

MAIL HANDLERS VOTE TO

RATIFY

THE 2022 TENTATIVE AGREEMENT



Ratification procedures to certify the terms of the tentative 2022 National Agreement between the Union and the U.S. Postal Service were adopted by the National Executive Board of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and widely distributed in November 2022. As a result, all regular members who were employed by the U.S. Postal Service as of Pay Period 26-2022 were eligible to vote and were furnished with the text of the proposed changes and deletions to the National Agreement, together with ballots and return envelopes. This ratification material was mailed to each eligible voter on January 31, 2023.

The balloting period began on January 31, 2023 and concluded at 9:00 a.m. on March 13, 2023, satisfying ratification procedures. The ballots were collected from the Post Office Box, verified, and counted beginning at 9:00 a.m. on March 13, 2023. The Union did retain the American Arbitration Association to oversee and certify the ballot count.

The terms of the 2022 National Agreement between the NPMHU and the U.S. Postal Service were officially ratified on March 13, 2023. The certified results show that over 84% of the membership approved of the new contract, with the final vote tally at 6617 in favor

of ratification and 1237 in opposition to ratification.

On December 15, 2022, the NPMHU and the Postal Service announced that they had reached a tentative deal on the terms of their 2022 National Agreement. After more than six months of bargaining (including a three-month extension of the 2019 agreement), both parties are happy to bring this long process to a close. The contract will last three years and expire on September 20, 2025.

At its core, the 2022 agreement will improve the working life of all members of the mail handler bargaining unit, from the newest MHA to the long-time career mail handlers. The goal of this contract,

as with every contract, is to protect the jobs of mail handlers, improve the quality of their workplace, and improve their standard of living and compensation. This well-crafted tentative agreement certainly meets those goals.

Starting immediately, and continuing through September 2025, the agreement continues the traditional pattern of general wage increases. Per the provisions of this tentative agreement, all mail handlers will receive three general increases — 1.3% on November 19, 2022 (applied retroactively), 1.3% on November 18, 2023, and 1.3% on November 16, 2024. In addition to the general wage increases, all career mail handler employees will be eligible for six semi-annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs), based on inflation.

Although MHAs do not receive COLAs, they will receive the same three 1.3% increases as career mail handlers in each November, supplemented by an extra 1.0% at the same time. Effective November 19, 2022, the current MHA rate for Grade 4 and Grade 5 will also be increased by \$0.50. Finally, no later than the first full pay period 180 days after the contract is ratified, the MHA wage scale will be altered to include a second Step B, which will be an additional \$0.50 higher than Step A. After six months in Step A, MHAs will reach Step B and be entitled to the extra \$0.50 based on their length of service.

Significantly, the National Agreement provides an extra 1% pay adjustment for all mail handlers at Steps BB, AA, and A, also effective retroactively to November 19, 2022. Then, no later than 180 days after union ratification, Step BB will be eliminated from the career pay scale. Employees in Step BB will be advanced to AA and will restart their step waiting period.

Along with the elimination of Step BB, waiting periods in each step will be reduced. No later than the first full pay period 180 days after ratification, the step waiting period for all career steps

will be reduced from 52 to 48 weeks. As of that date, any career mail handler with at least 48 weeks in step will advance to the next step and have their time reset. The reduction of time in each waiting period combined with the elimination of Step BB means that mail handlers will reach the top of the pay scale 116 weeks or more than 2 years faster.

Another major change in the contract will protect all MHAs from prolonged delays in conversion to career status. A new provision will automatically convert any MHA who reaches 24 months of relative standing in a 200 man year installation to career status as a full-time flexible (FTF) mail handlers, without any new probationary period. This conversion will give any MHA reaching 24 months full career benefits, a salary slightly below Step AA for up to 48 weeks. Upon conversion to full-time regular or after 48 weeks as an FTF, these employees will move to Step AA and continue through the pay scale like any full-time employee.

FTFs will be considered part of the “regular work force,” but will have flexible reporting times, flexible non-scheduled days, and flexible reporting locations within their installation. If and when an FTF transitions into a full-time regular (FTR) by successfully bidding on an FTR duty assignment, or being placed in a residual vacancy, the FTF will be slotted into the FTR pay step commensurate with their number of weeks as FTF and retain in-step credit.

In addition to these changes, the National Agreement also contains many contract improvements covering a host of subjects in the National Agreement. In no particular order, here are some of the most noteworthy changes:

An extension of the Article 6 No Layoff clause, covering all career employees as of September 20, 2022.

A change to Article 11 to include Juneteenth National Independence Day as a holiday for career employees.

Expansion of bereavement leave for the passing of grandchildren, and a more inclusive definition of in-laws.

A new MOU has been added about Dignity and Respect in the Workplace, in which the parties commit to improving workplace relationships and to treating each and every individual employee with dignity and respect.

Under Article 8, in postal installations with 200 or more man years of employment, career employees shall have consecutive scheduled days off. MHAs and PTFs, there will be a guaranteed nonscheduled day each service week.

For MHAs, after completion of an initial 360-day term as an MHA and immediately upon reappointment to any subsequent appointments, MHAs will be advanced 40 hours of annual leave. PTFs will also be advanced their 40 hours of annual leave. Additionally, MHAs with a minimum of 90 days of continuous service as an MHA prior to conversion into career status will be exempt from the 90-day qualifying period for use of annual leave.

A new MOU was negotiated concerning 204(b) temporary supervisors, which provides that the Postal Service is in the process of developing alternate approaches to recruiting, staffing, and filling temporary supervisor positions, including the possibility of creating EAS positions to do so. To the extent that the Postal Service implements an alternative program, the parties at the National Level agreed to meet to discuss the status of the current 204(b) program.

Another purge of Letters of Warning applicable to career employees and MHAs.

All the contractual changes of the National Agreement were included in the ratification material sent to all eligible voters. We thank the entire NPMHU membership for its continuous patience and support during these six-months of negotiations.