



2015-2019 / Bulletin no. 29

September 18, 2015

## SINGLE-BUNDLE WORK METHOD IS THE SAFEST

### A JOINT ERGONOMIC STUDY CONFIRMS THE UNION WAS RIGHT

The saga around the work method began on September 7, 2010, when the Union filed an application for a cease and desist order (*in the nature of an injunction*) forcing the employer to cease or desist from introducing the multiple-bundle work method. In the Union's opinion, that method has always entailed risks for Group 2 workers, especially considering that no joint ergonomic study approved by the Union had been conducted by the Corporation before implementing the multiple-bundle work method.

Unfortunately, the arbitrator denied the application for an injunction. The employer then forced workers to utilize an unsafe work method for years.

For the past five years, and despite arbitration decisions that favoured workers (eg, Arbitrator Burkett), the employer has failed in its obligation to provide a safe method for foot delivery. It also refused to take appropriate and effective measures, both preventative and corrective, to protect the health and safety of letter carriers before implementing the multiple-bundle work method.

In doing so the employer demonstrated a glaring lack of good faith by endangering the health, safety and physical well-being of workers.

#### NATIONAL JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Following discussions on the National Joint Health and Safety Committee (NJHSC), the parties retained the services of Golder Associates to carry out a joint ergonomic assessment of mail bundle carrying methods. These methods included two different methods of two 2-bundle delivery and also considered the traditional single bundle method.

#### ONE-BUNDLE METHOD – SORTED MAIL

Golder Associates issued its final report and their findings proved the Union was right. There is no ambiguity in the report's clear-minded conclusion: **The traditional one-bundle delivery method is the one that entails the lowest risk. The report also**

**recommends that sequenced mail be sorted at the sortation case.**

*"[...] Use of the 1-bundle method under the current directive of not sorting manual mail or householders into sequenced mail at the sortation case, requires that letter carriers sort mail at their vehicle. Mail sorting at the vehicle is either performed at the back of the vehicle, on the non-roadside door (for vans) or through the side window on the roadside. This has the potential to position the letter carrier behind or beside the vehicle on the roadway with the focus of their attention inside the vehicle, presenting an increased risk of traffic incidents. **Mail sorting at the back of the vehicle involves sustained back flexion to handle mail at a low height, increasing risk of low back injury.**"*

The report also stated:

**"The observed postural risk factors are inherent in this method of handling mail bundles and are not likely to be significantly reduced through additional training on this technique; however, enabling sortation at the case rather than in the truck would eliminate hazards associated with sorting at the truck."**

(Source: article 5.2.3, page 26-27 of the English version of the report)

#### FORMAL NOTICE TO THE CORPORATION

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Employer received notice from the Union to, within 10 days, restore the one-bundle delivery method and allow the sortation of sequenced mail at the sortation case.

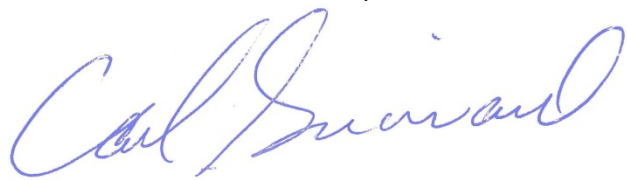
We will inform you of the Corporation's decision as soon as the Union is advised.

This case illustrates that we can never give up in the face of a corporation that lacks respect for the health and safety of its workers.



# The Struggle Continues

In solidarity,



Carl Girouard  
National Union Representative

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CG/lh cope 225  
/ cd cupe 1979

