

The Future of the Post Office?

This morning I was witness to one of the many facets of being a professional letter carrier. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised since I've seen it before. What is this act that I saw you wonder? What would make me want to write an article about it? The answer: a PTF carrier broke their hold-down to carry another route. I asked the PTF about breaking their hold-down; however, I must admit I was a little "aggressive" in my tone, but this bothered me. The conversation went something like this...

Me: Why did you break your hold-down?

Carrier: No response

Me: Let me get this straight, you break your hold-down to carry one of the best routes in the station right?

Carrier: Yes.

Me: So, would you break your hold-down to carry the worst route in the station?

Carrier: No.

Me: Then why break your hold-down in the first place? What would you do if management came up to you some morning and asked you to break your hold-down to carry the worst route? You can't say "no" since you broke your hold-down before. Don't you think that management would bring this up?

Carrier: Don't worry about it, it's none of your business!

Me: Everything that happens in here is my business.

It's not a verbatim account of what was said, but the gist is there. I have been in the Post Office for only 5 1/2 years, but ever since day one, I've been attending my union meetings, going to conventions, Congressional breakfasts, attending Union functions and I even held a stewardship. I am very pro-union and have no problem expressing it. However, I'm very troubled in what I'm seeing with a few of the PTF's that work for the Post Office now. I don't think that they even know what all the Union has done for US as professional letter carriers. I'm sure that this has been a problem for many years in the past, and will continue to be a problem in the future.

Many new carriers haven't heard the stories of what it was like in the past, waiting on a bench in the morning hoping to work that day, being called in for only two hours of work, and many more. Before there were hold-downs for example, management would be able to place a PTF on any route at any time. Thanks to the Union, today's letter carriers have it much easier and we all should be thankful for that. If you doubt my words just ask any senior carrier, you'll be amazed at what you'll find out!

Another thing which is troubling is seeing a PTF finding every possible way of getting out of the job that they are paid to do. We, as letter carriers, get paid to deliver the mail, not to case on other carriers routes all day, answering phones, processing stampback, and other jobs as this. When this happens, the only people who are getting hurt are the other carriers that now need to handle the extra workload. Is this fair to them? No. But unfortunately life isn't fair and neither is the Post Office. How would they feel if the roles were reversed? I'm guessing not so good.

Some of you may be asking yourselves why I should even care. Well, I'm proud to wear the carrier uniform and what it means. I'm proud to be a letter carrier and everything the job entails. I want the Post Office to continue operating and provide a career for me to support my family. And lastly, every Union Brother and Sister should care about the continual success of our Union, and what it does to make our lives better.

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