

Vice Presidents Report  
November 2009

Submitted by Craig Dameron

Motor Vehicle Accidents continue to be a focus for Qwest Communications. We have grieved several of these over the past few months, and the company proven through their actions that any motor vehicle accident is the fault of the technician driving the vehicle and will carry a minimum of a Written Warning and a 3 day unpaid suspension, stretched out over three weeks. In a few cases we have made some progress in resolving these issues, but many of them have had to move to the second step of the grievance process.

I had the opportunity to attend an arbitration hearing last week. The depths that the company will go to defend their position was truly an eye opener. The importance of our part at the investigatory meeting(s), the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> steps grievance meetings became more obvious as the testimony was gone through. As stewards, we have an awesome responsibility to defend our members Weingarten Rights, do our homework, investigate to the fullest any allegation made against one of our brothers or sisters, and present the best defense that we can in the grievance process.

Documentation is the key, we must document everything, from the investigatory meeting to the grievance meetings, and we must do this as if our brother or sisters job depends on it, because it actually may. What we may view as a minor incident with a written warning may seem fairly harmless at the time, it can be used later by the company to try and show a pattern that lead to the member's termination. Even if you know the answer, ask the questions, get the answers from the company documented, it just may save some ones job in the future.

Begin every investigatory meeting with the following questions and document the answers:

1. What is the company investigating? (make the company get specific, don't let them generalize, with violation of the code of conduct) What part of the code of conduct, what specific action, are they investigating that they believe violated that section of the code of conduct.
2. After getting this information, ask to meet with the member privately, before the company begins their investigation. (Find out what the member knows about the event, advise the member not to lie, or make up answers, if they don't know, it is ok to state that they don't remember, or that they don't recall)
3. Ask clarifying questions, if the company is investigating a motor vehicle accident and they begin asking why the employee was at a specific location 20 days before the accident, clarify, what that has to do with the motor vehicle accident.

Michael, Stan and I will be meeting with MV Transportation again this Saturday. This will be our third bargaining unit meeting with them this year. We are going to try to do a one hour stewards training following the meeting.

You hear it every month from Stan, but Health Care Reform has moved further under the Obama Administration than it ever has. We have a real shot at passing meaningful Health Care Reform this year, but it will take the effort of each and every one of us.

Jeanine Maury has begun SIF Health Care Reform Training again, and is looking for volunteers from the general membership to attend. If you have the names of any members in your area please get them to Jeanine so that she can get the training scheduled.

Those that oppose Health Care Reform that will benefit the American People and not the Insurance Industry are hard at work trying to block any kind of meaningful reform, thus we need to be working twice as hard to overcome their efforts. I urge each of you to call 888 580-0792 every day to leave messages with your Senator and Congressman urging them to meaningful health care reform that includes, a strong public option, opposes excise tax on health care benefits, close the loop holes for pre-Medicare retirees, and pre-existing conditions.

One year ago tonight, we were celebrating the election of the first African American President in the United States, and President that stands strong with working families. While this is an off year election, there are some very important legislative issues being determined today. R-71 dubbed as everything but marriage law and I-033 which if passed will limit grown in city, state and county revenues.

We will also see if we will have change at the Port of Seattle, will Max Vekich and Rob Holland prevail and change the way the port is being run.

Dow Constantine is up in the polls but who will be the next King County Executive.

In the Seattle Mayoral race, we wait to find out if the next Mayor of Seattle, will be the Union Busting T-Mobil executive, Joe Mallahan, or the community organizer that wants to give our work away to Seattle City Light, Mike McGinn. Which ever way this race goes, we are in for a long 4 years.

The votes will be counted and hopefully we will have a better idea of where we are headed after tonight.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Dameron