

Union Members
Transferring Crafts
Among
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
National Postal Mail Handlers Union, AFL-CIO
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association

Avoiding Unintended Multiple Dues Withholding

A Handbook for Organizers, Local Officers, and Members



American Postal Workers Union



NOTE: Information provided in this document is subject to change without notice, to accommodate changes in law, USPS Employee Labor Relations Manual, national union constitutions, or internal union policies.

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Objective

The objective of this handbook is to assist union members and officers in the proper processing of membership dues forms and to help avoid the unintended payment of multiple dues when a member changes from one craft to another craft that is represented by a different union.

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Employees should keep copies of all forms and correspondence and confirm correct deductions by reviewing their bi-weekly pay stubs. Any errors in dues withheld should be brought to the immediate attention of the employee's personnel office and/or union representative.

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In reading through this document you will find the procedures used by each union to be different. When joining a union, turn to the chapter for that union and follow the procedures. In addition, if you are canceling your membership as a result of changing crafts, you should go to the chapter of the union you are leaving and follow the procedures for cancellation of dues for that union.

Reciprocal Agreement

Among
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
National Postal Mail Handlers Union, AFL-CIO
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association

In the interest of relieving our members of multiple dues obligations among and within the four postal unions, the unions resolve as follows:

Each of the four postal unions agrees that whenever one of its members transfers either voluntarily or involuntarily to a position within the bargaining unit of one of the other postal unions, **and joins the union representing that bargaining unit**, each will grant the member a release, upon request (and in accordance with the procedures established in this agreement) from his or her union membership outside of his or her anniversary window period. The procedures outlined in this booklet have been established to facilitate transferring of membership.

Robert L. Tunstall, Secretary-Treasurer
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

12/04/03
Date

Jane E. Broendel, Secretary-Treasurer
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

12/04/03
Date

Mark Gardner, Secretary-Treasurer
National Postal Mail Handlers Union, AFL-CIO

12/04/03
Date

Clifford D. Dailing, Secretary-Treasurer
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association

12/04/03
Date



Chapter 1 American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Procedures

APWU Background

The American Postal Workers Union is recognized as the collective bargaining agent for USPS employees in the clerk, motor vehicle services, and maintenance crafts. In addition, the APWU represents workers employed in support services: information systems/accounting service centers, mail equipment shops, material distribution centers, and operating services facilities. USPS employees can ask their shop steward or local officer for a Form 1187 to join APWU. If you work in a very small office that does not have union officials, to obtain a form 1187 to join APWU, you may contact APWU's Director of Organization, 1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 842 – 4228, or you may print three copies of the form from APWU's web page at www.APWU.org (click on Departments and Divisions, then click on Organization, then go to Organizing Information and Forms).

Application of the Reciprocal Agreement

When an individual is hired by the US Postal Service and becomes a union member in one of the crafts represented by the American Postal Workers Union, and later transfers to the mail handler craft, rural carrier craft, the city carrier craft, or vice-versa, the reciprocal agreement comes into play. The member may request to terminate his or her APWU membership by showing proof that he or she has joined the union of the gaining craft. The major difference between our procedure and the other postal unions is that APWU National Headquarters processes its own 1187s, 1186s and 1188s. Each union has a different procedure for implementing the reciprocal agreement.

A. Processing the 1187 for the New Member Leaving the NALC, NRLCA or the NPMHU and Joining the APWU

APWU requires the use of Standard Form 1187 (Authorization for Deduction of Dues) to initiate membership dues withholding. New members who are transferring membership from the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), or the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) to APWU as a result of a change in craft, and who do not wish to continue membership in their previous union, must:

Follow the cancellation process of the union you want to leave, (see page 10 for NPMHU; page 6 for NALC, page 14 for NRLCA).

In addition, you must:

- Complete the top portion of the APWU Form 1187.
- By hand in the margin write in large print, "Do not process until [NALC, NPMHU, NRLCA] dues are terminated."
- Return the form to your APWU representative.

Your union representative then completes the middle portion of the 1187, indicating the current amount of dues to be withheld biweekly, and submits the form to the National Secretary-Treasurer of APWU, 1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

B. Transferring to Another Union As A Result of A Change of Work Assignments

If you want to retain your APWU Health Plan you are required to be a full dues paying member of APWU.

There are three methods to use:

1. The method preferred by APWU:

Have your gaining local or Branch write to **their** National Secretary-Treasurer requesting him or her to write to the APWU National Secretary-Treasurer requesting cancellation of APWU dues withholding. (You must also follow the process of the union you are joining.)

2. You may fill out a Form 1186 or 1188 and send it to Secretary-Treasurer of APWU, 1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, along with a copy of your completed Form 1187. (You must also follow the process of the union you are joining.)
3. The APWU Local President may write on the Local's letterhead to Secretary-Treasurer of APWU, 1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, giving the name, Social Security Number, and Finance Number of the person, requesting termination of APWU dues due to a craft change. (You must also follow the process of the union you are joining.)

In addition to following the above, the member's responsibilities are:

- To keep a copy of each document you turn in, for your personal records.
- To check your pay stub frequently to verify that the appropriate dues are being withheld. APWU dues withholding code is **UN W**.

The National's Administrative Functions:

- APWU Headquarters will process your requests as soon as practicable.
- The APWU National Secretary-Treasurer's office will write a letter to its Local notifying it of the Pay Period in which the APWU dues termination is requested, with a copy to the National Secretary-Treasurer of the gaining union and a copy for the member, to be transmitted by the APWU Local.



Chapter 2 National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Procedures

I. Background

The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) is the exclusive bargaining agent for the 230,000 city letter carriers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. All city letter carriers and other non-supervisory employees in the Postal Service are eligible to join the NALC.

City carriers as well as all other USPS employees wishing to enroll in the NALC Health Benefit Plan (NALCHBP) must become NALC members by paying full union dues.

II. Dues deductions

The NALC utilizes the services of the U. S. Postal Service to process Form 1187 (Authorization for Deduction of Dues) and Form 1188 (Cancellation of Dues Deductions). On specific pay periods only, NALC Headquarters implements the increase and/or decrease of dues deductions by sending a membership tape to the USPS Payroll Center in Eagan, Minnesota for processing. Aside from processing Form 1187 and Form 1188, the USPS is not authorized to honor any request pertaining to changes in the dues deduction of any member regarding any action on a member's record unless the request is in writing and signed by the National Secretary-Treasurer.

III. Application of the reciprocal agreement

The reciprocal agreement applies when:

1. A city carrier belonging to the NALC transfers to the mail handler craft, rural carrier craft, or one of the other crafts represented by the American Postal Workers Union,

or

2. A non-city letter carrier craft employee who is a member of one of the other three postal unions transfers into the city carrier craft.

Since the reciprocal agreement supercedes the 1188, in neither of the two cases does the employee have to complete Form 1188 or wait until his/her anniversary date to withdraw from one union to join the union representing his/her new craft.

IV. Special considerations

1. An NALC member who leaves the city carrier craft for another craft but wishes to maintain his/her enrollment in the NALC Health Benefit Plan (NALCHBP), must continue NALC membership and pay full union dues.

2. A non-city carrier USPS craft employee belonging to another craft union who joins the NALC to enroll in the NALC Health Benefit Plan is not covered under the reciprocal agreement and must complete USPS Form 1188 in accordance with Section 925.1(b) of the ELM to cancel his/her dues from the union representing the other craft.

V. When a city carrier transfers to another craft

1. A city letter carrier transferring to another craft signs Form 1187 to join the union representing the new craft and:

➤ informs the representative of the new craft that he/she was formerly a city letter carrier, wishes to have his/her NALC dues canceled, and requests that the representative of the new union write the NALC Secretary-Treasurer stating that the employee has transferred crafts, has joined the union of the gaining craft and requests cancellation of his/her NALC dues;

or

➤ asks the secretary of his/her NALC branch to write a letter to the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer stating that the member has transferred crafts, joined the new craft union and wishes to cancel NALC membership and dues deductions.

2. Upon receipt by the Office of the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer of either a letter from the gaining union or a letter from the secretary of the NALC branch, the NALC Membership Department contacts the USPS and requests the cancellation of the member's NALC dues, specifying a particular pay period for the cancellation to become effective.

3. Should the Office of the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer receive a Form 1188 with a notation that the city carrier/NALC member is transferring to another craft instead of either a letter from the gaining union or a letter from the secretary of the NALC branch, the NALC Secretary-Treasurer writes to the member (copy to the branch secretary) explaining that:

a) should the member wish to join the union representing his/her new craft, the reciprocal agreement will apply and thus the specific steps must be followed;

b) should the member not wish to join the union representing the new craft, the reciprocal agreement does not apply and he/she must initiate the cancellation by

- completing Form 1188 no earlier than 20 days and no later than 10 days before his/her anniversary date which is stated in the letter, and

- having the employing office date-stamp Form 1188, retain the top two copies to be forwarded to the Servicing DDE/DR Site for processing and send the third copy (Organizational copy) to NALC Headquarters' Membership Department via certified mail.

VI. When a non-city carrier craft employee transfers to the city carrier craft

1. NALC stewards, branch secretaries and other officers should ask members transferring into the city carrier craft from another craft

- to sign a Form 1187 indicating they wish to have dues deducted for the NALC; **and**

- whether they belong to another craft union, and if so, which union and whether they want to have dues deductions for the other union canceled.

2. When the new NALC member completes Form 1187 and indicates that he/she wants to have dues deductions from the other union canceled, the NALC representative either:

writes on the NALC headquarters' copy of the form, "Transfer from APWU", "Transfer from NPMHU," or "Transfer from NRLCA," whichever was the losing craft,

or

writes a letter to the Office of the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer informing the national union that the incoming NALC member is transferring from the APWU, NPMHU or NRLCA.

3. After the new NALC member has completed Form 1187, the NALC representative files the Management Sectional Center copy of the form with the employing office with a request to forward the Form 1187 to the servicing DDE/DR Site for processing.

4. Upon receipt of the Headquarters copy of Form 1187 with the notation and/or letter (see 2a and 2b above), The Office of the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer writes the “losing” union, stating that employee is now a city letter carrier belonging the NALC and has requested cancellation of dues to the union representing his/her former craft.

5. A copy of the letter to the “losing” union is put in a pending file until NALC headquarters receives (a) for employees leaving an APWU-represented craft, a letter from the APWU stating the pay period the employee’s dues are being canceled; or (b) for all other employees, a copy of the “losing” union’s cancellation request to the USPS. Upon receipt of this correspondence, the NALC Membership Department attaches the correspondence to the copy of the outgoing letter for filing.

6. If the “losing” union fails to respond within two months, the Office of the NALC National Secretary-Treasurer sends the “losing” union another letter asking whether the new member’s dues deduction to the other union has been canceled.



Chapter 3 National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) Procedures

I. OVERVIEW

The National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) serves as the exclusive bargaining representative for more than 50,000 mail handlers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. All persons employed in the mail handler craft are eligible for regular membership in NPMHU; individuals employed in any other craft of postal employees or in any other branch of the federal government may become NPMHU associate members. Exclusive benefits of membership, including participation in the Mail Handlers Health Benefit Plan (MHBP) - which provides health insurance coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) – are available to both regular and associate members. Mail handlers craft employees wishing to participate in the MHBP health plan must be regular members of NPMHU.

II. RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT

According to the terms of the Reciprocal Agreement, a United States Postal Service employee who is a member of a postal union and transfers to a position represented by another postal union, may terminate membership in the current union by showing proof of joining the union of the gaining craft.

Cancellation procedures for each union may differ. So please reference each union's procedures on the following pages:

APWU, page 3; NALC, page 6; NRLCA, page 14

III. JOINING NPMHU

NPMHU requires the use of Standard Form 1187 (Authorization for Deduction of Dues) to initiate membership dues withholding.

Employee/Union Representative Responsibilities (Non-Craft Change):

- The employee obtains Form SF 1187 (Authorization for Deduction of Dues) from the NPMHU representative.
- The employee completes the top portion of the SF 1187 and returns the form to the NPMHU representative; the union representative then completes the middle portion, indicating the amount of dues to be withheld biweekly, and submits the form to the representative of the postal installation where the employee works.
- The postal installation representative completes the bottom portion of the SF 1187; the date of processing at the postal installation will become the member's dues anniversary date.
- The completed SF 1187 will then be forwarded by the postal installation representative to the employee's DDE/DR site, and dues deductions should commence the first full pay period following receipt at the DDE/DR.

Employee/Union Representative Responsibilities (Craft Change)

Employees may join NPMHU at any time due to a change to the mail handler craft.

- Employee completes SF 1187 as indicated above and submits to the local NPMHU representative.
- In order to avoid double dues withholding to both NPMHU and to the former union, employees wishing to cancel membership in the former union must write on the top of their SF 1187: **"DO NOT PROCESS UNTIL [APWU, NALC or NRLCA] DUES DEDUCTION IS TERMINATED"**. The local NPMHU representative should not submit this form to the postal installation until termination of previous dues withholding has been verified.

- To facilitate cancellation of the prior union's dues withholding, the employee may:
 1. Request that the NPMHU local union representative send a copy of the 1187 with a letter that includes the employee's name, Social Security Number, Finance Number, and former union affiliation to

National Secretary-Treasurer
National Postal Mail Handlers Union
1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW; Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

The National Office will send a request to the National Secretary Treasurer of the appropriate union requesting that dues deductions for that member be terminated effective the first full pay period after receipt. Please note, however, that cancellation procedures for each union may differ and should be referenced under the section for that union.

OR

2. Obtain a copy of PS Form 1188 (Cancellation of Organization Dues from Payroll Withholdings) from the USPS installation, write **"CRAFT CHANGE"** at the top and complete the top portion. This form should be submitted with form 1187 to the NPMHU local representative, who will give them to the local postal installation representative with a brief letter requesting that they be processed simultaneously.

Employees should keep copies of all forms and correspondence and confirm correct deductions by reviewing their bi-weekly earning statements (the code for NPMHU is UN H). Any errors in dues withheld should be brought to the immediate attention of the employee's personnel office.

IV. CANCELLATION OF NPMHU DUES WITHHOLDING

Membership in the National Postal Mail Handlers Union is irrevocable for a period of one year and automatically renews for successive periods of one year. Dues withholding may be cancelled at any time during this period due to a craft change (and upon obtaining membership in the postal union representing the craft to which the individual has changed) or due to a transfer to a non-bargaining unit position.

Voluntary terminations, other than the craft-change situation described above, must take place during the window period prescribed on the PS Form 1188: that is, not more than 20 days, and not less than 10 days, prior to the member's dues anniversary date. The anniversary date is determined by the processing date of the original SF 1187 at the employee's postal installation.

Please note: *To continue enrollment in the Mail Handlers Benefit Plan (MHBP), a mail handler craft member must be a regular member of the NPMHU -- paying the full dues amount required by the NPMHU Local Union having jurisdiction over that member's postal facility. Workers in other postal crafts and all non-bargaining unit employees in the USPS must maintain their NPMHU associate membership to continue enrollment in the MHBP.*

Member Responsibilities:

- Member obtains copy of USPS Form 1188 from postal installation and completes Part A.
- If terminating outside of the 20/10 day window, the employee must fulfill the obligation to join the union representing the new craft and indicate "CRAFT CHANGE" at the top of the form; a new job title may be noted to reflect an employee's change to a job title outside of the bargaining unit.
- Member submits form to postal installation for completion of Part B, and sends **only the 3rd copy** (as indicated on the 1188 form) to the NPMHU National Office by certified mail.



Chapter 4 National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) Procedures

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, identified as the NRLCA, is the recognized labor union that provides representation for all those employed by the USPS within the rural craft. The NRLCA also provides certain benefits of membership to active, retired and qualified former rural carriers.

Application of the Reciprocal Agreement

Under the terms of the National Agreement between the USPS and NRLCA, when an individual, that is hired by the USPS to work in the rural craft, becomes a union member and later transfers to another craft identified in this handbook, the reciprocal agreement comes into play. That individual would follow the procedures outlined below under the section, *Cancellation of Dues Withholding Authorizations*.

Membership by Dues Withholding

The NRLCA is one of the USPS labor organizations that has been approved to participate in a dues withholding program for its qualified members. The USPS ELM 923.a identifies the NRLCA dues withholding code as **Code R**.

Membership by dues withholding is offered to a rural craft employee who holds either a career or a non-career position. NRLCA membership may also be continued for an employee who has left the rural craft to accept a permanent position in another craft. The individual who leaves the rural craft for a permanent position in another craft but wishes to continue NRLCA membership would be classified as an Associate member.

However, this does not apply to those who accept a permanent management position. Rural craft members who transfer to a permanent management position are excluded from Associate membership.

Dues Amounts

The NRLCA has different applicable dues amounts based upon the classification of the individual. A career rural craft employee will normally pay a rate of state and national dues that are higher than those of a non-career employee.

The dues rate for an Associate member is the same as for a career rural craft employee working in the same state in which the Associate member is employed. This is important to know for those non-career rural craft members who transfer to a career position in another craft.

Employee Eligibility

In order to initially be eligible for membership in the NRLCA, the individual first must have been hired to serve as a career or non-career rural craft employee. One cannot enroll as an Associate member without first having been a rural craft employee. Then, the associate membership status must continue immediately (without interruption) upon leaving the rural craft. One cannot enroll as an associate member after having left the rural craft.

Authorization Forms

The NRLCA recognizes and accepts Standard Form (SF) 1187, Authorization for Deduction of Dues, for employees wishing to join the NRLCA. That form is to be completed by the member and then sent to the appropriate NRLCA State Secretary for initial processing.

Multiple Dues Withholdings

The USPS ELM 924.22 provides that an eligible employee may have dues deducted for up to three organizations at one time. A separate authorization is required for each organization.

The submission of Standard Form (SF) 1187 for rural craft employee dues does not transfer to another craft when the individual leaves the rural craft. Rather, NRLCA dues deductions will continue unless the requirements outlined in “Cancellation of Dues Withholding” described later are followed.

An employee who leaves the rural craft for another craft, but is enrolled in and wishes to maintain enrollment in the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP), which is a closed plan, or other non-federal NRLCA sponsored insurance plans,

must continue NRLCA membership as an Associate member. If the employee who is enrolled in any of the NRLCA sponsored insurance plans chooses not to continue membership as an Associate, the NRLCA must notify the insurance carrier to cancel the coverage. The individual will not be allowed to re-enroll anytime in the future.

Submission of a Completed Dues Withholding Authorization Form

Initial processing of the (SF) 1187 is completed by the appropriate NRLCA State Secretary who then sends the form to the NRLCA Headquarters for further processing.

The USPS ELM 924.422 outlines that the NRLCA National Office is responsible for entering the “date of delivery to employer” on the form. This becomes the employee’s anniversary date.

Once this is completed, the NRLCA submits the (SF) 1187 to the servicing distribution data entry/distribution reporting (DDE/DR) site of the USPS where the member is employed.

The DDE/DR site is required to enter the “date of delivery to employer” as identified by the union as the member’s anniversary date. The anniversary date is not the date the form is processed by the USPS DDE/DR site.

Confirmation of Dues Deductions

The amount of dues deducted and the union’s code can be found on the employee’s earnings statement, Form 1223-A or Form 1223-B. The code listed for rural craft members in **UN R**.

Procedures in Case of Error

If an erroneous dues amount is withheld, the employee is to follow normal payroll inquiry procedures for questioning such deductions. The Eagan ASC does not make a retroactive adjustment unless the Postal Service is responsible for the error.

The NRLCA does not manage the withholding of dues at NRLCA National Headquarters. This is done through the USPS. Once the USPS processes (SF) 1187, the NRLCA only monitors what forms have been properly submitted to them and what procedurally incorrect cancellations of dues were processed by the USPS.

Cancellation of Dues Withholding Authorizations

A rural carrier employee who has not changed crafts and wishes to cancel dues withholding in the NRLCA can only do so by obtaining and properly submitting a USPS Form 1188 in accordance with the USPS ELM 925.

If a rural craft employee, career or non-career, has left the rural craft to accept a craft position in the APWU, NALC or NPMHU and does not desire to continue membership in the NRLCA as an Associate member, that employee needs to:

- (1) Provide evidence of having joined the gaining craft's union. A letter from the gaining union's branch or national office confirming that a properly completed (SF) Form 1187 has been submitted to them will suffice.
- (2) Provide a brief letter to the attention of the NRLCA Secretary-Treasurer notifying of the craft change and of the employee's desire not to continue as an NRLCA Associate member.
- (3) Provide a copy of the latest Form 50 showing the official personnel action of the craft change.
- (4) Mail the above listed items all together to:

National Rural Letter Carriers' Association
Secretary-Treasurer
Attn: Membership Dept, Room DWC
1630 Duke St, 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314

When the NRLCA has received the properly submitted request for cancellation of NRLCA dues withholding, the NRLCA Secretary-Treasurer will send a request on the individual's behalf to the appropriate DDE/DR site requesting cancellation of dues withholding for the NRLCA Code R organization. A courtesy copy of the NRLCA request will be sent to the individual and to the gaining union's National Secretary-Treasurer.

Normally, when the DDE/DR site receives the cancellation request, the termination of dues will become effective the first full pay period after the request is processed by the USPS.

Any individual not desiring to provide the above required information to cancel NRLCA dues withholding would need to follow the instructions for submitting USPS Form 1188 as outlined in USPS ELM 925.

Effective Member Dates

Once the properly submitted (SF) 1187 by the rural craft employee is accepted by the local or state elected or appointed union official, the rights of membership begin even though dues deductions may not start until several weeks later. With this in mind, dues deductions may continue until the DDE/DR site processes the cancellation request from the NRLCA. The determining factor of membership, when an authorized (SF) 1187 has been filed, is identified by dates rather than when dues are deducted or stopped.

If after a reasonable period of time of the DDE/DR site being notified by the NRLCA to cancel dues withholding and the deductions do not cease, the employee needs to follow the “procedures in case of error” as previously outlined.

Since the NRLCA has no direct control of exactly when dues deductions start and stop, any refund provisions would be handled by qualified adjustments through the USPS payroll data center.

Member's Responsibilities

The NRLCA member leaving the rural craft must remember that dues and membership are not transferred to a gaining craft union. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the member to notify the NRLCA National Secretary-Treasurer's office of his/her desire to discontinue rural dues deductions and membership as previously outlined.

Further, the member is responsible for notifying the gaining craft that they have a completed dues withholding authorization on file with the NRLCA and that they wish to either continue or discontinue that authorization.

The employee should also review and understand the unions' dues deduction codes shown on the employee earning statement.

All inquiries to the attention of the NRLCA Membership Department must be in writing and will be responded to in writing. Under no circumstances will any member's personal information be discussed or given over the telephone.

Acknowledgements

The NRLCA has compiled these procedures governing its approved dues withholding program. The above procedures identify the submission of authorization and cancellation requirements for dues deductions in the NRLCA.

Some of the described procedures are required as outlined in Chapter 9 of the USPS ELM. Others are required because of language in the NRLCA Constitution and Bylaws. The remaining procedures are directed under the NRLCA National Board's policy.