UNION STEWARD
RESOURCES UPDATED

The NPMHU website (npmhu.org) provides valuable information for our members and stewards. The main page of the website is continually updated to reflect the most recent news affecting mail handlers across the country. Within the website, under the heading MEMBER RESOURCES, is a plethora of archives and databases which are accessed by password only. This is called "MAILS" (MAIL HANDLER ARCHIVE INTERACTIVE LIBRARY SEARCH) and SHOP STEWARD RESOURCES.

To access this database, you must first register with the NPMHU. This is done right at the beginning of the MAILS access. (As mentioned at the virtual SAMLU in November 2020, because of the vast number of users we have in this database, **we have decided to delete all users who show zero activity in the last ten years**. If your name was deleted by mistake, please re-register.)

The National Office has recently performed a redesign of this MAILS subpage. This redesign is concentrated on simplifying the design and modernizing the content to include updating out of date USPS Publications and Manuals. Most USPS manuals change over time and the NPMHU is committed to trying to keep the most current manuals posted to help our stewards and members have the most recent and accurate information needed in enforcement of the National Agreement. This most recent update has ELM version 49.
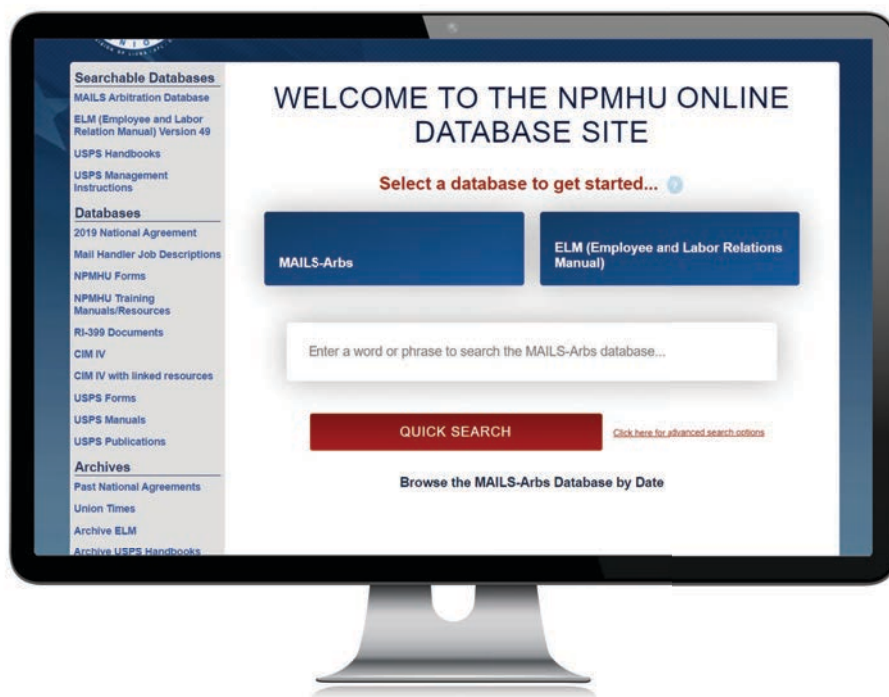
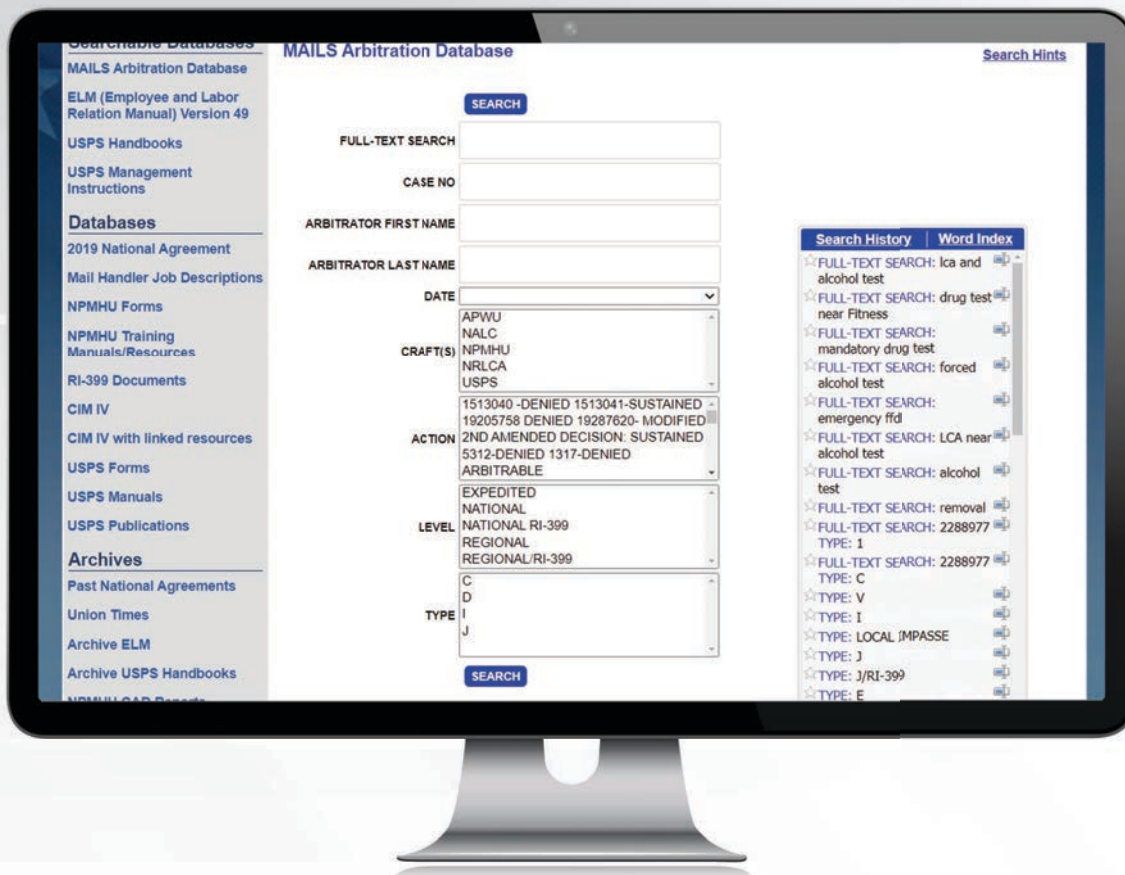Other changes on the MAILS page include the following:

- The landing page is simplified and has a different look;
- The help hints have been re-worded to simple layman terms;
- The sidebars with links to the ELM, National Agreement, CIM, and many other resources has been simplified, updated and re-organized;
- We have created a new link on the sidebar where we will now store archived items, including past National

Agreements, the Union Times Newsletter, old ELMs, handbooks and manuals, CAD reports, NPMHU membership recruitment material, etc.; and

- The request for information forms have been updated and/or simplified.

The redesign was tailored to suit the needs of the membership — particularly our representatives in the field — by making the page easier to navigate and search. When you log in to the MAILS page you will now see this screen shown below:

While the format of the screen has been changed, the functionality of the page has not. Rather than the old way of having to dive deeper into the page to search the ELM, or MAILS, you can now directly search either one of these often-used databases immediately. If you want to perform an advanced search, you still have that option by clicking either the "quick search" or "advanced search" buttons on the MAILS landing page. This will lead you to the page shown above:

This advanced search is designed to help whittle down the number of results you might get, and to help you search more precisely. While there are technical terms to describe how you perform this type of search (Boolean operators), the search hint button on the top right of this page or the guide below will help you with searching to find the best result. The "Search Hints" button on the top right of this page

has been modified and these hints hopefully are easier for our members to understand.

For the best results, start with a word you need, and then keep adding key words or "operators" to narrow your search. Unless you want to read several thousand arbitrations, the word "removal" is not going to get you what you need. Just typing the word "removal" produced 3935 results when this article was being written. The hints below are designed to help you get the results you are seeking.

When you perform any of the searches as explained below, you will get a screen as shown below. This screen tells you a lot of things.

SINGLE EXACT WORD SEARCHES:

To find documents with the exact word, simply enter only the word into the Search Dialogue box.

Do not use symbols, italics, parentheses or quotation marks. For example:

- **Holiday** (This resulted in 873 hits)
- **Altercation** (This resulted in 439 hits)
- **Theft** (This resulted in 266 hits)

Typically, you will find that single word searches result in too many results. Your search will probably need to be pared down by using one of the examples below.

SEARCHING AN EXACT PHRASE OR A SERIES OF WORDS:

Simply enter the desired phrase or series of words with no symbols, italics, parentheses or quotation marks. The multiple word phrase will be **searched in the exact order you type them.** For example:

- **Holiday overtime** (This resulted in 20 hits)
- **verbal altercation** (This resulted in 108 hits)

- **mail theft** (This resulted in 23 hits)

You will find that these searches did indeed help you reduce the number of "hits" you achieved. But there are other ways to get even more precise results.

SEARCHING MULTIPLE WORDS OR PHRASES USING THE BOOLEAN OPERATORS "AND", "OR" AND "NOT"

The MAILS *precise* search method utilizes Boolean Operator syntax. Boolean Operators are words used to get more precise searches. Some examples of Boolean Operators searches are:

- **Holiday AND overtime** (This resulted in 602 hits)
- **Verbal AND altercation** AND discipline (This resulted in 233 hits)

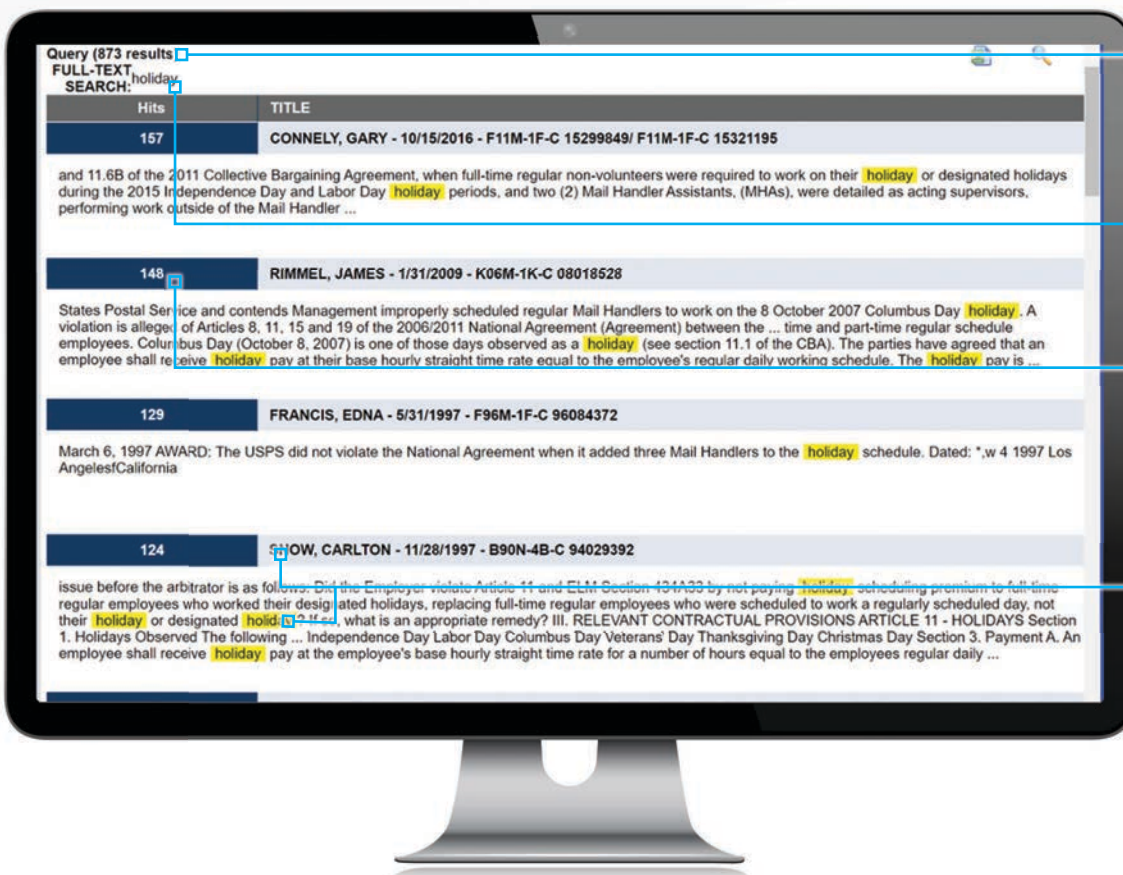- **Mail AND theft AND vandalism** (This resulted in 6 hits)

The searches above will give you documents with the most instances of either of the words. The word **AND** is not a part of the search. However, the results you get (in the first example) might be a lot of instances of one word and very few instances of the other word. **Holiday** and 502 instances of **the other word.**

The **NEAR** operator is used when you want to require that certain terms appear **in the same sentence or paragraph of the document.** The use of the word "**NEAR**" generally requires the term following it to occur within certain distance of the preceding word in the search; in MAILS, using the word "**NEAR**" requires the terms to be within a predetermined amount of words from

each other, in either direction. **Joining words by NEAR gives you fewer document(s) hits** than using the word "**AND**" because it requires the words to be closer together.

- **Holiday NEAR overtime** (this resulted in 313 hits)
- **Verbal NEAR altercation NEAR discipline** (this resulted in 5 hits)
- **Mail NEAR theft NEAR vandalism** (this resulted in 0 hits)

As with anything else, you cannot learn to use this valuable resource if you do not try it out. We hope you give this redesigned portion of our webpage a test drive. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact any CAD staff member, or your Regional Director.

A This shows the number of documents which you can read that contain your search.

B This shows the word(s) or specific search you typed in for this search.

C Each document result shows separate. This tells you how many times your search is contained in this document.

D This line shows the Arbitrator's name, date of decision and GATS numbers from your search. Additionally, you see your key words highlighted in a piece of the actual award.