

TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER INSTALLATION

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One of the benefits of our National Agreement with the Postal Service is the ability to voluntarily transfer or relocate to another USPS installation, whether that installation is in a different part of your metropolitan area or in another region of the country. As life changes, so can the need to relocate. This Article is to help Mail Handlers to understand the contractual process.

Under the NPMHU the National Agreement, there are several different articles and memoranda of understanding that lay out the process for transferring. Article 12 and the MOU re Transfers together provide the basic rules on transfers, but applying the details of these rules can become a very difficult and sometimes confusing endeavor. There also is important language in the MOU re Filling of Residual Vacancies, which mandates that 1 out of every 4 residual vacancies that occur in an installation be filled with a transfer. Any Mail Handler can request a transfer after completing the lock-in period. The lock-in period is 18 months if you are requesting to transfer within your District or any District that geographically adjoins your District. It is 12 months if your request is to transfer outside this geographical area. Time as an MHA is counted toward this lock-in period provided you are transferring to another Mail Handler position. If you are attempting to transfer to another craft, however, your MHA time will not count towards the lock-in period. The lock-in time period must be satisfied prior to submitting your request in eReassign; otherwise, your request will be closed as ineligible. Once you transfer, you start a new lock-in period until you reach the 12 or 18 months required. If within the geographical area, the 18 months is reduced to 12 months if returning to your former installation or a PTF gaining more hours per week. However, your application in eReassign must be reached and the installation within the ratio must be ready to receive a transfer before the reduction in lock-in can be reduced or waived. There are no provisions to transfer to another bid cluster outside the submission in eReassign for any reason.

The lock-in period for the first transfer an employee receives in his or her career cannot be modified or waived.

So assuming you have your time in the craft and have decided that you want to start a transfer to another installation or district, the written request for this transfer is through eReassign, which is found on the LiteBlue webpage. There are two different processes that you can use to submit your written requests, and both are found on the LiteBlue webpage. The first and easiest method is to simply press the “Submit Request” button at the top of the eReassign web page. This will bring you to a site that will be populated with all of your personal information, name, address, current work location, etc. It is important to verify that all of this information is correct. At that point, all that is left is for you to simply pick the state, district, bid cluster and craft that you are hoping to transfer to. There is no need to wait for a specific position to request.

Once you have clicked on the submit request button, you will be placed on the eReassign list. The list is kept based on the date the employee from any craft puts in the request; seniority doesn’t have any effect on your placement. You will need to put in a request for each bid cluster and craft you are requesting. This request will remain active for 1 year, at which point you can extend this for another year. There is no limit on the number of times you can extend your request, but it must be done each year within 90 days of the expiration date. If a request expires, it cannot be reactivated.

The second method is to search by “Reassignment Opportunities”; when you go onto this webpage, you will see all available opportunities nationwide at that particular time. Postings open from the 1st day of the month through the 21st day of the month. You can then review and select from that list of available opportunities.

Here is where the confusing part comes in: when you select a position in the Reassignment Opportunities section, you are placed on the eReassign list in the same manner had you processed your request through the “Submit Request” button that was discussed earlier. You will not be put on a different list, and you will not be processed any faster. Your submission is to transfer to a different bid cluster; this is not a job bidding system but only advertises what positions have become

available to fill. Indeed, when you are on this page, you should take note of the side of the page which states:

APPLICATION TO POSTED POSITION

Although you may apply for a specific posted job, please note that you are not guaranteed that position once contacted. You are actually applying for a specific location and craft only. Applies to APWU and NPMHU postings.

Here is the issue that is often encountered with the Reassignment Opportunities process. An employee picks a specific duty assignment on this webpage and then receives the transfer. That person believes that he or she is going into that specific position until they get their official notice of transfer, where it instructs them to select a current residual vacancy in the bid cluster. If that residual is still available it can be selected, but many times there have been conversions of MHAs during the time between applying for and receiving the transfer, and MHAs being converted in that installation would have the right to choose that bid. It is important to understand that until you receive your transfer you have no rights to any bid in your new installation.

When an employee is placed on eReassign, the Postal Service will indicate your request has a status as “on hold.” That simply means that your request is submitted, and you are on the list. When a residual vacancy becomes available in an installation you have selected and you are reached on the eReassign list, it will change the status to “in review.” This is when your current facility will be asked to furnish information from your record. The items that will be looked at are attendance for the past two year (although approved FMLA absences cannot be used against a Mail Handler requesting a transfer), safety record, supervisor evaluation, and any active discipline. So it is important if you disagree with the stated reason that you see a shop steward in your installation to request a review of your record with the supervisor. Your attendance record should properly reflect any absences with the correct code of scheduled or unscheduled. If your record is incorrect your shop steward will assist in the correction with the supervisor and if necessary to file any appropriate

grievance. As with any grievance, it must be filed within 14 days from when you became aware of the denial to transfer.

To transfer to a position within the Mail Handler craft you are considered qualified; however, if you are requesting transfer to another craft, you must satisfy all qualifications prior to finalizing the transfer as accepted. If you fail to qualify on any portion, the transfer cannot be finalized. You cannot be moved into another craft through a transfer pending qualification.

The final status that you hope to see is “accepted”; you will then receive a letter detailing your transfer. It will give you the choice to accept or deny the transfer. The letter will also provide you with an expected date to report, usually within 30-45 days. You will be given a list of residuals, if more than one exists; otherwise you will be notified of your new schedule. It is important remember that, if you need more time to get your affairs in order, you should communicate about this topic with the contact name listed in the letter to determine an agreeable date.

There are no relocation benefits given to an employee who voluntarily transfers. When you arrive at your new facility, you will be given a new seniority date. Please reach out to the NPMHU representatives so you can learn about your new facility.

