



FMLA Updates

by Vickie Kintzer

There are many things changing in the world of FMLA. Vz is changing the way they administer FMLA so you need to make sure you understand the changes that [took effect] the beginning of May.

A) When you report your absences you should either be referring them as a NEW request or related to a case number or previous absence date.

B) Once the absence is reported, if it was NEW, ARC will send you a letter stating you are eligible and that you have a deadline date to submit forms. ARC will NO LONGER be including a certification form. Therefore, make sure you HAVE a blank copy of the form at home so you can take with you to the doctor's office. Forms can be [obtained on] the Vz eweb site go to "About you" and follow the worklife tabs or ASK the supervisor for a blank copy.

C) It is YOUR responsibility to fax the forms back to ARC and make sure you get a FAX TRANSMITTAL showing the number of pages etc for the transmission as your proof of faxing. We all know ARC loses everything and that's your only proof. If you allow your doctor to fax on your behalf, make sure they note in your chart the date/time the form was faxed for they will need to provide you with that notice on any denials for non receipt of paperwork.

The 1-877-275-8947 Helpline number information is also changing. ARC's CSR's will no longer provide you with :

- 1) your hours worked
2) your FMLA time used
3) copies of any correspondence
4) copies of blank forms

This information will be provided by the department supervisor or the person assigned to FMLA in your department.

Facts you need to know:

FMLA time is NON PAID leave of absence time. The only reason you get paid is there's a contractual agreement between CWA and Vz as to what you are paid for. Sick time is paid according to your contract agreement for the first seven days of your sickness. Af-

(FMLA on page 3)

Safety Meanderings

by Ray Pomeroy

Safety on the job, or at home, is one of my favorite subjects. I know a lot about safety and that makes it easy for me to write about. Not that I know everything about safety but I'm learning more every day.

I didn't know much at all about safety when I started working for C&P Telephone back in 1986, but they were very good at teaching it. My union brothers and sisters were good at teaching safety on the job as well.

The lessons that I remember best came from supervisors that were still allowed to supervise. They weren't tied to the desk and expected to be on conference calls every day or hounded about why a job was still in the pool. Managers and Directors did their job and let the supervisors do theirs. You could expect to see your supervisor on the job at least once a week and if you were doing something wrong you got "gigged" and a lesson on doing it right.

I don't remember discipline, beyond a "gig" on your inspection, being a part of my early training, although that has somehow become the main teaching tool today.

Even though the current Safety Action Plan

policy out of MJ Johnston's group states as Note 1, "Please use the discipline safety matrix as a guideline for administering discipline. All cases should be reviewed independently and measured based on the employee's length of service and safety history", it seems that everybody that has an accident is being made an object lesson. Some directors are using common sense and understand the word guideline, others are just looking at the matrix and skipping the notes.

For those complaining that the union "let them" implement this policy, you should already be aware that the company unilaterally implemented it and it is the subject of an executive level grievance.

A part of the Safety Action Plan that I don't think gets enough attention is a note on page 8 and actually refers to a policy from April 2003, referred to as VZ SAF-000-100 Issue B. Note: Not providing employees with the required protective equipment, safety training and necessary enforcement is considered a serious management violation. Management employees who permit or direct anyone to work in a life-threatening situation or fail

(Safety on page 3)

How Fast Are You?

from the CWA e-Activist Network

Millions of Americans--especially in rural and low-income urban areas--don't have high speed Internet access. Millions more who have what we in America call "high speed" Internet pay much more for slower speeds than people in Europe or Japan.

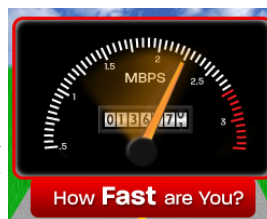
How fast is your Internet access? How does your speed compare nationwide and around the globe? Are you getting what your Internet provider says you're paying for?

Take the CWA Speed Matters speed test to find out: www.speedmatters.org/cwa2008

Speed Matters is CWA's public policy and awareness campaign to invest in our nation's high speed networks, create good jobs and close the digital divide. Testing your Internet connection speed is an important part of this campaign.

Last year, Speed Matters used tens of thou-

sands of speed tests from people like you to develop a state-by-state report on Internet connection speed. USA Today featured the findings on its front page, reporting that the



US is falling far behind other industrialized nations in high speed Internet access.

Thanks to the first report, state broadband initiatives were developed in Ohio, West Virginia, Tennessee, Washington and elsewhere. It was also used to help convince the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to change its definition of high speed Internet, and to urge Congress to adopt a national broadband policy, complete with a broadband map of America.

(Speed Matters on page 3)

**E-mail Addresses**

**President:** Denise Burns  
dburns@cwa-2107.org  
**EVP:** Ray Pomeroy  
rpomeroy@cwa-2107.org  
**Sec-Treas:** Dutchin Webster  
dwebster@cwa-2107.org  
**Northern VP:** Jeff Savin  
jsavin@cwa-2107.org  
**Southern VP:** James Padgett  
jpadgett@cwa-2107.org  
**Cingular VP:** Vacant  
at&t@cwa-2107.org  
**Asst Sec-Treas:** Sandi Burch  
sburch@cwa-2107.org  
**Editor:** Ray Pomeroy  
newsletter@cwa-2107.org  
**General Mailbox**  
2107@cwa-2107.org



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**Officers:**

**President**-Denise Burns  
**Secretary/Treasurer**-Dutchin Webster  
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**Asst Secretary-Treas**-Sandi Burch  
**Editor**-Ray Pomeroy  
**Assistant Editor**-Matt Dement

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**President's Point of View.....**

*Denise Burns*

It's a bargaining year. If you haven't been around here for any length of time or you aren't paying attention-you may not realize that management is already playing member against member and member against union.

Don't fall for the obvious. I'll use the latest examples. They refer to our members as "FiOS technicians", "Copper technicians" and "VPS technicians". In Construction they refer to our members as, FTTP, Copper or PPM (Proactive Preventative Maintenance) technicians.

Our Verizon contract has Cable Splicing technicians, Outside Plant technicians, Services technicians and Systems technician. There is no FiOS, FTTP or VPS in the contract. Once upon a time, when the company cared about its' customers and reputation it used all technicians to provide service. What a concept!

The company unfairly distributes overtime by giving it to one group over another, dividing it by these imaginary lines that they have created. When you don't give it some thought and you are upset with another tech because they are getting OT that you are, or should be qualified to do, you are buying in to that.

What about the EISP's? Some job titles in some locations got offers while other members with more service, same job titles, different locations, did not.

This leads to one group or member pitted against another because some are able to work OT and some are not, or they get the EISP or not.

In the latest incident I am aware of, a Construction crew was told that I said it was unfair that they could work the maintenance load during the day and do construction work on OT when maintenance couldn't work OT, therefore Construction couldn't work their ADO on construction work. Let me tell you, I for one would love to have that power because I would be fair and let everyone share the wealth.

As a member you need to realize what a bargaining year brings. Management always picks up the pace. Expect the unexpected. As UNION members we need to protect each other, our jobs, and our benefits. Don't let the company drive a wedge between you and another worker or the UNION. Verizon did not *give* you anything. It was fought for by those UNION MEMBERS that came before us! Don't lose sight of that fact that we, too, have to fight.

CWA Districts 1, 2 and 13, together with the IBEW, have agreed to resume early negotiations with Verizon. It covers the Verizon "East" contract with a tentative start date of talks to begin on May 27. Negotiations that started last November were suspended earlier this year. We need to be mobilized and ready to take action to support the bargaining team. We have a stewards' army out there. Expect them to be contacting you to participate in our activities and to verify your personal information. The more personal emails we have, the faster we can get the word out to you.

We will keep you informed when there is something to tell. We will not always get daily reports as things can change each time they meet to bargain. Our bargaining team will keep us as up to date as possible.

The current contract covering 55,000 CWA members expires on August 2, 2008. What can you do?

- WEAR RED ON THURSDAY!
- Participate in work place activities.
- Watch out for your union brothers and sisters.
- Make sure when you get mad get mad at the right ones!

*"Is it not much better to even die fighting for something than to have lived an uneventful life, never gotten anything and leaving conditions the same or worse than they were and to have future generations go through the same misery and poverty and degradation?"*  
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

**at&t members**

Your contract expires 2/7/09. We will be having mobilization activities and asking you for information regarding bargaining. Be aware that your input is very important. Thanks to those of you that filled out the benefits survey. We are going to need more

people to get involved as mobilizers. Our trainers will be Regina Fletcher and Collin Caswell. If you are interested in participating please contact either of them or a steward to let them know. Training will be later in the summer.

*(Speed Matters from page 1)*

We're getting ready to release our second annual speed test report this summer, and we need as many people as possible to take the speed test. Help our new report by taking the speed test: [www.speedmatters.org/cwa2008](http://www.speedmatters.org/cwa2008)

With your help, the second report should make as big of a splash as the first one. We're timing the release of the report with the Democratic and Republican National Conventions to make sure high speed Internet access is on both parties' agendas.

In the 21st century, we all deserve access to quality, high-speed Internet. By taking the Speed Matters speed test, you can help make it happen.

We need to collect as many speed tests as we can get in order to make an impact at the Democratic and Republican conventions this summer. Tell your friends and family about the speed test.

Go to [www.unionvoice.org](http://www.unionvoice.org) to sign up for email alerts on speed matters and other issues.

### Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is June 9th. RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month.

All meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

**The Crab Feast scheduled for Friday June 13th at Hillsmere Beach has been moved to July 11th due to the poor early crab harvest.**

*(Safety from page 1)*

*to intervene when such situations are observed are subject to disciplinary action.*

I keep hearing whispers that people don't have the required number of cones or can't get new hard hats etc. I've done some checking and I'm told that while the supervisors order the stuff it never shows up or hasn't been approved. If a manager hasn't approved the purchase of safety gear it's not likely we'll ever be able to prove it but in the end the onus is on the member. If you don't have the gear, don't do the work. Period. Call a steward if you have to.

With all that said here are some timely safety items you should brush up on with the TEDS number or infopoint tip numbers where available:

School will be out soon so we need to watch out for kids around during daylight hours, in

*(FMLA from page 1)*

ter the 7th Calendar day, you will fall into the Short term disability plan and you are required to notify Metlife at 800-638-4228 to open a claim. **(ON THE 8TH DAY)**

**Time off the job for physical therapy, Xrays, MRI's, doctor visits is NOT paid** under our contracts. You can use FMLA to be excused for the treatment, but you are not entitled to be paid for that time off.

**Medical release forms.** You do **NOT** have to sign any medical release form of Vz's or Metlife's or FMLA. The only person who needs a medical release is the doctor who holds your medical files. Make sure your OWN doctor has a medical release from you, but there's **no reason for you to sign the FMLA form**, nor the Metlife form for disability or restriction cases.

**FMLA subsequent absences:**

If you have an absence for which your doctor is authorizing intermittent future absences, make sure the supervisor is reporting the subsequent absence dates as "related" to the original absence date until you get approved and get a case number. Once you have a case number, you refer to that case number. **NO MEDICAL INFORMATION** is to be shared/given to the supervisor regarding your reason for being out of work. Until you have an approved case number, any subsequent absences, ARC will expect you to send in paperwork for each absence separately. Your doctor, I'm sure, isn't going to fill out 5-10 forms until Vz gets around to reviewing your original paperwork. **THEREFORE:** For subsequent absences, follow this procedure to cover them.

- 1) report the absence as "related" to the original date of your certification

the street and on the job.

Peak tornado season is here and the 2008 Hurricane season starts on June 1st (why do they train you on this in October?) so brush up on storm safety and why your 188A should be with you at all times YYJS0064, IP7217, YYJS0058, YYJS0133, YYJS0041

Warm weather brings out poisonous plants, YYJS0067, snakes and bugs and precedes hot weather, YYJS0062, IP7366. Heat stroke, just one heat related problem of many, is a serious condition and the best way to deal with it is to prevent it. Are the ice machines in your shop working and do you have a safe water supply? Now would be the time to check.

- 2) write a note to ARC stating: Your absence for X date is related to absence Z date and your doctor authorized you for intermittent absences as listed on the certification form you faxed on \_\_\_date. You are faxing this same certification form and ARC should use this form for the X absence date as well. Keep the transmittal copy of the 5 pages (note + 4 page CF) and that should cover the absence time line.
- 3) until you are approved and get a case number to reference, repeat the "related to absence date" and repeat the note for each subsequent absence followed by the repeat of faxing the original certification form.

Most important: Don't guess at things. Call me for any questions. Once you guess and if you have filed an admin review if that comes back in a final denial, it's hard to get those fixed. I get frustrated when I can't help you after the fact when I know I could have if you'd contacted me before doing anything. I'm always here to help with getting forms filled out, helping with any denials, etc.

Make sure you are calling Metlife by the 7th calendar day if you continue to be out of work. You can pull the attending providers statement off the Vz eweb so you can take that with you to the doctor's and have that faxed to Metlife ASAP after the claim is initiated. Vz instructs Met to close the claim if there's no medical received by day 3 after the claim is initiated. That doesn't give any time for the doctor to respond and your pay is jeopardized. Make sure your doctor responds timely to Metlife.

*Our members wil need to call Paula Terveer at 888 571-7218 rather than Vicki Kinser, who wrote the article.*

We have instructed our stewards and officers to stop when they observe a safety hazard or violation and correct it. If we see you on the road without a vest, hardhat, work area protection or anything else we recognize as a deficiency we will be stopping to talk to you.

Remember these?

"No job is so important, and no service is so urgent, that we cannot take time to perform our work safely."

"Today is your reward for working safely yesterday."

Those aren't just corny slogans, they're words to live by, literally. One more thought on safety since I'm still seeing you weaving and talking. Hang Up and Drive.

**Sympathies to:**

Martin Connelly on the death of his sister

**Get Well to:**

Kimecia Tompkins-Brown  
 Jeffrey Hellman  
 Walter Kaczorek recovering from surgery

**Bargaining Hotline**

When we start getting something to report in bargaining we will put it on the bargaining hotline at: **866 900-2107**

**Verizon**

Call MetLife for the Preferred Dental Program (PDP) to receive a list of dentists in your zip code area on 800 988-8331 or access MetLife at [www.metlife.com/dental](http://www.metlife.com/dental).

Call Davis Vision for participating providers on 800 999-5431 or [www.davisvision.com](http://www.davisvision.com). For Laser Vision Correction visit the web or call 877 999-7006.

We now have a Single Point Of Contact for benefits excluding the 401k. (To view beneficiary info for basic life and pension you must use the toll free number.) Using the internet you can log on to : <http://resources.hewitt.com/verizon>, use the eweb at; <http://eweb.verizon.com>, select "get hr benefit info" or call toll free 877 275-8947.

For your 401k go to [www.401k.com](http://www.401k.com) or call 1-888-457-9333.

**Dates to Remember**

**Membership meetings**

06/03	Combined in Annapolis	6:30 pm
07/07	Northern area	6:00 pm
07/09	Southern area	6:30 pm

**Other Meetings**

06/09	Retired Members Club	10:00 am
06/09	CSC	3:00 pm
06/10	Executive Board	
06/11	ACFC	
06/12	MD State & DC AFL-CIO	9:30 am
06/19	Metro Balt Council meetings	5p & 7p
07/07	Executive Board	tba
07/14	Retire Members Club	10:00 am

**Other**

05/27	VZ bargaining Begins
06/03-06/04	Local Stewards Training
06/10	Joe Corbi delivery
06/13	Golf Tournament
06/13	AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards
06/16	Safety Conference Call
06/17	Newsletter deadline
06/22-6/25	CWA National Convention
07/09	ACFC

**Bargained for Holidays**

05/26	Memorial Day
07/04	Independence Day

08/02/08	Verizon Contract Expires
02/07/09	at&t Orange Contract Expires

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