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VICE PRESIDENT, LABOR RELATIONS



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VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS
MANAGER, CAPITAL METRO OPERATIONS
MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (AREA)

SUBJECT: Employee Participation Programs

This is in response to inquiries from the field on the extent to which local management may implement employee participation programs.

An organizational development program known as CARE – Communication, Accountability, Recognition, and Environment – has prompted inquiries from both the field and the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO (APWU). Please be advised that craft employees may only be involved in this program with the knowledge and consent of the local APWU organization.

On April 9, 1992, the Postal Service signed an agreement with the APWU which articulates its right not to participate in the EI/QWL process. To ensure compliance with that agreement, prior to implementing any employee participation program, management must contact the local APWU president, in writing, with the specifics of a proposed employee participation program and invite the union's active involvement. Implementation of an employee participation program with the APWU crafts is subject to the approval of the local APWU organization.

While this memorandum was prompted by a complaint from the APWU, please be aware that local management will need to contact the local union organization of any craft employee who may be involved in programs such as CARE. Generally, programs like CARE impact working conditions of employees over whom our unions have the exclusive right of representation. The union, therefore, must be an active participant to comply with our collective bargaining obligations.

This does not preclude managers from speaking directly to craft employees to provide information on business goals or related subjects. Further, while this does not prevent the acceptance of suggestions and/or proposals from any employee, you may not unilaterally implement any suggestion and/or proposal which directly relates to wages, hours, or working conditions. When you plan to conduct a focus group or ask craft employees for information related to work, notify the appropriate local union president(s) as a courtesy prior to the activity. Such activities as focus groups with craft employees may be conducted as long as the activity is "on-the-clock," and participation is voluntary, and as long as the focus group is for the sole purpose of collecting information and/or opinions.

If a local manager is unsure of the impact of a proposed local program on our collective bargaining relationships, the district office of Labor Relations should be consulted prior to implementation. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact Doug A. Tulino at (202) 268-7447.


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