



National Rural Letter Carriers' Association

James W. "Jim" Riess, District Representative, NRLCA, 897 Roosevelt Ave, Pine River, Minnesota 56474-5162

PHONE: 218-587-2206 EMAIL: Jim.Riess@nrlca.org FAX: 855-677-0009

The NRLCA (your office) needs you!

Greetings to all Prospective Local Stewards!

This mailing may be, perhaps, the single most important mailing you ever receive from the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Strong Statement to say the least! Why? For years Rural Carriers enjoyed an excellent working relationship with managers in the Postal Service - we performed a very necessary task while working under a unique pay system allowing managers a "hands off" management approach, that in turn has led to a number of misunderstandings on what the Contract actually does say and what 'rights' can be exercised by both carriers and managers.

What has happened? What's happened is that the USPS is no longer experiencing the "growth" that allowed it to manage without accountability and, thus, management is "enforcing" the Contracts of all Unions and squeezing all managers for more efficiency. Unfortunately for rural carriers that has meant more attention being paid us and with it we experience mismanagement on a daily basis simply because of the 'unique' features of the evaluated system. Indeed, many rural carriers will contact the stewards and complain about 'harassment' when in fact investigation reveals that their manager is simply enforcing the contract, albeit, the contract of the city craft or clerk Union but nonetheless, a Contract that the manager is familiar with and it need be said our contract is enforced as well in some instances. Key issue, however, there are very few managers in the Postal Service that truly understand the concepts of the evaluated system - a system based on piece work accounted for by the second during a mail count that is then used as an average for the year by converting to a pay system based loosely on a 40 hour work week with a unique agreement with the Department of Labor making us FLSA B employees for regular carriers for the most part which in manager terms means "exempt". Confused? Imagine what your manager is when they do not even have the experience in most cases of working as a rural carrier! RCA's are treated as FLSA Section A (hourly) by the way, though, until they reach 40 hours in work week they too are paid the evaluation if assigned to all duties of a route.

Why this mailing? Because it is the answer to the situation! Becoming a local steward or having a local steward in your office is the way that we address issues as they happen with the correct information. It allows you the carrier to deal with management as the Contract calls for with the protection of the Labor Laws that have evolved over the past century plus! It need be said that the 'reality' is we are paid to report to work, case the mail, tie out, load, deliver in a safe and timely manner, and on our return to the office clear ourselves and all mail for the day. Nothing in that description gives a carrier any right to debate office practices with the supervisor/postmaster nor for that matter any right to do anything but our job and frankly management can 'direct' us to do things per Article 3 that may be beyond the normal scope of our duties and responsibilities as outlined in Article 30 and the PO 603. As a steward, one does have extended rights (based on Labor Law) to many of the things that carriers often believe 'our contract' and/or common sense provides them when in fact there are no such guarantees!

I am asking you to please consider the position; hold the election; and send the completed forms (both pages) to me at the address at the top of this letter and the process of certifying you, as a Local Steward can become a reality. A process that involves an intense two-day training session with one of the assistant district representatives or myself scheduled as soon as possible after receipt of the election information.

Jim Riess, Northland District Representative, NRLCA

Do your Job (Art 30/PO 603)-
Ask Management (Discuss)
File the Grievance (Article 15.3)
Steward (All Offices/Article 17)

Remember *it is not just the "Union Contract"*, it is an agreement negotiated with give and take by both parties, the employer and the union; an agreement that need be honored by both because both the employer and the employees have rights and obligation. *It is the union and employer contract.*

Application for Steward Certification NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION



Date _____ Post Office (MAIN) _____
 Station or Branch _____ Finance Number _____
 Postmaster/Station Manager's Name (LFM) _____
 Mailing Address of Post Office _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Number of Rural Routes at this Office _____ PO Phone _____ PO Fax _____
 Name of Rural Carrier Steward (LFM) _____
 Employee ID Number _____ Home Phone _____
 Steward Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Fax _____
 Mailing Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 e-mail _____

This is to certify that the above named rural carrier has been elected as the RURAL CARRIER STEWARD to represent the rural letter carrier craft of employees in labor-management relations at the above named Post Office. It is understood that this representative upon successful completion of the NRLCA Training Course will be certified in accordance with Article IX Section 4.B.3 and 4 of the NRLCA Constitution. This representative will serve until; the next called election, the position becomes vacant, the incumbent Local Steward retires, or when two-thirds of the members submit a petition to conduct a steward election to the District Representative for approval in accordance with Article IX Section 7.B.1 of the NRLCA Constitution.

Signatures of those appearing below confirm the selection of the above named rural carrier as Local Steward for the rural carrier craft. ONLY DUES PAYING MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ARE ELIGIBLE TO SIGN BELOW OR BE SELECTED AS STEWARD.

Signatures of Rural Carriers ¹

Route No. ²	REGULAR	LEAVE REPLACEMENT
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____
8	_____	_____
9	_____	_____
10	_____	_____

- ¹ If additional space for signatures is needed, attach a separate sheet.
- ² Indicate Vacant Routes.

I accept the responsibilities of the position of steward for the rural carrier craft for the above Post Office.

Signature of Steward

Print Name of Steward

District Representative Use Only - Do Not Write In This Space

Date Trained / Certified _____

Date PM / Steward Notified _____

Signature of District Representative
The affixing of the signature of the District Representative
will serve to validate this document



Local Steward Election Call

A Local Steward Election is called for the _____ Post Office.

This election will be held on _____ at _____

Location _____

THIS NOTICE MUST BE POSTED AT LEAST 15 DAYS PRIOR TO THE ELECTION DATE

Date of Posting _____

In accordance with the Constitution of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Article IX, Section 7, this notice hereby constitutes written notification to all NRLCA members that an election shall be held for the position of a Local Steward in their office. Failure of members to exercise this right will result in the local office being assigned representation in accordance with the Constitution of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association.

The selection of a Local Steward should be in accordance with democratic procedures. To become a steward, a rural carrier must be a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Local Steward Elections will be conducted in the month of July of every fourth year (i.e.; 2016, 2020, 2024 etc.) unless the incumbent Local Steward is unopposed.

The Steward shall serve until a successor is elected and certified or until he or she resigns. An election may be called any time the position is vacant, or when two-thirds of the members submit a petition to the District Representative for approval a Local Steward may be re-elected to the position.

Written notification to all NRLCA members shall be given at least 15 days before the date of the election. A majority vote of those NRLCA members voting is required for an election. When there is more than one (1) Local Steward at an installation, including stations and/or branches, a Chief Steward will be elected by the NRLCA members of said office.

Re: Article IX Sections 7.B.1, 2, & 3 of the NRLCA Constitution

Nominations will be accepted at the time of election and any dues paying members of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association can announce his/her intention to be a candidate by signing below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Print name)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Sign name)

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANNOUNCING AND CONDUCTING AN ELECTION FOR LOCAL STEWARD

1. Post LOCAL STEWARD ELECTION CALL in the office on the bulletin board used for rural carrier information or another conspicuous place. This notice must be completely filled in with date, time and place of election. If you intend to hold the election in the Post Office, be sure and get permission from your Postmaster first. Generally, it is better to schedule the election for a time and day that most carriers are in the office (Tuesday morning, for example) though those who are not scheduled to work need permission to be on the work room floor or breakroom. An off-site election site is best at a time and place available to all members. MAKE SURE THE POSTING GOES UP AT LEAST 15 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION.
2. Allow members to nominate their chosen candidates or themselves by signing and printing their name on the Election Call.
3. At the planned time of the meeting, announce to all carriers present that the election meeting is going to be held and give them time to get prepared and get to the meeting place.
4. At the meeting have someone (any union member not a candidate) conduct the election. He/she should announce that only union members can nominate, vote or hold the office. If there are any questions about union membership contact your NRLCA District Representative or Assistant District Representative or the state secretary for verification.
5. The person running the meeting should then announce that _____ has/have been nominated for the position of local steward on the Election Call form and then they should ask if there are any other nominees. They should ask this at least twice.
6. If there is only one person nominated, then the person running the meeting should then say _____ has been nominated, all those in favor raise your hand. It only takes one vote to win that election because we do not allow "No" votes or write in votes in elections.
7. If there is more than one candidate, then ballots should be handed out and each member votes secretly. The group should choose 2-3 people to count the ballots and report the results. It takes a majority **of the votes cast** to win election. If there are more than 2 candidates, one must still get a majority (more than 50%) of the votes or there is no election. In this case, one candidate may wish to drop out. Either way, the vote must be taken again until one candidate gets a majority.
8. Whoever is elected should then collect signatures from the carriers who voted on the *Application for Steward Certification* and also fill in all of their personal information. **Both the Election Call and the Application for Steward Certification should then be sent to the District Representative.** If a ballot vote was held, the ballots should also be sent to the District Representative.
9. Remember, your steward is not certified to act as the steward until trained and certified by the District Representative. The newly elected steward will be contacted soon after election to schedule certification training.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR DELIVERY UNITS WITH 50 OR MORE RURAL CRAFT EMPLOYEES AND OFFICES WITH MULTIPLE DELIVERY UNITS

1. Any delivery unit (work location) with 50 or more rural craft employees is entitled to elect two local stewards.
2. At the time of the election, two separate votes would be held-one for each steward position. All the principals of nomination and election would apply. The winners of the two elections would be certified to the District Representative as the local stewards.
3. A third election is then held between the two local stewards. Union members vote for their choice to serve as Chief Steward for that unit. The local steward receiving the majority of votes will be certified to the District Representative as the Chief Steward. In the event of a tie, the District Representative will select the Chief Steward.
4. In offices with more than one delivery unit, each unit (station or branch, APO or RMPO) is entitled to elect a local steward or stewards according to the above guidelines.
5. In these offices with multiple delivery units, a Chief Steward should be elected from among the current local stewards serving in the delivery units by all of the union members in the office (ALL stations and branches). The Chief Steward of the office will represent the craft in matters that concern the entire office and also serve as the local steward for the stations and branches that have no local steward.
6. If an election is to be held for the Chief Steward of an office with multiple delivery units, we recommend contacting the District Representative for assistance with notifying all members, setting a meeting time and place outside the Post Office, and conducting the election.