



Safety Activity

by Ray Pomeroy

Stewards army members and Local officers recently performed truck safety inspections at 3 garage locations.

The fleet, or at least what we've seen so far, isn't in bad shape. The inspections were minor in nature and confined to what could be easily seen such as lights, tires and glass.

While we did find quite a few cosmetic and nuisance issues we were primarily concerned with safety.

Of 107 trucks inspected we found 15 defects giving a rate of just over 14% of the fleet going out with a problem. Only one vehicle had to be sent to the mechanic immediately.

The majority of the defects were strobes not working and while this doesn't preclude safe operation of the truck it can have a great effect on the members' work area protection and as such should be treated as a priority.

In southern Maryland the major concern was tire wear. We gather that the mechanics have been instructed to let tire tread depth get down to 2/32 of an inch which is the state minimum with one exception. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations 393.75(b) states - *Any tire on the front wheels of a bus, truck, or truck tractor shall have a tread groove pattern depth of at least 4/32 of an inch when measured at any point on a major*

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Bargaining

Verizon has approached the Districts about bargaining early.

As we go to print Districts 1, 2 and 13 are talking to their local officers to get their input.

We don't know what the company is bringing to the table or how far negotiations will go at this point in time but our members should be prepared to support our bargaining team at all times.

As of this writing we have 283 days left in the current contract and shouldn't feel pressed.

While we have heard rumors about a contract extension this is only a request for early bargaining at this point.

at&t Members, It's Not Too Late

by Denise Burns

We get a lot of members that don't know the rules, have never been covered with the rules or have forgotten the rules. The company (at&t) says they don't have a suspension policy so if you do something egregious you will be fired.

Your ARSM, RSM and assistants should be able to provide you with the training and information you need. If you don't feel you are getting the help you need call a steward. If you are given feedback on what you do wrong but aren't given training or coaching to improve then you need to ask for an Action Plan. The Action Plan should give you tips and any other information to do your job.

Make sure that when you are given any type of discipline, you ask for Union Representation. If we can't get someone there we can get someone on a conference call.

You need to step up and take control of what is happening to you. Be prepared to ask questions. You should be getting one-on-one monthly feedback meetings (store reps). If you think the meeting is turning into something that could lead to discipline, stop the meeting and ask for a steward. If management is just giving you feedback with no write ups, it is most likely not disciplinary. Make sure they are telling you about any

points you have acquired on the attendance plan. Make sure they are also telling you about any points you have acquired on their attendance plan.

It is your responsibility to ask for Union representation. If you don't have information on your Union bulletin board or don't have a board you need to contact us and we will get the info out to you. In the meantime, if you need a steward you can access that information on our website cwa-2107.org. Remember, management does not have to tell you that you need representation. They must stop the meeting until a rep can be there once you ask for one. Know your rights and use them. It can save your job.

Most importantly, use common sense. If you know something you are doing is wrong or it could be suspicious, don't do it. Make sure you don't allow others to bring you into a problem situation. Even management can do wrong. Make sure they aren't telling you to do something that may get you disciplined. If they are you need to bring it to their attention, if that doesn't solve the issue, go higher up. A steward is just a phone call away if you have questions or are unsure of a situation.

Don't wait until it is too late. Take action on behalf of yourself!

Bargained for Holidays in November are Veterans Day in Verizon and Thanksgiving Day and the Day After Thanksgiving in both of our contracts!

Benefit Renewal

from John Petrini

1) Recertification of Students. This year recertification will be handled during Benefit Renewal. Members should review their dependents carefully to insure coverage for 2008. Failure to certify student status will result in loss of coverage on Jan '08.

2) VZ has determined to add a \$150.00 hospital deductible across all their offered HMO plans. With few exceptions, we do not negotiate the HMO coverage provisions. This is an opportunity for our members to review their coverage and consider the bargained for plans MCN or MEP where offered. Neither of these plans have the hospital deductible. We have many members in the Aetna

HMO who generally would be better served by the MCN, especially with this change in HMO benefit levels.

3) Members in the Lehigh Valley who are in either Health America or Aetna MEP in order to gain access to Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH), should be aware of the agreement between LVH and Aetna to be a participating facility beginning in Dec 2007. These members may also wish to consider selecting MCN to reduce their out of pocket costs.

4) Before switching to another plan, members should be encouraged to check

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

What are the important issues to you for bargaining a contract at Verizon? Hopefully, most of you say job security and healthcare. Start with the major issues and then work your way down to the smaller issues.

Like most of us I wish for the crystal ball that will tell us how bargaining will go. Knowing that is not an option, I am preparing myself for anything that may arise. You should be doing the same.

We need to put aside all our differences as individuals and come together for the common good for all of us. Bargaining strength is in the numbers. District 2 is responsible for CWA locals in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. The district represents more than 35,000 workers in private and public sector employment. Less than half of them are in Verizon or other telecommunications.

We used to be the majority but Verizon has steadily decreased its headcount with EISP offers. In fact I received nine more today. They are hell bent on keeping us out of the wireless side and now are fighting to keep us from Verizon Business. This means it is more important than ever for us to unite and stand strong. While we will have the support of our brothers and sisters in other sectors and industries, we need to show that we can hold our own and defeat the horrible injustice

that Verizon wants to put upon us.

Verizon still makes money even though they are cutting any and every expense they can. So much so that now the Public Service Commission in Maryland has taken an interest in why there are so many complaints about our delays in repairing service.

We, the workers, at Verizon want not only what is fair and equitable to us but to our customers as well. We built this company and kept our customers in service for many years until the mega giant Verizon was born. Perhaps Verizon can't see the forest for the trees. The customers in our communities and the workers have made this company profitable. Verizon shouldn't start short changing either of us!

Be thinking about what will benefit all of us in bargaining and what you can do to help make bargaining a success. We will call on you and we need everyone's support.

"Many join unions for selfish reasons, and well they might. Whatever their faults, over the years unions have raised wages, shortened hours, secured vacations, pensions and other benefits. And the good ones have given workers, above all, a sense of independence and self worth-dignity-the ability to stand up to the boss." John Cort

ALS Walks

by Denise Burns

The ALS walks that are going on in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia have been very successful. Without knowing how much will come in from companies that do a donation match our team, For Pete's Sake is up to \$30,000 and counting.

I attended the Washington Walk, along with Pete, his family, Jeff Rechenbach, CWA Executive VP, some staff and other union folks. It was beautiful weather and I was glad I was there to be able to support our brother Pete Catucci, District 2 VP.

Thanks to everyone that supported the walkers and it's still not too late to donate. The website to make a donation is:
http://fightals.alsinfo.org/site/PageServer?pagename=WLK_MakeADonation.

Make sure you put it towards someone on Pete's team or just the team itself.

Help to find a solution to this deadly disease!

Verizon Ramp Change

Effective December 2007 modifications will be made to RAMP. The company is supposed to notify all employees of the changes as the effective date gets closer. This communication will explain the changes and provide instruction.

There will be two ways to apply. Electronically through a system called VZCareers or by a mechanized voice portal line. It will include the ability to apply for interstate jobs. Each applicant will have to have a resume that can be created in VZCareers. Access to VZCareers will be via the intranet or the Voice Portal using your VZID and passcode. The Voice Portal will be available 24 hours a day.

Make sure that you read everything pertaining to the RAMP guidelines so that you will not be misled or surprised by any of the changes.

(Safety from page 1)

tread groove. The measurements shall not be made where tie bars, humps, or fillets are located. The definition of a truck in this case would include any of the company's trucks with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Combined Vehicle Weight Rating (GCWR, (with a trailer)) of 10,001 lbs or more.

It's up to you, the driver, to verify that the vehicle you're operating is in compliance and where the 2/32" minimum is legal and exists you will have to compensate for the deficiency. Slow Down! A tire with a tread that shallow will give you a wicked surprise on a wet road and is utterly useless in snow or sleet.

Keep in mind that if you have substantially more tread on the front tires than on the rear tires the vehicle can be more difficult to control during hard braking or emergency maneuvers than if all 4 (or 6) tires are equally worn.

We will be doing other safety activities in the future. As far as we're concerned safety is still first.

(Benefits from page 1)

with their Dr's office to ensure their participation in any alternative plan considered.

5) Spousal Surcharge review. IF the spouse has a base salary of more than \$25K, and IF the spouse is required to contribute less than \$900.00/yr. for individual coverage (the least expensive plan offering) AND only IF the spouse waives coverage from their employer, THEN the member is responsible to enroll in the Spousal Surcharge. The charge is \$40.00/month. Under no circumstance should the spouse be dropped from coverage.

6) The stated Benefit Renewal period is Oct 17 thru Oct 30 and may be done by phone (recommended), 877-ASKVZHR or internet. Should a (former BA) member wish to make a change after OCT 30 but before the end of the year, they may do so. They must call the benefit center as the internet will indicate that Benefit Renewal is closed.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is November 13. (Please note this is a Tuesday-Monday is a Holiday).

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

How Close Can You Get

In response to a question about the 40" minimum distance from primary power in last months newsletter we have the "approach distance" table from OSHA.

Minimum approach distance: The closest distance an employee is permitted to approach an energized or a grounded object.

Voltage range (phase to phase)	Approach distance In inches
300 V and less	Avoid Contact
Over 300 V to 750 V	12
Over 750 V to 2 kV	18
Over 2 kV to 15 kV	24
Over 15 kV to 37 kV	36
Over 37 kV to 87.5 kV	42
Over 87.5 kV to 121 kV	48
Over 121 kV to 140 kV	54

Approach distance for employees is not the same as clearance for the plant.



Min approach distance is 24" if this is a 13 kV power line.

Verizon Executive Level Grievances

by Ray Pomeroy

We have a number of issues in District 2 that are being handled as executive level grievances including contractors doing our work in violation of the broadband agreement.

Our members have caught contractors doing our work on a number of occasions and we should file a grievance whenever we find it happening. The fiber work is ours, period. We should do everything in our power to keep it.

The only remedy we have at the moment, besides mobilization, is the grievance process and the company makes sure that proceeds as slowly as possible.

If we file at the local level and someone takes the grievance and hears it at the first step they just naturally can't settle it so it gets appealed to the second step.

The second step is handled by our District staff. Once the District representative and the company representative get their schedules together (this alone can take months and it shouldn't) they hear it and the company declines to settle the grievance.

Now comes the appeal to arbitration. The appeal is not automatic and when it happens it can take years to get an important issue to arbitration and that's not a guarantee that we'll win.

So why do some things go to an "executive level" grievance? Some things are spread across large areas of the district and it just makes sense to handle them at a higher level. This can cut out some of the delay but if it goes to arbitration it can still be a lengthy process.

It took something like 3 years to get the 18% vacation we bargained through the grievance and arbitration process and then the company refused to comply and we ended up in court to enforce it.

Don't ride our stewards and officers because contractors are doing your work. Ride the company about it. Step up and file a grievance. Ride the guys who are too lazy to do the work and don't care that it's going to contractors.

Since we have a no strike/no lockout clause in our contract we can't just walk out the door when the company is jerking us around so that leaves us the long and cumbersome process outlined above and we're going to have to use it.

We've been down to 3 linemen in this local and it was squarely on the shoulders of the members who were too lazy to do the work or would rather whine than take action. Lets not repeat that bit of history.

Community Services

We are asking for craft donations for our December sale. Help us make this an outstanding year. All proceeds go to Pediatric Aids. You should be seeing the flower order going around for our Christmas flowers. If you have a craft donation, want to order a flower or have questions please Robin Coiro on 443 436-5240 or the local office.

THERE WILL BE A BLOOD DRIVE AT Riva Road on Thursday, November 15th from 11am to 3pm. Please call Sandi Burch at 410 265-0416 and leave a message to schedule your appointment. The Red Cross has advised they are in serious need of all types of blood, so please donate if at all possible.

Sympathy to:

Michael Brigger on the death of his father

Get Well to:

Nicole Clark

ATTENTION

Bill Sonnik has retired and until his replacement is up and running Vicky Kinzer is taking the FMLA calls at 866 248-4449

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

11/05 Northern Area 6:00 pm
11/07 Southern Area 6:30 pm

Other Meetings

10/30 Executive Board meeting tba
11/13 Retiree meeting 10:00 am
11/14 ACFC meeting
11/27 Executive Board Meeting tba
11/27-29 Verizon Bargaining meeting
12/10 President's meeting 10:30 am

Other

10/31-11/2 District 2 Conference
11/02-11/4 MD/DC AFL/CIO Biennial Convention
11/04 Daylight savings time ends
11/15 ACFC Fair
12/04 Newsletter deadline
12/07 Christmas Craft & Flower Sale
12/10 President's meeting 10:30 am
08/02/08 Verizon Contract Expires

Negotiated Holidays-Enjoy!

11/12 Veterans Day (Verizon)
11/22 Thanksgiving Day
11/23 Day After Thanksgiving
12/25 Christmas

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