



New Cell Phone Law

For our members who work in, or are occasionally loaned in to, D.C. a new law affecting cell phone use went into effect on July 1. If you are caught using a cell phone in the District without a hands free device you will be subject to a \$100 fine and 1 point on your license.

If you use a company cell phone your supervisor should supply you with some type of hands free device to use with it.

Cingular –The count down is on

by Denise Burns

Cingular's contract is set to expire on February 5, 2005. Do you have bargaining issues that you would like heard? Are there problems that you can't get resolved? We must have your input.

We are aware that people are upset with the compensation package changes. We also know that there have been pay issues regarding timeliness and not being paid properly. Some of you are concerned about where your particular job title is heading. Overtime seems to be an issue in some stores.

We are starting to hear from more of you about different things pertaining to each location. Perhaps some places have the same issues. We won't know how large the problem is unless we hear what the issues are from each location.

Now is the time to start speaking up. We need to address the contract issues. We need to start communicating throughout the stores and offices. We must start mobilizing on issues that don't get addressed.



www.laborart.com

Solidarity means strength. This will be the first time our Local has been involved in mobilizing for Cingular bargaining. Let's make it effective by starting to prepare now.

We have several people that have shown an interest in being stewards, if you are interested please contact the local office.

Get Out of The Way and Let Me Do My Job!

by Ray Pomeroy

Verizon let too many people go, including some of our most experienced and best trained people. We've lost technicians in the field, the central offices and in the test centers. We're short on Maintenance Administrator's and other support personnel. It's so bad out there that no one can get anything done and nobody upstairs seems to care.

Customer service? That's been redefined to mean we call our customers four or five times regardless of whether we actually fix anything.

You have to hold for your dispatch center, assuming your call gets into a queue and not voice mail. You have to hold for a tester and if you can't get one for 30 minutes or so you have to start calling Supervisors, Managers and Directors to escalate the problem. Chances are that they won't answer and you end up leaving them a voice mail. Then if you need help at the CO (central office) you may have to wait for a CO Tech to get to that office. If you are working on a wholesale trouble no one in the center "owns" it so you get to hold some more and start from scratch with the new tester once you get help.

If you need PIC's (Plug In Cards) there is a good chance you can't find any. Why? The PIC's group won't replace your defects and therefore everything that was to be used for orders, was used to replace defects on trouble tickets. PIC's won't send any more unless it's an emergency and then they *might* overnight a card to you. What do you tell the customer? It's not in the budget? See you tomorrow?

Does management know all this? Yes they do. At least as high as the Director level knows but who's to say if it gets any higher? When you contact a manager about the issue, you and your boss will likely be told "do what you can", "make it happen" or "find the cards you need", i.e. scrounge something up to make it work or field engineer your job to work with what you have.

We have chronic troubles that are the result of little or no PPM (Proactive Preventative Maintenance) being done (all those techs are in the trouble load) and when the cable tech gets out to make a repair he rewires or "swaps" something rather than tracking

down the root of the problem, because he has to keep his numbers up.

While you're fighting all this you have to fill out a callback sheet even if the type of job you are on requires someone else to actually do the callback, and fill out a PWI (Premise Work Invoice) even if you aren't billing the customer.

When you finish your job you have to "mark up" and if your laptop is dead or you're in an area that your AIRCard doesn't work you get to call dispatch for another round of hold.

This is just some of what goes on in National Services Potomac, formerly Enterprise. The people in the Network Services group, formerly National, are facing many of the same issues.

With all these roadblocks the company still expects everyone to keep their numbers up and now in some groups they are apparently looking for opportunities to discipline people for anything they can find in order to scare everyone into improving.

Morale gets worse every day, people are so disgusted with what they have to deal with every day that they don't want to stick around and work overtime when it's needed and don't care much to bend over backwards to get anything done during the day. They're getting burnt out.

If Verizon wants better numbers and increased productivity then they need to GET OUT OF OUR WAY! Get us the supplies we need, get us some support and get rid of some of the unnecessary paperwork! We know what to do and how to do it, we're good at it.

If the company would let our supervisors get away from the paper blizzard that's blinding them and let the field supervisors run their crews they might see some improvements in identifying training issues and giving that little extra supervision to those that need it.

Verizon is substituting a computer monitor, some GPS equipment and a lot of roadblocks for good management. As long as they continue to manage from behind a desk and use discipline as a means of improvement they'll never see any.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Once upon a time there was a company called C&P Telephone Company. It was a family of co-workers and bosses getting work done and having fun. A time when you weren't embarrassed to say where you worked. A time when you talked to your neighbors about our new services because the company kept you updated no matter what department you were in. We had enough information given to us so you could talk about the services intelligently.

While there were struggles back then, fighting for fair contracts and grievances, we seemed to be able to let our disagreements die and continue on with the business at hand. We were glad to come to work. It was a place that was comfortable and friendly.

We tackled business problems with input from people actually doing the work. We were welcomed to talk to our supervisors about what we thought would work better. They listened to us. What we had to say meant something. The business seemed to flourish and nobody suffered.

We had a committed workforce and satisfied customers. We were able to service our customers and care about their problems. We went the extra mile to satisfy and we enjoyed it. It was a pleasure to know that you could solve a customer's problem. We were sent to training to help us do our job effectively.

It was a time when "shortcuts" weren't the norm and we did business right. If we had to do something on a temporary basis we would actually go back to fix it later. We had the tools do to the job right. We were a local company.

We partied together outside of work with and without our families. We enjoyed each others' company. We knew who we worked with. We had faces with names. I would call it the good ole days.

It was a time that has long since faded away. *"In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us."* Flora Edwards-author

Status Quo at Verizon or Give Up Job Security

from CWA

CWA and IBEW representatives met with Verizon last week to follow up on the annual commitment in the Verizon-East agreement to discuss wages and job security.

The Company made it clear that it is content with the status quo. The Company said that it would not discuss an additional wage increase for Verizon-East above the guaranteed 2% nor returning DSL tech support work to the bargaining unit unless we agree to give back the no layoff provision. We told the company that that is not an option.

We laid out a four-point agenda for the discussion: fiber to the premise (FTTP), VoIP, DSL tech support, and Wireless.

Wireless:

The Company immediately objected to placing any discussion of Wireless on the agenda.

DSL Tech Support:

We reiterated our demand for DSL tech support work to be moved from contractors to the bargaining unit, arguing that it would be a good transition for the Fiber Solutions Centers that will provide support for FTTP. Management said it wasn't interested in

moving that way.

The Union reps summarized the company's position as saying they are content to call on Union members' support when they need it, while battling the Union at Wireless and refusing to move on DSL tech support. The Company said they were content with the status quo of the contract and don't see a reason to change unless the Union wants to give up the job security.

Fiber to the Premise:

One positive development is the company's plan to deploy a nationwide fiber network. All work associated with FTTP sales, service, construction, installation, repair, and tech support will be done by union employees under our current contracts. As the number of customers increases, the Company will open Fiber Solutions Centers in New England, New York, and the Potomac region, in addition to the first center now operating in Texas for repair and tech support.

Voice over IP (VoIP):

Verizon will shortly begin offering VoIP

Stressed, Disgusted and Burnt Out

by Denise Burns

Disgruntled workers? You bet. Abused workers? Absolutely! Work place problems and workers attacking each other, does this sound like the office where you work?

While upper management is doing their thing, whatever that is, they have our management jumping through hoops to manage numbers and run reports. Some of our supervisors are feeling like us. Where will the madness end? Some supervisors would like to do their job. They would actually like to manage.

We have supervisors that have little or no experience and NO guidance. Some have no people skills. We have to wonder why they were promoted of course, unless it was toplug in numbers.

In this new phase of Verizon, good workers are being exploited. Management is too busy with their day to day paper chase to concentrate on training, developing, and coaching to give all employees a chance to be the best they can be. If you are never told what you are doing wrong, will you know? In the meantime, those that know the job get more frustrated each day.

In my office, even management knows there is a terrible morale problem. They can't get the manager to accept it. It is too easy to ig-

nore. What we have now is a hostile environment with management doing nothing to help or correct the situation.

Stress levels are running high. More work, less people, more expectations, less training. How long before this system comes crashing down?

What we need to do is realize we need to be at work on time, doing our job. That's our protection in this festering situation. We need to be less critical of our co-workers and put the blame where it belongs.

We know if we see things happening, management sees them happening or overhears something or someone runs to tell them about it.

We are not supervisors and we should not monitor our co-workers. We should be accountable for ourselves. Let management handle the issues that come up. Make them be accountable.

Hopefully, this will help with the stress. If it doesn't call EAP, 800 845-0632, make an appointment and go talk about the stress in the workplace. Remember, you get five free visits and they can be company paid if you can't get an appointment outside of your working hours.

Forced Overtime is Back

by Ray Pomeroy

Once again this summer the workload is through the roof and the company is scurrying to cover it. They can't get people out of construction because of the FTTP project and they let too many people go in the last round of EISP's.

Network Services is asking everyone for help, construction, coin and National Services, but still can't get the work covered. Kathy Rhodes, Director Patuxent Region, held a conference call with the Locals she deals with on July 13 to let them know she didn't want to force overtime but it is necessary, to advise them on how she planned to do it to make it easier on the members and to discuss the issue as well as ask for assistance in getting volunteers per the letter of understanding on page 159 of the contract.

Kathy has put out a letter in preparation for forcing the technicians to work the 8 hours a week overtime the contract allows. She plans to ask everyone to pick the 4 days a week, Monday through Friday, that they can work 10 hours. The DRC will assign the people that have no preference as needed to cover the load. The techs will also be able to volunteer to work on their ADO, Saturdays and Sundays.

DOT drivers will need to keep an eye on their hours absent a disaster proclaimed by the Governor. In accordance with an arbitration award in our favor the company should be accepting reasonable excuses. Voluntary hours count towards your 8.

For the members who love to work all they can, be careful out there.

Reminder

Once again we need to remind our members that you must go through a Supervisor for certain things. This holds true in Cingular as well as Verizon.

Clerks should not be approving timesheets or time off. Associates in the center should not be deciding who gets called out for an ECO unless there is a rotation list, prepared by management, that they are following.

You should not be calling in sick to a clerk, you must ask for a Supervisor. If you get a Supervisors voice mail, request a callback to verify they have your message and follow up if you don't hear from them in a timely manner. Call another Supervisor or your Manager if you have to!

Too many members are on one end or the other of these scenarios and apparently don't even question them. If you are told to do something like this you can't refuse but you should contact a Union Rep and let them know what is happening.

(Security from page 2)

service in order to meet the competition from cable companies, AT&T, and start-ups like Vonage, all of which are offering VoIP throughout Verizon's region. While Verizon's long-term plan is to have its own managed IP network to offer the service, it will initially resell service on another network. The primary sales channel will be the internet, and customers will do their own installation.

Additional Issues Discussed

Surplus:

Verizon representatives said that they don't believe there will be additional surpluses/pension offers announced this year, though that is always subject to change. Currently, there is an operator surplus in New England.

GPS:

Union reps explained that the GPS spy system doesn't make sense. Even the company admits it's not currently cost effective. One of the joint committees on absence has looked at data that shows that employees who are micro-managed have a higher absence rate than employees who are trusted to do their jobs. Management said that productivity results don't reflect that.

Our Cingular Members will soon be covered on Cingular's "Expectations Program". The program covers what they expect from you at work on a day to days basis and addresses

Cingular Expectations

pretty much everything you do from greeting the customer within 10 feet/10 seconds to

thanking them at the end of their visit. Cingular will be using secret shoppers to verify everyone is in compliance so be on your best behavior.

Scholarships

The Scholarship Fund will be holding a yard sale in the fall. Please donate your unwanted items. (Infant clothing only) If you have a donation please get it to a steward, officer or Ann Crawford at Riva Rd.

Sympathies to:

Jimmy Stern's on the passing of his father
Lanny Goodrum on the passing of her nephew

Congratulations to:

Maurice Lott on his wedding

Get Well to:

Minnie Liles

Cingular Wireless

NetBenefits	877-421-5225
Prescription Service Caremark	800-388-2085
VSP Vision Care	800-524-0910
Dental DHMO Cigna	888-010-5225
Tuition Assistance	866-242-6587
Disability MetLife (STD or LTD)	888-430-2630
EAP	800-287-9009
Pensions and 401K	877-421-5225

Dates to Remember

	Membership meetings
09-14	Combined meeting in Bowie
	Other Meetings
07-27	Executive Board Meeting
09-13	Retiree Meeting
	Other
08-11	Blood Drive Riva

Retirees Corner

RMC meetings will be held on the second Monday in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November

Discounts

We have discount tickets for Six Flags and Hershey Park. Our Local has signed up for Shamu Club and Club Busch Gardens. They are the complimentary corporate membership programs of Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks, offering special savings and vacation deals to Sea World San Diego, Sea World Orlando, Sea World San Antonio, Busch gardens Williamsburg, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, Adventure Island, Waster Country USA and Sesame Place. Admission discounts, exclusive offers and special events for Club members are all available online. The Club gives you up-to-the-minute park news and the most current offers quickly and efficiently. To take advantage of these special offers go to http://www.adventureclubonline.com/_login/member_sign_up.aspx. You will be asked to provide your Company Code during the sign up process. Call the Local for the Company Code.

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