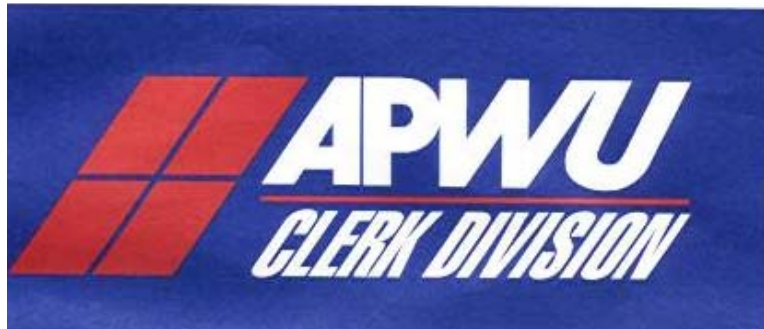


# American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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## RETAIL RIGHTS AND WRONGS

**C**lerks who work at the window have been referred to by many titles - Window Clerk, Sales & Service Associate (SSA), Lead Sales & Service Associate (LSSA), Sales, Service & Distribution Associate (SSDA) and Retail Associate (RA). Whatever title is used they are all Retail Clerks, which is the term that will be used here.

**R**etail Clerks have many different duties and functions. Clerks are taught these duties and functions with the intent to provide service to our customers. The complete performance of these duties and functions protects our work as clerks.

**T**he American Postal Workers Union recognizes there are continuing issues involving clerks who work window/retail operations. This bulletin is intended to address some of these issues as a permanent posting.

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## POSTAL INSPECTORS AND OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL AGENTS

**P**ostal Inspectors and OIG agents are law enforcement officers. They are not your friends. They are not here to help you. They are conducting an investigation. Even though they may be in your office to investigate another Postal Worker, always request that a Union steward be present.

Remember, *you* must request representation—they are not obligated to automatically provide it for you. Reprinted below is a "Statement of Rights" card you may obtain from the APWU.

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## **Rights Before Postal Inspectors and OIG Agents**

If questioned by a U.S. Postal Inspector or OIG Agent, even if you believe you are not guilty of any wrong doing, it is suggested that you:

- Remain calm;
- Correctly identify yourself;
- Do not physically resist an arrest or a search of your person or property;
- Read aloud to the PI or Agent the statement on the reverse side of this card;
- Remain silent until you have consulted with your APWU representative or attorney, as appropriate
- Do Not Sign Anything

This is not complete legal advice. Always consult with a lawyer.

### **Statement**

I Request the presence of my APWU representative. If I am a suspect in a criminal matter, please so advise me. If so, I wish to contact my attorney.

His/Her name is \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

If I am under arrest, I request you to so advise me and to inform me of the reason or reasons.

I do not consent to a search of my person or property. If you have a search warrant, I request to see it at this time.

I do not waive any of my rights, including my right to remain silent. I will not sign a waiver-of-rights form, nor admit or deny any allegation, nor make any written or oral statement unless my attorney is personally present and so advises me.

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## **DON'T BE A HERO**

### **If a robbery occurs:**

- Don't take any risks.
- No amount of money is worth YOUR LIFE.
- Remain calm and try not to provoke the robber.
- Contact the police when safe to do so.

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## **ARTICLE 28**

### **Employer Claims**

#### ***SECTION 1. Shortages in Fixed Credits***

**E**mployees who are assigned fixed credits or vending credits shall be strictly accountable for the amount of the credit. If any shortage occurs, the employee shall be financially liable unless the employee exercises reasonable care in the performance of his duties. In this regard, the Employer agrees to:

- A. Continue to provide adequate security for all employees responsible for Postal Funds.
  - B. Prohibit an employer from using the fixed credit or other financial accountability of any other employee without permission.
  - C. Grant the opportunity to an employee to be present whenever that employee's fixed credit is being audited and if the employee is not available to have a witness of the employer's choice present.
  - D. Absolve an employee of any liability for loss from cashing checks of the employer following established proclaims.
  - E. Audit each employee's fixed credit no less frequently than once every four months.
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## RETAIL EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS

- Document **all** equipment failures by notifying your supervisor in writing and keep a copy.
- Include the date, time and type of equipment, i.e., RSS terminal, scale, calculator, PVI printer, etc. Make sure to detail the specific malfunction.
- For persistent RSS problems, call the HELP DESK so a ticket can be generated to document that a problem exists and a fix can be initiated.

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## AUDITS & COUNTS

### ***Examination of Stamp Credits***

- Normally, conducted by supervisory personnel or the Postal Inspection Service.
- You have the right to be present whenever your credit is being audited or if you are not available you may have a witness of your choice present.

Individual Clerk Credit Accountability		Segmented Inventory Accountability (SIA)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed Credits must be audited no less frequently than once every four months.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk Cash retained must be audited at least every quarter.</li> </ul>	
Tolerances			
Amount of Stamp Stock	Tolerance	Cash Retained Amount	Tolerance
Up to \$30,000.00	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$25.00
\$30,000.01 to \$60,000.00	\$100.00		
Above \$60,000.01	\$150.00		

- Use form 3294-P(Cash and Stamp Stock Count and Summary) or 3294-C(Cash Credit Count and Summary) to document count.
- If count is out of tolerance, either over or under, request a second count.
- Adjust your 1412 **only** if you are **out** of tolerance.
- You have a right to a recount whether you are **OVER** or **SHORT**.

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## UNIFORMS

**A** uniform allowance is provided to retail personnel at Post Offices whose official assignment at a retail counter is for a minimum of 4 hours daily for 5 days a week on a continuing basis, or for not less than 30 hours a week. These employees are required to wear the prescribed uniform while performing their retail duties,

Employees who do not qualify for a uniform allowance under the criteria described above must wear the appropriate uniform for the position **if it is provided to them outside of the uniform allowance program.**

No clerk can forced by management to purchase uniform clothing to be worn at the window with personal funds—please notify your steward and file a grievance to be reimbursed for your time and purchase! Make sure you save your receipt to document your purchase.

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## TRAINING

All retail clerks must receive adequate training before taking their test. This applies to the classroom and on-the-job. If you are not trained properly, you should contact your steward immediately. Don't wait until after the training to file a grievance.

OJI's must be certified as retail coaches. They must remain with the trainee throughout the entire process. Clerks left alone during training are not adequately trained.

At the end of a student's on-the-job training, student may be asked to sign that they have been properly trained. If the student is not satisfied with the training, DO NOT SIGN the form. Ask to see a steward.

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## DO NOT TAKE SHORTCUTS

### Shortcuts result in losses of money and JOBS!

- Carry out each task on the window as you were taught in window training.
- Make certain you witness the verification of monies you turn in and obtain a signed receipt.
- Scan items in individually! It is faster than hitting all those function keys and it protects your job by giving clerks proper transaction time credit.
- Utilize the appropriate terminal key when leaving retail/window operations to perform other functions (2nd notices, distribution, etc.). Be sure to punch into the proper operation number and go into stand-by mode on the RSS to get proper time credit.
- Never accept stock while on window—take time to count!
- If you have Individual Accountability, use PS Form 17 when accepting or giving stamp stock.
- When retrieving a certified or registered item, you should hit the appropriate Non-Revenue key, you should go into stand-by mode prior to leaving the window which locks your drawer.
- Learn your RSS buttons and always use them appropriately.
- The Union can best protect you from discipline and paying for shortages if you help protect yourself by following proper procedure.

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## SECURITY

The contract, in conjunction with postal manuals, **requires** the Postal Service to provide clerks with adequate security. Report any security problem in writing to management. You may use APWU's Report of Security Problem or Poor Financial Practice Form (available from APWU.org, Clerk Craft, under "Quicklinks") to report the problem. If the APWU form is not available put it in writing somehow. Retain a copy as proof.

Common security problems to look for include: a yearly lock and key check not being done (this needs to be done to insure no ones' keys can open another's drawer or safe compartment); drawers not securing or locking on the counter line; retail equipment failures; duplicate key inventory envelope PS Form 3977 problems including the required 6-month check not being conducted; others having access to the envelope by it not being secured in a proper safe compartment, or tampering with the envelope; and password or code for retail equipment should only be known to the clerks themselves.

If you have questions on what constitutes a security or financial problem contact your APWU representative.

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## Retail Customer Experience

The postal service has a Retail Customer Experience program throughout the country. This program is designed to improve customer service. The Retail Customer Experience program should not be utilized as a tool for discipline. If you are issued any form of discipline under the Retail Customer Experience program, contact an APWU steward immediately.

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## **PUT YOUR CHECKBOOK AWAY**

**ALL** demands for money *must* be put in writing. That demand for money should be in the form of a Letter of Demand. No demand for money should be given orally. The Letter of Demand must contain the employee's appeal rights in the grievance process.

Grievances must be filed within 14 days of receiving any Letter of Demand. Contact your union representative immediately if you are issued a Letter of Demand. Also, if the demand is grieved, the grievant does not have to pay anything until the grievance has reached a final resolution.

Even if the Letter of Demand reaches resolution in the grievance/arbitration process you may elect to continue under the Debt Collection Act. You would not pay the demand until the Debt Collection Act decision has been reached. If you have any questions on demands for money, contact your Union representative.

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### **Retail Rights and Wrongs Updates**

**Do you think we could add other Information? Send written suggestions to: APWU Clerk Division, 1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Lamont Brooks, Director.**