

# NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

*between*



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

*and*



**March 09, 2025**

*Vigilance* ★ *Service* ★ *Integrity*

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## **INTRODUCTORY NOTE**

Unless otherwise noted, any reference to "employee" or "employees" throughout this Agreement shall mean bargaining unit employee(s) only.

Throughout this Agreement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection may be referred to as "The Employer", "Agency", or "CBP", and the National Treasury Employees Union may be referred to as "the Union", or "NTEU."

All acronyms will be spelled out the first time they are used in a given Article.

## **PREAMBLE**

CBP and NTEU set forth the following principles of general guidance to aid in the creation of a constructive labor-management relationship that ensures and supports the effective and efficient accomplishment of the Agency's critical national security mission:

- ***We*** recognize employees are the keystone of the Agency, and their commitment, knowledge, skill, wisdom, experience, enthusiasm and versatility is the lifeblood to the successful accomplishment of the Agency's important mission.
- ***We*** recognize participation of employees, through their elected representative, NTEU, in the formulation and implementation of policies and practices affecting the conditions of their employment can contribute to increased organizational performance. As a result, CBP and NTEU are committed to develop and maintain a constructive relationship supportive of the employees and the mission they fulfill.
- ***We*** renew, as this relationship moves forward, our commitment to:
  - Recognize each other's needs and interests;
  - Focus and encourage non-adversarial methods for resolving problems;
  - Encourage and assist employees in developing to their full potential; and
  - Invite employee input on matters that affect them whenever practicable.

## **ARTICLE 1: COVERAGE**

The terms of this Agreement apply to all professional and non-professional employees of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), excluding:

- Employees in the Office of Border Patrol who are assigned to Border Patrol Sectors;
- Employees of the Office of Chief Counsel; and
- Management officials, supervisors, and other employees excluded from the bargaining unit in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 7112(b)(2), (3), (4), (6) and (7).

In the event the National Treasury Employees Union is certified as the exclusive representative of any additional bargaining unit(s) within CBP after the effective date of this Agreement, the parties may, by mutual agreement, automatically cover such unit(s) by the terms of this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 2: FAIRNESS AND EQUITABILITY**

**Section 1.** Several provisions in this Agreement require that the Employer exercise its authority or discretion in a fair and impartial (or fair and equitable) manner. Unless otherwise defined, such terms will be interpreted to mean that the Employer will exercise the referenced authorities or discretion fairly and consistently so as to avoid adverse impact. To clarify, this provision does not require the authority or discretion itself to be fair and impartial (or fair and equitable) on its face; but rather that it be applied, or followed fairly and impartially (or fairly and equitably). In other words, the provision simply requires that the referenced authorities or discretion be applied (or not applied) in accordance with law, rule, regulation, and this Agreement to similarly situated bargaining unit employees, without bias, favoritism, arbitrariness or consideration of reasons not relating to merit or mission.

**Section 2.** In carrying out their respective roles (either orally or in written format and individually or in group settings, *e.g.*, town halls), the parties (union and management) will treat employees and each other with dignity and respect.

### **ARTICLE 3: EFFECT OF LAW & REGULATION**

**Section 1.** Except as provided by law, in the administration of all matters covered by this Agreement, the parties are governed by:

- Existing or future laws;
- Government-wide rules or regulations in effect on the date the Agreement becomes effective;
- Government-wide rules and regulations issued after the Agreement is effective which do not conflict with the contract and over which all bargaining responsibilities have been fulfilled; and
- Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection policies, rules and regulations which do not conflict with this Agreement and over which all bargaining responsibilities have been fulfilled.

**Section 2.** The parties may implement through mutual agreement any conflicting rules or regulations issued after the effective date of this agreement or over which bargaining has not been completed, but this is not a mandatory subject of bargaining for either party.

**Section 3.** This Agreement supersedes all previous agreements and past practices in conflict with it. Otherwise, all practices and agreements will continue until otherwise modified by the parties.



## **ARTICLE 4: LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEES**

The parties will establish Labor-Management Relations Committees (LMRCs) in accordance with the provisions of this Article. They will give consideration to: areas of pre-decisional input; the prevention and resolution of misunderstandings and grievances; working conditions, personnel policies and practices; the promotion of good employee-supervisor relationships; the strengthening of morale; etc.

All LMRCs are solely for the purpose of exchanging views and information and shall be deemed a supplement to negotiations as defined by the Civil Service Reform Act, not a substitute. However, the parties recognize that issues unresolved in these meetings potentially can be addressed in grievances, mid-term bargaining and other traditional representational forums.

The parties recognize the benefits and importance of in-person meetings. In-person meetings lead to better collaboration and facilitate more open and honest communication. The parties acknowledge that LMRCs are vital to the promotion and development of sound and stable relationships between management and the union. If at any level, either party requests to meet virtually that request will be given serious consideration by both parties. Upon mutual agreement, the forum may be held virtually.

### **Section 1. National Labor-Management Forum.**

- A. A national Labor Management Forum (LMF) will meet two (2) times per calendar year for no more than two (2) business days at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Headquarters facilities. Additional meetings may be held, by mutual consent, at such other times as deemed necessary. Fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting, the parties will exchange anticipated agenda items. Matters not on the agenda can be discussed by mutual consent.
- B. The Union will have five (5) attendees from the bargaining unit present. These five (5) units members will receive official time for the meeting as well as the time necessary to travel to and from the meeting, in the event the forums are held in-person. National LMF bargaining unit members will be reimbursed travel and per diem in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations in the event the forums are held in-person. The national LMF bargaining unit members may be joined by National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) elected leaders and staff who are not CBP employees.
- C. By mutual agreement, a national LMF at the Assistant Commissioner level may be established.

## **Section 2. National Work Groups.**

- A.** The national LMF may, by mutual agreement, establish work groups to analyze specific problems and propose solutions. Absent mutual agreement by the national LMF, a work group shall be comprised of no more than eight (8) members, i.e., four (4) representatives from NTEU and four (4) representatives from CBP.
- B.** No later than seven (7) calendar days after the national LMF agreeing to establish a work group, CBP will provide NTEU the qualifications necessary to participate in a specific work group. Within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of qualifications from CBP, NTEU will provide employee nominations.
- C.** The work groups proposed solutions will be presented to the national LMF for consideration.
- D.** Where the Employer selects bargaining unit employees to serve on committees, work groups or projects to analyze work processes or problems, and such work is not normally assigned to all employees in a given position or location, the Employer will solicit from NTEU nominations of employees based on qualifications provided by the Employer. The Employer will select from the Union nominations, absent just cause.

## **Section 3. Field Level Labor-Management Relations Committees.**

- A.** In addition to the national LMRC, committees will be established at the field level (e.g., DFO or equivalent level) to support the objectives of this Article. Field LMRCs will meet four (4) times every calendar year for no longer than one (1) regular work day at space provided by CBP management. The committees may also meet at other times as the parties find mutually agreeable.
- B.** The parties will furnish each other, no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting, a written agenda of items to be discussed. Matters not on the agenda can be discussed by mutual consent. Either party may place Port specific issues on the agenda if attempts to resolve the issue have been exhausted at the local level. Absent mutual agreement, grievances and other forms of litigation will not be discussed in the LMRC.
- C.** NTEU will be represented by a maximum of six (6) and a minimum of four (4) unit members on any field LMRC. Representatives from the NTEU National Office and CBP Headquarters may attend any field LMRC meeting. Their attendance will not count towards the field LMRC structure. The Parties may agree to have more or less participants by mutual agreement.

- D.** Field LMRC meetings will be held during normal duty hours, and all participating unit employees shall be on official time.
- E.** Field LMRC bargaining unit members will be reimbursed travel and per diem in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations, in the event the forums are held in-person.

**Section 4. Lower Level Labor-Management Relations.**

- A.** In addition to the national LMF and field LMRCs, the parties are committed to the encouragement of Chapter leaders and equivalent levels of CBP management to establish a productive relationship for the same purposes as listed above. This could be done by the creation of a local committee structure, a weekly meeting among key principals, an open-door policy, etc.
- B.** If either party at this level is not satisfied with their respective labor-management relationship, either party can move that dispute to the field LMRC for assistance, if needed.

## **ARTICLE 5: UNION RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** The Union is the exclusive representative of the employees in the bargaining unit and is entitled to act for, and represent the interests of, all employees in the unit.

**Section 2.A.** The Union shall be given the opportunity to be represented at any formal discussion between one (1) or more representatives of the Agency and one (1) or more employees in the bargaining unit or their representatives concerning any dispute or any personnel policy or practices, or other general condition of employment.

- B.** The appropriate Union representative will receive reasonable advance notice of such formal discussions and advance copies or access to documents the Agency proposes to discuss unless such documents are protected by applicable laws, rules and regulations. The appropriate Union representative to receive such notice and documents will be designated locally by each NTEU Chapter. When possible, such notices shall be given no less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the discussion.
- C.** At any formal discussion, the designated Union representative will be identified and has the right to ask questions, comment, speak and make statements related to the subject matter addressed by the Agency at that meeting and shall not seek to take charge of or disrupt the meeting.
- D.** After a formal meeting held by management with a group of employees to discuss general conditions of employment, workload and operational requirements permitting, the Union may meet with those employees for up to thirty (30) minutes. After meeting with the employees, the Union will share employee concerns, if any, with management.

**Section 3.** The Union shall be given the opportunity to be represented at any examination of an employee in the unit by a representative of the Agency in connection with an investigation if:

- A.** The employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee; and
- B.** The employee requests representation.
- C.** The term examination as discussed above includes anytime information, whether by verbal interviews or written memos, is solicited from a bargaining unit employee.

**Section 4.** The Union may refuse to represent employees in statutory appeals, e.g., before outside agencies such as Merit Systems Protection Board (adverse actions), or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (discrimination appeals). The Union may refuse to represent employees in other matters where employees have the statutory right to choose other representation (e.g., replies to proposed suspensions, adverse actions, reductions in grade or removals based on unacceptable performance).

**Section 5.A.** The Agency will give the Union as much advance notice as possible, normally at least three (3) calendar days, of a new employee's entrance on duty date, name, position, and work location. The Union will also be notified of any employee employment orientation session, including those held at the Field Operations Academy (FOA), and allowed to participate in accordance with the formal meeting procedure to discuss representational matters. The Union representative will be provided a period of time not to exceed sixty (60) minutes, before a break if possible, to address the new employees at their permanent duty station as part of this employee employment orientation session. If a new employee will not be included in a group orientation, a Union representative will be afforded a period of time, not to exceed sixty (60) minutes, normally during the new employee's first day of employment but in any event no later than fourteen (14) days of reporting to duty, to discuss representational matters. Release of the Union representative to attend these meetings will be on official time in accordance with Article 30: Union Representatives and Official Time.

**B.** Upon request, the Agency agrees to show a Union video, if provided with one, wherever basic training orientation sessions are conducted including the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) facilities in Glynco, Front Royal and Marana. The Agency will also make available to participants in these sessions a list of NTEU Chapter Presidents' names and phone numbers, NTEU brochures and an NTEU announcement card (as provided by NTEU). All bargaining unit employees attending basic training sessions at FLETC facilities will be provided a notice at their first class session informing them of who will provide them with Union representation while they are at the Center and how they can contact their Union representative.

**C.** NTEU shall distribute to each new employee, at the time of the orientation or other meeting as provided for in this Agreement material on its benefits and services, descriptive material about the Union, and information concerning their conditions of employment. These materials shall contain no adverse or derogatory information about the Employer. Any material distributed must conform to the requirements of law and regulations concerning information which may be distributed on Federal property.

**Section 6.A.** The parties agree to recognize Labor-Management Recognition Week on an annual basis at an agreed upon time. During that week, and in accordance with Article

29: Access to Facilities and Services, local chapters may use the Agency's cafeterias, break rooms and meeting rooms to set up exhibits that publicize the contributions of organized labor, including NTEU, to society.

- B.** This provision does not grant official time to employees for participating in this event.

**Section 7.** Once a year, employees will be granted excused absence from duty (not to exceed one (1) hour), workload permitting, to consult with Union-sponsored benefits counselors. This consultation may be done in conjunction with other health information initiatives (e.g., Health Fair, Open Season, etc.). At the beginning of each session, the local NTEU Chapter will notify employees that CBP does not sponsor or endorse the material provided. CBP will not be held liable for any misinformation provided during such sessions. If a request is denied due to work requirements, the supervisor will explain the reason and will indicate to the employee when the employee expects it will be possible to grant the request.

**Section 8.** On a bi-annual basis during the first weeks of January and July, the Employer will provide NTEU Chapter 128 with information on employees under the jurisdiction of the Chapter that will include the employee's first name, last name, series, and duty location (street address, city, and state).

## **ARTICLE 6: AGENCY RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** In accordance with the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 the Agency retains the authority:

- A.** To determine the mission, budget, organization, number of employees, and internal security practices of the Agency; and,
- B.** In accordance with applicable laws:
  - (1) To hire, assign, direct, lay off, and retain employees in the Agency, or to suspend, remove, reduce in grade or pay, or to subject such employees to other remedial action;
  - (2) To assign work, to make determinations with respect to contracting out, and to determine the personnel by which the Agency's operations shall be conducted;
  - (3) With respect to filling positions, to make selections for appointments from:
    - (a) Among properly ranked and certified candidates for promotion; or
    - (b) Any other appropriate source; and
  - (4) To take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the Agency during emergencies.

## **ARTICLE 7: PROTECTION AGAINST PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES**

**Section 1.A.** For the purpose of this Article and in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 2302, "prohibited personnel practice" means any action described in Section 2.

**B.** For the purpose of this Article, "personnel action" means a(n):

- (1) Appointment;
- (2) Promotion;
- (3) Adverse action, disciplinary action or other corrective action;
- (4) Detail, transfer or reassignment;
- (5) Reinstatement;
- (6) Restoration;
- (7) Reemployment;
- (8) Performance evaluation under Chapter 43 of Title 5 of the United States Code;
- (9) Decision concerning pay, benefits, or awards, or concerning education or training if the education or training may reasonably be expected to lead to an appointment, promotion, performance evaluation, or other action described in this Subsection;
- (10) Decision to order psychiatric testing or examination; and
- (11) Any other significant change in duties or responsibilities or working conditions.

**Section 2.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 2302, the Employer shall not:

**A.** Discriminate for or against any employee or applicant for employment:



- (1) On the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, as prohibited under Section 717 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
  - (2) On the basis of age, as prohibited under Sections 12 and 15 of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967;
  - (3) On the basis of sex, as prohibited under Section 6(d) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938;
  - (4) On the basis of handicapping condition as prohibited under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; or
  - (5) On the basis of marital status or political affiliation, as prohibited under any law, rule, or regulation;
- B.** Solicit or consider any recommendation or statement, oral or written, with respect to any individual who requests or is under consideration for any personnel action unless such recommendation or statement is based on the personal knowledge or records of the person furnishing it and consists of:
- (1) An evaluation of the work performance, ability, aptitude or general qualifications of such individual; or
  - (2) An evaluation of the character, loyalty, or suitability of such individual;
- C.** Coerce the political activity of any person (including the providing of any political contribution or service), or take any action against any employee or applicant for employment as a reprisal for the refusal of any person to engage in such political activity;
- D.** Deceive or willfully obstruct any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment;
- E.** Influence any person to withdraw from competition for any position for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of any other person for employment;
- F.** Grant any preference or advantage not authorized by law, rule or regulation to any employee or applicant for employment (including defining the scope or manner of competition or the requirements for any position) for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of any particular person for employment;

- G.** Appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a civilian position any individual who is a relative (as defined in Title 5 of the United States Code) of such employee if such position is in the agency in which such employee is serving as a public official (as defined in Title 5 of the United States Code) or over which such employee exercises jurisdiction or control as such an official;
- H.** Take or fail to take or threaten to take or fail to take a personnel action with respect to any employee or applicant for employment as reprisal for:
- (1) A disclosure of information by an employee or applicant which the employee or applicant reasonably believes evidences:
    - (a) A violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or
    - (b) Gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, if such disclosure is not specifically prohibited by law and if such information is not specifically required by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs; or
  - (2) A disclosure to the Special Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board, or to the Inspector General of an agency or another employee designated by the head of the agency to receive such disclosures, of information which the employee or applicant reasonably believes evidences:
    - (a) A violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or
    - (b) Gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety;
- I.** Take or fail to take or threaten to take or fail to take any personnel action against any employee or applicant for employment as a reprisal for the exercise of any appeal right complaint or grievance right granted by any law, rule, or regulation; testifying for or otherwise lawfully assisting any individual in the exercise of any right of this subsection; cooperating with or disclosing information to the Inspector General of an agency, or the Special Counsel, in accordance with applicable provisions of law; or refusing to obey an order that would require the individual to violate a law;

- J.** Discriminate for or against an employee or applicant for employment on the basis of conduct which does not adversely affect the performance of the employee or applicant or the performance of others; except that nothing in this Subsection shall prohibit an agency from taking into account in determining suitability or fitness any conviction of the employee or applicant for any crime under the laws of any State, of the District of Columbia, or of the United States;
- K.** Knowingly take, recommend or approve any personnel action if the failure to take such action would violate veterans' preference requirement; or
- L.** Take or fail to take any other personnel action if the taking of or failure to take such action violates any law, rule, or regulation implementing, or directly concerning the merit system principles contained in 5 U.S.C. § 2301.

**Section 3.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 2302, nothing in Section 2 above shall be construed to authorize the withholding of information from the Congress or the taking of any personnel action against an employee who discloses information to the Congress.

**Section 4.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 2302, nothing in Section 2 above shall be construed to extinguish or lessen any effort to achieve equal employment opportunity through affirmative action or any right or remedy available to any employee or applicant for employment in the Civil Service under:

- A.** Section 717 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- B.** Sections 12 and 15 of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age;
- C.** Under Section 6(d) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex;
- D.** Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of handicapping condition; or
- E.** The provisions of any law, rule, or regulation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of marital status or political affiliation.

**Section 5.A.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 7121, an employee aggrieved under Subsection 2.A., above, may raise the matter under a statutory procedure or the grievance and arbitration procedures provided in this Agreement, but not under both.

- B.** An employee shall be deemed to have exercised their option under this Section at such time as the employee timely initiates an action under the applicable statutory procedure or timely files a written grievance under the provisions of this Agreement, whichever event occurs first.
- C.** Selection of the grievance and arbitration procedures contained in this Agreement in no manner prejudices the right of an aggrieved employee to request the Merit Systems Protection Board to review the final decision pursuant to Section 7702 of Title 5 of the United States Code in the case of any personnel actions that could have been appealed to the Board, or, where applicable, to request the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to review a final decision in any other matter involving a complaint of discrimination of the type prohibited by any law administered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

**Section 6.** Except as provided in Section 5 above, any employee aggrieved under the provisions of this Article shall file their complaint under the grievance and arbitration provisions contained in this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 8: POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND CLASSIFICATION APPEALS**

**Section 1.** The position description is a written record of the principal duties and responsibilities assigned to a position and which comprise the work assigned to an employee. Position descriptions will clearly state what work is expected to be performed.

**Section 2.A.** Position descriptions will state the principal duties, responsibilities and supervisory relationships in a manner necessary for proper classification.

**B.** Position descriptions are not expected to contain a comprehensive or exhaustive listing of each and every task or duty which is performed by an employee. These incidental and infrequent duties may be omitted from the position description or covered by a brief statement showing that other minor duties may be performed.

**C.** It is understood that this Section does not preclude management from assigning such duties as necessary to accomplish its mission in accordance with law.

**Section 3.** A group of like positions with similar principal duties, responsibilities and supervisory relationships may be covered by a standard position description.

**Section 4.** CBP will take the necessary steps to ensure position descriptions accurately reflect the assigned duties of the employee occupying that position.

**Section 5.** An employee will be provided with a copy of their position description when they report for duty in the position; when changes are made in the position description; and upon appropriate request.

**Section 6.A.** In accordance with the procedures contained in this Agreement, CBP will inform NTEU and provide copies via email of changes to be made in the grade controlling and/or principal duties and responsibilities of positions held by bargaining unit employees; changes in position descriptions; and the creation of new bargaining unit position descriptions. The parties will bargain such changes to the extent required by Article 26 and/or law.

**B.** Positions that have the same grade controlling duties or responsibilities will be classified at the same grade level in accordance with applicable law, rule or regulation.

**Section 7.** CBP will provide NTEU with copies of proposed classification standards referred to the Employer by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for comment.

**Section 8.A.** Employees are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor significant aspects of duty assignments that are believed not to be covered by official position descriptions.

- B.** If the supervisor agrees that material differences exist, the employee will either arrange for the preparation of a new position description or amendment to bring the position up-to- date or take action to assign the employee the duties and responsibilities reflected in the position description of record.

**Section 9.A.** A General Schedule employee may file a classification appeal directly with OPM or through the Appeals Procedure established by CBP. An employee may not pursue both procedures at the same time.

- B.** A Federal Wage System (e.g., Wage Grade) employee must file a classification appeal with CBP before going to OPM.

**Section 10.** When an employee elects to file a classification appeal directly with OPM, the employee will do so in accordance with the appropriate rules and regulations. When an employee elects to file a classification appeal through the CBP Appeals Procedure, the following procedures will apply:

- A.** Appeals must be made in writing and forwarded to the CBP Office of Human Resources Management, Office of Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness Division.
- B.** An employee may file an appeal directly or designate, in writing, a representative to process the appeal. Two (2) or more employees may appeal jointly if they occupy identical additional positions and agree on the basis of the appeal.
- C.** Appeals must contain the following information:
  - (1) The organizational location of the position;
  - (2) The title (or requested title), series, and grade level;
  - (3) Reasons why the position is believed to be incorrectly classified;
  - (4) A statement of any relevant circumstances, information, or classification standards which have a bearing on the appeal; and,
  - (5) If applicable, a written designation of representative.

- D.** CBP will provide a decision to the employee following a reasonable investigation and evaluation period, normally within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

**Section 11.A.** In the event CBP issues an unfavorable decision, an employee may submit a classification appeal to OPM in accordance with established rules and regulations.

- B.** CBP will make available to employees the OPM requirements for submitting a classification appeal.

- C.** CBP will inform NTEU within three (3) calendar days when CBP learns formally in writing by OPM that an employee has filed a classification appeal with OPM.

**Section 12.** A successful classification appeal will be effected no later than the beginning of the second full pay period following the receipt of the decision.

**Section 13.A.** Employees and NTEU may grieve reductions in grade or pay actions that result from classification decisions but not the substantive classification decision itself.

- B.** Where the classification of a position results in the reduction in grade or pay of an employee, the employee or NTEU may appeal through the grievance procedure and arbitration provisions of this Agreement, or, at their option, to the Merit Systems Protection Board under such regulations as the Board may prescribe.

**Section 14.A.** An employee who has filed a classification appeal will be entitled to a Union representative at any desk audit or meeting with any CBP representative concerning the appeal, provided that such representation is not prohibited by any rule, regulation or operating procedure of CBP.

- B.** An employee who has filed a classification appeal will not be subject to any penalty, reprisal, discrimination, or harassment because the employee has filed such an appeal.

## **ARTICLE 9: PERSONNEL RECORDS**

**Section 1.** Only information authorized by law or regulation will be maintained in an employee's electronic Official Personnel Folder (e-OPF) or Employee Performance Folder (EPF). No derogatory material of any nature which might reflect adversely upon the employee's character or Agency career will be placed in their e-OPF or EPF without their knowledge. Nothing in the e-OPF or EPF will be made available to any unauthorized person for inspection or photocopy. Moreover, even authorized persons may only access the files in connection with official business. A log will be kept of the name and date of any use of the files.

**Section 2.A.** Employees may access records within their e-OPF at: <https://eopf.opm.gov/dhs/>.

**B.** An employee, or their personal representative designated in writing will, upon request, be given a sanitized (in accordance with the Privacy Act) copy of the audit trail log identifying the user(s) who accessed their e-OPF or EPF records. Such requests should be submitted to the employee's servicing Human Resources Management Specialist (for e-OPFs) or Mission Support Specialist (for EPFs).

### **Section 3. Supervisory records, notes and diaries.**

**A.** In the event an individual supervisor maintains a formal working file concerning an employee's conduct or performance (e.g., through the use of the former Office of Personnel Management Form 7B or equivalent), each employee or their personal representative designated in writing will, upon request, and in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and/or the Privacy Act solely for purposes of redaction, be given a copy of any document contained in such file with the exception of records restricted by law or regulation.

**B.** Notes or diaries maintained by a supervisor with regard to their work unit or employees are merely extensions of the supervisor's memory, and may be retained or discarded at the supervisor's discretion. However, they may not be given or shown to any other person but the supervisor who created them and the employee unless, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 6 (a) (1), there is a need to know by the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), or requested by court order.

**C.** Such records, notes or diaries shall not be used as the basis to support an unfavorable personnel action, or denial of such, unless the employee has been shown and provided a copy of such record, note or diary after it has been determined that the information will be used for such purpose, and before it is used. Of course, these



extensions of the supervisor's memory must also meet the requirements of the Privacy Act before they can be used.

- D.** The parties recognize that the longer a supervisory record covered by Section 3.A of this Article is kept without notifying the employee of it, the less likely it is that the employee will be able to fairly respond to the notation due to the passage of time, e.g., asking the employee to explain why the employee came in ten minutes late on a day months ago. Consequently, employees will be given a reasonable amount of official time to timely respond to any potentially negative recordation maintained by the agency or an individual supervisor.
- E.** Any non-disciplinary actions issued to employees such as letters or memoranda of counseling, records of discussion, or any other issuance that could lead to discipline will be purged from an employee's file no later than one (1) year of issuance. At the discretion of the supervisor, such admonishments may be purged by the beginning of the next rating cycle. The Agency recognizes any record retained beyond one (1) year may be considered ineffective for proposing a subsequent disciplinary action.

**Section 4.** There will be no personnel files, retrievable by name or other personal identifier (e.g., SSN), other than the individual supervisors' and the EPF or E-OPF.

## **ARTICLE 10: NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES**

**Section 1.** All new employees will be informed by the Agency that the Union is the exclusive representative of employees in the unit.

**Section 2.** An employee who receives a personally addressed notice, proposal or correspondence from the Agency concerning:

- A. Removal of firearm carriage authority;
- B. Leave restriction;
- C. Denial of a within-grade salary increase;
- D. A fitness for duty examination;
- E. A request for outside employment;
- F. Reassignment or transfer;
- G. An adverse action; or
- H. A disciplinary action; or
- I. Denial of a career ladder promotion

shall receive an additional copy which states at the top of the first page: **THIS COPY MAY AT YOUR OPTION BE FURNISHED TO YOUR NTEU REPRESENTATIVE.**

An additional copy will not be provided in Section 2.G and 2.H notices if the employee has designated the Union as their representative but will instead be provided to the employee's Union representative pursuant to the procedures set forth at Article 45 Section 8 and Article 46 Section 7.

**Section 3.** Each employee will be furnished, on a bi-weekly basis, a payroll statement showing the employee's total cumulative earnings and total cumulative deductions from the first yearly pay period in each standard category. The notice shall also contain annual leave and sick leave balances. The Employer is not required to provide this information in a paper format as long as it provides employees access to the same information electronically.

**Section 4.A.** The Agency agrees to provide an employee who is injured while on duty status with a copy of the Department of Labor brochure, e.g. CA-550, and all the appropriate forms within a reasonable period of time after the reporting of the job accident or injury.

**B.** At a minimum, when the employee sustains a job-related injury which requires medical treatment, management shall promptly authorize treatment by giving the employee a properly executed CA-16 within four (4) hours of the report. A CA-2 will be provided in lieu of the CA-1 if the employee is reporting an occupational illness.

**C.** Although the Agency will employ an electronic system in administering this Section, paper copies of the required documents will be available upon request.

**Section 5.A.** The Agency may periodically direct the attention of all employees to the Standards of Conduct, and their responsibilities thereunder, and the Table of Offenses and Penalties, through orientation sessions and formal and informal discussions.

**B.** Each supervisor will provide advice and guidance to the employees under their supervision concerning conduct questions, within the scope of their experience, knowledge and authority, and assist them in obtaining advice on conduct questions which are beyond that scope.

**C.** An employee who has a question concerning an interpretation or the application of the Standards of Conduct may forward the question, in writing, through normal supervisory channels. An answer will be provided in writing by an appropriate Agency representative.

## **ARTICLE 11: OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

**Section 1.** In accordance with U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, and other regulations and directives applicable to Agency employees, employees are required to obtain approval prior to engaging in outside employment or activity, with or without compensation, or participating in or being associated with a business activity.

**Section 2.** Outside employment or activity means any form of non-Federal employment, business activity, business relationship or other covered activity as identified in the Federal regulations applicable to Agency employees involving the provision of personal services by the employee, whether or not for compensation. It includes, but is not limited to, personal services as an officer, director, employee, agent, attorney, advisor, consultant, contractor, general partner, trustee, or teacher.

**Section 3.** Outside employment or activity does not include:

- A. Speaking and writing activities so long as they are not combined with the provision of other services that fall within this definition, such as the practice of law or other activity that relates to an employee's official duties.
- B. Participation in the activities of a nonprofit charitable, religious, professional, social, fraternal, educational, recreational, public services, or civic organization, unless the participation involves:
  - (1) acting in a fiduciary capacity,
  - (2) providing professional services or rendering advice for compensation other than the reimbursement of expenses, or
  - (3) An activity relating to the employee's official duties, to include activities relating to any ongoing or announced policy, program, or operation of the employee's agency.
- C. Activities otherwise permissible under the Hatch Act and related regulations relating to partisan political activities.
- D. State or Federal military service protected by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
- E. Any other outside employment or activity specifically exempted for Agency

employees. The following outside employment activity categories do not require prior approval, unless the activities involve an entity personally owned by the officer or employee (e.g., sole proprietorship, a limited liability company, incorporated company, etc.).

1. Artistic activities, such as being a musician or dancer and similar work as a performing artist, as well as selling personally created arts within the United States (excludes any import and export activities prohibited under 5 C.F.R. §§ 4601.104).
2. Beauty/body care services (e.g., hair/nail/skin services, masseuse/wellness services).
3. Compensated amateur athletic positions as sports officials or coaches.
4. Food service industry positions (such as waiter/waitress, host/hostess, food preparation, etc.).
5. Driving and Delivery: Ride sharing services (e.g., Uber, Lyft, or similar services); limousine or taxi driver, food delivery (Uber eats, Grubhub, Doordash, etc.), and other freelance transportation of goods (e.g., Amazon Flex), except that this does not include: any services that require a Commercial Driver's License (class A, B, or C); driving services that require crossing international borders; or activities in support of international carriers.
6. Event support: Wedding and event planner, photographer/videographer, florist, graphic art/design, decoration, catering and/or bartending, and similar jobs. This exemption does not include event security.
7. Officer roles on homeowners' and alumni associations.
8. Personal training/physical exercise instruction not conducted in federal or General Services Administration (GSA)-leased facilities.
9. Pet care (e.g., grooming, dog-walking, pet-sitting)
10. Retail sales positions, not to include ownership (e.g., working at a grocery store or mall retail shops).
11. Substitute teaching for an accredited elementary, middle, or high school.
12. Task-oriented freelance services (e.g., TaskRabbit, Instacart, or similar service networks) for personal services such as childcare, caretaking, in-home

cooking, shopping/picking up and delivering items, and assembling or moving furniture and similar items, etc.).

13. Trustee positions on officer or employee personal trusts.
14. Unincorporated rental of non-commercial real estate (e.g., renting out a personal residence or short-term rental of investment property).

**Section 4.** No Agency employee shall:

- A. Be employed by or engage in activities in support of or on behalf of a customs broker; international carrier; bonded warehouse; foreign trade zone as defined in 15 C.F.R. § 400.2; cartman; law firm engaged in the practice of customs, immigration, or agriculture law; entity engaged in the enforcement of customs, immigration, or agriculture law; importation or exportation department of a business; or business or other entity which engages in services related to agriculture matters where such agriculture matters relate to CBP's mission.
- B. Engage, in any private capacity, in employment or business activity related to the importation or exportation of merchandise or agricultural products requiring inspection (other than a personal, routine consumer transaction unrelated to the operation of a business), or the entry of persons into or departure of persons from the United States.
- C. Engage in outside employment or activities for a non-profit or other organization that involves assisting persons with matters related to the entry of persons or merchandise into or the departure of persons or merchandise from the United States, or matters relating to obtaining temporary or permanent residency, citizenship, adjustment of status, or other immigration-related benefits.

**Section 5.** The Agency shall grant an employee's request for outside employment or activity, as defined in Section 2, unless it has been determined by the Agency that the outside employment or activity is expected to involve conduct prohibited by statute or Federal regulation, gives rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest, or interferes with the efficient performance of an employee's duty or availability for duty.

**Section 6. Request Procedures.**

- A. Employees desiring to engage in outside employment or activity, as defined by Section 2, shall obtain prior approval of the Employer by forwarding a request on CBP Form 3031, Request to Engage in Outside Employment or Business Activities. Provided the Form 3031 contains sufficient and complete information for the Employer to make a decision, the Employer will act on the request within thirty (30)

business days after receipt of the Form 3031.

- B.** If Form 3031 does not contain sufficient and complete information for the Employer to make a decision, the Employer will, absent mutual agreement with the employee to extend the period, notify the employee of any additional information that is needed within fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the initial Form 3031. Upon the employee's submission of sufficient and complete information, the Employer will have thirty (30) business days to make a decision.
- C.** In the event the employee has not received a decision on the request to engage in outside employment or activity, as defined in Section 2 above, within the time frames established in Section 6.A above, the Union may take the matter directly to expedited arbitration in accordance with Article 28: Arbitration. If the Arbitrator finds the Agency failed to provide a final decision within the time frames established in Section 6.A above, the arbitrator may assess all arbitration costs against the Agency.
- D.** If the Employer's response is to disapprove the request, it will provide the employee a written explanation of the basis for the disapproval.
- E.** If the Employer's response is to approve the request, the employee is responsible for seeking re-approval if the employee's duties materially change or the employee assumes a new position.
- F.** Employees desiring to engage in exempted outside employment or activity, as defined by Section 3.E., shall provide notice to their immediate supervisor by completing and submitting CBP Form 3031, Request to Engage in Outside Employment or Business Activities. Upon submission, the employee may engage in the exempted activity without delay.

**Section 7.** If the employee has not changed positions or duties, and the outside employment or activity has not changed, the employee need not reapply for approval simply because the approving official has changed.

**Section 8.** Employees are encouraged to ask for, and the Employer further agrees to provide, guidance and specific interpretative assistance on questions concerning outside employment when requested in writing by the employee.

**Section 9.** When the Employer determines that upon further review or upon a change in circumstances, that any approved outside employment or activity, with or without compensation, is inconsistent with the criteria for approval, as defined in Section 5, the employee must terminate the employee's outside employment or activity. This will be

done by written notice to the employee which includes an explanation for the basis of the disapproval.

**Section 10.** All challenges to the Employer's decision to deny or discontinue outside employment will be appealed directly through expedited arbitration in accordance with Article 28: Arbitration.



## **ARTICLE 12: PROBATIONARY PERIODS**

This Article is intended to clarify the policies, procedures and processes applicable to employees serving on probationary periods.

**Section 1.** For the purpose of this Article, probationary period refers to a probationary or trial period served by an employee that is established in accordance with the appointment under which an employee serves.

**Section 2.** Probationary periods will be served in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and the authority under which the employee is appointed. The duration of such periods will be documented in the employee's Official Personnel Folder.

**Section 3.** During the probationary period, the employee's conduct and performance in the actual duties of the position will be observed, and the employee may be separated from the Agency in accordance with this Article and applicable regulations.

**Section 4.** The Employer will advise employees serving a probationary period of performance standards and standards of conduct at the beginning of the probationary or trial period.

**Section 5.** During the probationary period, the Employer will:

- A. Provide work related training to probationary employees;
- B. Observe the employee's conduct, general character traits, and performance;
- C. Provide guidance in regard to work related problems; and
- D. Evaluate the employee's potentialities and attempt to determine whether the employee is suited for continued employment with the Employer.

**Section 6.** In the event the performance or conduct of an employee serving a probationary period may be lacking, the Employer will:

- A. Explain what is required of the employee in the position;
- B. Identify areas where the employee needs improvement; and
- C. Suggest ways or means for the employee to improve their performance and/or conduct.

**Section 7.** The Employer will meet with, discuss and counsel an employee serving a probationary period regarding their work, performance expectations, or conduct upon request by the employee. Such counseling will include those areas in which the employee indicates they would like further guidance or knowledge.

**Section 8.** In evaluating a probationary employee's potentialities and determining whether the employee is suited for continued employment, the management official responsible for conducting the evaluation and making the determination may seek input from any supervisor or management official with or for whom the employee performed work during the probationary period.

**Section 9.** Nothing in this Article is to be interpreted as preventing or discouraging the Employer's initiation of a separation action at any time during the probationary period.

**Section 10.** In the event the Employer determines an employee will be separated during their probationary period, the Employer will inform the employee in writing of the separation, including the general reasons for and effective date of the separation. Such separations must be effective before the employee completes their probationary period.

**Section 11.** Nothing will prohibit an employee serving a probationary period from resigning in lieu of an Employer initiated separation.

**Section 12.** An employee serving on a competitive service appointment who is separated during the probationary period based on deficiencies in performance or conduct occurring after entering on duty, in accordance with law and regulation, may only appeal the separation to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) on the following grounds:

- A. When the employee believes the separation was based on partisan political reasons or marital status; or
- B. When the employee believes the separation was based on discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or because of age, provided that at the time of the alleged discriminatory action the employee was at least forty (40) years of age, or disabling condition, only if such allegation is combined with an otherwise appealable matter based on subsection A.

**Section 13.** An employee serving on a competitive service appointment who is separated during the probationary period based in whole or in part on conduct occurring prior to employment, in accordance with law and regulation, may only appeal the separation to the MSPB on the following grounds:

- A. When the employee believes the separation was based on partisan political reasons or marital status;

- B.** When the employee believes the Employer did not follow proper procedures for separating the employee as set forth in applicable laws and regulations; or
- C.** When the employee believes the separation was based on discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or because of age, provided that at the time of the alleged discriminatory action the employee was at least forty (40) years of age, or disabling condition, only if such allegation is combined with an otherwise appealable matter based on subsections A. or B.

**Section 14.** Appeals to the MSPB must be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the separation has been effective, or as otherwise allowed by applicable MSPB regulations.

**Section 15.** Where an employee separated during the probationary period believes that the separation is based solely on discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or because of age, provided that at the time of the alleged discriminatory action the employee was at least forty (40) years of age, reprisal for Equal Employment Opportunity activity, or disabling condition, the employee may pursue an appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission pursuant to procedures and time frames established by the Commission and its regulations.

**Section 16.** The separation of an employee during the probationary period is not subject to the grievance or arbitration procedures established elsewhere in this Agreement unless permitted by law, rule or regulation.

**Section 17.** Nothing in this Agreement diminishes the right of an employee serving a probationary or trial period from pursuing other appeal avenues with the assistance of NTEU such as appeals filed with the Office of the Special Counsel or to the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

## **ARTICLE 13: BID, ROTATION AND PLACEMENT**

### ***PART A: BID, ROTATION AND PLACEMENT FOR CBP OFFICERS AND CBP AGRICULTURE SPECIALISTS***

CBP and NTEU share a mutual interest in providing opportunities for employees to receive work assignments and available shifts and schedules in accordance with their preferences. This Article memorializes the Parties' commitment to afford CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists within the Office of Field Operations an annual procedure to bid to available work units and shifts and schedules within the area of responsibility of their Port Director with selections to assignments determined by qualifications and seniority. The Parties also acknowledge that during the course of the year, employees may have to be temporarily assigned outside their bid to work unit. This Article also addresses the policy and procedures for how those temporary movements are made.

This Article supersedes all previous practices in conflict with it. Otherwise, all practices will continue until otherwise modified by the parties per Statute and this Agreement.

Those local parties that determine by mutual agreement to retain existing Bid, Rotation and Placement work practices or to develop new practices will be permitted to do so as long as such practices do not conflict with this Article.

#### **Section 1. Definitions.**

- A. *Bid*** is the term used to refer to an individual's request to be assigned to a specific work unit and available shifts and schedules. Similarly, *bidding* refers to the process of submitting a request for assignment to a work unit in accordance with this procedure. Such a bid constitutes an employee commitment to be assigned to those requested work units and available shifts and schedules in the event they are selected in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- B. *Covered employees*** include all CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists assigned to a port of entry who have successfully completed the formal academy and structured post-academy training programs, and can perform the full scope of required duties as described in Section 2.D.
- C. *Duration*** refers to the length of time an employee serves within a work unit, shift, and schedule.
- D. *Mutual agreement*** refers to the ability of the local parties (e.g., a NTEU Chapter President and Port Director) to vary from the procedures set forth in this policy only if both parties agree to do so voluntarily. A "by mutual agreement" provision does

not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over a proposed variation to grievance, arbitration or any other impasse dispute procedures. Such agreements must be placed in writing and signed by the parties, and will be binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw. Withdrawals will be effective at the beginning of the next annual bid cycle following receipt of the notice.

- E. ***Flex-capable Employee*** is an employee who bids to a pre-designated Flex-capable position in a work unit with a schedule, but may be assigned to other work units. Flex-capable employees will be assigned to work outside of their work unit in a fair and equitable manner. Flex-capable employees may be scheduled to other work units in advance. No more than 20% of the port staffing eligible to bid by series, and no more than 50% of the positions in a work unit will be designated as Flex-capable. By mutual agreement, the parties may designate more than 50% of the positions in a work unit as Flex-capable.
- F. ***Flexible Work Unit*** is a bid work unit in which employees will be regularly required to work in any of the work units within the port. Employees in this work unit may be scheduled in advance to perform functions. Flex work unit employees may also be used to perform functions outside previously scheduled work within the same work schedule. As an exception to the Port Director's sole discretion to establish work units, flexible work units may only be established by mutual agreement.
- G. ***Operational Requirements*** are conditions that affect the staffing needed for given assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, such conditions as threat level, staffing requirements, workload requirements, special enforcement operations, or natural or man-made disasters.
- H. ***Placement*** refers to a change in an employee's work unit, shift, or schedule in accordance with these procedures.
- I. ***Qualifications*** refers to the knowledge, skills and abilities for particular assignments and for the composition of particular work units. Such qualifications will be uniformly applied throughout the unit and limited to those established consistent with law and regulation.
- J. ***Rotation*** refers to a change in an employee's work unit, schedule, or shift immediately following the annual bidding process.
- K. ***Seniority*** will be determined by:
  - (1) For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS-1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as an Immigration

Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement. For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

- (2) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- (3) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
- (4) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

**L. *Schedule*** is the workdays and RDOs within a pay period. Such schedules are specific to the configuration of each Port and are designed based on the operational requirements, as determined by the Port Director.

**M. *Shift*** is the hours of work associated with a particular schedule. Such shifts are specific to the configuration of each Port and are designed based on the operational requirements, as determined by the Port Director.

**N. *Temporary Pull*** is a procedure CBP may use to move employees to a work unit for temporary assignments outside the employee's bid work unit.

**O. *Work unit*** means the smallest operational unit, determined by the Port Director, to which groups of employees can expect to be assigned and for which qualifications are defined and applied. Such units are specific to the configuration of each Port, and are designed based on the regular and recurring functions that will be performed, as determined by the Port Director consistent with this definition.

To assist Port Directors with configuring their work units, the Agency will make available a catalog of sample work units previously used in accordance with this

Article. Both CBP and NTEU understand these samples are only a general reflection of work performed throughout the agency. Within any specific port, actual work units and functions performed within the work unit are the responsibility of the Port Director.

## **Section 2. Policies.**

- A.** Consistent with the Parties' mutual interests to preserve a process in which employees will receive work assignments in accordance with their preferences, employees will normally remain in and work in their assigned work units. This Article also identifies the mechanisms and the order the Agency will use to move employees outside their bid work unit, as found in Section 5.
- B.** Given the flexibilities in this Article to meet operational requirements through flexible employees and temporary pulls, Port Directors will not include "catch-all" phrases in unit descriptions so as to require employees to work in units other than their bid work unit. A catch-all phrase is a statement within a work unit description that captures duties that are not regular or recurring within the work unit.
- C.** In ports where all officers perform the duties within the port and no work units exist, employees will bid to the available shifts and schedules, with selections determined by seniority.
- D.** Employees who do not meet the definition of covered in Section 1.B and are unable to perform the full scope of required duties at the beginning of the bid cycle may submit a placeholder bid that will be processed if the employee provides administratively acceptable written documentation that they will be able to perform the full scope of required duties within the first four (4) months of the bid cycle. Management has the discretion to temporarily fill the bid position by following the procedures of Article 38, Section 4 or Section 6 of this Article, given it is temporary in nature. Once those employees who submitted a placeholder bid are able to perform the full scope of required duties of the position, the employee temporarily occupying the bid position will be assigned to their bid work unit. By mutual agreement, the local parties may agree to another procedure when accommodating a placeholder bid.
- E.** On an annual basis, to the extent consistent with operational requirements, each Port of Entry will solicit bids and rotate approximately fifty percent (50%) of covered employees within each work unit under these procedures.
- F.** Management may deviate above or below the fifty percent (50%) standard in Section 2.E. If, based on operational and mission requirements, management decreases below 50%, NTEU will be informed and consulted at the local level.

- G.** In processing employee bids under these procedures, management is responsible for ensuring employees are assigned to a particular work unit so as to ensure continuity of, and to prevent unnecessary disruption to, Agency operations. This responsibility includes determining work unit structure consistent with the definition of a work unit, the appropriate numbers, types (e.g., CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists) and grades of employees with specific skill sets needing to be assigned or retained within a particular work unit, shift, or schedule.
- H.** Where management involuntarily extends the assignment of an employee to a particular work unit or assignment as a result of fulfilling its responsibility in Section 2.G., it will take reasonable steps to train others to replace the employee so that the retained or extended employee may rotate within six months, but no later than the beginning of the next bid cycle. Management will also make reasonable efforts to alleviate any adverse impact on the extended or retained employee.
- I.** Employees selected for assignments pursuant to these procedures will normally perform the work assigned for a minimum of one full bid cycle period (e.g., October through September). As an exception, CBP may establish longer assignment durations, normally not longer than two years, in connection with assignments requiring specialized training involving significant investment of time and/or money by the Agency. Employees in such assignments may be required to remain on the assignment for one full bid cycle from the end of the cycle wherein the employee received the specialized training. Assignments to which this exception applies shall be identified prior to the call for employee bids and will normally apply uniformly throughout the country.
- J.** Employees may not receive reimbursement for any travel or relocation costs associated with assignments made under these procedures.
- K.** When Management changes the number of work units (add or decrease) and/or the number of employees assigned to a work unit during the bid year, employee movements will be made after consultation with the Chapter and consistent with the procedures contained in Article 38: Temporary Assignments until the end of the bid year.
- L.** When Management needs to make changes during the bid year to RDOs, shifts, and/or schedules, after consultation with the Chapter, the procedures and appropriate arrangements contained in Article 34: Scheduling will be used.

### **Section 3. Procedures.**

- A.** The parties can mutually agree to execute the BRP on either an annual or biennial



basis.

**B.** On or about August 1<sup>st</sup> each calendar year in which a bid will be affected, each port of entry shall conduct a bid, rotation and placement process for covered employees in accordance with the below procedures.

- (1) CBP will provide NTEU, at the local level, all bid opportunity announcements, to include those identified as flex-capable, for the upcoming bid cycle no later than July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Such announcements will include a description of the duties and functions of the work unit and the assignment's duration, as well as identify the knowledge, skills and abilities CBP intends to use to determine if an employee is qualified for such assignments.
- (2) NTEU shall provide CBP its issues or concerns regarding the announcements no later than July 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- (3) CBP and NTEU will meet between July 16<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>, or any other mutually agreed to date, to discuss any issues or concerns raised by NTEU. The Parties may use this opportunity to discuss issues and concerns expressed in A.(2) of this section.
- (4) No later than August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, CBP will identify and post (or distribute) the bid opportunity announcements at each Port.
- (5) Employees wishing to bid on one or more available assignments must submit a completed bid preference and qualifications form within ten (10) calendar days of the posting (or distribution) of the bid opportunity announcement postings. By mutual agreement, the parties may extend or adopt a longer bidding period.
- (6) During the bid process, employees will be permitted to bid to a work unit, shift and schedule that are, consistent with the terms of this Agreement, determined to be available by the Port Director.
- (7) Selections for available work units, shifts and work schedules will be made based on qualifications and seniority.
- (8) For the purpose of providing transparency of process and procedural compliance awareness, local bid and rotation committees, consisting of at least two (2) representatives each from NTEU and CBP management shall review and process employee submissions. The committee may be a different size by mutual agreement. To ensure the committee is prepared to implement these procedures each year, it will review these procedures as well as the employee

submissions prior to doing so.

- (9) Upon request by the BRP committee, an employee may be required to provide proof of their seniority. Requests will be made only when necessary, as determined by at least one (1) member of the committee. In the event proof is not provided, the employee's bid request will be removed from consideration.
- (10) Management shall select qualified employees bidding for one or more assignments in seniority order, with the most senior processed first, except when an obvious difference in qualifications exists among employees that would impact the performance of the work unit. The processing of bids will continue until the identified number (normally 50%) of new placement within each work unit is made.

When processing a bid, the employee will be placed in their highest priority bid for which they are qualified and more senior than an employee currently assigned or bidding to that work unit. To accommodate this placement, the employee with the least seniority assigned to the work unit will be displaced. Absent the placement of the displaced employee through the processing of their bid and qualifications form, they will be assigned to the Port's core function(s).

By mutual agreement, the parties may establish a different method for determining which employee is affected by the placement of a more senior qualified employee bidding to the work unit. Any such agreement must be made prior to, and publicized concurrently with, the bid opportunity announcements postings.

- C. Bid qualifications statements of employees will be retained for use in accordance with Section 6 below.

**Section 4. Announcement and Implementation.** Absent unusual circumstances, CBP will announce bid and rotation and work schedule results within thirty (30) calendar days of the close of the employee bid submission period. Implementation of BRP results will occur starting on the first pay period of the following fiscal or calendar year in accordance with local agreements and/or established practices.

#### **Section 5. Temporary Pulls Out of Work Units.**

Temporary pulls out of assigned work units may be made to address any short-term operational requirement that requires staffing adjustments in accordance with the procedures contained below. However, these procedures will not be used to undermine the Bid, Rotation and Placement process and procedures.

**A.** When determining how to fill temporary operational requirements, management will follow the order below.

- (1) Qualified and releasable Flex Work Unit Employees
- (2) Qualified and releasable Flex-capable Employees

Absent the availability of employees identified in 1 and 2 above, the following procedures will be used to assign employees from their bid work unit:

**B.** Temporary pulls within the employee's current shift.

- (1) The port may conduct temporary pulls of employees from one work unit to another. The following procedure will be followed by the Employer when conducting temporary pulls:
  - a) The Employer will determine the work unit(s) from which to temporarily pull employees and the number of employees needed;
  - b) The Employer will inform the local NTEU Chapter of the need to temporarily pull employees, the impacted work units, and the name(s) of employees to be pulled. If operational circumstances permit, such notice will be provided sufficiently in advance of the pull to enable the Chapter to provide input. If not, the Employer will provide this information to NTEU as soon as possible after temporary pulls are implemented.
  - c) The Employer will solicit qualified and releasable volunteers from the identified work units.
  - d) If there are insufficient qualified and releasable volunteers, qualified and releasable employees will be pulled by inverse seniority.
  - e) After the need is met, the temporarily pulled employee will return to their original work unit.
  - f) Although an employee may be pulled more than once during a tour of duty, no employee will be temporarily pulled from their bid work unit for more than their current work shift (eight (8) hours or compressed work schedule shift) unless the employee volunteers for the longer assignment. The local NTEU Chapter will be advised of these longer, volunteered assignments; or,

- (2) The Parties may continue to utilize existing practices or, by mutual agreement, establish new mechanisms to temporarily move employees.

#### **Section 6. Post-Rotation Vacancies.**

- A. As they arise between bid cycles where CBP has determined to fill the vacant position, CBP has elected to fill vacancies in work units subject to the annual bid and rotation process through one of the following methods in the following order:
  - (1) By mutual agreement, including the continuation of a past practice;
  - (2) By the use of an existing wait/standby list previously developed by the parties at the local level; or
  - (3) By the solicitation of volunteers from a work group determined by management with selections determined by seniority. If there are not a sufficient number of volunteers, selections will be determined by inverse seniority.
- B. Absent unusual and unforeseen circumstances that would create a significant personal hardship for the employee, they must accept placement under this procedure.
- C. Employees who are placed in a work unit as a result of the Post-Rotation Vacancy procedures set forth in this section will work in their new work unit until the end of the work unit's durational period.

#### **Section 7. Problem Solving.**

In order to identify BRP problems that are not resolved at the local level, either party may add BRP topics during a scheduled OFO Labor-Management Forum (LMF). The requesting party will inform the other of their concerns, including the impacted ports. The receiving parties will investigate the concerns presented and will report back its findings.

***PART B: BID, ROTATION AND PLACEMENT FOR IMPORT AND ENTRY SPECIALISTS***

To increase the variety in work assignments, this Part describes bid and rotation work selection procedures for Import Specialists and Entry Specialists assigned to the Centers of Excellence and Expertise. These procedures may be reopened by either party to address bid, rotation and selection procedures in the event other positions are assigned to the Centers on a permanent basis.

**Section 1. Definitions.**

- A. ***Covered employees*** include all Import Specialists and Entry Specialists working in a Center who have completed initial training requirements and can perform the full scope of required duties.
- B. ***Work unit*** is the term used to refer to the Divisions, or similar organizational units, within a Center.
- C. ***Bid*** is the term used to refer to an individual's request to be assigned to a specific work unit. Similarly, bidding refers to the process of submitting a request for assignment to a specific work unit. Such a bid constitutes an employee commitment to be assigned to that requested work unit in the event they are selected in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- D. ***Rotation*** refers to a change in an employee's work unit assignment immediately following the bidding process.
- E. ***Mutual agreement*** refers to the ability of the parties at the national level to vary from the procedures set forth in this policy only if both parties agree to do so voluntarily. A "by mutual agreement" provision does not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over a proposed variation to grievance, arbitration or any other impasse dispute procedures. Such agreements must be placed in writing and signed by the parties, and will be binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw. Withdrawals will be effective at the beginning of the next bid cycle following receipt of the notice.
- F. ***Qualifications*** refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities the Agency has determined necessary for particular assignments and for the composition of particular work units. Such qualifications will be uniformly applied, and limited to those established consistent with law and regulation.

***G. Seniority for Import Specialists and Entry Specialists:***

Seniority for Import Specialists and Entry Specialists will be determined by:

- (1) The total time employees have served in their current series.
- (2) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time within CBP and legacy Agencies.
- (3) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., Service Computation Date) will be used.
- (4) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), a random selection method as determined by agreement between Center management and NTEU National. Absent identification of a random selection method, the default methodology will be coin flip.

**NOTE 1:** Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rata basis.

**Section 2. Bid and Rotation Policies.**

- A. These procedures apply to all Centers.
- B. Management will solicit bids annually for eligible covered employees.
- C. Upon rotation Import Specialist and Entry Specialist will perform the work assigned for three (3) continuous years after which they will be eligible to participate in the next bid cycle. During this period, Import Specialists and Entry Specialists cannot be moved out of their work unit assignments through rotation.
- D. Management will rotate at least 45% of the work unit within the Center provided there are sufficient volunteers who bid to the work units with the required seniority. Any percentage above a whole number will be rounded up, e.g., based on a 45% rotation rate, 5 employees will be permitted to rotate into a 9-person work unit.
- E. Management may, at its discretion, increase the number of rotation opportunities to more than that prescribed in Subsection D above, after informing NTEU National.
- F. Management may limit the number of rotations to less than that prescribed in Subsection D when it determines such limits are needed based on operational and mission requirements. In such circumstances, management will inform NTEU prior

to the solicitation for employee bids and take the necessary steps to permit the rotation of employees in accordance with this Article by the next bid cycle.

- G.** Employees may work any of the work schedules set forth in Article 14 consistent with any local agreements unless applicable Center agreements address the matter.
- H.** Employees rotating to a new work unit will be provided a reasonable amount of training determined necessary by the supervisor. Safety equipment and protective devices shall be provided to Import Specialists and Entry Specialists as required and prescribed by applicable regulations, directives and provisions of this Agreement.
- I.** Import Specialists and Entry Specialists selected for assignment pursuant to these procedures are expected to work collaboratively to address all scheduling issues, e.g., regular days off under compressed work schedules. Absent agreement among impacted employees, conflicts will be addressed by seniority.
- J.** Employees that are assigned or reassigned to another Center during the bid cycle will be placed at management's discretion and will be eligible to participate during the next bidding cycle once they have worked in the assigned work unit for two years for Import Specialist and Entry Specialists.

### **Section 3. Bid and Rotation Procedures.**

- A.** Before the annual fiscal year Bid and Rotation, on or about July 1, each CBP Center will solicit employee seniority dates based on the seniority definitions of this Article. These dates will be provided to the Center Bid and Rotation Committee discussed in subsection 3.G. to create the Center-wide seniority list. At the same time, CBP will generate a list of employee seniority dates that will also be provided to the Committee in order to create one list of employee seniority dates.
- B.** In subsequent years, the list created in Section 3.A. will be supplemented by the seniority dates of the new Import Specialists and Entry Specialists.
- C.** On or about September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, each Center will make available the number of Import Specialist positions and Entry Specialist positions assigned to each work unit. Each Center will make available a Center-wide seniority list based on the processes described in Section 3.A and 3.B.
- D.** CBP will provide NTEU National a copy of the Center standardized bid announcements at least two (2) weeks before they are made available to employees.
- E.** Within ten (10) workdays of advertising available bids, Import Specialists and Entry

Specialists will submit bids for the Center work units, in priority order to the Center management personnel designated in the Bid announcement. Included with the bids, the employee will self-certify their seniority. By mutual agreement, the parties may extend or adopt a longer bidding period.

- F.** For the purpose of providing transparency of process, Center bid and rotation committees consisting of four (4) representatives from NTEU and four (4) representatives from CBP Center management shall review and process employee submissions. By mutual agreement the committee may be a different size. To ensure the committee is prepared to implement these procedures each year, it will review the procedures, seniority lists and the employee bids prior to processing submissions.
- G.** Upon request by the Bid and Rotation Committee, an employee may be required to provide proof of their seniority. Requests will be made only when necessary, as determined by at least one (1) member of the committee. In the event proof is not provided, the employee's bid request will be removed from consideration.
- H.** Bids will be granted in seniority order. When processing a bid, the employee will be placed in their highest priority bid.

**Section 4. Announcement and Implementation.** Absent unusual circumstances, CBP will announce bid and rotation results within thirty (30) calendar days of the close of the employee bid submission period. Implementation of BRP results will occur starting on the first pay period of the following fiscal or calendar year in accordance with local agreements and/or established practices.

**Section 5.** These bid and rotation procedures may be modified by mutual agreement. For purposes of mutual agreement discussions, NTEU National will represent NTEU.



### ***PART C: BID, ROTATION AND PLACEMENT FOR CBP TECHNICIANS***

In conjunction with the Port's Bid, Rotation and Placement procedures for CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists, CBP Technicians will be permitted to bid to available shifts and schedules. Work assignments for CBP Technicians will be determined by the Port Director.

#### **Section 1. Definitions.**

**A. *Seniority*** will be determined by:

1. The total time the employee has served as a GS-1802 Technician within CBP OFO.
2. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used.
3. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
4. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

**B. *Covered employees*** include all CBP Technicians assigned to a port of entry who can perform the full scope of required duties.

**C. *Schedule*** is the workdays and RDOs within a pay period. Such schedules are specific to the configuration of each Port and are designed based on the operational requirements, as determined by the Port Director.

**D. *Shift*** is the hours of work associated with a particular schedule. Such shifts are specific to the configuration of each Port and are designed based on the operational requirements, as determined by the Port Director.

***PART D: ALL OTHER POSITIONS***

**Section 1. All Other Positions.**

- A.** On at least an annual basis (normally an employee's annual proficiency review meeting) all other non-uniformed employees will be permitted to express a preference for routine work assignments, e.g., audits, accounts, or branches, for management's consideration. In the event a preference cannot be accommodated, management will meet with a requesting employee and explain the decision(s) not to accommodate the preference and discuss potential alternatives. Upon request from an employee, management will provide a written explanation as to why a work preference couldn't be accommodated.
- B. Regulations and Rulings & Regulatory Audit Positions.**

  - 1) Absent a request for local bargaining consistent with Article 26 of this agreement, Regulations and Rulings will continue to operate its bid, rotation and placement.
  - 2) Either party at the local level may request to bargain a pilot bid, rotation and placement program within Regulatory Audit.
- C.** Upon mutual agreement of the local parties, other bid and rotation procedures may be created for bargaining unit positions other than CBP Officer, CBP Agriculture Specialist, Import Specialist and Entry Specialist.
- D.** However, those locations operating under existing practices will continue on those practices to the extent that they comply with the provisions of this Article and changes are implemented in accordance with law and this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 14: ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES**

**Section 1.** Alternative work schedules are potential scheduling options. Establishment and termination of such scheduling options is subject to applicable law, regulations and the terms of this Agreement. Furthermore, employees covered by this Agreement may participate in a flexible or compressed work schedule only to the extent expressly provided under a locally negotiated agreement.

**Section 2.** CBP and NTEU recognize and acknowledge that broad use of alternative work schedules enable employees to better balance their work and personal responsibilities, increase employee effectiveness and job satisfaction, and aid CBP's recruitment and retention efforts. The parties therefore agree to take necessary and reasonable steps, consistent with the effective and efficient accomplishment of the Agency's mission, to support and encourage employee use of alternative work schedules. Such steps may include:

- A. Identifying Agency positions that are suitable for alternative work schedules;
- B. Adopting appropriate policies to increase the opportunities for employees in positions suitable for participation in alternative work schedules;
- C. Providing appropriate training and support necessary to implement alternative work schedules; and
- D. Identifying barriers to implementing alternative work schedules, and developing strategies for addressing such barriers.

**Section 3.** Flexi-Tour, Gliding Schedule, and compressed work schedules are the alternative work schedules available for local implementation.

### **Section 4. Flexible Work Schedule Options and definitions.**

- A. **Flexi-Tour:** A flexible work schedule in which an employee, having once selected start and end times within established flexible time bands, with supervisory approval, continues to adhere to those times until the periodic opportunity to change arises. CBP and NTEU agree this Section shall not apply to employees compensated under the Customs Officer Pay Reform Act (COPRA).
- B. **Gliding Schedule:** A flexible work schedule in which a full-time employee who has a basic work requirement of eight (8) hours in each day and 40 hours in each week, may select a starting and stopping time each day and may change starting and

stopping times daily within the established flexible hours, without supervisory approval. CBP and NTEU agree this Section shall not apply to employees compensated under the Customs Officer Pay Reform Act (COPRA).

**C. The following definitions apply to Flexi-Tour and Gliding Schedules:**

- (1) **Basic Work Requirement:** Ten (10) eight-hour days during each bi-weekly pay period. An unpaid lunch period each day of 30 to 60 minutes may or may not exist.
- (2) The starting time for a Flexi-Tour and Gliding Schedule may be fixed on the quarter hour.
- (3) **Core Hours (Time):** The designated hours and days during the bi-weekly pay period when an employee on a flexible schedule must be at work.
- (4) **Flexible Time Bands:** That part of the schedule of working hours during which employees may choose their time of arrival and departure from work.
- (5) **Credit Hours:** Any hours worked under a Flexi-Tour or Gliding Schedule which are in excess of an employee's basic work requirement which, upon management approval (e.g., that sufficient work to be performed exists), are worked at the request of the employee. Credit hours may be earned and used in quarter-hour increments. Credit hour use must be requested by the employee and approved by management in advance. A request to use credit hours will be granted, workload permitting.

**D.** As an exception to the core hour requirement, participating employee(s) must be available to work outside the established core hours, normally within a one-day advance notice, when management makes a determination that the employee's presence is required. Prior to implementing this exception, management will attempt to schedule the activity within the established core hours.

**Section 5. Flexi-Tour for Block Time Union Representatives.**

CBP and NTEU have agreed in Section 4 that employees covered by COPRA are not permitted to work a Flexi-Tour or Gliding Schedule. However, as an exception to this rule the following procedures apply:

- A.** Prior to starting a Flexi-Tour arrangement, union representatives on block time must coordinate with a designated management official on their schedule and the procedure for taking and requesting credit hours.

- B.** Only 100% and 50% block time union representatives, per the Article 30 formula, are eligible. 25% and 50% block time union representatives by virtue of a split 100% allocation are excluded from this section.
- C.** Approved credit hours can only be used during designated representational time.
- D.** Flexible arrival time and departing times can never overlap with assigned operational work.
- E.** It is understood that 50% block time union representatives may only be able to utilize a flexible arrival time or a flexible departure time if they conduct representational work for part of the workday.
- F.** 50% block time union representatives can only use Flexi-Tour on the days they are authorized to conduct representational functions. Their work schedule will revert to the operational schedule on other days.

#### **Section 6. Compressed Work Schedules.**

A compressed work schedule is defined as an eighty (80) hour basic work requirement in a pay period which is scheduled for less than ten (10) workdays. The following are examples of widely recognized (a.k.a. traditional) compressed work schedules:

- (1) 5/4-9: a schedule comprising of eight (8) workdays of nine (9) hours each and one (1) workday of eight (8) hours in each pay period.
- (2) 4-10: a schedule comprising of four (4) workdays of ten (10) hours each in each administrative workweek of the pay period.

**Section 7.A.** At the local level, either party may initiate bargaining over the establishment and implementation of the alternative work schedule(s) found in Section 3, or the modification or termination of an existing practice or local agreement addressing these alternative work schedule(s). LER will be copied by the party initiating bargaining. LER will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate NTEU Chapter(s) representatives and CBP managers (e.g. Port, Center, etc.) are notified. In addition to whether the establishment of such schedule(s) are feasible, the scope of such negotiations may include:

- (1) Commencement date and frequency of the periodic opportunity period;
- (2) Where the number of employees permitted to work specific start times and to take a lunch break at a specific time is limited, the procedures by which qualified employees will be notified of, express interest in, and be selected for specific schedules;

- (3) Procedures by which opportunities to work credit hours are offered and assigned among qualified and available employees;
- (4) Where work requirements prevent the approval of all requests for credit hour use received for a particular time, the procedures by which conflicting requests among qualified employees will be resolved; and
- (5) Methods for employees to notify their supervisor of their approximate start time under a Gliding Schedule.

**B.** The Agency will establish a maximum of five (5) core hours (continuous hours) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Employees may start their day up to three hours prior to the start of core hours, and end their day up to three hours at the end of the core hours. The parties may, by mutual agreement, change the number of core hours, when taken, and the flexible time band.

**C. Unpaid Lunch Period.** When an alternative work schedule includes an unpaid lunch period, the employee must work their basic work requirement for the workday regardless of the type of AWS. For example, an employee on a nine (9) hour workday that starts at 7:00 a.m. with a 30-minute lunch break, is required to work until 4:30 p.m. to meet the nine (9) hour workday requirement.

**Section 8.** Alternative work schedules established through local negotiations must reasonably align to staffing and workload requirements, and not adversely impact operations or result in increased operating costs (other than a reasonable administrative cost relating to the process of establishing a flexible or compressed schedule). With this in mind, in order to promote the availability and employee participation in such scheduling options, where traditional compressed work schedules are not feasible, local parties are encouraged to explore the feasibility of more creative compressed work schedule options such as (but not limited to) alternating between compressed and regular schedules based on known fluctuations in workload (e.g., seasonal fluctuations).

**Section 9.** Management may require an employee who is on temporary assignment, travel or training to adopt a regular work schedule for the pay period(s) in which such temporary assignment, travel or training occurs, the work associated with the temporary assignment, travel or training does not align with the employee's regular work schedule and management reasonably determines that there is no legitimate work that may be assigned that would allow the employee to work their established tour of duty.

**Section 10.** Management may temporarily suspend the use of flexible and compressed work schedules for a particular work group or team in order to meet unexpected work requirements or changes in staffing levels that require such a suspension, provided a minimum of two (2) weeks advance notice is provided to the affected employees and

designated union representative. Such notices will include the date such schedules are expected to resume. Nothing shall prohibit the local union from voluntarily agreeing to adjust schedules prior to the conclusion of the two week notice period, if acceptable to management. Absent local agreement, such temporary suspensions shall not be longer than three (3) pay periods in duration.

**Section 11.** Should the Employer at any time determine that a locally negotiated flexible or compressed work schedule has had an adverse impact, e.g., a reduction in productivity, a diminished level of services furnished to the public, or has resulted in an increase in operating costs (other than a reasonable administrative cost relating to the process of establishing a flexible or compressed schedule), the Employer will notify the Union of its intent to modify or terminate such schedules in accordance with applicable law and regulation. Such notice will include an explanation of the basis for the Employer's decision.

**Section 12.** If the Employer and the Union reach an impasse with respect to establishing or terminating a flexible or compressed schedule, the impasse shall be presented to the Federal Service Impasses Panel for resolution in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

**Section 13.** The policies, practices, and procedures established under previous local agreements governing flexible and compressed schedules shall remain in effect only to the extent that they comply with the provisions of this Article and neither party exercises their ability to reopen and invoke negotiations. If the union invokes negotiations either at its own initiative or in response to an employer proposal to terminate an existing local agreement or practice, changes will not be implemented until the bargaining obligations of law are met.

**Section 14.A.** The parties recognize that local agreements may not cover all assignment and scheduling considerations. Accordingly, where local agreements are silent, the terms of this NCBA will be used to address these and/or other considerations in the same manner as non-AWS employees. For example, if not otherwise negotiated in a local AWS agreement or mutually agreed upon practice the parties will use BR&P as the yearly process by which employees receive work assignments and corresponding schedules and shifts in accordance with their preferences.

- B. Unless specifically provided for in a local agreement, should the employer need to reduce the overall percentage of employees on CWS, or the percentage of employees assigned to a specific CWS (e.g., 4/10 or 5/4/9), the employer will notice and bargain pursuant to this article and changes will not be implemented until the bargaining obligations of law are met.

**Section 15.** The parties also agree that local agreements established in accordance with this Agreement may be reopened by either party at any time.

## **ARTICLE 15: TELEWORK**

**Section 1.A.** Telework (also commonly referred to as flexi place, telecommuting, or mobile work) has the potential to enhance the quality of work life for employees but must be balanced against the Agency's need to accomplish its mission. The policy and procedures contained in this Article memorialize the parties' commitment to continue the CBP-NTEU Telework Program for all CBP employees. Telework is neither a legal right nor an entitlement; it is a benefit to employees given at the discretion of management in accordance with 5 U.S.C. §6502 and this Article. CBP will implement the Telework Program in accordance with law, rule, regulation, and this Agreement.

- B.** The provisions found in Article 15 Telework and Article 52 Remote Work shall apply to all new applications for Telework and Remote Work received after the execution of the new collective bargaining agreement. Any employees who were on telework agreements that do not have the employee reporting to the traditional work site at least two (2) times per pay period will remain on their previously approved telework agreement for a period of six (6) months from the effective date of this Agreement. During this six-month period these employees will be provided with the opportunity to apply for Remote Work or Telework consistent with the provisions in Article 15 and 52. If an employee's request is not approved or the employee fails to apply for Local Remote or Telework in a timely manner, at the end of the 6 month period the employee will be removed from their telework agreement and required to report to the traditional worksite. This does not prevent employees from subsequently applying for remote work or telework.

**Section 2.** The Agency will continue to make available to all employees the procedures, policies, guides, and related forms on the CBP Telework Program website.

### **Section 3. Definitions.**

- A. Alternate Worksite** is an approved location where official duties are performed away from the traditional worksite. An alternate worksite can be a designated area in a home-based office or other approved location.
- B. Approving Official** is a management official with delegated authority to review, modify, approve, deny and/or terminate the Telework arrangement.
- C. CBP Telework Ready Employee:** An employee who is on an approved telework arrangement (e.g. core or situational/episodic), is equipped with the appropriate secure and approved technology equipment and has an approved alternate worksite.



- D. Core Telework (also known as “routine telework”)** is a telework arrangement that occurs on an ongoing, regular and recurring basis. Employees on core telework arrangements must report to the traditional worksite at least two (2) days per pay period. An employee with an approved routine/core telework agreement is also eligible for situational/episodic telework.
- E. Telework Portal:** An on-line telework website that provides employees information and access to Telework Forms, including but not limited to the Telework Agreement, Safety Self Certification Checklist, CBP Form 121 and OPM Telework Fundamentals Training, CBP IT Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior Training Certifications, and the Public Transportation Incentive Program (PTIP) form, if applicable.
- F. Emergency Personnel/Employees:** Employees who are assigned to positions required to sustain a facility or function in the event of a localized situation, such as inclement weather, interruption of power, or a dismissal or closure of DHS/CBP operations or services. CBP has determined that all Field Technology Officers/Officials within the Office of Information and Technology should be designated as emergency personnel for cross deployment and support to all CBP locations in the event of an event/incident/disaster. However, due to the unique circumstances of any given emergency, CBP may designate additional emergency employees who may also be required to report for (or remain at) work.
- G. Federal Government Closures/Delayed Arrival/Early Departure:** These are situations that prevent significant numbers of Federal employees from reporting to the office on time or remaining at the office for the full workday and for situations which require Federal offices to close. Situations may include emergencies, severe weather conditions, natural disasters, pandemics, and other incidents causing disruptions of government operations.
- H. Portable Work:** Work normally performed at an employee’s traditional worksite that can be performed at an alternate worksite. This work is part of the employee’s regular assignments and does not involve a change in duties.
- I. Situational/Episodic Telework:** A telework arrangement that occurs on an *ad hoc*, occasional, episodic, or short-term basis. These arrangements are appropriate for operational requirements, a temporary medical situation/condition or emergencies. The situational/episodic telework arrangement may occur on one or more occasions any time during a pay period and does not require a set work schedule.
- J. Telework:** An approved work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of their position, and other authorized activities from an approved worksite other than the location from which the

employee would otherwise work.

- K. Telework Agreement:** A written agreement, along with terms and conditions of the agreement between the Agency and an employee, to permit the employee to perform official duties, responsibilities, and other authorized activities away from the traditional worksite.
- L. Traditional Worksite:** The official Agency location within the official duty station where the employee regularly performs the employee's duties and where work activities are based, generally considered a centralized CBP owned or leased facility, commonly referred to as the "regular worksite", "Agency worksite", or "official worksite." An employee's official worksite is the worksite documented on the employee's Notification of Personnel Action (Standard Form 50 or equivalent), as determined by the Agency.
- M. Unscheduled Telework:** A form of telework that allows employees with an existing telework agreement to telework in response to specific announcements by OPM or other local government deciding/authorizing officials regarding emergency situations.

#### **Section 4. General Policies.**

- A.** Telework is neither an employee entitlement, nor an alternative for child, elder or dependent care or a means to conduct personal business (e.g. home repairs, running a self-owned business, etc.).
- B.** An employee's participation in a telework arrangement is voluntary unless directed or required during a Continuity of Operations (COOP) activation, while the employee is in an evacuation status, or during a declaration of pandemic health crisis by the appropriate government authorities requires approval from management. An employee covered by a telework work agreement may be required to telework outside of the employee's normal telework schedule during temporary emergency or Federal government closure situations as set forth in Section 5 of this Article. In some cases, an employee's residence, or other location (e.g., other CBP, DHS, or U.S. Government facilities) may be designated as a COOP facility.
- C.** Telework is appropriate for those positions whose assigned duties, tasks, or other work activities can be performed at an alternate worksite. This may include either uniformed or non-uniformed employees.
  - (1) It is recognized that most CBP Uniformed Personnel are required to report in person to their assigned permanent duty location or temporary duty location and telework is generally not available to these employees. However, with respect to

- Uniformed Personnel, Approving Officials must make a case-by-case determination as to requests for core or situational/episodic telework exceptions based on the criteria set forth in this Article.
- (2) Most positions that do not require the wearing of a CBP Uniform are presumed to be eligible for telework.
- D.** In order to participate in telework, eligible employees must have a performance rating of Successful (or equivalent) and may not be on leave restriction, the subject of any pending performance or disciplinary action, or the subject of an allegation of misconduct, that may prevent the performance of the full scope of required duties.
- (1) A pending disciplinary action is defined as the period between receiving a notice of proposed disciplinary or adverse action and receipt of a final CBP decision pursuant to the applicable Articles of this Agreement and may include the investigatory period prior to receiving a notice of proposed disciplinary or adverse action, if the nature of investigation prevents the employee from performing the full scope of required duties.
- (2) A pending performance-based action is defined as the period between receiving a notice of proposed performance-based action and receipt of a final CBP decision pursuant to the applicable Articles of this Agreement and may include the initiation of an employee proficiency period prior to receiving a notice of proposed performance-based action.
- (3) For new federal employees meeting the performance requirement, after the employee is under a performance plan for at least 90 days, supervisors should make a determination regarding whether the employee is performing acceptably – no rating of record is required for this situation. Employees transferring from another federal agency can use the rating from the previous agency.
- E.** Employees who have been subjected to any final disciplinary or performance action within the last twelve (12) months are ineligible to participate in a telework arrangement. Exceptions to this criterion may be requested by employees in an eligible position and approved or denied by the approving official on a case-by-case basis.
- F.** Telework and non-Telework employees alike have the same rights, responsibilities, and expectations for purposes of work requirements, performance management, awards and recognition, training opportunities, promotion, and other personnel actions under the purview of managerial discretion.
- G.** Approving officials and/or supervisors have the discretion to approve an employee's telework request at any time and can require that an employee occupy a new position

for a sufficient period to obtain a performance rating in that position before any request is approved. An employee may request an exception. The approving official will approve or deny these exception requests on a case-by-case basis.

**H. Employee and Supervisor responsibilities during the submission/approval process include:**

- (1) CBP employees are encouraged to communicate with their supervisors before requesting a telework arrangement. This discussion does not prevent an employee from submitting a telework application.
- (2) Eligible employees who wish to participate in the Telework Program must complete and submit the on-line electronic Telework Portal, in its entirety and attach all required documents and certifications to their supervisor.
- (3) In the Telework Portal the employee will input the type of telework arrangement sought, either core or situational/episodic and if core, the number of days the employee is requesting per pay period. Employees on core telework arrangements must report to the traditional work site at least two (2) days per pay period. The two (2) days per pay period requirement is prorated for employees who are scheduled to work less than a full-time regular schedule.
- (4) After the supervisor has received the required package above, and within thirty (30) days of the submission, the employee will schedule a discussion with the supervisor regarding the employee's request, eligibility, opportunities and expectations.
- (5) When considering employee request to telework, the Agency acknowledges its commitment to approve/deny telework requests no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the discussion. The supervisor or approving official may request additional information to make a determination for approving telework and provide a reasonable amount of time for production of that additional information. Once the employee has provided all requested documentation, the approving official should approve or deny the request within 15 calendar days from receipt of additional information. Upon approval, changes will take effect on the first day of the next pay period.

**I. Eligible employees must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the CBP Telework Program, Telework Arrangement, to include the Terms and Conditions, Self-Safety Certification Checklist, and all established CBP policies and procedures, including security, leave, and conduct.**

**J. Participating employees must complete the appropriate on-line OPM Telework**

Fundamentals Training Employees on [www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov) and the [Cybersecurity Awareness and Rules of Behavior Training](#). Participating employees must certify their completion of the training by attaching the certificate of completion in the Telework Portal.

- K.** A permanent significant change in the terms of the telework arrangement requires a new telework agreement setting forth such changes. Permanent changes may be requested by the employee or may be management-directed. Changes include but are not limited to the duties being performed, number of telework days, the duty location, changes in work schedule, employee requested changes to the approved telework agreement; and a significant change in duties being performed that impact position eligibility.
- (1) An employee may request to alter a telework agreement at any time. The employee must notify the appropriate supervisor or approving official in writing and if approved, make the necessary adjustments to the telework agreement and work schedule. A new telework agreement must be accomplished in the Telework Portal. Changes will take effect on the first day of the next pay period.
- (2) Employees who want to modify a telework agreement should first discuss it with the supervisor and then submit a new telework application in the Telework Portal for approval. If there is a change in work schedule, the supervisor must communicate the new telework schedule to the timekeeper.
- L.** An employee's existing telework arrangement will not be impacted pending the approval of the new telework agreement. If approved, the employee will be exempt from taking the required OPM Telework Fundamentals Training on-line telework training again.
- M.** Unless otherwise instructed by an approving official, employee(s) will perform official duties only at the traditional worksite or Agency approved alternate worksite. Upon request, an employee's alternative worksite will be the employee's approved home-based office. If an employee requests an alternate worksite other than or in addition to the home-based office, the participating employee must indicate the change in the Telework Portal and receive approval before beginning work in a location different from that listed in the current telework agreement.
- N.** Employees approved for telework are expected to report to their traditional worksite a minimum of two (2) days per pay period, absent supervisor approval, regardless of work schedule.
- O.** When considering employee requests to telework, the Agency will make determinations regarding approvals of telework arrangements based on mission

requirements and on the employee's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position at an alternate worksite.

- P. In the event a telework request is denied by the approving official, the employee will be provided with a written justification supporting the denial.
- Q. An employee may opt out of the telework arrangement at any time. The employee must contact their supervisor, in advance and in writing, to terminate their telework arrangement. Unless otherwise agreed, the employee can request a new telework arrangement six (6) months after the effective date of the employee's Opt-Out Option election. In such cases, the employee will return to the traditional worksite in accordance with Section 18, below.
- R. Telework may be required to share workspaces/workstations while working at the traditional or mobile worksite. A workspace/workstation sharing arrangement may involve employees sharing one office/cubicle or use of unassigned workstations set aside for shared use by telework. Absent an existing agreement on workspace sharing, CBP will notify NTEU in accordance with Article 26.
- S. Annual Review: Supervisors may review agreements each year to confirm the efficacy of the telework arrangement. If necessary, adjustments to Telework Agreements may be made consistent with the policies and procedures of this Article.
- T. Once per quarter, upon request, NTEU National will receive a report on telework applications submitted by NTEU bargaining unit employees. Requests will be submitted to the CBP Telework Program Coordinator. NTEU may also request and will receive an in-person briefing from CBP. Reports will provide the following information:
  - (1) Employee name
  - (2) Employee's Field Office/Work Location
  - (3) Date application was created
  - (4) Date of approval/denial
  - (5) Decision: Approved or Denied
  - (6) Number of telework days requested
  - (7) Number of telework days approved
  - (8) Date telework commenced

## **Section 5. OFFICE DISMISSAL AND CLOSURE PROCEDURES.**

This section establishes the telework and leave procedures CBP employees will follow in the event the Agency, OPM, or the Federal Executive Board declares offices open with options for unscheduled leave or telework, delayed reporting, early dismissal or closes a

government office where CBP employees work. All employees within CBP will follow the same procedure, as noted in this section.

**A. Policies in the event of an office closure or dismissal:**

- (1) Employees who are designated as emergency employees are expected to report to or remain at work even when the Agency, OPM, or the Federal Executive Board declares or recommends the Agency remain open with options for unscheduled leave or telework, delayed reporting, or early dismissal or closure procedures.
- (2) When the Federal Government or individual Agency offices are open with options for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework, non-emergency telework-ready employees (those who have an approved telework agreement) must notify their supervisor of their intent and request approval to use unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. If employees are regularly scheduled to telework the employee will continue to work the entire workday or may take unscheduled leave if it is available and approved.
- (3) When the Federal Government or offices (i.e., buildings/facilities) are closed due to weather-related conditions, telework-ready employees, regardless of whether they were scheduled to telework that day, must continue to work for the entire workday, or may request unscheduled leave, or a combination of both.
- (4) If the Federal Government is closed for part or all of the day, telework-ready employees are required to work at their alternate worksites. However, if an employee is unable to work at the alternative work site due to the same event that initiated the unscheduled leave/telework announcement (e.g., electricity or infrastructure issues, etc.), the employee may be eligible for weather and safety leave with the approval of the supervisor. An employee must immediately notify their supervisor if there is such an issue and request weather and safety leave before taking it.
- (5) When a delayed arrival or early departure is announced, telework-ready employees are required to work the entire day. If a delay occurs on a day when a teleworker is scheduled to report to the official worksite that employee must report to the worksite just as all other non-teleworkers are directed or they may request to telework the entire day. In the case of an early departure when a teleworker has reported to a CBP facility that is subsequently subject to an early departure, the employee may report to the employee's alternative work site location and continue working until their scheduled end-of-shift or request unscheduled leave for whatever part(s) of the day are appropriate. The employee will be in a paid status while traveling between worksites.

(6) When there is a shelter-in-place incident telework program participants performing work at the telework location are expected to continue working unless affected by the emergency or otherwise notified by their supervisor.

**B. Weather and Safety leave (WSL) for office closures will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Article 37, Section 10: Excused Absences and law. Except as provided below, employees who have an approved telework agreement and are able to safely travel to and work at an approved telework site may not be granted weather and safety leave.**

(1) A telework program participant may request WSL if the employee could not have reasonably anticipated the severe weather or other emergency condition and therefore did not take home needed equipment or work. (For example, an area weather forecast changes dramatically during the weekend so an employee cannot reasonably be expected to telework on Monday.) Generally, employees who have an approved telework agreement, regardless of whether it is a core or an episodic agreement, should remain telework ready at all times, (e.g., always have in their possession equipment and work to be prepared to telework at any time).

(2) A telework program participant may request WSL if the Telework/alternate work location is made unsafe or unsuitable for performing work (e.g., power outage) by the same event triggering the closure of the traditional workplace.

(3) Non-telework nonemergency employees, as defined above will receive WSL during the office closure.

(4) When possible, the Agency will notify employees who have a core or episodic telework agreement in advance of potential office closures. In anticipation of potential office closures, employees on an approved telework agreement will ensure that they are prepared to telework in case of closure.

(5) In the event an employee who is on a core or episodic telework agreement is unable or unprepared to work in a telework status, the employee must notify the employee's supervisor (or designee) at the earliest available opportunity, but absent just cause, no later than one (1) hour before the time in which the employee is scheduled to report for duty in a telework status.

(6) Nothing in this Section prevents an employee from requesting leave in accordance with the terms of the National Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**C. Employees on Preapproved Leave.** After annual or sick leave has been approved, employees are not expected to work throughout the duration of the leave request. In



the event the Agency, OPM, or the Federal Executive Board declares open with options for unscheduled leave or telework, delayed reporting, early dismissal or closure procedures employees on preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off (e.g., compensatory time off, credit hours)—including an employee who requests unscheduled leave or other paid time off—generally should be charged leave or other paid time off rather than WSL. The employee will remain in their pre-approved leave status, unless one of the following exceptions apply:

- (1) If a telework program participant who was on pre-approved sick leave for a medical appointment no longer requires leave, the employee will telework, or request unscheduled leave or other paid time off. Emergency employees will report to or remain at the worksite as appropriate.
- (2) If a telework program participant who was on pre-approved annual leave, elects to cancel their leave, the employee will telework, or request unscheduled leave or other paid time off in lieu of continuing approved annual leave. Emergency employees will report to or remain at the worksite as appropriate.

#### **Section 6. Continuity of Operations.**

- A. Continuity personnel are not emergency personnel for the purpose of an inclement weather event unless designated as such. When CBP activates the continuity plan, members will receive a notification via the established alert and notification channels.
- B. If a participating employee is designated as a Continuity of Operations (COOP) employee, the employee must at least be placed on a situational/episodic telework arrangement and be telework ready to support the agency in the event of an emergency.
- C. When CBP activates the continuity plan CBP may expand and require telework for a larger segment of the workforce in support of Agency operations to allow as many employees as possible to work during a Continuity Plan.

#### **Section 7. Position Eligibility.**

- A. Telework is appropriate for positions with enough portable work (duties and responsibilities of a position that can be effectively performed at an alternate worksite). Determinations for telework (core and situational/episodic) and will be made on a case-by-case basis based on operational needs and the employee's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of an employee's position at an alternate worksite.

- B.** Examples of duties that would justify some or all employees in a position being ineligible for Telework arrangements may include one or more of the following:
- (1) On-site activity that cannot be handled remotely or at an alternative worksite;
  - (2) Access to or direct handling of classified national security information;
  - (3) Office support and phone coverage;
  - (4) Hands-on contact with machinery, equipment, vehicles, etc.;
  - (5) Positions that require the physical presence at all times; or
  - (6) When Customer service or Agency mission would be adversely affected (e.g., workload increase for other employees, team performance is reduced, unable to respond to customers/clients, etc.).
- C.** All participating employees, including employees in positions generally excluded from core Telework arrangements, may be eligible for situational/episodic Telework arrangements.

## **Section 8. Compensation & Benefits.**

- A.** Telework is not a basis for changing salary or benefits.
- B.** Upon approval of a core Telework arrangement (i.e., one or more Telework per week), a participating employee who also participates in the Public Transportation Incentive Program (PTIP) will submit an amended PTIP benefit application to reflect any reduction in actual transportation costs, as appropriate.
- C.** Telework employees may be eligible for subsidized parking depending upon their duty station location. The Parking Application (CBP Form 238) signed by their supervisor must be updated if the employee's telework agreement decreases the number of days commuting to their Official Worksite/Duty Station.
- D.** The participating employee's timekeeper will have a copy of the employee's work schedule. The employee's time and attendance for hours worked at the traditional worksite and the alternate worksites, which are consistent with the Agency's policy, will be certified by the approving official bi-weekly.
- E.** Participating employees may be assigned and approved overtime as determined necessary by the Agency. All applicable employment and labor laws, including but

not limited to statutes, regulations, rules, policies, negotiated agreements, etc. governing overtime and/or work scheduling, will continue to be adhered to. Participating employees must ensure that all overtime is authorized/approved, in advance, by their supervisor.

### **Section 9. Official Travel, Holidays, and Leave.**

- A. If an employee is on official travel, on leave, or reports to temporary duty location on a day when the employee would otherwise be expected to report to the traditional worksite, the day will be considered a day at the CBP facility.
- B. If an employee's scheduled telework day falls on a federal holiday (or day designated a holiday by federal statute or executive order), an employee may request to telework on another day within the same pay period; however, it is at the discretion of the supervisor to approve/deny the request.
- C. Employees will continue to follow established office procedures and practices for requesting and obtaining approval of leave.

### **Section 10. Conduct.**

- A. Telework employees are expected to maintain grooming and dress standards as if they were in a CBP facility and to present themselves on camera when required by the supervisor, agency official, and/or the meeting organizer. When practical, employees will be provided advance notice, normally no less than five (5) minutes, when required to be on camera.
- B. Participating employee(s) are bound by Agency standards of conduct while working at the alternate worksite. Nothing in this Article precludes the Agency from taking any appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against an employee who fails to comply with the provisions of their Telework agreement or Agency policies and procedures.

### **Section 11. Technology and Security.**

- A. Participating employee(s) must certify that the Agency's Security Awareness Training has been completed.
- B. Participating employee(s) must have an internet connection (high-speed connection [e.g., DSL or cable] is recommended) before requesting a Telework arrangement. Employees must be accessible at all times, via telephone, during their working hours. Participating employees are responsible for all costs associated for their own Internet connection and telephone.

- C. Participating employee(s) may be required to use a virtual meeting platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams). CBP may use the platform's status symbols, to monitor an employee's time, attendance, or performance, but may not use this information as the sole basis for any disciplinary action. Employees will be permitted to use any appropriate, system templated, or agency provided virtual background.
- D. Employees who Telework will ensure government property and information are kept safe, secure, and separated from their personal property and information.
- E. Employees who Telework will be the sole operators of the government-owned equipment they use and will abide by established Agency policy regarding the use of government-owned equipment for personal business.
- F. Technical support will be provided to participating employees when needed. A participating employee's Telework arrangement may be temporarily or permanently terminated, in the event technical problems significantly reduces independence from the traditional worksite that prevents the employee from performing assigned duties at the alternate worksite. In such circumstances, the employee should consult with their supervisor as to whether to report to the traditional worksite or request leave.
- G. The use of equipment or software that is meant to simulate the movement of a computer mouse is not authorized at any time in any work location.

## **Section 12. Liability.**

The Agency will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternate worksite, except to the extent the Agency is found liable under by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

## **Section 13. Alternate Worksite Costs.**

- A. Except for costs associated for an employee's own Internet connection and telephone, the Agency will provide the supplies and equipment determined necessary by the Agency for participating employees to perform their assigned duties. Customary office supplies (such as paper, pens, etc.) provided at the traditional worksite will be made available by the Agency to employee(s) participating in a Telework arrangement.
- B. Technical administrative services such as photo-copying, facsimile transmissions, mailing, etc. will normally be conducted during time at the traditional work site. In

the event a participating employee desires Agency reimbursement for technical administrative services performed at an alternate work site, advance written approval must be obtained from the Agency.

- C. To support the use of Telework and a mobile workplace, the Agency may replace desktop computers and telephones at the traditional worksite with portable devices and equipment to effectively perform their duties while in a telework status.

#### **Section 14. Workers' Compensation.**

Participating employee(s) are covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at either the traditional or the alternate worksite. The employee will notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at the alternate worksite and to complete any forms required in connection with claims based upon the accident/injury.

#### **Section 15. Work Assignments/Performance.**

- A. An employee on a telework agreement will have their work and conduct evaluated the same as employees at the traditional worksite.
- B. If management determines at any time during the evaluation year that an employee's performance has diminished, and a continued decline could result in an annual performance rating of Unsuccessful (fails to meet expectations), management will give notice to the employee of the performance deficiency, counsel the employee, and give the employee an adequate opportunity to improve. If the employee does not improve after notice, counseling, and an adequate opportunity to improve, it may be grounds for temporarily rescinding an employee's telework agreement. In such cases, the employee will be notified of the deficiencies determined by management and provided instruction on what conditions need to be met to have their telework agreement re-evaluated.
- C. If the employee's performance fails to improve, they will be evaluated pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article 19: Employee Proficiency Review and their telework agreement will remain rescinded.

#### **Section 16. Records Management.**

Participating employee(s) will protect U.S. Government and Agency records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)).

## **Section 17. Worksite Safety and Home Inspection.**

- A.** Telework employees must complete the safety checklist in the Portal as a part of the application process. Failure to do so will result in a denial of telework status.
- B.** The Agency reserves the option to inspect alternate worksites for adequacy and compliance with safety requirements.
- C.** Absent unusual circumstance, home inspections will be conducted during normal working hours with prior notice of at least two (2) business days.
- D.** Upon request by a participating employee, a NTEU representative may be present at a home inspection while in an official time status consistent with Article 30: Union Representatives and Official Time. Home inspections will not be unreasonably delayed to accommodate a request for NTEU presence at the home inspection.
- E.** If a telework employee is unable to effectively work from the employee's alternate worksite (e.g., due to lack of electricity, flooding, infrastructure, connectivity issues, or other factors which prevent the employee from working successfully and safely), the employee will immediately notify their supervisor. The employee may request leave and/or report to an official CBP worksite or other approved location.

## **Section 18. Agency Directed Return to Work & Changes to Telework Arrangements.**

- A.** Telework employee(s) must be available to work at the traditional worksite at any time, for any part of a day or a full or multiple days, normally with a one-day advance notice, when management makes a determination that the employee's presence is required based on operational needs. The employee may request to Telework on an alternate day, in cases where the employee is required to report to the traditional worksite on a regularly scheduled Telework day.
- B.** Once a telework employee begins working at the employee's alternative duty location, the employee is considered to have reported to the employee's work site for the duty day. Accordingly, mileage in excess of their commute to their traditional worksite and other appropriate travel compensation pursuant to Article 16 will be paid for travel away from the alternative work site.
- C.** When a participating employee is required to return to the traditional worksite on a temporary basis, the employee must report within a reasonable amount of time. Time required to report to the traditional worksite, including traveling distance and mode of transportation factors, will be taken into consideration in evaluating what is reasonable.

- D. Requests by the participating employee to change a scheduled Telework day(s) in a particular week or biweekly pay period must be submitted in advance, prior to the effective date of the change, in writing, and approved by the Agency.
- E. In the event an employee is removed from Telework for cause, i.e., the employee is ineligible pursuant to the policies set forth in this Article, the employee will be expected to return to the traditional worksite on a permanent basis on the next scheduled duty day that is not less than twenty-four hours from notice to the employee. The supervisor and employee may mutually agree upon a different time for the employee to report.

### **Section 19. Employee Initiated Return to Work.**

If a participating employee believes there is a need to return to the traditional worksite, the employee will normally provide their approving official with two (2) weeks advance notice. The notice of their intent to terminate their telework agreement will be in writing, indicating if the return to the traditional worksite is temporary or permanent and also include a brief description of the reason(s) prompting the return to the traditional worksite. An employee-initiated telework agreement termination will be effective on the last day of the pay period during which the termination is made. Once effective, the employee must report to the official CBP worksite on the first day of the next pay period or as required by the approving official.

**Section 20.A.** Employee(s) returning to the traditional worksite for any reason may not have the same working conditions they had prior to participating in a Telework arrangement.

- (1) The Agency will attempt to provide the returning employee with the same working conditions (work area space, equipment, etc.) that the employee possessed prior to participating in Telework.
- (2) In the event the returning employee's prior working conditions cannot be accommodated, the Agency, within a reasonable amount of time, will provide similar working conditions as other bargaining unit employees at the traditional worksite.

### **Section 21. Selection Order.**

- A. In following through with its commitment to support Telework, the Agency will make a good-faith effort to provide sufficient funding for Telework arrangements. In the event limited funding or resources result in limitations in selections for telework arrangement to fewer than the number of employees volunteering, the following hierarchy will be followed:

- (1) Employee with a disability;
- (2) Employee with temporary or chronic health problems, who may otherwise choose to leave the Agency; then
- (3) All other selections will be made by seniority. Seniority is defined as time as a CBP employee in a position subject to telework. Ties will be broken by Service Computation Date (SCD), then coin flip. In the event, that selections are between employees in different positions, seniority will be determined by SCD.

**B.** Conflicts in days worked at the alternate work site will be resolved through seniority. However, seniority does not allow a new telework agreement to negate an existing agreement (e.g. a senior employee may not bump a junior employee who is on an existing agreement.)

## **Section 22. Information.**

- A. To foster the growth of and monitor the efficiency of the Telework program, NTEU will be provided the same Telework data provided by the Agency in compliance with statutory or regulatory reporting requirements.
- B. Once per quarter, upon request, NTEU National will receive a report on telework applications submitted by NTEU bargaining unit employees. Requests will be submitted to the CBP Telework Program Coordinator. NTEU may also request and will receive an in-person briefing from CBP. Reports will provide the following information:
  - a. Employee name
  - b. Employee's Field Office/Work Location
  - c. Date application was created
  - d. Date of approval/denial
  - e. Decision: Approved or Denied
  - f. the number of telework days requested
  - g. the number of telework days approved
  - h. Date telework commenced

**Section 23. Local Level Variation.** By mutual agreement of the parties at the local level, post-implementation bargaining concerning the impact of changes in office space, selection orders, and any other Telework matter not in conflict with this Article or Agreement is permitted. "By mutual agreement" is an understanding that neither party is allowed to take post-implementation bargaining disputes to any method of impasse resolution.



## **ARTICLE 16: TRAVEL**

**Section 1.A.** Employees shall be reimbursed for travel on official business in accordance with law, regulation, and this Agreement in the maximum amounts permissible.

- B.** Employees authorized to use the Agency's automated travel system will be provided with sufficient training, as needed.
- C.** Any changes in rates or reimbursement to Federal employees by law or regulation during the life of this Agreement are hereby made part of this Agreement.

### **Section 2. Definitions.**

- A.** Official duty station is defined as the location of the employee's permanent work assignment (e.g., Port of Entry (POE), office building). For example, an employee assigned to a POE who is directed to report to a different jobsite within the same POE on a given workday would still be considered within their official duty station.
- B.** Temporary duty station is defined as any job-site outside the official duty station, or any location other than where the employee originally reported to the employee's official duty station. The parties agree that the definition of temporary duty station is applicable for determinations of mileage and other related travel expenses subject to reimbursement in accordance with existing federal travel regulations.
- C.** For applicable travel compensation purposes (e.g., comp time, per diem), official duty station is defined as a mileage radius of not greater than fifty (50) road miles. The fifty (50) road miles rule for determining travel compensation should not be applied to local travel procedures and mileage reimbursements contained in Section 5.
- D.** For the purpose of this Agreement, residence is defined as the home, place, or abode where an employee physically resides and regularly commutes to/from work to the employee's official duty station.

**Section 3.A.** To the maximum extent practicable, the Agency shall schedule the time to be spent by an employee in a travel status away from their official duty station within the regularly scheduled workweek of the employee. When travel is required outside the regularly scheduled workweek, the official involved shall furnish the employee, upon request, written reasons for the management official's decision.

- B.** Time spent in a travel status away from the official duty station of an employee is not hours of employment for pay purposes for employees exempt from the FLSA

unless:

- (1) The travel is within the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek, including regularly scheduled overtime; or
- (2) The travel is outside the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek, the travel is ordered or approved, and the travel meets one of the following four conditions:
  - (a) The travel involves the performance of actual work while traveling;
  - (b) The travel is incident to travel that involved the performance of work while traveling;
  - (c) The travel is carried out under arduous and unusual conditions; or
  - (d) Travel results from an event that cannot be controlled administratively.

**C.** Time spent in a travel status away from the official duty station of an employee is not hours of employment for pay purposes for employees non-exempt from the FLSA unless the circumstances in Section 3.B. apply; or:

- (1) The travel is required during regular work hours;
- (2) The travel requires driving a vehicle or performing work while traveling;
- (3) The travel requires serving as a passenger on a one-day assignment away from the official duty station; or
- (4) The travel requires serving as a passenger on an overnight assignment away from the official duty station during hours on non-workdays that corresponds to the employee's regular working hours.

**D.** Employees are permitted to earn and use compensatory time off for time spent in a travel status away from the official duty station when such time is not otherwise compensable in accordance with the negotiated CBP Directive 51630-005 "Compensatory Time Off for Travel."

**Section 4.** It is the responsibility of CBP employees to place themselves at their official duty station and return from there at their own expense.

**Section 5. Local Travel (travel within 50 miles of the official duty station)**

**A.** After employees place themselves at the location where they are directed to report

for the workday, the cost to employees of any local travel required for official purposes during regular hours of work or on overtime shall be reimbursed by the Agency. In this regard, once an employee arrives at the location they are directed to report for the workday the employee will receive full mileage reimbursement for any subsequent travel to any temporary duty station. Normal circumstances that would entail local travel may include attendance at an approved training class, meeting, seminar, or conference that is incident to the employee's official duties. Local travel must be authorized by the employee's supervisor/approving official.

- B.** Commuting from the employee's residence to the official duty station is not reimbursable. When an employee travels from the employee's residence to a temporary duty station and/or from a temporary duty station to the employee's residence, the employee will be reimbursed for any mileage in excess of the employee's normal round trip from their residence to where they normally reports.
- C.** Local travel procedures applicable to an employee on an approved telework or remote arrangement are addressed in Article 15.
- D.** No employee is entitled to reimbursements that are not permitted pursuant to the Federal Travel Regulations and CBP travel policy implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law.
- E.** Examples of the rules set forth in Subsections A and B above include:

  - (1) When an employee travels from the employee's residence to a temporary duty station and then returns to the employee's residence, the employee shall be reimbursed for actual mileage and expenses in excess of the normal round-trip distance between the employee's residence and where the employee normally reports.
  - (2) When an employee travels from the employee's residence to where the employee's normally reports, then travels from where the employee's normally reports to a temporary duty station, then travels from the temporary duty station back to the employee's residence, the employee shall be reimbursed for the distance between the two (2) duty stations. If the distance between the employee's final temporary duty station and the employee's residence exceeds the distance between where the employee's normally reports and the employee's residence, the employee shall be reimbursed for the excess expense.
- F.** Subsections A and B above do not apply to or cover established rotational assignments through different jobsites. This includes reporting to a work unit assigned through the Bid, Rotation and Placement process. The site of each rotational duty assignment shall be considered where the employee normally reports

for the duration of the employee's rotational assignment at that specific jobsite.

- G. The local travel reimbursement policies set forth in Subsections A and B above apply to travel to overtime assignments as well as assignments during regular hours of work.

#### **Section 6. Per Diem.**

- A. Employees shall be eligible for per diem or actual subsistence allowance only when: they travel to an assignment outside the official duty station. Commuting areas will be defined in accordance with law, rule, and regulation.
- B. Employees traveling outside the official duty station for a period of twenty-four (24) hours or less without incurring lodging costs are entitled to partial per diem when the travel period involved is more than twelve (12) hours.
- C. Any reimbursement will be in accordance with existing travel regulations.
- D. Employees will receive the maximum Meals and Incidental Expense (MIE) rates while on official travel unless the meals are provided and/or contracted for by the government.
- E. CBP will provide NTEU with Article 26 notice in the event it changes its MIE policy.

**Section 7.A.** When use of one privately owned vehicle is made by two (2) or more employees on official business, mileage reimbursement will be made to only one (1) employee.

- B. When travel on official business could be performed by two (2) or more employees riding in one privately owned vehicle, and the employees elect to travel in separate automobiles, mileage reimbursement will be made only to one (1) employee.
- C. When joint use of one (1) privately owned vehicle would be impracticable or cause unreasonable personal hardship, each traveler shall submit a written justification for the use of more than one (1) automobile. The Agency shall approve mileage reimbursement for separate vehicles when such justifications and requests are in accord with applicable law and regulation and this Agreement.
- D. When an employee is authorized to use a privately owned vehicle for official business and that vehicle sustains damage, the employee may file a claim in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3721 and DHS Management Directive 1650.1.

- E. It is the Agency's responsibility to provide employees the equipment necessary to perform Agency work. Accordingly, employees may, but will not be required to, use a privately owned vehicle for official business. If the employee does not elect to use a privately owned vehicle, the Agency will provide a government owned vehicle (GOV), if available. If not available, the Agency will identify alternative means so that employees can perform Agency work. These alternative means will take into account the safety of employees.

**Section 8.A.** At the discretion of the Agency, an employee on official travel may be required to return to their official duty station during duty hours for non-workdays.

- B. In the case of a voluntary return of a traveler to their official duty station (or their place of residence from which they regularly commutes to their official duty station), the employee will be reimbursed for the cost of the round trip and back to the employee's temporary duty station or the cost of per diem if the employee had remained at this temporary duty station, whichever is the lesser. A cost comparison is required for reimbursement.
- C. If an employee elects to remain at the site of their temporary duty assignment rather than return to their official duty station for non-workdays, the employee will be reimbursed for the cost of the round trip and back to the employee's temporary duty station or the cost of per diem the employee incurs by remaining at the temporary duty station, whichever is the lesser.

**Section 9.A.** When the Agency makes lodging available for an employee on official travel, the employee will have the option of remaining in the Agency-provided lodging or of securing other lodging.

- B. If the employee elects to secure their own lodging, the Agency will reimburse the employee for the cost of the lodging provided by the Agency or the cost of the lodging secured by the employee, whichever is the lesser.
- C. Where lodging is provided by the Agency, and remaining at the place of lodging is integrally related to, and necessary for, the accomplishment of the purposes for the official travel, the employee may not exercise the option provided in Subsection B above.

**Section 10.A.** An employee who regularly utilizes public ground transportation in the performance of official duties shall be reimbursed for the cost thereof upon submission of the appropriate expense voucher and in accordance with appropriate regulations. In the alternative, and where practicable, the Agency may issue bus tokens, fare cards, taxi fare books or other bulk vouchers.

- B. The type of public ground transportation which may be used on a particular occasion shall be determined by the Agency.
- C. If the employee elects to use a different but equally efficient type of public ground transportation, the employee will be reimbursed for the costs of the least expensive type of ground transportation.

**Section 11.A.** Upon timely application, the Agency will take all reasonable steps, consistent with current policies and procedures, to provide travel advances to employees prior to the date of departure on official travel.

- B. In cases of emergency job related travel, the Agency will take all reasonable steps to provide travel advances to employees in accordance with current policies and procedures.

**Section 12.** While assigned to Pre-Clearance or other foreign locations, employees will receive allowances in accordance with applicable State Department regulations.

**Section 13. Travel Handbook.**

- A. Matters not specifically addressed in the Article will be governed by the CBP Travel Handbook HB 5300-013A or a successor Handbook that has been implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law.
- B. The information contained in the Employer's Travel Handbook will be consistent with applicable law, rule, regulation, and this Agreement.
- C. The Employer will take reasonable steps to ensure the information contained in its Handbook is updated to reflect current travel laws, rules and regulations. Such steps will include providing NTEU (at the national level) notice and the opportunity to bargain over changes to the Handbook resulting from changes in law, rule or regulation in accordance with the procedures contained in Article 26: Bargaining.
- D. The Travel Handbook will be made readily available to employees through the Employer's intranet.

**Section 14. Government Travel Card Reimbursements.**

- A. Except for those relocation allowances identified below, CBP will reimburse an employee within thirty (30) calendar days of an employee's submission of a properly completed travel voucher. If CBP disputes all or any portion of a travel expense claim, CBP will pay the employee the amount of the travel claim which is not in dispute and notify the employee that all or part of the claim was disallowed

with a detailed explanation of the reason(s). The following relocation expenses are exempt from this provision:

- (1) Transportation and storage of household goods and professional books, papers and equipment;
- (2) Transportation of mobile home;
- (3) Transportation of a privately owned vehicle;
- (4) Temporary quarters subsistence expense, when not paid as lump sum;
- (5) Residence transaction expenses;
- (6) Relocation income tax allowance;
- (7) Use of a relocation services company;
- (8) Home marketing incentive payments; and
- (9) Allowance for property management services.

B. If, through no fault of the employee, CBP fails to reimburse an employee within thirty (30) calendar days:

- (1) Interest will be paid to the employee if the computed amount is \$1.00 or greater. The amount will be calculated using the prevailing Prompt Payment interest rate beginning the day after the required payment date and ending the day on which payment is made.
- (2) CBP will pay the employee an amount equivalent to any late payment fee the bank charged the employee for not paying the bill.
- (3) In accordance with the Travel Handbook and CBP Directive 51735-013B, "Standards of Conduct" and related Table of Offenses and Penalties or successor policies that have been implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law, CBP will refrain from taking any discipline or adverse action against an employee solely (i.e., absent aggravating circumstances) on the basis that an employee's account is delinquent due to CBP's non-payment.

## **ARTICLE 17: PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT**

**Section 1.A.** Part-time employment provides the Agency with flexibility to meet work requirements and provides a benefit to employees who require or prefer shorter hours, for example, older or handicapped individuals, students, and parents with family responsibilities.

- B.** To be considered part-time for the purposes of this Article, an employee must work between sixteen (16) and thirty-two (32) hours per week, or thirty-two (32) and sixty-four (64) hours per pay period.
- C.** The Agency will consider requests for part-time career employment and, when appropriate, will make such opportunities available, consistent with resource and operational requirements.
- D.** Employee requests for part-time employment must be made in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor. The Agency will give fair and objective consideration to the employee's request for part-time employment and grant such requests based on the Agency's need for the employee's services, the suitability of the position for part-time employment, availability of resources, and the impact on the efficiency of the Agency. Requests will be approved or disapproved within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt by the immediate supervisor. In the case of disapproval, the supervisor will inform the employee in writing and provide the reason for the denial.
- E.** Before an employee is assigned to a part-time position, the Agency will provide the employee information concerning the impact of the conversion from full-time to part-time employment in the areas of retirement, reduction-in-force, health and life insurance, promotion and step increases. This information will be provided to the employee in the form of a written fact sheet. The employee will be required to sign a statement indicating that they received this information.
- F.** Any person who is employed on a full-time basis shall not be required to accept part-time employment as a condition of employment.

**Section 2.A.** Job-sharing is a form of part-time employment in which the tours of duty of two or more employees are arranged in such a way as to cover a single full-time position.

- B.** The Agency will consider requests to job-share and may grant these requests based on the Agency's need for the employees' services, the suitability of the position for



job-sharing, availability of resources, and the impact on the efficiency of the Agency.

- C.** Employee requests to job-share must be made to the immediate supervisor(s) in writing, in accordance with the procedures of Section 1.D., above.
- D.** If one partner leaves the program for any reason, the other partner(s) will have forty-five (45) days from receiving written notice from the Agency to find another partner or resume full-time employment, unless workload demands require otherwise.

## **ARTICLE 18: CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

**Section 1.** The Employer will establish a Child Care Subsidy Program (Program or CCSP) in accordance with Public Law 106-554 and the terms of this Agreement, subject to budgetary considerations. The intent of the Program will be to make childcare more affordable for lower income employees whose children are, or will be, enrolled in licensed child care facilities. The implementation of the CCSP is subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

**Section 2.** The Employer will take the necessary steps to ensure the Program is established and operational not later than one (1) year following the effective date of this Agreement.

**Section 3.** The Employer will publicize the availability and characteristics of the Program on its intranet site.

### **Section 4. Eligibility and Administration.**

**A. Employee Eligibility:** All full and part time employees who meet all of the following requirements are eligible to participate in the Program:

(1) Total gross household income based on Adjusted Gross Income on the prior year's tax return(s) is not more than \$175,000;

(2) Have (or is the legal guardian of) a child or children under age thirteen (13) (under age eighteen 18 if the child is disabled); and

(3) Uses a home-based or center-based child care provider that:

(a) is located in the United States and licensed or regulated by state and/or local authorities in the state or locality in which the provider operates; or

(b) is located in a U.S. territory or overseas location and complies with the territory's and/or overseas' licensing requirements. If no such territory or overseas location requirement(s) exist:

i. CBP will accept any license, accreditation, or other certification issued by the Department of Defense authorizing its employees to use the home-based provider or center-based childcare facility; or

ii. If the Department of Defense does not have an established authorization, CBP will coordinate with the Department of Defense

to request a site visit and/or assessment of the home-based provider or center-based facility.

- iii. If the Department of Defense is unable and/or unwilling to assist, the employee will self-certify via a CBP form that the selected home-based provider or center-based childcare facility meets the general industry safety and health standards.

- B. Subsidy Limit: The amount of the subsidy provided under this Program will not exceed \$ 5,000 per calendar year, and will be reduced by any current federal, state, local, and/or military subsidy parents/guardians currently receive.
- C. Participation in other Federal Programs. In the event both parents (or legal guardians) work for Federal government agencies offering a child care subsidy program, the Employee must select only one of the programs in which their family will participate (not both).
- D. Annual Subsidy Calculation: Monthly subsidies paid will be calculated based on the below formulas:

Total Family Adjusted Gross Income	Maximum Subsidy Per Family Per Month
\$152,000 or less	\$400.00
\$152,001 – \$175,000	\$300.00
over \$175,000	\$0.00

\*\*To be eligible to participate in this program, an employee's household total Adjusted Gross Income must be no more than \$175,000 per year.

## Section 5. Program Application Procedures.

- A. Employees are eligible to register and enroll for the Program if currently utilizing licensed child care or will be starting licensed child care within forty-five (45) calendar days, as indicated on OPM Form 1644.
- B. To apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program, CBP employees must provide:
  - (1) Child Care Subsidy Application (OPM Form 1643), completed by the employee;
  - (2) Child Care Provider Information For the Child Care Subsidy Program for

- Federal Employees (OPM Form 1644), completed by the child care provider;
- (3) A copy of the most recent signed and dated Federal Income Tax Return for each parent/spouse or partner/guardian;
  - (4) A copy of the two most recent Leave and Earnings Statements (or equivalent) for each parent/spouse or partner/guardian;
  - (5) A copy of the employee's most recent Notification of Personnel Action (Form SF-50);
  - (6) If the child's name does not appear on the Federal Income Tax Return in subsection B(3) above, a copy any document that establishes the child as a dependent of the employee (e.g., birth certificate, adoption decree);
  - (7) A copy of the child care provider's license;
  - (8) A copy of the child care provider's schedule of fees; and
  - (9) Proof of enrollment of the child(ren) in the child care facility.
- C.** Within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date the employee submits an application, the Employer will approve applications submitted by eligible employees that are complete and meet the criteria contained in applicable law and regulation, and the terms of this Agreement. On an annual basis, participating employees must submit an updated application for approval/recertification.
- D.** After review of the application package, a letter of notification will be sent via CBP email notifying the applicant of non-eligibility or eligibility, including the subsidy amount and the effective date for receipt of the subsidy. Program participants must sign and return the letter of notification within thirty (30) calendar days in order for the subsidy effective date to be valid.
- E.** Participants will receive the subsidy under the program for eligible child care expenses incurred after the effective date listed on the letter of notification, issued to the program participant.
- F.** In the event that funding becomes unavailable, CBP will create a waitlist and pause new enrollment until funding becomes available. Once funding becomes available, CBP will invite waitlisted employees to apply in the order they were waitlisted. Waitlisted employees will have thirty (30) calendar days to submit their application. If the employee fails to respond within thirty (30) calendar days, CBP will invite the next employee on the waitlist to apply. The employee who failed to respond may request to be placed back on the waitlist.

- G. The CBP Child Care Subsidy issued during the calendar year will be reported on the Employee's W-2.

#### **Section 6. Renewing Participation.**

- A. Each year, by April 30 (or extended by the federal government), existing participants must submit updated OPM 1643, pay statements, tax returns(s), and provider fee schedules as well as an updated provider license if it is expired or expiring.
- B. If a participant does not renew by the stated deadline, the participant may be removed from the Program, and will need to reapply to receive any future subsidy.

#### **Section 7. Provider Changes.**

- A. If participant changes child care providers after enrolling into the Program, they must immediately, but no later than 30 calendar days, submit the following information to the Program Administrator (vendor):
- (1) The last date child(ren) will/did end care with the prior childcare provider and the first date child(ren) will/did start care with the new child care provider;
  - (2) Child care Provider Information Form (OPM 1644) for the new provider;
  - (3) A copy of the new provider's current license or state of compliance with state and/or local child care regulations;
  - (4) A copy of the new provider's fee schedule.
- B. In the case an outdated provider is paid, the participant is responsible for collecting overpaid funds from the outdated provider and returning them to the Program Administrator (vendor).
- C. If a participant's child care provider changes their rate, the participant must notify the Program Administrator in writing and submit applicable documentation (e.g., new rate sheet) within 30 calendar days. Failure to submit applicable documentation will result in a missed provider payment.

**Section 8.A.** Except as provided in subsection B below, monthly subsidy payments under this Program will be made directly to the child care provider based on services actually rendered. The Employer will make such payments when it receives the monthly invoice from the employee no later than the last day of the month following the month for which payment is requested (e.g., to obtain subsidy for services rendered in October, the employee must provide the invoice no later than November 30<sup>th</sup>).

- B.** For foreign territories or overseas locations where a child care provider/center does not have an established U.S. financial institution that can receive subsidy payments, CBP will make eligible subsidy payments directly to employees.
- C.** If an employee does not submit an invoice three months in a row they may be removed from the Program and can reapply (or if applicable, join the waitlist) when subsidy benefits are desired again.

**Section 9.** In the event an employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria, the Employee will notify the Employer immediately of the circumstances in writing. The employee will be responsible for reimbursing the Employer for any overpayment resulting from the employee's delay in notifying the Employer.

**Section 10.** Employees are responsible for determining and addressing all income tax consequences relating to the receipt of a subsidy under this Program.

## **ARTICLE 19: EMPLOYEE PROFICIENCY REVIEW**

This Article shall govern the administration of the Employee Proficiency Review (EPR) process for all employees within the bargaining unit.

### **Section 1. EPR Objectives:**

- A. To improve both individual and organizational performance;
- B. To encourage constructive, honest and open communication between supervisors and bargaining unit employees about performance issues;
- C. To encourage bargaining unit employees to participate in assessing their own strengths and areas requiring further development; and
- D. To meet statutory and regulatory requirements concerning the EPR process.

### **Section 2. Definitions.**

- A. ***Annual Proficiency Review*** is the written annual record of the proficiency review and the assignment of either a Successful or Unacceptable proficiency rating.
- B. ***Competencies*** are the broad-based (i.e., generic) components considered essential to achieving successful performance in all positions within CBP. These competencies collectively constitute the core critical element and will be the basis for the annual proficiency rating.
- C. ***Performance Plan*** is the document provided to each employee by the supervisor which outlines the critical element and related competency areas.
- D. ***Review*** means the process of assessing an employee's performance against established competencies.
- E. ***Review Period*** is a period of time, normally not less than twelve (12) months, during which an employee's performance will be reviewed.
- F. ***Successful Rating Level*** means the employee has successfully performed their assigned duties and responsibilities in furtherance of the mission and goals of CBP.

- G. *Unacceptable Rating Level*** means the employee's performance of their assigned duties and responsibilities is unacceptable. An unacceptable rating may not be issued to an employee until and unless the conditions of Section 9 (Improving Performance) have been satisfied.
- H. *Minimal Review Period*** is the minimum period of time allowed for the review of an employee. The minimum review period is ninety (90) consecutive calendar days.
- I. *Employee Proficiency Plan*** is a document prepared by the supervisor which describes an employee's deficiency in meeting a Successful level of performance, the steps which the employee must take to improve performance and the possible consequences of unimproved performance.
- J. *Employee Performance File*** is the file containing current official copies of an employee's performance plan, proficiency reviews, employee proficiency plan, and any supporting or related documentation concerning proficiency review.

**Section 3.A.** The Agency has determined that the proficiency ratings and competency areas discussed in this section shall be used in rating employees' annual performance.

- B.** The proficiency rating will constitute the annual performance rating as required by 5 C.F.R. § 430. Under the EPR process, each employee will receive, on an annual basis, one of the following two (2) proficiency ratings: Successful or Unacceptable.
- C.** The annual proficiency review will be based on an employee's performance as measured against the competencies which constitute the core critical element required for successful performance. Locally developed competency areas are not to be added to the core competencies for purposes of employee proficiency reviews.
- D.** In conducting this proficiency review, the supervisor will consider the level of the employee's job knowledge, technical skills, professional application and ability to work with others, as those terms are defined below. Individual proficiency ratings (i.e., Successful, Unacceptable) are not required for each of the individual competency areas. The overall proficiency rating shall be based on simultaneous consideration of all competency areas as parts of the core critical element to determine if the employee has performed at the Successful level. Thus, unacceptable performance in one or more of the competency areas may or may not result in a proficiency rating of Unacceptable.



#### **Section 4. Competency Areas.**

The Employer has determined the following Competency Areas will be used in rating the annual performance of employees:

Competency Area # 1 - Job Knowledge:

Properly interprets law, regulation, and Agency policy and directives in the performance of their respective duties.

Competency Area # 2 - Technical Skills

Proficient in the technical skills necessary to accomplish their assigned work in an effective and efficient manner. Examples would include use of job-specific equipment, automated systems/data bases, research materials, enforcement techniques, manuals, etc.

Competency Area # 3 - Professional Application

Effective application of job knowledge and technical skills. Examples include written and oral communication, leadership, planning and organization, analytical skills and problem solving.

Competency Area # 4 - Working with Others

Works constructively and in collaboration with co-workers and personnel from other agencies/organizations toward common goals. Shares information, knowledge and experience with others to accomplish team goals. Assumes personal responsibility for assigned areas. In all work situations, maintains open, honest and constructive interactions with co-workers, other agencies and the public.

#### **Section 5. Individual and Organizational Performance Planning.**

- A. At the beginning of the review cycle, the supervisor and employee will meet for a discussion of the job-specific expectations for performance. The purpose of this meeting is to jointly clarify how the competencies apply within the work environment so that there is a common understanding about the Agency's expectations for performance. At this time, the employee will receive a copy of the critical element, which consists of the four core competency areas, and will sign the Annual Proficiency Rating Form to acknowledge receipt.
- B. The Agency's expectations for performance must be reasonable, realistic, and attainable, providing the employee with a firm benchmark toward which they can aim their performance. Thus, the competencies should be applied in such a manner that an employee may achieve a Successful rating without attaining an "absolute or perfect" level of performance in one or more competency areas.

- C. If applicable, this meeting should include the communication and discussion of goals established by the Agency for the individual and the work unit's plan for contribution to applicable national goals/initiatives for the performance year.

### **Section 6. Optional Self-Assessment and Development Plan.**

- A. The self-assessment and development plan is an optional tool which an employee may use for self-improvement. Under this plan the employee assumes responsibility for their own development. This plan is focused on the development of an individual's job-related skills and is not a vehicle for achieving promotion. The Agency recognizes its responsibility to help employees raise their level of competence and is committed to support employee self-development plans within available Agency resources such as time, money, etc. An employee self-development plan is not meant to supersede the provisions for employee development spelled out in Article 32: Employee Development. Rather, it is meant to encourage current-job performance-related communication between the employee and their supervisor.
- B. The self-assessment portion of this plan is expected to help the employee gain some insight into their strengths, identify areas for self-improvement and obtain current-job performance-related feedback from the supervisor.
- C. The optional self-assessment and development plan may be prepared in advance for use at any stage of the EPR cycle (beginning of the year, on-going reviews or final annual review).

### **Section 7. On-Going Reviews.**

Throughout the performance cycle, the supervisor and the employee should meet frequently to discuss the employee's performance to date and, if pertinent, progress made toward achieving any previously identified goals, objectives or development. The employee or supervisor may initiate an on-going review meeting at any time. At least one on-going review meeting will be conducted during the sixth or seventh month of the performance cycle. An employee's individual contributions to team or unit goals may also be discussed. Employees are encouraged to utilize the optional worksheet for the purpose of preparing for on-going review meetings. An employee's signature is not required for any on-going review meeting except the one that is held during the sixth or seventh month of the performance cycle.

### **Section 8. Final Review Procedures.**

- A. The review period will normally coincide with the fiscal year. However, the parties may, at the DFO, headquarters or appropriate headquarters or field office level,

agree to a June 1-May 31 review period for one or more ports within the DFO area. Absent unusual circumstances, all reviews must be completed within one (1) month after completion of the performance cycle.

- B.** Every employee is assigned one immediate supervisor for the purpose of completing the annual proficiency review, on-going reviews, any development plan and any associated meetings. However, in the case where employees and/or supervisors rotate, the assigned supervisor may, in making these determinations, rely on input provided by other immediate supervisors who have directly supervised the employee's work during the performance cycle. As an exception to the requirements of 8.C. below, the annual proficiency review will not be deferred where the assigned supervisor is able to rely on input provided by other immediate supervisors who have directly supervised the employee's work during the performance cycle under the same approved performance plan for ninety (90) days.
- C.** The annual proficiency review will be deferred if:

  - (1) The supervisor/employee relationship has not existed for ninety (90) days (i.e., the supervisor lacks ninety (90) days as the employee's immediate supervisor);
  - (2) The employee has not served under an approved performance plan in accordance with this Article for a minimum ninety (90) day period; **or**
  - (3) An employee has been issued an Employee Proficiency Plan as described in Section 9.
- D.** If a proficiency review has been deferred under Subsection C.(1) or (2) above, the employee's performance cycle will be extended to provide a full ninety (90) day basis for evaluation at which time a proficiency rating will be issued. In cases where an employee's extended absence does not permit the minimum period of time for a review, the employee will not receive a proficiency rating that appraisal period (e.g., long-term training, LWOP, etc.).
- E.** Authorized time spent performing Union representational functions will not be considered when assessing employee performance.
- F.** Full-time Union representatives may request a proficiency rating, provided they have performed sufficient overtime work - the equivalent of ninety (90) days - to have their performance assessed. Such requests should be made in writing and submitted to the appropriate rating official along with a listing of the overtime assignments worked during the rating period.
- G.** Full-time Union representatives who do not work overtime or have not performed

sufficient overtime work to have their performance assessed are considered unratable in accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 430. However, in the event of a RIF, these employees will receive ratings in accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 351.203.

- H.** Both the supervisor and the employee will sign the EPR and the employee will be provided with a copy. A secondary review signature will be required only when performance is at an Unacceptable level.

## **Section 9. Improving Performance.**

- A.** Improving the deficient performance of employees is in the best interests of the individual employee and promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency. The objective of the improvement process is to eliminate deficiencies in an employee's performance. This process is intended to be corrective in nature, not punitive.
- B.** This process is not intended to address misconduct or remediation matters (e.g., habitual tardiness). Such matters should be dealt with under Article 45: Disciplinary Actions and/or Article 46: Adverse Actions.
- C.** Deficiencies in performance should be recognized and their causes determined as soon as they become evident. Most deficiencies should be corrected through normal interactions between the employee and supervisor. Such interactions should take place prior to the issuance of an EPP. An EPP is intended for those situations where deficiencies continue and should be issued at the earliest opportunity. An Unacceptable proficiency rating may not be given to an employee prior to the employee having completed the EPP. A review during the sixth or seventh month of the performance cycle, and the final review period, are not and should not be the only opportunities for the Agency to issue EPPs.
- D.** At the time the EPP is provided to the employee, it shall be discussed with the employee. Prior to the onset of the meeting for discussion of the EPP, the employee will be advised that a request for Union representation at the meeting will be honored. As part of the EPP discussion process, the employee will be afforded the opportunity to make verbal or written comments. The employee and supervisor will sign and date the EPP, indicating only that the employee has received a copy.
- E.** The EPP provided for above will contain:
- (1) Identification of the Competency Area(s) in which the employee is deficient;
  - (2) An explanation and/or examples of the specific duties which are not being performed adequately;

- (3) Advice as to what the employee must do to bring performance to a Successful level;
  - (4) A statement that the employee will be given a minimum of sixty (60) days to demonstrate improvement in performance;
  - (5) A description of the type(s) of assistance the Agency will make available (e.g., formal and/or on-the-job training, increased supervision, etc);
  - (6) A warning of the possible consequences of unimproved performance, and if applicable, advice that the employee's within-grade increase will be withheld;
  - (7) A statement that employee requests will be honored for union representation at meetings where EPPs are issued; and
  - (8) Information about the availability and means of contacting the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Note: Such notice is not intended to imply that the Agency has determined that the employee is in need of EAP services, nor that the employee's participation is mandatory.
- F.** An EPP may be issued at any time throughout the proficiency review cycle. If an EPP is issued less than sixty (60) days prior to the end of the proficiency review period, the assignment of the annual proficiency rating will be deferred until the employee has had a minimum of sixty (60) days in which to demonstrate improved performance.
- G.** An employee will be given, at a minimum, sixty (60) days to demonstrate improvement in performance under the EPP. The supervisor will keep the employee informed of their progress by means of counseling as appropriate. At the end of the EPP period, the employee's performance will be reviewed by the supervisor. If the Agency determines that the employee's performance has improved to a Successful level, then the EPP will be removed from the Employee Performance Folder (EPF) when a progress review is given, or at the end of the review period, whichever occurs first. If the employee does not improve to the Successful level, the Agency will exercise its options to extend the EPP, reassign the employee, or initiate reduction in grade or removal action, as deemed appropriate.
- H.** One supervisor will issue and monitor the EPP. This supervisor should have direct knowledge of the employee's deficiencies. However, in the case of rotating employees and/or supervisors, the supervisor issuing the EPP may, subsequent to issuing the EPP, consult with, and be provided with input from, other supervisors

who will directly supervise the employee's work during the EPP period.

- I.** In no instance will an employee's performance be rated Unacceptable without the employee having been issued an EPP.
- J.** The requirements of this Section do not apply to employees serving probationary or trial periods.

**Section 10. Temporary Assignments/Details.**

- A.** If an employee's proficiency review is due while that employee is on TDY/Detail for ninety (90) days or less, the Proficiency Review will be completed by the supervisor at the employee's home duty station.
- B.** If an employee's proficiency review is due while that employee is on TDY for over ninety (90) days, the proficiency review will be completed by the TDY/Detail supervisor. The proficiency review and optional self-assessment and development plan, if one exists, will be mailed back to the employee's home duty station.
- C.** Copies of proficiency review ratings issued under subsections A and B above will be provided to the permanent supervisor at the employee's home duty station.

**Section 11. Record Keeping.**

- A.** The current official copies of the performance plan, proficiency reviews, EPPs, and any supporting or related documentation concerning proficiency review shall be maintained in accordance with local procedures in an EPF. Proficiency reviews will be maintained for at least four (4) years.
- B.** The EPF, and the materials contained therein, shall be maintained by the Agency and shall be made available only to Agency officials with the need for such information. The information in the EPF shall be safeguarded and released only for the purposes listed in the Office of Personnel Management's Privacy Act Notice covering EPFs.
- C.** Employees may review their EPFs upon request.

**Section 12.** In the event the Agency finds it necessary to change the current employee performance rating levels, NTEU will be provided advance notice and the opportunity to bargain in accordance with the procedures contained in Article 26: Bargaining

## **ARTICLE 20: ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE**

**Section 1.A.** An acceptable level of competence (ALC) means performance by an employee warrants advancement of the employee's rate of basic pay to the next higher step of the grade of the employee's position.

**B.** Within-Grade Increase (WGI). In accordance with applicable law, an employee will be granted a within grade increase (WGI) upon meeting the following requirements:

- (1) The employee must have completed the required waiting period;
- (2) The employee must not have received an equivalent increase in pay during the required waiting period; and
- (3) The employee's most recent rating of record must be of an acceptable level of competence.

**Section 2.A.** The ALC determination will be made by the employee's supervisor in a fair and objective manner, and free of personal favoritism.

- B.** The supervisor will use the rating of record which was issued no earlier than the most recently completed performance cycle in making the acceptable level of competence decision, unless a special rating of record is prepared as described in Subsection 2.C. To be determined at an acceptable level of competence, the employee's rating of record shall be at least Successful. A WGI will not be granted to an employee whose most recent or special rating of record is less than Successful.
- C.** In any case in which the supervisor's ALC determination is not consistent with the employee's most recent rating of record described in Subsection 2.A, a special rating of record shall be prepared covering the period between the annual rating and the employee's ALC anniversary date.
- D.** If the supervisor determines that the employee's performance is below the acceptable level of competence, the employee will be given sixty (60) working days (days that the employee actually worked) within which to demonstrate performance at a Successful level (the "EPP period"). The EPP period may be reduced if the Employer determines that the employee's performance is Successful sooner. This notice will be provided through the issuance of an Employee Proficiency Plan (EPP), in accordance with Article 19: Employee Proficiency Review. If sixty (60) days in advance of the WGI due date, the employee is on an EPP which includes a warning that a WGI may be withheld, then no additional notice will be required.

- E. If the employee's performance improves to the Successful level at the end of the EPP period, the notice will be canceled and the effective date of the WGI will be the first day of the first pay period after the acceptable determination has been made.
- F. If the employee's performance does not improve to the Successful level by the end of the EPP period, the WGI may be denied. When a WGI is to be denied, the employee will be informed that their WGI is being withheld as soon as possible after the end of the waiting period. When a WGI is to be denied, the employee shall be given written notice which contains the following:
- (1) Statement of denial of within-grade increase;
  - (2) Reasons for the negative determination and the respects in which the employee must improve the employee's performance in order to be granted a WGI;
  - (3) Employee's right to request, in writing a reconsideration of the negative determination within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the negative determination;
  - (4) Name of the reconsideration official to whom the request should be sent; and
  - (5) An additional copy which states at the top of the first page: **THIS COPY MAY AT YOUR OPTION BE FURNISHED TO YOUR NTEU REPRESENTATIVE.**

**Section 3.A.** Requests for reconsideration of a negative determination must be filed in writing within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the notice of final negative determination. NTEU is under no obligation to represent non-members who wish to challenge reconsideration of a negative WGI determination.

- B. An employee reconsideration file will be established and maintained by the Agency. The file will not contain any document that has not been made available to the employee with an opportunity to submit a written exception to any summary of the employee's personal presentation. This file will contain all pertinent documents related to the negative determination and the request for reconsideration to include:
- (1) Written negative determination and the basis therefore;
  - (2) Employee's written request for reconsideration;
  - (3) Report of investigation when an investigation is made;
  - (4) Written summary or transcript of any personal presentation; and
  - (5) The Agency's decision on the request for reconsideration.



- C. An employee in a duty status shall be granted a reasonable amount of official time to review the material relied upon to support the negative determination and to prepare a response to the determination after which the agency will provide the employee with a prompt written decision.
- D. The deciding official in reconsideration cases shall be an appropriate higher level official designated by the Agency, who has greater authority than the official who issued the initial determination.
- E. If a meeting is requested, the Agency will determine the location of the meeting. Attendance at such meeting will be limited to the employee, the employee's local Union representative and/or NTEU's national field representative and such representatives as the Agency may designate. Where the Agency chooses a site other than the employee's work location, the Agency will pay travel and per diem costs for the local representative.

**Section 4.A.** An ALC determination will be delayed when:

- (1) the employee has not worked under a performance plan in their current position for the minimum ninety (90) day review period and the employee has not been given a rating of record in any position within ninety (90) days before the end of the waiting period; or
  - (2) the employee was reduced in grade because of poor performance and has not served at least ninety (90) days under the performance plan in the new position.
- B.** In the circumstances cited in subsection 4.A above, the employee's ALC determination will be postponed until the employee has worked under an approved performance plan for ninety (90) days. Upon completion of the minimum ninety (90) days, the employee will receive a special rating of record in accordance with Article 19: Employee Proficiency Review. The rating issued will serve as the basis for the delayed ALC determination. If the employee's performance is determined to meet the acceptable level of competence (i.e., proficiency rating of Successful), the WGI will be retroactive to the beginning of the pay period following completion of the waiting period.

**Section 5.A.** When an employee's work is determined to be of an acceptable level of competence in accordance with the requirements of Section 2 of this Article, the effective

date of the WGI will be the first day of the first pay period following completion of the waiting period.

- B.** If a negative ALC determination is changed upon reconsideration or appeal, the WGI will be granted retroactively, unless prohibited by applicable law or higher Agency regulations, and the effective date for the WGI is the date on which it would have been due.
- C.** When an ALC determination is not made on a timely basis through administrative error, oversight or delay, the determination shall be made based upon the employee's performance during the period that would have been covered had the determination been made in a timely manner. The effective date for the WGI is the date on which it would have been due.

**Section 6.A.** After being withheld, the Agency will granted the WGI at any time after it is determined that the employee has demonstrated sustained performance at an ALC.

- B.** After withholding a WGI, the Agency will determine, at a minimum, whether the employee's performance is at an ALC after fifty two (52) calendar weeks following the original due date for the WGI. If an acceptable level of competence is achieved and the agency determines that a WGI is warranted, the effective date of the within-grade increase shall be the first pay period after an acceptable level of competence has been achieved. If the new determination is again negative, the employee must again be so notified.

**Section 7.** Appeals under this Article are only subject to the final step of the grievance procedure and expedited arbitration procedures set forth in Article 27: Grievance Procedure and Article 28: Arbitration.

**Section 8.** Determinations that an employee is not performing at an ALC will not be used to dispose of questions of misconduct not directly related to job performance.

## **ARTICLE 21: UNACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE**

**Section 1.A.** The actions covered by the provisions of this Article are: reduction in grade and removal for unacceptable performance for employees serving in bargaining unit positions at the time the action was initiated.

- B.** The Agency will determine when the need arises for such action (i.e., the employee's performance is at an unacceptable level in one or more critical elements for which the employee was afforded an opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance) and the action will be carried out in a prompt and timely manner in accordance with applicable law and regulation.
- C.** Prior to initiating any such action, the Agency will prepare an Employee Proficiency Plan (EPP) in accordance with Article 19: Employee Proficiency Review. The employee will be provided a reasonable EPP period, at least sixty (60) working days, to demonstrate acceptable performance to the Successful level. The opportunity period may be reduced if the Agency determines that the employee's performance is Successful sooner.
- D.** Where sufficient improvement to meet the Successful level has not been demonstrated during the initial sixty (60) day period, the EPP may be extended for a reasonable period of time as determined by management, or the Agency will initiate reduction in grade, or removal action, as appropriate.

**Section 2.** Once a determination has been made to proceed with actions indicated in Subsection 1.A of this Article, the Union will be provided with advance written notice and will be given the opportunity to attend any formal discussions conducted with the affected bargaining unit employee concerning that action.

**Section 3.** An employee whose reduction in grade or removal is proposed under this Article will be provided with thirty (30) days, but no more than sixty (60) days, advance written notice which identifies:

- A.** Specific instances of unacceptable performance by the employee on which the proposed action is based;
- B.** The performance expectations of the employee's position that apply to each instance of unacceptable performance;
- C.** That the employee shall receive a reasonable amount of official time to review the material relied upon to support the proposed action and to prepare an answer orally and/or in writing;

- D.** That the employee has the right to be represented by the Union, consistent with Article 5, Section 4, or an attorney or other representative of their own choosing; and,
- E.** That the Agency will provide a written response and specific reasons at the earliest practicable date.

**Section 4.** The advance written notice period may be extended for 30 days or for a longer period, but only as consistent with 5 CFR § 432.105(a)(4)(i)(B)(1)-(6) or (C).

**Section 5.** Where an action is proposed under this Article, an employee will be provided with a copy of those portions of all written documents which contain information or evidence relied upon by the Agency in proposing the action. The Agency will also supply the employee with a copy of those portions of written documents that are favorable to the employee and are related to the identified instances of unacceptable performance. Such information shall be supplied in a manner consistent with the requirements and provisions of the Privacy Act.

**Section 6.A.** An employee against whom an action is proposed under this Article shall be provided with reasonable time (normally fourteen (14) calendar days) from receipt of the notice of the proposed action and all information set forth in Section 5 above to review material relied upon by the Agency and answer the proposed action orally and/or in writing. The employee may submit affidavits and/or other documentary evidence in support of the answer. If the employee wishes to make an oral reply, the request for an oral reply must be made within seven (7) days of the date the employee receives the letter of proposal and all information. In no case will the employee be required to present their reply sooner than three (3) working days after receiving the material relied upon in the notice.

- B.** The employee shall have the right to be represented by the Union, consistent with Article 5, Section 4, or an attorney or other representative of their own choosing in connection with the oral and/or written reply.
- C.** An employee will have the right to raise any defense to the proposed action allowed by applicable laws and regulations.
- D.** The Employer shall prepare a summary of any oral reply or, by mutual agreement, provide the Union a digital recording of any oral reply. The employee may review the summary and make corrections or shall submit their version of the summary within a reasonable amount of time if corrections are not mutually agreeable.
- E.** The management official presiding at the oral reply will have reviewed the entire case file, including the materials relied on and the employee's written reply if one

was previously submitted.

- F.** The deciding official will carefully consider the employee's oral and/or written replies in rendering their decision.

**Section 7.A.** The decision to retain, reduce in grade, or remove an employee:

- B.** Shall be made within thirty (30) days after the date of expiration of the notice period, and

- C.** In the case of a reduction-in-grade or removal, may be based only on those instances of unacceptable performance by the employee:

- (1) Which occurred during the one (1) year period ending on the date the notice was issued under Section 1C; and
- (2) For which the notice and other requirements of this Article are complied with.

- D.** The decision shall:

- (1) Specify, or cite by reference to the proposal letter, the instances of unacceptable performance by the employee on which the reduction in grade or removal is based;
- (2) Be concurred with by an Agency manager who is a higher position than the person who proposed the action unless proposed by the Commissioner of CBP; and,
- (3) Contain the reasons supporting the decision, will address employee allegations of pertinent factual discrepancies concerning the incident, and will be served upon the employee and the Union.

**Section 8.** The employee shall be provided with a copy of the notice of proposed action, the answer of the employee when written, a summary thereof when made orally, the notice of decision and supporting reasons, and any order effecting an action covered by this Article, together with any supporting material. The Agency shall provide the employee and/or their designated representative an audio recording of the oral reply if the oral reply is recorded.

**Section 9.** Where the Union moves a matter to arbitration under this Article:

- A.** The arbitrator shall be governed by Section 7701(c)(1)(A) of Title 5, United States Code (i.e., the Agency shall bear the burden of proof and the decision of the Agency shall be sustained only if the Agency's decision is supported by substantial evidence).

**B.** The Agency's decision affecting any action under this Article may not be sustained if the Union:

- (1) Shows harmful error to the employee in the application of the procedures of this Article in arriving at such decision;
- (2) Shows that the decision was based on any prohibited personnel practice described in Article 7: Protection Against Prohibited Personnel Practices; or
- (3) Shows that the decision was not in accordance with other law.

**Section 10.A.** Adverse decisions under this Article may be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board or, with the consent of the Union, directly to arbitration, but not both.

- B.** An employee shall be deemed to have exercised their option under this Section at such time as the employee timely initiates an appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board, or arbitration is invoked, whichever event occurs first.
- C.** An employee who elects to appeal an action to the Merit Systems Protection Board may be represented by the Union, consistent with Article 5, Section 4, or an attorney or other representative of their own choosing. An employee who elects to appeal an action using the grievance and arbitration procedures provided in the Agreement may be represented only by the Union.

**Section 11.A.** Any of the time limits set forth in this Article may be extended or waived by mutual agreement of the parties.

- B.** Reasonable extensions of time will be granted by the Agency on a case-by-case basis, upon good cause shown.

**Section 12.** If because of performance improvement by the employee during the notice period, the employee is not reduced in grade or removed and the employee's performance continues to be acceptable for one (1) year from the date of the advance written notice provided under Section 3 of this Article, any entry or other notation of the unacceptable performance for which the action was proposed under this Article shall be removed from any Agency record relating to the employee.

**Section 13.** The provisions of this Article do not apply to those employees specifically excluded by governing law or regulation.

**Section 14.** This Article applies to bargaining unit employees who have completed their applicable probationary or trial period.

## **ARTICLE 22: INVESTIGATIONS**

**Section 1.** This Article contains the policy and procedures to be followed when bargaining unit employees are the subjects of, or involved with investigative and administrative interviews. These policies and procedures will be followed by Agency and Union representatives and employees participating in these interviews/examinations. Agency representatives include CBP managers, supervisors, factfinders, and the Office of Professional Responsibility.

### **Section 2. Union Notice.**

- A.** When the Agency knows in advance that it is going to conduct an interview of an employee(s), the applicable NTEU Chapter will receive reasonable advance notice when and where the interviews are being conducted by the Agency, whether the interview will be audio/video tape-recorded and whether the employee will be the focus of the investigation or a third-party witness. The Union will also be informed of the general subject matter of the investigation when it is criminal in nature. When the interview is administrative in nature, the Union will normally be informed of the specific nature of the allegations, such as misuse of a government vehicle, misuse of position, inappropriate outside employment, etc. This information will be provided before the interview will take place.
- B.** OPR and NTEU are committed to working together in a professional manner to coordinate on scheduling interviews. The parties will attempt to mutually determine when the interview will take place so that NTEU may select the appropriate individual to represent the employee. In the event that the parties are unsuccessful, upon request, CBP will explain to the applicable NTEU Chapter in writing why its suggested date cannot be accommodated.

**Section 3. Location of Interviews.** Absent extenuating circumstances, interviews that are administrative in nature will be conducted at the employee's worksite. Interviews that are criminal in nature will be held at a location determined by the Agency.

**Section 4.A.** Employees and Union representatives acknowledge their responsibilities under Sections 12 and 13 when participating in investigative and administrative interviews under this Article.

- B.** CBP representatives will also act in a professional manner when conducting investigative and administrative interviews under this Article.

**Section 5. General Notice.** When an employee is interviewed by the Agency, and the

employee is the subject of an investigation, the employee will be informed of the general nature of the matter (i.e., criminal or administrative misconduct) being investigated and be informed whether or not the interview is related to possible criminal misconduct by the employee. This notice shall be on a form (see Appendix A-1) which the employee will sign and date at the outset of the interview.

**Section 6. Employee Weingarten Rights.** When any Agency representative is obtaining information from a bargaining unit employee, verbally or in writing that could lead to potential discipline or adverse action, the Agency representative shall advise the employee of the right to union representation prior to the commencement of questioning. This notice shall be on a form (see Appendix A-2) that the employee signs at the beginning of the interview and is witnessed by another Agency representative.

- A. If the employee exercises the option to have union representation present, the employee will have a reasonable period of time to secure Union representation.
- B. The arrangements made to accommodate Union representation in subsection A may not cause an unnecessary delay prompting an obstruction of the Agency's investigation.
- C. Where a representative of the Agency denies an employee the opportunity to be represented by the Union during an interview, the employee will, upon request, be provided with the reason for the denial in writing.
- D. Interviews that begin before or continue beyond the employee's regular duty hours shall constitute hours of work and be compensated.
- E. The Agency will annually inform employees of their rights under 5 U.S.C. § 7114(a)(2)(B).

**Section 7. Third Party Witness Interviews.** Prior to beginning interviews with employees who are being interviewed as third party witnesses, the Agency will provide employees with a form (see Appendix A-3), which shall be signed and dated by the employee at the outset of the interview.

**Section 8. Miranda Rights.** When an employee who is the subject of a criminal investigation is interviewed in custody by the Agency, the employee shall be given a statement of the employee's Constitutional rights in writing on a form (see Appendix A-4) prior to commencement of questioning. The employee shall sign the statement of rights and indicate if the employee is waiving these rights.

**Section 9. Beckwith Rights.** In a non-custodial interview involving possible criminal matters, an employee will be advised in writing of the employee's rights and the



consequences of refusing to answer the questions posed to the employee on the grounds that the answers may tend to incriminate the employee. This notice shall be on a form (see Appendix A-5) that the employee signs and dates prior to the commencement of questioning.

**Section 10. Kalkines Rights.** In an interview involving possible criminal matters, where prosecution has been declined by appropriate authority, an employee will be required to answer questions only after the Agency representative has provided the employee with the appropriate assurances. Prior to requiring an employee to answer under such circumstances, the Agency representative shall inform the employee that the employee's statements concerning the allegations during the interview cannot and will not be used against the employee in a subsequent criminal proceeding, except for possible perjury charges for any false answers given during the interview. This notice shall be on a form (see Appendix A-6) which shall be signed and dated by the employee at the outset of the interview.

**Section 11.** All Appendix A Forms will be modified to include a space for the name, position, and signature of the investigator presenting the form to the employee for signature. The employee will be provided a copy of the completed form by the conclusion of the interview.

**Section 12.A.** In any interview where the employee is not the subject of a criminal investigation, or when an employee has been advised of the employee's rights under Section 10., above, the Agency representative has the authority to inform the employee that:

- (1) The employee must disclose any information known to the employee concerning the matter being investigated;
- (2) The employee must answer any questions posed regarding any matter which has a reasonable relationship to matters of official interest and may properly refuse to answer questions regarding matters in which the Agency has no official interest;
- (3) The employee's failure or refusal to answer such questions may result in disciplinary or adverse action; and
- (4) A false answer to any such question may result in criminal prosecution.
- (5) The employee may discuss the matters raised in the interview with the Union but not with other employees until the investigation is completed.

**B.** When an employee refuses to answer a question in accordance with this section, the

Agency representative shall inform the employee of the employee's obligation to answer.

**Section 13.A.** Employees have the ability to secure an NTEU representative to participate in all phases of the investigative interview in accordance with this Article. When the person being interviewed is accompanied by a representative furnished by the Union, in both criminal and non-criminal cases, the role of the representative includes, but is not limited to the following rights:

- (1) To clarify the questions;
- (2) To clarify the answers;
- (3) To assist the employee in providing favorable or extenuating facts;
- (4) To suggest other employees who have knowledge of relevant facts; and
- (5) To advise the employee.

**B.** However, a union representative may not disrupt an investigation by transforming the interview into an adversarial contest.

**C.** The employee being interviewed by OPR will not be permitted to carry a firearm. Absent extenuating circumstances, a Uniformed Union Representative will be permitted to carry their duty weapon.

**Section 14.** Prior to interviewing anyone other than the subject of the investigation, the Agency will be mindful of its obligations to obtain all reasonable and necessary information from the employee, rather than others, in accordance with the Privacy Act.

**Section 15. Employee Interviews.**

**A.** If a sworn written affidavit is required by an Agency representative, employees are allowed to review their answers and to make any changes they deem are required at the completion of a sworn affidavit at the conclusion of an investigative interview. If a recording is made of the interview, the opportunity to review includes the ability to listen to a portion of or the entire recording to verify answers before executing the affidavit. A clean version of the affidavit will be provided after the employee reviews and before the employee being interviewed signs the affidavit. A signed copy of affidavits will be provided to the employee except in the following circumstances:

- (1) Ongoing criminal investigations; or

- (2) When multiple employees are being interviewed regarding the same investigation. In such circumstances, and upon request by the employee, all employees will be provided a copy of the employee's affidavit within fourteen (14) days of the last employee interview. If any employee is re-interviewed a copy of their prior affidavit will be made available upon request before they are re-interviewed.

**B.** CBP has determined that audio and/or video recordings will only be used during investigative interviews conducted by OPR with the exception of Fact Finders. The following procedures will apply to recorded interviews conducted by OPR:

- (1) At the completion of an investigatory interview, the investigator or agent will offer the subject/witness and union representative, if involved, the opportunity to review the audio and/or video recording of the interview, in whole or in part, to ensure that the investigatory interview was properly recorded.
- (2) At the conclusion of the review, the subject/witness will attest that the recording is an exact and true copy of the previously reviewed recording in a supplemental recorded statement. In the event the interview was not properly recorded, the investigator or Agent will conduct a subsequent interview. Such subsequent interviews may be conducted on the same day when the prior not properly recorded interview lasted less than three hours. If the prior not properly recorded interview lasted more than three hours the subsequent interview may be scheduled on the same day, at the employee's option.
- (3) A subject or witness has the right to waive the review process.
- (4) The recording will capture the employee's acknowledgement to review or decline of reviewing of the recorded interview.
- (5) A subject or witness may provide a written statement to the Agent or investigator at any phase of the investigation. Alternatively, the employee may request a supplemental investigatory interview subject to the provisions of this Article.
- (6) At the completion of the investigatory interview, employees are allowed to review their answers and to make any changes or clarifying statements they deem are required. This opportunity to review includes the ability to listen to a portion of or the entire audio and/or video recording to verify answers and to make additional statements on the audio and/or video recording before the interview concludes.

- (7) Audio recordings will capture all sounds of those present for the investigatory interview, as practicable. Video recordings will view all individuals of those present for the investigatory interview, if feasible.
- (8) Upon request, recordings will be provided to the employee except in the following circumstances:
  - (a) Ongoing criminal investigations; or
  - (b) When multiple employees are being interviewed regarding the same investigation. In such circumstances and upon request by the employee, all employees will be provided a copy of the employee's affidavit within fourteen (14) days of the last employee interview. If any employee is re-interviewed, a copy of their prior recording will be made available before they are re-interviewed.

**Note:** Reproducing recordings is labor intensive and copies will not be available at the conclusion of the interview when requested. Copies will be provided within five (5) calendar days of the interview.

- (9) In the event a written transcript is developed of the recording, and the Agency proposed a disciplinary or adverse action, the transcript will be provided to the Union.
- (10) In the event the audio and/or video recording is used by CBP as materials relied upon to support a proposed or final disciplinary or adverse action, the entire video and audio recording will be provided by CBP to the employee and with the employee's permission, their NTEU representative.
- (11) Upon request, employees may take breaks during the investigatory interview.
- (12) When providing audio video recordings, CBP will provide NTEU with at least one (1) copy that is compatible with CBP equipment.

**Section 16.** At the conclusion of an investigation governed by this Article which does not result in the proposal of any criminal or administrative action, the Agency will notify the affected employee of that fact in writing within thirty (30) calendar days.

## **ARTICLE 23: REDUCTION IN FORCE**

This Article will apply to reductions in force (RIF) conducted by the Employer. First and foremost, CBP and NTEU will exhaust every effort to avoid the need for RIF. If a RIF is necessary, this article will mitigate the impact of any RIF decision on the employees, attempt to reduce the number of employees who would be involuntarily separated, downgraded, or otherwise impacted; retain employees who have institutional knowledge of CBP; establish procedures that will be used by the Employer to implement RIF; and establish procedures for any expedited bargaining in connection with a reorganization associated with a RIF.

### **Section 1. RIF.**

- A.** Pursuant to 5 I 351.201, a reduction in force (RIF) is the release of a competing employee from their competitive level by furlough for more than thirty (30) days, separation, demotion, or reassignment requiring displacement, when the release is required because of lack of work; shortage of funds; insufficient personnel ceiling; reorganization; the exercise of reemployment or restoration rights or reclassification of an employee's position due to erosion of duties when such action will take effect after an agency has formally announced a reduction in force in the employee's competitive area and when the reduction in force will take effect within one hundred and eighty (180) days. The need to apply RIF procedures does not suspend the Employer's authority and responsibility to take other legitimate employee actions, such as reassignment, change of duty station, or demotion for unacceptable performance. Such actions may be taken before, during, or after a RIF, but appropriate procedures must be followed.
- B.** In accordance with the foregoing, the Employer retains the right to determine the organization and numbers of employees within CBP; and, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and this Agreement, to assign, release and retain employees within CBP; and to remove or reduce in grade such employees; and to determine the numbers, types and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project or tour of duty. Furthermore, management retains the right to determine whether a reduction in force is necessary and when a reduction in force will take place.
- C.** Reduction in force within CBP shall be carried out in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and this Article.

## Section 2. Definitions.

- A. Release** – To remove an employee from their current competitive level.
- B. Tenure** – The period of time the employee may reasonably expect to serve under a current appointment.
- C. Competitive Area** – The organizational and geographical boundaries in which employees compete for retention under RIF procedures.
- D. Competitive Service** – All civilian positions in the Federal Government that are not specifically excepted from the civil service laws by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by the OPM under Rule VI and are not in the Senior Executive Service.
- E. Excepted Service** – All positions in the executive branch of the Federal Government which are specifically excepted from the competitive service by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by OPM, and which are not in the Senior Executive Service.
- F. Competitive Level** – A group of positions in the same grade and classification series, and official tour of duty. These jobs are so similar in qualifications, duties and responsibilities that the Agency can move an employee from one position to another without significant training and without unduly interrupting the work program.
- G. Retention Register** – A list of competing employees within a competitive level who are grouped by tenure, veteran's preference or length of service.
- H. Retention Standing** – An employee's relative standing on a retention register based on tenure, veteran's preference or length of service.
- I. Subgroup Standing** – The employee's relative standing on a retention register based on tenure group and veteran's preference subgroup. It does not take into account length of service.
- J. Days** – Calendar days.

**Section 3. Release Factors.** CBP will follow the procedures contained in 5 I Part 351 when conducting a RIF. The law provides that agencies must give effect to four factors in releasing employees:

- A.** tenure of employment (e.g., type of appointment);

- B. veterans' preference;
- C. total creditable Federal civilian and uniformed service; and
- D. Performance ratings.

#### **Section 4. Competitive Areas.**

- A. Washington, DC Metro Area: All Headquarters positions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area shall constitute one (1) competitive area for reduction in force purposes. Separate competitive areas will be established by individual commuting areas for positions physically located outside the metropolitan Washington, DC area, including overseas duty stations. Competitive areas established under this paragraph will not include field positions (i.e., positions outside of CBP Headquarters).
- B. Outside of the Washington, DC Metro Area: The competitive areas outside of CBP Headquarters will be defined geographically by local commuting area. The commuting area will include a population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and reasonably can be expected to travel back and forth daily from home to work in their usual employment.
- C. Competitive and excepted service employees compete separately for retention.

#### **Section 5. Competitive Level.**

- A. Pursuant to 5 I 351.403, the Employer shall establish competitive levels and maintain documents to describe them. Each competitive level will consist of all positions in a competitive area which are in the same grade or occupational level and classification series and which are similar enough in duties, qualification requirements, pay schedules, and working conditions so that the Employer may reassign the incumbent of one position to any of the other positions in the level without undue interruption.
- B. No reduction in force action may be taken until every position in the affected competitive area is assigned to a competitive level.

#### **Section 6. Retention Register.**

- A. The Employer will establish all retention registers required during a reduction in force, reflecting the retention standing of each competing employee in accordance with 5 I 351, Subpart E.
- B. Within each competitive level, employees in the competitive service shall be divided

into tenure groups and veterans' preference subgroups. For example, a career employee in the competitive service, who is not a preference eligible, could be in Tenure Group I, Subgroup B.

(1) Tenure – The period of time the employee may reasonably expect to serve under a current appointment.

(2) Tenure Groups (Competitive)

(a) Group I – Career employees who are not serving a probationary period for appointment to a competitive position.

(b) Group II – Career-conditional employees and employees who are serving a probationary period for initial appointment to a competitive position.

\* The fact that an employee is serving a probationary period for a supervisory or managerial position does not affect the tenure group of the employee's appointment for RIF purposes.

(c) Group III – Employees serving under indefinite appointment; temporary appointment pending establishment of a register (TAPER); term appointment; status quo appointment; and any other nonstatus, non-temporary appointment. An employee serving under a temporary limited appointment is not in tenure group III and is not a competing employee.

(3) Tenure Groups (Excepted)

(a) Group I – Permanent employees whose appointments carry no restriction or condition such as conditional, indefinite, specific time limit, or trial period.

(b) Group II – Employees who are serving a trial period or whose tenure is equivalent to a career-conditional appointment in the competitive service in agencies having such excepted appointments.

(c) Group III – Employees whose tenure is indefinite (i.e., without specific time limit but not actually or potentially permanent); or whose appointments have a specific time limitation of more than one year; or who are currently under a temporary appointment limited to one year but have completed one year of current continuous service. An employee serving under such a temporary appointment who does not have one year of current continuous service is not in tenure group III and is not a competing employee.

(4) Veteran Preference Subgroups – Within each of the three tenure groups on a



retention register, employees are listed by veteran preference subgroup. These subgroups are the same for both the competitive and excepted services. The subgroups are as follows:

- (a) Subgroup AD – Preference eligible employees who have a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more.
  - (b) Subgroup A – Preference eligible employees who are not in subgroup AD.
  - (c) Subgroup B – Employees who are not eligible for veteran preference.
- C.** When it appears that a reduction in force action may be necessary, HRM will prepare a retention register for each affected competitive level within the appropriate competitive area(s). The register shall contain the names of employees within the competitive level, first by tenure group and then by subgroup.
- D.** Within the subgroup, employees are listed in the order of their retention standing in relation to each other, as established by the application of the four retention factors (tenure of employment, veterans' preference, length of service, and performance ratings).
- E.** The service computation date for reduction in force purposes shall be adjusted for performance by HRM for each competing employee. An additional service credit will be given based on the mathematical average (rounded in the case of a fraction to the next higher whole number) of the value of the employee's last three annual performance ratings of record received during, as appropriate, the four year period prior to the date the agency (1) issues specific RIF notices or (2) freezes ratings before issuing the RIF notices. Depending on the types of performance system, additional service credit is as follows:
- (1) 4 Tier Performance System:
- (a) 20 additional years of service for each performance rating of "Achieved Excellence" or equivalent (i.e., Level 5); or
  - (b) 16 additional years of service for each performance rating of "Exceeded Expectations" or equivalent (i.e., Level 4).
  - (c) 12 additional years of service for each performance rating of "Achieved Expectations" or equivalent (i.e., Level 3).
  - (d) 0 additional years of service for each performance rating of "Unsuccessful" or equivalent (i.e., Level 1).

- (2) Pass/Fail Performance System:
    - (a) 12 additional years of service for each performance rating of “pass” (i.e., Level 3)
    - (b) 0 additional years of service for each performance rating of “fail” (i.e., Level 1)
  - (3) The Employer will establish a cut-off date of 15 days prior to the date of the specific RIF notice. After this cut-off date, no new annual performance ratings will be put on record and used for RIF purposes. However, all performance appraisals that are due will be prepared and considered in the analysis. At a minimum, the employee’s most recent appraisal will not be more than one year old unless the rating has been deferred pursuant to Title 5 United States Code Chapter 43.
- F.** Non-competing employees will be listed apart from the retention registers but on the same document. They will be removed by means other than RIF from positions in the competitive level before releasing any competing employee from the level through RIF action.
- 1) Pursuant to § 351.602, an agency may not release a competing employee from a competitive level while retaining in that level an employee with:
    - (a) A specifically limited temporary appointment;
    - (b) A specifically limited temporary or term promotion; or,
    - (c) A written decision of removal or demotion from the competitive level.
- G.** Prior to initiating any reduction in force action, position descriptions of covered employees shall be reviewed for accuracy and official personnel folders must be updated to reflect the employee’s latest experience and training as submitted by the employee on a résumé for use in determining qualifications for other positions. Employees will be advised that they must provide an updated résumé. The résumé should be provided no later than 30 days before the effective date of the RIF.
- H.** In any grievance or appeal filed over an unacceptable performance action or a performance appraisal, the deciding official has the authority to impose any appropriate remedy. In the situation where an employee wins the appeal or grievance, the results of the new appraisal/removal action will be factored into the retention register standing to ascertain if the employee would have otherwise been

retained.

## **Section 7. Release from Competitive Level.**

- A.** When it becomes necessary to release employees from a competitive level, non-competing employees shall be released first. After all non-competing employees are eliminated, competing employees shall be released in the inverse order of their retention standing, beginning with the lowest (e.g., all employees in Group III are selected for release before any in Group II, and all employees in Group II are released before any in Group I. Within each Group, all employees in Subgroup B are released before any in Subgroup A, and all employees in Subgroup A are released before any in Subgroup AD).
- B.** When two or more employees are tied in retention standing (i.e., two employees in the same subgroup have the same adjusted service computation date) and one or more, but not all, tied employees must be released from the competitive level, the Employer shall break the tie on the basis of:
  - (1) time within grade; and if a tie remains,
  - (2) length of CBP Service; and if a tie remains,
  - (3) by lottery.
- C.** Exceptions to the foregoing shall be made in the cases of employees restored to duty after military services as follows:
  - (1) Veteran preference eligibles in Group I or II who are entitled to be retained for one year after restoration shall be retained over other employees in their subgroups until the end of the one-year period.
  - (2) Non-preference eligibles that are entitled to be retained for either six (6) months or one (1) year after restoration to duty shall be retained over other employees in their subgroups until expiration of the retention period.
  - (3) When deviations from the regular order of election are made as above, the reason for the deviations shall be recorded on the retention register for inspection by other employees and/or their representatives as appropriate.
- D.** In unusual situations, the Employer may make exception to normal order of selection provided for in Section 6 Subsection A as follows:
  - (1) A temporary exception to retain an employee reached for release from their

competitive level in order to satisfy a government obligation. This temporary exception can last for longer than 90 days.

- (2) A temporary exception, for up to 90 days, to retain an employee reached for release from their competitive level when none of the higher standing employees can take over their duties without undue interruption of operational requirements.
- (3) A temporary exception for up to 90 days for administrative reasons (e.g., an employee on approved, extended sick leave or an absent employee who did not receive their notice on the same date as higher- standing employees), so long as the rights of higher-standing employees are not adversely affected.
- (4) An exception is allowed for an employee to remain on the Agency's rolls past the effective date of the reduction in force in an annual leave status, if in so doing, the employee would attain immediate retirement eligibility and/or establish eligibility to carry health benefits coverage into retirement.

All exceptions will be made in a fair and objective manner.

**E.** Where management has made exceptions to the normal order of selection, as outlined above, notice shall be provided as follows:

- (1) When the Employer approves an exception for more than 30 days, HRM will notify in writing each higher standing employee in the same competitive level reached for release of the reasons for the exception and the date the lower standing employee's retention will end.
- (2) The Employer will notate on the retention register the reason for any exception to the regular order of release. In addition, when a temporary exception will exceed thirty 30 days, the retention register will also reflect the date the retention will end.

## **Section 8. Assignment Rights.**

**A.** When an employee has been selected for release from their competitive level, the Employer shall:

- (1) Assign the employee, with their consent, to a position for which the employee is qualified which will last at least three (3) months; or
- (2) Furlough the employee; or

(3) Separate the employee.

**B.** An available position should be in the competitive service; requires no reduction, or the least possible reduction, in representative pay rate; has the same type of work schedule, and is held by an employee who is:

(1) In a lower tenure group or in a lower subgroup within the same tenure group and is no more than three grades or grade intervals below the position from which released; or

(2) With lower retention standing in the same tenure group and subgroup and is not more than three grades or grade intervals below the position from which and is the same position, or an essentially identical one, previously held by the released employee in a Federal agency (except that for a preference eligible employee with a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more, the limit is five grades or grade intervals).

(3) An employee with a current annual performance rating of record of “fully successful” or equivalent may be assigned under paragraph (2) of this subsection only to a position held by an employee with a current annual performance rating of record no higher than “minimally successful” or its equivalent.

**C.** An employee is entitled to only one offer of assignment under B above, and the Employer shall determine which of the two or more positions with the same representative rate it wishes to offer. An employee is entitled to no further offer when:

(1) The employee accepts an offer;

(2) The employee rejects an offer; or

(3) The employee fails to reply to an offer within the time allowed.

**D.** An employee will be given 10 workdays in which to accept or reject a reassignment offer.

**E.** An employee who is placed as a result of a reduction in force action in a lower- graded position than the previous position, and who is otherwise eligible, shall receive grade and pay retention benefits in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations (I) Title 5 Part 536.

**Section 9.** The Employer will notify the Union prior to the issuance of RIF notices to

employees.

- A.** The Employer agrees to brief NTEU of any planned RIF as far in advance as practicable, but at least 45 days in advance, of issuing the RIF notices. The information provided shall include the competitive levels initially affected, the number of employees involved, the proposed effective date and the reasons for the action. The Employer will also inform the NTEU of measures it has taken to avoid a RIF.
- B.** The NTEU may provide recommendations to prevent the RIF or mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of a proposed RIF.
- C.** The Employer will evaluate all recommendations provided by NTEU and, if feasible, attempt to incorporate those recommendations as an effort to reduce the impact caused by a RIF.
- D.** If the Employer determines a RIF is required, the Union will be given notice and the opportunity to bargain the impact and implementation of the RIF consistent with Section 14 of this Article and to the maximum extent permitted by law. Impact and implementation bargaining may include the use of the following strategies to mitigate the impact of the RIF: Reassignment Preference Notices, VERA and VSIP and Voluntary Incentives through Job Swaps.
- E.** The procedures set forth in Article 26 shall be followed.

**Section 10. RIF Notices.** A competing employee selected for release from their competitive level shall be provided with an official, personal written notice, a RIF notice. The employee shall receive a specific written notice at least 60 days (or no less than 30 days, if approved by OPM) before the date of their release. There is no maximum RIF notice period.

- A.** The notice shall contain the following information:
  - (1) Specific RIF action to be taken;
  - (2) The effective date of the action;
  - (3) The reasons for the RIF action;
  - (4) The employee's competitive area, competitive level, subgroup, service date, and the three most recent annual performance ratings received during the last four-year period;

- (5) The place where the employee may inspect the regulations and records pertinent to the employee's case;
- (6) If applicable, the reasons for retaining a lower-standing employee under a mandatory or permissive exception;
- (7) The employee's appeal or grievance rights;
- (8) If applicable, specific information on the Reemployed Priority List (RPL), the Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) and the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP), or an indication that such information will be provided separately; and
- (9) Other information as may be required by law, regulation or this Agreement in specific cases.

**B.** In cases involving demotion or separation, the Employer shall arrange a discussion with an Agency representative at the request of the employee. At the option of the Employer, the discussion may be conducted in person or telephonically.

**Section 11. Inspection of Records.** Where an employee is proposed for separation or assignment to a lower grade level, the employee and/or their representative shall have the right to inspect retention records and other records pertinent to the case, including CBP policies and procedures and Office of Personnel Management RIF regulations. The employee and/or the employee's representative are entitled to inspect the registers listing employees who may be entitled to displace the employee, as well as the registers of employees may be entitled to displace.

**Section 12. Employee Assistance Program.** In order to assist employees separated in a reduction in force action to obtain other employment, the following assistance will be provided:

- (1) Designate a human resources specialist as outplacement coordinator to serve as the focal point for all outplacement assistance activities;
- (2) Refer affected employees to other Federal agencies, list them with State Employment Services, and contact non-Federal prospective employers;
- (3) Maintain a file of résumés submitted by affected employees for distribution to prospective employers upon the prospective employees request; and
- (4) Establish and maintain a Reemployment Priority List (RPL) for the affected competitive area(s).

**Section 13. Reemployment Priority List.**

- A.** The Employer shall establish and maintain a RPL for each competitive area in which it separates Group I or II employees by reduction in force. The name of each separated employee shall be entered on the list for all competitive positions in the commuting area for which the employee is qualified and available.
- B.** An employee who has declined assignment to a non-temporary competitive position with the same type of work schedule and a representative rate no lower than that of the position from which separated shall not have their name placed on the list.
- C.** The name of a separated Group I employee shall remain on the list for two years, while the name of a separated Group II employee shall remain on the list for one year from the date the employee is entered on the Reemployment Priority List.
- D.** An employee's name shall be deleted from the list when:
  - (1) The employee requests removal from the list in writing;
  - (2) The employee accepts a non-temporary competitive position; or
  - (3) The employee declines a non-temporary position with the same work schedule and a representative rate no lower than that of the position from which separated by RIF.

**Section 14. RIF Appeals, Grievances and Corrective Actions.**

- A.** Employees separated from CBP by RIF actions shall be advised in writing of their rights to severance pay, if any; a lump sum payment for all accrued annual leave; their eligibility for placement on the Reemployment Priority List; their eligibility for discontinued service retirement; and the effect of the RIF on life and health insurance coverage.
- B.** RIF procedures shall not be used to eliminate employees in lieu of established adverse action procedures.

**Section 15. Notice.** Upon notice of a RIF, the Union will be limited to negotiating the impact and implementation of only those issues not covered by the provisions of this article.



## **ARTICLE 24: RETIREMENT**

**Section 1.** The Agency will provide retirement counseling to be made available on an as-needed basis, but not less than annually in which all employees in the unit nearing eligibility for retirement may voluntarily participate. Such counseling may include individual assistance, informational material, and/or group sessions. Subject to available funding, counseling may be personally delivered or conducted through audio and video technology that will enable interaction between the counselor and the employees. Upon request, employees may be permitted to attend retirement counseling during duty hours and, if applicable, have their shifts changed to attend the counseling. Workload permitting and absent just cause, such requests will be granted.

**Section 2.** Each employee who separates voluntarily or involuntarily (except by retirement) will be informed by the Agency as to:

- A. Their rights to file for disability retirement if the employee has at least five (5) years of creditable civilian service under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or 18 months of creditable civilian service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS);
- B. The possibility of applying for a discontinued service annuity;
- C. Eligibility for deferred annuity at sixty-two (62), provided the employee has had at least five (5) years of civilian service and leaves their money on deposit with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM); and
- D. All the options regarding the contributions the employee has made to the retirement funds and the Thrift Saving Plan, if appropriate.

**Section 3.** An employee may withdraw a resignation or retirement application at any time prior to its effective date, provided the withdrawal is communicated to the Agency in writing and received by the Agency prior to its having made a commitment to fill the position of the retiring or resigning employee.

**Section 4.** The parties recognize that final decisions concerning retirement applications and issuance of retirement checks are the responsibility of the OPM. The Agency agrees to process and transmit all necessary paperwork in connection with retirement applications in a timely fashion.

**Section 5.** Upon receipt of a written request from an employee who is eligible to retire, or who is within one hundred twenty (120) days of such eligibility, the Agency agrees to provide a statement setting forth an estimate of the employee's monthly compensation upon retirement, types of retirement options available, and the procedures for continuing

any health or life insurance policies. This information will be updated at the employee's request, but not more frequently than once a year.

**Section 6.** See Article 35: Overtime, Section 1.J. for annuity integrity procedures covering COPRA covered employees who are within three (3) years of retirement.

**Section 7.** Subject to available funding and absent just cause, employees who have worked for CBP and/or a legacy agency for at least twenty (20) years will receive a plaque upon retirement.

**Section 8.A.** Eligible law enforcement employees will receive an identification card upon retirement from CBP.

**B.** To assist authorized officers, pursuant to LEOSA, the Agency will post appropriate guidance to authorized officers on its intranet or SharePoint site.

**Section 9. Phased Retirement.** CBP will notify NTEU and negotiate in accordance with Article 26 if it intends to implement a Phased Retirement Program. Additionally, NTEU may exercise its right under Article 26 to initiate bargaining on a Phased Retirement Program.

## **ARTICLE 25: DUES ALLOTMENTS**

**Section 1.** Employees of the bargaining unit who are members in good standing of the Union will be permitted to pay dues through the authorization of voluntary allotments from their compensation provided the employee has: 1) completed and submitted a Standard Form 1187, Request and Authorization for a Voluntary Allotment of Compensation of Employee Organization Dues, to the Employer's Payroll Office; and (2) receives net compensation sufficient to cover the total amount of the allotment after higher priority deductions.

**Section 2.** The Union's responsibilities include:

- A. Informing and educating bargaining unit members on the voluntary nature of the system for allotment of Union dues, including the conditions under which the allotment may be revoked;
- B. Purchasing and distributing Standard Form 1187, and electronically forwarding properly executed and certified Standard Forms 1187 to the Payroll Office on a timely basis;
- C. Informing the Payroll Office electronically at [payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov) of any member who has been expelled, suspended or is no longer a member in good standing of the Union, within ten (10) business days of such final determination; and,
- D. Informing the Payroll Office of any changes in rates of membership dues by submitting a memorandum electronically at [payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov) by December 1st each year that includes the following:
  - (1) Union letter head;
  - (2) the effective period;
  - (3) the NTEU Chapter(s) impacted; and
  - (4) the current and new rate(s), as applicable.

**Section 3.** In cases where an employee changes Union membership from one (1) NTEU Chapter to another, NTEU National will deliver notification to the Payroll Office via electronic mail, and the Employer will effect the change in Chapters on the next pay period after receipt of notice.

**Section 4.** The Employer's responsibilities include:

- A.** Processing appropriately filed Standard Form 1187s within one (1) pay period of receipt from the Union;
- B.** Notify NTEU National on a quarterly basis when it has suspended dues withholding for employees who leave the unit temporarily, and when it has automatically resumed dues withholding upon their return to the bargaining unit;
- C.** Upon written notice from the Union, processing changes in dues amounts that will be effective during pay period 1;
- D.** Notifying an employee who is not eligible for dues withholding of that fact. The local chapter will also be notified when an employee is not eligible for dues withholding;
- E.** Terminating dues allotments for employees due to loss of membership in good standing or due to separation from the bargaining unit;
- F.** Taking necessary steps to correct administrative errors for which it is able to correct.
- G.** Providing the Union's Operations Department with the following dues withholding data each pay period via an electronic file using ASCII delimited (preferable comma or tab delimited) file format and codes set forth in Appendix B. If the ASCII file format is not available the Microsoft Excel file format will be used. The detailed filed layout will describe the field names, field lengths, field data-types, and any other relevant information explaining the data.

<i><b>Name of field/column</b></i>	<i><b>Description of data in each column</b></i>	<i><b>Type of Data*</b></i>	<i><b>Maximum Length</b></i>
<i>Agency-ID</i>	<i>The ID number of your agency</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>PP-Date</i>	<i>Pay Period Date</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>SSN</i>	<i>Member Social Security Number</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Chapter-ID</i>	<i>ID of member chapter</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Fname</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Lname</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Middle</i>	<i>Middle Initial</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Amount</i>	<i>Total Amount of Dues Withheld</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>WAEID</i>	<i>Seasonal Member ID</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>DW-Code</i>	<i>Dues Withholding code</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>1</i>

<i><b>Name of field/column</b></i>	<i><b>Description of data in each column</b></i>	<i><b>Type of Data*</b></i>	<i><b>Maximum Length</b></i>
<i>Duty-State</i>	<i>State in which Member works</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Duty-City</i>	<i>City in which Member works</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Duty-County</i>	<i>County in which Member works</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Level Member is paid at</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Step</i>	<i>Level within grade Member is paid at</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Pay-Plan</i>	<i>Pay Plan chart Member is paid on</i>	<i>N-C</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Nat-Amt</i>	<i>Member dues due to NTEU</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Local-Amt</i>	<i>Member dues due to local chapters</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Adj-Base-Pay</i>	<i>Adjustable Base Pay</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>8</i>

**Key:** N-C = Numbers and/or Characters (Alphanumeric) N = Number only

**Section 5.** In the event the Employer erroneously removes an employee from the bargaining unit as a result of administrative error(s) for which the Employer is responsible, and thereby inappropriately terminates a proper dues allotment, or fails to begin dues withholding in a timely manner, the Employer will:

- A.** Correct the error and begin or reinstate the dues allotment no later than the following pay period after becoming aware of the error; and
- B.** Pay the full amount owed to the Union and recoup the funds from the employee's salary through a salary adjustment. These adjustments are subject to the employee's right to seek a waiver of overpayment in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 5584 and applicable laws and implementing regulations; and
- C.** In the event the Employer fails to correct errors and begin or reinstate the dues allotment in accordance with the timeframe identified in Subsection A., the Employer will pay the full amount owed to the Union and may waive employee overpayment pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 5584 and applicable laws and implementing regulations; and
- D.** In the event the Union notifies the Employer of the failure to begin dues withholding or an inappropriate termination of dues withholding within six (6) pay periods of receiving dues withholding data from the Employer such overpayments may also be waived pursuant to statutory provisions under the 5 U.S.C. § 5584 and laws and applicable implementing regulations.

**Section 6.A.** The Employer will notify the Union, in writing, of any reimbursement to which the Employer is entitled because of dues received by the Union in violation of this Agreement.

- B.** The Union will not knowingly accept dues withheld through the Employer's payroll system from employees who are not in the bargaining unit.
- C.** Within thirty (30) days of the Employer's notice in Subsection A, above, the Union will reimburse the Employer, or file for a waiver of the Employer's collection action in accordance with law, e.g., 5 U.S.C. § 5584 and applicable laws and implementing regulations.

**Section 7.** The amount of dues to be deducted as an allotment from compensation may be changed no more than once every twelve (12) months.

**Section 8.** If an employee is improperly separated and is ordered reinstated by the proper authority, the employee is required to initiate a new SF-1187, if required by law, to restart their dues withholding.

**Section 9.**

- A.** Revocation notices for employees who have not had dues withholdings in effect for one year must be submitted to the Payroll Office at [payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov) on or before the one-year anniversary date of their dues allotment. The revocation will become effective the first full pay period after the employee's anniversary date.
- B.** Revocation notices for employees who initiated dues withholdings on or before August 9, 2020 and who have had dues withholding in effect for more than one (1) year must be submitted to the Payroll Office at [payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov) during USDA pay period 15 each year. Revocations will become effective during USDA pay period 18.
- C.** Pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2429.19, employees who initiated dues withholdings on or after August 10, 2020, may elect to revoke their dues withholdings any time after the one-year anniversary date of their dues allotment by submitting a completed SF-1188 form to the Payroll Office at [payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:payroll-information@cbp.dhs.gov). Should changes be made to 5 C.F.R. § 2429.19 or similar law, rule, or regulation while this Agreement is in effect, the parties will process dues revocations consistent with Sections 9.A and 9.B above.
- D.** Revocations under this section may only be effected by submission of a completed Standard Form ("SF")-1188 that has been initialed or signed by the Chapter President, or designee, so that the Chapter can discuss with the employee the reason for the revocation. If the SF-1188 is not initialed, the Employer will return it to the employee for resubmission.

- E.** Any subsequent request to initiate dues withholdings will require a new Standard Form 1187 and will restart a new one-year anniversary under 5 U.S.C. § 7115.

**Section 10.** Information Codes used on the NTEU biweekly dues withholding data provided by the Employer will be included in this Agreement as Appendix B.

## **ARTICLE 26: BARGAINING**

**Section 1.** The provisions of this Article cover the policies and procedures to be used by the parties when engaging in collective bargaining. Resolving bargaining issues in an effective and efficient manner is beneficial to the interests of both CBP and NTEU.

**Section 2.** CBP and NTEU will enter all bargaining situations striving to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome through a constructive and non-adversarial approach. While traditional bargaining will serve as the default, the parties are free to utilize any, or a combination of any bargaining models they wish. These models may include: traditional, interest-based, or protest bargaining.

**Section 3.A.** Except in cases of emergency, as provided for in the Civil Service Reform Act, such as unforeseen occurrences precluding such notice, the Employer shall provide the Union with reasonable advance notice of intended changes where the reasonably foreseeable adverse effect of the change on the bargaining unit's conditions of employment is more than de minimis in nature and not covered by this Agreement or an existing agreement as defined in Section 4 of this Article. Such notice will inform the Union of the Employer's point of contact for purposes of all matters related to bargaining.

**B.** In response to the notice provided to the Union by the Employer in Section 3.A. above, the Union may negotiate:

- (1) Procedures which management officials of the Agency will observe in exercising its management rights; and
- (2) Appropriate arrangements for employees adversely affected by the Agency's exercise of its management rights;
- (3) At the election of the Agency, the numbers, types, and grades of employees or positions assigned to any organizational subdivision, work project, or tour of duty, or on the technology, methods, and means of performing work; and
- (4) The substance of the change if negotiable under existing law.

**Section 4.** The Union, in accordance with law and the terms of this Agreement has the right to initiate bargaining on its own and engage in mid-term bargaining over proposed changes in conditions of employment with the exception of the following areas:

**A.** Matters specifically addressed in this Agreement or another negotiated agreement between the parties. This section does not apply to bargaining in accordance with Section 15 below.



- B.** Matters where there is a clear and unequivocal waiver of the right to bargain by the Union, including those issues clearly and unmistakably bargained away as part of the legal implementation of other conditions of employment including the negotiation of this Agreement.

**Section 5.** All notices of intended changes and demands to bargain referenced throughout this Article will be delivered in writing through either personal delivery, electronic mail or by facsimile.

**Section 6.A.** Unless otherwise specified within the negotiated Agreement, the Union's designated representative to receive initial bargaining notices is the National President of NTEU and designee who will be identified to the Employer in writing.

- B.** The Employer's designated representative to receive initial bargaining notices is the Chief Labor Relations Officer or designee.
- C.** Mid-term agreements resulting from local negotiations will not include any terms that conflict with this Agreement.

**Section 7.A.** Unless the level of bargaining is identified in another Article, should either party request to exercise its rights under this Article, the moving party will deliver clear and specific notice to the other party at the level of exclusive recognition, i.e., at the national level. The party delivering the notice must include its designated representative for the bargaining.

- B.** Within twenty one (21) days of receipt of such notice the receiving party will request to bargain, indicate its designated representative and may request a briefing.
- C.** Within fifteen (15) days of the submission of the request to bargain, or the date of the briefing, whichever is later, the receiving party or designated representative will submit its proposals.
- D.** Bargaining will normally begin within fourteen (14) to thirty (30) calendar days after the receipt of proposals.
- E.** If the fifteenth or twenty-first day referred to herein falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the period shall run until the end of the next regular business day (Monday through Friday).
- F.** If agreement is not reached, either party reserves the right to seek the services of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), and, if necessary, the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP). By mutual agreement, the parties may use a

different impasse resolution procedure, e.g., the use of a mediator-arbitrator.

**Section 8.A.** Reasonable extensions of time under this Article will be made for good cause shown, such as delays in receipt of necessary and relevant information consistent with the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute provided that the total time involved does not cause an unreasonable delay or impede the Employer in the exercise of its management rights.

- B.** The submission of proposed changes and proposals shall not preclude either party from submitting other proposals or counter proposals that are related to the proposed change(s) and do not deal with extraneous matters.

**Section 9.** Where negotiation meetings are required, the meetings will be conducted as follows:

- A.** Negotiations will take place at a mutually agreeable site. Absent agreement, negotiations will be rotated between sites selected by the parties. National negotiations will normally occur at the headquarters offices of the Union or the Employer.
- B.** Upon mutual agreement of the parties, negotiations may take place virtually using an agreed upon platform (e.g., telephonic, video conferencing).
- C.** Unless agreed to otherwise, negotiations will be conducted during the regular workday of the office where the negotiations are taking place. Where feasible, the Employer shall make shift adjustments for Union representatives to accommodate the bargaining process.
- D.** An employee representing the Union in bargaining under this Article shall be authorized official time for such purposes during the time the employee otherwise would be in duty status. Designated bargaining representatives for the Union will also be afforded a reasonable amount of official time to prepare for bargaining. In the event face-to-face negotiations are conducted, bargaining teams will be limited to a maximum of three (3) Agency employees for each party, unless the parties mutually agree otherwise. NTEU and CBP staff members and the parties' subject matter experts may also participate in bargaining.
- E.** CBP is responsible for the travel and per diem costs of no more than three (3) bargaining unit employees serving as NTEU bargaining representatives unless the parties mutually agree otherwise.
- F.** Whenever the Employer wishes to change the current practice related to reimbursing employees to travel for bargaining and related matters, it will serve notice on the

Union and negotiate prior to implementation.

**Section 10.** Local and national agreements and past practices will stay in place unless they conflict with this Agreement or are re-negotiated in accordance with law and this Agreement.

**Section 11.** The Union and the Employer agree that it is in the interest of the parties to resolve impact bargaining issues expeditiously.

**Section 12.** The duties of the parties to negotiate in good faith under this Article shall include the statutory obligation:

- A. To approach the negotiations with a sincere resolve to reach a collective bargaining agreement;
- B. To be represented at the negotiations by duly authorized representatives prepared to discuss and negotiate on any condition of employment;
- C. To meet at reasonable times and convenient places as frequently as may be necessary, and to avoid unnecessary delays;
- D. In the case of the Employer, to furnish to the Union, upon request, and, to the extent not prohibited by law, data:
  - (1) Which is normally maintained by the Employer in the regular course of business;
  - (2) Which is reasonably available and necessary for full and proper discussion, understanding, and negotiations of the subjects within the scope of collective bargaining; and
  - (3) Which does not constitute guidance, advice, counsel or training for management officials or supervisors relating to collective bargaining; and
- E. If agreement is reached, to execute on the request of any party to the negotiation a written document embodying the agreed terms, and to take such steps as are necessary to implement such agreement.

**Section 13.** The parties recognize that emergencies or other situations permitted by law may mandate that a change be implemented before negotiations concerning the matters are concluded. The Employer agrees to make reasonable efforts to obtain sufficient time delays from higher authorities to enable bargaining to conclude before implementing the change. Accordingly, where basic management rights are involved, and an emergency or other situations permitted by law require the Employer to act without undue delay, the Employer

may implement the proposed change and negotiations may continue on a post-implementation basis.

**Section 14.** Should a provision of any agreement negotiated pursuant to this Article be rendered invalid by appropriate authority after the effective date of this Agreement, either party may reopen the specifically affected sections as well as issues clearly and unmistakably bargained away as part of any agreement on the now invalid terms, where one or both parties have not formally pursued enforcement of the provision.

**Section 15.** All local and national mid-term agreements may be reopened by either party after one (1) year of its effective date by the submission of a request to bargain. Mid-term reopener request(s) must be submitted to the other party no later than thirty (30) days from each one (1) year anniversary date of the effective date of the agreement(s).

**Section 16.** The Employer agrees that when employees are surveyed by CBP management, and not at the behest of an outside agency, about matters relating to conditions of employment, the Union will be provided an advance copy of the survey, invited to comment on its appropriateness and completeness, and upon request, be briefed on the survey results. Employees will be granted time on duty to complete surveys and all entries will remain confidential.

**Section 17.** Where the Employer selects bargaining unit employees to serve on committees, work groups or projects to analyze work processes or problems and analyzing such work is not normally assigned to all employees in a given position or location, the Employer will solicit nominations from NTEU. NTEU will forward the nominations of bargaining unit employees to serve on these committees, work groups or projects based on qualifications provided to NTEU by the Employer.

## **ARTICLE 27: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

**Section 1.A.** The purpose of this Article is to provide a fair and efficient process to expeditiously resolve Agency, Union, and bargaining unit employee grievances.

**B.** The parties recognize that many grievances arise from misunderstandings that can be settled promptly and satisfactorily on an informal basis. The purpose of this Article is to provide procedures to enable the Agency and the Union to resolve grievances informally or at the lowest level possible.

**C.** The Agency officials designated to hear and decide grievances at each step of the grievance procedure are set forth in Section 12.D.

**Section 2.** Except as excluded pursuant to Section 3 below, for the purpose of this Article, grievance means any complaint:

**A.** By any bargaining unit employee concerning any matter relating to the employment of the employee;

**B.** By the Union concerning any matter relating to the employment of any employee;  
or

**C.** By any bargaining unit employee, the Union, or the Agency concerning:

a) The effect or interpretation, or a claim of breach, of a collective bargaining agreement; or

b) Any claimed violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of any law, rule, or regulation affecting conditions of employment; or

**D.** By any bargaining unit employee or the Union concerning a claimed violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of the Agency's policies affecting conditions of employment.

**Section 3.** The following matters are excluded from the grievance procedure:

**A.** Any claimed violation of Subchapter III of Title 5 of the United States Code (relating to prohibited political activities);

**B.** Retirement, life insurance, or health insurance;

**C.** A suspension or removal under Section 7532 of Title 5 of the United States Code

(relating to national security matters);

- E.** Any examination, certification, or appointment;
- F.** Any matter regarding the classification of any position which does not result in the reduction-in-grade or pay of any employee;
- G.** The separation of an employee during a probationary or trial period, except as permitted by law or government-wide regulation;
- H.** Non-selection for promotion from a group of properly ranked and certified candidates unless the basis of the grievance involves a statutory violation, (e.g., EEO, Prohibited Personnel Practice, CSRA, etc.);
- I.** Non-adoption of a suggestion, disapproval of an honorary or discretionary award not directly related to job performance (except as specifically provided for in Article 42: Awards and Recognition);
- J.** A proposal of an action or issuance of an Employee Performance Plan (EPP), which if effected, would be covered under this procedure or under a statutory appeal procedure;
- K.** An action terminating a temporary promotion within a maximum period of two (2) years and returning the employee to the position from which they were temporarily promoted, unless termination would constitute a prohibited personnel practice (see Article 7: Protection Against Prohibited Personnel Practices) or other violation of law or government-wide regulation.
- L.** Any mandatory removal made in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 7371; and
- M.** Any matter in which the affected employee has elected to appeal through a statutory or regulatory processes, e.g., the EEOC (by filing a formal complaint), MSPB (by filing an appeal to the MSPB), FLRA (by filing an FLRA charge) or OSC (by filing a complaint with OSC).

**Section 4.** Except for matters excluded under Section 3 of this Article, the procedures contained in this Article shall be the exclusive administrative procedures available to employees for resolving grievances that fall within its coverage.

**Section 5.** Grievances under this Article may be initiated by employees either singly or jointly. When two (2) or more employees initiate separate grievances involving the same facts or events arising out of the same incident, the grievances shall be consolidated and processed through the grievance procedure as a single grievance. When processing such a consolidated grievance, absent mutual agreement, no more than three (3) employees covered by the grievance will be permitted to attend any meeting concerning the

grievance.

**Section 6.A.** The Union maintains the right, on its own behalf or on behalf of any bargaining unit employee to present and process grievances under this Article. Employees also maintain the right to present a grievance on their own behalf without Union representation.

- B.** Any resolution of a grievance filed by an employee who proceeds without Union representation will be consistent with law and the terms of the parties' Agreement. The Union will be provided copies of all grievance replies in such cases.

**Section 7.** The Union will be notified and provided the opportunity to attend any grievance or settlement discussion to the extent required by Section 2 of Article 5: Union Rights.

**Section 8.A.** All issues raised under Step 2 of this Article shall be identified in writing and signed by the employee or employees, Union representative, or management official raising the issue on form CBP 280 (see Appendix C). This form may be filed by the employee or the employee's Union representative in the Employer's electronic mail system.

- B.** Issues not raised and actions not requested in the initial filing of the Step 2 grievance form (i.e., the form CBP 280) may not be introduced at arbitration absent mutual agreement. Filings containing the language "any other remedies that may be appropriate in accordance with law and regulation" are sufficient to identify the action requested. Evidence and witnesses that are relevant to the resolution of the grievance may be introduced at any stage of the grievance procedure prior to arbitration.
- C.** Filings by management under this Article shall be made in writing directly with the Chapter President or the Union's National Office as appropriate.

**Section 9.** All written submissions made under this Article shall be delivered through personal delivery, facsimile, or electronic mail. Grievance responses shall be served on the same day to the grievant and the designated Union representatives.

**Section 10.** As used in this Article, "days" refers to calendar days unless otherwise expressly provided herein. If the day an action must be completed under this Article falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, the due date shall be by 11:59 pm the next regular business day (Monday through Friday).

**Section 11.** Absent mutual agreement, all grievance meetings will be held at the employee's work location during regularly scheduled work hours. Meetings will be

attended by the designated union representative and the manager designated with the authority to address the grievance. The grievant and the manager alleged to have taken the grieved action may also attend. Either party may choose to have an additional advisor/representative participate. Participants are encouraged to hold such meetings face-to-face; individuals unable to be physically present at such meetings will participate in them through telephone conferencing or some other audio-visual technology.

## **Section 12. Local Level Grievances.**

### **A. Step 1: Initial Problem Solving Meeting.**

- (1) To increase the ability to resolve problems expeditiously, grievance should initially be raised as soon as practical, but no later than forty-five (45) days after the incident giving rise to the complaint or the date upon which the employee became or should have become aware of the incident by submitting to an immediate supervisor within their chain of command, or Port Director/Manager (or designee), a written request for a meeting with the lowest level management official available with the authority to resolve the complaint. Designees will be identified to the local Union Chapter and employees. In the absence of such designation, the supervisor is the default. The request must include a brief description of the complaint. If they are not the lowest level management official with the authority to resolve the complaint, the first line supervisor will immediately forward the request to the appropriate official and notify the employee and the Union representative of the name and location of the appropriate official where the grievance was forwarded.
- (2) Absent mutual agreement, the lowest level management official available with the authority to resolve the complaint will, in collaboration with the local Union Chapter, schedule and hold the requested meeting within seven (7) days of the date of receipt of the request. If the complaint is not resolved at the meeting, the management official shall provide a substantive written response (e.g., addresses each allegation in the grievance) to the grievant and designated Union representative(s) within seven (7) days of the conclusion of the meeting).
- (3) The failure of the responding party to respond or provide a written response within the applicable seven (7) days, unless mutually agreed, will entitle the moving party to advance the grievance to Step 2: Formal Submission.
- (4) The parties agree that disputes which arise out of an alleged violation of Article 40: Preclearance Section 7 Extension Request and Return Procedures will be expedited to Step 2. Grievances shall be filed by submitting a CBP



form 280 to the employee's Port Director and the Assistant Director for the IOAD Field Office no later than forty-five (45) days after the incident giving rise to the complaint or the date upon which the employee became or should have become aware of the incident. After filing, the grievance will be processed in accordance with the remaining procedures in Section 12.B and, as applicable, 12.C. If a dispute is filed as a Step 1 grievance, management will advance the grievance to Step 2.

- (5) The parties agree that disputes concerning an alleged violation of Article 39: Reassignments, Section 2.C(1) which arise out of an employee's NROB selection and/or denial of placement, will be expedited to Step 3. Grievances shall be filed by submitting a CBP form 280 to the OFO Headquarters Mission Support Director for the Human Capital Division no later than forty-five (45) days after the incident giving rise to the complaint or the date upon which the employee became or should have become aware of the incident. After filing, the grievance will be processed in accordance with the remaining procedures in Section 12.C. If a dispute is filed as a Step 1 grievance, management will advance the grievance to Step 3. All other NROB grievances will be filed in accordance with Section 12.A above.

**B. Step 2: Formal Submission.**

- (1) If the grievance problem solving meeting in Step 1 does not resolve the grievance, the party raising the issue shall make a written filing on form CBP 280. The CBP 280 must be submitted to the designated official identified in Table 12-1 within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the denial of the Step 1 grievance.
- (2) Within seven (7) days of receipt, the relevant Office's management official identified in Table 12-1 below (or designee) will meet with the affected employee to discuss and attempt to resolve the grievance.
- (3) The Employer's substantive written answer (e.g., addresses each allegation in the grievance) shall be provided to the grievant and Union representative within fourteen (14) days of the close of the meeting.
- (4) The failure of the responding party to hold the meeting within the seven (7) day time frame or provide a response within fourteen (14) days will entitle the moving party to advance the grievance to Step 3: Review & Final Decision, to include a mandatory meeting with the relevant Office's management official (or designee) identified in Table 12-1 below.

**C. Step 3: Review & Final Decision.**

- (1) If the employee is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint after Step 2, an appeal may be filed by submitting the denial and the form CBP 280 to the deciding official identified in Table 12-1 (or designee) within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the Step 2 decision or after when the Step 2 decision should have been issued. The grieving party may request a meeting to discuss the grievance at the time the appeal is forwarded. In the event the grieving party chooses not to request a meeting, the deciding official identified in Table 12-1 (or designee) has the ability to request a meeting to discuss the grievance within seven (7) days of receiving the appeal. Absent mutual agreement, all requested meetings at this step will be held within seven (7) days of the receipt of the grievance at the Step 3 level.
- (2) If a meeting is held, the deciding CBP official (or designee) will issue a substantive final decision to the grievant and Union representative within seven (7) days of the meeting. If no meeting is held, the final decision will be issued within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the appeal.
- (3) If the employee is not satisfied with the final decision, the Union may invoke arbitration within thirty (30) days of receipt of the decision by following the process in the Article 28: Arbitration. If no Step 3 decision is provided in accordance with Subsection (2) above, the Union may invoke arbitration within thirty (30) days of when a decision should have been issued.

**D. Grievance Steps – Deciding Officials.**

**TABLE 12-1: Grievance Steps – Deciding Officials or Designee**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>
Office of Field Operations (Ports & International Field Office)	Lowest level management official with authority to resolve the complaint	Port Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Director, Field Operations
All grievances specific to Article 40 Section 7 will be expedited to step 2.	N/A	Director, Mission Support (IOAD)	Director, Field Operations
All grievances specific to Article 39 (Section 2C(1)) for the NROB will be expedited to Step 3.	N/A	N/A	Director, Human Capital Division (HQ/OFO/MSD)

Centers of Excellence and Expertise (CEE)	Lowest level management official with authority to resolve the complaint	Center Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Director, Field Operations where the CEE is located
Centers of Excellence and Expertise (CEE Employees grieving a non-CEE decision)	Lowest level management official with authority to resolve the complaint	Port Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Director, Field Operations
Laboratories & Scientific Services Division (LSSD)	Branch Chief	Assistant Lab Director	Lab Director
HRM Hiring Center (Minneapolis); HRM Processing & Servicing Center (Indianapolis)	Deputy Director	Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Executive Director
Headquarters	Branch Chief	Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Executive Director
Field Operations Academy (FOA)	Branch Chief	Assistant Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Director, FOA
Canine Centers, Advanced Training Center, e.g. Harpers Ferry and Charleston	Deputy Director	Director with authority to resolve the complaint.	Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) – OTD
Default for all other offices not identified above	Supervisor with authority to resolve at the lowest level. Ex: First line supervisor, Branch Chief, or Deputy Director.	Branch Chief, Deputy Director or Director depending on who is the subject of the grievance.	Director, Deputy Executive Director, or Executive Director.

### **Section 13. National and Field Office or Equivalent Program Office Level Grievances.**

- A. National Level Grievances.** To be considered a national level grievance, the issue(s) in dispute must affect employees in more than one (1) Field Office or equivalent structure in a Program Office or the institutional rights of the Union. The parties must make best efforts to resolve all grievances at the lowest level possible, including where appropriate as determined by each party, delegation to the lowest level. (This may include a delegation to use the procedures in Section 12).

**B. Field Office or Equivalent Program Office Level Grievances.**

- (1) To be considered a Field Office or equivalent structure in a Program Office level grievance, the issue(s) in dispute must affect employees in more than one NTEU Chapter within a single CBP Field Office or equivalent structure in a Program Office, as determined by the Field Office/Program Office structure in place upon the effective date of this Agreement.
- (2) Step 1. To increase the ability to resolve problems expeditiously, grievance should initially be raised as soon as practical, but no later than sixty (60) days after the incident giving rise to the complaint or the date upon which the Union became or should have become aware of the incident by submitting to the CBP Chief Labor Relations Officer (or National President if the Employer is the moving party) or designee a written request for a meeting with the lowest level management official available with the authority to resolve the complaint. The request must include a brief description of the complaint. The CBP Chief Labor Relations Officer (or National President if the Employer is the moving party) or designee will schedule a meeting within fifteen (15) days of receiving the meeting request, absent mutual agreement to extend. If the complaint is not resolved at the meeting, the management official shall provide a substantive written response (e.g., addresses each allegation in the grievance) to the Union within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the meeting, and provide the name and email address for the Step 2 Official.
- (3) Step 2. If the grievance problem solving meeting in Step 1 does not resolve the grievance, the party raising the issue shall make a written filing on form CBP 280 or a written equivalent containing the same required information to the designated Step 2 Official within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the denial of the Step 1 grievance. Within fourteen (14) days of receipt, Step 2 Official will meet with the Union to discuss and attempt to resolve the grievance. The Employer's substantive written answer (e.g., addresses each allegation in the grievance) shall be provided to the Union within twenty-one (21) days of the close of the meeting. The failure of the responding party to hold the meeting within the fourteen (14) day timeframe or provide a response within twenty-one (21) days will entitle the moving party to advance the grievance to arbitration.
- (4) If not satisfied with the resolution, the Union (or Employer if it is the moving party) may invoke arbitration within thirty (30) days by following the process in Article 28: Arbitration and using the appropriate Field Office arbitration panel.

- C.** Nothing in this section prevents an NTEU Chapter from filing a local grievance. This includes matters which CBP believes could have been addressed as a Field Office level or National level grievance. A Chapter may not file a local grievance and a Field Office or equivalent structure in a Program Office grievance on the same matter. However, the parties at the Field Office or National level may mutually agree to consolidate local grievances at the Field Office or National level.

**Section 14.A.** An exception to the rule that local grievances must be filed within forty-five (45) days, Field Office or Equivalent Program Office level grievances within sixty (60) days, and national grievances within ninety (90) days is when the grievance involves an alleged continuing violation. A continuing violation is a claimed pattern of ongoing conduct, even when the conduct occurred before the applicable time frames for filing a grievance. To be considered a continuing violation there must be a related violation at least one instance of the conduct being grieved must have occurred within the applicable local or national time frames for filing.

- B.** Remedies for grievances alleging a continuing violation must be in accordance with applicable law, rule, and regulation.

**Section 15.** Any denial of requested information in contemplation or connection with a grievance will be automatically joined to the grievance as an issue for the arbitrator to resolve. The Arbitrator will allow the parties to submit a written argument regarding the release of the data in question, before determining a resolution.

**Section 16.A.** It is understood that each party in this process has a responsibility to timely follow the procedures set forth above in order to ensure the expedient resolution of disputes. In the absence of an extension in accordance with Section 18 below, the failure of a grieving party to comply with the technical time frames for moving a grievance from one step to the next will result in the grievance being barred from arbitration. In such circumstances, the Employer agrees to consider the grievance on its merits, meet with the grieved party and provide a substantive response; however, the grievance is barred from arbitration.

- B.** If the Employer alleges that a complaint is not grievable and/or not arbitrable, the Employer shall notify the grievant and, if applicable, their designated union representative in writing stating the reason(s) for such determination(s). If a question of grievability and/or arbitrability is raised, the issue will be considered part of the grievance and processed pursuant to Article 28, Section 8.A.

**Section 17.A.** Suspensions of one (1) to fourteen (14) days may be appealed by NTEU through the expedited arbitration procedures of Article 28: Arbitration, Section 11 within thirty (30) days after receipt of the decision to effect the

suspension (thereby waiving Step 3 of the grievance procedure), or beginning at Step 3 of the grievance provisions of this article within fourteen (14) days of the final after receipt of the decision to effect the suspension. In addition, the Employer, within fourteen (14) days of the final decision to suspend, may serve written notice to the other party that it is waiving the Step 3 meeting. If the Employer waives the Step 3 meeting, expedited arbitration must be invoked by the Union within thirty (30) days of receipt of the waiver decision.

- B.** Grieved suspensions of one (1) to fourteen (14) days will be stayed throughout the grievance procedure. When expedited arbitration is invoked by the Union for a suspension of one (1) to fourteen (14) days, the suspension will be stayed until an award is issued. In exchange for staying the suspension until an award is issued, NTEU agrees attorney fees may not be awarded if expedited arbitration results in the suspension being modified or overturned.

**Section 18.** Reasonable extensions of time under this Article can be made by mutual agreement between the parties.

**Section 19.A.** A final decision or resolution of any grievance prior to an arbitration decision will apply only to that grievance and will not constitute a precedent that is binding on either party for other grievances.

- B.** The remedy granted as a result of a grievance resolution will be applied only to those employees who are parties to the grievance, unless otherwise required by law or regulation.

**Section 20.** A description of any matter in dispute and the basis upon which it is resolved in any confidential settlement agreement may be available for CBP and NTEU's internal use or business.

## **ARTICLE 28: ARBITRATION**

**Section 1.** Only the Union or the Agency may invoke the procedures set forth in this Article.

**Section 2.A.** Matters specifically excluded from the grievance procedure are also excluded from this Article.

- B.** As used in this Article, “days” refers to calendar days unless otherwise expressly provided herein. If the day an action must be completed under this Article falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, the due date shall be 11:59 p.m. the next regular business day (Monday through Friday).
- C.** “By mutual agreement” as used in this Article does not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over a proposed variation to the national arbitration procedures to grievance, arbitration or any other impasse dispute procedures. Such mutual agreements must be placed in writing and signed by the parties, and will be binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw.

**Section 3.A.** Requests for arbitration must be submitted in writing, e.g. by U.S. mail, facsimile or electronic mail, to the Agency’s Director of Labor-Management Relations, while requests from the Agency for arbitration must be submitted in writing, e.g. by U.S. mail, facsimile or electronic mail, to the Union’s National President, within thirty (30) days from receipt of the final grievance decision or at any time after a final grievance decision should have been issued under either Sections 12 or 13 of Article 27: Grievance Procedure. Adverse Actions must be invoked to arbitration within thirty (30) days of the employee’s receipt of the Employer’s final adverse action decision.

- B.** In accordance with Article 27: Grievance Procedure, Section 17, suspensions of one (1) to fourteen (14) days may be invoked to expedited arbitration within thirty (30) days after receipt of the decision to effect the suspension if the suspension has not been appealed by the Union to Step 3 of the grievance procedure. If the decision to effect the suspension has been appealed to Step 3 of the grievance procedure in accordance with Article 27: Grievance Procedure, Section 12, expedited arbitration must be invoked within thirty (30) days after either the employee’s receipt of the Step 3 decision or at any time after a final grievance decision should have been issued. If pursuant to Article 27: Grievance Procedure, Section 17 the Employer has notified NTEU, in writing, that it is waiving Step 3 of the grievance procedure, arbitration must be invoked within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written waiver decision.

- C. Once arbitration is invoked, the parties' designees will assign the grievance, based on the date of the invocation, to an arbitrator on the appropriate Arbitrator Panel on a rotating basis beginning with the arbitrator whose last name appears first in alphabetical order. On a monthly basis, CBP will provide to the corresponding NTEU Field Office/NTEU National a list of the grievances that have been invoked to arbitration with the assigned arbitrator, date of invocation, and the assigned CBP attorney.
- D. The arbitrator and other party must be contacted by the party invoking arbitration within forty-five (45) days of the non-invoking party identifying its representatives to pursue a hearing date.
  - (1) If the invoking party fails to contact the arbitrator and other party within forty-five (45) days or otherwise fails to schedule a hearing date, the other party may contact the arbitrator with proposed hearing dates and the arbitrator, in consultation with the parties, will be required to set a hearing date within eight (8) months of the invocation date, absent mutual agreement by the parties that the arbitrator can choose a date outside that time.
  - (2) If the parties cannot agree on a hearing date acceptable to the arbitrator that is within eight (8) months of the invocation date, the arbitrator is required to set a date during that time absent mutual agreement by the parties that the arbitrator can choose a date outside that time.
- E. Failure of the invoking party to fulfill its obligations under Section 3.D. will result in the invoking party assuming all costs due and payable resulting from the arbitration, if any.

#### **Section 4. Arbitrator Panels.**

- A. The parties agree to have twenty-one (21) arbitration panels: one panel for Headquarters, Pre-Clearance and the NTEU National Office, and one panel for each Field Office. The Chicago Field Office Panel will include the Financial Management Services Center (Indianapolis). Each Panel will be comprised of at least five (5) arbitrators, to hear and decide issues submitted to arbitration, with reasonable consideration given to each Field Office's geographic service area in the selection of panel members.
- B. Arbitrator panels being used by CBP and NTEU at the time of this Agreement will be maintained until the replacements or additions are in place. Absent mutual agreement, current members will remain in place unless either party strikes them under this Agreement's striking procedures. The parties will attempt to appoint new members who live within the boundaries of the geographic Field Office they



serve.

- C. All arbitrators should be at least members of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service or American Arbitration Association panels and should be members of the National Academy of Arbitrators.
- D. In any particular arbitration, the parties by mutual agreement may agree to request a list of five (5) arbitrators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and alternately strike arbitrators until an arbitrator is selected, or they may simply agree on an arbitrator to hear the case, e.g., someone who works in the city in which the hearing will be held. The parties will toss a coin to determine which party will strike first.
- E. In order to reach the requisite number of arbitrators on each panel and to fill any subsequent vacancies, the parties agree to select such arbitrators as follows:
  - (1) The parties may mutually agree to place any arbitrator on the panel who meets the qualification requirements of Section 4.C. of this Article.
  - (2) The parties will retain their existing panels of arbitrators. In filling vacancies, the parties will then request a sub-regional list of five (5) arbitrators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. Each party will add two (2) additional names to the list for each vacancy on a panel by privately sending those names to FMCS and asking that they be added to the list of five (5). The parties will toss a coin to determine which party will strike first. The parties will strike alternately until the requisite number of arbitrators remains.
- F. Each arbitrator will be selected on a rotating basis to hear and decide arbitration cases within the service area covered by their panel. If an arbitrator who would otherwise be selected via the rotating procedure does not reside in or near the city where the case will be heard, as an exception to the rotating procedure, the parties may mutually agree to select an arbitrator from another panel if s/he resides in or near the city where the case will be heard. If the parties do not mutually agree to select an arbitrator by this alternate method, the selection rotating procedure will be used.
- G. Absent mutual agreement to do otherwise, each party may strike one (1) arbitrator from each panel during each twelve (12) month period following the effective date of this Agreement by giving written notice to the other party. In addition, if an arbitrator is unable to schedule a case in accordance with Section 3.D. of this Article in two successive cases the parties try to schedule with the arbitrator, either party may strike the arbitrator at that time. Upon receipt of written notice, no further cases will be assigned to that arbitrator. An arbitrator struck pursuant to this section will

hear and decide any cases already assigned to the arbitrator. No later than two days prior to notifying the arbitrator of the arbitrator's removal, the striking party will provide a courtesy notice to the other party to ensure the parties agree that no pending cases or issues before the arbitrator. The effective date of the arbitrator's removal will be the date the other party has received courtesy notice of the striking party's intent to remove the arbitrator. The striking party will inform the arbitrator that the arbitrator has been struck from the panel after the arbitrator has rendered a decision on all assigned cases and all compliance issues have been resolved. Absent mutual agreement, within thirty (30) days after receipt of such notice, the parties shall meet and select another arbitrator to replace the arbitrator removed using the procedure in Section 4.E. of this Article. The newly selected arbitrator will be placed on the list in the position of the arbitrator they replace and will take the cases on a rotational basis in the same manner as the arbitrator they replace would have received them. An arbitrator may remove themselves from the list at any time.

- H. Only arbitrators with experience in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or civil rights law will hear and decide grievances involving allegations of EEO discrimination.

**Section 5.A.** Arbitrations involving local grievances will be held at an Agency facility in reasonable proximity to the geographic locale in which the grievance was filed, or any site mutually agreed to by the parties. National grievances shall be arbitrated in Washington, D.C. and will be rotated between the Employer's and the Union's premises. If either party believes local grievances of a similar nature can be consolidated into a national arbitration, the parties shall meet to discuss such consolidation. If the parties mutually agree to consolidation, the parties shall follow the procedures for arbitration of national grievances and the arbitrator's decision shall be binding on the consolidated local grievances.

- B. Absent mutual agreement, a party that requests postponement of an arbitration proceeding after an arbitrator has been selected and a hearing date scheduled shall pay all fees and costs due and payable to the arbitrator, if any, as a result of the postponement. However, if the parties settle the grievance prior to a final and binding arbitration award going into effect, any and all fees and costs will be equally shared.
- C. If an employee is aggrieved due to the receipt of a disciplinary action, the Agency will pay for the travel and per diem of the aggrieved employee and approved witnesses if they are not located within commuting area of the arbitration hearing location in accordance with the applicable travel and per diem regulations. In arbitrations not based upon issued disciplinary actions, the Agency will pay for the travel and per diem in accordance with the applicable travel and per diem

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regulations of the aggrieved employee, and, in the event there are multiple aggrieved employees in a non-disciplinary arbitration, the Agency will pay for travel and per diem for up to a maximum of four (4) representative employees.

- D.** In the event a witness is not assigned to a duty station located within the commuting area of the arbitration hearing location, the party calling that witness shall have the right to obtain their testimony via telephone or other telecommunication device. Bargaining history testimony may be provided in person or via telephone, or other telecommunication device, at the discretion of the witness.

**Section 6.** This Section addresses the procedures to be applied by the parties regarding an arbitration hearing.

- A.** No later than twenty (20) days before the hearing date the parties will:

- (1) Meet in person, by telephone or by video-conference and will use their best efforts to reach settlement.
- (2) Absent settlement, the parties shall prepare a joint letter submitting the matter in dispute to the arbitrator. The letter shall present, in question form, the issue(s) on which arbitration is sought, including questions of grievability and arbitrability. If the parties cannot agree on the issue(s) on which arbitration is sought, each party shall prepare its version of the issue(s) and submit it to the arbitrator; however, the arbitrator should look to the unresolved issues in the grievance to determine the issue.
- (3) Attempt to reach an agreement on joint exhibits and any stipulation of facts concerning the matter being arbitrated. Either party may forward to the arbitrator as soon as practicable after their selection the following materials: the written invocation of arbitration, submission letter(s), a copy of this Agreement, and copies of applicable agency regulations, together with a copy of the form CBP 280 grievance and responses. The parties shall be mindful that the scope of the arbitration is set forth in the form CBP 280 and in the Agency's grievance responses.

- B.** Copies of any and all documents filed with the arbitrator at any stage of the arbitration proceeding shall be simultaneously served on the other party.

- C.** The Parties will exchange a list of witnesses at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of the hearing, briefly identifying the relevance of the testimony expected from each witness. Either Party may object to the other party's witnesses on the grounds that the witness's proffered testimony is not relevant, probative or competent, or that a witness was not included on the original witness list. The

arbitrator will resolve disputes over the other party's witnesses by a conference call with the parties at least four (4) days prior to the hearing.

- D. The Parties may exchange lists of any exhibits they intend to offer into the record or use for demonstrative purposes either prior to or during the hearing.
- E. Bargaining history may not be used in an arbitration hearing unless the party proposing to use it has notified the other at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing of its intent to use it. If a party gives notice of intent to use bargaining history, the other party may use it without providing notice.
- F. Without waiving any right to request information under 5 U.S.C § 7114(b)(4) at any time, Requests for Information (RFIs) submitted after invocation of arbitration will normally be submitted no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting identified in Section 6.A above. For just cause, subsequent requests may be made beyond the forty-five (45) day period. Any denial of requested information in contemplation or connection with an arbitration will be automatically joined to the arbitration as an issue for the arbitrator to resolve. Should such a matter be joined, the arbitrator will ensure that the parties are allowed to present any arguments against the release of the requested data. When an issue is resolved, the parties will comply with the Arbitrator's order, subject to any subsequent appeal.
- G. The arbitration hearing shall be conducted between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Absent mutual agreement, the Parties shall be allotted a minimum of thirty (30) minutes midday for a lunch break. The Parties may mutually agree to begin the hearing at a time other than 9:00 a.m. or to continue the arbitration hearing beyond 5:00 p.m. but may not be compelled to do so. The arbitrator should attempt to use the last thirty (30) minutes of the day to provide feedback to the parties and promote settlement of the case prior to briefing.
- H. Arbitration hearings are administrative in nature and not court proceedings. The rules of evidence have only general applicability, but the arbitrator shall exclude irrelevant or unduly repetitious testimony. Except as expressed in this Agreement, the arbitrator shall determine the procedures to be followed at the hearing, and shall explain such procedures to both parties prior to or at the outset of the hearing.
- I. The parties may offer such relevant and non-repetitious evidence as they desire and shall produce such additional evidence as the arbitrator may deem necessary to an understanding and determination of the dispute. The arbitrator shall be the judge of the relevance and materiality of the evidence offered and conformity to legal rules of evidence shall not be necessary.

- J. Arbitration hearings shall normally be open hearings. Either party may request that the hearing be closed to persons having no interest in the dispute. Upon good cause shown the arbitrator may close the hearing.
- K. The invoking Party shall present its case first, except in disciplinary or adverse action cases where the Agency shall present its case first. The invoking Party shall bear the burden of proving its case by a preponderance of the evidence, except: in disciplinary or adverse action cases, in which case the burdens applied shall be those of the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) in adverse action cases; in matters covered by 5 U.S.C. § 4303, in which case the arbitrator is governed by the burden established in 5 U.S.C. § 7701(c)(1)(A) (Employer's decision is supported by substantial evidence); and in matters covered by 5 U.S.C. § 7512, in which case the arbitrator will be governed by 5 U.S.C. § 7701(c)(1)(B) (Employer's decision is supported by preponderance of evidence).
- L. The arbitrator may, at their discretion, require witnesses to testify under oath or affirmation, and, if requested by either party, shall do so. The arbitrator may sequester witnesses other than the grievant during the testimony of other witnesses as they deem appropriate.
- N. The arbitrator may receive and consider the evidence of witnesses by affidavit but shall give it only such weight as the arbitrator deems proper after consideration of any objection made to its admission.
- M. A verbatim transcript of the hearing shall be made by a qualified reporter unless the Parties mutually agree that one is not needed or unless the expedited arbitration procedures are utilized. Copies of any transcript made shall be provided to the arbitrator, the Union, and the Employer.
- N. The filer, their representative, and all employees who are called as witnesses will be excused from duty without charge to leave to the extent necessary to participate in the arbitration.

**Section 7.** Unless otherwise provided for in this Article, the parties shall bear equally the arbitrator's fees and all expenses of arbitration, including but not limited to the compensation and expenses of the arbitrator, the charge for the transcript, court reporter fees, and the costs of any non-governmental hearing rooms or facilities that may be used. These fees do not include fees for services that the Agency is required to provide as a Reasonable Accommodation or as a Personal Assistance Service as set forth in Article 47. However, where the Agency offers sufficient services, but NTEU prefers to use a different service, the cost of the preferred service will be shared by the parties with CBP paying up to the amount of its offered service. If in any individual case, the Employer

has an existing services contract for sufficient services and NTEU prefers to use a different service or service provider the Employer will not be required to pay for the different service or service provider.

**Section 8.** This Section describes the Authority of any selected arbitrator deciding a grievance as defined by this Agreement.

- A.** The arbitrator shall have authority to make all grievability and/or arbitrability determinations. The arbitrator shall hear and resolve these issues at the beginning of the hearing through a bench decision. If the arbitrator's decision is that the dispute is non-grievable and/or non-arbitrable, the arbitrator will not address the merits of the dispute. If the arbitrator finds the case to be non-grievable and/or non-arbitrable that shall be considered a final award and an appeal to that decision may be filed accordingly.
- B.** The arbitrator shall have no authority to add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of the Agreement.
- C.** The arbitrator's award will be limited to the issues presented and remedies requested during the grievance procedure at step two. Awards issued pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 5596 (i.e., the Back Pay Act) shall be limited to the period identified in the Statute.
- D.** Consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 7121(b)(2)(A), the arbitrator will have the authority to issue a stay of any personnel action in a manner similar to the manner described in section 5 U.S.C. § 1221(c) with respect to the Merit Systems Protection Board (i.e., complaints filed pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §§ 2302(b)(8) and/or (b)(9)).
  - (1) The petition for a stay must be filed at or prior to the settlement meeting identified in Section 6.A above.
  - (2) The Union's petition for a stay must contain the following:
    - i. A chronology of the facts including a description of the alleged disclosure involved and the personnel action that the Agency has taken or intends to take which forms the basis for the petition;
    - ii. Evidence and/or argument showing that the action taken or threatened is a personnel action, that the action taken or threatened was based on a whistleblowing or other protected activity, as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 1209.4(b), and that there is a substantial likelihood that the grievant will prevail on the merits of the grievance;

- iii. Evidence and/or argument addressing how long the stay should remain in effect; and
  - iv. Any documentary evidence that supports the stay request.
- (3) The Agency may submit a response to the stay request within five (5) business days of the date of service of the stay request on the Agency. The Agency's response must contain the following:
- i. Evidence and/or argument addressing whether there is a substantial likelihood that the grievant will prevail on the merits of the grievance;
  - ii. Evidence and/or argument addressing whether the grant of a stay would result in extreme hardship to the Agency; and
  - iii. Any documentation relevant to the Agency's position on these issues.
- (4) The petition for a stay must be filed by e-mail with the selected arbitrator and the Agency representatives for the arbitration.
- (5) The arbitrator may seek a mutually agreed resolution of the matter or clarify the issues via telephone or video teleconference prior to issuing a decision on the stay. The arbitrator must issue a written ruling on the stay petition within ten (10) days of the receipt of the Employer's response. The arbitrator may only grant a stay consistent with the burdens of proof and standards established by the Merit Systems Protection Board in cases concerning 5 U.S.C. § 1221(c). A stay must not be granted for any other reason.
- (6) Absent mutual agreement, the arbitrator who ruled on the request for a stay will hear the ultimate arbitration related to that action, if any. A stay becomes effective on the date specified in the arbitrator's order. The stay will remain in effect for the time period set forth in the order or until the arbitrator issues a final decision on the grievance of the underlying personnel action that was stayed, or until the arbitrator vacates or modifies the stay, whichever occurs first. When an arbitration decision results in the reversal of the Agency's action, based upon a specific finding of a prohibited personnel practice, the arbitrator has the authority to issue all legal remedies.

**Section 9.** When the Union has requested such a remedy, attorneys' fees, back pay, and interest will be provided in accordance with standards established by the FLRA, MSPB, EEOC, Federal Court, or other applicable jurisdiction.

**Section 10.** The parties will request that the arbitrator serve their decision in writing

on both Parties within forty-five (45) days after the close of the hearing or filing of the post-hearing briefs.

**Section 11.A.** The parties may agree that the procedures set forth in this Article are too time consuming, formal, and costly for the nature of a particular grievance. In such instances and subject to the other limitations set forth in this Article, the parties may agree to expedited arbitration as follows:

- (1) The hearing will be conducted within six (6) months of the arbitrator and the other party being contacted pursuant to Section 3.D. above. The arbitrator will be selected in accordance with the procedures in Section 4 of this Article. If the invoking party fails to agree to a hearing date within six months, absent just cause, the arbitrator will order a hearing date within that six-month period.
- (2) No written transcript will be made and no briefs may be filed.
- (3) The arbitrator will announce the award at the close of the hearing or within five (5) days thereafter.
- (4) If during the selection process the arbitrator indicates that the arbitrator is unable to meet these time limits, the parties may select a different arbitrator from the panel who can meet these time limits.

**B.** These expedited arbitration procedures shall be used in the following actions unless the parties agree otherwise:

- (1) All non-adverse disciplinary actions, e.g., suspensions of one (1) to fourteen (14) days;
- (2) Written reprimands;
- (3) Within grade appeals;
- (4) Performance evaluation disputes;
- (5) Outside employment denials;
- (6) Denials of annual or sick leave or leave without pay;
- (7) Denials of official time requests by Union representatives under this Agreement;
- (8) Improper maintenance of personnel records;



- (9) Decisions by the Employer concerning:
  - (a) Bulletin board postings;
  - (b) Literature distribution;
- (10) Placement of employees pursuant to Article 13: Bid, Rotation & Placement; and
- (11) Denial of an employee's requested AWS or telework schedule.

**Section 12.A.** Either Party may file exceptions to an arbitrator's award to the FLRA under regulations prescribed by the FLRA for this purpose. If neither Party timely files exceptions, the arbitrator's award will be binding. In adverse action arbitrations, the impacted employee may file an appeal to the Federal Circuit. In addition, the parties recognize that the Agency may request that the Director of OPM file a petition for judicial review in the Federal Circuit. If an exception or appeal is filed, the arbitrator's award will not be implemented until all appeals are exhausted and a final decision is rendered by the FLRA or the court of highest authority to which the case has been appealed.

- B.** In cases where an arbitration remedy has been set aside by a reviewing party solely because the remedy was determined to be deficient, the case will be remanded to the arbitrator by the parties to fashion a new remedy, if appropriate.

**Section 13.** Any of the time limits set forth in this Article may be waived or extended by agreement of the parties which has been confirmed in writing.

## **ARTICLE 29: ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Section 1.** Access to CBP facilities and services for communication among the Union, the bargaining unit and the Agency will facilitate labor-management relations, save time and energy, and produce more efficient and effective working relationships.

**Section 2.A.** Upon a Union request received by the Employer, normally no later than twenty-four (24) hours in advance, the Employer will provide meeting space, if available, in areas occupied by the Employer for meetings during non-duty hours. The Union will comply with all security, safety and housekeeping rules in effect at that time and place.

**B.** Any request for meeting space must contain the date, time, duration and purpose of the meeting and the estimated number of employees expected to attend.

**C.** An NTEU National Representative, upon an approved request received by the Employer, normally no later than twenty-four (24) hours in advance, may visit non-work areas located on the Employer's premises to discuss appropriate Union business with bargaining unit employees during non-duty hours. Absent just cause, the Union's request will be approved.

**D.** Employees attending meetings under this Section will only do so during non-duty hours or while in a leave status.

**Section 3.** Mutually agreed upon space will be provided for the placement of ballot boxes provided by the Union to be used in conjunction with Chapter Officer elections governed by local by-laws. The Union will comply with security and housekeeping rules in effect at that time and place. No responsibility for the safety or security of the ballot boxes is assumed by the Employer.

**Section 4.A.** Upon reasonable advance request by the Union, the Employer will provide confidential meeting space during official hours of business, in areas occupied by the Employer.

**B.** In the event meeting space is not available, the Employer will make necessary arrangements to reserve meeting space as soon as it becomes available.

**C.** Nothing in this Section will be construed as permitting meetings for the purpose of discussing internal Union business.

**Section 5.A.** For purposes of this Section, the term "official bulletin board" is defined as any physical bulletin board upon which the Employer posts notices to and for employees.

- B.** The Employer will provide the Union with a reasonable amount of dedicated space on each official bulletin board for its exclusive use. In addition, and subject to applicable restrictions, the Employer will provide space for the Union to install one bulletin board, of reasonable size, per floor occupied by employees. The Union will pay for the boards and the cost of installation. The boards will be for the exclusive use of the Union.

**Section 6.A.** The Union may distribute material on the Employer's premises during non-duty hours (e.g., lunch hours) in non-work areas during scheduled work hours provided that the employees distributing and receiving the material are on their own time and provided that there is compliance with the Employer's security policies and practices.

- B.** Non-work areas are: cafeteria or any other commercial enterprises located on the Employer's premises (with approval of lessor or operating agency), space set aside as snack bar or break areas, and rest rooms, entrance ways, lobbies and parking lots.
- C.** Material distributed by the Union in accordance with Section 6.A that does not libel or slander any individual, other labor organizations, government agencies, or activities of the Federal Government may be distributed, so long as it relates to working conditions or practices, or labor-management relations communications.
- D.** All costs incidental to the preparation and/or distribution of Union materials under this Section will be borne by the Union.

**Section 7.** The Union will be allowed to distribute brochures to employees describing the Union's optional insurance and benefit plans.

**Section 8.A.** To promote the greatest, and most efficient, distribution of this Agreement, CBP will post the Agreement on its intranet and internet site. The posted Agreement will have hyperlink ability to assist in navigating through the articles. Once the Agreement is posted, the Employer will immediately inform all employees of its availability and how to view its contents.

- B.** CBP will also post on its intranet and internet, mid-term agreements entered into at the national level in addition to all Agency Directives, handbooks etc. that impact conditions of employment.
- C.** NTEU National will be provided up to 1200 copies of the contract during the duration of the agreement. NTEU National will distribute copies of the contract to the local NTEU Chapters.

**Section 9.A.** The Union's use of Agency equipment, supplies, and/or media for communications concerning Employer-Union business is permitted when available.

Examples of such communication media include U.S. Mail, fax machines, electronic mail, telephones, satellite facilities, video or teleconferencing, two-way radio, photocopiers, inter-office mail, physical and electronic bulletin boards.

- B.** Communication by U.S. mail does not include the use of government paid postage.
- C.** The Union may establish National and Chapter electronic bulletin boards for one-way communication designed to reach large numbers of employees. CBP will provide access for designated CBP employees to web-based bulletin boards where available, for viewing NTEU information.
- D.** The Union's use of Agency equipment or supplies for internal Union matters or business is strictly prohibited.
- E.** Upon reasonable advance request, the Union will be allowed to use the Employer's audio visual equipment, if locally available, for use during new employee orientation presentations.
- F.** The Employer will provide all employees, as practicable, with access to a CBP electronic mail system. Employees may exchange messages related to official Agency business and Employer-Union matters. Additional storage for email messages is available using archives in Outlook, SharePoint sites, and hard drive space. Upon Request, training will be made available for any representative unfamiliar with the storage options available.
- G.** All costs incidental to the use of such equipment will be borne by the Union. The Union will return any equipment used to the Employer in good condition promptly after being used.

**Section 10.** Upon receiving the geographic locations covered by each chapter from NTEU, the Employer will furnish to the Union, for the its internal use alone, a list which will contain the name, grade, position, title, branch, division, organizational office and NTEU chapter of all employees in the bargaining unit. Additionally, the list will include information describing whether each employee is under FERS or CSRS and information about each employee's employment status (e.g., seasonal, intermittent, permanent part- time, permanent full-time, temporary, term, etc.). This list will be supplied within one month after this Agreement becomes effective and on February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1 of each year thereafter.

**Section 11.** The Employer will provide upon request, two (2) four-drawer file cabinets, if available, to each NTEU Chapter which has not previously been provided with file cabinets by the Employer.

**Section 12.A.** Space availability and budget considerations permitting, as determined by the Employer, the Employer will make good faith efforts to provide lockable lockers for uniformed employees to be located near their work areas. In addition, the Employer will request that the General Services Administration furnish adequate locker space in new or replaced CBP facilities being constructed under their supervision, and also a like request will be made to authorities providing space to the Employer without charge.

**B.** Space availability and budget considerations permitting, as determined by the Employer, the Employer will, within its authority, make reasonable attempts to ensure that adequate eating space, drinking fountains, sanitary facilities and vending machines are available at all permanent locations, which will be properly heated and ventilated.

**C.** Space availability and budget considerations permitting, as determined by the Employer, the Employer will, within its authority make reasonable attempts to ensure that adequate lounges/break rooms are provided at all permanent locations.

**Section 13.** The Employer will list the name, office telephone number, home or Union office telephone number of each Chapter President and NTEU National Vice-Presidents in the CBP telephone directory.

**Section 14.A.** At a minimum, the Employer will provide each Chapter with adequate office space and equipment at a CBP worksite, including the Field Operations Academy (FOA) or other approved facility, in accordance with government-wide regulations on space management. Upon the effective date of this Agreement, local chapters may request to negotiate over office space in accordance with Article 26: Bargaining. Alternatively, the Union may choose to rent/lease its own commercial space. In the latter case, the leased space will be centrally located and readily accessible.

**B.** Any space considered for availability must be in accordance with government-wide regulations on space management. However, at a minimum, any office provided will be equipped with a desk, four chairs, and a telephone.

**C.** Based upon need, equipment and system availability and budget considerations, the Employer will make reasonable efforts to provide a Union office in Employer-controlled space, with a fax machine, computer and systems access. Alternatively, the Union may provide such equipment and access at their expense.

**D.** Any disputes regarding CBP provided space and/or equipment availability may be referred to the appropriate Field Level Labor-Management Relations Committee.

**E.** Nothing in this Subsection is intended to reduce the number of Chapter union offices in place as of the effective date of this Agreement.

**Section 15.** The Employer will make reasonable efforts to ensure that temperatures within CBP-occupied office space are adjusted, where possible, to the allowable limits prescribed by applicable law, regulation or directive. Where temperatures in CBP occupied office space consistently fail to meet the allowable limits referred to above, the Employer will make reasonable efforts to have the situation corrected.

**Section 16.** The Employer will provide the Union appropriate notice when a determination is made to acquire new or modify existing space and this decision may affect unit employee working conditions. The Employer will consider Union recommendations in making determinations related to space management.

**Section 17.** The Employer will promptly forward to the lessor substantiated complaints by employees alleging problems relating to space management outside the Employer's control.

**Section 18.** Employees will, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Transportation Incentive Program, be provided with the maximum allowable transportation subsidy they qualify for based on their commute.

**Section 19.A.** The Employer will, to the extent possible within its fiscal statutory and regulatory authority, work to provide employees with free, safe and secure parking in reasonable proximity to their workplace. In accordance with Article 26, NTEU will be provided notice and the opportunity to bargain over changes to employee parking in accordance with law, including any proposed or actual change in parking fees. When the Employer does not possess the authority to establish or change parking fees at duty locations, the Employer will coordinate with NTEU regarding what steps will be taken to appeal to the appropriate entity, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), regarding the provision of safe, secure, and free parking to CBP employees that is a reasonable proximity to the workplace.

**B.** The Employer will maintain the existing pre-tax dollar parking benefit program.

**Section 20.A.** To communicate with managers and employees on employee conditions of employment, the Employer, upon request, will provide one hand-held mobile device to each NTEU Chapter.

**B.** Chapter officials using agency provided hand-held mobile devices are responsible for operating the device in accordance with applicable CBP policy.

**C.** Communication with a hand-held mobile device in accordance with this Section may not be used for any purpose other than labor-management relations. Chapter officials using a hand-held mobile device in accordance with the Section are not

entitled to increased forms of compensation, e.g., claims under FLSA.

**Section 21.** In the administration of this Article, no local NTEU Chapter will forfeit any rights, privileges, benefits or access to CBP facilities or services contained in any collective bargaining agreement between CBP and NTEU unless specifically in conflict with this Article.

**Section 22.** In the event that employees are prohibited from carrying a privately owned pager, cell phone or other wireless communication device to receive incoming calls or messages, the Employer will ensure that at least one manned telephone line is available at all Ports covered by such policy which is specifically and solely dedicated to receiving incoming emergency telephone calls to bargaining unit employees (in a manner consistent with 64 FLRA No. 70). For Ports with operational command centers that are staffed and answer calls during operational hours, the Employer may use existing multipurpose phone lines at such centers for this purpose. For Ports without such command centers, the Employer will add a dedicated phone line for this purpose. CBP will implement internal procedures to ensure that impacted bargaining unit employees are immediately informed of the emergency telephone call. Port employees will be informed of the emergency telephone numbers and emergency notification procedures.

**Section 23.** The CBP Directive titled Lactation Support Program establishes policy and procedures, and assigns responsibilities governing the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Lactation Support Program (LSP), in accordance with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Worklife Programs. (See Appendix G).

## **ARTICLE 30: UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIAL TIME**

**Section 1.** The term “official time” as used in this Article, means an approved absence from duty by a bargaining unit employee during regular hours of duty without loss of pay and without charge to leave.

**Section 2.A.** Representatives shall be granted a reasonable amount of official time for all matters relating to the administration of this Agreement, and joint labor-management relations matters arising under Chapter 71, Labor-Management Relations, Title 5 and any other activity for which the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) allows employees to use official time such as:

- (1) to prepare for and participate in Labor-Management Relations Committees (LMRCs) activities as provided for in this Agreement;
- (2) meetings with the Employer concerning personnel policies, practices or other general conditions of employment or any other matter covered by 5 USC 7114(a)(2)(A);
- (3) to prepare for and present unfair labor practice charges or unit clarification petitions including preparation for and participation in any Federal Labor Relations Authority investigation or hearing as a representative of the Union;
- (4) to prepare and deliver written and/or oral replies to notices of proposed disciplinary, adverse or unacceptable performance actions;
- (5) to prepare for and present appeals in connection with statutory or regulatory appeal procedures in which the Union is designated as the representative;
- (6) to prepare for and present reconsideration replies in connection with the denial of within grade increases;
- (7) examinations of bargaining unit employees by a representative of the Employer in connection with an investigation;
- (8) to prepare for and participate in grievance meetings and arbitration hearings;
- (9) meetings of committees on which Union representatives are authorized membership pursuant to this Agreement;



- (10) to prepare for and/or participate in local or national negotiations;
- (11) to meet with national staff representatives of the Union in connection with a grievance, arbitration, or unfair labor practice charge;
- (12) to travel to and from any activity for which official time is authorized under this Article;
- (13) to attend or conduct Union sponsored training and other joint labor-management relations training matters. In no case will a Chapter receive less than forty (40) hours for each national Vice President, Chapter President, or Chief Steward and no less than twenty-one (21) hours for each Steward position authorized by this Agreement;
- (14) to engage in lobbying activities (e.g., visiting, phoning and writing to elected representatives) on matters concerning Union employees' conditions of employment. This official time will be available to union representatives in addition to Chapter Presidents, Chief Stewards and Stewards (e.g., Legislative Coordinators or Chapter Vice Presidents); or
- (15) to prepare and maintain records and reports required of the Union by 5 U.S.C. § 7120 (c).

**B.** When serving as a designated employee representative in an established appeals procedure, a steward, chief steward, Vice-President or Chapter President shall receive such official time as may be provided or allowed in the law or regulations governing the appeal procedure.

**C.** Reasonable time shall also be granted as necessary to stewards, chief stewards, Vice-Presidents, Chapter Presidents, and affected employees to prepare for meetings referenced in Subsection A. above.

**Section 3.** As necessary or required, workload permitting, employees shall be excused from duty without charge to leave to participate in the activities covered in Section 2 of this Article.

**Section 4. Stewards and Chief Stewards.** With regard to representational duties, the Union may officially designate Union stewards and chief stewards as follows:

- A.** The Union may designate at least one (1) official steward at each post of duty. A post of duty, for the purpose of this Article, is a common physical location, such as a station, port-of-entry, airport etc. The post of duty shall be the representational area of the steward(s) for the purposes of this Article.

- B.** The Union agrees to appoint no more than the following number of stewards at any post of duty where more than twenty-five (25) employees are stationed.

<b>Post of Duty Size</b>	<b>Number of Stewards</b>
26 – 50 unit employees	3
51 – 100 unit employees	6
101 – 175 unit employees	8
176 – 250 unit employees	10
251 – 325 unit employees	12
326 – 400 unit employees	14
401 – 475 unit employees	16
476 – 550 unit employees	20
551 – 625 unit employees	21
626 – 700 unit employees	22
701 – 775 unit employees	23
776 – 850 unit employees	24
851 – 925 unit employees	25
926 – 1000 unit employees	26
1001 – 1075 unit employees	27
1076+ unit employees	28

- C.** In addition to the stewards designated pursuant to Subsections A and B above, the Union may also designate one (1) chief steward for each CBP Port, Area, or Headquarters Office where employees are permanently assigned. Each Chapter shall have at least one chief steward. A chief steward may represent any employee concerning matters related to the employment of the employee within the Chapter's jurisdiction. The preceding will not result in any additional cost, e.g., travel and per diem, to the Employer.
- D.** Local NTEU Chapters will provide the Employer a list of its Vice Presidents and other officers/stewards within thirty (30) calendar days of the effective date of this Agreement, and annually thereafter.
- E.** In addition, the Chapters will provide the Employer a list of additions, deletions or changes to the list each month. Only those stewards and alternates on the steward's list will be recognized by the Employer as having authority to represent the Union. The Union at the National level will provide to the Employer a list of its Chapter Presidents within thirty (30) calendar days of the effective date of this Agreement and changes to this list each month.
- F.** The Union may change stewards at any time by providing written notice to the appropriate management official. At least one (1) management official will be

designated to receive such information within each port, Area, field headquarters office, and National Headquarters. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit a Chapter President or an NTEU National representative from representing the Union.

- G.** The Employer shall recognize the President of each existing NTEU Chapter representing CBP employees as having the authority to represent the Union in the administration of this Agreement and to represent bargaining unit employees concerning any matter relating to the employment of an employee within their respective jurisdiction. Where more than one (1) Chapter President exists within a DFO area, the DFO area shall be geographically apportioned by the Union to provide non-overlapping representational areas for each Chapter President. The Union shall notify the Employer of such apportionment. The Chapter President may represent any employee concerning matters relating to the employment of the employee within the chapter's jurisdiction. The preceding will not result in any additional cost, e.g. travel and per diem, to the Employer.
- H.** The parties increased the number of Stewards authorized at each Post of Duty and the number of Block Time officials. The intent for the increases in block time officials and corresponding block time hours was founded in the belief by both parties, that given the total amount of official time (block and *ad hoc*) over the last four (4) years, an increase in block time is likely to reduce the need for *ad hoc* time and overall Agency-wide official time hours will remain relatively neutral as a result. Accordingly, it shall be the duty of all stewards and union officials utilizing *ad hoc* time to conserve and minimize the use of such time to the greatest extent practicable to conduct necessary representational activities. There will continue to be circumstances where the use of *ad hoc* official time is appropriate. Examples of such circumstances for *ad hoc use* include but are not limited to the following:
- (1) A request for a representative to be present during an interview that the employee reasonably believes could lead to discipline and all block time officials are off-duty, on detail, or unable to be present.
  - (2) All block time officials are off-duty, on detail, unable to be present, and a representational need (e.g. required by law, rule, regulation, etc.) is both apparent and time sensitive in nature.
- I. Block Time.**
- (1) In recognition of the complexity of CBP operations, e.g., 24/7 working schedules, multiple ports within one NTEU Chapter's jurisdiction, varying miles between ports, seasonal ports, the presence of uniform and non-uniformed employees, frequent changes in shift times, and the diverse preferences of Chapter representatives to perform CBP duties some or none

of the time, the parties agree that the number of chapter representatives designated below will receive a block of time as noted each week so that both parties can plan and employees have known access to the union. The entitlement to block time is as follows:

- (a) Chapters representing more than 75, but less than 350 bargaining unit employees will be allowed at least one full-time representative on official time.
  - (b) Chapters representing 350 or more employees shall be allowed at least two full-time representatives on official time.
  - (c) Chapters representing 700 or more employees shall be allowed at least three full-time representatives on official time.
  - (d) For every full increment of 400 employees above 700 the chapter will be allowed to appoint another full-time representative.
  - (e) If a chapter also has more than 10 but less than 20 ports, the Chapter will receive one additional 50% block time official. If a chapter has 20 or more ports, the Chapter will receive one additional 100% block time official.
  - (f) However, no chapter will be entitled to more than five (5) full-time representatives under (a)-(e) above.
- (2) The Union may appoint one (1) full-time representative for its basic training representational needs at the Field Operations Academy (FOA). Accordingly, NTEU National will designate the chapter that will oversee this responsibility. In the rare event that training is suspended for more than one (1) pay period (e.g. Global Pandemic, budget shortfall, etc.) the designated representative will temporarily return to the position in the same series and grade the representative occupied before assuming full-time union duties. The representative will resume full-time representation when the FOA resumes training.
  - (3) In the event of an NTEU Chapter jurisdictional reorganization or creation of a new Chapter, NTEU will provide prompt notification to CBP and, upon request, will brief the Agency regarding the proposed structure.
  - (4) Union representatives who elect full-time status will notify the appropriate management official(s) of their status and its anticipated duration in accordance with local scheduling practices.

- (a) Block time officials will meet with management to coordinate schedules and duty location in advance of beginning their status as a full or part time block time official. Any deviations from an established schedule will be provided to the designated management official prior to implementation.
  - (b) Generally, one block time official will perform official time duties on weekdays / day shift. Chapters with more than one block time official may coordinate alternative shifts for additional block time officials.
  - (c) Full-time block officials may only divide block time among its representatives in half (50%) or quarter-block (25%) increments. Such sharing will be identified at the beginning of each calendar year (or as determined by mutual agreement of the local parties) and may only be changed/modified in writing at least 28 days in advance of the change.
- (5) Union representatives are prohibited from electing full-time status when it will result in a significant reduction in regular operational staffing levels which hinders port operations. For example, a port that loses 1/3 of its staff to 100% official time. When CBP believes that the Union's designation of a full-time representative at a particular port will meet this standard, the parties will explore options for allowing the designation of a block time representative at the port. Such options may include shift modifications and/or splitting the block with a designated representative at another port. If these efforts are not successful, the chapter may challenge CBP's determination that allowing a full-time representative will hinder port operations through the Article 27 Grievance Procedure.
- (6) Upon conclusion of their labor-management duties, full-time Union representatives will return to positions in the same series and grade they occupied before assuming full-time union duties.
- (7) The Employer will designate a manager to whom a full-time Union representative will report for administrative purposes (e.g., leave, travel, etc.). Normally, this manager will be the Port director or their designee. Employees who are serving as full-time representatives will be rated in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Article of this Agreement while fulfilling their labor-management duties.
- (8) Performing full-time duties as a Union representative will have no effect on an employee's ability to participate in overtime. Full-time union officials who elect to participate in the Port's overtime pool will notify management in writing of their intention every three (3) months. Participating employees covered by COPRA will conform to Article 35.

- (9) Union representatives in full time status will not be required to perform the normal duties of their position, unless by mutual agreement or the statute otherwise gives the employer the right to order the full-time union official to perform work assigned to the union official.
- O.** In the event of operational demand employees on official time must be able to immediately report to work prepared to carry out the full scope of their respective duties.
- P.** Official time may be used in any reasonable location agreed to by the parties locally.
- Q.** In the event the local parties are unable to reach agreement, the Agency will provide the representative with a reasonable location to perform representational duties while on official time.

**Section 5.** For each representative allowed under the provisions of this Article, the Union may appoint an alternate representative. The alternate representative may serve as a representative only when the official representative is absent from duty or on an assignment outside their representational area. This section does not apply to representatives on block time who are on approved absence in chapters with more than one block time official.

**Section 6.A.** The Employer has determined that, unless there are insufficient other qualified candidates, union officers or stewards will be considered for details or temporary promotions to supervisory positions only if they volunteer. When the Employer determines to detail or temporarily promote a union officer or steward to a supervisory position, the union officer or steward must relinquish all union responsibilities for the duration of the detail or temporary promotion.

- B.** This Section shall not prohibit a Union officer or steward from serving as an acting supervisor for brief periods of time so long as no conflict of interest is created.

**Section 7.** In accordance with the special job order accounting code established for that purpose, all approved time spent by representatives on representational functions will be charged to labor-relations time and so recorded by the Employer on the time and attendance report.

**Section 8.** Union representatives other than full-time representatives who wish to use official time authorized under this Article must obtain consent from their immediate supervisor before undertaking such activity. An SF-71 or other form mutually agreed to by the parties at the local level may be used for such requests. The representative shall inform the supervisor where they are going, the general purpose of their visit, i.e., the category of representational activity, and when they expect to return. Immediately upon return to the

work site and prior to returning to duty, the representative shall inform their supervisor of their return.

**Section 9.** When a representative enters a work area or performs representational activities they must receive the consent of the immediate supervisor in charge of the work area. The representative shall inform the supervisor whom they wish to confer with, the general purpose of the visit and how long they expect the conferee to be away from their duties. The conferee shall receive the agreement of their immediate supervisor prior to ceasing their duties. Whenever practicable, the conference shall take place in a meeting room as provided for in Article 29: Access to Facilities and Services.

**Section 10.** Workload requirements permitting, requests pursuant to Sections 8 and 9 above will normally be granted. If a request is denied due to work requirements, the supervisor will explain the reason and will indicate to the representative and/or employee when they expect it will be possible to grant the request.

**Section 11.** Workload requirements permitting and upon request, the Employer shall make shift and tour of duty adjustments for representatives to attend labor-management meetings to represent employees, and to attend approved NTEU sponsored training and legislative conferences, during duty time. NTEU agrees not to submit to arbitration any grievance alleging any changes to an impacted employees shifts and/or tours of duty pursuant to this section.

**Section 12.** Employees are permitted, but not required to wear a uniform. Employees not wearing uniforms will dress appropriately for the representational duties they are performing i.e., will dress in accordance with appearance standards for non-uniformed personnel in the duty location.

**Section 13.** An employee's entitlement to premium pay while on official time will be based on law and legal precedent.

## **ARTICLE 31: EMPLOYEE RIGHTS**

**Section 1.A.** Employees covered by this Agreement shall have the right to form, join, or assist any labor organization, or to refrain from any such activity, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, and each employee shall be protected in the exercise of such right. Except as otherwise provided in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, such rights include the right:

- B.** To act for a labor organization in the capacity of a representative and the right, in that capacity, to present the views of the labor organization to heads of agencies and other officials of the Executive Branch of the Government, the Congress or other appropriate authorities; and
- C.** To engage in collective bargaining with respect to conditions of employment through the Union as provided by law and this Agreement.

**Section 2.** Nothing in this Agreement shall require an employee to become a member of the Union, or to pay money to the Union except pursuant to a voluntary written authorization by a member for the payment of dues through payroll deduction.

**Section 3.** Each employee covered by this Agreement has the right to be represented by the Union without discrimination and without regard to labor organization membership subject to the Union's right to refuse to represent the employees described in Section 4 of Article 5: Union Rights.

**Section 4.A.** Employees and Agency managers shall conduct themselves in a professional and businesslike manner, characterized by mutual courtesy, in their day to day working relationships.

- B.** Any discussions with individual employees concerning counseling, evaluations, workload review, or disciplinary actions will be conducted so as to ensure the privacy of the employee.

**Section 5.A.** When an employee is ordered by a supervisor to perform any action and the employee believes the order is a violation of law, the employee may do any or all of the following:

- (1) Give the supervisor a written statement expressing the employee's objection to the order;
- (2) Use the Internal Affairs hotline to report the alleged violation;



(3) Verbally inform the supervisor of their concerns.

- B.** Any such action by the employee must not interfere with their carrying out any lawful order. Failure to carry out a lawful order may result in disciplinary action. The supervisor shall assume full responsibility for the decision, but not for the employee's execution of the order.

**Section 6.** Except in the case of a grievance or other negotiated appeal provisions contained in this Agreement, nothing shall be construed to preclude an employee from:

- A.** Being represented by an attorney or other representative, other than the exclusive representative, of the employee's own choosing in any dispute or appeal action; or
- B.** Exercising dispute or appellate rights established by law, rule, or regulation.

**Section 7.** An employee covered by this Agreement may, without fear of penalty or reprisal, engage in the disclosure of information which the employee reasonably believes evidences:

- A.** A violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or
- B.** Mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, if such disclosure is not specifically prohibited by law and if such information is not specifically required by Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

**Section 8.** Consistent with the procedures contained in Article 22: Investigations, an employee has the right to representation by the Union at any examination conducted by a representative of the Agency in connection with an investigation if:

- A.** The employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee; and
- B.** The employee requests representation.

**Section 9. Complaints Made Against Bargaining Unit Employees.**

- A.** An employee will be notified of a written complaint received by management. A complaint for the purpose of this section is defined as a written statement, including any oral complaints reduced to writing by the Agency, by an identified complainant, indicating dissatisfaction with an employee by reason of conduct, appearance or carelessness or propriety of an action taken by the employee.

- B.** For the purposes of this section an “identified complainant” is any individual (e.g., CBP employee, member of the traveling public, brokers, or other stakeholders) who produced information indicating dissatisfaction with an employee by reason of conduct, appearance, carelessness, or propriety of an action taken by the employee.
- C.** Notification shall be provided by management as soon as practicable, normally within five (5) business days, following the receipt of the complaint. Upon request, the employee shall be furnished with a copy of the complaint; or, if the complaint involves more than one employee, that portion of the complaint related to the requesting employee.
- D.** Nothing in this Section requires the release of information that would violate the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) or diminishes the Union’s right to request information pursuant to law. The Agency retains the discretion to take whatever action is necessary to sanitize a complaint so as to protect confidential sources or other employees involved to include the complainant. Where sanitizing the complaint is insufficient to protect a confidential source or other employees involved, a summary of the complaint will be provided pursuant to the timeframes in Section 9.C above. The summary will provide sufficient information to enable the employee to recall and/or respond to the complaint. A Memorandum of Instruction (formerly known as a cease-and-desist letter) or a General Notice to the employee pursuant to Article 22 can be a sufficient summary for the purpose of this subsection.
- E.** A copy of a written response, if issued, by management will be furnished to the employee upon written request by the employee.
- F.** The Agency will afford the employee a reasonable period of time, normally at least two (2) days, in which to prepare and give to the Employer a response to the complaint, which will be considered before the Employer responds to the complainant. Upon request, the Employer will advise the employee of its response, if issued, by providing a copy or summary.
- G.** Any employee who opts to provide a response for management to consider does so with the understanding it may be used as part of management fact-finding or investigative process.
- H.** The mere act of management providing a written complaint to an employee is not an investigative interview nor a formal meeting. However, if and when a conversation takes place about the written complaint, management may initiate an investigative interview and adhere to the applicable procedures covered by Article 22 of this Agreement.

- I.** Section 9 does not apply to whistleblower complaints, complaints that have been referred to the Joint Intake Center, and/or complaints that are currently under investigation by the Office of Professional Responsibility, or the Office of the Inspector General.
- J.** The parties agree that not all allegations of misconduct should be referred to OPR through the Joint Intake Center. The Joint Intake Center webpage or Labor and Employee Relations should be consulted if there is a question on whether a matter should be referred to OPR.

**Section 10.A.** Management initiated allegations of misconduct and/or internal management communication concerning allegations of employee misconduct (e.g., emails, text, phone calls, Teams messages) do not constitute a complaint for purposes of this article. In these circumstances, management agrees to provide a Memorandum of Instruction (formerly known as a cease-and-desist letter), or General Notice to the employee pursuant to Article 22 as soon as practicable normally within ten (10) business days. In either case, the employee will be provided sufficient information to enable the employee to recall and/or respond to the allegation.

- B.** Section 10 does not apply to allegations which contain whistleblower complaints, allegations that have been referred to the Joint Intake Center, and/or allegations that are currently under investigation by the Office of Professional Responsibility, or the Office of the Inspector General.

**Section 11.A.** The Agency has determined that the review of audio and video recordings is designed to reveal deviations from standards and unsafe conditions and practices so that appropriate corrective actions can be taken. Accordingly, audio and video recording devices will be used to augment the Agency's surveillance capabilities for port perimeters, secured areas and for interactions between employees and the public. Any Agency operated audio and video recording will be conducted in accordance with law, rule and/or regulations.

- B.** Unless the Agency has an internal investigative interest, Agency operated audio and video recordings are not intended to capture employee actions while in non-work areas. A non-work area includes bathrooms, break rooms, parking lots or other areas where official duties are not performed. Although not the intended purpose of the Agency's audio and video surveillance systems, nothing in this Section is intended to prohibit the Agency from proposing action against an employee in the event a recording captures potential misconduct in a non-work area. In the event the Agency determines to operate audio and video recordings in non-work areas, it will notify NTEU and provide it the opportunity to bargain, as appropriate.

- C.** In the event an audio or video recording is relied upon by the Agency when

proposing a discipline or adverse action, the employee will be provided such recording and the opportunity to respond in accordance with Article 45: Disciplinary Actions and Article 46: Adverse Actions.

**D.** The Agency will brief NTEU on retention schedule established by National Archives, GAO and Federal Register notice when finalized. This schedule covers all incident-activated non-surveillance audio/video recordings created and owned by CBP law enforcement personnel using cameras to include, but not limited to body-worn, mobile, and vessel-mounted cameras during the course of their official duties. In the interim, the recorded data will result in two types of audio/video files:

(1) audio/video files that have no evidentiary value Non-Evidentiary; and

(2) audio/video files that have evidentiary value.

(a) Audio/Video files where the content is not deemed to have evidentiary value will be destroyed/deleted.

(b) Audio/Video files determined to have evidentiary value shall be preserved under established rules of evidence.

**Section 12.** When the Employer exercises its legal right to search an employee's possessions at the work site (e.g., desk, locker, car, clothing, etc.) in a non-criminal matter, the employee and their representative will be allowed to be present during the search. If the employee and their representative are not present at the work site, the search will be delayed until such time as they are both available unless such delay impedes the purpose for which the search is conducted.

**Section 13.A.** Participation in the Combined Federal Campaign, United States Bond Drives, Blood Donor Drives and other worthy programs will be on a voluntary basis.

**B.** Contributions for gifts for supervisors, management officials or fellow employees will be strictly voluntary.

**Section 14.** The Employer will ensure that a copy of Article 22: Investigations is included in all orientation materials provided to newly hired employees.

**Section 15.A.** In consideration of an employee's right to privacy, any requested medical information will be kept in confidential files separate from an individual's personnel file.

**B.** Employees will normally provide appropriately requested medical information to the requesting official who will ensure the information is protected in accordance with Subsection A. As an exception, in the event an employee has a reasonable

privacy concern related to providing detailed medical information (*e.g.*, information that includes a doctor's prognosis and diagnosis) directly to the requesting official, upon employee request, the Employer will make alternative arrangements for the employee to deliver the required information directly to a medically certified Agency representative. The employee acknowledges the granting of such a request may result in a delay in the benefit sought by the employee.

- C. In the event a medically certified Agency representative provides medical information to CBP management officials for the purpose of making an informed management decision, the non-medically certified CBP management officials will only review applicable summary medical information in which they have an appropriate need to know.

## **ARTICLE 32: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

**Section 1.** Training and development of employees within the unit is a matter of significant importance. In conjunction with this concept, the Employer, within budgetary limitations, will make available to an employee the training the Employer determines will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the Employer's mission and performance goals, including training for different positions within CBP or in other Federal agencies. The Employer and the Union agree to continue their encouragement of self-initiated development efforts of individual employees consistent with the terms of this Article.

**Section 2.A.** The Employer will maintain information about CBP provided training as well as other job-related educational resources. This information will be made available to all CBP employees. Employees seeking counseling and guidance regarding training opportunities should discuss the matter with their immediate supervisor and/or their Mission Support Staff.

**B.** CBP will inform employees at least annually of the availability of training and other job-related educational resources.

### **Section 3. In-Service Training.**

**A.** Where the Employer offers in-service training to enhance job proficiency, excluding required and remedial training, the following procedures will apply:

- (1) The Employer will advertise in-service training programs to all CBP employees through an electronic web-posting or other appropriate method.
- (2) The in-service training advertisement will provide employees information about the offered training, any prerequisite qualifications, and application procedures.
- (3) Employees will be selected for such training in a fair and equitable manner as described in Article 2: Fairness and Equitability. Absent just cause, qualified volunteers (e.g., employees within the targeted work unit) will be selected for such training in seniority order or in inverse seniority order if there are an insufficient number of volunteers, as defined in this Agreement.
- (4) In the event of a posting failure which affects a group of employees, the remedy available under this Agreement shall be limited to priority consideration when such training is offered again, or in the event the training is not offered again, management will make a good faith effort to offer other trainings as a priority.

- B. Firearm and Less-Lethal Instructor Training.** Prior to selection volunteers for Firearms Instructor (FI) and Less-Lethal Instructor (LLI) training may be required to demonstrate their ability to successfully complete these courses. These requirements are intended to ascertain whether the candidates can successfully perform the self-certified course prerequisites (e.g., Practical Exercise Performance Requirements (PEPRs)) which Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance administers at the commencement of these courses.
- (1) When the Employer requires one candidate within a Port to demonstrate their ability, all candidates within the Port will be required to demonstrate their ability.
  - (2) The Employer may verify that candidates have demonstrated their ability to successfully complete the following:
    - a) FI: the Firearms Instructor Training Program (FITP) Pre-Attendance Proficiency Demonstration
    - b) LLI: the Physical Fitness Test (PFT)
  - (3) If all volunteers cannot complete the training requirements above because of limited testing ability, selections for testing will be made pursuant to Section 3.A(3) above.
  - (4) Opportunities to demonstrate their ability will be announced as far in advance as possible, with no less than three (3) days' notice for the PFT.
  - (5) For FI, employees may request, subject to operational needs and the availability of resources, duty time to engage in additional training with local firearms instructors.
  - (6) Employees who demonstrate their ability successfully will not need to do so again for twelve (12) months.
  - (7) Employees who fail to demonstrate their ability successfully, will be ineligible to bid to such work units, be placed in that collateral duty position, or be placed on the waitlist, as applicable.
- C.** Upon request, the local NTEU chapter will be informed of those employees selected for in-service training.

**Section 4. Non-CBP Training.**

- A.** When an employee requests non-government training, the Employer will pay authorized expenses for such training at a facility approved by the Employer when the following conditions have been met:
- (1) the training has been applied for on an SF-182 or the appropriate form and approved in advance;
  - (2) the training will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the Employer's mission and performance goals, including training for different positions within CBP;
  - (3) existing training programs within CBP will not adequately meet the training need;
  - (4) it is not feasible to establish a new training program to meet the need effectively;
  - (5) reasonable inquiry has failed to disclose the availability of a suitable and adequate program elsewhere within the Government;
  - (6) funds are available to pay for the training;
  - (7) the course is not being taken solely for the purpose of obtaining a degree; and,
  - (8) the approval of such training will not create an undue interference with operational requirements or an imbalance in staffing patterns.
- B.** An employee who fails to satisfactorily complete the training provided for in Section 4 shall reimburse the Employer for all tuition and related expenses incurred by the Employer for that portion of the training not satisfactorily completed.
- C.** In accordance with applicable law and regulations, the Employer may waive in whole or in part a right to recover tuition and related expenses, if it is shown that the recovery would be against equity and good conscience or against the public interest. For example, waiver would normally be appropriate if the employee encountered unforeseen personal or health problems, medical emergency, or change in official duties.
- D.** Upon request, the local NTEU chapter will be informed of those employees selected for non-CBP training.



**Section 5. Tuition Assistance Program.**

- A.** In addition to the mechanism for employees to request non-CBP training in Section 4, the employer may, in accordance with 5 USC Chapter 41, and subject to the availability of appropriations and sufficient budgetary resources, establish a supplemental Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) as an additional method of obtaining training not offered by CBP. If CBP terminates, as opposed to temporarily suspending its existing Tuition Assistance Program, CBP will fulfill any attendant obligation to notice and bargain with NTEU pursuant to law and Article 26 of this Agreement.
- B.** Matters not specifically addressed in this Article will be governed by the CBP TAP Directive, 52000-02, dated April 24, 2024, which remains in effect until superseded. CBP will provide NTEU with notice and the opportunity to bargain consistent with Article 26 if the TAP directive is superseded.

**Section 6.A.** When an employee is reassigned due to the position previously held having been eliminated, sufficient training as determined by the Employer will be given to the employee to enable the employee to perform the duties of the new position.

- B.** The lack of adequate training will be a defense to any action adverse to the employee.
- C.** When training is given by the Employer primarily to prepare employees for promotion, selection for the training will be made under the merit promotion procedures contained in this Agreement.

**Section 7.A.** Employees who are selected to assume the duties of a new position, but who subsequently do not satisfy the training requirements of the new position will be given the option of returning to their prior position.

- B.** The employer will consider the existence of any learning disabilities or handicaps and whether they were reasonably accommodated or not before taking action adverse to the employee based on their performance in training.

**Section 8.** Employees required to attend training will be given notification as far in advance as possible and, absent unusual circumstances, no later than two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of such training. This requirement may be waived by the employee.

**Section 9.** If the Employer determines that successful completion of a training course is required for placement or continued retention in a position, employees who fail to successfully complete the course may be subject to removal from the position, or not placed/retained in the position. Any such action will be taken in accordance with law and

the terms of this Agreement.

**Section 10.** The Employer will reimburse employees for all training costs and expenses incurred as a result of training in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. For example, if law or regulation permits the Employer to reimburse professional employees, such as attorneys, accountants, and chemists for required continuing professional education, it will do so.

**Section 11.A.** In order to determine the quality of training, an evaluation through questionnaires may be conducted by the Employer after any national training conducted outside of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Responses to the questionnaire may be made anonymously.

**B.** Employees at FLETC, CETC or similar training centers will be surveyed every two years concerning the living conditions. Un-sanitized copies of such surveys will be provided to NTEU although the name of the student may be sanitized.

**C.** After consulting with NTEU regarding the survey results pursuant to Subsection B, CBP will take necessary action to seek improvements, if needed.

**Section 12.** Training courses and testing procedures will be validated pursuant to government-wide rules and regulations and applicable law.

**Section 13.** The CBP upward mobility program will include unit employees who have not yet been selected for positions with career ladder potential to GS-11 or WG-15.

**Section 14. Commercial Driver's License.**

**A.** Only employees with a commercial driver's license (CDL) will be permitted to drive Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) equipment (with boom closed) that has a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more from one location to another. Operating NII equipment with the boom open does not require a CDL requirement.

**B.** If while driving NII equipment during the course and scope of employment, the equipment is involved in an accident, the agency will defend any agency employee against liability consistent with applicable law, rule, regulation and policy.

In order to ensure employees have the opportunity to successfully operate NII equipment, CBP will provide employees with sufficient training; such training will emphasize safety and emergency stop procedures.

## **ARTICLE 33: SAFETY AND HEALTH**

**Section 1.** The Employer will make every reasonable effort, consistent with the mission of the Service and the inherent hazards of the work to be performed, to provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions when and where it is within its authority and control to do so. The Employer has determined that whenever it becomes necessary to move an employee from a work area because of conditions or practices in that work area that pose a threat to that employee's health or physical safety, a reasonable effort will be made to find work for that employee elsewhere in the employee's post of duty.

**Section 2.** The parties recognize that not all safety standards and regulations formulated for industrial or business concerns are applicable to, or readily transferable to, the operations of a law enforcement agency. However, in fulfilling its obligations under Section 1 above, the Employer shall adopt, develop, issue and maintain safety standards and regulations that are appropriate to the Employer's operations. In issuing such standards and regulations, Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Executive Order 12196, 29 C.F.R. § 1960, and appropriate orders and issuances promulgated thereunder shall be used.

**Section 3.A.** Employees have a responsibility to promptly correct, if possible, and/or report unsafe conditions to appropriate supervisors. The supervisor will promptly take steps to correct conditions which they find to be unsafe and/or to refer the matter to appropriate management authority. Employees will report all work-related accidents (fatalities, injuries, near-misses, and illnesses), no matter how minor, to their supervisors at the time of the incident.

**B.** The Employer will initiate prompt and appropriate action to correct unsafe conditions whenever they are found to exist.

**Section 4.A.** Annual inspection of all CBP facilities will be conducted by a designated safety representative of the Employer. Facilities where there is a higher than average incidence of accidents and/or illness will be inspected more frequently as determined by the Employer. At the conclusion of each inspection, the official in charge of the facility and the appropriate chapter president shall be advised of any apparent unsafe or unhealthful conditions. Employee reports of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions shall be addressed in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 1960.28. Nothing in this section is in derogation of any rights the Union may have pursuant to law, rule or regulation.

**B.** A representative or designee of the Union shall be provided with reasonable advance notice and an opportunity to accompany the safety inspector(s) on official time during any inspection conducted by the Employer or by the safety representative described in Section 4.A. The Employer will pay mileage costs for Union

representatives who are bargaining unit employees for travel to and from inspections under this Section.

**Section 5. Safety and Health Committees.**

- A. The Employer and the Union will cooperate in the continuing effort to eliminate accidents and health hazards. To this end, a Joint Safety and Health Committee will be established at the National level. Committees will also be established at Headquarters, the National Finance/Logistics Center (NFC/NLC), Laboratories, Training Centers, and at the DFO and Port levels, unless the local parties agree that the work of such committees can be handled through other methods. Field headquarters employees will be covered by the Committee in place at their work location. The parties will exchange agenda topics fifteen (15) days in advance of the Joint Safety and Health Committee meeting. All local safety issues must be raised at the Port or equivalent level prior to being placed on the agenda for the National Safety and Health Committee.
- B. The National Safety and Health Committee shall be composed of eight (8) members to be selected as follows:
  - (1) Three (3) representatives of the Employer, one of whom shall be the senior safety officer or representative within the jurisdiction of the Committee. The safety officer or representative shall serve as Chairman of the National Committee.
  - (2) Three (3) employee representatives to be selected by the Union.
  - (3) One (1) employee representative to be selected from among the non-unit, non-represented employee groups.
  - (4) One (1) member from the NTEU National Office.
- C. The Employer and the Union will establish the size of the Safety and Health Committees at other levels.
- D. Safety Officers will be selected from among volunteers. The parties agree that Safety Officers should be given sufficient time, training, resources and encouragement to perform their duties as outlined in the CBP Occupational Safety and Health Handbook. Safety Officers will be monitored by local Safety and Health Committees and will be invited to local Safety and Health Committee meetings. Proposed enhancements to the CBP safety program will be referred to the National Safety and Health Committee for discussion.
- E. Each Committee shall meet at least once each six (6) months, or at such other times

as are agreed to by the parties. The Committee Chairman shall provide a written report of each meeting to the Commissioner, Port/Area Director, and designated Union representatives as appropriate.

- F.** Committees shall have access to CBP training materials, and will be provided training in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and the CBP Occupational Safety and Health Handbook.
- G.** Committees established pursuant to this Section shall be advisory in nature, and will advise, and will be consulted by the Commissioner, Headquarters, the National Finance/Logistics Center (NFC/NLC), Laboratories, Training Centers, DFOs and Port Directors on all aspects of the CBP occupational safety and health programs.
- H.** Committees shall monitor the performance of the CBP Occupational Safety and Health Programs. Committees are encouraged to review accident trends, recommend specific training needs, review adequacy of emergency evacuation procedures, and recommend promotional campaigns.
- I.** Committees shall have full access to all existing information relevant to their advisory and monitoring functions.
- J.** In the event that safety and health hazards requiring corrective action involve property leased by GSA on behalf of the Employer, or property owned by a private corporation and made available for the employer's use, Committee members may, as deemed appropriate by the employer, be utilized when dealing with GSA or the property owner when efforts are undertaken to resolve the problem.
- K.** Since the Committees are established as management advisory committees, committee members shall receive a reasonable amount of official time, and necessary travel and per diem expenses, to take part in the deliberations of the committees.

**Section 6.A.** The Employer will, to the extent practical and available locally from government sources, continue to offer whatever health services are obtainable for employees. At a minimum, this will include maintenance of the existing practice of making annual influenza vaccinations and other voluntary health improvement and screening activities available for employees at those locations where practicable.

- B.** In any work location where health facilities are not available on the premises, the Employer agrees to provide and maintain standard GSA first aid kits.

**Section 7.** If an ill or injured employee is sent to a medical facility for treatment, and a competent medical authority at the facility determines that the employee is unable to return

to work, the employee may be granted sick leave in accordance with applicable law, regulations and the provisions of Article 37: Leave and Excusal. If the medical authority determines that the affected employee is able to return to work, the Employer will consider that recommendation in determining whether to return the employee to work.

**Section 8.** If it becomes necessary for an employee to leave work because of an incapacitating illness or injury, and normal transportation is not available or within the employee's capacity, the Employer agrees to assist in arranging transportation to a medical facility or to the employee's home, at the request of or on behalf of the employee. The Employer's monetary, pecuniary or tort liability is governed by law, regulations, Federal court decisions, and/or decisions of the Comptroller General and the Employer assumes only such responsibility or liability allowable by law, regulation or such decisions.

**Section 9.A.** Employees shall report all work-related fatalities, injuries, near-misses, and illnesses as soon as possible to their supervisor verbally, and by submitting a report in CBPs Safety Incident and Reporting Tool (SIRT) and cooperate in the investigation of safety incidents.

- B.** When an employee is injured in the performance of the employee's duties, the employee shall report the injury to their supervisor in accordance with the provisions of 20 C.F.R. § 10.207. The Employer will provide the injured employee with forms and information provided for under the Agency's Workers' Compensation Program and will be assisted in obtaining appropriate benefits by a servicing Worker's Compensation advisor.

**Section 10.A.** An employee who sustains a disabling job-related traumatic injury, unless electing to utilize leave, is entitled to the continuation of the employee's regular pay for a period not to exceed forty-five (45) calendar days in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

- B.** Should an employee suffer a recurrence of disability and again stop work, the employee may elect to continuation of regular pay, providing the forty-five (45) calendar days were not all exhausted during the initial period of disability. This is applicable, however, only during a forty-five (45) day period beginning from the date the employee first returned to work following the initial disability.
- C.** Subsequent absences necessary for examination, treatment, and therapy may be charged against the forty-five (45) days in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- D.** If an employee stops work under the provisions of this Section for only a portion of a day or shift (other than the day or shift when disability began), such day or shift will be considered as one (1) calendar day.

**Section 11.A.** An employee who returns to work after an off duty medical condition who has a medical certificate indicating the employee should work restrictively and that full recovery is expected, will be considered for light duty on a case-by-case basis. If management determines it is available, employees who return to work after an on duty or off duty injury, illness, or medical condition (see Section 10A and 11A) will be assigned light duty assignments on the shifts they occupied immediately prior to assuming light duty. An assignment to light duty appropriate to the specific medical condition will normally be granted for a temporary period, if such work is available and the assignment will not unduly disrupt work operations.

- B.** An employee on light duty will be eligible for assignment to overtime work associated with the light duty assignment, consistent with the organization's need for such work to be performed on an overtime basis and the medical restrictions placed on the employee.
- C.** The assignment of an employee to light duty or the assignment of a light duty employee to overtime under this Section will not be grounds for disputes by other employees in the work unit on the basis that they have had to assume added or burdensome duties.

**Section 12.** Safety equipment and protective devices shall be provided to employees as required and prescribed by applicable directives and regulations.

**Section 13.A.** The Employer may require an individual who has applied for, or occupies a position which has physical/medical requirements for selection or retention, or which is a part of an established program of medical surveillance related to occupational or environmental exposure or demands, to report for a medical evaluation under the following circumstances:

- (1) Prior to appointment or selection (including re-employment on the basis of full or partial recovery from a medical condition);
  - (2) On a regularly recurring periodic basis; or
  - (3) Whenever there is a direct question about an employee's continued capacity to meet the physical or medical requirements of the position.
- B.** The Employer may require an employee who is receiving worker's compensation benefits, or is assigned to limited duties as a result of an on-the-job injury, to report for a medical evaluation when the Employer has identified an assignment or position (including the employee's regular position) which the Employer reasonably believes the employee can perform consistent with the medical limitation of his

condition.

- C. The Employer may require an employee who has been released from their competitive level in a reduction-in-force to report for a medical evaluation when the position(s) to which the employee has reassignment rights requires specific physical capacities to perform the duties of the job, and those physical capacities are different from those required in the employee's present position. The Employer shall be aware of the affirmative obligations which require reasonable accommodation of a qualified employee with a disability.
- D. When the Employer orders an employee to undergo a medical examination, it shall inform the employee in writing of its reasons for ordering the examination and the consequences of failure to cooperate.
- E. The Employer shall designate the examining physician, or other appropriate practitioner, for all examinations ordered or offered by the Employer. In addition, at their expense, the employee has the opportunity to submit medical documentation from the employee's personal physician which the Employer shall review and consider before making a final determination on medical suitability or fitness for duty.
- F. The Employer may order a psychiatric examination or psychological assessment only when:
  - (1) The results of a general medical examination which the agency has ordered show no conclusive physical basis to explain actions or behavior which may affect the safe and efficient performance of the individual or others, or
  - (2) A psychiatric examination is specifically required by medical requirements or a medical evaluation program.
- G. The Employer will make a good faith effort to secure evaluative services within the employee's local commuting area. However, in cases where the Employer's medical personnel/consultants indicate that the appropriate services are not readily available within that area, the employee may be required to travel to an alternate location. In such cases, the Employer will be fully responsible for all costs associated with such travel.
- H. The Employer will pay all expenses incurred for agency ordered or offered medical examinations. Employees must pay for a medical examination conducted by a private physician or practitioner where the purpose of the examination is to secure a benefit sought by the employee (e.g., reassignment based on personal need, extended sick leave).



- I. Employees required to undergo a medical examination will be provided copies of all medical documentation generated in conjunction with the examination upon written request from the employee. The documentation will be released by the Employer unless the information contained in the documentation concerns medical conditions of such a nature that a prudent physician would hesitate to inform a person suffering from those conditions of their exact nature or probable outcome. In the latter case, the information will be released to a licensed physician or mental health professional designated in writing by the employee.
- J. In the event an employee no longer satisfies the established physical/medical standards of their current position, the Agency will consider the employee for other positions, for which the employee is qualified, within the duty location, prior to taking an administrative action. This provision is not intended to replace or conflict with established reasonable accommodation procedures, nor does this effort to place an employee in a different position establish that the Agency perceives in any way that the employee is an individual with a disability.
- K. Nothing in this section shall be construed or applied in a manner that would expand or diminish the parties' rights and obligations under applicable law and regulation.

**Section 14.** The Employer shall, through coordination with the General Services Administration (GSA), perform periodic monitoring of asbestos levels in the Employer's buildings that have been identified by the GSA as having potential asbestos problems. The results of the monitoring shall be provided to the Union. In the event such monitoring reveals a level of exposure in excess of the standard established by the Office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), through coordination with GSA, the Employer agrees to move exposed employees to work sites that do not have excessive exposure as soon as practicable. To the maximum extent permitted by law and regulations, affected employees will be paid hazardous duty pay or environmental differential pay during the period of exposure. For purposes of this agreement, "period of exposure" means the time between the receipt of a conclusive report indicating a level of exposure above the GSA standard and the time affected employees are removed from such exposure.

**Section 15.** The Employer shall establish procedures to assure that no employee is subject to restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal for filing a report of an unsafe or unhealthful working condition, or other participation in agency occupational safety and health program activities, or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of themselves or others of any right afforded by Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Executive Order 12196, or 29 C.F.R. § 1960. These rights include, among others, the right of an employee to decline to perform their assigned task because of a reasonable belief that, under the circumstances the task poses an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm coupled with a reasonable belief that there is insufficient time to seek effective

redress through normal hazard reporting and abatement procedures established by the Employer.

### **Section 16. Respirators.**

- A.** In accordance with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Standard (29 C.F.R. § 1910) the Employer will determine which type of respirators are required to protect employees and under which work situations they are required to be used.
- B.** In accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 1910.134(c)(2)(i), the Employer will inform employees of the circumstances under which an employee will be allowed to don Agency provided respirators, at their discretion, without supervisory approval. In the event an employee encounters a situation and is unclear that donning a respirator is appropriate, the employee should obtain supervisory approval prior to donning the respirator.
- C.** CBP will provide sufficient training to employees who are required to use respirators. The training will be comprehensive, understandable, and provided at a minimum on an annual basis.
- D.** The respirators required training and necessary medical evaluations will be provided at no cost to the employee.
- E.** CBP will provide appropriate storage for approved respirators.
- F.** CBP will comply with all legal requirements concerning the maintenance, care, cleaning, disinfecting, storage, inspection and repair of respirators.
- G.** All medical evaluations to determine employees' ability to use a respirator will be limited to that specific purpose and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of 29 C.F.R. § 1910.134.
- H.** To the extent possible, evaluations will be administered privately during employees' normal working hours. CBP will inform employees how to deliver or send any required questionnaire to the appropriate FOH recipient and will provide any required postage.
- I.** Employees required to wear a respirator will be fit tested in accordance with the provisions of 29 C.F.R. §1910.134 and in accordance with CBP Policy on Respirator Use and Facial Hair, dated March 29, 2011.
- J.** The only information provided to CBP will be the results of the Medical Clearance, which does not contain any personal medical information.

- K.** If an employee is not medically cleared to wear a respirator in a mandatory use situation, the parties recognize that the OSHA standard prohibits management from assigning the employee to perform work duties that may expose them to the respiratory hazard. In such circumstances, management may assign the work to employees who have been medically cleared and fit tested for respirator use, or permit the employee to use a respirator that does not require a medical evaluation.
- L.** CBP will conduct respirator program evaluation as required by law. Upon request, CBP will provide NTEU a briefing to discuss the data obtained in those evaluations.

**Section 17.** All personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance, policy interpretations, and the determination of appropriate PPE will come from the HRM, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division. The OSH Division, in coordination with the impacted office, will conduct hazard assessments to determine the appropriate PPE for specific job tasks and situations where employees may be at risk and are required to don such PPE.

## **ARTICLE 34: SCHEDULING**

**Section 1.** This Article contains the procedures by which the Employer will schedule non-overtime work. The scheduling of employees shall be accomplished in a fair and equitable manner.

**Section 2.** As covered by Article 14, Section 14.A, where local Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) agreements are silent concerning matters covered in this Article, the terms of this Article, except for Section 4, will be used to address scheduling in the same manner as for non-AWS employees.

### **Section 3. Definitions.**

- A. Administrative Workweek** is a period of seven (7) consecutive calendar days designated in advance by the Employer.
- B. Regularly Scheduled Administrative Workweek** for a full-time employee, means the period within an administrative workweek when the employee is regularly scheduled to work. For a part-time employee, it means the officially prescribed days and hours within an administrative workweek during which the employee is regularly scheduled to work.
- C. Basic Workweek** for a full-time employee, means the forty (40) hour workweek established for the employee.
- D. Tour of Duty** means the hours of a day and the days of an administrative workweek that constitute an employee's regular schedule.
- E. Regular Day Off (RDO)** is a day during the administrative workweek on which an employee is not scheduled to work.
- F. Seniority** will be determined by:
  - (1) Step 1.
    - a. For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS- 1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as an Immigration Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement.

- b. For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
  - c. For all other positions, the total time the employee has served in the current job series with CBP.
- C. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- D. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
- E. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

- G. Fixed shifts work schedules are those work schedules where employees work the same repeating shift with the same start and stop times throughout the work schedule.
- H. Rotating shift work schedules are those work schedules where employees rotate through different work shifts with different start and stop times throughout the work schedule.

**Section 4.** Except when the Employer determines, pursuant to its authority to determine exceptions under 5 U.S.C. 6101(a)(3), that it would be seriously handicapped in carrying out its functions or that costs would be substantially increased, for non-AWS schedules and/or shifts, the Employer will provide that:

- A. Assignments to tours of duty are scheduled in advance of the administrative workweek over periods not less than one (1) week;
- B. The basic forty (40) hour workweek is scheduled on five (5) consecutive days when possible, and the two (2) days outside the basic workweek are consecutive;

- C. The working hours in each day of the basic workweek are the same;
- D. The basic non-overtime workday may not exceed eight (8) hours;
- E. The occurrence of holidays may not affect the designation of the basic workweek;  
and
- F. Breaks in working hours of more than one (1) hour may not be scheduled in a basic workday.

**Section 5.** Pursuant to its authority under 5 U.S.C. 6101(a)(3) to establish exceptions from these scheduling requirements, the Employer has determined that, with respect to Customs and Border Protection Officers and Agricultural Specialists, the following are exceptions to the scheduling requirements in Section 4:

- A. Section 4.A does not prohibit later changes in work schedules as are required to meet situations otherwise beyond the control of CBP;
- B. Section 4.B does not prohibit scheduling non-consecutive days off to avoid a substantial increase in costs or to be able to respond timely and efficiently to posed threats;
- C. The working hours in each day of the basic workweek need not be identical where flexibility is essential to meet conditions over which CBP has no control or to avoid hiring additional personnel or otherwise substantially increased costs.

**Section 6.** For those situations enumerated in Section 5, upon the Union's or affected employee's request, the Employer will explain in writing its rationale for deviating from the specific scheduling requirement. The Union's or affected employee's request will be made within a reasonable period of time after being provided notice of the scheduling exception, not to exceed 45 calendar days. The parties agree that the time period for filing a grievance under Article 27 shall not be tolled or otherwise delayed by the requirements of this section.

**Section 7.** The following circumstances automatically qualify as exemptions to the scheduling requirements of Section 4.A, 4.B, and 4.C without the need for further explanation:

**A. Mandatory Training, when:**

- (1) An employee is required to attend a training session which only became available after the employee received the posted schedule; or

- (2) An employee who is scheduled on a fixed shift is required by the Agency to attend a training session only offered on a different shift.

- B.** Court or Administrative Litigation-Related Activities. Scheduling exceptions are appropriate when an employee is required to testify in court or at an administrative hearing; at a deposition; or to meet with an attorney for the United States, a state or local prosecutor, or Agency Representative in connection with the employee's official duties.
- C.** Anti-Terrorism/Contraband Enforcement Team (ATCET) and the team performing the functions of traditional passenger roving team, or other dedicated enforcement team identified by a different name but performing the same function as those teams. These work units will be identified during BRP.
- D.** Voluntary or employee requested scheduling exceptions. Scheduling exceptions are appropriate when, in accordance of the provisions of this Agreement, the Employer requests a voluntary change to an employee's schedule and the employee agrees and/or an employee requests a change which the Employer approves. Voluntary and employee requested meetings include mutually scheduled meetings, such as grievance meetings with agency management pursuant to Article 27 and counseling sessions and mediation involving EEO/CBP Privacy, FOIA, and EEO (PFE) officials. Scheduling exceptions are appropriate when the employee is a grievant or an informal or formal EEO complainant in order for the employee to participate in that process.

**Section 8.** Scheduling determinations in accordance with Section 7 are excluded from the negotiated grievance procedure and arbitration provisions. In any review of scheduling determinations pursuant to Section 5, an arbitrator must give initial deference to the Agency's determination and apply an initial presumption in favor of the Agency that the Agency's scheduling determination was appropriate. The arbitrator will uphold the Agency's scheduling determination unless the Union establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that the Agency's determination pursuant to Section 5 was arbitrary and capricious. "Arbitrary and capricious" is defined as a scheduling determination which, based on the information available to the Agency at the time of its decision, is not rationally related to one or more of the bases for scheduling exceptions in Section 5 and the explanation for the determination provided under Section 6.

**Section 9.** The Employer will establish employee work schedules (including basic workweeks, tours of duty and RDOs) to accomplish the mission of the Agency, and to correspond with the employee's actual work requirements.

**Section 10.** This Section only addresses the substance of a shift being fixed or rotating. Nothing in this Section, pre-BRP discussions or any bargaining conducted pursuant to Sections E and/or F, will interfere with management's ability to:

- (1) Establish and/or change tours of duty and schedules in accordance with the procedures in this article.
  - (2) Ensure the appropriate numbers, types, and grades are assigned to tours of duty and schedules pursuant to the procedures in this Agreement.
- A. No later than June 1st every year, the local parties will meet to discuss the application of fixed or rotating shifts within work units at the port for CBP Officers, CBP Agriculture Specialists, and CBP Technicians.
  - B. By mutual agreement, the parties will implement the outcome of these discussion for the upcoming BRP.
  - C. Absent mutual agreement, port management will proceed with posting available work schedules and if the shifts are fixed or rotating per Article 13.
  - D. If management decides to propose a change from fixed to rotating shifts or from rotating to fixed shifts, NTEU will receive notice pursuant to Article 26. Any agreement reached will be implemented at the beginning of the next Article 13 bid cycle.
  - E. The local NTEU Chapter may initiate bargaining pursuant to Article 26 over a proposed change from fixed to rotating shifts or from rotating to fixed shifts. Any agreement reached will be implemented at the beginning of the next Article 13 bid cycle.
  - F. This Section does not apply to CBP Officers, CBP Agriculture Specialists, and CBP Technicians covered by a local AWS Agreement. Those agreements are subject to renegotiation per Article 14.

**Section 11.** When the Employer knows in advance of an administrative workweek that the specific days and/or hours of a day actually required of an employee in that administrative workweek will differ from those required in the current administrative workweek, the Employer will reschedule the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek to correspond with those specific days and hours. The Employer will inform the employee of the change, and will record the change on the employee's time and attendance records.

**Section 12.** The Employer will make available projected employee non-overtime work schedules as far in advance as practicable, but not less than four (4) weeks in advance of the start of the pay period. Employees will be assigned and informed of overtime assignments in accordance with Article 35: Overtime. This provision is intended to



establish a consistent national minimum standard and is not intended to change established practices at locations where projected employee schedules are normally made available more than four (4) weeks in advance of the start of the pay period.

**Section 13.** When changes to posted schedules are required, the Employer will notify affected employees as soon as practicable. Nothing in this Section relieves the Employer of its obligation under Section 4 of this Article.

**Section 14.A.** The Employer may authorize a special tour of duty of not less than forty (40) hours to permit an employee to take one or more courses in a college, university, or other educational institution when it is determined that:

- (1) The courses being taken are not training under Chapter 41 of Title 5, United States Code;
- (2) The rearrangement of the employee's tour of duty will not appreciably interfere with the accomplishment of the work required to be performed;
- (3) Additional costs for personnel services will not be incurred; and
- (4) Completion of the course will equip the employee for more effective work in the Agency.

- (1) The Employer shall not pay to an employee any premium pay solely because a special tour of duty authorized under this Section causes the employee to work on a day, or at a time during the day, for which premium pay would otherwise be payable.

**Section 15.** The Employer will make individual employee schedules, as well as any changes thereto, available to those employees. Work schedules for all bargaining unit employees, as well as any changes thereto, will be made available to the appropriate NTEU Chapter President.

**Section 16.** Employees shall be compensated for hours of work in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

**Section 17.** The Employer will also notify affected employees of any modification or alteration of an existing shift or tour of duty not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to its implementation.

**Section 18.A.** When staffing new shifts or tours of duty, the Employer will identify the numbers, types and grades of employees, the knowledge, skills and abilities required, as well as any other mission or operational requirements related to the nature of the assignment. Volunteers meeting these requirements will be solicited from appropriate

work groups (as determined by the Employer). In the event more equally qualified and releasable employees volunteer, absent just cause, selections will be made in seniority order. If too few qualified and releasable employees from within the work group volunteer, qualified and releasable employees will be assigned in inverse seniority order. Employees selected under this procedure will be notified not less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the start of their new shift or tour of duty.

- B.** To the extent the above procedure conflicts with other provisions of this Agreement (e.g., the method for staffing post-rotational vacancies from outside the work unit under Article 13: Bid, Rotation & Placement), those other provisions will take precedence.

### **Section 19. Voluntary Weekly or Daily Tour of Duty Changes.**

- A.** In order to reduce any potential adverse impacts on employees from an exception determination under Section 5, the Employer will permit the following temporary weekly or daily tour of duty changes.

**(1) Weekly or Daily Tour of Duty Swaps.**

- (a) For the purpose of this Section, a swap is defined as the voluntary exchange of a scheduled daily (shift) or tour of duty (weekly) between two employees.
- (b) Infrequent employee requests to temporarily swap shifts or tours of duty will be approved provided the employees involved in the swap are qualified to perform the duties encompassed in the swapped shift or tour of duty and the swap does not result in a negative impact on operations or an increased cost or conflict with overtime cap compliance procedures. Swaps may not be approved to the extent they undermine the purpose and intent of any other provision of this Agreement (e.g., work schedule preference provisions of Article 13: Bid, Rotation & Placement), and/or, if the involved employees are in a leave, TDY, or light duty status.
- (c) In order to be considered under this Section, employee swap requests must be submitted to the appropriate management official by the involved employees not less than five (5) calendar days in advance of the day (for shift swaps) or start of the work week (for tour of duty swaps). Requests submitted less than five (5) calendar days in advance may be approved at the discretion of management.
- (2) Once scheduled for a tour of duty accordance with this Article, an employee may voluntarily agree to changes that would result in a work schedule that may be inconsistent with the requirements of Section 4. For example, an employee

subject to a swap contained in this Section, or an employee assigned to the midnight shift may voluntarily agree to change their tour of duty the following day to a day shift schedule to take advantage of a last-minute firearms qualifications opening at the gun range (e.g., caused by an employee previously scheduled requested sick or emergency annual leave), which would result in a schedule inconsistent with Section 4.A. and C.

- B.** Any schedule changes provided under this Section will be made notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, will be documented by the Employer, and are not grievable by the employees involved or not involved in the schedule change, or by the Union.

**Section 20. Rest Periods.**

- A.** The Employer will ensure employees are provided rest periods during the work day for the purpose of attending to employee personal needs.
- B.** Such rest periods will be of reasonable duration and will be permitted at reasonable times during the work day, to include work performed on an overtime basis, consistent with the Employer's right to assign work and workload demands.

**Section 21.** Employees will be scheduled (or excused) and compensated for Holidays in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in Article 36: Holidays.

## **ARTICLE 35: OVERTIME**

This Article describes the procedures by which employees covered by this Agreement will be scheduled and assigned overtime work.

### **Section 1. COPRA Covered Employees.**

#### **A. Definitions.** For the purpose of this Article:

- (1) **Anticipated Overtime** is work necessary to be performed on an overtime basis that is known, and can reasonably be planned for and scheduled in advance.
- (2) **Unanticipated Overtime** is work necessary to be performed on an overtime basis that is not known, or cannot reasonably be planned for and scheduled in advance. This includes, but is not limited to, overtime work that cannot be scheduled in advance because of fluctuations or uncertainties in operational requirements.
- (3) **Operational Requirements** are conditions that affect the staffing needed for given assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, such items as threat level, staffing requirements, workload requirements, special enforcement operations, or natural or man-made disasters.
- (4) **Qualified** employee means one that possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a particular assignment. The Employer will establish and apply such requirements in a manner consistent with applicable law, rule and regulation.
- (5) **Least Cost** is the Agency's responsibility to schedule all work assignments in a manner which minimizes the cost to the government or party in interest. Decisions, including, but not limited to, what hours should be covered by a tour of duty or whether an assignment should be treated as a continuous assignment or subject to commute compensation, should be based on least cost considerations. However, base pay comparison of eligible employees shall not be used in the determination of staffing assignments.
- (6) **Low Earner** is the employee with the lowest dollar amount of overtime (and premium pay after the employee has reached the 50% figure in overtime earnings) as calculated in Subsection H.
- (7) **Overtime Pool** consists of employees who are qualified to perform the overtime

assignment.

- (8) **COPRA** is the Customs Officer Pay Reform Act.
- (9) **BESA** is the Budgeting and Employee Scheduling Application.
- (10) **Mutual Agreement** refers to the ability of the local parties (i.e. Chapter President and Port Director or designee) to vary from the procedures set forth in this Agreement, and specifically authorized within the Agreement, only if both parties agree to do so voluntarily. A “by mutual agreement” provision does not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over a proposed variation to grievance, arbitration or any other impasse dispute procedures. Such agreements must be placed in writing and signed by the parties, and will be binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw.

**B. Anticipated Overtime.**

- (1) Anticipated overtime assignments will be scheduled and posted as far in advance as practical, but not less than seventy-two (72) hours in advance of an assignment. This provision is intended to establish a consistent national minimum standard, and is not intended to change established practices at locations where anticipated overtime assignments are normally scheduled and posted more than seventy-two hours in advance.
- (2) Employees who are assigned anticipated overtime are responsible for reporting for overtime assignments in accordance with posted assignments, absent extraordinary circumstances. When such circumstances are encountered, the employee will contact the locally designated management official as soon as possible for the purpose of requesting an excusal. When warranted, the locally designated management official may excuse the employee for either the entire assignment or any portion thereof.
- (3) Anticipated overtime assignments will be made on least cost, low earner principles, and in accordance with the call-out order contained in Subsection E.
- (4) Advanced scheduling may increase the likelihood for circumstances to arise resulting in the cancellation of a scheduled overtime assignment. When such circumstances are encountered, the procedures contained in Subsection D.(3) will be followed.

C. Unanticipated Overtime.

- (1) Unanticipated overtime assignments will be made on least cost, low earner principles, and in accordance with the call-out order contained in Subsection E.
- (2) Management will make a reasonable effort to inform employees of their assignment to overtime as far in advance as practicable. On-duty employees, where possible, will be notified at least two (2) hours in advance of the end of their scheduled shift or assignment.
- (3) On-duty employees assigned unanticipated overtime provided less than two hours in advance of the end of their scheduled assignment will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make personal notifications concerning the overtime assignment.

D. General Overtime Rules.

- (1) An overtime assignment shall begin when an employee reports to the first worksite to perform tasks associated with the assignment, and shall terminate when the tasks associated with the assignment are completed by the employee. When an employee is required by management to utilize specific tools or equipment which the employee does not have the option to take from work to home, the overtime assignment shall begin when the employee reports to the location where the resources are located and shall stop when the associated tasks are completed and the resources are secured.

Overtime assignments will have a projected end time with the understanding that the actual end time may differ from the projected end time.

- (2) When the Agency has to contact an employee for an overtime assignment pursuant to the terms of this article, a failed attempt to reach the employee will be recorded before attempting to contact the next employee. Once an attempt to reach an employee has been made and recorded as unsuccessful, that employee will no longer be eligible for that assignment if another employee has been assigned.

A qualified employee who calls back before all overtime assignments are assigned for that grouping of overtime assignments will be eligible for an assignment that does not incur a commute unless the original assignment also incurred a commute. Providing employees overtime assignments pursuant to this procedure will constitute an exception to the call-out order.

- (3) When employees' services on an overtime basis are determined not to be needed prior to the start of the assignment, management will attempt to notify affected employees in sufficient time to prevent the employees from reporting for duty.
- (4) Certain overtime assignments, by their very nature, do not have firm starting times, and therefore require that specific notification and verification procedures be followed. Examples of such include, but are not limited to, the clearing of private aircraft, small vessels, and perishable cargo. The Employer will identify and keep employees informed of assignments of this nature, as well as the specific procedures by which employees will be notified of and required to verify assignment start times.
- (5) An employee properly reporting for an overtime assignment [i.e., the requirements of Subsections D (3) and (4) do not apply] that is cancelled will be compensated up to a maximum of callback (to include commute), if so entitled. In such circumstances, the employee must remain available to perform work for a minimum of two (2) hours from the reporting time.
- (6) Absent operational requirements, employees will not be scheduled to work a combination of regular and/or overtime assignments that do not allow for eight (8) consecutive hours off-duty within each twenty-four (24) hour period. This twenty-four (24) hour period begins when the employee first reports to work (either on regular time or an overtime basis) after an off-duty period. In implementing this provision, management may make the necessary adjustments to the affected employee's schedule, notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement.
- (7) Employees will be released from overtime assignments in high earner order on a voluntary basis. The order in which employees will be voluntarily released are: those with previously approved excusals, involuntary drafts, and then volunteers. If there are no volunteers, employees will be released in high earner order.
- (8) Overtime will be assigned consistent with the earnings list available when the assignment was made.
- (9) Employees who volunteer for anticipated or unanticipated overtime may unvolunteer up until the commencement of assignment preparations. After commencement of the preparation of assignments, employees are eligible and may avail themselves of trades, exceptions and excusals identified in this article. Any anticipated assignment vacated by this procedure will be filled by utilizing the unanticipated procedures.

- (10) The parties may continue existing practices or, by mutual agreement between the Port Director (or designee) and the respective NTEU Chapter President (or designee), may develop new practices regarding matters such as the following: anticipated overtime, when the overtime earnings list is pulled, the process for employees to make themselves available for overtime assignments, procedures for RDO excusals, timeframe for submitting request for excusals from involuntary drafts, the number of overtime pools, when overtime and premium pay earnings will trigger a cap compliance audit, the timeframe for responding to offered overtime assignments. These mutual agreements will be reduced to writing and submitted for Agency Head Review pursuant to 5 U.S.C §7114 (c).

**E. Callout Order.**

- (1) Overtime assignments will be made to COPRA covered employees in accordance with the following call-out order. The call-out order includes: all CBP Officers/CBP Agriculture Specialists (including trainee Officers/Agriculture Specialists that possess the skill sets to complete the assignment) and supervisors who perform daily operational functions.
- (a) For unanticipated overtime needs arising on the current or adjacent shift, on duty volunteers then non-volunteers in the overtime pool may be considered before off duty employees;
  - (b) Volunteers in the overtime pool (either on or off duty) where commute compensation is not required;
  - (c) Volunteers from part-time employees in the overtime pool (either on or off duty) where payment of commute compensation is not required;
  - (d) At the Employer's discretion, on duty supervisors who are not fully integrated into the daily operational work schedule and/or volunteer non-supervisory non-bargaining employees (e.g. SRT, TTRT, etc.) where payment of commute compensation is not required;
  - (e) Involuntary drafts in the overtime pool (either on or off-duty) where commute compensation is not required;
  - (f) Volunteers in the overtime pool where payment of commute compensation is required;



- (g) Involuntary drafts in the overtime pool where payment of commute compensation is required;
- (h) Involuntary drafts from part-time employees in the overtime pool where payment of commute compensation is required; and
- (i) At the Employer's discretion, supervisors who are not fully integrated into the daily operational work schedule and/or volunteer non-supervisory non-bargaining employees (e.g. SRT, TTRT, etc.) where payment of commute compensation is required.

(2) In the event the call-out order is exhausted, employees who have been granted an excusal may be drafted for overtime assignments in low-earner order.

**F. Trades.** Management will approve employee requests to trade overtime assignments provided the employees involved in the trade are qualified to perform the traded assignment and the trade does not result in a negative impact on operations, the payment of commute compensation or conflict with overtime cap compliance procedures. Under this subsection, a trade is defined as the voluntary exchange of overtime assignments between two employees.

**G. Exceptions & Excusals.**

(1) The following exceptions apply to the procedures for assigning overtime and determining missed overtime assignments contained in the Article:

- (a) Employees unavailable to report to the assignment at the prescribed time. In determining the appropriateness of this exception, management retains the discretion to make adjustments to assignment start and ending times, which may impact employee availability and/or prescribed time of the assignment.
- (b) When an employee's overtime assignment, assigned pursuant to the call-out order, ends, or an employee is placed in an overtime status to respond to a work requirement during the hour immediately prior to the beginning of the employee's regularly scheduled tour, the employee will remain in duty status until the start of the employee's scheduled tour.
- (c) An employee may be required to remain in a duty status for up to an hour from the end of the employee's scheduled tour to allow management sufficient time to utilize the call out order as necessary. If the assignment is going to go beyond one hour, management will utilize the call-out order to relieve the officer.

- (d) Employees will be required to complete a holdover assignment, which are those overtime assignments made necessary by a task already begun during the employee's regular tour or current overtime assignment which, in the interest of continuity and efficiency, should be completed by the involved employee (e.g. such as but not limited to a seizure, admissibility control adverse action, special enforcement operation, etc.).
  - (e) Employees who are unable to perform the full range of duties.
- (2) The following excusals apply to the procedures for assigning involuntary overtime contained in the Article:
- (a) An employee on RDO or approved absence from duty will automatically be granted an excusal. Employees on RDO are excused unless they volunteer.
  - (b) Employees will not be involuntarily drafted for overtime if the expected overtime will result in the employee working more than twelve (12) consecutive hours. Employees will have a minimum eight (8) hour break between assignments. Nothing in this subsection will preclude an employee from volunteering for overtime in excess of twelve (12) hours pursuant to the terms of this Article. This Section does not impact management's ability to use holdover exceptions or to otherwise hold employees beyond twelve (12) hours in exigent circumstances in which all other options have been exhausted in compliance with this Article. The Employer will inform the local NTEU Chapter of the need to apply this Section, the impacted work units, and the name(s) of employees held. If operational circumstances permit, such notice will be provided sufficiently in advance of the hold to enable the Chapter to provide input. If not, the Employer will provide this information to NTEU as soon as possible after the hold is implemented. This provision may be modified by local mutual agreement pursuant to Section 1.D(10).
  - (c) Any other valid reason, at management's discretion.
  - (d) Employee excusals under a and b will apply as follows:
    - (1) Excusals granted under paragraph a above will begin at the conclusion of the employee's last scheduled tour before the excused period and continue until the start of the employee's next scheduled tour after the excused period with the exception of holdover assignments per G.1.d in this Article.

- (2) Excusals granted under paragraph b above will begin at the conclusion of the employee's twelve (12) consecutive hours of work and continue until the start of the employee's next scheduled tour or overtime assignment with the exception of holdover assignments per G.1.d in this Article.

#### H. Missed Overtime Assignments.

- (1) In the event management determines an employee was missed for a voluntary overtime assignment, CBP will hold a formal meeting with the employee and invite a NTEU representative to participate, in an attempt to immediately resolve the issue.
- (2) An employee or the Union may initiate the negotiated grievance procedure in the event a voluntary missed overtime assignment is alleged. By mutual agreement, the grievance may be filed at a level above Step 1.
- (3) During the formal meeting, or at any step of the grievance procedure, if it is determined the employee was skipped for a voluntary overtime assignment the employee and Chapter will be presented with and may select from the following options:
  - (a) Backpay;
  - (b) Priority consideration for the next available overtime assignment of equal duration (will be considered an exception to the call out order and the employees' preference on the date and time of the assignment will be considered),
  - (c) Excused absence not charged to leave equal to the hours that would have been assigned for the missed overtime assignment, or
  - (d) Other local agreement between the Agency and the designated NTEU representative.

#### I. Calculation of Earnings.

- (1) Overtime and premium pay will be tracked separately. Overtime earnings will be used as the basis for equalizing opportunity for overtime up to fifty percent (50%) of the statutory pay cap. When an employee's overtime and premium pay earnings reach fifty percent (50%) of the statutory pay cap, the employee's premium pay and overtime pay will be combined, and additional overtime assignments will be made on the basis of the combined earnings.

- (2) Upon request, employees who are unavailable to work overtime for three (3) consecutive pay periods or longer (including new reports and/or transfers to a particular Port) and are not restricted by the requirements of subsection I (Cap Compliance) will be averaged up upon their return to work. The average earnings for an employee will be the two hundred percent (200%) overtime figure as recorded in BESA for the port on the date the employee is averaged in. This amount is not used as actual earnings for cap compliance purposes under Subsection J.

**J. Cap Compliance.**

- (1) The statutory overtime and premium pay cap establish the maximum allowable earnings for COPRA covered employees. It is necessary to apportion overtime and premium pay earnings in order to ensure the full range of numbers, types and grades of personnel required by the Agency throughout the fiscal year. After an employee's combined overtime and premium pay earnings are audited, their earnings will be prorated bi-weekly when:
- (a) An employee's actual overtime and premium pay earnings reach 50% of the statutory limitation on earnings, or
  - (b) By mutual agreement, the parties at the local level may agree to conduct audits at a different percentage of earnings.
  - (c) In recognition that cap compliance procedures are appropriate when overtime opportunities remain constant throughout the year, by mutual agreement, such procedures will not apply at those ports where overtime is worked on a seasonal basis, e.g., where cruise ship or airport arrivals are significantly reduced during certain months of the year.

Prorated amounts not earned during one pay period will be carried over to the next pay period during the balance of the fiscal year.

- (2) An employee will not be prevented from working an overtime assignment if at the time of the assignment the employee is below their prorated pay limitation for the pay period, provided the assignment will not cause the employee's overtime and premium pay earnings to exceed the statutory pay cap. An employee will not be prevented from earning a shift differential or removed from an existing shift so long as the employee's projected shift differential earnings at the end of the fiscal year when combined with the employee's overtime earnings will not exceed the statutory pay cap. However, an employee's normal work schedule may need to be adjusted by the Employer to

prevent the employee's overtime and premium pay from exceeding the cap. This adjustment may result in other employees without cap compliance issues having their schedule changed. Such changes will be made consistent with the procedures and arrangements within Article 34.

- (3) When the Employer identifies a group of employees for which the Employer intends to seek a cap waiver, the Employer will solicit employees in the identified group to determine employee preferences for a cap waiver. The Employer will not be bound by an employee's preference. The process by which the Employer identifies the group and the decision to seek a cap waiver for an individual or group of employees is solely at the Employer's discretion and is not subject to the grievance procedures of Article 27.

**K. Annuity Integrity.** In accordance with 19 C.F.R. § 24.16, the amount of COPRA overtime employees within three (3) years of their statutory retirement eligibility may work is limited to the average yearly number of COPRA overtime hours the employee worked during the employee's career. The Employer will monitor employee overtime earnings to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and the requirements of this subsection.

- (1) **Definitions.** For the purpose of annuity integrity,

- (a) **COPRA overtime** refers to the specific compensation stipulated in 19 C.F.R. § 24.16 (e)(1), which does not include premium pay for Sunday, holiday, or night work.
- (b) Within three (3) years of retirement eligibility refers to the statutory minimum retirement eligibility criteria (i.e., years of service and age) applicable to the employee minus three (3) years for both years of service and age.
- (c) **Average annual overtime hours** refer to the total number of COPRA overtime hours worked divided by the total number of years the employee was covered by COPRA. The total number of hours is calculated from the beginning date the employee was first covered by COPRA through the end of the fiscal year following the date when the employee is within three (3) years of retirement eligibility.
- (d) **Restricted employee** refers to a COPRA covered employee within three years of retirement eligibility whose average annual overtime hours multiplied by the employee's current hourly pay rate is equal to less than half of the statutory COPRA overtime pay cap applicable when the employee

was first covered by COPRA.

- (e) **Unrestricted employee** refers to a COPRA covered employee within three (1) years of retirement eligibility whose average annual overtime hours multiplied by the employee's current hourly pay rate is equal to or greater than half of the statutory overtime pay cap applicable when the employee was first covered by COPRA.

(2) Overtime Calculations and Adjustments.

- (a) All calculations will be based on fiscal years, with the exception of 1994. Note: 1994 was calculated on the calendar year (January 1 – December 31, 1994). COPRA began on January 1, 1994.
- (b) When calculating an employee's average annual overtime hours, the Employer will discount:
  - (1) Any fiscal year in which, for two (2) or more consecutive pay periods, the employee was unable to participate in COPRA overtime due to medical issues or was on assignment or training with no availability of COPRA overtime. This is contingent upon a valid employee request as stipulated under Subsection (J)(3).
  - (2) For a COPRA covered employee who converts from part-time to full-time, all fiscal years in which the employee was in a part-time status; (except 1994 which is by calendar year).

(3) Notification Procedures.

- (a) In the event the Employer determines an employee is restricted under this subsection, the employee will be advised of the determination in writing.
- (b) Once notified of the restriction, it is the employee's responsibility to notify management that adjustments should be made to the average annual overtime hours due to medical issues, duty assignments, or training lasting for two or more consecutive pay periods with no availability of COPRA overtime. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide any required documentation supporting this claim.
- (c) Upon request, the Employer will assist the employee in researching and locating existing records that support the employee's claim.

- (d) If an employee claim is specific to sick leave covering two (2) or more consecutive pay periods of absence, BESA records identifying this fact will be considered as proof of the employee's claim.
- (e) Valid employee claims will result in an adjustment of the employee average annual overtime earnings in accordance with Subsection J(2)(b)1.
- (f) If the employee remains restricted after adjustments are made under this subsection, the Employer will advise the employee in writing and will include the number of overtime hours the employee may work in that fiscal year.

(4) Effect of Restrictions.

- (a) Restricted employees will be permitted to work COPRA overtime in an amount up to the employee's average annual overtime hours as defined and calculated under this subsection, and in accordance with overtime assignment procedures contained in this Agreement.
- (b) Employees first placed into a COPRA covered position who are within three (3) years of retirement eligibility will be restricted only to the average number of COPRA overtime hours worked by covered employees at the employee's Port during the fiscal year immediately prior to the employee's placement. If the average annual overtime hours multiplied by the employee's current pay rate is less than half of the statutory pay cap applicable when the employee is placed, the employee will be restricted for purposes of this subsection. Conversely, if this calculation is equal to or greater than half of the statutory overtime pay cap, the employee will be unrestricted for purposes of this subsection.
- (c) If the previous fiscal year's average overtime hours for a port to which an employee permanently transfers is greater than the employee's previously established average annual overtime hours, the employee's average will be increased to match the port average. If the previous year's port average overtime hours multiplied by the employee's hourly rate exceeds half of the applicable statutory overtime pay cap, the employee will no longer be restricted. If the previous year's port average overtime hours are less than the employee's previously established average annual overtime hours, the employee will maintain the restriction to the employee's previously established average overtime hours.
- (d) In the event a restricted employee is determined unrestricted under this

subsection, the employee will remain unrestricted for the remainder of the employee's career.

- (5) Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the assignment of COPRA overtime to a restricted employee when it is determined by management to be in the best interest of the Agency (i.e., a waiver is obtained) and the assignment is not in conflict with law, rule, regulation or the terms of this Agreement.

## **Section 2. Employees Not Covered by COPRA.**

- A. Employees will be compensated for performing overtime work in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- B. Upon written request, an employee will receive temporary exemption from the requirement to work overtime for documented, legitimate medical reasons, and for other severe personal hardships. Staffing and workload requirements permitting, such exemptions will be granted.
- C. Overtime assignments will be made and rotated in a fair and impartial manner, i.e., consistent with law and regulation, and consistent with existing agreements and practices not in conflict with this Agreement. In the event management elects to change an existing practice, it will serve notice in accordance with Article 26: Bargaining.
- D. Upon reasonable advance request, and subject to supervisory approval, qualified employees will be allowed to exchange overtime assignments. Such requests will be approved if the exchanges do not result in a negative operational impact, an increase in cost, or adversely impact upon the administration of limits established by law placed upon the permissible amount of overtime for employees.
- E. Employees will receive notice of overtime assignments as far in advance as possible.
- F. Employees on a scheduled day off or on approved annual leave will not be required to work overtime during such periods unless operational and staffing requirements so dictate.
- G. Absent a local mutual agreement, the following procedures will apply concerning the assignment of overtime:
  - (1) Qualified volunteers will be solicited.
  - (2) The qualified volunteer with the lowest amount of earned overtime on a fiscal



year basis will have the first opportunity to work overtime followed by the volunteer with the next lowest amount of earned overtime, etc. If all employees are equal in earnings, seniority will be used to determine volunteers.

- (3) If there are an insufficient number of qualified volunteers, the employee with the least amount of earned overtime will be drafted to work overtime followed by the employee with the next least amount of earned overtime, etc. If all employees are equal in earnings, inverse seniority will be used to determine volunteers.

## **ARTICLE 36: HOLIDAYS**

This Article describes the policies and procedures by which employees will be scheduled (or released) and compensated for Holidays and/or Religious Observances.

**Section 1.** Holiday means any day designed as a holiday by a Federal statute or declared by an Executive Order. For reference, Federal holidays (and the date on which they fall) are:

- (1) New Year's Day (January 1<sup>st</sup>);
- (2) Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (third Monday in January);
- (3) Washington's Birthday (third Monday in February);
- (4) Memorial Day (last Monday in May);
- (5) Juneteenth National Independence Day (June 19<sup>th</sup>)
- (6) Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>);
- (7) Labor Day (first Monday in September);
- (8) Columbus Day (second Monday in October);
- (9) Veterans Day (November 11<sup>th</sup>);
- (10) Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November);
- (11) Christmas Day (December 25<sup>th</sup>);
- (12) Inauguration Day (January 20<sup>th</sup> of each fourth year after 1965 for employees whose duty locations are in the District of Columbia, or Montgomery and Prince George counties in Maryland, or Arlington and Fairfax counties in Virginia, or in the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia); and
- (13) Any other day designated by Federal statute or declared by an Executive Order.

### **Section 2. General Policies.**

- A. A full-time employee who is not required to work on a holiday will receive the employee's basic rate of pay for all of the non-overtime hours the employee would otherwise work on that day.
- B. A part-time employee is entitled to a holiday when the holiday falls on a day the employee is regularly scheduled to work. A part-time employee who is excused from work on a holiday will receive the part-time employee's basic rate of pay for the hours they are regularly scheduled to work on that day.

C. If a holiday falls on an employee's regular day off and the employee is called in to work overtime on that day, the employee is entitled to pay at the overtime rate for all hours worked on the holiday and not holiday premium pay. Employees performing non-overtime work on their "in lieu" of holiday will receive holiday premium pay.

D. For the purpose of this Article, seniority will be determined by:

- (a) For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS-1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as an Immigration Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement.
  - (b) For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
  - (c) For all other positions, the time the employee has served in the employee's current series.
- (2) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- (3) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
- (4) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after Step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

### **Section 3. Holiday Observances and Compensation.**

A. COPRA Covered Employees. Employees covered by the Customs Officer Pay

Reform Act (COPRA) will observe holidays and be provided holiday premium pay in accordance with 19 C.F.R. § 24.16 and this Section (provided for informational purposes).

- (1) Premium pay differentials may only be paid for non-overtime work performed on holidays, Sundays, or, at night (work performed, in whole or in part, between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.). An employee shall receive payment for only one of the differentials for any one given period of work. The order of precedence for the payment of premium pay differentials is holiday, Sunday, and night work.
- (2) An employee who performs any regularly-scheduled work on a holiday will receive pay for that work at the officer's hourly rate of base pay, which includes authorized locality pay, plus premium pay amounting to one-hundred (100) percent of that base rate. Holiday differential premium pay will be paid only for time worked. Intermittent employees are not entitled to holiday differential.
- (3) When a holiday is designated by a calendar date, the holiday will be observed on that date regardless of Saturdays and Sundays. Employees who perform regularly-scheduled, non-overtime, tours of duty on those days will be paid the holiday differential. Holidays not designated by a specific calendar date, shall be observed on that date, and employees who perform regularly-scheduled, non-overtime, work on those days will be paid the holiday differential.
- (4) Inauguration Day is a legal public holiday for the purpose of COPRA. Employees whose duty locations are in the District of Columbia, or Montgomery and Prince George counties in Maryland, or Arlington and Fairfax counties in Virginia, or in the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia, who perform regularly scheduled, non-overtime, work on that day shall be paid the holiday differential. When Inauguration Day falls on a Sunday, the next succeeding day selected for the public observance of the inauguration of the President is the legal public holiday.
- (5) If a legal holiday falls on an employee's regularly-scheduled day off, the employee shall receive a holiday "in lieu of" that day. Holidays "in lieu of" shall not be granted for Inauguration Day. An employee who works on an "in lieu of" holiday shall be paid the holiday differential.
- (6) If an employee is assigned to a regularly-scheduled, non-overtime, tour of duty which contains hours within and outside the twenty-four (24) hour calendar day of a holiday – for example, a tour of duty starting at 8 p.m. on a Monday holiday following a scheduled day off on Sunday and ending at 4 a.m. on Tuesday – the employee shall receive the holiday differential (up to eight (8) hours) for work

performed during that shift. If the employee is assigned more than one regularly-scheduled, non-overtime, tour of duty which contains hours within and outside the twenty-four (24) hour calendar day of a holiday – for example, a tour of duty starting at 8 p.m. on the Wednesday before a Thursday holiday and ending at 4 a.m. on Friday – the management official in charge of assigning work shall designate one of the tours of duty as the employee's holiday shift and the employee will receive holiday differential (up to eight (8) hours) for work performed during the entire period of the designated holiday shift. The employee will not receive holiday differential for any of the work performed on the tour of duty which has not been designated as the holiday shift but will be eligible for Sunday or night differential as appropriate.

- (7) If an employee is assigned to a compressed schedule, non-overtime, tour of duty which contains hours within and outside the twenty-four (24) hour calendar day of a holiday – for example, a tour of duty starting at 8 p.m. on a Monday holiday following a scheduled day off on Sunday and ending at 8 a.m. on Tuesday – the employee shall receive the holiday differential up to the extent the law allows (e.g., here, no more than twelve (12) hours will be compensable at the holiday premium rate.)
- (8) Employees who are regularly scheduled, but not required, to work on a holiday shall receive their hourly rate of base pay for that eight (8) hour tour plus any night differential they would have received had the day not been designated as a holiday. To receive holiday pay under this paragraph, the employee must be in a pay status (at work or on paid leave) either the last work day before the holiday or the first work day following the holiday.
- (9) An employee who works only a portion of a regularly-scheduled, non-overtime, holiday shift will be paid the holiday differential for the actual hours worked and the appropriate differential (night) for the remaining portion of the shift such employee was not required to work. The night differential premium pay shall be calculated based on the rate applicable to the entire shift.

**B. Employees Not Covered by COPRA.** Employees not covered by COPRA will observe holidays and be provided holiday premium pay in accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 550, as appropriate. This includes:

- (1) An employee who is required to work during non-overtime hours on a holiday will receive the employee's rate of basic pay, plus holiday premium pay at a rate equal to their rate of basic pay, for each hour of holiday work.
- (2) An employee who is required to perform any work during non-overtime holiday hours is entitled to a minimum of two (2) hours of holiday premium pay.

- (3) In the event a holiday is observed on a full-time employee's regular day off, the employee will normally be provided an "in lieu of" holiday on the employee's regularly scheduled non-overtime work day immediately preceding the holiday. The exception is when the holiday falls on the first regular day off of the employee's administrative work week, in which case the employee will be provided an "in lieu of" holiday on the following work day.
- (4) In accordance with 5 C.F.R. 610.405, part-time employees are not entitled to an "in lieu of" holiday when a holiday falls on a non-work day.

#### **Section 4. Holiday Scheduling.**

- A. Absent the existence of a supplemental agreement or past practice addressing such issues as the selection of "in lieu of" holidays, current holiday procedures will apply.
- B. Absent the existence of a locally negotiated agreement or past practice, the Employer will use the following procedure when excusing employees from work on a holiday:
  - (1) If the Employer determines that more than one (1) employee is excusable from within the work group from which the excusal is to be made, management will solicit volunteers from within that work group.
  - (2) In the event:
    - (a) More excusable employees volunteer than are required, excusals will be granted in seniority order.
    - (b) Too few excusable employees volunteer, employees will be excused in inverse seniority order.
- C. Where employees are not regularly scheduled to work on a holiday and the employer determines more than one (1) employee is qualified and eligible from within the work group from which the holiday assignment is to be made, management will solicit volunteers from within the work group from which the selection is to be made. In the event:
  - (1) More qualified employees volunteer than are required, selections for assignments will be made in seniority order.
  - (2) Too few qualified employees volunteer, assignments will be made in inverse seniority order.

- D. Employees will be assigned to work holidays in a manner that does not conflict with applicable compensation cap or annuity integrity requirements and procedures.

**Section 5. Religious Observances.**

- A. An employee whose personal religious beliefs require the abstention from work during certain periods of time may request annual leave, Leave Without Pay (LWOP) or elect to engage in overtime work for time lost for meeting those religious requirements in accordance with applicable law and government-wide rules, regulations and the policies and procedures contained in this Section.

- (1) Requests for annual leave or LWOP for such purpose will be considered and approved in accordance with the procedures contained in Article 37: Leave and Excusal.
- (2) To the extent that such modifications in work schedules do not interfere with the efficient accomplishment of its mission, the Employer shall in each instance afford the employee the opportunity to work compensatory overtime and shall in each instance grant compensatory time off to an employee requesting such time off for religious observances when the employee's personal religious beliefs require that the employee abstain from work during certain periods of the workday or workweek.
- (3) For the purpose stated in subsection A.(2) of this section, the employee may work such compensatory overtime before or after the grant of compensatory time off. A grant of compensatory time off shall be repaid by the appropriate amount of compensatory overtime work within five (5) pay periods of its use. Time not repaid will be charged to the employee's annual leave account at the end of the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) pay period by amending the time card(s) as appropriate. Compensatory time off under this Section may be earned and used in quarter- hour increments.
- (4) If at the time requested, no productive work is available for the employee to perform on compensatory overtime, alternative times will be arranged by the Employer in accordance with law and government-wide rules and regulations.
- (5) The premium pay provisions for overtime work do not apply to compensatory overtime work performed under this Section.
- (6) The Employer will approve requests within each work unit in seniority order, absent mutual agreement.

## **ARTICLE 37: LEAVE AND EXCUSAL**

The purpose of this Article is to establish the policy and procedures by which employees request and management reviews and considers leave and excusal.

### **Section 1. General Policies.**

- A. Leave and excused absences may be requested, approved, and used in quarter-hour increments. The Employer will respond in a timely manner so that the employee knows that their request has been received.
- B. Leave and excused absences will be requested as far in advance as possible through the use of an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Form SF-71, "Request for Leave or Approved Absence" (or equivalent). Requests submitted through the Budgeting and Employee Scheduling Application (BESA), WebTA, and other CBP approved Time and Attendance systems meet this requirement. Emergency requests for leave may be made telephonically to the designated management official and will be followed up with a formal request upon the employee's return as appropriate.
- C. In the event an unforeseen emergency arises that prompts an employee to request unscheduled leave, such leave will be requested as follows:
  - (1) If the emergency arises while the employee is at work, the employee will notify the Employer of the nature of the emergency, the anticipated extent of the employee's absence, and seek the Employer's approval for the appropriate type of leave.
  - (2) If the emergency arises when the employee is not at work, and the need to take leave would prevent the employee from reporting to work as scheduled, the employee must notify the employee's supervisor (or designated alternate) at the earliest available opportunity, but absent just cause, no later than one (1) hour after the time in which the employee is schedule to report for duty. At the time the emergency request for leave is made, the supervisor (or designated alternate) will advise the employee as to whether the request for leave is approved (including provisional approvals subject to follow-up documentation when appropriate). If the supervisor (or designated alternate) is not available, the employee must leave a message with a telephone number where the employee can be reached.



- (3) If the emergency extends beyond the period for which leave was originally requested, the employee must again notify the Employer and request additional leave.
- D.** The Employer will review, consider, and approve employee requests for leave and excused absence in a fair and impartial manner.
- E.** If any request for leave or excused absence is denied, the Employer will provide the employee with an explanation for the denial upon request.
- F.** Mutual agreement refers to the ability of the local parties to establish procedures only if both parties agree to do so voluntarily. It does not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over the proposed variation to grievance, arbitration, or any other impasse dispute process.
- G.** When leave amounts are identified in terms of workdays in this Article one (1) workday is equivalent to eight (8) hours regardless of an employee's actual work schedule. This is represented in this Article in a "days (hours)" format (e.g., 10-day (i.e., 80 hours)).

## **Section 2. Annual Leave.**

- A.** The entire leave year will be available for annual leave requests, and the Employer will allow each employee to schedule annual leave as the employee desires, subject to approval by the appropriate official based on workload and staffing needs. This includes approving annual leave requests in a manner that permits each employee, if the employee wishes, to request at least one (1) period of two (2) consecutive weeks of annual leave each leave year. By mutual agreement, the parties may agree to permit requests of longer than two (2) consecutive weeks of annual leave each year.
- B.** When making annual leave requests in advance, employees will not be required to provide details as to the specific reason and may give a reason of "personal business" if asked by the Employer.
- C.** Local Annual Leave Procedures.
  - (1) Upon the effective date of this Agreement and at any time thereafter, the Employer and the Union may, by mutual agreement, adopt a local annual leave procedure.
    - (a) The scope of such mutual agreements may include:

1. The time periods in which employees within appropriate work units or groups will compete for available leave periods.
  2. The dates for submission of leave requests.
  3. Ad Hoc annual leave procedures.
  4. The posting of leave schedules; and/or
  5. The criteria, priorities and/or the methods for resolving conflicts between leave requests among employees competing for available leave periods within an organizational segment.
- (b) Local annual leave procedures adopted through mutual agreement may not conflict with law, rule, regulation, or the terms of this Agreement.
- (c) Any local mutual agreement reached under this subsection must be placed in writing and signed by the parties and will be binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw. Withdrawals will be effective at the beginning of the annual leave request cycle following receipt of the notice. When one party withdraws, Section (2) below will serve as the default procedure.
- (2) Absent the establishment of a local procedure under Section 2.C.(1) of this Article, the following will serve as the default procedure:
- (a) Request Solicitation Period. When the Employer determines scheduling requirements or complexities necessitate or make it efficient to use a yearly process by which employees within a particular work unit or organizational subcomponent request and compete for available annual leave periods (i.e., in one- and two-week blocks), the following procedure will be used:
1. Absent mutual agreement to do otherwise, for those uniformed employees participating in the Article 13 Bid, Rotation and Placement (BRP) process, the Employer will solicit employee requests for annual leave for the upcoming leave year no later than the date of BRP implementation. The solicitation period will be no less than fourteen (14) calendar days.
  2. For all other employees, no later than October 15th of each year, the Employer will solicit employee requests for annual leave for the upcoming leave (calendar) year. The solicitation period will be no less than fourteen (14) calendar days.

3. Following the close of the solicitation period, the Employer will review and approve the requests in accordance with Section 2.A. of this Article. In the event a greater number of requests are submitted for a given period than can be approved, the Employer will approve requests in seniority order. For purposes of this subsection, seniority will be determined by:

**Step 1.**

- i. For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS-1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as an Immigration Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement.
- ii. For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
- iii. For all other positions, the total time the employee has served in the employee's current series.
- b. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- c. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
- d. In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

4. The Employer will post or otherwise make available the resulting list of approved requests for the upcoming leave year to employees no later than 45 calendar days after the solicitation for leave.
- (b) Ad/Hoc Leave Requests. The Employer will review and approve leave requests it receives throughout the leave year in accordance with Section 2.A. of this Article. Absent local mutual agreement, management will approve or deny ad hoc leave requests as far in advance as practicable but normally at least two (2) business days in advance of the first requested leave date. Ad hoc leave requests submitted within two (2) business days of the requested leave date will be approved/denied within a reasonable time prior to the requested leave date. Decisions regarding leave approval/denial will be based on operational information to include availability of identified annual leave slots. If the Employer is presented with a greater number of unprocessed requests for a given day or period than can be approved, the Employer will approve requests in seniority order (using the seniority rules contained in Section 2.C.(2)(a)3 of this Article). The same requests for ad hoc leave that were denied two (2) business days in advance of the requested leave will not be reconsidered unless the employee identifies a change in operational conditions.
- D.** Should the Employer find it necessary to cancel previously approved leave, it will inform the employee as soon as practicable after the reason is known to the Employer. The reasons for canceling leave will be provided in writing for all leave that was requested in writing. Employee requests for rescheduling approved leave which has been canceled, shall be processed in accordance with this Article.
- E.** To the extent it has not otherwise been requested and approved, an employee with use or lose annual leave (as reflected in the Leave and Earnings Statement provided by the Employer) will submit annual leave requests for the balance of the leave year before September 1st of each year.
- F.** The maximum amount of leave that can be carried over into the new year is thirty (30) days (i.e., 240 hours) for employees stationed in the United States, and forty-five (45) days (i.e., 360 hours) for employees stationed overseas and entitled to home leave.
- G.** Annual leave requested and approved in writing by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) established use or lose deadline (before the start of the 3rd biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year) of each year and subsequently cancelled by management and forfeited by the employee may be restored when:

- (1) Exigencies of public business existed that were of such importance and duration as to prevent the use of annual leave that was scheduled in advance before the end of the leave year.
- (2) The employee experienced a period of sickness that interfered with the usage of scheduled annual leave, and occurred or continued so late in the leave year that annual leave could not have been rescheduled to avoid forfeiture; or
- (3) The forfeiture was caused by an administrative error on the part of the Employer.

**H.** The Employer will inform employees of the procedure by which forfeited annual leave may be restored each leave year.

**I.** Advanced Annual Leave. Requests for advanced annual leave may be made by an employee and will be evaluated by the Employer in accordance with the terms of this Article when:

- (1) The employee is eligible to earn annual leave.
- (2) The employee has served more than ninety (90) days in the employee's appointment.
- (3) The employee is not under leave restriction.
- (4) The employee makes the request in writing (i.e., memo) and provides a rationale for the request.
- (5) The employee does not request more advanced annual leave than would be earned during the remainder of the year; and
- (6) The liquidation of the advance may be anticipated by subsequent accruals of the leave or in the event of the employee's separation, recovery of the value of the advanced leave (e.g., by withholding salary or other funds due to the employee, etc.).

If an employee's request for advanced annual leave is denied, the employee will be provided written notification of the denial.

### **Section 3. Sick Leave.**

**A.** Sick leave may be requested by employees for:

- (1) personal medical needs,
- (2) to provide care for a family member,
- (3) to make arrangements for and attend the funeral of a family member,
- (4) to care for a family member with a serious health condition, and

(5) for adoption-related purposes.

- B.** The Employer will approve employee requests for sick leave for purposes and in amounts as required by applicable law, rule, and regulation (e.g., 5 C.F.R. § 630.401 which limits sick leave usage each leave year for sick leave taken for purposes identified in Section A(2), (3), and (5) above). When making a request for sick leave, the Employer may inquire about which categories of sick leave under Section 3.A. above the employee is using. Nothing in this subsection will preclude the Employer from requiring supporting documentation pursuant to subsection 3.E. below.
- C.** When an employee knows in advance that sick leave will be required, the employee will request sick leave at the time the necessity for the leave is determined.
- D.** The employee is responsible for contacting the employee's supervisor (or designated alternate) about the need for unscheduled sick leave as soon as possible, but absent just cause, no later than one (1) hour before the time an employee is scheduled to report for duty. If the supervisor is not available, the employee must leave a message with a telephone number where the employee can be reached. Upon return to duty, the employee will follow up on the request by making the necessary written submission(s).
- E. Supporting Documentation.**
- (1) Regardless of the duration of the absence, the Employer will consider an employee's self-certification (verbal or written statement) as to the reason for the employee's absence as administratively acceptable evidence of the need to use sick leave. However, for an absence in excess of three (3) workdays, or when determined necessary by the Employer (i.e., when there exist reasonable grounds to suspect the employee of leave abuse), the Employer may also require a medical certificate, or other administratively acceptable evidence as to the reason for the absence.
- (2) "Medical certificate" means a written statement signed by a registered practicing physician or other practitioner certifying to the incapacitation, examination, or treatment, or to the period of incapacitation while the patient was receiving professional treatment.
- (3) When requested, employees will provide such evidence within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the request, absent just cause.

**F.** Upon request by the employee, an approved absence which would otherwise be chargeable to sick leave will normally be changed to annual leave if the request is made at the time the request for approval of the leave is submitted.

**G. Advance Sick Leave.**

- (1) Requests for advanced sick leave may be made by an employee and will be evaluated and approved by the Employer in accordance with the terms of this Article when:
  - (a) The employee is eligible to earn sick leave;
  - (b) Advanced sick leave is required by the exigencies of the situation for a serious disability or ailment of the employee or a family member, or for purposes related to the adoption of a child;
  - (c) The employee makes the request in writing (i.e., memo) and supports the request with a medical certificate;
  - (d) The Employer has a reasonable expectation that the employee will return to duty and repayment can reasonably be expected; and
  - (e) The employee is not currently under leave restriction.
- (2) The employee may be approved for up to two hundred and forty (240) hours for the following reasons:
  - a. Incapacitation for the performance of the employee's duties by physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth;
  - b. For a serious health condition of the employee or a family member;
  - c. When the employee would, as determined by the health authorities having jurisdiction or by a health care provider, jeopardize the health of others by the employee's presence on the job because of exposure to a communicable disease;
  - d. For purposes relating to the adoption of a child; or
  - e. For the care of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, provided the employee is exercising their entitlement to FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember.
- (3) The employee may be approved for up to one hundred and four (104) hours for the following reasons:

- (a) When the employee receives medical, dental or optical examination or treatment;
- (b) To provide care for a family member who is incapacitated by a medical or mental condition or to attend to a family member receiving medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment;
- (c) To provide care for a family member who would, as determined by the health authorities having jurisdiction or by a health care provider, jeopardize the health of others by that family member's presence in the community because of exposure to a communicable disease; or
- (d) To make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or to attend the funeral of a family member.

**H.** The Employer will comply with the requirements of Section 15 of Article 31: Employee Rights regarding the handling and protection of medical information provided by employees under this Section.

**I.** Leave Abuse.

- (1) When reasonable grounds exist to suspect an employee of leave abuse, the Employer may ask the employee to explain.
- (2) When determined necessary by the Employer, (i.e. when reasonable grounds exist to suspect an employee of leave abuse), the employee may be notified in writing, that for a period, normally six (6) months, the employee's leave has been restricted. No request for the type of leave for which the restriction letter was issued or a request for any unscheduled leave (i.e., leave not approved in advance) will be approved unless supported by a medical certificate as defined in Section 3.E.(2) for sick leave, or other appropriate documentation for other than sick leave, as applicable. The restriction letter will describe the circumstances which led to its issuance and identify the review date of the leave restriction requirements. Prior to the end of the restriction period, the Employer will review and determine whether the restriction will be terminated or extended for an additional period, normally six (6) months. Any extension will be in writing and provided to the employee. Any extension will be reviewed in six (6) months.
- (3) When a compelling reason arises, an employee and/or the employee's NTEU representative may request that a leave restriction be rescinded prior to the expiration of the period identified in the leave restriction letter. Management is under no obligation to grant such a request or provide any additional justification for the continued restriction.



- (4) Employees who call out on a holiday or in lieu holiday will be required to submit medical or other documentation to support their absence. In addition to providing documentation, the employee may provide reasons for their absence. The Employer will review the documentation and any reasons submitted and determine whether or not the absence will be excused. If not excused, the employee will be considered AWOL.

#### **Section 4. Leave Without Pay.**

- A. Leave Without Pay (LWOP) is an employee requested and Employer approved temporary absence from duty in a non-pay status. Absent just cause, all LWOP must be requested and approved in advance.
- B. As LWOP can impact various employee benefits and other personnel actions, the Employer will ensure information is readily available for employees on such impacts. In addition, a representative of the Employer will be available to discuss such impacts with an employee who is contemplating making an LWOP request.
- C. In accordance with applicable law, rule and regulation, the Employer must approve requests for LWOP in the following specific circumstances:
  - (1) Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requests under Section 5 of this Article.
  - (2) Entitlements under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA).
  - (3) Requests from an employee who is a disabled veteran and presents an official statement from a medical authority that medical treatment is required in connection with the disability (provided prior notice of the period during which absence for treatment will occur is given to the Employer); and
  - (4) Employees who are in receipt of compensation from the Department of Labor for work-related injuries or occupational diseases may not be in a pay status, and therefore must be carried in a LWOP status.
- D. In the following circumstances, requests for LWOP may be made by an employee and will be evaluated by the Employer in accordance with the terms of this Article:
  - (1) To serve as the elected National President or Executive Vice President of the NTEU, or to serve full-time in an appointive position of the Union.
  - (2) To attend school for one (1) year in full-time study when: the study is related to the employee's position; the employee has worked for CBP for at least

five (5) years; the employee is performing at least at the acceptable level; and the employee agrees to return to CBP upon completion of the study period.

- (3) For a period of up to six (6) months when an employee has an illness or injury that would otherwise be covered by sick leave, the employee's annual and sick leave has been exhausted, and the employee agrees to return to CBP at the conclusion of the LWOP period. The amount of LWOP granted will be only what is necessary, and when combined with leave approved under another provision of this Article for the same purpose, the total absence may not exceed six (6) months.
  - (4) Up to twenty-four (24) hours of LWOP during a twelve (12) month period may be used to attend to (1) School & Early Childhood Educational Activities (2) Routine Family Medical Purposes and (3) Elderly Relatives' Health or Care Needs.
- E.** For all other requests for LWOP, the Employer will consider whether the value to the government, the public good, or the needs of the employee are sufficient to offset the administrative inconvenience and the cost of granting the request. Such factors as increased job ability, protection or improvement of an employee's health, job performance, and retention of a desired employee may be considered. In addition, the Employer should have a reasonable expectation that the employee will return to duty at the end of the LWOP (except in cases where an employee is relocating).
- F.** Approved LWOP may be retroactively changed to annual leave if:
- (1) Due to an administrative error or misunderstanding, the employee was not aware that the employee had an annual leave balance or that annual leave could have been used; or
  - (2) The employee is accepted into the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program and donated leave is available.
- G.** An employee who returns to duty after a period of LWOP (unassociated with FMLA) of forty-five (45) calendar days or less will be returned to the same position, or if not available a similar position, held at the employee's post of duty prior to the period of LWOP.
- H.** An employee who returns to duty after a period of LWOP (unassociated with FMLA) of more than forty-five (45) days will be returned to the same position, or if not available a similar position, held at the employee's post of duty prior to the period of LWOP; or, if not available, placed in a like position in the commuting area.

**Section 5. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), including Paid Parental Leave (PPL).**

- A. Employees will be granted FMLA leave in accordance with applicable law and regulations. To be eligible the employee must have at least twelve (12) months of Federal service of a type that is covered by the Title 5 FMLA provisions and any honorable active duty military service.
- B. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees (see 5 CFR § 630) to take leave without pay (LWOP), or to substitute appropriate accrued paid leave, for up to a total of twelve (12) administrative work weeks (480 hours) during a twelve (12) month period for the following reasons:
  - (1) Birth of a son or daughter of the employee and the care of such son or daughter.
  - (2) Placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care.
  - (3) Care of an employee's spouse, child, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
  - (4) Serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of the employee's position.
  - (5) Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty" (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Armed Forces. The definition of "covered active duty" for this purpose is found in 5 CFR 630.1201.
- C. Eligible federal employees qualify for FMLA to care for the following:
  - (1) Spouse\*
  - (2) Child (under 18, or 18 or over and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability, as defined in 5 CFR 630.1201)
  - (3) Parent
  - (4) In Loco Parentis (in place of a parent)

\* "Spouse" is defined as a partner in any legally recognized marriage (including same-sex marriages), regardless of the employee's state of residency. Unmarried domestic partners of the same-sex are not deemed

spouses unless their union is recognized as a common law marriage by the state in which they reside.

- D.** In addition to the basic FMLA allotment of up to 12 administrative workweeks, eligible employees may also take up to 26 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member (military caregiver leave). This FMLA entitlement is a one-time covered service member, per covered serious illness or injury entitlement.
- E.** The twelve (12) month period begins on the date the employee first takes leave under FMLA.
- F.** A “serious health condition” means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves:
  - (1) A period of incapacity or treatment in connection with or consequent to inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or medical care facility.
  - (2) A condition that results in incapacity requiring an absence of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days involving continuing treatment by a health care provider; or
  - (3) Continuing treatment/supervision by a health care provider for a chronic or long-term condition that, if not treated, would likely result in incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days.
- G.** Requests for FMLA leave must be accompanied by, (or followed up by as described in section K below) administratively acceptable medical documentation from a qualified health care provider supporting the request. Department of Labor Form WH-380, “Certification of Health Care Provider” satisfies this requirement. However, absent extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical complications, caregiver leave request), medical documentation is not required for FMLA requests related to the birth or adoption of a child.
- H.** Maternity and Paternity Leave. Employees who invoke FMLA for the purposes of maternity or paternity leave may be eligible for PPL in accordance with 5 CFR Subpart Q – “Paid Parental Leave”.
  - (1) **Employee Eligibility.** An employee must meet the FMLA eligibility requirements provided in Section 5 FMLA above and the following:

- (a) The employee has at least 12 months of Federal service of a type that is covered by the Title 5 FMLA provisions and any honorable active-duty military service;
  - (b) The employee has a full-time or part-time work schedule; and
  - (c) The employee has an appointment of more than 1 year (i.e., employees with temporary appointments not to exceed 1 year are ineligible);
  - (d) The employee must be a parent of a child born or placed (for adoption or foster care) with the employee on or after October 1, 2020;
  - (e) An employee who is initially ineligible for FMLA at the time of a qualifying birth or placement, may use PPL if the employee becomes eligible for FMLA under Title 5 within the 12-month period following the birth or placement of a child.
- (2) PPL Requests, certification, and approval.
- (a) An employee must invoke FMLA for the birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care to receive PPL. PPL is provided when the employee substitutes the paid leave for the unpaid leave under FMLA. Using FMLA for reasons other than birth or placement of a child (e.g., using FMLA for a serious health condition) during a 12-month period will reduce the amount of FMLA leave available for birth or placement purposes, as well as the amount of PPL available.
  - (b) PPL is limited to 12 weeks of leave in connection with a birth or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. Part-time employees and employees on an uncommon tour of duty are limited to a proportional amount of PPL based on the employee's scheduled tour of duty.
  - (c) PPL may only be used during the 12-month period following the birth or placement of child. PPL cannot be carried over and an employee cannot receive payment for any unused portion of PPL.
  - (d) The supervisor may request appropriate documentation in order to support the employee's request. This documentation must provide enough information for the supervisor to determine the employee's eligibility for PPL.
  - (e) Program Offices may not require employees to use annual leave or sick leave before using PPL.

- (3) Work Obligation
  - (a) Before using PPL, an employee is required to enter into a written service agreement to work for the CBP for 12 weeks after the day the employee stops using PPL (intermittent periods of work while using PPL do not count towards the meeting this 12-week work obligation).
  - (b) The 12-week work obligation applies regardless of the amount of PPL actually used. If an employee uses less than the full 12 weeks of PPL, the employee will still be required to work 12 weeks after using PPL.
  - (c) Any periods of paid leave (e.g., annual leave or sick leave), LWOP, or other periods in a non-duty status (e.g., furlough or AWOL) will not count toward the 12-week work obligation. Therefore, after the employee's PPL is exhausted or expires and the work obligation is triggered, if the employee remains on some other type of leave, the work obligation is not reduced by that time in a leave status, whether that leave status is paid or unpaid.
- (4) Reimbursement of Health Insurance Costs.
  - (a) Failure to complete the 12-week work obligation may result in an employee being required to reimburse CBP for the cost of the Government contribution CBP paid to maintain the employee's health insurance coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program during the period PPL was used.
  - (b) If CBP seeks a reimbursement, CBP must collect the full amount of the monies the agency paid for the employee's FEHB insurance. There is no authority for a partial waiver of the amount owed.
  - (c) CBP will provide a waiver if the employee is unable to return to work because of: (1) the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or child whose birth or placement was the basis for the PPL, but in the case of the employee's serious health condition, only if the condition is related to the birth or placement; or (2) any other circumstance beyond the employee's control as defined by 5 CFR 630.1705(h).
- (5) Employee Transfer
  - (a) If an employee transfers to another component or agency while using PPL, the work obligation will be owed to the organization the employee is employed with when the use of PPL concludes.

- (6) Multiple Birth or Placement Events.
- (a) If an employee has multiple children born or placed on the same day, this is a single event that initiates a single entitlement of up to 12 weeks of PPL.
  - (b) If an employee has one or more children born or placed during the 12-month period following the date of an earlier birth or placement of a child, each event will generate a 12-week leave entitlement to be used during the 12-month period following the birth or placement. However, any overlapping use of PPL (i.e., any period contained within more than one 12-month period following a birth or placement) will count toward the 12-week limit for each birth or placement involved.
- I. A “health care provider” is a licensed Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Osteopathy; a health care provider recognized by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program; a Christian Science practitioner listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts; or a Native American, including an Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian, who is recognized as a traditional healing practitioner.
- J. The Employer will protect and handle any medical information by the employee in accordance with Section 15 of Article 31: Employee Rights.
- K. When possible, a requesting employee must provide notice of the employee’s intent to take FMLA leave not less than thirty (30) calendar days before the leave is to begin. When not possible, the employee will provide notice as soon as practicable.
- L. Requesting employees must submit the necessary supporting medical documentation no later than fifteen (15) calendar days after the request for FMLA leave is submitted. If, due to circumstances beyond the employee’s control, the medical certification is not available within the fifteen (15) calendar day period, the employee must submit it no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the request for FMLA leave. The employee’s supervisor may waive the requirement for an additional medical certificate in a subsequent twelve (12) month period if the FMLA leave is for the same chronic or continuing health condition.
- M. FMLA leave under subsections B(1) and (2) of this Section may be taken on an intermittent basis if the employee so requests, and the employee’s supervisor reasonably determines that such a schedule will not adversely impact the accomplishment of the mission. FMLA leave under subsections B(3), (4) and (5) of this Section may be taken on an intermittent basis or on a reduced leave schedule (employee’s usual number of hours of regularly scheduled work per day is reduced),

only when medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member or for the serious health condition of the employee.

- N.** An employee may elect to substitute annual leave and/or sick leave, consistent with applicable law and regulations for using annual or sick leave, for any FMLA LWOP. An employee who elects to substitute paid leave for FMLA leave must notify the employee's supervisor of that election prior to the date the FMLA leave begins.
- O.** FMLA leave cannot be invoked retroactively, unless the employee and the employee's personal representative (if any) are physically or mentally incapable of invoking the employee's entitlement to FMLA leave during the entire period the employee is absent from work for a FMLA-qualifying purpose. If the employee meets this requirement, the employee may retroactively invoke the employee's FMLA entitlement within 2 workdays of returning to duty. The employee must provide acceptable medical documentation addressing the employee's incapacitation and acceptable documentation to the Employer explaining the inability of the employee's representative to contact the Employer during the entire absence to invoke FMLA leave.
- P.** Upon returning from FMLA leave, an employee will be returned to the same position, or if not available, an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status and other terms and conditions of employment. An employee who takes FMLA leave is entitled to maintain health benefits coverage. An employee on unpaid FMLA leave may pay the employee share of the premiums on a current basis or pay upon return to work.
- Q.** Employees should contact their supervisors, or mission support for advice and assistance with FMLA and PPL requests.
- R.** Employees may request, and the Employer will evaluate and approve leave for maternity and paternity (including adoption or foster care) purposes through PPL under FMLA, in accordance with the terms of this Article. Employees may request additional leave through normal leave request procedures.
- S.** Requests under this Section (other than FMLA requests) may be for a period of up to six (6) months, and include a combination of sick leave, annual leave, and LWOP in accordance with the corresponding Sections contained in this Article.
- T.** Nothing in this Section requires an employee to exhaust accrued annual and/or sick leave prior to requesting LWOP under this Section.



**Section 6. Military Leave.**

- A.** Military leave is absence from duty from the employee's civilian position without loss of pay (including pay for regularly scheduled overtime) to perform military duty.
- B.** In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), an employee performing service with the uniformed services will be permitted, upon request, to use military leave or accrued annual leave during such service.
- C.** In order to be entitled to military leave, an employee must be:
  - (1) A member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces or the National Guard.
  - (2) A full-time, part-time, or indefinite employee who does not have an intermittent work schedule; and
  - (3) Serving in an appointment that is not limited to one (1) year or less.
- D.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (a), eligible employees accrue fifteen (15) calendar days (i.e., 120 hours) of military leave per fiscal year for active duty, active-duty training, inactive duty training and funeral honors duty. An employee may carry over a maximum of fifteen (15) days into the next fiscal year.
- E.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (b), eligible employees may accrue an additional twenty-two (22) workdays (i.e., 176 hours) of military leave per calendar year for emergency duty as ordered by the President or a State governor. This leave is provided for employees who perform military duties in support of civil authorities in the protection of life and property, or when performing full-time military service as a result of a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.
- F.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (c), members of the National Guard of the District of Columbia are provided unlimited military leave for certain types of duty ordered or authorized under Title 49 of the District of Columbia Code.
- G.** In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (d), Reserve and National Guard Technicians only are entitled to forty-four (44) workdays (i.e., 352 hours) of military leave in a calendar year for duties overseas under certain conditions. This entitlement is in addition to the entitlement to fifteen (15) days of military leave under 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (a) and Section 7.D. of this Article.
- H.** Whenever possible, employees must submit requests for military leave in advance, which will be accompanied by a copy of the military orders (if available) or a copy of the weekend drill schedule.

- I.** The minimum charge for military leave is one (1) hour. An employee may be charged military leave only for hours that the employee otherwise would have worked and received pay. Time taken on a workday for traveling to the military training location cannot be charged to military leave unless the military orders encompass the required travel time.
- J.** Holidays and non-duty days are not charged against military leave.
- K.** Military leave does not have to be exhausted prior to using other appropriate types of leave (i.e., annual leave or LWOP) to perform military duty, and may be intermingled with other leave. In accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 353.208, an employee may request, and the Employer will approve, the use of accrued annual leave, previously earned compensatory time off, previously earned credit hours, or LWOP intermittently when the employee is activated into military service.
- L.** An employee's civilian pay will remain the same for periods of military leave under 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (a) and Section 7.D. of this Article, including any premium pay (except Sunday premium pay) an employee would have received if not on military leave. For military leave under 5 U.S.C. § 6323 (b) and (c), and Sections 7.E. and F. of this Article, the employee's civilian pay is reduced by the amount of military pay for the days of military leave. However, an employee may choose not to take military leave and instead take annual leave in order to retain both civilian and military pay.
- M.** Federal civilian employees returning from a qualifying deployment for at least forty-two (42) consecutive days on active military duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), will receive five (5) days of uncharged leave (excused absence) only once in a 12-month period. A qualifying deployment is any military service in connection with Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or other military operations subsequently established under Executive Order 13223.
- N.** Voluntary Schedule Changes for Military Training.

  - (1) Upon request and subject to the conditions in this section, employees will be granted a voluntary schedule change so that their regular days off (RDOs) align with their scheduled monthly military service requirements (i.e., Inactive Duty Training ("IDT")). The purpose is to reduce the need to take military leave by adjusting the employee's RDOs to coincide with their military IDT dates for the pay period.
  - (2) Requests under this section must be made as soon as practicable but no less than two weeks in advance of the requested change and should not otherwise impact staffing levels beyond what would normally be impacted by the

employee's military service (i.e., whether the employee is on a RDO or in a leave status the employee would not report for work during periods of military IDT).

- (3) Unless submitted prior, when making the request, the employee must provide a memorandum from the employee's military chain of command or military orders that identify the dates of the IDT military service (an annually issued letter with all projected military training dates for the year meets this requirement). This section does not apply to other types of military service.
- (4) Employees who want to request a voluntary schedule change for military training/service that is not covered by this subsection, (i.e., military service requirements other than IDT) may request a voluntary schedule change under Article 34, Section 19.

#### **Section 7. Court Leave.**

- A. Court leave is an approved absence from duty without loss of pay or charge to an employee's accrued leave for any period of absence for which the employee is summoned by a court or authority responsible for the conduct of that proceeding, to serve (1) as juror, or (2) as a witness for any party, in connection with any judicial proceeding to which the United States, the District of Columbia, or a State or local government is a party.
- B. Court leave must be requested and approved in advance, and the request must be accompanied by the summons, court order, subpoena, or other official request.
- C. Court leave will be granted for absences during an employee's regularly scheduled tour of duty, including regularly scheduled overtime. It can be granted only for those days and hours the employee would otherwise be in a pay status.
- D. Employees assigned to night shifts or standby tours of duty are granted court leave comparable with employees assigned to regular day shift work. Since jury or witness duty generally requires an employee's presence in court during daytime hours, an employee who is scheduled to work at night will be granted court leave during the day on which the night shift begins or ends.
- E. If an employee's absence is properly chargeable to court leave, the employee may not elect to have the absence charged to annual leave. If an employee is on annual leave when called for jury duty or witness service, court leave will be substituted.
- F. When an employee on court leave is excused or discharged by the court, the employee must return to duty unless doing so would be impractical. An employee

excused or discharged by the court for a substantial portion of a workday is not entitled to court leave but must report for duty (or request appropriate leave). As a general rule, an employee will contact the employee's supervisor to determine if the employee should report for duty.

- G.** Once the employee has completed the employee's jury or witness service, the employee must submit a certificate of attendance, signed by a clerk of the court or other appropriate official to the employee's supervisor for retention with timekeeping records. Such certificates should identify fees and expenses allowances provided.
- H.** Since court leave permits an employee to fulfill the employee's obligation to the court without any loss of pay, the employee is responsible for collecting lost wage compensation provided by the applicable jurisdiction and forwarding it to U. S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Finance, Revenue Division, 8899 E. 56th Street, Mail Stop 203-J, Indianapolis, IN 46249. Such compensation must be delivered by money order or personal check. In the event the employee fails to collect fees payable or waives payment of such fees, an equivalent amount will be withheld from the employee's salary. Full-time employees may retain fees for compensation paid for jury service on holidays and other non-workdays.
- I.** Employees may keep any expense fees they receive while on court leave.

#### **Section 8: Home Leave.**

- A.** Home leave is a period of approved absence with pay authorized by 5 U.S.C. § 6305 which is earned by an employee performing service abroad. Home leave is to be used in the United States, in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or in the territories or possessions of the United States.
- B.** Employee's home leave address of record represents a permanent location in the United States, or a U.S. Commonwealth or possession, if an employee's place of residence is outside the area of employment to which the employee and family members are authorized to proceed when granted home leave. Employees serving outside the United States who meet the requirements of 5 U.S.C. § 6304 (b) for the accumulation of a maximum of forty-five (45) days (i.e., 360 hours) of annual leave are eligible for home leave.
- C.** Home leave will accrue and be granted in accordance with applicable law, rule, regulation, and this Agreement. Employees recruited and hired locally in an overseas area are not eligible to accrue home leave. Voluntary or employee-initiated transfers do not affect eligibility to earn and use home leave (if otherwise eligible).

- D.** Home leave for eligible employees at Preclearance stations accrues at the rate of five (5) days per twelve (12) months of service. An employee who is eligible for home leave will not accrue home leave when their period of service abroad is interrupted by a tour of duty in the United States Armed Forces. However, the time spent in the Armed Forces (regardless of the location of the military assignment) will be counted towards “continuous creditable service.” Home leave accrues without limit. However, employees are not paid for unused home leave upon separation or retirement.
- E.** When an employee moves from one home leave earning rate to another during a month of service abroad, or when there is a change in the rate of percent for the authorized post differential during a month of service abroad that results in a change in the home leave earning rate, the Agency shall credit the employee’s home leave account with the leave accrual to which the employee was entitled to earn before the change became effective.
- F.** The Employer will exercise its right to approve home leave in a fair and impartial manner with consideration of operational demands when the employee has completed a basic service period (continuous creditable service) of twenty-four (24) months of continuous service abroad and the employee has been selected to return to service abroad, and the employee has signed a service agreement to return overseas for at least a twelve (12) month assignment after using the home leave. Completion of the basic 24 months of continuous service period abroad is broken by:

  - (1) A break in service of one or more workdays; or
  - (2) An assignment (other than a detail) to a position in which an employee is no longer subject to Section 6305(a) of Title 5, U.S.C.
  - (3) Additionally, completion of the basic 24 months of continuous creditable service period abroad is delayed by time spent in a leave without pay (LWOP) status that exceeds two work weeks within a 12-month period while assigned abroad.
- G.** A Service Agreement, which refers to an employee’s signed written agreement that reflects acceptance of an assignment abroad for at least 12 months but no more than 36 months, is required.
- H.** Home leave may be used only in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the United States, when these possessions or territories are outside the area of employment. Home leave is not intended to be taken or used when the employee remains in the area of employment.

- I.** Employees must officially document their home leave address of residence in writing using the “Actual Place of Residence Certification Form” prior to departing for their overseas assignment. Request for changes to the home leave address of residence may be approved by the appropriate designated official only if the employee can establish that changes in circumstance so require. Request for such change will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The election of a new location intended to accommodate the employee’s personal convenience is not an acceptable basis for approval.
- J.** Request for home leave will be made when the employee has requested and receives approval for an additional assignment outside the United States, and has signed a service agreement, if applicable. Request for home leave will be made using Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Form 71, “Request for Leave or Approved Absence” (paper or electronic), Home leave should be annotated in the remarks section of the form as well as the employee’s travel destination and official home of record.
- K.** Subject to approval by the appropriate official, based on workload and staffing needs, home leave will be used within the ninety (90) days after the employee becomes eligible (i.e., has completed 24 continuous months of service abroad, has been selected to return to service abroad for a minimum of one year, and has signed a service agreement, under Section 9.F. of this Article). Requests for extensions will be considered by the Employer on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Assistant Commissioner or Chief (or designee) of the organization to which the employee is assigned. The 90-day “window” may be extended by management when the home leave request is disapproved because of operational/mission requirements.
- L.** After the use of home leave, the employee’s new service period does not begin until the employee’s return to an overseas duty location.
- M.** Home leave must be used in increments of a full day and will generally be requested to be taken in blocks of ten (10) days. However, employees who have accrued additional home leave may request the extension of their home leave period to the extent such leave is available. Home leave may not be used except during the period for which it has been authorized and for which home leave travel authorizations have been issued. Nothing in this Section prohibits an employee from requesting annual leave or leave without pay in combination with home leave.
- N.** Employees engaged in home leave travel are not eligible for Compensatory Time-Off for Travel Benefits.
- O.** Once home leave has been approved, round-trip travel for the employee and the employee’s immediate family to return to and from the employee’s official

residence (home leave address of record) will be authorized at government expense as home leave travel. Employees will be reimbursed once for each successful completion of a service agreement period. In the absence of a service agreement, the frequency of home leave travel reimbursement will be based upon the employee's program office procedures. Per diem for the employee is authorized, but not for the employee's immediate family.

- P.** For the purpose of this section, Immediate family is defined in 41 C.F.R. 300-3.1, and includes any of the following named members of the employee's household at the time the employee reports for duty: spouse or domestic partner; children of the employee, or of the employee's spouse or domestic partner, who are unmarried and under age 21, or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support; dependent parents of the employee, or of the employee's spouse or domestic partner; and dependent brothers and sisters of the employee, or of the employee's spouse or domestic partner, who are unmarried and under age 21, or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support. Immediate family members qualify for home leave travel based on eligibility of the employee. Normally, the employee and dependents will travel together on home leave. Immediate family members do not qualify for home leave travel benefits in the event the employee does not travel under home leave provisions.
- Q.** Employees may elect to take home leave to other than their official residence, but such travel must still be within the areas specified under Section 4, "Home Leave Authorization and Use" of the February 2007 CBP Leave Handbook. However, an employee who elects an alternate travel destination will be reimbursed by the government only up to the cost of round-trip travel for the employee and the employee's immediate family to the employee's official place of residence and return. Any additional costs or travel time will be the responsibility of the employee. Home leave travel benefits may not be used to travel to the United States merely as a stopping off point in route to or from foreign destinations.
- R.** Official travel time or transit time will be granted to the employee's travel destination and return to the duty station without charge to either home leave or annual leave. The amount of official travel time or transit time will be limited to the period needed by common carrier over the most direct route and without a "stopover" during transit. A "stopover" is a break during the journey such as interrupting air travel from Guam through Honolulu to Los Angeles with a brief stay in Honolulu. A "stopover" is not authorized pursuant to the regulations.
- S.** When a greater amount of time than that normally required to complete travel is spent either in travel or awaiting transportation because of circumstances over which the traveler has no control and could not reasonably avoid, the actual amount of time spent shall be considered official travel time or transit time. Time used by the

employee in travel and awaiting transportation that is in excess of allowable transit time, as well as any leave used in route, will be charged as appropriate.

- T.** An employee is indebted for the home leave the employee used when the employee fails to return to service abroad after the period of home leave, or after the completion of an assignment in the United States. The indebtedness may be paid by a charge against the employee's annual leave or by cash payment to be arranged between the employee and CBP. However, a refund for this indebtedness is not required when:
- (1) The employee has completed not less than six months of service in an assignment in the United States following the period of home leave.
  - (2) CBP determines that the employee's failure to return was due to compelling personal reasons of a humanitarian or compassionate nature, such as may involve physical or mental health or circumstances over which the employee has no control; or
  - (3) CBP, which granted the home leave, determines that it is in the public interest not to return the employee to the employee's overseas assignment.
- U.** When a determination is made a refund of all home leave is required, the employee shall repay the transportation costs connected with the home leave. If a partial refund of home leave is required, there is no requirement to repay the transportation costs.
- V.** An employee is entitled to have the employee's home leave account transferred or recredited when moving between agencies or is reemployed without a break in service of more than 90 days. No lump-sum payment is made for unused home leave, and no monetary payments are made in lieu of home leave travel.

## **Section 9: Other Paid Leave and Excused Absences.**

- A.** Excused absence, often referred to as "administrative leave," is an authorized absence from duty without loss of pay or charge against leave, which is not authorized under any other provision of law. Excused absences which are provided for under other provisions of law are not included in the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) limitation, (e.g. weather and safety leave, paid parental leave, court leave, etc.).
- B.** During any calendar year, an agency may place an employee in administrative leave for a period of not more than a total of 10 workdays (i.e., 80 hours) when it is not specifically prohibited by law, and when it is:
- (1) Directly related to CBP's mission.



- (2) Officially sponsored or sanctioned by CBP.
- (3) Determined to enhance the professional development or skills of an employee in the employee's current position.
- (4) Brief and is determined to be in the interest of CBP.

**C. Examples of use of Administrative Leave include but are not limited to:**

- (1) Participation in Volunteer Activities (when the criteria above is met).
- (2) Internal Examinations. To take examinations related to employment with CBP, e.g., examinations to establish an employee's qualifications for promotion in CBP.
- (3) External Examinations. To take examinations which are directly related to the employee's current or prospective duties within CBP (e.g., CPA exam for accountants, bar exam for attorneys), including travel to and attendance at an oral interview required as a prerequisite to the grant of a professional license. The time authorized under this provision is limited to a single examination for any one (1) employee.
- (4) Employee Interviews. To attend interviews or testing when competing for positions within CBP.

**D. Administrative Leave for Voting.**

- (1) When voting in connection with each Federal general election day, up to four (4) hours of administrative leave may be used for voting on the Federal general election day or for early voting (i.e., voting prior to Federal general election day, as authorized by the employee's jurisdiction).
- (2) When voting in connection with each election event (including primaries and caucuses) at the Federal, State, local (i.e., county, municipal), Tribal, or territorial level that does not coincide with a Federal general election day, up to four (4) hours of administrative leave may be used for voting on the established election day or for early voting. If an election involves more than one level simultaneously, it is considered a single election event.
- (3) When voting in connection with Federal special Congressional elections not held on the date of a Federal general election, up to four (4) hours of administrative leave may be used for voting on the established date of a special election or for early voting.

- (4) Employees may use administrative leave for voting in connection with each covered election event in which the employee participates by voting. However, an employee is limited to four (4) hours of administrative leave for voting per election event.
- (5) CBP employees are also authorized up to four (4) hours of administrative leave per leave year for the purpose of serving as a nonpartisan poll worker or participating in nonpartisan observer activities at the Federal, State, local (i.e., county or municipal), Tribal, or territorial level. The leave year begins on the first day of the first pay period commencing on or after January 1 of the given year and ends on the day before the first day of the next leave year. With respect to administrative leave for poll worker or observer activities:
  - a. This leave is in addition to any administrative leave an employee uses to vote.
  - b. This leave includes training periods.
  - c. If the employee's poll worker or observer activities require more than four (4) hours of administrative leave per leave year, the employee may, subject to supervisory approval, use other leave flexibilities to participate in such activities.
- (6) The following additional conditions apply when using administrative leave for the purposes outlined above:
  - a. Employees must obtain supervisory approval before using the authorized administrative leave to ensure that mission operations are not significantly disrupted. Supervisors should strive to accommodate employee leave requests by making necessary operational adjustments.
  - b. Administrative leave may not be used during a non-workday or during overtime work hours outside the tour of duty established for leave-charging purposes.
  - c. Administrative leave may be used for any travel time to and from the employee's voting poll location.
  - d. If an employee needs to spend less than four hours to vote, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted.
  - e. Any administrative leave used for voting will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year administrative leave limit.

- E. Administrative Leave for Blood Donations.** Employees may be granted up to four (4) hours of administrative leave, once every 3 months, to give blood or platelet donations to an officially authorized blood bank, or in emergencies transfusions to individuals, for the period it takes to travel time to/from the donation/transfusion location, make the donation or transfusion, and recover. Should the employee desire or need additional time, the employee may request accrued annual leave, sick leave, compensatory time, credit hours or LWOP. This subsection does not cover an employee who gives blood for personal use or receives compensation for donations. Any Administrative Leave used under this provision will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap.
- F. Administrative Leave for Meetings and Conferences.** Employees may be granted a reasonable amount of administrative leave to attend a convention, conference or meeting that is not directly related to official duties if management determines the employee's attendance will contribute to the goals of CBP. After evaluating the request, the Employer will grant or deny the excused absence. If denied, the employee may request annual leave or LWOP to attend. Any Administrative Leave used under this provision will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap.
- G. Administrative Leave for Relocation.** Employees may be granted a reasonable amount of administrative leave to enable an employee who is relocated by the Employer outside the employee's commuting area to make pre-moving and post-moving arrangements, as permitted in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and this Agreement. This section does not apply to house hunting trips covered under 41 C.F.R. Part 302-5 where employees are on duty time. In addition, nothing in this subsection prohibits the Employer from granting employee requests for annual leave or leave without pay in combination with excused absences for such pre- and post-moving arrangements. Any Administrative Leave used under this provision will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap.
- H. Civil Defense Activities.** Employees may be granted of administrative leave, up to five (5) workdays per calendar year (i.e., 40 hours) of administrative leave to participate as a volunteer in emergency rescue/protective work or to participate in a federally recognized civil defense program. Emergency situations include, but are not limited to, extreme weather conditions or disasters such as fire, flood or other natural phenomena, and search operations. At the conclusion of the employee's participation in the emergency work or civil defense program, the employee must provide acceptable evidence certifying the employee's attendance through the excused absence period. Any Administrative Leave used under this provision will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap.

**I. Weather and Safety Leave (“WSL”).**

- (1) Employees may be granted WSL only if they are prevented from safely traveling to or safely performing work at a location approved by the agency due to:
  - a. An act of God,
  - b. A terrorist attack; or,
  - c. Another condition that prevents an employee or group of employees from safely traveling to or safely performing work at an approved location.
- (2) WSL is not an entitlement and will only be provided at CBPs discretion. It is not Administrative Leave and does not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap. WSL will generally be provided when there is an office closure, delayed arrival, or early departure). For employees located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, CBP will follow operating status announcements issued by OPM. For locations outside the Washington, D.C. area, it is within the authority of heads of operating units or their designees to determine the operating status. Employees designated as emergency employees are expected to report to or remain at work when there is an office closure, delayed arrival, or early departure, unless otherwise excused by their supervisor or designee.
- (3) WSL and Approved Leave. Employees may not receive WSL leave for hours during which they are on other preapproved leave (paid or unpaid) or paid time off. Employees will not be provided weather and safety leave if an employee cancels preapproved leave or paid time off or changes a regular day off in a flexible or compressed work schedule, for the primary purpose of obtaining weather and safety leave. This restriction does not apply to employees who cancel their preapproved leave because their leave plans are disrupted by the weather/safety event (e.g., an employee, who is not otherwise ill, requests sick leave to attend a doctor's appointment that is cancelled because of the same weather/safety event). Weather and safety leave may be provided to these employees if they are neither otherwise required to report to work nor telework-ready.

**J. Parental Bereavement Leave (“PBL”).**

- (1) PBL is a paid absence entitlement which is available to eligible employees in addition to other leave categories. PBL does not affect the accrual or leave balances for other types of paid leave, does not take the place of sick leave

for bereavement purposes, and does not count against the 10-day per calendar year cap for administrative leave. Eligible employees may use PBL, sick leave, or both in accordance with CBP policy.

- (a) Eligible employees are entitled to take a total of 2 workweeks of Parental bereavement leave due to a death of a son or daughter (the term “son or daughter” has the meaning given that term in the FMLA law at 5 U.S.C. 6381(6)).
  - (b) PBL is not authorized for miscarriages and stillbirths.
  - (c) Parental bereavement leave is only available when the death of a child occurs while the parent is an eligible employee during the 12-month eligibility period.
- (2) Eligibility. An employee is eligible for Parental Bereavement Leave only if the employee is eligible for FMLA under title 5 at the time of the child’s death. Therefore, the employee must meet the following criteria to be eligible for this type of leave:
- (a) The employee is covered by 5 C.F.R. Chapter 630 (the annual and sick leave program),
  - (b) The employee is serving on a permanent or term appointment greater than 1 year,
  - (c) The employee has an established full-time or part-time work schedule, and
  - (d) The employee has completed at least 12 months of service as an employee under 5 U.S.C. § 2105. This includes service with the United States Postal Service, the Postal Regulatory Commission, and non-appropriated fund organizations.
- (3) The following employees are ineligible for Parental Bereavement Leave:
- (a) Employees serving on a term appointment of 1 year or less,
  - (b) Employees who have an intermittent work schedule as described by 5 C.F.R. § 340.401 and 340.403; and
  - (c) Employees with a seasonal work schedule or employees who are placed in a non-duty/non-pay status (see 5 C.F.R. § 340.401-402).

- (4) An employee may not receive more than two (2) workweeks of PBL in any 12-month period. The 12-month period commences on the date of a child's death. An employee may have overlapping 12-month eligibility periods if another child dies at a later time during a current 12-month eligibility period. Any use of parental bereavement leave during an overlapping 12-month eligibility period will count towards each 12-month eligibility period.
- (a) The 2-workweek period of available PBL is based on the employee's work schedule and the number of hours of work in a biweekly pay period at the time the 12-month period of leave eligibility commences.
  - (b) Full-time employees scheduled to work 80 hours in a biweekly pay period are entitled to receive 80 hours of PBL.
  - (c) Full-time employees with an uncommon work schedule (see 5 C.F.R. § 630.201 and 210) are entitled to receive the number of hours in the employee's biweekly work schedule (or the average number of hours if the employee's biweekly work schedule changes from pay period to pay period).
  - (d) Part-time employees are entitled to receive the number of hours over a biweekly pay period the employee is scheduled to work for leave-charging purposes.
  - (e) If there is a change in an employee's work schedule before the employee uses the full 2-workweek amount of parental bereavement leave, any remaining balance of parental bereavement leave must be recalculated based on the new work schedule. Example: If a regular full-time employee has a balance of 40 hours of unused parental bereavement leave and then converts to a part-time schedule of 24 hours per week, the balance would be recalculated to be 24 hours.
- (5) Use of Parental Bereavement Leave. Eligible employees are entitled to use parental bereavement leave upon request. Supervisors may require employees to provide documentation to verify the use of parental bereavement leave.
- (a) Parental bereavement leave is used in quarter-hour increments.
  - (b) The use of parental bereavement leave is based on an employee's defined work schedule. Based on Program Office Schedule of Work policies, employees may be allowed to vary their basic non-overtime work requirements on a daily basis. In such circumstances, Program Offices may establish rules allowing the employee to determine the number of

scheduled work hours parental bereavement leave will be used on a given workday.

- (c) Beginning December 27, 2021, CBP must grant an eligible employee's request to retroactively substitute a past period of leave without pay with parental bereavement leave.
- (d) Parental bereavement leave may only be used during an employee's regular work schedule. An employee may not use parental bereavement leave in the following circumstances:
  - i. While serving a suspension under 5 C.F.R. § 752,
  - ii. During a period of leave without pay for service in the uniformed services,
  - iii. During off-season periods for a seasonal employee.
  - iv. During a furlough; or
  - v. During a period of separation from Federal service.
- (e) Parental Bereavement and Premium Pay. PBL is typically paid at the same hourly rate as other paid leave, to include:
  - i. Recurring overtime and certain premium pay payments such as standby duty premium pay, regularly scheduled FLSA overtime pay (not overtime pay for irregular or occasional overtime), law enforcement availability pay, and Border Patrol overtime supplements.
  - ii. Nonforeign area cost-of-living allowances and post differentials; and
  - iii. Night differential for regularly scheduled night work that is part of an employee's work schedule for leave-charging purposes, without regards to the 8-hour rule found in 5 U.S.C. § 5545(a)(2) and 5 C.F.R. § 550.122(b). For non-COPRA employees on a flexible work schedule under Article 14, night differential is not included for those hours falling under the flexible time bands, but is included for designated core hours between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- (f) Eligible employees who regularly perform Sunday work and receive Sunday premium pay will not receive Sunday premium pay while using PBL.

(6) Changing Agencies and Separations for Federal Service.

- (a) The 2-workweek limit for PBL is not affected if an employee moves to a different department or agency during a 12-month PBL period. If an employee with an unused balance of PBL transfers to another eligible position, the PBL balance transfers with the employee.
- (b) The gaining department or agency must determine if a newly hired employee is in the 12-month parental bereavement period, and if so, how many hours of PBL the employee has already used. The gaining department or agency is not bound by any agreement between the employee and the losing department or agency regarding intermittent use of PBL.
- (c) If an employee leaves Federal service with an unused PBL balance, the unused PBL is forfeited unless the employee returns to Federal service within the 12-month eligibility period. Unused PBL may not be converted to a cash payment at any time, including when transferring to another agency, transferring to a position ineligible for PBL, or separation from Federal service.

- K. Medical Examinations and Treatment.** To undergo a medical examination requested by an authorized CBP official, or to obtain medical services required for official purposes or administered as part of the official Safety and Health program, including travel time. An employee undergoing initial examination and emergency treatment for a work-related injury on the day of the injury will be granted duty time and such time will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.
- L. Bone Marrow and Organ Donation.** Employees may use up to seven (7) workdays per calendar year to serve as a bone marrow donor, and up to thirty (30) workdays per calendar year to serve as an organ donor. This absence will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.
- M. Funeral of Immediate Relative in the Armed Forces.** An employee is entitled to up to three (3) days of excused absence to make arrangements for, or to attend the funeral of, or memorial service for an immediate relative who died as a result of wounds, disease, or injury incurred while serving as a member of the Armed Forces in a combat zone (as determined by the President of the United States). The three (3) days are required to be within the employee's established tour of duty. The three (3) days need not be taken on consecutive days, but the employee is required to provide a justification for using this leave on non-consecutive days. This absence



will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.

**N. Funeral of a Fellow Law Enforcement Officer.**

- (1) Law enforcement officers may be granted may be excused from duty without loss of, or reduction in, pay or leave to attend the funeral of a fellow Federal law enforcement officer or Federal firefighter, who was killed in the line of duty. When so excused from duty, attendance at such service shall be considered to be an official duty of the officer or firefighter. CBP has determined employees who receive the enhanced retirement are eligible for this benefit. This absence will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.
  - (2) Non-law enforcement officers may be granted administrative leave for the same purposes as subsection (1) above. However, the absence will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.
- O. Veterans to Attend Funeral Services.** An employee who is a veteran of a war, or of a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, or a member of an honor or ceremonial group of an organization of those veterans, may be excused from duty for up to four (4) hours on any one day to participate as a pallbearer or as a member of a firing squad or guard of honor in a funeral ceremony for a member of the armed forces whose remains are returned from abroad for final internment in the United States. This absence will not count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.

**P. Absences to Perform Community Service.**

- (1) Supervisors are encouraged to use existing scheduling of work (e.g., use alternative work schedules or adjust an employee's work schedule) and leave rules (e.g., allow employees to use annual leave, compensatory time off, or credit hours) to enable employees to perform community service.
- (2) In rare circumstances, Component heads or designees may approve up to 60 hours of administrative leave each leave year to perform community service when the community service is directly related to the mission of the Department of Homeland Security in either of the following mission areas (A leave year begins on the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in a calendar year. A leave year ends on the day immediately before the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in the following calendar year.):

- (a) Prevention and Protection: Engage in volunteer activities that will involve detecting, deterring, and mitigating threats to our homeland, including training in prevention and protection. This includes volunteer activities to help safeguard our people and their freedoms, critical infrastructure, and property from acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
  - (b) Preparedness and Response: Engage in volunteer activities that involve planning, coordinating, or participating in response to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies, including training in preparedness and response. This includes participating in natural, state, local, and private sector efforts to restore services and rebuild communities after acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
  - (3) Any administrative leave authorized by this section is required to comply with DHS policy, including DHS Directive 254-01, Volunteer Community Service and will count against the 10-day limit on administrative leave. This absence will count against the 10-day (i.e., 80 hours) per calendar year cap on Administrative Leave.
- Q.** Supervisors have the discretion to excuse occasional brief absences from duty of less than one (1) hour when the employee provides the supervisor with an acceptable explanation for the absence.

## **ARTICLE 38: TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS**

**Section 1.** This Article contains the procedures applicable to assignments **within the bargaining unit** that are temporary in nature and not otherwise addressed in this Agreement.

**Section 2. Definitions.**

- A. Position** is the duties and responsibilities assigned by competent authority and requiring employment of a person.
- B. Duty Station** refers to those facilities and work locations to which an employee is assigned (i.e., Port of Entry, city or county).
- C. Temporary Assignment** includes any circumstance in which an employee is directed by the Employer to perform the duties and responsibilities of a position. The position may or may not be at another facility, location or duty station other than the one to which the employee is normally assigned when the employee is expected to return to their regular duties and facility, location or duty station at the end of the assignment. Examples of temporary assignments include details, temporary reassignments and temporary promotions to positions within the bargaining unit.
- D. Covered Employees.** The provisions of this article apply to all CBP employees covered by this agreement who are not the subject of any pending performance action, disciplinary action, investigation of alleged misconduct, or medical evaluation (OWCP and/or FFDE) that would impede their ability to perform the full range of duties for the duration of the temporary assignment.
- E. Operational Requirements** are conditions that affect the staffing needed for given work units. This includes, but is not limited to, such conditions as threat level, staffing requirements, workload requirements, special enforcement operations, or natural or man-made disasters.
- F. Seniority** will be determined by:
  - (a) Step 1.**
    - i. For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS- 1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as

an Immigration Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement.

- ii. For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
  - iii. For all other positions, the total time an employee has served in their current series within CBP.
- (b) **Step 2.** In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- (c) **Step 3.** In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD) will be used.
- (d) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

### **Section 3. General Policies.**

- A. Temporary assignments will be used when the Employer determines such assignments are necessary for meeting the temporary operational requirements of the Agency's work and/or programs, or for training or employee development purposes. Such assignments will be made in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in this Article.
- B. Prior to making a temporary assignment under this Article, the Employer will inform the employee of the intended assignment, as well as its expected duration and end date.
- C. When a temporary assignment is to a position outside of the commuting area of the employee's permanent duty station, the Employer will reimburse the employee for

travel and/or moving expenses in accordance with applicable law, regulation (including the Federal Travel Regulations) and the terms of this Agreement.

- D.** When temporary assignments are made for training or developmental purposes (not under a formal training and development program), employees do not need to fully meet all of the qualification requirements of the position to which temporarily assigned.
- E.** The Employer may return an employee serving in a temporary assignment to their regular assignment at any time.
- F.** The Employer will not use temporary assignments in lieu of taking corrective action under discipline and adverse action procedures.

#### **Section 4. Temporary Assignments Procedures.**

- A.** Several procedures to address movements from one work unit to another within a Port can be found in Article 13.
- B.** So that the Employer possesses the necessary flexibility to immediately meet operational requirements, as well as to assist in the training and development of employees, the Employer may temporarily assign any employee to any position for a period of not more than thirty (30) consecutive calendar days. When made for training and development purposes, the Employer will exercise its discretion in this subsection in a fair and impartial manner.
- C.** When the Employer anticipates an assignment under this Section will be more than thirty consecutive (30) calendar days in duration, and more than one (1) employee is qualified from within the work group from which the temporary assignment will be made, volunteers will be solicited. In the event more qualified employees volunteer than are required, selections will be made in seniority order. If too few qualified employees within the work group volunteer, absent just cause, employees will be assigned in inverse seniority order.
- D.** In the event the Employer determines it is necessary to fulfill temporary needs lasting more than ninety (90) calendar days through the involuntary temporary assignment of a significant number of employees from more than one duty station to positions outside of the commuting area of the employee's permanent duty station (e.g., the northern border initiative, SWB Surge), the Employer will notify NTEU (at the national level) and upon request, negotiate over the procedures by which employees are assigned and appropriate arrangements for employees adversely affected by the Employer's determination. Upon NTEU request, such negotiations will continue on a post-implementation basis. This provision does not apply to

regularly occurring temporary assignments for which employee interest is periodically solicited (e.g., instructor opportunities at the Academies).

- (1) When making temporary assignments outside the commuting area, the local management will provide the respective NTEU Chapter President with an informational briefing upon request. Management will consider the Chapter's input prior to making assignments within the control of the local management.
  - (2) Absent mutual agreement by the local parties, the following excusal rules will serve as the default for temporary assignments outside the commuting area:
    - (a) If desired, an employee, operationally permitting, will be excused from an involuntary temporary assignment if the employee has completed a similarly situated temporary assignment for more than thirty (30) days within the prior twelve (12) months. This excusal can only be applied once.
    - (b) In the event all qualified and releasable employees have been selected to serve on an operation outside their commuting area, absent a sufficient number of volunteers, employees, including those that have previously been granted an excusal, may be drafted for an involuntary temporary assignment in inverse seniority order.
    - (c) The employee must assert their excusal request at the time management solicits volunteers for the temporary assignment.
    - (d) Management will consider other requests to be excused from an ordered TDY in a fair and equitable manner.
- E.** When the Employer assigns an employee to a higher graded position, or position with known promotion potential, in addition to the procedures contained in subsections A. and B., the following will apply:
- (1) The Employer will not exercise its discretion to assign an employee to a higher graded position without promotion for periods of thirty (30) consecutive calendar days or less solely for the purpose of avoiding promoting an otherwise qualified and eligible employee who is performing the duties of the position.
  - (2) When the higher graded position has been filled through a temporary assignment without promotion, if the employee serves in the assignment for thirty one (31) consecutive calendar days, and the employee meets the qualifications and time-in-grade requirements, the Employer will effect a temporary promotion at the beginning of the pay period in which the thirty first (31<sup>st</sup>) day falls.

- (3) For temporary assignments to a higher graded position, or position with known promotion potential, of more than one hundred and twenty (120) consecutive calendar days, the procedures within Article 41: Merit Promotion will be used.

**F.** At no time may an employee noncompetitively serve in any temporary assignments to higher-graded positions, or to positions with known promotion potential, with or without promotion, or in any combination thereof, for more than one hundred and twenty (120) calendar days during any twelve (12) month period.

### **Section 5. Non-Seniority Based Temporary Assignments.**

**A.** As an exception to the seniority provisions contained in Article 13: Bid Rotation and Placement, the Employer may assign employees on a voluntary basis for up to the remainder of the BRP year to specific duties of an equally graded position where management has determined a need to place the best qualified personnel.

**B.** The following procedures will be used to fill such positions:

- (1) Management may identify specific needs within the Port.
- (2) A solicitation and announcement will include the start and end dates, duties, and qualifications necessary and will be communicated to all port employees.
- (3) When assignments are anticipated to last the complete BRP cycle, managers may solicit, announce, and make selections prior to the assignment/selection phase of BRP in order to eliminate potential disruptions (i.e., the domino effect) to the BRP process. Employees selected for Non-Seniority Based Temporary Assignments in advance of the annual/biennial BRP process will be considered to have been placed in like manner as those who are placed through completion of the BRP process.
- (4) Interested employees may volunteer by submitting a resume and their knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).
- (5) Management will select the best-qualified employees to fill the needs.

**C.** In order to ensure the integrity of the BRP process, assignments under this provision will be limited as follows:

- (1) No more than 10% of port Officers/Agriculture Specialists or 30 employees, whichever is less, per BRP year, will be permitted to fill positions solicited in 5.B. By mutual agreement, the parties at the local level may agree to a different

percentage, number of employees or the length of assignments, subject to these procedures.

- (2) Employees will only be assigned to positions and/or work units not within the Port's identified core processes. These core processes will be conveyed to the local NTEU Chapter prior to the initiation of the yearly BRP process.
  - (3) Factors which may be considered during the selection process include, but are not limited to, the amount of prior experience, demonstrated ability, and/or extent of specialized education/training related to the assignment.
- D.** The procedures set forth in Section 5 may only be modified by the mutual agreement of the parties at the national or local level until the term agreement expires and is re-negotiated pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article 53: Duration.



## **ARTICLE 39: REASSIGNMENTS**

CBP and NTEU recognize the value of retaining highly experienced and productive employees in the accomplishment of the Agency's mission. With this in mind, CBP and NTEU have agreed to establish the following mechanisms by which employees may express an interest in and/or be reassigned.

### **Section 1. Definitions.**

**A. *Reassignment:*** Unless defined otherwise, refers to the permanent change of an employee from one duty station (i.e., Port of Entry, Centers of Excellence and Expertise, city or county) to another, within the same occupational series, without promotion or change to lower grade, where OPM requires documentation by an SF-50.

### **B. *Covered employees:***

- (1) Except as supplemented below, the provisions of this Article apply to all CBP employees covered by this Agreement who are not the subject of any pending performance-based action, pending disciplinary action or pending medical evaluation (OWCP and/or FFDE) or investigation of alleged misconduct that would impede their ability to perform the full range of duties for the reassignment position.
- (2) For the purposes of this Article, pending a disciplinary, performance-based action, or medical evaluation (OWCP and/or FFDE) as used in this section should be understood as follows:
  - (a) for disciplinary or performance-based actions, pending means the period between an employee receiving a notice of a proposed action and receipt of a final decision from CBP pursuant to the applicable Articles of this Agreement; or
  - (b) for medical evaluations, pending means the period between an employee being placed on modified duty that prevents the employee from performing the full range of duties for the reassignment position and the employee being medically cleared to perform the full range of duties.
  - (c) In cases where the parties agree or are required to stay an action pending arbitration under Article 27, Section 17.B, the matter will be considered pending for the duration of the stay.

- (3) CBP will determine eligibility at the time it is making selections from a voluntary reassignment roster, approving a position exchange, or approving a hardship reassignment. Employees must maintain eligibility until the effective date of the transfer on the employee's SF-50. Any employee requesting reassignment to a position in a different occupational series must be fully qualified for such position as determined by the Agency consistent with Article 41.

**C. *Seniority*** for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists will be determined by:

- (1) For GS-1895 CBP Officers, the total time an employee has served as a GS- 1895 CBP Officer, including Canine and Enforcement, and any time served as a Customs Inspector in the heritage U.S. Customs Service or as an Immigration Inspector in the heritage Immigration and Naturalization Service, including Canine and Enforcement. For GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialists, the total time the employee has served as a GS-401 CBP Agricultural Specialist, including Canine, and any time served as a PPQ Officer, including Canine, in the heritage Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
- (2) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time an employee has served in CBP and heritage agency, regardless of position, will be used. For example, the time a current GS-1895 CBP Officer spent as a PPQ Officer at APHIS will count towards seniority in this step.
- (3) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., Official Service Computation Date for Leave (SCD LV) will be used.
- (4) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), the methodology provided by the local NTEU Chapter President for the port of entry will be used. Such methodology shall be provided prior to the bid cycle each year. Absent identification, the default methodology will be a random process determined by CBP.

Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rated basis.

**D. *Seniority*** for Import Specialists, Entry Specialists Officers, and other non-uniformed positions will be determined by:

- (1) The total time employees have served in their current series.
- (2) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (1), the total time within CBP

and legacy Agencies.

- (3) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (2), the total time in Federal government service (i.e., SCD LV) will be used.
- (4) In the event it is necessary to resolve ties after step (3), a random selection method as determined by agreement between the Agency and NTEU. Absent identification of a random selection method, the default methodology will be coin flip.

**NOTE:** Less than full-time employment will be credited for seniority purposes in accordance with the above on a pro-rata basis.

## **Section 2. Employee Requested/Voluntary Reassignments.**

**A. Coverage.** Unless otherwise identified within this article and in addition to the requirements of Section 1.B., this Section applies only to employees who have completed their entry level training requirements (pre-academy, academy and post-academy) and who are not assigned to Preclearance and overseas locations. Return procedures for Preclearance are found in Article 40 Section 7.

**B. Policies.**

- (1) The Employer will consider employee-initiated requests for reassignment in accordance with this Section to duty stations at which the employee's Office (e.g., Office of Field Operations, Office of Trade or Office of Information Technology) has employees of the same occupation and grade.
- (2) When filling a position with other than a "new hire", the Employer will consider the placement of employees pursuant to the procedures in this Section.
  - (a) A "new hire" is any applicant hired through an external source that has accepted a final offer of employment (e.g., Delegated Examining Unit, probationary, reinstatement eligible, trial period employee, etc.).
  - (b) OFO is committed to offering reassignment opportunities to CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists while balancing the need to onboard new hires. Accordingly, CBP will offer voluntary reassignments to funded vacancies that exist at the commencement of the current NROB cycle through the procedures in this Article prior to filling those funded vacancies with new-hires.

Note: The above “new hire” language refers specifically to the reassignment process for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists.

- (3) This Section does not apply to the placement of employees through the procedures contained in Article 13: Bid, Rotation and Placement.
- (4) As such reassignments are primarily for the benefit of the employee, all relocation costs associated with reassignments granted under this Section are the responsibility of the employee.
- (5) Employees may withdraw a voluntary reassignment request submitted under this Section at any time by delivering written notification to the management representative responsible for administering the applicable voluntary reassignment process described below.
- (6) In the event an employee accepts a reassignment, accepts a reassignment and subsequently declines prior to their release, or declines or fails to respond to an offer of reassignment under this Section, the employee will not be eligible for future voluntary reassignments for a period of two (2) years.
  - (a) This provision does not prohibit an employee from applying to management-initiated vacancy announcements or submitting a request for reassignment on the basis of a hardship (Subsection E) in the event the circumstances leading to the hardship develop after the voluntary reassignment was offered under this Subsection.
  - (b) This provision does not apply to position exchange offers that are accepted but does apply to position exchange offers that were accepted and subsequently declined prior to the employee’s release, or where the employee declines or fails to respond to a position exchange offer.
- (7) Where required to be provided by this Article, an employee’s resume will be used by the Employer for the purpose of reviewing the employee’s qualifications and determining what training, if any, would be required if placed.
- (8) Management will consider reassignment requests under this Section in the following priority order:
  - (a) Placements made as a result of third-party decisions (or related settlements);
  - (b) Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) eligibles;
  - (c) Re-employment Priority List (RPL) eligibles;

- (d) Grade retention eligibles;
- (e) Priority consideration eligibles;
- (f) Special consideration for re-promotion eligibles as a result of a classification decision;
- (g) Medical and educational hardships (granted in the order in which they are received);
- (h) Spousal hardships (granted in the order in which they are received);
- (i) Preclearance returnees (the exclusive procedures for returning from Preclearance are found in Article 40: Preclearance);
- (j) Voluntary reassignments to include the National Reassignment Opportunities Bulletins (NROB);
- (k) Management initiated reassignment opportunities to include the Lateral Reassignment Opportunity Bulletin (LROB);
- (l) Reassignment requests from other CBP employees who are not in the NTEU bargaining unit.

**C. Voluntary Reassignments.**

- (1) For covered CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists within the Office of Field Operations (OFO), the following NROB voluntary reassignment procedures shall apply:
  - (a) For purposes of this section, employees in the CBP Officer (Canine), CBP Officer (Enforcement), and Agriculture Specialist (Canine) occupations may identify themselves for consideration pursuant to these procedures, as a CBP Officer or Agriculture Specialist. However, upon selection, the employee will be required to relinquish their specialty, e.g., (Canine or Enforcement).

In the event a CBP Officer (Enforcement) is offered a CBP Officer position, the employee must sign a written form acknowledging their requested reassignment will result in obtaining a different retirement coverage. Such employees should contact a representative from the Employer's Benefits, Medical, and Worklife Division before making this decision.

- (b) On a biannual basis in January and August, NROB voluntary reassignment requests will be solicited from eligible employees through a nationwide posting. Upon mutual agreement, additional solicitation periods may be made consistent with this section and based on operational needs. The Agency will post valid vacancies for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists. These vacancies will be confirmed at the time compiled. Due to the fluid nature of staffing, vacancies identified may no longer be available at the time an employee makes a request for a reassignment.
- (c) In addition to the requirements of Section 2.A., eligible employees are those that have successfully performed in their current occupational series with CBP for the previous two (2) years.
- (d) Employees will be provided twenty-one (21) calendar days from the date of the solicitation to submit reassignment requests. Such requests must include a current resume, a self-certification statement of seniority, and identify up to three (3) duty stations to which the employee wishes to be reassigned.
- (e) Within ninety (90) calendar days of the date employee requests are due, the Employer will establish a roster of employees in each occupation who desire a voluntary reassignment for each duty station, in seniority order. The Employer will establish a procedure by which NTEU and the twenty (20) most senior employees who requested a voluntary reassignment for each duty station will be able to obtain their status.
- (f) Unless a formal written withdrawal is submitted, an employee request will be considered active until the roster of the current open period is archived prior to the implementation of the next open period (typically a 4-week period). Absent an exigent need for staffing, during this time, CBP will not fill management initiated lateral reassignments for bargaining unit employee positions.
- (g) Approvals of reassignment requests will be entirely dependent on vacancies at the gaining Port of Entry. When filling a vacancy at a particular duty station through NROB voluntary reassignment, the most senior qualified employee will be selected absent just cause or unless:
  - i. **Delayed EOD Offer:** The most senior employee requesting a reassignment cannot be released due to staffing at their current duty station. In which case the employee will be informed in writing that the employee cannot be immediately released but will be provided a “delayed EOD” and released within 12 months or when staffing conditions permit, whichever occurs first. During the period of the

delayed EOD, nothing precludes the Employer from selecting and placing the next employees on the NROB list who can be released.

- ii. **Skill Mismatch:** The most senior employee lacks the specialty skills and/or training and the placement of the employee would unreasonably hinder port operations at the gaining and/or losing port.
- (h) When making selections under this subsection for positions within a Port's core functions (e.g., passenger processing and cargo), the Employer has elected to provide the employee the necessary training (as determined by management) for the employee to perform the core function prior to or following the employee's placement.
  - (i) Absent exigent circumstances, an employee selected for reassignment under these procedures will notify management of their acceptance or declination within five (5) calendar days of the offer.
  - (j) In the event an employee declines, or fails to respond to an offer, in addition to the requirements of Section 2.B.(7), the employee will be removed from all voluntary reassignment rosters.
  - (k) Management initiated lateral reassignment opportunities for the CBP Officer and Agriculture Specialist occupations will be used after the procedures in Section 2.C.1 have been exhausted with releasable employees. When using a management initiated lateral reassignment opportunity, selection will be made from among qualified and releasable employees. Where management has determined that there are multiple equally qualified and releasable employees for the position, selection will be made based on seniority.
  - (l) The procedures in this Article do not apply to entry into the CBP Officer/Agriculture Specialist (Canine) or CBP Officer (Enforcement) positions.
- (2) For employees in occupations other than CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists and/or outside OFO, the following procedures shall apply:
    - (a) An employee may request a voluntary reassignment under this Section at any time by submitting a written request to the gaining Center, Port or Division Director (or designee) with a copy to their current Center Port or Division Director (or designee) [or equivalent management officials]. Such requests must include a current resume and a self-certification statement of seniority.

- (b) For employees assigned to Centers of Excellence and Expertise, requests made under this section may involve relocation from one duty station to another (either within a Center or between two Centers), or reassignment from one Center to another at the same duty location.
- (c) Management at the gaining Center or duty station will maintain, and consider active, requests received for a period of not less than one (1) year. Employees may submit a formal withdrawal during this period at any time.
- (d) The Employer, upon request, will inform the employee of the status of an active reassignment request.
- (e) When filling a vacancy at a Center or particular duty station through voluntary reassignment, absent just cause, the most senior qualified employee with an active request will be selected. If denied, the employee will be informed of the reasons for the denial upon request.
- (f) Absent exigent circumstances, an employee selected for reassignment under these procedures will notify management of their acceptance or declination within five (5) calendar days of the offer.

**D. Position Exchanges.**

- (1) The Employer will consider a request from no more than three (3) eligible employees in the same occupational classification and grade level who wish to voluntarily exchange their official post of duty at any time.

For Center employees, position exchanges may involve relocation from one physical location to another (either within a Center or between Centers), or reassignment from one Center to another at the same physical location.

- (2) Trainees attending basic training at the Field Operations Academy are permitted to engage in two-way position exchanges with another trainee with the same class start date, prior to returning to their originally assigned post of duty for post-academy training as long as they began their Field Operations Academy training within one (1) month of each other or within two (2) months of each other in the event either trainee has a Spanish language requirement. Exchanges under this paragraph must not be affected during the first 90-days of any competitive appointment per 5 C.F.R. § 330.502 - General restriction on movement after competitive appointment.
- (3) To be considered, a copy of the request must be submitted to each employee's Center Director, Port Director or Division Director (or designee) [or equivalent



- management official], and include a copy of each employees' current resume.
- (4) Management will normally respond to such requests within forty-five (45) calendar days.
  - (5) If the employees meet the qualification requirements of the position at their respective gaining duty stations or Centers, absent just cause, the requests will be granted. When evaluating exchange requests for an exchange between up to three (3) CBP Officers or up to three (3) Agriculture Specialists assigned to core functions of their respective Ports and the core functions are in different operating environments (e.g., land border port vs. airport vs. seaport), the Employer has elected to provide the employees the necessary training (as determined by management) for the employee to perform the core function prior to or following the exchange. As an exception, the Employer may deny the exchange request when an employee lacks skill and or training and the granting of the exchange would hinder port operations at the gaining or losing location.
  - (6) Nothing in this subsection will prevent the Employer, at its discretion, to grant a position exchange where any of the requesting employees do not fully meet the qualifications and training requirements of the position(s) at the gaining duty station(s). The Employer may grant an exchange wherein the employees' grades do not align if agreed to by the Office receiving the lower-graded employee.
  - (7) Effective dates for exchanges involving either two or three employees will be the same.
  - (8) If one employee involved in a two person or three-way exchange withdraws from the arrangement, the entire request will be considered void.
  - (9) Exchanges granted under this Subsection are not grievable, either by the employees involved or not involved in the exchange, or the Union.
  - (10) The Union agrees not to arbitrate situations when one or more employee(s) withdraws from a request for a two-person or three-way exchange request, thereby nullifying the request of the other one or two employees.

**E. Hardship Reassignments.**

- (1) The following procedures have been established so that employees experiencing hardships may be provided consideration for reassignment at other duty stations in an expedited manner and with greater priority than most other reassignment requests. As a result, hardship circumstances have been defined to exist in only narrow circumstances.

- (2) Only hardships impacting the employee or the employee's immediate family will be considered under this Subsection. Immediate family means those individuals identified in 41 C.F.R. § 300-3.1.
- (3) Employees covered by this Subsection include all full-time permanent employees covered by this Agreement (notwithstanding Section 2.A.), provided the circumstances leading to the hardship occurred after the employee accepted employment at the current duty station.
- (4) Qualified hardships include when an employee (or immediate family member) experiences:
  - (a) A medical condition:
    - i. That is serious in nature, and
    - ii. The condition is not treatable in the employee's current duty station (e.g., a severe condition which might be alleviated by relocation to another geographic area would not be considered a significant hardship unless the condition cannot be alleviated or controlled by recognized medical treatment in the employee's current duty station);
  - (b) A condition requiring special educational facilities where there are no equivalent facilities in the employee's current duty station; or
  - (c) Separation of an employee from their spouse when:
    - i. The spouse is employed by the Employer, private or other public sector entity, or is active duty military, at the time of the circumstances leading to the separation;
    - ii. The separation is a direct result of (one of these conditions must be met):
      - a. The employee's CBP spouse is involuntarily permanently assigned to a duty station outside the employee's current commuting area (i.e., outside a fifty (50) road-mile radius of the location where the employee normally reports for the workday); or
      - b. The employee is married to an active-duty military member who is ordered to a permanent change of duty station which is outside of the employee's current commuting area; or

- c. The employee's private or other public sector spouse, is given a directive in writing, to relocate to a location outside of the employee's commuting area, under conditions that refusal of the directive would result in the loss of employment from the same private or other public-sector employer or
    - d. The employee's CBP spouse is selected for permanent competitive promotion to a duty station outside of the employee's current commuting area.
  - iii. The separation did not exist prior to the employee's or spouse's acceptance of employment at their current duty station.
  - iv. Except in the circumstances described in subparagraph 2d above, any spouse voluntarily applying for and accepting a job in a different location after the CBP employee accepted their current duty location is not eligible for a spousal separation hardship reassignment under this Article.
  - v. Transfers will be considered for duty stations where the employee and CBP spouse are not in each other's chain of command. If this situation arises and cannot be mitigated within the same duty station, e.g. different chains of command, the next closest duty station may be considered.
- (d) Relocation based on a documented and reasonable fear that the employee is in imminent physical danger at the employee's current location (e.g., victims of domestic violence). If approved, CBP will determine the location to which the employee can be reassigned.
- (5) To be considered, an employee hardship reassignment request must contain verifiable documentation concerning the circumstances (including medical documentation if applicable) that give rise to the hardship. The Employer may request additional documentation if deemed necessary.
- (6) Prior to requesting a hardship reassignment, employees should seek to develop alternatives to relocation if applicable (e.g., securing assistance from the Employee Assistance Program, local and state social services, other counseling services, etc.). Alternatives to reassignment for accommodating hardships include Voluntary Reassignments (Subsection C), Position Exchanges (Subsection D), and applying to vacancy announcements for positions of equivalent grade.

- (7) To expedite processing, all hardship requests shall be filed with the requested Field or Division Office (or equivalent) with a copy provided to the current Field or Division Office (or equivalent) through the chain of command. Upon request, employees will be informed in writing when the request has been received. Employees will notify current and requested duty stations in the event they wish to withdraw their requests.
- (8) Requests for a hardship reassignment within the geographic area of the same Field or Division Office (or equivalent) will be processed by that Office.
- (9) Requests for a hardship reassignment between two Field or Division Offices (or equivalent) will be evaluated and decided by the requested (potential gaining) Office.
- (10) The deciding official shall review and provide the employee a written response to the request within forty-five (45) calendar days of receiving the request or supplemental information requested from the employee, whichever occurs later. The written response will indicate whether the request has been granted, and if denied, will explain in detail the reasons for the denial.
- (11) Where an employee has been found ineligible for a hardship reassignment after due consideration of any response(s) to requests for clarification, the employee may not resubmit another application for hardship reassignment for the same basis unless the employee believes there has been a change in the situation likely to alter the eligibility of the hardship reassignment request or new information or documentation that was not previously available becomes available. Appropriate supplemental documentation must be submitted for reapplication.
- (12) When a qualified hardship reassignment request that meets the criteria of this Section is approved, and a vacancy in the employee's job series exists (or at the request of the employee a vacancy in a job series that the employee is otherwise deemed qualified for exists), then the hardship reassignment will be effectuated within two (2) pay periods absent just cause (unless a later enter on duty date is requested by the employee). If the employee requests to be considered for vacancies in another job series the employee must be found qualified before CBP will determine that a vacancy in the job series exists.
- (13) When there is no vacancy the employee will be placed on a waitlist that is uniformly maintained agency-wide by CBP. Each pay period, the Employer will review and identify any new vacancies. Employees placed onto a waitlist will remain on the waitlist until a vacancy exists at the receiving location, or the circumstances that led to the hardship no longer exist.

### Section 3. Management-Directed Reassignments.

- A. The Employer retains the right to identify and direct the reassignment of any employee to any position of equivalent grade based on the needs of the Agency, including but not limited to workload fluctuations, new programs, new locations and/or the need to realign existing resources. This Section describes the procedures by which such reassignments will be made.
- B. The procedures contained in this Section will apply to management directed reassignments, including but not limited to:
  - (1) The reassignment of bargaining unit employees from unit to non-unit positions and;
  - (2) The reassignment of CBP Officer (Canine) to a CBP Officer position. As an exception, in the event a canine assigned to a specific CBP Officer (Canine) retires, expires or otherwise becomes inoperative and the Employer does not intend to provide the CBP Officer (Canine) a new canine, the Employer may elect to reassign the affected employee to a CBP Officer position at the same grade and duty station. The same is true where a CBP Officer (Canine) fails to complete and/or recertify required canine courses/academies.
    - (a) In the event a CBP Officer (Canine) is involuntarily reassigned under this provision through no fault of their own, they will be given priority consideration for any CBP Officer (Canine) position filled at their duty station for a period of not less than one (1) year from the date of the reassignment.
- C. Reassignments within a Duty Station.
  - (1) If the Employer determines that more than one (1) employee is qualified from within the work group from which a reassignment within the duty station is to be made, management will solicit volunteers from within the work group from which the selection is to be made.
  - (2) In the event:
    - (a) More qualified and releasable employees volunteer than are required, selections will be made in seniority order.
    - (b) Too few qualified and releasable employees within the work group volunteer, employees will be assigned in inverse seniority order.

**D. Directed Reassignments Outside the Duty Station.**

- (1) If the Employer determines that more than one (1) employee is qualified from within the work group from which a reassignment outside the duty station is to be made, management will solicit volunteers from within the work group from which the selection is to be made.
- (2) In the event more qualified and releasable employees volunteer than are required, selections will be made in seniority order.
- (3) In the event too few qualified and releasable employees volunteer, management may proceed with reassigning the volunteers in accordance with the provisions of this Section. In the event the Employer determines it is necessary to involuntarily reassign employees outside the duty station, the Employer will provide the Union notice and the opportunity to bargain in accordance with Article 26: Bargaining.
- (4) Costs associated with reassignments under this subsection shall be the responsibility of the Employer, and will be provided in accordance with established policy and procedures for a permanent change of station.

**Section 4.** Nothing in this Article shall preclude the Employer from reassigning an employee to a position within their duty station or commuting area for the purpose of correcting or minimizing deficiencies in the employee's performance or conduct. In such circumstances, and where there are multiple duty stations within the same commuting area, the Employer will determine whether the correction or minimization can be successfully accomplished through the reassignment of the employee to a position within the employee's current duty station prior to directing the reassignment of the employee to another duty station. In such circumstances, the Employer will consult with the local NTEU Chapter in implementing this Section.

**Section 5.** Employees selected for reassignment under this Article will be provided reasonable notice (as far in advance as practical, but normally not less than thirty (30) calendar days) of the date they are expected to report to their new duty station. However, the parties understand that conditions beyond the control of management may necessitate a brief notification period.

**Section 6.** An employee reassigned to a duty station outside of their commuting area may request and will be granted excused absence without charge to leave to enable the employee to make pre-moving and post-moving arrangements in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Section 10.C.(11) of Article 37: Leave and Excusal.

**Section 7. Information**

- A.** To assist bargaining unit employees in the 1895 and 0401 position series with making an informed decision when requesting a reassignment through the procedures in Section 2.C.1, CBP will normally post valid vacancies that are available by location two (2) weeks prior to the solicitation in 2.C.1. (this two (2) week period is known as the preview period). This information will also be provided to NTEU National.
- B.** Every January and August, OFO will provide NTEU National with the following information a list that identifies the name, current duty location, requested duty location, seniority date, type of request and status of all employees who requested and were selected for an employee requested NROB or Hardship reassignment under this Article.

## **ARTICLE 40: PRECLEARANCE OPERATIONS**

**Section 1.** This Article covers the exclusive policy and procedures by which employees will be selected for, assigned to, and returned from Preclearance locations under the jurisdiction of the Office of Field Operations (OFO).

**Section 2.** When filling positions at Preclearance locations, the Employer will utilize the same announcement and application solicitation procedures as those used for positions filled through merit promotion. Such announcements will have an agency-wide area of consideration and contain relevant information concerning the expected tour length and return policies.

### **Section 3. Assignment Duration and Return Service Requirements.**

- A.** Once the employee is selected and assigned to a Preclearance location, the employee will serve an initial tour of two (2) years, with an opportunity to extend for a second tour of two (2) years, and a final opportunity to extend for a third tour of two (2) years. As an exception to this general rule, tour duration is determined by the host country and the Department of State ("DoS"). The actual tour duration will be reflected in the vacancy announcement.
- B.** Employees are expected to comply with all host country requirements as a condition of their assignment abroad. This includes, but is not limited to, all requirements pertaining to host country admissibility, personal property, and sponsored dependents for all Preclearance locations.
- C.** Nothing in this Article is intended to prohibit the Employer from exercising its authority to curtail and/or release an employee from the employee's assignment to a Preclearance location for just cause.
- D.** In any situation where DoS or the Employer curtails an employee's assignment abroad for just cause (e.g., based upon a failure to comply with Chief of Mission (COM) requirements by the employee or Eligible Family Member (EFM)), the employee will return to their Home Port of Record (i.e., the permanent duty location the employee was assigned to at the time the employee was selected for the Preclearance assignment).
- E.** In any situation where DoS or the Employer does not approve the continuation/extension of an employee's assignment abroad for just cause, the employee will return to their Home Port of Record.
- F.** In any situation where DoS does not approve the continuation/extension of an



employee's assignment abroad for other than just cause (e.g., reduction of staff) and the Employer does not pursue discipline or adverse action the employee will receive return rights pursuant to the procedures in Section 7.

- G.** When filling positions under Section 2 of this Article, the Employer will only consider applications from employees previously assigned to a Preclearance location when they have completed a stateside return period of not less than two (2) years. The stateside return period begins on the effective date for which the employee was reassigned from the employee's last Preclearance location to the employee's stateside location. There will be no consideration for any applications received prior to the stateside return period. The minimum return period of two (2) years excludes any TDY assignments to Preclearance locations.
- H.** The Employer may delay the reporting date for any employee who is the subject of any pending performance action, disciplinary action, administrative inquiry, or investigation of alleged misconduct. The reporting date will be placed in abeyance pending the issuance of a final decision and completion of any outstanding appeals, including service of a suspension. The Employer may rescind an offer of reassignment abroad for any employee who is the subject of any performance action, disciplinary action, administrative inquiry or investigation of alleged misconduct that has been substantiated and when the underlying issue impairs the employee's ability to perform the full scope of duties, conflicts with the employee's official government duties and/or responsibilities, adversely interferes with the mission of CBP, or fails to comport with the country requirements of the duty location in which the employee is pending reassignment.
- I.** As an exception to Section 3.G, should the Employer determine it is necessary to consider employees who have not completed the stateside return period (e.g., when the Employer anticipates an announcement will not generate a sufficient pool of well-qualified candidates or when establishing new Preclearance locations), it will be annotated on the posted vacancy announcement and notice will be sent to NTEU. In these situations, employees are permitted to apply from one Preclearance location to another.
- J.** In the event the host country initiates changes impacting staffing levels at any Preclearance location, the Employer will make appropriate adjustments by returning the most senior employee(s) that volunteer and by following the procedures set forth in Section 6. If there are insufficient volunteers, the Employer will make appropriate adjustments by returning the most junior employee(s).
- K.** If the Employer elects to alter its policies regarding the assignment duration and stateside return period requirements contained in this Section, it will provide the Union notice and the opportunity to bargain in accordance with Article 26:

Bargaining.

#### **Section 4. Non-Competitive Reassignment Opportunity for Onboarding Employees.**

- A. At management's discretion, and provided that it does not impact another employee's offer or assignment to a Preclearance location, employees who have accepted an offer for a Preclearance location and are waiting in the pipeline (to enter on duty), may be afforded the opportunity to deploy to an alternate Preclearance location in lieu of their original accepted Preclearance location.
- B. The alternate Preclearance location is determined by management, it is not negotiable, and it is based on an immediate operational need to fill positions at a particular location.
- C. An employee highest on the Preclearance pipeline (which means they have waited the longest number of days since they, and all dependents, received medical clearance from the DoS) will be given the first option and right to decline.
- D. Accepting the offer for an alternate Preclearance location is completely voluntary and there are no negative repercussions should an employee decline such.
- E. An employee must respond by email to accept or decline the offer for an alternate Preclearance location within seventy-two (72) hours of the date offer email was sent. Failure to respond within this timeframe, will be considered a declination of the offer for the alternate Preclearance location. There are no exceptions.
- F. An employee who declines an offer for an alternate Preclearance location will remain in their same position within the pipeline for their current Preclearance location.
- G. An employee who accepts an offer for an alternate Preclearance location, agrees they are declining the Preclearance location for which they were originally selected. An employee who accepts the alternate Preclearance location and later declines, will be considered to have declined both offers (the original and alternate) and will need to reapply if they would like to be considered for another Preclearance position.

#### **Section 5. Preparation and Reporting Procedures.**

- A. Selected employees will be informed of all pre-deployment requirements for foreign assignments. Selected employees are required to complete the pre-deployment requirements for foreign assignments within one hundred and twenty (120) calendar days following their selection notification, absent circumstances outside the employee's control, and will receive reasonable amounts of duty time to complete

pre-deployment training and pre-deployment administrative requirements (e.g., applying for an official passport and other paperwork). An employee's failure to complete pre-deployment requirements timely or follow orders instructions regarding the pre-deployment process will result in their offer being rescinded, absent just cause.

- B.** Official reporting dates will be provided to selected employees as far in advance as practicable, but not less than sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the effective date of the reassignment.
- C.** Once an employee receives a reporting date, they will be provided one (1) opportunity to delay the effective date of the reassignment. Thereafter, if the employee is unable to report once notified of their final reporting date and the employee declines, the employee's offer for reassignment abroad will be rescinded.
- D.** Selected employees will be provided an excused absence not to exceed forty (40) hours to make relocation arrangements for departing their Home Port of Record and arriving to the Preclearance location.

**Section 6.** While assigned to a Preclearance location, employees will be considered within the area of consideration for CBP vacancy announcements with a nationwide area of consideration, as well as those CBP vacancy announcements with an area of consideration that includes the duty location the employee was assigned to at the time the employee was selected for the Preclearance assignment (i.e. Home of Port Record). If selected, an employee's travel and relocation cost reimbursement will be determined by the conditions stated on the vacancy announcement to which the employee applied.

**Section 7. Extension Request and Return Procedures.**

- A.** Employees will file requests for extension or reassignment two hundred and forty (240) days to a year prior to the planned end of a tour and a determination will be provided no later than fifteen (15) business days so that the employee has as much notice as possible of their pending return. If there are more extension requests than slots available, the more senior employee(s) will be selected to extend.
- B.** No more than one hundred and fifty (150) calendar days before the end of tour, but not less than ninety (90) calendar days prior to the end of the initial tour, as well as the conclusion of any extensions, employees are expected to formally express their intent to return to the United States, through a fully completed Notice of Intent (NOI). At the time an employee submits an NOI to return to the United States, the employee will follow the procedures in Section 7.D below. An employee may submit an NOI starting on the first day of any pay period during the one-hundred-

fifty (150) to ninety (90) days window to submit an NOI. An employee who has not made selections on their NOI by ninety (90) calendar days prior to the end of their tour will return to their Home Port of Record.

**C.** Absent just cause, including that explained in Section 3.C and 3.F., requests for extensions will be approved.

**D.** Requesting a Port and processing the NOI:

1. By the end of the second week of each Pay Period, the Agency will post a list of valid vacancies on the NOI Portal for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists. These vacancies will be confirmed at the time the list is compiled. Due to the fluid nature of staffing, vacancies identified on the list may no longer be accurate at the time an employee makes an NOI selection.
  - a. Since Mission Support personnel occupy various job series, they will not receive a list of valid vacancies and those submitting NOIs will select locations under Section D.2.
2. Eligible employees may select up to five (5) locations on their NOI from a list of all ports of entry regardless of vacancies.
3. All NOI submissions will be canvassed with each respective Field Office on the second Monday of every other Pay Period to determine valid vacancies.
4. All NOIs will be compiled and ranked in seniority order (as defined in Article 38) by the tour length for which they have served. Employees will be placed in their highest prioritized vacancy in the following order:
  - a. Seniority Order by those employees completing their 3<sup>rd</sup> preclearance tour;
  - b. Seniority Order by those employees completing their 2nd preclearance tour;
  - c. Seniority Order by those employees completing their 1st preclearance tour.
5. If an employee receives one of the ports listed in the employee's NOI, the employee will be obligated into the vacancy at that location.
6. Should an employee not be placed in one of their prioritized selections, the employee may request an Extension of Tour (if eligible for an additional tour abroad, not to exceed a total of 6 years) or be returned to their Home Port of Record.

- E.** When the Employer has a critical need to fill a vacancy at a location and cannot accommodate the time it takes for an employee to return from Preclearance, the Employer retains the flexibility to bypass the Preclearance returnee and fill that critical need through any of the methods identified in Article 39 Section 2.B(8).
- F.** Returning employees will be informed of the date to which they are expected to report to the location to which they are placed as far in advance as practicable, but not less than sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the date they are expected to report. Reporting dates will be established no later than one-hundred-twenty (120) calendar days from the end of the scheduled tour.
- G.** When making placements under this Section for positions within a Port's core functions (e.g., passenger processing and cargo), the Employer has elected to provide the employee the necessary training (as determined by management) for the employee to perform the core function prior to or following the employee's placement.
- H.** During the above process, the Employer will provide returning employees a point of contact that may be contacted regarding the status of their return request and assignment.
- I.** Returning employees will be provided up to forty (40) hours of excused absence in order to make relocation arrangements for departing their Preclearance location and arriving at their next port.
- J.** An employee returning to the United States will have their relocation orders signed by the Employer no later than sixty (60) days prior to the employee's end of tour. In the event this does not occur, the employee and/or NTEU can elevate the matter to the Mission Support Division for resolution.
- K.** The Agency will credit the employee's home leave balance to reflect any home leave that has been accrued. If an employee requires assistance with home leave balances, the employee and/or NTEU can elevate the matter through the local Mission Support Specialist(s) for resolution.

#### **Section 8. Education Departure Adjustment ("EDA") Program.**

- A.** The parties agree the EDA Program may delay an employee's departure date to allow their dependent child(ren) to continue attending school until the end of the current school year or a preferred school-established break.
- B.** Only in locations where country limitations do not allow for employees to remain

in- country for more than six (6) years (e.g., Ireland), employees in their third tour may request an early departure in the summer for education purposes of their dependent child(ren). Summer is defined as the natural school break between grades.

- C. Extension to the tour's duration is subject to the approval of the host country and the Department of State.
- D. To be eligible for the EDA Program:
  - (1) Child(ren) must meet the definition of a "child" as defined in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) 270 receiving an Education Allowance;
  - (2) Child(ren) must be enrolled in Grades K-12 or equivalent;
  - (3) Child(ren) are not home-schooled;
  - (4) Supporting documentation on child(ren)'s identified school schedule must be provided at time of EDA Program submission;
  - (5) Employee's tour may not exceed country specific tour limitations, in this Article; and
  - (6) Employee was not denied an extension and their departure is not the result of curtailment by Department of State and/or Management.
- E. **Requesting Delayed EDA.** Employees requesting to delay their departure will submit a request for an EDA, through eMAP, when they reach one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days but not later than one hundred and fifty (150) calendar days before their end of tour (EOT) and prior to submitting a notice of intent (NOI) request for stateside reassignment.
- F. **Requesting Early EDA.** Employees requesting early departure, following Section III.D above, who are in their third tour will submit a request for the EDA Program when they reach two hundred and seventy (270) calendar days but not later than two hundred and forty (240) calendar days before their end of tour. Adjusted end of tour dates will be established in summer, and no more than 180 calendar days prior to their original end of tour.
- G. **Departure Dates.** Departure dates will be established by IOAD: 1) as close as practical to the end of the current school year; 2) at the employee's preferred school-established break during the current school year; or 3) in summer for third tour early departures.

- H. Reviewing/Approving Officials.** CBP has determined that the employee's Port Director and/or the IOAD Mission Support Division will review the EDA Program request and ensure the employee's eligibility. CBP has determined that the employee's Port Director is the deciding official of the employee's EDA Program request, to include the duration of the delay or advance in compliance with Section III.D above, and the employee's adjusted EOT date.
- I. Decision Notice.** Employees will receive a decision on their EDA request no later than one-hundred-twenty (120) days prior to their EOT to ensure employees have sufficient time to participate in return procedures if necessary.
- J. Irrevocability.** Once an EDA request is approved the employee's adjusted EOT date and revised NOI eligibility window are irrevocable. However, actual departure dates will still have the flexibility established in Section 6.G.
- K. EOT Date and NOI Eligibility.** Employees who are approved an EDA will be provided an adjusted EOT date and NOI eligibility window. Employees who are approved an EDA will not submit an NOI during the timeframe of their original NOI eligibility window, but instead will follow Section 7 based on their newly established EOT date and their revised NOI eligibility window of 150 calendar days to ninety (90) calendar days before their EOT.
- L. Rotation and Return.** When an employee reaches their revised NOI eligibility window, the same extension and return procedures apply as stated in Section 7. If an employee's NOI is exhausted and they are eligible and choose to extend at post for an additional tour, the extension will be based on their original tour dates, not the EDA Program revised EOT date.
- M. Early Departure Limitations.** The EDA Program will not allow for the early departure of the IFO employee prior to their EOT, unless they are in an eligible location in their third tour; see Section III.D above.

## **Section 9. iPASS Travel Reporting.**

- A.** Employees stationed at a Preclearance location must record, in the International Personnel Accountability Service Solution (iPASS) system, travel departure and return dates for themselves and their eligible family members (EFM) to an area outside of the defined Chief of Mission (COM) area of responsibility that lasts more than one (1) day or as mandated by COM.
- B.** It is the responsibility of the employee to record travel as defined in Section 8.A. If an employee is unable to record their, or their EFM travel in iPASS, a port management official can also record in iPASS in such cases, if requested by the

employee.

- C. The reporting requirement is not required prior to requesting and/or approval of leave. However, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure travel outside the area of responsibility is recorded in iPASS prior to traveling. The reporting requirement will not be a factor in consideration of leave approval.
- D. Employees will list the name of the travelers, the location of travel, the anticipated travel dates, and contact information for the traveler in case emergency notifications are required.
- E. If employees and/or their EFMs travel changes after it is recorded in iPASS, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure iPASS is updated accordingly. A port management official can also update iPASS while the employee is in a travel status or away from the Port, and if requested by the employee.



## **ARTICLE 41: MERIT PROMOTION**

**Section 1.** The purpose of this Article is to clarify and/or supplement the procedures by which the Employer will solicit and evaluate applications from employees for bargaining unit positions subject to competition.

**Section 2.** The Employer will establish, maintain and make available to employees its Merit Promotion Plan in accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 335 and applicable provisions of this Agreement.

### **Section 3. Action Coverage.**

**A. Actions Covered.** Except for actions identified in subsection B., the Employer will utilize merit promotion procedures for all promotion actions to bargaining unit positions as well as the following:

- (1) Temporary promotions for more than 120 days (all prior service by detail to higher grade or by temporary promotion, whether competitive or noncompetitive during the preceding 12 months, is to be counted toward the 120-day limit);
- (2) Selection for details of more than 120 days to a position of higher grade or to a position with higher known promotion potential;
- (3) Selection for training which is part of an authorized training agreement, part of a promotion program, or required before an employee may be considered for a promotion as specified in 5 C.F.R. § 410.302;
- (4) Reassignment or demotion to a position with more promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (except as permitted under reduction-in-force regulations);
- (5) Transfer to a position at a higher grade or with more promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service;
- (6) Competitive promotion of employees serving in career or career-conditional appointments;
- (7) Reinstatement to a permanent or temporary position, and reinstatement including those made from reemployment priority lists, to a permanent or temporary position at a higher grade than the last grade held in a non-

temporary position in the competitive service, or to a position with higher known promotion potential than the last non-temporary competitive service position held; and

- (8) Any other action for which management determines utilization of these procedures may be appropriate or beneficial.

**B. Actions Not Covered.** These procedures do not apply to:

- (1) Conversion of a temporary promotion to permanent promotion when the temporary promotion was originally made under competitive procedures and the fact that it might lead to a permanent promotion was made known to all potential candidates through its inclusion on the announcement.
- (2) A promotion resulting from the upgrading of a position without significant change in the duties and responsibilities due to issuance of a new classification standard or the correction of an initial classification error;
- (3) A position change permitted by reduction-in-force procedures;
- (4) Promotion to the next higher grade in a career ladder position;
- (5) A promotion resulting from an employee's position being reclassified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities;
- (6) Temporary promotion of 120 days or less or a detail to a higher grade or higher promotion potential for 120 days or less;
- (7) Promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has an interchange agreement) from which an employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons;
- (8) Promotion, reassignment, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, or detail to a position having promotion potential no greater than the potential of a position the employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which OPM has an interchange agreement and did not lose because of performance or conduct reasons);
- (9) Consideration of a candidate not given proper consideration in a competitive promotion action;

- (10) Positions filled through delegated examining authority granted from OPM; and
- (11) Any other action permitted by law or government-wide regulation without competition.

#### **Section 4. Area of Consideration.**

- A.** Areas of consideration must be sufficiently broad to ensure the availability of high quality candidates, taking into account the nature and level of positions covered.
- B.** The minimum area of consideration may be limited to CBP employees within the commuting area of the position being filled. However, the area of consideration must be sufficiently broad to ensure the availability of high-quality candidates, taking into account the nature and level of the position covered. The local commuting area is the geographic area that constitutes one area for employment purposes. The local commuting area is defined as the area surrounding the duty station by which people reasonably travel back and forth from home to work. A reasonable local commuting area is considered approximately 75 miles from the duty location being advertised. An applicant's home address or duty location within approximately 75 miles will be honored for eligibility purposes.
- C.** Employees on a temporary assignment outside of the commuting area for a period of one (1) year or less will be considered within the area of consideration of their permanent place of residence or position of record.

#### **Section 5. Announcements.**

- A.** At a minimum, Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs) will include the following information, if applicable:
  - (1) Vacancy (or job opportunities) identification;
  - (2) Number of vacancies;
  - (3) Position title, series and grade (or pay rate);
  - (4) Full performance level of the job;
  - (5) Duty location(s);
  - (6) Opening and closing dates;
  - (7) Qualification requirements;
  - (8) Selective placement factor(s);
  - (9) Salary range;
  - (10) Duties of the job;
  - (11) Basis of rating (evaluation method(s) to be used);
  - (12) Area of consideration;
  - (13) Whether moving and related expenses are authorized;

- (14) Position bargaining unit eligibility (Seniority implications may apply for matters covered by the NCBA);
  - (15) Instructions on what to file and how to apply;
  - (16) Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) nondiscrimination statement;
  - (17) Reasonable accommodation statement;
  - (18) Electronic Verification statement (E-Verify)
  - (19) DHS branding statement
  - (20) National service experience language
  - (21) Benefits statement
  - (22) Link to the Common Definitions; and
  - (23) Veterans' preference information and any other special requirements.
- B.** Employees entitled to and eligible for priority consideration or placement will be referred to the selecting official before other candidates, and if possible, before a JOA is issued.
- C.** All qualification requirements and evaluation criteria must be based on a valid job analysis. To be valid, there must be a rational relationship between performance in the position being filled (or in the target position in the case of an entry position) and the requirements or criteria being used.
- D.** For those positions filled using occupational tests, specific instructions regarding testing times, locations and any other administrative information will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors considered in determining test administration may be based on such factors as applicant location, response volume, hiring needs, etc.
- E.** To increase the efficiency of this procedure when a significant number of essentially identical positions are expected to be filled over an extended period, nothing will prohibit the Employer from establishing long-term announcements, e.g., open continuous announcement or announcements with a fixed closing date, permitting the establishment of a pool of applicants from which certificates may be issued up to one year from the issuance of the first certificate. In these circumstances, JOAs must specify the intent to establish long-term use and indicate how long certificates may be used.
- F.** JOAs subject to this procedure will be posted on the internet and open for a minimum of five (5) calendar days.
- G.** The decision to pay or not to pay moving and related expenses must be made before the issuance of the JOA. As a general rule, the Employer will pay relocation expenses for employee transfers that are in the interest of the Government and are not primarily for the convenience or benefit of the employee. The decision not to pay moving and related expenses may be made if a sufficient supply of qualified

local candidates potentially exists. A statement addressing whether payment of moving and related expenses has been authorized must be included in the JOA. When authorized, payment of moving and related expenses will be provided in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations and applicable terms of this Agreement.

**H.** All JOAs can be found at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

## **Section 6. Application Procedures.**

- A.** To be considered for announced positions, employees must apply in accordance with the procedures contained and explained in the JOA.
- B.** Employees within the area of consideration who are absent for legitimate reasons, e.g., on detail, on leave, at training courses, in the military service, or serving in public international organizations or on Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments, will receive appropriate consideration for those positions to which they apply
- C.** All employee application materials must be received by the closing date of the JOA. The Employer will grant exceptions to this requirement to employees who are unable to apply to a JOA by the closing date due to unique circumstances, such as extended military service. In these limited situations, the Employer will allow an employee to apply and receive consideration after the closing date of an announcement, provided no selection has been made.
- D.** Upon request, and subject to workload requirements, employees will be permitted a reasonable amount of duty time, and the use of the Employer's equipment (i.e., computers), to perform all requirements (including developing resumes) associated with applying for positions announced under this Article. To reduce the amount of time required, employees will store electronic resumes in the automated application system so that they may be used in applying to subsequent announcements.
- E.** The Employer will establish a method for potential applicants within the stated area of consideration who need additional assistance in following the on-line application procedures (e.g., those without reasonable access to the internet) to obtain such assistance. In unusual and specific circumstances, the Employer may provide alternative methods for submitting the required information (e.g., by facsimile). In such cases, the employee must still comply with all other requirements of the announcement, including but not limited to the submission of all required application material by the announcement closing date.

## **Section 7. Evaluation Procedures for Minimally Qualified and Eligible Applicants.**

- A.** Applicants meeting basic qualification and eligibility requirements will be evaluated for positions and receive a rating based on how well they meet the job related knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) contained in the JOA.
- B.** For applicants who are evaluated based on narrative responses to the required KSAs and/or information provided in the employment application or resume, the following procedures will be used:
  - (1) The evaluation will be performed by one or more individuals familiar with the position being filled.
  - (2) The information provided by the applicant will be reviewed and compared to the required KSAs contained in the announcement using an evaluation instrument consisting of four levels for each KSA - Excellent, Good, Moderate and Barely Acceptable, and will be scored four (4), three (3), two (2) and one (1) respectively. If the information provided by the applicant shows no evidence of possessing a particular KSA or if there is insufficient information on which to base a rating, a zero (0) score will be assigned.
- C.** For applicants who are evaluated based on answers to job-related questions, scores will be assigned to each answer.
- D.** Applicant ratings will be transmuted based on a total possible score of one hundred (100) points. The minimum qualifying score will be seventy (70) points.
- E.** Only tests approved by OPM and/or the Employer, as part of a comprehensive set of assessment procedures, may be used. Without OPM approval, the Employer cannot implement a written test to determine basic eligibility (i.e., on a pass-fail basis), or as the single evaluation instrument in assessing in-service applicants.
- F.** Applicants may be evaluated based on responses to standard questions under a structured interview method. This assessment will be used in conjunction with other assessments. The results of the interview may be scored and applied to an applicant's overall rating or used on a pass/fail basis. When structured interviews are used, if one applicant within an evaluation category (e.g., best qualified) is provided the opportunity to participate in a structured interview, all employees within that evaluation category will be provided the opportunity to participate in a structured interview. All applicants will be asked the same questions in the same order.
- G.** Applicants will be considered for selection based on the rating received from the

evaluation process. The applicant's final rating is a reflection of their overall education, training and/or experience for a particular position and will determine further selection consideration. Those applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements and are determined best qualified may be referred for selection consideration.

- H.** In an effort to assist the Employer in achieving its diversity goals, a sufficient number of best-qualified applicants will be placed on the referral certificate in score order. All names within twelve (12) points of the top score, including all those with tied scores, will be referred to the selecting official, with three (3) additional applicants referred for each additional vacancy. The minimum number of referrals is three (3) and the maximum number is fifteen (15) plus all tied scores. Applicant scores will not be shown on the referral certificate.
- I.** Applicants for whom competitive procedures do not apply, a.k.a., alternative staffing candidates, will be considered and referred to the selecting official, on a separate referral certificate for selection consideration at the same time as the competitive referral certificate. Applicants subject to this referral procedure who meet the basic qualification and eligibility requirements of the position will be placed on the referral certificate in alphabetical order.

## **Section 8. Selection Procedures.**

- A.** When reviewing the applicants on the competitive certificate, the selecting official will consider current employees before considering outside applicants.
- B.** Selecting officials may interview all, some or none of the applicants referred on any certificate. Interviews may be conducted in person or by telephone or videoconference (or equivalent method).
- C.** Selecting officials may choose any applicant referred on the best-qualified list. However, in cases where fewer vacancies are filled than initially identified, selections must be made within the allowable number of referrals for each vacancy in accordance with Section 7.H. Nothing will prevent the employer from making a greater number of selections from a certificate than the number of vacancies initially identified in the announcement, provided doing so is consistent with government-wide rules and regulations.
- D.** Selecting officials may elect to make a selection, or not, from any referral certificate, and/or may select from any other appropriate source, including, but not limited to, reemployment priority lists, reinstatement, transfer, handicapped, or Veteran Recruitment Act eligible, or those within reach on an appropriate OPM certificate. In making such determinations, the Employer has an obligation to determine which

source is most likely to best meet the agency mission objectives, contribute fresh ideas and new viewpoints, and meet the Employer's affirmative action goals.

- E. Selecting officials will make selections in a timely manner. For other than long-term vacancy announcements, the Employer will establish a goal of completing the selection process within 30 days of the certificate issuance date. Except for unusual circumstances, a certificate will not be valid for more than 90 days after its issuance date.
- F. Once a candidate has been selected and accepted the position, the candidate will not receive further consideration under that JOA. Similarly, if an applicant's employment status has changed since applying for a position under a JOA which results in the applicant meeting the criteria for being a noncompetitive eligible, the employee will be considered as an alternative staffing candidate under that JOA.

## **Section 9. Information and Documentation.**

- A. A temporary record of each action taken under the Employer's merit promotion plan will be maintained for a period of at least two (2) years from the date of selection or until the action has been formally evaluated by OPM (whichever comes first). Merit promotion files that are related to EEO complaints, appeals, or grievances will be maintained in accordance with the National Archives and Records Administration, General Records Schedule for Civilian Personnel Records, provided the Employer was timely notified office of such actions prior to the end of the normal retention period. The documentation should be sufficient to allow reconstruction of the entire promotion action, including documentation on how candidates were rated and ranked.
- B. Upon request, the following information may be released to an applicant or their designee (with written authorization):
  - (1) Whether the applicant was qualified and/or referred for selection;
  - (2) If not qualified, the reasons;
  - (3) Whether the applicant was referred for selection;
  - (4) Name of the selectee;
  - (5) Cutoff score (lowest score referred); and
  - (6) Rating/scores of best-qualified candidates.



- C. Information that may not be released includes, but is not limited to confidential examining material (e.g., answer keys, rating schedules and crediting plans, rating sheets and test booklets); information that may intrude upon the privacy of other individuals; and materials that would compromise the objectivity or fairness of the examination and evaluation process.

**Section 10. Grievances.** Employees and/or the Union have the right to file a complaint relating to a promotion action taken under this Article. Such complaints will be submitted and addressed under Article 27: Grievance Procedure. While the procedures used by the Employer to identify and rank qualified candidates may be proper subjects for formal complaints and grievances, non-selection from among a group of properly ranked and certified candidates is not an appropriate basis for a formal complaint or grievance.

**Section 11. Post-Selection Actions.** Upon request by an employee referred but not selected under this procedure, the selecting official will meet with the employee for the purpose of discussing how the employee may improve their standing in the event another position is filled using this procedure in the future.

**Section 12. Career Ladder Promotions.** An employee occupying a position with established career ladder promotion potential will be promoted on the first pay period after a period of fifty-two (52) weeks, or whatever lesser period may be applicable, provided the supervisor has determined the employee has demonstrated the ability to perform at the higher grade level, all qualification and administrative requirements have been met, the employee's current rating of record is at least fully successful (or equivalent) and there is sufficient higher level work to be performed.

**Section 13. Interchange Agreement.** Within one (1) month of the effective date of this Agreement, CBP will seek an interchange agreement between CBP and OPM for all excepted service employees that allows excepted service employees to be converted into the competitive service without competition. Within one (1) month of such an agreement between CBP and OPM, NTEU will be provided a briefing.

**Section 14. Re-promotion procedures.** This link provides information on the OFO re-promotion procedures impacting NTEU represented employees.

[https://uconnect.cbpnet.cbp.dhs.gov/sites/OFO/ms/Shared%20Documents/OFO\\_RePromotion\\_Policy\\_wFAQ-SEPT\\_21\\_2015.pdf](https://uconnect.cbpnet.cbp.dhs.gov/sites/OFO/ms/Shared%20Documents/OFO_RePromotion_Policy_wFAQ-SEPT_21_2015.pdf)

## **ARTICLE 42: AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Section 1.** Recognition of employee accomplishments is an important element in effective workforce management. This Article and CBP's Employee Awards and Recognition Directive 51000-003 contains the policy and procedures for distributing awards for the bargaining unit.

### **Section 2.A Definitions.**

- (1) **Award:** [In accordance with 5 C.F.R. § 451.102] Recognition bestowed on an individual or group for a contribution made toward meeting organizational goals or improving the efficiency, effectiveness or economy of CBP, DHS, or the Federal government, or is which otherwise in the public interest.
- (2) **Monetary or Cash Award:** An award given to an individual or group that is in the form of a lump sum that does not increase the employee's rate of basic pay and is based on tangible or intangible benefits to CBP or the government.
- (3) **Non-Traditional Award:** An award in which the recognition device is not a cash payment or time-off, but rather an award of symbolic value (e.g., a letter, certificate, medal, coin, or lapel pin). Supervisors have the authority to give non-traditional awards with a cost and fair market value of up to \$100 per employee per calendar year. Any non-traditional award item, whose cost or fair market value of which exceeds \$100, must be reviewed, and approved by the Office of Finance prior to procurement. Plaques, wall commissions, ensigns, coins, and statuettes are "exceptional achievement awards" under this umbrella and are excluded from the \$100 cost and fair market value limitation of this provision.
- (4) **Performance-Based Cash Award:** An award that is linked directly to an employee's rating of record and excellence in performance. It is granted as a lump sum cash payment.
- (5) **Quality Step Increase (QSI):** A QSI is a within grade increase (or step increase) that is used to reward an employee who has sustained excellent performance. The QSI is granted in advance of the normal schedule for step increases that based on longevity and satisfactory performance, and increases the employee's rate of basic pay from one step of their grade to the next higher step of that grade.
- (6) **Rating of Record:** A written performance appraisal that reflects an employee's overall performance of assigned duties in relation to performance expectations (standards) and includes the assignment of a summary rating level.

- (7) **Special Act or On-the-Spot (OTS) Cash Award:** A monetary award given to recognize a meritorious personal effort, act, service, or other achievement accomplished within or outside assigned job responsibilities, including an act of heroism or other exemplary performance or achievement related to one's employment.
- (8) **Team or Group Award:** An award that recognizes two or more participants in a joint accomplishment or achievement.
- (9) **Time-Off Award (TOA):** An award in which time-off duty is granted to the employee without loss of pay or charge to leave for an employee's contribution or accomplishment. This type of award can be given in conjunction with other awards.

**Section 3.A.** The Agency retains the discretion to determine how much of its budget will be allocated for awards. Budget permitting, the Agency has determined that the amount of funds dedicated to a bargaining unit employee awards pool at a Port of Entry (or equivalent level) will normally be the maximum amount permitted by the Office of Personnel Management, which for fiscal year 2017 is 1.5 percent of the total annual bargaining unit salary (including base salary and locality pay). When CBP determines that it cannot provide the maximum amount, the parties will continue to rely on the procedures within this Article except that the funding for Other Awards under Section 6 of this Article will be reduced by the amount of the reduction after which, if necessary, the funding for Superior Achievement Awards under Section 4 will be reduced to achieve the required reduction.

- B.** The Agency will ensure the percentage of funds dedicated to awards for the bargaining unit (calculated in terms of total annual bargaining unit salary) at a Port of Entry (or equivalent level) will be no less than the percentage of funds dedicated to the non-bargaining unit pool (calculated in terms of total annual non-bargaining unit salary).
- C.** The Agency will ensure that no less than eighty-five (85) percent of the annual bargaining unit award funding at a Port of Entry (or equivalent level) is made available for distribution as Superior Achievement Awards under Section 5 of this Article. The remainder shall be available for distribution as Other Awards under Section 6 of this Article.
- D.** Awards that provide monetary recognition will be in the form of a lump sum payment.
- E.** Nothing in this Article prevents consideration of an accomplishment that is

recognized by a Section 6 Other Award when deciding if an employee's overall performance is eligible for a Section 5 Superior Achievement Award.

**Section 4.** No later than thirty (30) calendar days following the commencement of the first performance year in which this Article applies, the parties will publicize the procedures, appropriate forms, and time frames associated with this article to all employees. This includes the Agency conducting a formal discussion for unit employees to receive additional information and raise questions. Union representation will be allowed to attend and participate in these discussions in accordance with the official time procedures contained in Article 30: Official Time.

**Section 5.** Superior Achievement Awards (SAA). The SAA is an annual award, given at the end of the performance year to recognize an individual, group, or team's significant achievements accomplished throughout that year. At the end of each fiscal quarter, following the procedures outlined in Section 5.A, a Joint Awards Committee (JAC) will review the nominations for the awards.

**A. Joint Awards Committees.**

- (1) At the commencement of each performance year, the Port Director (or equivalent management official or designee) and the local NTEU Chapter President will establish a JAC. Such committees will be made up of three (3) representatives each from NTEU and CBP. Representatives are generally expected to serve on the JAC for the entire performance year. By mutual agreement, JAC may be established at the area port level instead of at the port level.
- (2) Employees serving as union representatives on the JAC will do so while on official time in accordance with Article 30: Official Time.
- (3) The JAC will be responsible for evaluating nominations for SAAs for bargaining unit employees and submitting recommendations for such awards to the designated management official for final approval.
- (4) The required quorum for any JAC meeting is two (2) representatives each from NTEU and CBP.
- (5) To ensure the JAC is prepared to execute its responsibilities under this Article, it will jointly review these procedures at the commencement of each meeting.
- (6) JAC deliberations concerning awards nominations and recommendations will be considered confidential by both parties. This provision, however, is not

intended to prohibit either party from presenting evidence or providing testimony regarding the conduct of a JAC in a third party proceeding (e.g., arbitration, EEO complaint or Unfair Labor Practice Complaint) where such evidence or testimony is relevant or necessary to the adjudication of the case.

- (7) For a given quarter's nomination and after the approving official has approved, modified, or rejected the JAC recommendations for the SAAs, the JAC Administrator or designated management JAC member will notify (in writing via email or letter) the supervisors of the employees who received an approved SAA recommendation for the quarter. The employee's name and reason for the award(s) approved will be shared with the supervisor. The number of shares awarded will not be shared with anyone outside of the JAC or the approving official until official notification occurs after the end of the fiscal year.
- (8) JAC members may not participate in or be present during the deliberation of an award for which they are nominated or initiated the nomination.
- (9) By mutual agreement the parties at the national level may consolidate national level JACs in whole or in part.

**B. Award Nomination Procedures.**

- (1) The Employer will establish, in collaboration with NTEU (at the national level, a standardized form to submit award nominations. As an alternative the parties may establish (at the national level for national JACs and the local level for local JACs) an electronic process for employees to submit and track award nominations. If an electronic process is implemented the following will apply.
  - (a) CBP will provide virtual training via a link on the new electronic JAC processing system prior to its implementation. Employees will have a reasonable amount of duty time to complete the training.
  - (b) The electronic nomination form used in the electronic processing of JAC nominations shall contain the same information as the paper form.
- (2) To be eligible for consideration for an award under this process, employees nominated for either individual or group/team awards must have been rated at the "Successful" level during their most recent annual proficiency rating, and the performance under consideration for recognition must have occurred during the current performance rating cycle. It is intended that nominations are relative to activities that occurred during the quarter for which solicitations are being requested. However, while the JAC is not required to do so, it has

the discretion to consider all nominations submitted at any time during the current performance rating cycle. In order to do so, the JAC must in the first quarter meeting, by mutual agreement, devise in writing, the manner in which they will consider nominations outside of the solicitation period. The JAC must then consistently apply that standard throughout each nomination period for that year. The JAC may not situationally devise a procedure after the first quarter meeting. Additionally, procedures devised by a particular JAC are valid only for the JAC that developed them.

- (3) Eligibility for a SAA will include a minimum rating level determined by the agency upon implementation of rating levels identified in Article 19: Performance Management. Nominations for awards under this process will be submitted in the following ways:
  - (a) Groups/Teams: may be nominated by agreement of the group/team's members; sponsor or supervisor of the group/team; and/or nominated by a CBP employee who uses or benefits from the group's/team's services or products.
  - (b) Individuals: may be nominated by a peer/co-worker; the employee themselves; a manager or supervisor; or by the other members of a group/team of which the individual is a member.

To ensure employee-initiated nominations have been processed and forwarded to the JAC, nominating employees may also provide a copy of submitted nominations to their Chapter President (or designee). Nothing in this provision is intended to prevent JAC consideration of an award nomination for which the Union was not provided a copy.
- (4) At the conclusion of each of the fiscal quarters, the Port Director (or equivalent management official or designee) will formally solicit nominations from employees and/or supervisors to identify award-worthy performance of a specific covered employee, group or team during that quarter, or period deemed appropriate by the JAC as established in Section 5B. (2). Nominating employees and supervisors are encouraged to confirm the accuracy and completeness of their nominations with the nominated employee.
- (5) Employees will be provided a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of the solicitation announcement to submit award nominations to the nominated employee's supervisor.
- (6) Supervisors will review each nomination form received during the solicitation

period and validate (and document on the form) the nominated employee's eligibility for an award, as well as the employee's performance of the activity identified in the nomination. The supervisor may also provide any additional information they wish the JAC to consider in the evaluation of the nomination. The failure of a supervisor to add additional information is not a reflection of the employee's performance. Completed nomination forms, including any nominations supervisors wish the JAC to consider will be submitted to the designated Joint Awards Committee members within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of the end of the solicitation period.

- (7) Within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of receipt of the award nominations, the JAC will meet for the purpose of evaluating the nomination and, using consensus decision making methods, make a written recommendation as to which nominees will receive awards under the criteria established in Section 4.C. of this Article. For the purpose of this submission, all nominees for which a majority (i.e., more than fifty (50) percent) of the committee agrees should receive an award will be forwarded as an award recommendation. Nothing in this provision prevents the JAC from requesting additional information from a nominator with consideration of the amended nomination by the JAC taking place during the next quarter's deliberations up to the start of the final quarter of the fiscal year.
- (8) When evaluating award nominations, the JAC will give deference to the supervisor's determination as to whether the employee is eligible for the award.
- (9) In accordance with applicable law, rule and regulation, employees may not receive awards under this process for the performance of union representational functions.
- (10) Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the JAC recommendations, the official with award approval authority will consider the recommendations and accept, modify or reject them. If recommendations are rejected or modified, the approving official will provide the JAC with a reasonably detailed written explanation of the decision. The JAC may request reconsideration of rejected/modified recommendations by making a written request with a justification for reconsideration within seven (7) days of the receipt of the written explanation. A response on any request for reconsideration will be provided to the JAC no later than seven (7) days following receipt of the request. Final decisions rejecting or modifying JAC recommendations may be grieved at the final step of the negotiated grievance procedure as described in Section 12.C of Article 27: Grievance Procedure. Accepted recommendations (including no award) may not be grieved.

- (11) By mutual agreement, as defined in this Agreement, the local JAC can agree on modified time frames for nomination procedures. Absent a mutual agreement, the terms in this Section will apply.

**C. Evaluation of Award Nominations.**

- (1) Absent the establishment of alternative criteria in accordance with subsection C.(2) of this Section, when the JAC determines a submitted nomination warrants the granting of an award, it will use the following table to determine the appropriate number of “shares” that will be awarded:

		<i><b>Extent of Impact</b></i>	
		<b><u>Limited:</u></b>	<b><u>Extended:</u></b>
<b><u>Value of Benefit</u></b>	<b><u>Illustrations:</u></b>	Affects the functions, mission, or personnel of one facility or field location, or an organizational element of headquarters.	Affects the functions, mission, or personnel of an entire field area or major office; or subsequently surpasses established performance standards, expectations, or goals.
<b><u>Moderate:</u></b>	An activity or achievement that surpasses established performance standards, expectations, or goals; a significant contribution to the accomplishment of the office or Agency goals; or behavior that exemplifies the Agency’s core values.	1 Share	2 Shares
<b><u>Substantial:</u></b>	A reduction in unit costs or maintenance of highly efficient operations by such direct action as minimizing waste, engaging in efficient and sustained high performance of assigned tasks, improving utilization of manpower and facilities, or revised operating procedure, or unusual skill in the application of present procedures.	3 Shares	4 Shares



- (2) Port Directors (or equivalent management officials or designees) and Chapter Presidents are authorized to modify the award criteria identified in the above table by mutual agreement. "By mutual agreement" means that the parties do so voluntarily, and does not confer or infer any right or obligation to engage in bargaining, or to submit any disagreement over a proposed variation to grievance, arbitration or any other impasse dispute procedures. Such agreements must be in writing and signed by the parties prior to the commencement of the performance year. Such agreements are binding until such time as either party provides written notice to the other of its intent to withdraw. Withdrawals will be effective at the beginning of the performance year following receipt of the notice.
- (3) An employee or team may only receive one award under this process for a particular accomplishment.
- (4) No employee with a rating of record below Successful is eligible for a performance award.

**D. Calculation and Distribution of Awards.** At the end of the performance year, the Employer will use the following procedure to determine the amount of and distribute Superior Achievement Awards:

- (1) The value of a share at a Port of Entry (or equivalent level) will be determined by dividing the bargaining unit awards pool for that Port of Entry (or equivalent level) by the total number of shares issued through the JAC process at that Port (or equivalent level).
  - (a) Employee awards at a Port of Entry (or equivalent level) will be calculated by multiplying the share value calculated in Section 4.D.(1) by the number of shares awarded to the employee through the JAC process. All employees receiving an annual SAA award will be limited to the amount for which the Director of Field Operations (or equivalent management official) is authorized to grant up to \$3500.00 as determined by the EAC, regardless of the number of shares awarded to the employee. Award pool funds not expensed through this process will be available for distribution throughout the year to bargaining unit employees under Section 5 of this Article. 1. The minimum value of an SAA in this process may not be less than \$100.00. Should an employee's award value be less than \$100.00 that award should be converted to a Special Act award for the SAA value or may be substituted with a non-traditional award such as a gift card for an amount that does not exceed \$100.

- (b) Absent circumstances beyond the control of the Employer (e.g., the agency's annual budget has not been approved), all awards issued under this process will be distributed within ninety (90) days of end of the performance cycle. In the event such circumstances occur, the Employer will notify the Union as soon as practicable.
  - (c) Concurrent with their distribution, the Employer will locally post a list of all Superior Achievement Awards to include the name, position and description of performance prompting the award.
- (2) Employees who are awarded shares for work performed under a JAC, will receive the awarded amount from that JAC regardless of whether the employee remains in that JAC for the duration of the fiscal year.
  - (3) Employees who are awarded shares for work performed while the employee was a member of the bargaining unit will receive the awarded amount regardless of whether the employee remains in the bargaining unit at the close of the fiscal year.

**Section 6.A. Other Awards.** Awards under this section are designed to permit managers to quickly recognize one-time and short-term efforts of employees or groups/teams that result in service of an exceptionally high quality or quantity. Examples of such efforts include situations where employees or groups/teams:

- (1) Produce exceptionally high quality work under tight deadlines;
- (2) Produce added or emergency assignments in addition to their regular duties;
- (3) Demonstrate exceptional courtesy or responsiveness in dealing with customers or colleagues; or
- (4) Exercise extraordinary initiative or creativity in addressing a critical need or difficult problem.

**B.** These awards may be recognized in one or a combination of the following:

- (1) Special Act Cash Award or On-the-Spot (OTS): Monetary award for satisfying the criteria in Section 2.A.7.
- (2) Time-Off Recognition: Time-Off recognition is time off work without charge to leave (Refer to 2.A.9).

(3) Non-Traditional Awards: Use the criteria found in 2.A.3.

- C. Agency managers have the discretion to grant awards under this section without conducting a formal nomination process. However, when management grants an award under this section, the awardee(s) will be notified of the management official granting the award and a brief description of the basis for the award. Furthermore, when granting a Special Act Cash Award under subsection B.(1) above, employees may request and Agency managers will consider providing the award in the form of time off under subsection B.(2) in an amount with a cost equivalent to but not more than the dollar value of the award. Agency managers will exercise their discretion to approve such requests in a fair and equitable manner.

**Section 7. Quality Step Increases (QSIs).** QSIs increase an employee's basic rate of pay from one step in the grade to the next higher step. Management will grant these increases responsibly, judiciously and in accordance with regulation and policy, with awareness of their long-term financial impact on budgets. In order to be eligible for a QSI all of the following criteria must be met:

- A. Employee receives a "successful" rating of record;
- B. Employee demonstrates performance significantly above that expected for the position as determined by the following criteria:
  - (1) Displays outstanding performance to meet organizational goals or improves the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the Government;
  - (2) Excels in all critical performance areas as documented by specific examples; and
  - (3) Exhibits timeliness in performance;
- C. Employee must not have received a QSI in last fifty-two (52) weeks; and
- D. Employee level of exceptional performance is expected to continue in the future.

**Section 8. Foreign Language Awards Program (FLAP).**

- A. FLAP incentivizes Officers and Agriculture Specialists to attain and maintain competency in a foreign language, thereby improving the efficiency of operations for the functioning of the Agency's security mission, making the United States a more welcoming place when foreign travelers find officers can communicate in their language, and helping to expedite traveler processing to reduce wait times. FLAP will be implemented in accordance with this Agreement and CBP Directive 51451-

004B, dated May 3, 2008 (“the Directive”) or a successor Directive that has been implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law.

**B. Notice.**

- (1) Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Agreement, CBP will provide all OFO employees with information on changes to FLAP.
- (2) During new employee orientation CBP will provide employees with the FLAP information. Materials will be made available as CBP will also afford the union an opportunity to meet with the new bargaining unit employees during the orientation.

**C. Testing.**

- (1) CBP will pay the cost of the initial test for any foreign language, as well as proficiency re-examinations. CBP will only pay the cost for one proficiency examination per fiscal year. Two (2) additional proficiency examinations will be paid for by CBP in a fiscal year if they are identified as a “Language of Special Interest.” Employees who do not reach the minimum proficiency rating of S2+ can apply through their chain of command for retesting the following fiscal year. An employee’s request for retest will be approved if the employee’s initial test score results in an S-2 proficiency determination. This retesting provision will be limited to one test. Once an employee’s foreign language proficiency has been determined the employee may request to be re-examined after five (5) years of the original test date at the agency’s expense.
- (2) CBP will attempt to notify the applicant of the date, place, and time of the proficiency test as far in advance as possible.
- (3) Employees reserve the right to request an appeal/review of their proficiency determination within two (2) weeks of receiving a score if the employee believes that the score is inaccurate. The employee will submit a written request through their chain of command stating their desire to have their proficiency determination reviewed.
- (4) Employees who submit a written application to their supervisor for a proficiency examination within ninety (90) days of the start of the fiscal year or within ninety (90) days of returning from the CBP Academy and through no fault of their own, are not tested prior to the conclusion of the fiscal year will be guaranteed to receive an award, if qualified, for the fiscal year in which the application for the proficiency examination was submitted. In such

instances, payment of the retroactive award will be made within ninety (90) days of Headquarters' receipt of the qualifying test score.

- (5) The Employer will incorporate the use of Voice Recognition System testing technology into its FLAP for additional languages (e.g., Dutch and Arabic) to the extent the testing technology becomes available, is validated as meeting the Employer's needs, and is cost effective. The Union may request that the Employer evaluate such technology at any time.

**D. Minimum Usage Requirements.**

- (1) The minimum usage level to receive a FLAP award is ten percent (10%) for employees at the S4 or above proficiency level and twenty percent (20%) for employees at the S2+ - S3+ proficiency level of the employees' basic work schedule starting at the commencement of the first full proficiency rating period (i.e., October 1-March 31 or April 1-September 30) following the effective date of this Agreement.
- (2) As an exception to the minimum usage requirements in Section D.1, employees that speak an identified language of special interest will only be required to use the language twice per six-month FLAP period to receive an award at one percent (1%) for S2+ proficiency, three percent (3%) for S3 or S3+ proficiency, or five percent (5%) for S4 or above proficiency. Employees who speak an identified language of special interest and meet the usage requirements of Section D.1, will receive an award based on their proficiency level consistent with the chart in Section E.3 below.
- (3) To ensure that employees are meeting the minimum usage level, employees will be required to complete a FLAP Activity Log (Appendix F) which will be reviewed during the payment application period. Once an employee logs the number of hours required to meet the minimum usage requirement, employees will no longer need to maintain the FLAP Activity Log. At the local level, the Parties may agree to an electronic database that is identical to the FLAP Activity Log.
- (4) Employees will be given duty time immediately following the foreign language interaction to annotate the foreign language interaction in the FLAP Activity Log.
- (5) Foreign language usage will occur in the international (airport and seaport) passenger processing primary and secondary; or land border primary, secondary, and commercial vehicle environment work units, or other work units identified by management during the annual BRP. Use in other work

units must be preapproved by management. Limited exceptions may apply regarding the use of specialty languages in other environments in the performance of official duties.

**E. Payment Procedures.**

- (1) Employees seeking a FLAP payment will submit their application, to include the FLAP activity log in accordance with Section 5.4.1 of the Directive.
- (2) Payment of cash awards for each fiscal year will be made no later than ninety (90) days after the close of the fiscal year in which the award was earned. All foreign language awards are subject to the availability of CBP funds. CBP will make reasonable efforts to ensure that there are sufficient monies available to fund FLAP awards.
- (3) Proficiency Ratings and Pay Scale will be as follows:

<b>Proficiency Rating</b>	<b>Percentage of Basic Pay</b>	<b>Usage Requirement</b>
<b>S2+</b>	2%	20%
<b>S3 or S3+</b>	4%	20%
<b>S4 or above</b>	5%	10%

**F. Information.** Annually, CBP will prepare a report of FLAP testing results, that will be broken down by Director Field Operations and provided to the union showing:

- (1) the number of scores within each proficiency level 0 through 5;
- (2) the number of FLAP payment applications submitted;
- (3) the number of FLAP payment approvals; and
- (4) the number of FLAP payment denials, and the reason for the denial.

## **ARTICLE 43: USE OF FORCE & FIREARMS**

**Section 1.A.** Determinations as to when, where, under what circumstances, and which employees shall be authorized or required to carry firearms and/or other weapons are reserved solely to the Employer subject to agreements negotiated with NTEU and applicable law.

**B.** The CBP Use of Force Administrative Guidelines and Procedures Handbook 4500-002B: dated January 2021 (“Handbook”) and the accompanying CBP Use of Force Policy, 4500-002A dated January 2021 sets forth the Agency’s use of force policy in addition to the terms of this Article. The Handbook and the Agreement can be found on CBPnet.

**C.** Any use of force and firearms policies or regulations issued by the Agency during the life of this Agreement that apply to bargaining unit employees, shall conform to applicable laws, regulations and the provisions of this Agreement and, in addition to any changes to the Handbook, shall be subject to the bargaining rights and procedures contained in Article 26: Bargaining. Employees will be notified of, and have access to, all negotiated agreements resulting from future use of force policy changes.

**Section 2.** CBP will provide legal support, to the extent authorized by federal law and CBP Policy, for CBP officers involved in civil or criminal actions as a result of performing duties under this policy, provided that the officer acted in good faith and with a reasonable belief in the lawfulness of the officer’s actions.

**Section 3.** No employee will be subject to conditions hazardous to the employee’s health in the course of training and qualification in the use of firearms and other weapons that are not inherent to a position requiring the carriage of a firearm.

**Section 4.** Employees have the ability to forward questions regarding Use of Force policy directly to the Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance Directorate at [LESC-FAQ@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:LESC-FAQ@cbp.dhs.gov) for a response.

**Section 5.** Authorized officers who have successfully demonstrated proficiency may continue to carry their weapons to and from their residences and may make reasonable stops between their residence and work under their credentialed authority.

**Section 6.A** The Agency will provide managers and supervisors with additional guidance that will assist them in making swift and appropriate determinations in the weapon removal process, e.g., not every violation under the Table of Offenses may prompt the removal of a firearm.

- B.** When an employee's termination is proposed, the employee's carry authority will be revoked. Section 7 does not apply to these situations.

**Section 7.A.** When temporarily or permanently revoking the authority to carry firearms pursuant to the Handbook, the following procedures will apply after revocation occurs.

- B.** It is understood that CBP retains the authority to deny, suspend, or revoke an officer's authorization to carry a firearm when there is a reasonable belief that there is a nexus between an officer's performance and/or condition and the safety of the officer, other officers, CBP operations or the public. Upon exercising this discretionary authority, CBP will issue officers a written notice within a reasonable period of time, e.g., within fourteen (14) calendar days, explaining the nexus. In cases involving alleged employee misconduct, the notice will not be issued while federal, state and/or local criminal exposure exists. In such circumstances, the notice will be provided within a reasonable period of time, e.g., within fourteen (14) calendar days of the end of such exposure. The notice will include a statement regarding the condition(s) that must be met in order for the officer's authorization to carry a firearm to be restored, e.g., submission of appropriate medical documentation or successfully demonstrating proficiency.
- C.** The notice will inform officers that they may voluntarily provide a written response offering their views on CBP's decision to remove their authorization to carry a firearm as well as the CBP official to contact in order to do so. Officers may supplement any written response with an oral response upon request to the CBP official identified in the template letter. The officer may use this opportunity to raise questions or concerns regarding the nexus explained in the notice required in Section 7A.1. The notice will inform officers that their written response must be provided within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the notice. The oral response, if requested, will be scheduled within five (5) calendar days of the submission of the written response. A union official may represent the officer at the oral response.
- D.** It is understood that officers are under no obligation to exercise their right to offer their views or information for management's consideration under provision number 2. Any statements provided by the officer, written or oral, may be used for investigatory purposes.



- E.** The Employer's final written decision on the officer's authority to carry a firearm will be made by a higher level official than the official who issued the written notice and will contain the reasons supporting the decision.
- F.** In cases involving an administrative inquiry or internal investigation, the officer will be informed no later than every eight (8) weeks, in writing, of the status of the inquiry or investigation. In cases where a written status has not been provided after eight (8) weeks, the officer may request a written status from a higher level official than the official who issued the initial firearm removal notice.
- G.** While management is under no obligation to respond to an employee's views, until an investigation is completed, should management determine at any point they have sufficient information that eliminates any nexus concerns, the authority to carry may be reinstated.
- H.** The authorized officer's nexus letter will include an area for the Agency to provide the nexus for the firearm removal.
- I.** The authorized officer's investigation status letter will include an estimated time frame for completion.
- J.** An authorized officer's firearm removal nexus letter and subsequent investigation status letter(s) will also include the statement: "A COPY OF THIS LETTER MAY, AT YOUR OPTION, BE FURNISHED TO YOUR NTEU REPRESENTATIVE."

**Section 8.A.** In the event management mitigates a proposal to terminate an employee, and/or there is no longer a nexus between the alleged conduct and the threat to the safety of the officer, other officers, CBP operations, or the public, the firearm will normally be provided back to the employee within ten (10) calendar days. An exception to this general rule occurs if CBP has a reasonable belief that returning the firearm may jeopardize the safety of employee(s), CBP operations, or the public. In these circumstances, the employee will be informed of these concerns. In these circumstances, management may consider Fitness for Duty Examination or Reassignment options.

- B.** It is understood that CBP has determined that an employee will have their firearm and credentials removed while serving any suspension.

**Section 9.** In the event an authorized officer has temporarily had their authority to carry a firearm rescinded, the officer will be assigned duties that do not require the carriage of a firearm until the officer's situation is resolved ("Restricted Duty"). During this time, the Agency will make a reasonable effort to assign these officers to duties that may provide for overtime compensation. There is no obligation to create restricted duty overtime assignments and/or provide training in an area for which the officer is not

otherwise qualified.

**Section 10.** In the event an officer can no longer demonstrate the proficiency necessary to maintain the authority to carry a firearm, the Agency will consider the employee for other positions for which the employee is qualified prior to taking any other administrative action. This provision is not intended to replace or conflict with established reasonable accommodation procedures.

**Section 11.** Absent other outstanding misconduct issues, an authorized officer who has had a domestic violence conviction (i.e., Lautenberg Amendment) expunged will be treated as if the conviction had never occurred, e.g. the authorized officer will be permitted to carry a firearm in accordance with the provisions of the Handbook.

**Section 12.** If a bargaining unit employee is to be interviewed by any representative of the Agency concerning the employee's involvement in a use of deadly force incident, the employee shall be advised of their right to an NTEU representative, pursuant to the terms of Article 22: Investigations. The interview will not be held until the authorized officer or witness(es) has had a reasonable opportunity to regain their composure and to secure NTEU representation. Witnesses may be interviewed prior to seventy-two (72) hours provided notice under Article 22 was provided. Oral reports from the involved employee(s) addressing public safety and evidence preservation following a deadly use of force incident, consistent with Chapter 3.A.5 of the Handbook, are not considered interviews for the purpose of this section.

**Section 13.** Authorized officers involved in a use of deadly force incident will be strongly encouraged to receive immediate medical attention and provided with contact information for EAP and EAP on-site Clinicians.

**Section 14.A.** In accordance with Chapter 3 Section 8 of the Use of Force Policy, the Agency has determined that while performing official duties, authorized officers who carry firearms are also required to be trained in both and carry at least one approved less-lethal device (i.e. OC spray, ECW or a CSB).

- B.** Those authorized officers in the field who have previously been certified to carry OC Spray by either CBP, the former United States Customs Services, the former Immigration and Naturalization Service or the former Border Patrol, regardless of whether or not such certification required an OC spray exposure, will be permitted to continue the carry of OC as a less-lethal use of force option.
- C.** Those authorized officers in the field who have never been previously certified to carry OC spray, and voluntarily choose to carry OC spray as a less-lethal force option, must successfully complete the OC spray exposure exercise.

- D.** All authorized officers attending basic training must successfully complete the OC spray exposure exercise during their initial certification.
- E.** Re-certification in the use of OC spray will not require an OC spray exposure.
- E.** No pregnant authorized officer will be required to undergo an OC spray exposure.
- F.** In the event a DFO requires an officer to carry OC spray, an ECW and/or baton, the exceptions above will apply.

**Section 15.A.** In accordance with the Handbook, the Agency has determined authorized officers are required to demonstrate proficiency with their authorized firearms at least twice every fiscal year, in two separate training periods. Authorized officers are also required to recertify with less-lethal devices annually. Furthermore, authorized officers will receive training throughout the year in other Use of Force areas in accordance with the local and/or HQ training requirements. Local training requirements may include: use of simulators, scenario-based training, joint training with state/local LEO counterparts, vehicle extractions, and/or active shooter training. Training requirements may also be determined by delegated officials consistent with CBP Policy and Handbook.

- B.** Up to eight (8) hours of remedial training, not to exceed two (2) hours per day, will be provided to those failing to demonstrate proficiency with a firearm.
- C.** Up to eight (8) hours of remedial training, not to exceed two (2) hours per day, will be provided to those failing to demonstrate proficiency with a less-lethal device.
- D.** Upon request, CBP will provide NTEU an annual report containing data which reflects the number of Form CA-1 “Federal Employee’s Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation” filings that involved employee injuries during firearms and intermediate force training.
- E.** CBP Officers who are incapable of performing the full scope of duties may request and be considered for a light duty assignment in accordance with the CBP Temporary Light Duty Directive 51810-009A. Other arrangements specific to nursing officers are found in the CBP Lactation Support Program Directive, 51711-004. Upon request, an employee requesting light duty status will be assigned light duties on the shift and tour of duty that the employee worked immediately prior to assuming light duty status if such duties are available. If such shift and tour being requested doesn’t have light duty work, they will be assigned to an available shift and tour where light duty is available. A light duty assignment will not automatically require an employee to surrender their weapon and/or credentials provided they are otherwise qualified to retain their carriage authority under CBP policy and this Agreement. In the event an employee is authorized to carry their

weapon while on a temporary light duty status, they will do so in accordance with applicable CBP Policy.

- F.** CBP will provide access to adequate facilities for use of force and defensive tactics training.

**Section 15.G.** Video recordings of training sessions will be retained pursuant to appropriate records retention requirements or destroyed. If recordings are retained in accordance with record retention rules, this will normally be no more than 90 days. Should the duration of record retention change during the life of this Agreement, the Agency is obligated to abide by those changes.

**Section 16.A.** In addition to qualifications and training, as well as unusual circumstances, authorized officers will be provided with sufficient materials to clean and maintain their Agency-issued or Agency-authorized firearms on duty time in accordance with established guidelines and legally implemented procedures.

- B.** Upon request by a local NTEU Chapter, CBP will consult with the Chapter concerning the cleaning and maintenance of authorized firearms.

**Section 17.** The Agency will ensure medical personnel are available (either in person or by phone) when conducting use of force training exercises, including training concerning OC spray.

**Section 18.A.** Basic first aid and Trauma Management training will be made available to Range Officers to enable them to provide emergency first aid until a more qualified medical technician is available.

- B.** CBP will engage NTEU in pre-decisional involvement over modifications to the Agency's Occupational Safety and Health Handbook, to include the issue of having a sufficient number of employees trained in first aid procedures.

**Section 19.** Nothing in this Agreement or CBP policies and regulations shall be construed as interfering with the right of an employee as a private citizen to carry a privately-owned weapon in an off-duty status in accordance with applicable state or local law.

**Section 20.A.** Firearms and Less-Lethal Instructor candidates will be selected for training through the training solicitation process in Article 32.

- B.** Firearms and Less-Lethal Instructor selections will be in accordance with the parties' Bid, Rotation and Placement Agreement which may include the use of the certification as a work unit qualification. In locations that do not consider

Firearms and/or Less-Lethal Instructors as included in a “work unit”, existing selection procedures for the collateral duty will continue to apply.

**Section 21.A.** It is important that CBP appropriately determine whether an officer should have the authority to carry a firearm and that where CBP conducts investigations that involve the revocation of that authority, they will be flagged for priority over other investigations, and conducted in an expeditious manner.

- B.** Investigations involving the revocation of firearm carriage authority will not be confined to any time frame, will not require investigations to be concluded prematurely and will not take priority over all other CBP investigations.
- C.** To increase oversight and attempt to expedite misconduct investigations, the Office of Field Operations will inform (on a quarterly basis) the CBP office that is conducting the investigation, e.g., the Office of Professional Responsibility, of those authorized officers who have had their weapon removed and are pending an administrative investigation. In return, the Office of Professional Responsibility, or applicable office, will provide the Office of Field Operations a status of the individual investigations and an estimated time frame for completion.
- D.** In the event a decision to revoke firearm carriage authority is found to be improper, in whole or in part, any remedy may include reimbursing the employee for appropriate back pay, in accordance with the provisions of law, e.g. the Back Pay Act.

**Section 22.A.** Off-duty storage for Agency-issued firearms at the discretion of armed employees, including overnight storage, shall be permitted only at facilities CBP determines currently have storage available that is adequately secure.

- B.** Where CBP determines that a facility has adequately secure storage, but the facility does not have the capacity to fully accommodate employee interest in off-duty storage, employee requests for off-duty storage of their weapons shall be granted in the following order:
- C.** Authorized officers experiencing significant hardships will be provided off- duty storage.
- D.** Remaining off-duty storage at a duty location will be open to authorized officers for discretionary use with priority granted on the basis of seniority service at the post of duty.
- E.** This language is not intended to diminish the availability of secured storage provided under current practice at individual facilities.

**F.** To ensure that new or retrofitted facilities will have adequate off-duty firearms storage (i.e., storage to accommodate at least 25 percent of armed employees), CBP will add on-site storage capability to the technical design standards. Once a new facility is scheduled for construction or an existing location is scheduled for retrofitting, CBP will inform NTEU in accordance with existing Agreements and practices.

**G.** Each gun locker will be individually keyed such that a key to one locker will not open another locker.

**Section 23.A.** If a pregnant employee authorized to carry firearms in the course of their duties wishes to perform the full range of duties envisioned in the position to which the employee is assigned, the Employer may request a medical certificate stating that the employee is physically capable of performing the full range of duties.

**B.** Employees who elect to perform the full range of duties must qualify in accordance with appropriate firearms policy.

**Section 24.** In accordance with applicable law and regulation, employees with certified disabilities who are in positions requiring the carry of a weapon may be eligible for reasonable accommodation, in accordance with applicable laws and CBP policies. Employees who believe they may be eligible for reasonable accommodation should contact an EEO Counselor and/or the Union.

**Section 25.** The parties nationally will maintain the joint-working group to address firearms-related issues.

**Section 26.** CBP will provide NTEU notice and the opportunity to bargain in the event it implements post incident alcohol testing.

## **ARTICLE 44: ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE**

The purpose of this Article is to clarify and/or supplement the Employer's policies and procedures related to attire and appearance for uniformed and non-uniformed bargaining unit employees as reflected in the negotiated National Uniform Program Handbook (*Handbook*) and related policy, as modified by this Article. The related policies are the:

- Office of Field Operations "Boonie" Hat Wear Policy, dated January 16, 2015
- Class 4 Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) Blousing Policy, dated November 9, 2015
- Duty Belt Suspension System, dated May 2, 2017
- Office of Field Operations, Class 2 Long Sleeve Policy, dated June 21, 2018
- Authorization for Wear of Class 4 Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) in All Environments, dated August 21, 2023

### **Section 1. Uniformed Employees.**

- A. The Employer will maintain and make information readily available to employees regarding its uniform program. At a minimum, such information will identify the types of employees required to wear a uniform, describe the procedures for ordering and purchasing uniform and related gear and explain the Employer's uniform wear policies and appearance standards.
- B. The Employer's uniform program, including its wear policies and personal appearance standards will be established and maintained in a manner consistent with applicable law and regulation, as well as Federal Service Impasse Panel decisions not in conflict with this Article.
- C. Uniformed employees are responsible for reporting to their first assignment in a neat, clean, and complete uniform. Uniforms must be free from tears, visible repairs or other highly visible blemishes. Only uniform items and related gear officially authorized through the Employer's uniform program are authorized for wear (including authorized optional items). An employee reporting to the employee's first assignment in a soiled, torn, unkempt or incomplete uniform may be relieved from duty.
- D. The Employer will provide uniformed employees an annual allowance to be used toward the purchase of authorized uniform items and related gear.
  - (1) For full-time CBP Officers, CBP Agriculture Specialists and Seized Property Specialists who receive an initial issuance of uniforms, the allowance provided

will be \$1600-\$2400 (as designated by Annual Uniform Allowance Schedule) and \$1100 each fiscal year thereafter.

- (2) Newly hired uniformed employees will be permitted to order Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 uniform items while at basic training at the Field Operations Academy.
    - (a) While at basic training, uniformed employees will wear the FLETC uniform or the uniform of the day as determined by the Director, Field Operations Academy.
    - (b) All uniformed employees are responsible for reporting back to their duty station with the uniformed items required for the work environment for which they will be assigned.
  - (3) For part-time CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists with regular schedules of twenty (20) hours or more per week, the allowance provided under this subsection will be in the amount of \$825 per fiscal year.
  - (4) For part-time CBP Officers and CBP Agriculture Specialists with regular schedules of less than twenty (20) hours per week, the allowance provided under this subsection will be in the amount of \$495 per fiscal year.
  - (5) For other authorized uniform positions, including CBP Technicians, the allowance provided under this subsection will be as follows:
    - (a) For full-time employees, \$1100 the first fiscal year the employee is required to wear a uniform and \$880 each fiscal year thereafter.
    - (b) For part-time employees with regular work schedules of twenty (20) hours or more per week, \$825 per fiscal year.
    - (c) For part-time employees with regular work schedules of less than twenty (20) hours per week, seasonal employees and cooperative education/intern students, \$495 per fiscal year.
- E.** The Employer will maintain a mechanism by which employee requests for waivers from the Employer's uniform wear policy and personal appearance standards for medical or religious reasons will be reviewed and addressed. Such requests and resulting responses will be in writing. During the period an employee request submitted under this subsection is pending review and response by the Employer, the employee will not be required to conform to the specific policy or standard for which the waiver was requested. The Employer will approve waivers in a fair and impartial manner.



**F. Uniform Work groups**

- (1) The parties will establish a six-person work group made up of equal numbers of Union and Agency representatives drawn from diverse work areas to conduct studies and make recommendations to the parties at the national level on cost effective methods of implementing uniform upgrades/conversion and other uniform issues as they arise. Either party may request to bargain modifications to the Handbook based on the deliberations of the work group.
- (2) The workgroup will meet twice a year and will attempt to operate by consensus. At least one of the meetings will be face-to-face. NTEU representatives will participate in an official time status. CBP will pay the travel and per diem expenses of NTEU's representatives.

**G.** In the event the Employer exercises its right to change, modify, amend, or alter its uniform program in a manner that affects bargaining unit employees, it will provide notice and the opportunity to bargain over such changes in accordance with law and Article 26: Bargaining.

**H.** When the Employer becomes aware that an employee, as a result of the performance of official duties, has been subjected to threats, harassment, or other conduct leading to a reasonable fear on the part of the employee for the employee's safety (including the safety of the employee's family), the Employer will:

- (1) Promptly discuss the matter with the uniformed employee and authorize the use of a pseudonym for a period of not less than one hundred and twenty (120) days while the matter is being reviewed. At the end of this period, the Employer may extend the authorization for the use of the pseudonym in sixty (60) day increments pending the outcome of the review.
- (2) Upon request and subject to applicable state law, rules and regulations, the Employer will provide the employee a letter supportive of any employee's request to the employee's state Department of Motor Vehicles for personal address confidentiality.

**I.** Uniformed employees who perform the majority of their work day in a Class 3 environment and a minority in a Class 2 environment will be permitted to wear either the Class 3 or the Class 2 uniform. On these occasions, the Class 3 uniform must be neat, clean, and free of anything more than nominal wrinkles/blemishes.

- J.** In addition to the DBSS Tactical Vest Duty Belt Hanger, authorized under the Duty Belt Suspension System Policy, employees are authorized to use suspension systems that are similar to the authorized model in style and color.
- K.** Uniformed employees will be permitted to wear suspenders as long as they are only visible where it is attached to the duty belt.
- L.** Outer protective vest may include an insignia identifying the officer as: "POLICE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION." This does not apply to officers stationed at foreign locations. Officers at foreign locations will display the following insignia: "CBP FIELD OPERATIONS FEDERAL OFFICER."
- M.** When management determines an employee is not in compliance with the Personal Appearance Standards (PAS) the employee will be required to take immediate action to come into compliance. If management does not permit the employee to come into compliance by the next work shift, and instead sends the employee home, the employee will be put in administrative leave status for the period of time to correct the infraction. Absent the ability to return to work within a reasonable amount of time, the employee will remain on excused absence.
  - (1) Management retains the right to conduct uniform inspections of on-duty personnel quarterly and/or for special events/occasions.
  - (2) Except for employees in Basic Training, in exercising this right, management will provide employees with as much notice as practicable, normally two (2) business days if feasible, and give serious consideration to the employees' working environment (e.g., land border operations).

## **Section 2. National Uniform Program Handbook.**

The National Uniform Program Handbook will be modified to reflect the following:

- A.** Employees will be neat, clean and professional in personal attire and appearance at all times while on duty as modified by the negotiated Personal Appearance Standards-Quick Reference Matrix (Appendix E). Any other national or local grooming standards to the contrary are null and void.
- B.** Uniformed employees are authorized to wear outerwear indoors with all classes of uniforms, except with the Class 1 Ceremonial uniform. The only outerwear items not authorized for wear indoors (with exceptions to when employees are transitioning from indoors to outdoors and vice versa) are the raincoat and extreme cold weather parka.

- C. K9 pins may be worn on the Class 2, 3, or 4 uniform.
- D. Any other changes required by the parties' Agreement in this Article.

**Section 3. Non-uniformed Employees.**

- A. Non-uniformed employees will maintain a professional appearance, consistent with norms prevailing in similarly situated jobs in the local business community. Employees will be attired in a manner appropriate for their position and the duties being performed, such as office duty, court duty, field duty, rough duty or other assignments.
- B. Attire and/or personal appearances that create a real or potential health or safety hazard, interfere or are likely to interfere with the accomplishment of the Agency's mission by reducing an employee's ability to effectively deal or interact with either the public, fellow employees, governmental agencies or other organizational entities are prohibited.
- C. A weekly business-casual dress day, consistent with subsections A. and B., will continue to be extended to all non-uniformed employees.
  - (1) When required to perform work in rough duty situations, the Employer will provide non-uniformed employees with the necessary protective clothing. In such cases, the Employer will make a sufficient number of garments available for this purpose, in a range of sizes. Maintenance costs for protective clothing owned by the Employer will be paid for by the Employer. Maintenance costs for protective clothing owned by the employee will be paid for by the employee.
  - (2) Upon request, employees assigned duties on a regular or semi-regular basis that are traditionally performed by uniformed employees, e.g. import specialists performing cargo examinations, will be provided individual uniform items to protect their clothing and persons on an as-needed basis.
- D. The Employer will permit non-uniformed employees who serve as union officials to wear a NTEU pin or identification tag on their business attire, to be designed and paid for by the Union and subject to Agency review and approval of the design.
- E. OIT Field Technology Officers are allowed to wear shorts. The parties at the local level will mutually agree on the styles that may be worn, and under what conditions (e.g., office standards, OSHA standards).

## **ARTICLE 45: DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

**Section 1.** This Article applies to bargaining unit employees who have completed their probationary or trial period.

**Section 2.** A disciplinary action for purposes of this Article is defined as a written reprimand or a suspension from duty and pay of fourteen (14) calendar days or less.

**Section 3.** Disciplinary actions taken against an employee will be for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the service. Discipline will be taken in a manner that is fair and impartial, and timely (i.e., so as not to create an unreasonable delay that materially prejudices the employee).

**Section 4.** Disciplinary penalties will be imposed to correct behavior, teach the employee that certain actions are unacceptable, and to articulate the expected high standards of conduct for CBP employees. As such, discipline imposed under this Article will be taken with a progressive or corrective (rather than punitive) approach and will give appropriate consideration to the criteria contained in Appendix D: Douglas Factors.

**Section 5.** Procedures for effecting disciplinary actions are as follows:

**A. Letters of Reprimand:** A letter of reprimand will state the reason(s) for its issuance and inform the employee of the right to grieve under the contractual grievance procedures. A letter of reprimand will remain in the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF) for a period of eighteen (18) months, unless management exercises its discretion to remove it earlier. In the event the Employer exercises this discretion (either independently or upon request by the employee or Union) it will inform the employee and designated Union representative.

**B. Suspensions of Fourteen (14) Days or Less:**

- (1) The employee will be given fifteen (15) calendar days advance written notice stating the specific reason(s) for the proposed suspension. With the notice, the employee will be provided to the extent such information exists and is related to the action, a copy of those portions of all written documents and recordings which contain information or evidence relied upon by the Employer as the basis for the action, those portions of written documents and recordings that are favorable to the employee, and the investigative report. In addition, in the event the Employer reviewed video or audio surveillance recordings in proposing the action, such recordings will be made available for review by the employee, and portions provided upon request.

- (2) The employee will be given fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the notice of suspension and supporting material to present an oral and/or written reply to the proposed suspension. The employee will have the right to be represented by the Union, or by an attorney or other representative of the employee's own choosing in connection with the oral and/or written reply. Extensions of the reply period may be made by mutual agreement of the parties. All extensions granted will be confirmed in writing or electronic mail.

**(a) Oral Replies:**

1. Absent just cause, any request for an oral reply must be made within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the notice of suspension.
2. Upon request by either party, oral replies will be presented in person. By mutual agreement, oral replies may be provided by telephone or other technological means (including video teleconferencing). In the event an oral reply is held in-person the deciding official (or designee) will be physically present.
3. Oral replies will generally be heard at or near the employee's duty location, and CBP will provide time and reimburse the employee and the employee's designated local NTEU Chapter union representative to travel to and from the oral reply location.
4. In the event management elects to hold the oral reply at a location outside the employee's duty location, CBP will be responsible for all travel and per diem costs, as well as time for the employee and the employee's designated local NTEU Chapter Union representative to travel to and from the oral reply location.
5. To the maximum extent possible, NTEU will make a reasonable effort to designate a representative at or near the employee's duty location to participate in the oral reply. In the event NTEU elects to designate a representative outside of the geographical jurisdiction of the employee's NTEU Chapter, NTEU will be responsible for the travel and per diem expenses for its representative to attend the oral reply.
6. In the event the employee chooses anyone other than a NTEU representative, the local NTEU Chapter will be invited to the oral reply merely to observe.

7. CBP will provide a summary, audio recording, video recording, or transcript of any oral reply made to the affected employee and/or the employee's designated representative prior to the time a final decision is made.
  - i. The employee and representative will be given a reasonable period, based on the length of the summary, audio recording or transcript, to identify and submit corrections they feel are appropriate. The audio recording, summary or transcript, including all submitted corrections will be provided to the deciding official before the final decision is made.
  - ii. When CBP provides a video recording of any oral reply, where the video recording system has the capability to automatically generate a corresponding written transcript (e.g., Microsoft Teams Recordings), the employer shall provide an unedited automatically generated written transcript in .pdf format, upon request. Such requests must be made at start of the oral reply to ensure the availability of an automatically generated written transcript. The employee and representative will be given a reasonable period, to provide a written submission to clarify statements captured on the video recording. The video recording, including clarifications submitted in writing will be provided to the deciding official before the final decision is made. The Parties acknowledge that automatically generated transcripts may be unreliable, and any questions can be remedied by viewing the video.
- (b) **Written Replies:** Written replies must be received by the designated official prior to the end of the fourteen (14) calendar day reply period.
- (3) After receipt of the written and/or oral reply, and any corrections to the summary or transcript submitted by the employee or representative, the Agency will issue a final decision. In the event no written or oral reply is provided, the decision will be issued after the end of the fifteen (15) calendar day notice period. The final decision will advise the employee of the specific reason(s) for the decision and of the right to grieve the action under the negotiated grievance procedure.
- (4) In cases where a suspension is proposed for reasons of off-duty misconduct, the Agency's written notification provided for above will also contain a statement describing the nexus between the off-duty misconduct and the efficiency of the service.

**Section 6.** In cases where a suspension of fourteen (14) days or less is proposed (for purposes other than an emergency suspension related to an adverse action) and it is the first instance of a proposed suspension for misconduct by the employee, the employee, the Union and the deciding official may agree that alternative remediation in lieu of suspension (or part of it) is appropriate.

- A.** The alternative remediation covered by the provisions of this Article include, but are not necessarily limited to, referrals to the Employee Assistance Program, management designated training, changes in assigned duties, disqualification for a particular assignment, community service, leave without pay, suspension abeyance, donation of annual leave to a leave transfer program, a combination of any of the foregoing and divestment by the employee of any conflict of interest.
- B.** After receipt of a letter proposing a suspension of fourteen (14) days or less, either party may request a meeting to discuss alternative remediation. Any meeting will be attended by the employee, a union and management representative, and the deciding official (or designee). The deciding official (or designee) must attend in person if in the commuting area. Otherwise, the deciding official can participate by telephone. An equal number of additional Agency and Union representatives may also attend with the intent to limit the number of attendees to those necessary to make a decision. By mutual agreement, this meeting may take place in person, by telephone or other technological means (including video conferencing) and may occur before or during presentation of the oral reply.
- C.** In the event a meeting to discuss alternative remediation is not requested as noted in Subsection B, in order to promote awareness and use of alternative remediation, the employee (and the employee's representative) and the management official receiving the oral reply in Section 5.B.(2)(a) above will discuss whether alternative remediation is appropriate. This discussion will occur prior to the presentation of the oral reply.
- D.** Employees shall not be required to admit misconduct until alternative remediation is mutually agreed to by the employee and/or representative and the deciding official. If agreement is reached, alternative remediation will be implemented as described in subsection E., below. If no agreement is reached, no inference of misconduct can be drawn from the request for an alternative remediation meeting. Further, no part of the discussions, deliberations, offers or recommendations generated at any step of the alternative remediation process will be used in any way by either party.
- E.** All such alternative remediation shall be documented in a written format that contains the following:

- (1) An accurate and full description of the employee's misconduct;
- (2) The employee's admission of having engaged in the misconduct;
- (3) The employee's promise to correct the inappropriate behavior;
- (4) Descriptions of the specific suspension that would have been called for and the specific alternative remediation;
- (5) Acknowledgment that the letter will be retained by the Employer for a period not to exceed two (2) years to support possible future remediation based on new acts of misconduct committed by the employee during that period;
- (6) The specific remedial action that will be imposed if the employee fails to comply with the terms of the alternative remediation letter (remedial action may be less than that originally proposed);
- (7) A waiver of the employee's appeal and/or dispute resolution rights;
- (8) A statement that the agreement was voluntarily entered into by the employee, the Union and the Employer; and
- (9) Signatures of the employee, the deciding official, and the Union and management representatives.

**F.** Actions taken based on the Employer's allegation of non-compliance with an alternative remediation letter may be grieved under the negotiated grievance procedure.

**Section 7.A.** Suspensions taken under this Article will be served on consecutive days following the commencement of the suspension. To the maximum extent possible, effective dates for suspension of ten (10) to fourteen (14) days will be set so that the suspension is served across two adjoining pay periods, and the suspension does not cover more than five (5) regular duty days in either pay period.

**B.** Employees serving a suspension who are on an AWS will have their schedules changed to straight eight-hour shifts for the pay period(s) in which their suspension is served.

**C.** When making these schedule changes Management will evaluate the impact on the employee's work unit. If there is an impact, the employee will be temporarily assigned to another work unit for the pay period(s) in which the suspension is being served.



**Section 8.** The Agency will, after a bargaining unit employee has designated the Union as the employee's representative in a proposed disciplinary action, simultaneously serve a copy of the final decision letter on the employee and the designated Union representative. The preferred method of simultaneous service will be in person but may be accomplished by email. If the Union has not advised the Agency of a specifically named Union representative, the Agency will serve the corresponding Chapter president representing the Chapter where the employee made the Union designation.

**Section 9. Information.**

In addition to fulfilling requests under 5 U.S.C. § 7114(b)(4), within the first week of each quarter of each Fiscal Year, CBP will provide NTEU National with a report that provides the following information for bargaining unit employees only:

- A.** The case number, series, grade, position title, duty location for employees who were subject to a disciplinary action during the preceding quarter of the Fiscal Year.
- B.** For all employees identified in subsection 9.A, the list will also identify:
  - (1) the proposed disciplinary action;
  - (2) the charge(s) for which the proposed disciplinary action is based;
  - (3) the final decision imposed by CBP (if applicable); and
  - (4) the disposition of the disciplinary action.
- C.** Information provided by the Employer pursuant to this Section need not be provided again to any Union Chapter, office, or representative pursuant to any statutory or contractual request. Any request for information made based on the information found in this report are subject to the statutory 7114(b)(4) requirements. Initial requests will normally be limited to the proposal and decision letters (including any settlement agreement) for five (5) cases with personally identifiable information redacted, as appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 46: ADVERSE ACTIONS**

**Section 1.** This Article applies to employees who have completed their probationary or trial period.

**Section 2.** An adverse action for purposes of this Article is defined as a removal, suspension from duty and pay for more than fourteen (14) calendar days (including an indefinite suspension), reduction in grade, reduction in pay, or furlough of thirty (30) calendar days or less, unless excluded by law or government-wide regulation.

**Section 3.** Adverse actions taken against an employee will be for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the service. Adverse actions will be taken in a manner that is fair and impartial, and timely (i.e., so as not to create an unreasonable delay that materially prejudices the employee).

**Section 4.** Adverse action penalties will be imposed to correct behavior, teach the employee that certain actions are unacceptable, and to articulate the expected high standards of conduct for CBP employees. As such, adverse actions imposed under this Article shall generally be progressive in nature, and will give appropriate consideration to the criteria contained in Appendix D: Douglas Factors.

**Section 5.** The procedures for effecting adverse actions are as follows:

- A.** The employee will be given thirty (30) calendar days advance written notice, stating the specific reason(s) for the proposed action. Consistent with 5 C.F.R. § 752.404(d), the thirty (30) calendar days advance written notice may be reduced for employees when there is a reasonable cause to believe the employee has committed a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed. With the notice, the employee will be provided, to the extent such information exists and is related to the action, a copy of those portions of all written documents and recordings, which contain information or evidence relied upon by the Employer as the basis for the action, those portions of written documents and recordings that are favorable to the employee, and the investigative report. In addition, in the event the Employer reviewed video or audio surveillance recordings in proposing the action, such recordings will be made available for review by the employee, and portions provided upon request.
- B.** The employee will be given fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the notice and supporting material to present an oral and/or written reply to the proposed action. When there is a reasonable cause to believe the employee has committed a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed, the employee will be given seven (7) calendar days from receipt of the notice and supporting material to

request an oral reply and/or submit a written reply to the proposed action. The employee will have the right to be represented by the Union, or by an attorney or other representative of the employee's own choosing in connection with the oral and/or written reply. Extensions of the reply period may be made by mutual agreement of the parties. All extensions granted will be confirmed in writing or electronic mail.

**(1) Oral Replies:**

- (a) Absent just cause, any request for an oral reply must be made within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the notice of proposed action.
- (b) Upon request by either party, oral replies will be presented in person. By mutual agreement, oral replies may be provided by telephone or other technological means (including video conferencing). In the event an oral reply is held in-person the deciding official (or designee) will be physically present.
- (c) Oral replies will generally be heard at or near the employee's duty location, and CBP will provide time and reimburse the employee and the employee's Union representative to travel to and from the oral reply location.
- (d) In the event management elects to hold the oral reply at a location outside the employee's duty location, CBP will be responsible for all travel and per diem costs, as well as time for the employee and the employee's Union representative to travel to and from the oral reply location.
- (e) To the maximum extent possible, NTEU will make a reasonable effort to designate a representative at or near the employee's work location to participate in oral replies. In the event NTEU elects to designate a representative outside of the geographical jurisdiction of the employee's NTEU Chapter, NTEU will be responsible for the travel and per diem expenses for its representative to attend the oral reply.
- (f) In the event the employee chooses anyone other than an NTEU representative, the local NTEU Chapter will be invited to the oral reply merely to observe.
- (g) CBP will provide a transcript of any oral reply made to the affected employee and/or the employee's designated representative prior to the time a final decision is made. The employee and representative will be given a reasonable period, based on the length of the transcript, to identify and submit corrections they feel are appropriate. The transcript, including all submitted

corrections will be provided to the deciding official before the final decision is made.

- (2) **Written Replies:** Written replies must be received by the designated official (or designee) prior to the end of the fourteen (14) calendar day reply period.

C. After receipt of the written and/or oral reply, and any corrections to the transcript submitted by the employee or representative, the Employer will issue a final decision. In the event no written or oral reply is provided, the decision will be issued after the end of the thirty (30) calendar day notice period. The final decision will advise the employee of the specific reasons(s) for the decision and of the right to grieve the action under the negotiated grievance procedure or appeal the action to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), but not both.

- (1) An employee who elects to appeal an action to the MSPB may be represented by the Union, an attorney, or another representative of the employee's choosing.
- (2) An employee who elects to appeal an action through Article 27: Grievance Procedure may be represented only by the union. If the union appeals the action to arbitration, the employee may be represented only by the union.

D. In cases where an action is proposed for reasons of off-duty misconduct, the Agency's written notification provided for above will also contain a statement describing the nexus between the off-duty misconduct and the efficiency of the service.

**Section 6.A.** Suspensions taken under this Article will be served on consecutive days following the commencement of the suspension. To the maximum extent possible, effective dates will be set so that the suspension is served across two (2) adjoining pay periods.

- B. Employees serving a suspension who are on an AWS will have their schedules changed to straight eight-hour shifts for the pay period(s) in which their suspension is served.
- C. When making these schedule changes Management will evaluate the impact on the employee's work unit. If there is an impact, the employee will be temporarily assigned to another work unit for the pay period(s) in which the suspension is being served.

**Section 7.** The Agency will, after a bargaining unit employee has designated the Union as the employee's representative in a proposed adverse action, simultaneously serve a copy

of the final decision letter on the employee and the designated Union representative. The preferred method of simultaneous service will be in person but may be accomplished by email. If the Union has not advised the Agency of a specifically named Union representative, the Agency will serve the corresponding Chapter President representing the Chapter where the employee made the Union designation.

### **Section 8. Information.**

In addition to fulfilling requests under 5 U.S.C. § 7114(b)(4), within the first week of each quarter of each Fiscal Year, CBP will provide NTEU National with a report that provides the following information for bargaining unit employees only:

- A.** The case number, series, grade, position title, and duty location for employees who were subject to an adverse action during the preceding quarter of the Fiscal Year.
- B.** For all employees identified in subsection 9.A, the list will also identify:
  - (1) the proposed adverse action;
  - (2) the charge(s) for which the proposed disciplinary action is based;
  - (3) the final decision imposed by CBP (if applicable); and
  - (4) the disposition of the adverse action.
- C.** Information provided by the Employer pursuant to this Section need not be provided again to any Union Chapter, office, or representative pursuant to any statutory or contractual request. Any request for information made based on the information found in this report are subject to the statutory 7114(b)(4) requirements. Initial requests will normally be limited to the proposal and decision letters (including any settlement agreement) for five (5) cases with personally identifiable information redacted, as appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 47: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**Section 1.A.** The Agency will provide equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons and will prohibit discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual stereotyping), national origin, age (40 years old or older), disability (physical and/or mental), genetic information, and/or reprisal consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations except where required by statute or pursuant to bona fide occupational qualification.

**B.** The Union agrees that, in carrying out its representational activities, the Union will not engage in any discrimination against any employee because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual stereotyping), national origin, age (40 years old or older), disability (physical and/or mental), genetic information, and/or reprisal consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

**C.** The Agency, in the employment context, and the Union, in carrying out its representational activities, as applicable, agree not to discriminate against any employee because of sexual orientation or status as a parent consistent with applicable Executive Orders.

**Section 2.** The Union recognizes that the development of diversity/inclusion, civil rights and civil liberties programs, including equal employment opportunity programs, are management functions for which management is fully responsible. Employees of the bargaining unit are encouraged to participate in the various programs, including Special Emphasis Program Committees formerly known as CBP Diversity and Inclusion Program Committees.

**Section 3.** Where the development and implementation of diversity/inclusion plans and programs involve changes in personnel policies, practices or working conditions, the Agency will fulfill its obligation to bargain impact and implementation with the Union under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 and Article 26: Bargaining.

**Section 4.A.** Upon the request of either party (Director, Field Operations for the Agency, Local Chapter President for the Union), an EEO and Diversity Advisory Committee will be established in that Field Office to maintain effective communications between management and employees.

- (1) The parties will determine an appropriate number of representatives to serve on the committee, to be comprised of an equal number of members designated by the union and by the Agency.

- (2) Ground rules and operating procedures, including Privacy Act considerations, for each of the committees will be determined locally by its members initially and reviewed on an annual basis. The committee will document in writing the agreed upon ground rules and procedures.
- (3) EEO and Diversity committees will meet during duty hours and in duty status.
- (4) An EEO and Diversity committee's actions will not relieve management of its bargaining obligations, however a properly run committee should make that process more efficient.

**B. The roles and responsibilities of the committee typically include:**

- (1) Identifying and bringing to the Agency's attention any trends, problems, issues, or circumstances of an EEO nature.
- (2) Focusing the Agency's attention on personnel management practice or problems of an EEO nature that are producing or could produce dissension and dissatisfaction among employees such as merit promotion procedure, selection for training and distribution of awards.
- (3) Promoting and communicating the efforts of the Agency to achieve and maintain an effective EEO and diversity program; and
- (4) Acting as a forum for an exchange of ideas and actions on matters or concerns of an EEO or diversity nature.

**C. The Committees shall not:**

- (1) Be used as a channel for receiving, reviewing, or considering individual or class EEO complaints;
- (2) Involve members engaging in the conduct of investigations or the processing of formal or informal EEO complaints.
- (3) Engage in or otherwise assume the role reserved to exclusively recognized labor organizations.

**Section 5.A. Special Emphasis Committees.** Upon the request of either party (Director, Field Operations for the Agency, Local Chapter President for the Union), an EEO Advisory Committee will be established in the Field Office to promote equal opportunity to minorities, women, and people with disabilities in all areas of employment. The term, "Special Emphasis Programs," refers specifically to employment related programs which focus special attention on groups that are underrepresented in a specific occupational

category or grade level in the work force.

- (1) The parties will determine an appropriate number of representatives to serve on the committee, to be comprised of an equal number of members designated by the union and by the Agency.
- (2) Ground rules and operating procedures, including Privacy Act considerations, for each of the committees will be determined locally by its members initially and reviewed on an annual basis. The committee will document in writing the agreed upon ground rules and procedures.
- (3) Special Emphasis Committees will meet during duty hours and in duty status.
- (4) A Special Emphasis Committee's actions will not relieve management of its bargaining obligations, however a properly run committee should make that process more efficient.

**B.** The roles and responsibilities of the committee typically include:

- (1) Identifying and bringing to the Agency's attention any trends, problems, issues, or circumstances of an EEO nature.
- (2) Focusing the Agency's attention on personnel management practice or problems of an EEO nature that are producing or could produce dissension and dissatisfaction among employees such as merit promotion procedure, selection for training and distribution of awards.
- (3) Promoting and communicating the efforts of the Agency to achieve and maintain an effective EEO and Diversity program; and
- (4) Acting as a forum for an exchange of ideas and actions on matters or concerns of an EEO or diversity nature.

**Section 6.** Information Sharing.

- A.** The Agency will make its Affirmative Employment Plans and such other reports to include the MD-715 report, concerning bargaining unit employees that the Agency is required to provide to the EEOC, available to the Union.
- B.** The Agency will consider any written proposal furnished by the Union for use in updating EEO plans of action.

**Section 7.A.** In the event the Agency solicits employees to serve as collateral duty



mediators or any other position related to EEO in a detail or collateral duty capacity, the Agency will recruit and attempt to assure a fair and proportionate representation of those selected to be in the bargaining unit.

- B.** All duties, training, and activities related to the duties or training will be performed during regular hours and compensated at the appropriate rate.
- C.** The Agency will provide training to all employees selected on the skills needed to perform the EEO related detail or collateral duty.

**Section 8.A.** An employee may file a complaint with either the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Office, in accordance with the EEO regulations (26 C.F.R. 1614), or as a grievance, in accordance with the negotiated grievance procedures outlined in this Agreement in Article 27.

- B.** A complaint filed as a grievance may address issues other than discrimination and related matters and such matters will be addressed accordingly through the negotiated grievance procedure and arbitration. The EEO statutory process is exclusively for EEO-specific issues. An employee who elects the EEO statutory process may not add non-EEO subject matters.
- C.** Consistent with EEOC Management Directive (MD) 110, when an employee makes contact with an EEO Counselor regarding a potential EEO allegation, the Counselor will inform the employee of:
  - (1) the types of issues covered by the EEO statutory process;
  - (2) the types of issues covered by other Federal agencies, such as the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, and or Office of Special Counsel and the availability of the Union grievance procedure without discussing the merits or benefits of utilizing either forum;
  - (3) If the employee elects to file a grievance according to the collective bargaining terms under Article 27, there will be no requirement to contact a counselor or discuss any matter related to the grievance filed on their behalf; and
  - (4) An irrevocable election to pursue the matter through the grievance procedure or through the EEO statutory process is made when the employee files a grievance or when the employee files a formal EEO complaint, whichever is filed first. Contact with an EEO counselor does not constitute an election.
  - (5) The Union shall have the right to notice or participation in the statutory EEO

informal or formal complaint process as a representative of an employee as long as the Union has been designated as the representative by the employee filing the complaint.

- D.** At any stage in the process of an EEO grievance or complaint, the employee shall have the right to be accompanied, represented, and advised by a Union representative, if the employee designates the Union representative as their EEO representative.
- E.** In accordance with 29 CFR Part 1614, if a Union representative has been designated, any and all contact between the Agency and the employee, including contact by a representative of the EEO Office, must be coordinated with the designated union representative.
- F.** The Union may refuse to represent non-members in the EEO statutory process.
- G.** The Union will be notified of any formal discussion between the Employer and a bargaining unit employee not represented by the Union when the employee elects the EEO statutory process, consistent with law and Article 5, Section 2 of the Agreement.
- H.** All steps of the process must comply with the timelines identified in regulatory requirements. Employees must seek EEO counseling within 45 calendar days of the agency's alleged act of discrimination or, if the claim involves a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action.
- I.** The agency agrees not to fire, demote, harass, or otherwise "retaliate" against employees because they file a complaint of discrimination, because they complained to the Agency about discrimination on the job, or because they participated in an employment discrimination proceeding (such as an investigation or lawsuit).
- J.** The Agency will inform employees of their rights and entitlements in the EEO process by all reasonable means, such as Agency intranet, email, and the Information Display System (IDS).
- K.** Upon written request, employees will be afforded reasonable periods of duty-time to prepare, travel to/from, and participate in EEO activities. Use of a GOV for these purposes will be deemed official and therefore authorized.

**Section 9.A.** The Agency and the Union support the use of Mediation to resolve workplace EEO disputes. Participation in mediation is voluntary and not intended to replace the administrative and/or statutory appeal processes.

- B.** Parties who choose to participate in mediation retain the rights afforded by the administrative and/or statutory appeal processes.
- C.** An employee, with the consent of the Union, may bring a Union representative to mediation sessions.
- D.** Managers and supervisors who attend mediation sessions must have the authority to resolve the complaint or dispute at issue.

**Section 10.** If at any stage of the statutory complaint process the Employer determines to make changes to resolve the complaint with respect to personnel policies and practices or matters affecting the general working conditions of unit employees, the Union will be afforded reasonable notification and an opportunity to negotiate the matter prior to implementation of such changes in accordance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 and Article 26: Bargaining.

**Section 11. Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities.**

- A.** In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and CBP Directive 51713.007B, dated March 31, 2022 (or a successor Directive that has been implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law) an otherwise qualified individual with a disability may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation to enable the individual to perform the essential functions of their current position or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment, provided the accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship for the Employer or cause a direct threat to the individual or others.
- B.** CBP also has an obligation to provide personal assistance services (PAS) for employees with targeted disabilities to allow employees to participate in the workplace except when such accommodation would cause undue hardship or would cause a direct threat to the individual or to others. PAS, not otherwise required as reasonable accommodations that allow employees with targeted disabilities to fully participate in the workplace by providing assistance with the basic activities of daily living that an individual would typically perform if the employee did not have a disability. Examples of personal assistance services that may be provided on a case-by-case basis, as needed, include assistance with eating, drinking, dressing, and using the restroom. Personal assistance services are available to employees, and will be provided during work hours and job-related travel if:
  - (1) The employee requires such services because of a targeted disability;
  - (2) Provision of such services would, together with any reasonable accommodation required under the standards, enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their position; and,

- (3) Provision of such services would not impose undue hardship on CBP.

**C. Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation.**

- (1) To request reasonable accommodation based on the employee's disability, an employee, or someone acting on an employee's behalf must request a reasonable accommodation, orally or in writing, at any time.
- (2) A request for reasonable accommodation does not need to be formal, does not need to use the words "reasonable accommodation," and does not need to identify a particular accommodation. A reference to a medical condition which limits the employee's ability to work may be considered a request for reasonable accommodation.

**D. Interactive Dialogue.** Within fifteen (15) business days of when a request for reasonable accommodation has been received, the Decision-Maker (or a delegated management official) shall schedule an interactive dialogue with the employee. The interactive dialogue is a dialogue between CBP and employee about the request for accommodation. It is designed to clarify the scope of the accommodation that the employee is requesting, as well as the essential functions of the employee's position, and to discuss the process for determining whether the requested accommodation can be provided, as well as a time to explore alternative accommodation solutions. The interactive process should be periodically re-engaged, as needed, should the nature of the request change.

**E. Interim Accommodations.** During the processing or implementation of a reasonable accommodation request, Decision-Makers may grant accommodations on a temporary basis.

**F. Decisions.**

- (1) A written decision to provide or deny a reasonable accommodation request must be made within thirty (30) business days, absent extenuating circumstances, of the date the request was initially made.
- (2) If the request does not require supporting medical documentation, it shall be processed and the accommodation, if granted, provided as soon as possible but not more than thirty (30) business days, from the date the request was initially made.
- (3) If the request requires that medical documentation be obtained to determine whether the individual requesting a reasonable accommodation has a disability and/or to identify the functional limitations, the time for processing

will be stayed until the requested documentation is received. The decision shall be made and the accommodation, if granted, shall be provided within thirty (30) business days from the date the Decision-Maker receives the required documentation.

- (4) Written decisions will inform the employee of the right to request reconsideration of the decision as well as the following options. Employees are encouraged to discuss these options with their NTEU Chapter President.

(a) In addition, the employee may elect to contest the written decision through only one of the avenues outlined below within forty-five (45) calendar days.

1. File a grievance under Article 27; or
2. File an informal EEO complaint with CBP Privacy FOIA and EEO, if the employee wishes to pursue a claim of employment discrimination.

(b) If applicable, you have the right to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

- G. Request for Reconsideration.** An employee may file a request for reconsideration to the Decision-Maker within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the Decision-Maker's decision. The request for reconsideration should include the reason(s) for seeking reconsideration and be submitted with any additional medical documentation supporting such a request. The Decision-Maker will respond to the request for reconsideration as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) business days.
- H. Appeals.** If the Decision-Maker denies the employee's reconsideration request, an employee may appeal the denial of the reconsideration decision to the Executive Director (XD), CBP Privacy FOIA and EEO (PFE) within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the reconsideration denial letter. The appeal must be in writing. Filing an appeal with the XD, PFE, does not toll the 45-calendar day time period allowable to file an informal EEO complaint of discrimination or any contractually established time limit allowed for the filing of a grievance.
- I.** The time for processing a request and providing accommodation will be extended as reasonably necessary for extenuating circumstances. Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, the purchase of equipment may take longer than thirty (30) business days because of requirements under the Federal Acquisition Regulation or equipment is backordered. Where extenuating circumstances are present, the Decision-Maker must notify the individual, in

writing, of the reason for the delay and the approximate date on which a decision, or provision of the reasonable accommodation, is expected. Any further developments or changes should also be communicated promptly to the requester.

## **Section 12. Reasonable Accommodation for Religious Beliefs or Practices.**

- A.** In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and CBP Directive 51713-012, dated November 2, 2012(or a successor Directive that has been implemented consistent with the requirements of Article 26 and law). CBP will provide reasonable accommodations for the religious beliefs and/or practice of the employee unless providing a reasonable accommodation would result in undue hardship to CBP.
- B.** Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation. To request reasonable accommodation based on a religious belief or practice, an employee must request a reasonable accommodation, orally or in writing, at any time.
- C.** Interim Accommodations. The Decision-Maker may provide an interim accommodation while the employee's request for a religious accommodation is being processed or if an approved accommodation cannot be promptly implemented, based on a totality of the circumstances.
- D.** Decisions.
  - (1) A written decision to provide or deny a reasonable accommodation request must be made within thirty (30) business days, absent extenuating circumstances, of the date the request was initially made.
  - (2) Written decisions will inform the employee of the right to appeal the decision as well as the following options. Employees are encouraged to discuss these options with their NTEU Chapter President.
    - (a) In addition, the employee may elect to contest the written decision through only one of the avenues outlined below within 45 calendar days.
      - 1. File a grievance under Article 27; OR
      - 2. File an informal EEO complaint with PFE, if the employees wishes to pursue a claim of employment discrimination.
- E.** Appeals. If an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation is denied, they may appeal the decision to the Executive Director, PFE within 10 calendar days of receipt of the denial notice. Filing an appeal with the Executive Director, PFE does not toll the 45-calendar day time period allowable to file an informal EEO complaint of discrimination or any contractually established time limit allowed for the filing of a grievance.

## **ARTICLE 48: ADMINISTRATIVE FURLOUGH**

**Section 1.** The purpose of this Article is to clarify and/or supplement the procedures by which the Employer may have to furlough employees.

### **Section 2. Definitions.**

- A. Furlough:** A furlough is the placing of an employee in a temporary, non-duty, non-pay status because of lack of work or funds, or other non-disciplinary reasons.
- B. Administrative furlough:** An administrative furlough is a planned event by an agency, which is designed to absorb reductions necessitated by downsizing, reduced funding, lack of work, or any other budget situation other than a lapse in appropriations. This type of furlough is typically a non-emergency furlough in that the agency has sufficient time to reduce spending and give adequate notice to employees of its specific furlough plan and how many furlough days will be required. An example of when such a furlough may be necessary is when, as a result of Congressional budget decisions, an agency is required to absorb additional reductions over the course of a fiscal year.
- C. Furlough status:** Furlough status means that, because of a furlough, the employee is placed in a non-pay, non-duty status for designated hours *within* the employee's tour of duty established for leave usage purposes (i.e., the tour of duty for which absences require the charging of leave). Furlough hours are a type of leave of absence without pay.

### **Section 3. Terms.**

- A.** When employees have to serve one furlough day, management will work with the employees to schedule it and will allow the furlough day to be scheduled in conjunction with an employee's regularly scheduled days off in a pay period, absent operational needs.
  - 1) If an employee has to serve less than a full furlough day, management will also look to schedule the furlough hours before an employee's regularly scheduled day off.
- B.** When there are multiple furlough days for an employee to serve, CBP will schedule the number of hours in a furlough day consistent with the number of hours in an employee's regular work day.

- (1) Absent operational needs, CBP management will schedule furlough day(s) in conjunction with an employee's regularly scheduled days off in a pay period.
- (2) After the schedules have been posted, employees may request to serve their furlough day(s) on an alternative day(s) which will be considered by CBP, workload permitting. Where employees have to serve more than five furlough days in total, employees may also request to serve up to five (5) consecutive furlough days in a pay period which will be considered, workload permitting.
- (3) CBP will schedule the furlough days of employees in light of furlough days already served so that employees do not serve more than the required number of furlough days. However, as mentioned in 3.B.2., an employee can voluntarily choose to serve more than one furlough day a pay period. Management will not otherwise schedule more than one furlough day a pay period.
- (4) Employees covered by the Customs Officer Pay Reform Act (COPRA), workload permitting, will not be furloughed on a Sunday. However, employees may notify their supervisor as far in advance as practicable and no later than seven days before management provides the schedules to employees, that they have no problems being scheduled for a furlough day on a Sunday.
- (5) An employee scheduled for pre-approved leave of any kind may substitute furlough days in lieu of such leave.
- (6) Requested swaps of furlough days between qualified employees will be approved. Nothing in this provision prevents CBP from documenting such swaps.
- (7) Upon request, employees on approved non-furlough-related LWOP status will have their LWOP days converted to the required number of furlough days or portion thereof.
- (8) The parties at the local level, i.e. CBP and the local NTEU Chapter, may, by mutual agreement, establish procedures to schedule furlough hours in a manner different than the options described within this agreement. Also, an individual manager and employee, by mutual agreement, can schedule furlough days in a manner different than the options described within this agreement. Such decisions will be made in a fair and impartial manner consistent with the provisions set forth in Article 2: Fairness and Equitability of the National Agreement.
- (9) CBP will respond within a reasonable amount of time to employee requests for



furlough schedules that deviate from 3.B.

- (10) In the event two or more employee requests for a different furlough schedule cannot be accommodated, CBP will grant requests that it can accommodate in order of submission. If employee requests are submitted at the same time, the conflict will be resolved by seniority as defined in the National Agreement.
- (11) If authorized by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), employees will be permitted to convert extra furlough days for an equivalent amount of accrued annual leave in the event an employee has “taken” more furlough days than ultimately required.

**Section 4.** Where the administrative furlough CBP is operating under is based on an act of Congress (e.g. sequestration), in the event the United States Congress later terminates said sequestration (or other similarly termed event), employees who request and are approved to serve more than eight hours of furlough in a pay period acknowledge they may end up serving excess furlough hours. Accordingly, the parties agree that this exception creates no liability for the Agency, i.e., the Union is barred from invoking arbitration and requesting back pay for excess furlough hours.

**Section 5.** Pursuant to applicable law, furlough days that straddle a holiday will result in the employee losing holiday pay. As a result, an employee’s furlough days will not be scheduled such that the employee is furloughed both the day before and the day after the holiday.

**Section 6.** Furlough for part-time or uncommon tour of duty employees will be prorated by computing the furlough days as furlough hours in the same proportion to those hours scheduled for full-time employees working 80 hours biweekly. The furlough day for a part-time employee is defined as the number of hours they are scheduled to work in a basic work week divided by the number of days they work.

**Section 7.A.** Employee schedules that are a product of a locally negotiated Alternate Work Schedules (AWS) agreements, will remain in place unless modified in accordance with the terms contained in the respective local agreement or the terms contained in Article 14 of the National Agreement. CBP will reinstate any AWS that has been terminated outside the terms of the National or locally negotiated agreement.

- B.** Furlough days for employees with an AWS will be scheduled in accordance with this agreement.
- C.** For employees working on a compressed schedule, the application of 8 furlough hours to a workday may result in residual regular hours. For example, an employee working a 5/4-9 compressed schedule may have a scheduled day composed of 8

furlough hours and 1 residual regular hour of work. Or, an employee on a 4-10 compressed schedule may have a scheduled day composed of 8 furlough hours and 2 residual hours of work. In such cases, the residual regular hours of work will be appended to one or more of the employee's regularly scheduled workdays within the administrative workweek.

- D.** Alternatively, employees on a compressed schedule may request to be furloughed for all regularly scheduled hours of work in a workday. For example, an employee working a 4-10 compressed schedule may request to be furloughed for the full 10 hours in their regular workday.

**Section 8.A.** Ad hoc Annual Leave requests will continue to be considered in accordance with the National Agreement.

- B.** Employees will not have their previously approved leave cancelled unless there is a need to address an extraordinary operational concern, e.g. elevated threat level, or a natural or man-made disaster.
- C.** In the event there is an extraordinary operational concern that results in the cancellation of previously approved leave, employees will be given a written explanation of the extraordinary operational concern and when such leave can be used. A copy of the explanation will be provided to the respective Director, Field Operations and NTEU Chapter.

**Section 9.A.** Pursuant to the National Agreement, employees will continue to be permitted to work flexi-tour, earn and use credit hours, work compressed work schedules and earn and use compensatory time, including religious compensatory time, as appropriate. However, the parties acknowledge employees may not accrue compensatory time or perform work during scheduled furlough periods or during a regular day off that is scheduled during an administrative work week where the employee serves a furlough day.

- B.** In applying provision 9.A. above, an employee may not perform any work, including overtime, or accrue credit hours or compensatory time, or substitute compensatory time for furlough hours during the 24 hour work day during which the furlough day is served.
- C.** For employees whose scheduled straddles two calendar days, the twenty four hour period begins when the employee begins their shift and ends 24 hours later.

**Section 10.** The procedures for acquiring and denying official time will continue to be followed pursuant to the National Agreement.

**Section 11.** Furloughs will not impact CBP's evaluation of employee performance.

**Section 12.** The parties acknowledge the impact of furloughs on CBP's operations, as well as the employee's personal situation. Accordingly, CBP agrees to consider the impact of employee furloughs when evaluating requests for a telework arrangement from eligible employees.

**Section 13.** The employer will consider the impact of the furloughs as a mitigating factor when taking disciplinary or adverse action against an employee for any debt or credit problems the employee has that may have resulted from the lack of income during the furlough period.

**Section 14.** Employees who possess government-issued electronic device(s) and are permitted to use those devices for occasional personal business may continue to use those devices during the furlough for the same kind of occasional personal matters authorized by CBP's Directive titled: *Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology*. For example, if the employee gave their child's school the number of the government phone as their emergency contact number, the employee can continue to use the phone for that purpose.

**Section 15.A.** While in a furlough status, employees are not permitted to perform work or be compensated by CBP, however employees will be allowed to reenter the office (where access is normally granted) during furlough periods if the need is to obtain personal items that may have been left behind.

**B.** NTEU officials will be permitted to access their union offices and permitted to perform internal union business during their furlough designated hours. This time is not considered Agency work.

**Section 16.** Overtime assignments to COPRA covered employees will be made pursuant to Article 35 of the National Agreement.

**Section 17.** Employees who receive a transit subsidy from the government will not have their normal subsidy impacted by the furlough. Re-certification for obtaining a transit subsidy will continue under existing procedures.

**Section 18.** Requests for outside employment will be made pursuant to the procedures contained in the National Agreement. CBP will expedite these requests to the extent practicable.

**Section 19.** In the interest of cascading information concerning the impact of furlough on leave accrual, within-grade increases, and other benefits, the Agency will provide employees further furlough information via a document titled: Administrative Furlough - Frequently Asked Questions.

**Section 20.** In the event the act of the United States Congress (e.g. sequestration) terminates before the end of the fiscal year, management will make a reasonable effort to contact the employee and order them to return to duty. If management cannot make contact with the employee, once the employee reports to their next scheduled shift they will be given the option to identify what form of excused absence they wish to use for the excess time away from duty.

**Section 21.A.** Inasmuch as furloughs are different experiences for Agency managers and the bargaining unit, the Parties commit to an open and routine dialogue at all levels that will allow problems to be identified and policy adjustments to occur expeditiously when needed.

**B.** Where CBP is operating under an economic environment that necessitates furloughs over an extended period of time, no less than once per month representatives from CBP and NTEU at the local and national level will meet to discuss furlough implementation. Such meetings will take place in person unless the parties' representatives do not work in the same commuting area.

**Section 22.** In the event the Agency determines that a certain number of furlough days of employees is required, but then later determines less workdays are in fact required to achieve mandated budget reductions, CBP will adjust scheduling of furlough days within two weeks of such determination. The provisions of this agreement will remain in force except where such provisions are inconsistent with the equalized number of furlough hours required for each employee. Section (3.B.1) will be amended to read:

“Consistent with Article 34 Section 8 of the National Agreement, CBP will schedule all employee furlough days contiguous with one of the employee’s regularly scheduled days off. Scheduling will be accomplished to ensure that furlough days are distributed as evenly as possible throughout the pay periods remaining from the date of this schedule adjustment to the end of the fiscal year in which this furlough is affected. Furlough days served prior to the schedule adjustment will be counted toward the aggregate number of workdays or work hours deemed necessary for each employee.

The parties acknowledge that in order to adjust schedules in the event of a reduced need for furlough hours, CBP may need to deviate from the advance posting requirements contained in Article 34 of the National Agreement”.

**Section 23.** In the event CBP implements a furlough of 30 calendar days or less, it will

follow the adverse action procedures set forth in Article 46: Adverse Actions.

**Section 24.** In the event of a lapse in funding furlough:

- A. Grievance and arbitration time frames will be tolled for the duration of the furlough;
- B. Official time will be authorized for NTEU representatives when permitted by the contract in order to represent an employee when the Employer takes an action that is a permitted exception to the Anti-Deficiency Act, e.g. an investigatory interview, a formal discussion, responding to proposed discipline, a request to an employee to write an incident report explaining their behavior, and any other personnel action initiated by CBP.
- C. Employees will be permitted to volunteer to be furloughed during periods of pre-scheduled time-off.

## **ARTICLE 49: TRANSFER OF FUNCTION**

The purpose of this Article is to establish the policy and procedures by which a function ceases to be performed in one competitive area and is carried on in another competitive area.

**Section 1.** A transfer of function takes place when the performance of a continuing function of one or more employees is moved from one competitive area to one or more competitive areas. The function must cease in the losing competitive area and continue in an identical form in the gaining competitive area where it was not being performed at the time of the transfer. A transfer of function takes place for either of the following reasons.

**A. *Transfer of Function Because of Organizational Change***

A transfer of function takes place when a function ceases in one competitive area, and moves to one or more other competitive areas that do not perform the function at the time of transfer.

**B. *Transfer of Function Because the Competitive Area Relocates***

A transfer of function also takes place when the entire competitive area moves to a different local commuting area without any additional organizational change.

**Section 2.** When an employee's work transfers to a different competitive area, the employee is entitled to transfer with it only if the lack of an opportunity to do so would result in their demotion or separation in the competitive area losing the function.

**Section 3.A.** The competitive area losing the function is responsible for identifying the competing employees with the transfer of function. A competing employee is identified with the transfer of function on the basis of the employee's official position. Two methods are provided to identify employees with the transfer of function. Method One will be used to identify each position to which it is applicable. Method Two is used only to identify positions to which Method One is not applicable.

**B. Employees to be transferred will be identified as follows:**

- (1) **METHOD ONE** - A competing employee will be identified with a transferring function IF 1) the employee performs the function during at least half of the employee's work time OR 2) regardless of the amount of time the employee performs the functions during their work time, the function performed by the employee includes duties controlling the employee's grade or rate of pay.

(2) **METHOD TWO** – Under Method Two, the losing competitive area must identify the number of positions it needs to perform the transferring function. This determination is made by establishing a retention register compiled of the competing employees who performed the function. Method Two will be used only to identify positions and employees not covered by Identification Method One. Consequently, pursuant to Method Two, competing employees who perform the function less than half of their work time will be identified with a transferring function in the inverse order of their retention standing [see Article 23 concerning reductions in force] for reduction-in-force (RIF) purposes unless the procedure would result in the separation or demotion of an employee with a higher retention standing. In which case, the losing competitive area must identify competing employees in the order of their retention standing.

**C.** Volunteers in the losing competitive area will be allowed to transfer in place of those employees identified for transfer of function under Method One or Two, provided that:

(1) The volunteers are in the same competitive level(s) as the employees identified under Method Two; and

(2) No competing employee identified for transfer under Method One or Method Two will be separated or demoted solely because a volunteer transferred in their place to the gaining competitive area.

**D.** When the Agency determines that employees in more than one competitive level are interchangeable for transfer of function purposes, competitive levels will be combined for the purpose of allowing for volunteers.

**E.** Selections for transfer will then be made in the order of the volunteer's standing on the retention register for their competitive level(s), up to the maximum number of employees that have been determined to transfer with the function. If there are insufficient volunteers to make up this number, Method One or Two, as appropriate, will be used to identify the remaining employees to be transferred.

**Section 4.A.** The Union will receive reasonable advance notice of a transfer of function. Any bargaining undertaken subsequent to such notice shall be limited to determining the type of placement plan, if any, that shall be used in conjunction with the transfer of function. Any bargaining will be to the extent allowed by law.

**B.** The proposals developed by the Union pursuant to Section 4A above must be submitted within five (5) calendar days following the advance notice. The parties agree to meet to bargain within three (3) calendar days of receipt of the Union's proposals. The parties will either reach agreement or declare impasse within five

(5) calendar days. Either party may immediately thereafter invoke the services of the Federal Services Impasses Panel and request that the Panel provide expedited assistance in resolving the dispute. Both parties shall cooperate fully in expediting the final resolution of the dispute.

**Section 5.A.** Article 46: Adverse Actions procedures may be used to separate a bargaining unit employee who declines to transfer with a function. These employees will not be separated any sooner than the transfer of the employees who choose to transfer.

- B.** When a transfer of function occurs while a RIF is already in progress in the losing competitive area, management may, at its discretion, include employees who decline to transfer with their function as part of a concurrent reduction in force. In such circumstances, management should evaluate if the movement of employees with the transferring function is essential to the continuity and efficiency of the function.
- C.** When the losing competitive area identifies and transfers more employees than the gaining competitive area needs to carry on the function; the gaining competitive area will follow RIF procedures in accordance with Article 23 if necessary to relieve the surplus:
  - (1) After competing employees in the losing competitive area have indicated whether they will accompany their function, the rights of employees who have decided to accompany their function will be determined by combining the retention registers of the segment being transferred with the appropriate registers of the competitive area receiving the function. A determination of the rights of the incoming employees will not require a physical relocation or a paper transfer to the gaining competitive area.
  - (2) Those employees in the losing competitive area who compete unsuccessfully for retention in the gaining competitive area will not be transferred, either on paper or physically relocated, to the gaining competitive area in order to be separated. They will be separated from the losing competitive area acting as agent for the gaining competitive area.
- D.** A transfer of function will not result in personnel actions affecting employees of the gaining competitive area when the transfer does not require a RIF on the gaining end.

**Section 6.A.** When it appears that a transfer of function may be necessary, the Employer agrees to notify the Union prior to issuing notice to any effected NTEU represented employees.

- B.** As such information is developed or becomes available, the Employer will provide



the Union with information on the number and types of positions or employees to be effected and the approximate planned date of the action.

- C. At an appropriate time prior to the issuance of specific transfer of function notices to employees, the Union, upon request, may attend a meeting conducted by the Employer to explain the transfer of function procedure and to answer questions regarding the transfer of function.

**Section 7.A.** The Agency shall provide a specific written notice to each employee identified for transfer of function at least 60 calendar days prior to the effective date. The notice will advise employees of the transfer of function, and request their decision as to whether they will accompany their function to the new location. The notice will include all information available on the date of issuance, such as the title, grade, and location of the new position; what action is being taken; the effective date of the action; and what action is needed on the part of the employee to accept or reject the offer of transfer.

- B. It is recognized that in some situations information, such as the title or grade of the position to which an employee is being transferred, will not be available. Such a circumstance will occur when a RIF is necessary in the gaining competitive areas as a result of a transfer of function. This notice will advise the employee that the employee will be afforded applicable RIF rights if the offer to transfer with the function is accepted. Under such circumstances, employees will be given an opportunity to review a combined retention register for affected competitive levels which would be in effect in the gaining competitive area.
- C. Employees will be given a minimum of 10 workdays, but more time when practicable as determined by the Employer, in which to accept or reject an offer of transfer with a function.

**Section 8.A.** Assistance in obtaining other employment will be provided to those employees identified for transfer who decline to accompany their function to the new location. Between the date employees decline to accompany a transfer of function and the date of their separation from CBP (no sooner than the date any other employees transfer), the following assistance will be provided:

- (1) Designation of an outplacement coordinator to serve as the focal point for all assistance activities.
- (2) Maintenance of a file of résumés submitted by declining employees for distribution to prospective employers when possible. When requested by the prospective employers, these résumés will be provided.
- (3) Orientation session that explains how to use career transition services, and the

eligibility requirements for selection priority under Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP), and the Reemployment Priority List (RPL).

- (4) Registration of eligible employees on the Department of Homeland Security's Reemployment Priority List for the losing competitive area. Employees separated for declining to transfer with a function will be entered on such lists for placement after Group I and Group II employees separated by RIF procedures.

- B.** CBP shall advise, in writing, employees separated for refusal to transfer with a function of their rights to severance pay, if any; any lump sum payment for all accrued annual leave; their right to re-employment consideration and eligibility for career transition assistance under subparts B (RPL), F and G (CTAP) of Title 5 CFR § 351 part 330; their eligibility for discontinued service retirement, if applicable; and the effect of separation on their health and life insurance coverage.

**Section 9. A.** When a bargaining unit employee or the union believes CBP has incorrectly applied applicable law, regulation, or the terms of this Agreement, in carrying out a transfer of function action, a grievance may be filed pursuant to what is specified in the negotiated agreement.

- B.** A bargaining unit employee separated under Article 46 Adverse Action procedures as a result of a transfer of function may appeal that action under the procedures in the negotiated agreement. However, if the employee raises an allegation of discrimination, the employee has the option of pursuing the matter, either through the negotiated grievance procedure, Article 27: Grievance Procedure, via the procedures found under Article 47: Equal Employment Opportunity, or via an appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

**Section 10.A.** In cases when a transfer of function will result in employees moving to a different local commuting area, a Transfer of Function Canvass Letter to determine which employees want to be considered for positions in a different local commuting area may be used. Although canvas letters do not guarantee a place in the gaining competitive area, however, they ask the employee to state an interest in transferring with the function.

- B.** An employee who initially chooses to transfer with the function may later reconsider and decline to transfer to the new location. However, an employee who declines to transfer with the function may not later change the original declination to an acceptance of the offer to transfer with the function to the new location.

**Section 11.** An employee is generally eligible for relocation expense allowances for a transfer of function that requires relocation to a different local commuting area.

## **ARTICLE 50: BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS AND CONTINUOUS EVALUATION**

**Section 1.** This Article contains the policy and procedures to be followed when bargaining unit employees are the subjects of a periodic reinvestigation (PR), security forms review, or a continuous evaluation/vetting (CE/CV) conducted by the Office of Professional Responsibility's Personnel Security Division (PSD), or its Contracted Background Investigators, in accordance with applicable Suitability and National Security adjudicative policies and criteria.

**Section 2. Periodic Reinvestigation (PR).** The following procedures are applicable to any employee undergoing a Periodic Reinvestigation (PR) or security forms (formerly referred to as e-QIP) review:

- A. When a PR or security forms review is due, the employee will receive an email message with detailed instructions for completing the required security forms within the government's electronic filing system. Bargaining unit employees will be advised that they have the right to union representation during an interview, if the employee reasonably believes that their responses may lead to an unfavorable determination or disciplinary action.
- B. Upon receipt of notice from PSD, employees shall have thirty (30) days to complete the security forms.
- C. Employees will be permitted up to eight (8) hours of duty time to complete the required security forms. It is understood that some employees may need more time than others to complete the forms. Reasonable requests for additional time may be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and will be granted and scheduled, workload permitting. The eight (8) hours may need to be scheduled intermittently (i.e., an hour or two at a time) based on workload and staffing requirements.
- D. Employees will be permitted to leave the worksite during duty hours if reasonably necessary to complete the security forms or, upon supervisor approval, to begin their use of duty time away from the worksite at the beginning of the workday. Due to potential privacy conflicts, employees need not provide specific reason(s) for requesting time away. A general explanation or a reference to one of the following examples will be sufficient. Examples of situations for which employees shall be permitted to leave the work site include: to visit a financial institution, to visit a storage facility to inventory property, or to find a private location to complete the security forms. However, if a private work location is afforded the employee, the employee is encouraged to complete the security forms at the work location.
- E. Upon request, the deadline for submitting the security forms may be extended for a

reasonable period of time in the event the employee is on pre-approved leave during the thirty-day (30) timeframe. Requesting an extension will be done through coordination with PSD and the employee's immediate supervisor.

- F.** Photocopies of previously submitted security forms will no longer be accepted as the information will not be transferable to the government's electronic filing system.
- G.** Contracted Background Investigators will advise all third parties they interview of the purpose of the interview prior to asking questions.
- H.** Absent extenuating circumstances, interviews will be conducted at the employee's worksite during duty hours.
- I.** Employees may send an email to [IAPSDPRSTATUS@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:IAPSDPRSTATUS@cbp.dhs.gov) to determine whether their PR has been completed. PSD will respond as long as sixty (60) days have passed since the employee was interviewed by the Contracted Background Investigator.
- J.** If PSD determines additional information and/or documentation is required for issue resolution during the PR/security forms review process, OPR/PSD will follow the adjudication process in Section 4 below.
- K.** Within two (2) business days from the conclusion of an adjudication of the PR or security forms review, the Agency will notify the affected employee of the determination via an automated email.
- L.** Copies of the Certification of Investigation will be added into the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

**Section 3. Continuous Evaluation/Vetting (CE/CV).** CE/CV leverages a set of automated record checks and business rules to assist in the ongoing assessment of an employee at any time to determine whether the employee continues to meet applicable requirements.

- A.** When an automated record check pertaining to a bargaining unit employee is received, PSD will assess whether the alert is valid and requires an inquiry.
- B.** If PSD determines additional information and/or documentation is required for issue resolution during the CE/CV process, PSD or the Contracted Background Investigator will follow the adjudication process in Section 4 below.
- C.** Within two (2) business days from the conclusion of an adjudication, of a CE/CV check, the Agency will notify the affected employee of the determination via an automated email.

**Section 4. Adjudication.** PSD will adhere to the applicable policies and authorities for

suitability, fitness, and national security adjudicative decisions. If further investigation and/or adjudication of a PR, security forms review, or CE/CV is warranted:

- A.** PSD will issue an identity verification email to the employee and the corresponding local NTEU Chapter President which will include the Personnel Security Inquiry Notice (Appendix A-7) and the option to identify a representative to act on their behalf (via the designation of representation form (Appendix A-8 or email) to the employee and the corresponding local NTEU Chapter President. It is understood that the local NTEU Chapter President's receipt of the notice and the option to retain a representative does not infer or automatically designate the local NTEU Chapter President as an employee's representative. PSD will not solicit additional information from the employee for a period of three (3) business days or when the employee identifies a representative, whichever is sooner. If/when a bargaining unit employee identifies a representative, they must submit the representative's first and last name, phone number, mailing address and email address. PSD will continue to correspond with the employee and include their representative on all correspondence.
- B.** Upon receipt of a signed designation of representation form, PSD will provide the employee and the employee's designated representative (if applicable) with a Letter of Inquiry ("LOI"), which will afford the employee the opportunity to provide a written response that explains, refutes, clarifies, and/or mitigates the information that has raised the suitability or national security concern. The submission of any medical documentation will be in accordance with Article 31, Section 15.
- C.** After receiving an LOI, bargaining unit employees are afforded up to thirty (30) calendar days to provide a response to PSD (via email or fax). It is understood that some employees may need more time than others to respond. Reasonable requests for additional time will be granted by PSD. If PSD requests additional information and/or documentation as a follow-up to the initial LOI, the employee will be provided reasonable additional time to provide a response.
- D.** Employees who receive an LOI from PSD addressing a matter that is being or was previously investigated by OPR's Investigative Operations Directorate or through management inquiry, are being afforded an opportunity to provide a response addressing suitability and/or national security concerns.
- E.** An employee is not required to provide the requested information, but that decision may result in an unfavorable suitability determination, national security eligibility determination, security clearance action, or cancellation of further processing for national security eligibility and/or subsequent administrative action (e.g., failure to meet a condition of employment).

**Section 5.A.** CBP, and any agent acting on behalf of CBP acknowledges their obligation to, upon request, provide necessary and relevant background investigation information to NTEU during the personnel security adjudication process pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 7114 (b) (4) and not, exclusively, under the Freedom of Information Act.

**B.** Such requests include when NTEU is requesting information while representing an employee pursuant to a Letter of Inquiry issued within personnel security investigations.

**C.** This excludes the required portion of any background investigation or reinvestigation known as the National Agency Check (NAC), which is conducted, and must be released, by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Employees and representatives must follow OPM information request procedures for the NAC.

**Section 6.A.** Employees may send an email to [IAPSDPSIU@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:IAPSDPSIU@cbp.dhs.gov) to report complaints about the conduct of Contracted Background Investigators working on behalf of PSD. To facilitate the processing of a complaint, the email should include:

1. Subject line: Background Investigator Complaint
2. Include the Investigator's NAME, Credential/Badge Number, Contact information for the Investigator. (Investigator's are required to provide their badge number at the beginning of the interview.)
3. Short summary of the concern/complaint.

**B.** NTEU National will be informed if the email addresses provided in this Article change.

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## **ARTICLE 51: EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**

### **Section 1. Agency-Wide Physical Fitness Program (AWPFP).**

#### **A. Eligibility.**

- (1) In order to participate in the AWPFP bargaining unit employees may not:
  - a. Be under an Employee Proficiency Plan (EPP);
  - b. Be currently subject to a leave restriction; or
  - c. Be currently subject to disciplinary action. Currently subject to disciplinary action means that an employee has been issued a notice of proposed disciplinary/adverse action and has not received a final decision on such proposal.
- (2) Employees on a medical restriction may continue to use AWPFP within the limitations of their medical condition as determined by the employee in consultation with their medical provider.
- (3) Eligible bargaining unit employees must register on the AWPFP SharePoint site and electronically accept the Medical Self-Certification and Informed Consent forms.

#### **B. Policies.**

- (1) Use of AWPFP fitness time can be requested in any amount up to 120 minutes per occurrence. Requests are subject to supervisory approval based on operational requirements and program eligibility. If AWPFP time cannot be approved based on operational requirements, upon request, management will identify the operational requirement that led to the denial.
- (2) Administrative on-duty fitness time is not available the first or last hour of an employee's shift on Holidays.
- (3) PFP time is not a substitute for leave. To be eligible for PFP, employees must be on duty for at least a portion of the day in addition to the PFP time. In the unusual event that an employee requests unscheduled leave due to unforeseen circumstances, after using approved PFP time at the start of a tour of duty, the PFP time will be honored.

- (4) Requests for fitness time shall be approved in a fair and equitable manner, allowing for the greatest and most diverse amount of participants.
- (5) Eligible bargaining unit employees who have been approved pursuant to Section 1.B.(1) of this Article will be provided up to five (5) hours of approved administrative fitness time each week (at a maximum of 120 minutes per occurrence) to participate in the AWPFP. Fitness related activities are defined as physical activity that would directly affect muscular strength, aerobic capacity, and/or flexibility. In lieu of exercising in a facility, participants may utilize any exercise listed in the approved activities list found on the AWPFP SharePoint website. The CBP Employee AWPFP program manager or their designee, in collaboration with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP), will identify any additional exercise activities not already identified in the approved activities list.
- (6) Each eligible bargaining unit employee will track their AWPFP fitness activities using the AWPFP Activity Tracker.
- (7) Managers/supervisors will maintain written records (e.g., Excel, Word, written log, SharePoint, etc.) to track all fitness requests, approvals, and denials. If any administrative fitness time request is denied, the manager/supervisor will include a written explanation for the denial in the record. NTEU at the local or national levels will be provided a copy of the records, upon request.
- (8) Employees are required to review the AWPFP SharePoint medical self-certification if their personal health status changes (injury, new diagnosis, light duty, pregnancy) to continue participation in the AWPFP.
- (9) Administrative fitness time includes exercise time, travel time, and preparation time (e.g., changing clothes, showers, etc.). No additional time will be allotted to perform these functions. Employees are encouraged to use a minimum of 50% of fitness time per occurrence to engage in a physical activity outlined in the AWPFP (i.e., preparation and travel time should not exceed 50% of the requested activity time).

### **C. Procedures.**

- (1) Employees may work out onsite or offsite with or without a facility. CBP will not compensate participants for travel/mileage to and from fitness facilities or any costs incurred associated with private facilities, including but



not limited to membership fees. Only workouts performed by employees during work hours are considered a part of this Program.

- (2) Employees must remain available to be contacted by phone during all AWPFP fitness time.
- (3) Based on operational requirements, supervisors may approve bargaining unit employees to participate in the AWPFP during their regularly scheduled shift which may include the first and/or last hour of an employee's shift. However, on a designated federal holiday, AWPFP will not be available during the first and/or last hour of a shift. All approvals are subject to cancellation due to unanticipated changes in operational needs.
- (4) Participants approved to use AWPFP fitness time during the first hour of their shift must notify via email or phone the on-duty supervisor prior to commencing fitness time unless the supervisor and participant make other arrangements.
- (5) Prior to commencing fitness time in the last hour of the workday, employees must notify the on-duty supervisor via email or phone.
- (6) Participants and supervisors are required to record all administrative fitness time used in the official time and attendance system.
- (7) CBP will maintain a national Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section within the AWPFP site to address questions, concerns, and issues arising during the program. This section will not include Personally Identifiable Information.
- (8) Failure to adhere to the requirements under this article may result in losing eligibility to participate in the AWPFP.

**Section 2.** The Employee Support Services (Safe Harbor) MOU has been incorporated into this agreement in Appendix H.

**Section 3. Welfare Checks.**

- A. In furtherance of its commitment to ensure the health and safety of its employees, CBP has utilized welfare checks to check on CBP employees at their place of residence when there is a reasonable and articulable belief that an employee may need immediate assistance from CBP personnel. There are times when employees experience mental and/or physical distress outside of work and the Agency conducts

welfare checks to ensure the health and safety of employees. These checks must be conducted as expeditiously as possible.

- B. Before a physical welfare check is conducted, the Agency will exhaust all available methods of reaching the employee and the employee's emergency contact(s). If the Agency reaches the emergency contact, the Agency representative will provide their name, duty title, and explain the purpose of the contact.
- C. At any point during the welfare check, if the employee's whereabouts or status becomes known, satisfying the Agency's concern, the welfare check will be terminated.
- D. Bargaining unit employees assigned to perform Welfare Checks may decline to enter or remain on private property if the employee determines that it may be unsafe or unlawful pursuant to Article 31, Section 5.
- E. Whenever practical, CBP employees will use unmarked vehicles and cover identifiable uniform items to prevent the appearance of a law enforcement contact.
- F. Nothing precludes the persons conducting the welfare check from notifying appropriate authorities or taking legal actions if based on the circumstances it appears that the Employee's health and/or safety is at risk (e.g., suspected domestic violence, suspected suicidal ideations).
- G. If at any time during the welfare check, the Employee requests the persons conducting the welfare check leave the premises, the persons conducting the welfare check will comply with the request, absent exigent circumstances.
- H. Any subsequent investigations arising from or pertaining to facts and/or observations resulting from the welfare check process will be in accordance with Article 22 of the CBA.
- I. The parties agree when a dispute arises following the execution of procedures in this section, during each stage of the grievance and/or arbitration process, greater weight will be given to the Agency's good faith efforts to ensure the health, safety, and security of their employees.

## **ARTICLE 52: REMOTE WORK**

**Section 1.A.** The policy and procedures contained in this Article memorialize the parties' commitment to provide Remote work to eligible CBP employees. Remote work is neither a legal right nor an entitlement; it is a benefit to employees given at the discretion of management in accordance with law, rule, regulation, and this Agreement. The Agency will make available to all employees the procedures, policies, guides, and related forms on the CBP Remote work Program website. Remote work is a flexible work arrangement in which an employee, under a written remote work agreement, is scheduled to perform work at a remote duty location and is not expected to perform work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. A remote worker's official worksite may be within or outside the local commuting area of an agency worksite.

**B.** The provisions found in Article 15 Telework and Article 52 Remote Work shall apply to all new applications for Telework and Remote Work received after the execution of the new collective bargaining agreement. Any employees who were on telework agreements that do not have the employee reporting to the traditional work site at least two (2) times per pay period will remain on their previously approved telework agreement for a period of six (6) months from the effective date of this Agreement. During this six-month period these employees will be provided with the opportunity to apply for Remote Work or Telework consistent with the provisions in Article 15 and 52. If an employee's request is not approved or the employee fails to apply for Local Remote or Telework timely, following the six-month period the employee will be removed from their telework agreements and required to report to the traditional worksite. This does not prevent employees from subsequently applying for remote work or telework.

### **Section 2. Definitions.**

**A. Alternate Location (for the purposes of COOP):** Locations other than the official worksite used to carry out essential functions during COOP events. In some cases, an employee's residence, or other location (e.g., other CBP, DHS, or U.S. Government facilities) may be designated as a COOP facility.

**B. Continuity of Operations (COOP):** An internal effort within individual components of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of Government assuring the capability exists to continue uninterrupted essential component functions across a wide range of potential emergencies, including localized acts of nature, pandemic health crises, accidents, technological related emergencies, and natural or man-made disasters.

- C. Approving Official for Remote Work Request:** A management official with delegated authority to review, modify, approve, deny and/or terminate the Remote Work arrangement.
- D. Traditional Worksite:** For the purposes of Remote Work, the CBP traditional worksite is where the employee's home organization is based. A remote worker may be directed to report to the Traditional Worksite for official purposes including, but not limited to meetings, training, work assignments, technical support for equipment, and/or other official matters. The Traditional Worksite is determined exclusively by the Approving Official.
- E. Assigned Administrative CBP Facility:** For the purposes of Remote Workers whose official duty stations are located more than 50 miles from their Traditional Worksite, an Assigned Administrative CBP facility is a location to which a remote worker may report for technical support (e.g., computer updates, repairs, etc.) and which the remote worker may use as an alternate work location (for example, during service interruptions as a result of inclement weather, COOP, etc.).
- F. Local Commuting Area:** CBP considers the local commuting area to be within fifty (50) road miles or less from the employee's Traditional Worksite.
- G. Remote Duty Location (RDL):** The official duty station of a CBP employee who has an approved Remote Work Agreement and who is not assigned to work from a traditional CBP facility. Typically, the RDL is the employee's residence. An employee may work remotely from any of the fifty (50) United States, the District of Columbia, or other United States Territories.
- H. Remote Work Application and Agreement (Appendix I-1):** Documents an employee's request to become a remote worker, the locations and schedules for remote working, and the approving official's approval or denial of the application and agreement; and serves as an acknowledgement by the employee regarding the requirements of beginning, continuing, and ending remote work. All remote workers must have a current remote work agreement to work remotely.
- I. Remote Work:** An approved arrangement under a written remote work agreement where an eligible employee performs the duties and responsibilities of an employee's position at a location other than an established CBP facility (usually the employee's residence) and is not expected to report to an established CBP facility on a routine (regular and recurring) basis at least two days per pay period. An employee who reports to a CBP facility one day per pay period is considered remote, as is an employee who reports regularly on a non-pay period basis (e.g., one week per month). The employee may be required or directed to report to an established CBP facility based on mission or operational needs or for other reasons as determined by the supervisor. The remote worksite is the employee's official duty station.

- J. **Remote Work (Local):** An employee is approved for local remote work where the employee performs the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position at a location other than an established CBP facility (usually the employee's residence) which is within fifty (50) road miles from the employee's traditional worksite and is not expected to report to an established CBP facility on a routine (regular and recurring) basis at least two days per pay period.
- K. **Remote Work (Distant):** An employee is approved for distant remote work where an eligible employee performs the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position at a location other than an established CBP facility (usually an employee's residence) which is greater than fifty (50) road miles from the employee's traditional worksite and is not expected to report to an established CBP facility on a routine (regular and recurring basis).
- L. **Remote Worker:** An employee who is assigned to a remote duty location because there is no expectation or requirement for the employee to report regularly to a CBP facility (i.e. at least 2 times per pay period). The employee's residence or other approved location, referred to as a remote duty location in this article, is the employee's Official Duty Station. A Remote Work Application and Agreement is required before an employee is considered a remote worker.

### Section 3. General Policies.

- A. Remote Work is neither an employee entitlement, nor an alternative for child, elder or dependent care or a means to conduct personal business (e.g. home repairs, running a personal self- owned business, etc.).
- B. An employee's participation in a Remote work arrangement is voluntary unless directed or required by management during a Continuity of Operations (COOP) activation, while the employee is in an evacuation status, or during a declaration of pandemic health crisis by the appropriate government authorities. In some cases, an employee's residence, or other location (e.g., other CBP, DHS, or U.S. Government facilities) may be designated as a COOP facility.
- C. Remote Work is appropriate for those positions whose assigned duties, tasks, or other work activities can, at the discretion of an approving official, be performed remotely without diminishing employee performance or mission accomplishment. Requests for remote work made by an employee for personal reasons may be considered and approved if otherwise appropriate. When considering employees for remote work arrangements, the Employer will assess the complete benefits and potential costs, including the cost of periodic travel to the agency worksite or other TDY locations.

- D.** Remote work arrangements where the employee lives within the local commuting area will be considered local remote work. Local remote work will be approved when determined to be a benefit to the Agency by the Approving Official. Determinations for local remote work will be made on a case-by-case basis based on operational needs and the employee's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of an employee's position at an alternate worksite. Local remote work is appropriate for positions with enough portable work (duties and responsibilities of a position that can be effectively performed at an alternate worksite).
- E.** For employees whose duty location is more than fifty (50) road miles from their traditional CBP worksite, CBP will designate the nearest CBP facility capable of providing support as the Assigned Administrative CBP Facility to which the employee will report for technical support (e.g., computer updates, repairs, etc.) and for which the remote employee may use as a work location when the employee's remote worksite is not operational due to weather or other emergencies.
- F.** Management will review agreements on an annual basis. If necessary, adjustments to agreements may be made consistent with the policies and procedures of this Article.
- G.** Unless otherwise instructed by an approving official, employee(s) will perform official duties only at the traditional worksite or RDL. If an employee requests an alternate worksite other than or in addition to the RDL, the participating employee must indicate the change in the Telework Portal under the Remote Work tab and receive approval before beginning work in a location different from that listed in the current remote work agreement.

#### **Section 4. Employee Eligibility Requirements and Restrictions.**

- A.** To participate in remote work the employee must: (1) must meet eligibility requirements; (2) complete appropriate and required training; and (3) have a current and approved agreement for the Remote Work arrangement.
- B.** In addition, the Approving Official will consider the following factors when deciding if an employee is a good candidate for distant remote work. Employees, at their option, may submit documentation demonstrating these attributes. Employees are also encouraged to provide a supporting statement explaining why they are a good candidate for remote work. The factors include but are not limited to:

  - (1) The employee is self-directed and requires minimal supervision.

- (2) The employee is able to work independently and be comfortable not interacting with colleagues on a daily basis.
  - (3) The employee should have a demonstrated track record of being responsive to the organization, team, and customers (both internal and external to the Agency), keeping supervisors and co-workers informed about the status of projects pending and completed, and pitching in to help when needed.
- C. In order to participate in remote work, eligible employees must have a performance rating of Successful (or equivalent) and may not be on leave restriction, the subject of any pending performance or disciplinary action, or the subject of an allegation of misconduct that may prevent the performance of the full scope of required duties.
- (1) An employee is the subject of a pending disciplinary action during the period between receiving a notice of proposed disciplinary or adverse action and receipt of a final CBP decision pursuant to the applicable Articles of this Agreement. This period may also include the investigatory period prior to receiving a notice of proposed disciplinary or adverse action, if the nature of investigation prevents the employee from performing the full scope of required duties.
  - (2) An employee is the subject of a pending performance-based action during the period between receiving a notice of proposed performance-based action and receipt of a final CBP decision pursuant to the applicable Articles of this Agreement. This period may also include the initiation of an employee proficiency period prior to receiving a notice of proposed performance-based action.
  - (3) For the purposes of new federal employees meeting the performance requirement, the employee must perform successfully under a performance plan for at least one year after appointment, supervisors should make a determination regarding whether the employee is performing acceptably – no rating of record is required for this situation. Exceptions to this criterion may be requested by an employee in an eligible position and approved or denied by the approving official on a case-by-case basis.
- D. Employees who have been subjected to any final disciplinary or performance action within the last twelve (12) months are ineligible to participate in a remote work arrangement. After twelve months from the final disciplinary, adverse action, or performance action, the employee may request remote work. Exceptions to this criterion may be requested by employees in an eligible position and approved or denied by the approving official on a case-by-case basis.

- E.** Approving officials and/or supervisors have the discretion to approve an employee's remote work request at any time and can require that an employee occupy a new position for a sufficient period to obtain a performance rating in an eligible position before any request is approved. An employee may request an exception. The approving official will approve or deny these exception requests on a case-by-case basis.
- F.** Local remote work may be a component of a temporary light duty arrangement or other accommodation as deemed appropriate by management.
- G.** Remote Workers may be required to share workspaces/workstations while working at a CBP worksite. In such cases, hoteling for Remote Work employees will be handled in accordance with any existing local agreement at the CBP location where the Remote Work employee will be performing work.

**Section 5. Position Eligibility.**

- A.** When determining if a Remote Work arrangement is appropriate for an eligible employee, management will consider whether the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position can be effectively performed at a remote duty location while still delivering on mission objectives, maintaining agency operations, and meeting internal and external customer needs.
- B.** Distant remote work may be approved when the Approving Official determines approval of the request will strategically support the Agency's mission and result in a benefit to the agency. The Approving Official will assess the complete benefits and potential costs to the Agency to include the following:

  - (1) Any impact on the mission needs of the organization.

    - (a) The Approving Official will take into consideration factors, such as successful agency mission delivery, organizational health and performance, customer service (including that provided by support organizations to internal agency customers), continuity of agency operations and workplace culture.
    - (b) The Approving Official will consider the impact of the loss of an onsite employee, including whether fewer in-person interactions with Agency stakeholders (both internal and external customers, team members, supervisors/ managers) will impact the successful accomplishment of position duties, team performance, customer service, etc.



- (2) Business reasons including retention of high performing employees, other determined recruitment needs such as hard to fill mission critical positions, or agency real estate and other business cost reduction. Remote work requested primarily for employee convenience/preference will not be approved.
- (3) Cost of terminating or adjusting remote work agreements based on changing or potentially changing mission needs.
- (4) Cost of any travel (periodic or otherwise) to the official agency worksite when it is outside of the local commuting area of an employee's official remote worksite, as well as the cost of travel to other locations where the employee is reasonably expected to travel from their official remote worksite as compared to travel costs from the official agency worksite.

#### **Section 6. Remote Work Application Request and Approval.**

- A.** Eligible employees who wish to work remotely must first complete the Remote Work Application and Agreement (Appendix I-1) and submit the request to their Approving Official.
- B.** After the Approving Official has received the required package above, and within thirty (30) days of the submission, the Approving Official will schedule a discussion with the employee regarding the employee's request, eligibility, opportunities and expectations. The Approving Official may determine whether further information, documentation, and/or discussion is needed. If so, the approving official, or designee, will notify the employee in writing as soon as practicable.
- C.** The Approving Official will approve or deny the remote work application in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the discussion or production of additional materials (if applicable). If extenuating circumstances which prevent a decision from being made within fifteen (15) calendar days, an approving official will provide a response no later than forty-five (45) calendar days from the date the application is received.
- D.** If the Remote Work Application and Agreement is approved, the employee will complete the Remote Work request in the Telework Portal under the Remote Work Tab (or its successor).
- E.** Participating employees must complete the appropriate on-line OPM Telework Fundamentals Training Employees on [www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov) and the Cybersecurity Awareness and Rules of Behavior Training. Participating employees must certify

their completion of the training by attaching the certificate of completion on the Remote Work tab in the Telework Portal.

- F.** If the Remote Work Application and Agreement is denied, the Approving Official will provide written justification using the Notice of Denial of a Remote Work Application or Termination of a Remote Work Agreement form (Appendix I-2).

### **Section 7. Changes to Remote Work Agreements.**

- A.** Approved remote work agreements will remain in effect unless permanent and significant changes are required or the agreement is terminated (by the Agency or the employee). If terminated and the employee wishes to reapply, the employee must reapply under the provisions of this Agreement.
- B.** An employee may request to alter a Remote work agreement at any time. The employee's existing Remote Work agreement will not be impacted pending the approval of the new Remote Work Agreement. The employee must notify the appropriate supervisor or approving official using Appendix I-1, and if approved, make the necessary adjustments on the Remote tab in the Telework Portal. Unless otherwise agreed to, changes will take effect on the first day of the next pay period.
- C.** An employee may request to terminate a Remote work agreement at any time. The employee must notify the appropriate supervisor or approving official using Appendix I-2, and if approved, make the necessary adjustments on the Remote tab in the Telework. Unless otherwise agreed to, changes will take effect on the last day of the pay period during which the termination is made and the employee must report to the Traditional Worksite on the first regularly scheduled day of the next pay period.
- D.** The Employer may terminate a remote work agreement and reassign the employee to a duty location pursuant to Section 8.D. below if management finds that the remote work arrangement no longer meets operational needs or for cause (e.g., there is a change in the employee's eligibility, or there is a decline in employee performance).

### **Section 8. Remote Duty Location.**

- A.** An employee may work remotely from any of the fifty (50) United States (US), the District of Columbia (DC), or other US territories with a properly approved remote work application and agreement. A remote work location is typically, although not always, the employee's residence.

- B. Managers/supervisors have the right to require a remote worker to report to a CBP facility at any time, for any part of a day, or for full and/or multiple days, based on business- related operational needs. Remote workers are required to report to the official worksite, or other duty or training location, as required or directed for, including but not limited to, attending meetings, training opportunities, and in-person collaboration.
- C. Employees will be given reasonable notice when needed to report to an official CBP worksite or other specified work location. Employees may be eligible for travel reimbursement in accordance Article 16 of this Agreement.

**D. Agency Directed Return to Traditional Worksite.**

(1) Remote Work (Local):

- (a) Employee(s) must be available to work at the traditional worksite at any time, for any part of the day or a full or multiple days, normally with a one-day advance notice, when management makes a determination that the employee's presence is required based on operational needs.
- (b) In the event an employee is removed for cause, the employee will be expected to return to the traditional worksite on a permanent basis by the employee's next regularly scheduled workday.

(2) Remote work (Distant):

- (a) Employee(s) who must report to the traditional worksite temporarily, will be provided a reasonable amount of time to report to the worksite giving consideration to the time necessary to travel, mode of transportation, travel authorizations, and other factors that may delay travel. Travel will be in accordance with Article 16 and applicable law, rule, and regulation.
- (b) In the event an employee is removed from Remote Work (distant) and directed by management to report to a traditional worksite (outside of the local commuting area) the direction will be considered a directed reassignment and will be conducted in accordance with Article 39 and Agency Policy. Unless removed from federal service for cause, if the employee is unable or unwilling to report to a traditional worksite, the employee may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including removal but will retain benefits consistent with a removal for refusing a

management directed reassignment outside of the employees' commuting area (e.g., CTAP/ICTAP, severance pay, retirement), if eligible.

- (3) An employee who is removed from remote work may be eligible to participate in Telework if all eligibility requirements for Telework are met.

### **Section 9. Remote Work Responsibilities and Benefits.**

- A. Remote work is not a substitute for leave; any dependent care (child or elder care) or personal business should be on personal time or on approved leave. Employees found in violation of this requirement may be subject to disciplinary action.
- B. Remote workers have the same opportunities and requirements for training, awards, assignments and reassignments, promotion, reduction in grade, and retention as other employees, subject to any location-based requirements and budgetary constraints (e.g., for travel costs).
- C. Remote workers may work an Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) consistent with applicable local AWS agreements for the Traditional Worksite.
- D. Remote work employees may work overtime, earn compensatory time, or earn credit hours if it is assigned or is properly requested and approved. The supervisor or manager schedules, orders, and approves all requests according to the same criteria used for other employees under their supervision.
- E. Remote workers are expected to maintain grooming and dress standards as if they were in a CBP facility and to present themselves on camera when required by the supervisor, agency official, and/or the meeting organizer. When practical, employees will be provided advance notice, normally no less than five (5) minutes, when required to be on camera.
- F. During any period where the CBP Continuity Plan is activated, the requirements of that plan supersede all Remote Work Guidance.

### **Section 10. Office Dismissal and Closure Procedures.**

- A. When the Federal Government or individual Agency offices are open with options for unscheduled leave, remote workers must notify their supervisor of their intent and request approval to use unscheduled leave. If a remote employee is scheduled to work the employee will continue to work the entire duty-day unless unscheduled leave is available and approved.

- B.** When a delayed arrival or dismissal is announced, remote workers are required to work the entire day or request unscheduled leave if available and approved.
- C.** If the Federal Government is closed for part or all of the day, remote workers are required to continue to work as normal. However, if an employee is unable to work due to disruption to the remote worksite caused by the same event that caused the Federal Government closure (e.g., electricity or infrastructure issues, etc.), the employee may be eligible for weather and safety leave. An employee must immediately notify their supervisor if there is such an issue and must receive approval before claiming weather and safety leave.
- D.** Nothing in this Section prevents an employee from requesting leave in accordance with the terms of the National Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Section 11. Continuity of Operations.** If a remote work employee is designated as continuity personnel, that employee must remain ready to support the Agency in the event of an emergency at the normal remote work official duty station or any other duty station determined by CBP.

**Section 12. Compensation, Commuting, and Relocation Expenses.**

- A.** If an employee enters into a remote arrangement which results in a change in their official duty station, the employee's salary or benefits may be impacted depending on the new duty location. Any impact may be discussed during the discussion in Section 8.C above.
- B.** Remote employees within the local commuting area have no normal commuting costs in accordance with DHS and CBP policies. Therefore, remote employees within the local commuting area are not eligible for local travel expenses. Remote Workers are not eligible for the Public Transportation Incentive Program (PTIP).
- C.** If a remote work employee is required by the Agency to report to any other duty location and it is more than 50-miles from the employee's remote official duty station, the employee will receive any applicable travel reimbursement in accordance with Article 16.
- D.** If an employee relocates as a result of their voluntarily remote work agreement, the employee will bear all relocation expenses.

**Section 13. Conduct.**

- A.** Participating employee(s) are bound by Agency standards of conduct while working at the alternate worksite. Nothing in this Article precludes the Agency from taking

any appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against an employee who fails to comply with the provisions of their Remote Work agreement or Agency policies and procedures.

- B. Remote Work Participants must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the CBP Remote Work Arrangement, to include the Terms and Conditions, Self-Safety Certification Checklist, and all established CBP policies and procedures, including security, leave, and conduct.

#### **Section 14. Security and Technology.**

- A. Remote workers must follow all established Agency rules, regulations and policies related to security and technology. Participating Remote work employee(s) must have an internet connection (high-speed connection [e.g., DSL or cable] is recommended) before requesting a remote work arrangement. Employees must be accessible at all times, via telephone, email and other means during their working hours. Participating employees are responsible for all costs associated with their own Internet connection and telephone.
- B. Participating employee(s) may be required use a virtual meeting platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams). CBP may use the platform's status symbols, to monitor an employee's time, attendance, or performance, but may not use this information as the sole basis for any disciplinary action. Employees will be permitted to use any appropriate, system templated, or agency provided virtual background.
- C. Remote Workers will ensure government property and information are kept safe, secure, and separated from their personal property and information.
- D. Remote Workers will be the sole operators of the government-owned equipment they use and will abide by established Agency policy regarding the use of government-owned equipment for personal business.
- E. Technical support will be provided to participating employees when needed. A participating employee's Remote Work arrangement may be temporarily or permanently terminated, in the event technical problems significantly reduces independence from the traditional worksite that prevents the employee from performing assigned duties at the alternate worksite. In such circumstances, the employee should consult with their supervisor as to whether to report to the traditional worksite or request leave.
- F. The use of equipment or software that is meant to simulate the movement of a computer mouse is not authorized and may not be used while remote working.

## **Section 15. Liability.**

The Agency will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternate worksite, except to the extent the Agency is found liable under by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

**Section 16. Remote Worksite Costs. A.** A remote employee will bear all costs for modifications to a remote worksite, furniture, internet, phone, or other items purchased for their remote worksite.

- B.** The Agency will provide the supplies and equipment determined necessary by the Agency for participating employees to perform their assigned duties. Customary office supplies (such as paper, pens, etc.) provided at the traditional worksite will be made available to Remote Workers.
- C.** Technical administrative services such as photo-copying, facsimile transmissions, mailing, etc. will normally be conducted during time at the traditional work site. In the event a Remote Worker desires Agency reimbursement for technical administrative services performed at an alternate work site, advance written approval must be obtained from the Agency.

**Section 17. Workers' Compensation.** Remote work employee(s) are covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at their remote worksite. The employee will notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at their remote worksite and to complete any forms required in connection with claims based upon the accident/injury.

**Section 18. Work Assignments/Performance. A.** An employee on a remote work agreement will have their work and conduct evaluated the same as employees at the traditional worksite.

- B.** If management determines at any time during the evaluation year that an employee's performance has diminished, and a continued decline could result in an annual performance rating of Unsuccessful (fails to meet expectations), management will give notice to the employee of the performance deficiency, counsel the employee, and give the employee an adequate opportunity to improve. If the employee does not improve after notice, counseling, and an adequate opportunity to improve, it may be grounds for temporarily rescinding an employee's Remote Work agreement. In such cases, the employee will be notified of the deficiencies determined by management and provided instruction on what conditions need to be met to have their remote work agreement re-evaluated.

- C. If the employee's performance fails to improve, they will be evaluated pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article 19: Employee Proficiency Review and their remote work agreement will remain rescinded.

### **Section 19. Records Management.**

Participating employee(s) will protect U.S. Government and Agency records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)).

### **Section 20. Worksite Safety and Home Inspection.**

- A. All remote workers must complete the safety checklist as a part of the application process. Failure to do so will result in a denial of remote work status.
- B. The Agency reserves the option to inspect employees' official worksites for adequacy and compliance with safety requirements.
- C. Absent unusual circumstance, home inspections will be conducted during normal working hours, either in person or virtually, with prior notice of at least two (2) business days.
- D. Upon request by a participating employee, a NTEU representative may be present during a home inspection while in an official time status consistent with Article 30: Union Representatives and Official Time. Home inspections will not be unreasonably delayed to accommodate a request for NTEU presence during at the home inspection.



## **ARTICLE 53: DURATION**

**Section 1.A.** This Agreement will be considered executed when no further action is necessary to finalize the agreement, e.g., date the last chief negotiator signs the signature page.

- B.** The Agreement will then be submitted for Agency Head approval the day after NTEU notifies the Agency's chief negotiator of ratification by the NTEU membership.
- C.** If the Union fails to ratify the Agreement or the Agency Head disapproves any provision of the Agreement, the parties will return to the bargaining table and use the same ground rules practices used to negotiate this Agreement.
- D.** However, if the Agreement is disapproved and challenged through the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) negotiability appeal process, the Agreement will not go into effect until the date the FLRA decision is final and binding so long as the FLRA has upheld the validity of the negotiated language and ordered the Agency Head to rescind its disapproval. By mutual agreement, the parties may explore severing disapproved provisions and proceeding with effecting the Agreement.
- E.** This Agreement will become effective ninety (90) days after obtaining agency head approval pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §7114 (c) or a date mutually determined by parties.

**Section 2.A.** This Agreement will remain in effect for six (6) years, unless modified in accordance with this Article.

- B.** Either party may reopen and/or propose up to four (4) articles within the thirty (30) days immediately after the halfway mark of its initial term. The parties will mutually agree on the date of the thirty (30) day window. Unless the parties mutually agree otherwise, the procedures of Article 26: Bargaining, will be used for re-opener negotiations. However:
  - (1) NTEU will be entitled up to six (6) bargaining unit employees, and may additionally have NTEU staff;
  - (2) CBP will pay the travel per diem cost for NTEU's bargaining unit employee members for up to twelve (12) weeks of bargaining; and
  - (3) The parties will negotiate ground rules governing re-opener negotiations, to include the initial exchange of proposals.

- C. Upon expiration, this Agreement will remain in effect for yearly periods thereafter unless either party serves the other party with a written notice of the desire to renegotiate the Agreement during a window period beginning four (4) months prior to the expiration date and ending two (2) months prior thereto.

**Section 3.** Nothing prohibits the parties from modifying or extending this Agreement by written mutual agreement.

**APPENDIX A-1: GENERAL NOTICE**

I am investigating the alleged \_\_\_\_\_ (theft, misuse, loss, etc.). You, \_\_\_\_\_ (employee's name) \_\_\_\_\_, are the subject of the investigation concerning this matter.

One of the following must be checked.

\_\_\_\_\_ The general nature of this matter is criminal.

\_\_\_\_\_ The general nature of this matter is administrative.

One of the following must be checked.

\_\_\_\_\_ This interview is related to possible criminal misconduct by you.

\_\_\_\_\_ This interview is not related to possible criminal misconduct by you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's initials

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature

## **APPENDIX A-2: WEINGARTEN RIGHTS**

### EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION REGARDING UNION REPRESENTATION

Pursuant to 5 USC §7114(a)(2)(B) you have the right to be represented during the interview about to take place by a person designated by the exclusively recognized labor organization for the unit in which you work, if,

- (a) you reasonably believe that the results of this interview may result in disciplinary action against you; and
- (b) you request representation.

I acknowledge receipt of the aforementioned notification of my right to representation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature

**APPENDIX A-3: THIRD PARTY WITNESS INTERVIEW  
NOTIFICATION**

You are not currently the subject of this investigation. However, you may be held responsible for any false statements you make or for any violation of the CBP Code of Conduct that you admit. Therefore, if at any time during the interview you reasonably believe that you may be subjected to discipline as a result of your statements, you may request representation by the exclusively recognized labor organization for the unit in which you work.

I acknowledge receipt of the aforementioned notification of my rights.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature

## **APPENDIX A-4: MIRANDA RIGHTS**

### WAIVER OF RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT AND OF RIGHT TO ADVICE OF COUNSEL

#### STATEMENT OF RIGHTS

- Before we ask you any questions, it is my duty to advise you of your rights.
- You have the right to remain silent.
- Anything you say can be used against you in court, or other proceedings.
- You have the right to consult an attorney before making any statement or answering any question, and you may have an attorney present with you during questioning.
- You may have an attorney appointed by the U.S. Magistrate or the court to represent you if you cannot afford or otherwise obtain one.
- If you decide to answer questions now with or without a lawyer, you still have the right to stop the questioning at any time, or to stop the questioning for the purpose of consulting a lawyer.

However, you may waive the right to advice of counsel and your right to remain silent, and you may answer questions or make a statement without consulting a lawyer if you so desire.

#### WAIVER

I have had the above statements of my rights read and explained to me and fully understanding these rights I waive them freely and voluntarily, without threat or intimidation and without any promise of reward or immunity. I was taken into custody at \_\_\_\_\_(time), on \_\_\_\_\_(date), and have signed this document at \_\_\_\_\_(time), on \_\_\_\_\_(date).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

MIRANDA RIGHTS, cont.

WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature

**APPENDIX A-5: BECKWITH RIGHTS**

You have the right to remain silent if your answers may tend to incriminate you.

Anything you say may be used as evidence later in an administrative proceeding or any future criminal proceeding involving you.

If you refuse to answer the questions posed to you on the grounds that the answers may tend to incriminate you, you cannot be discharged solely for remaining silent.

I have been given the above warning at the beginning of the interview held on  
(Enter date) .

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature



## **APPENDIX A-6: KALKINES RIGHTS**

### STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Before we ask you any questions, it is my obligation to inform you of the following:

You are here to be asked questions pertaining to your employment with CBP and the duties that you perform for CBP. You have the option to remain silent, although you may be subject to removal from your employment by the Service if you fail to answer material and relevant questions relating to the performance of your duties as an employee. You are further advised that the answers you may give to the questions propounded to you at this interview, or any information or evidence which is gained by reason of your answers, may not be used against you in a criminal proceeding except that you may be subject to a criminal prosecution for any false answer that you may give.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Receipt by Employee

I have been given the above Statement of Rights and Obligations at the beginning of the interview held on, (enter date).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Name  
(Agency representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator's Signature

## **APPENDIX A-7: PERSONNEL SECURITY INQUIRY** **NOTICE**

### **Inquiry Stemming from Information Obtained During the Periodic Reinvestigation, Security Forms Review or Continuous Evaluation**

**Background:** All CBP employees must be continuously evaluated to ensure ongoing suitability and/or eligibility for continued employment. The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), Personnel Security Division (PSD) recently identified information that may have a negative impact on your continued suitability and/or eligibility for employment in your position. Additional information is required from you in relation to information PSD has identified.

**The information PSD identified, along with the response you provide, if any, may be furnished to:**

- (1) designated officers and employees of agencies and departments of the Federal Government for employment related purposes (i.e., evaluation of qualifications, suitability for employment, loyalty to the U.S. Government), a determination regarding qualifications for suitability for performing a contractual service to the Federal Government, and/or eligibility for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position;
- (2) any Agency of the Federal Government having oversight or review authority with regard to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) activities;
- (3) the intelligence agencies of the Federal Government; and
- (4) those with an established need based on the routine uses of information as published in the Federal Register.

**You may elect not to provide the requested information,** but that decision may result in an unfavorable determination, security clearance action, or cancellation of further processing for suitability and/or national security eligibility and/or subsequent administrative action (e.g., failure to meet a condition of employment).

**Weingarten Rights - Bargaining unit employees are entitled to union representation if:** (a) you reasonably believe that the results of this inquiry may result in disciplinary action against you, and (b) you request representation. Current union information can be found on the CBPnet.

In order for a representative to act on your behalf in this matter, you must submit to PSD a "Designation of Representation" signed by you and your representative (or send an email with the representative's first and last name, phone number, mailing address and email address as referenced Article 50, section 4.A). Should you identify a representative, PSD will continue to correspond with you and copy your representative on all correspondence.

**APPENDIX A-8: PERSONNEL SECURITY INQUIRY**  
**DESIGNATION OF REPRESENTATION**

NTEU Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby appoint the following named individual or organization as my Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (Number and Street)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

I acknowledge I have discussed with my Representative their authorization to represent me during the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), Personnel Security Division's inquiry stemming from information obtained during a Periodic Reinvestigation, security forms review or Continuous Evaluation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee/Requester

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX B: DUES WITHHOLDING CODES

Information Codes used on the NTEU biweekly dues withholding data provided by the Employer.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description/Explanation</u>
D	Continuing  Explanation: Dues withholding is continuing.
E	Insufficient Pay  Explanation: No union dues were deducted because the employee either did not receive any pay or there were insufficient funds remaining for union dues after higher precedence deductions were taken.
F	New Allotment  Explanation: New allotment represents the first pay period that a new allotment is effective. If there are insufficient funds for dues withholding during the first pay period, Code F will be used as the Information Code for that pay period and Code E will not be used in those instances.
G	Revocation  Explanation: Code G will appear on the magnetic tape only during the pay period in which dues withholding is revoked (terminated), and represents allotments that have been permanently terminated.
H	Separation (Other than Retirement)  Explanation: Identifies all employees separated during the pay period, except for those who retire.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description/Explanation</u>
I	<p>Pay Adjustments (Plus Amounts Only)</p> <p>Explanation: Used only for adjustments that are being PAID to the union.</p>
J	<p>Movement Out of the Recognition Area</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies employees who are permanently transferred or reassigned to a non-bargaining unit position.</p>
K	<p>Seasonal Employee, or On-Call Employee, to Non-Duty Status (Pay Period that Seasonal or On-Call Employee is placed in Non-Duty Status)</p> <p>Explanation: Seasonal or On-Call employees with work schedule codes G, H, J, Q, R, or T, who are placed in a non-duty status, will be identified by Code K in the pay period the action occurs. Thereafter, they will be identified by Code N until the pay period they return to duty.</p>
L	<p>Temporary Promotion/Temporary Reassignment to Non-Bargaining Unit Position</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies employees temporarily being promoted or reassigned to non-bargaining unit positions until they return to their bargaining unit positions.</p>
M	<p>Reactivate Union Dues Withholding after Temporary Promotion/Temporary Reassignment is Completed</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies employees returning to their bargaining unit positions from temporary promotions/temporary reassignments to non-bargaining unit positions during the pay period they return.</p>

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description/Explanation</u>
N	<p>Non-Duty Status (seasonal or on-call employee in continued non-duty status)</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies seasonal or on-call employees with work schedule codes G, H, J, Q, R, or T who continue to be in a non-duty status for more than one pay period until they return to duty. During the first pay period they are in non-duty status, they will be identified by Code K.</p>
R	<p>Retirement</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies employees who retire during the pay period the retirement is effective.</p>
S	<p>Inter-Chapter Transfer (Transfer Out of Chapter)</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies dues withholding that is terminated for the “old chapter” when an employee changes union chapters. Employees transferring out will be listed on the chapter they are leaving as an “S” in the last pay period for which dues are withheld in the chapter they are leaving.</p>
T	<p>Inter-Chapter Transfer (Transfer In to Chapter)</p> <p>Explanation: Identifies dues withholding that is commenced for the “new chapter” when an employee changes union chapters. Employees transferring to the new chapter will be listed on the chapter they are transferring to as a “T” in the first pay period for which dues are withheld for that chapter.</p>
X	<p>Deceased</p>

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description/Explanation</u>
Z	Pay Adjustments (Minus Amounts Only)  Explanation: Identifies amounts which have been paid to employees for reimbursement for over withholding of union dues, and charged to agency funds. These amounts will appear on the tape solely to notify the union of the over withholding. No deductions will be taken from union dues withholding for pay adjustments.

## **APPENDIX C: GRIEVANCE FORM**



**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

### **GRIEVANCE FORM** National Treasury Employees Union

	1A. GRIEVANCE NUMBER	1B. DATE FILED
2. FILER (EMPLOYEE NAME (S) OR UNION CHAPTER)	3. EMPLOYEE POSITION AND WORK STATION	
4. EMPLOYEE'S IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR (NAME)		
5. EMPLOYEE'S REPRESENTATIVE (CHECK ONE)	5A. NAME OF UNION REPRESENTATIVE	
<input type="checkbox"/> SELF <input type="checkbox"/> UNION (COMPLETE 5A & 5B)	5B. UNION REPRESENTATIVE TELEPHONE NUMBER	
6A. SPECIFIC ARTICLE(S) OF THE AGREEMENT ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN VIOLATED; SECTIONS OF APPLICABLE LAW OR REGULATION ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN VIOLATED; OR THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITION IN DISPUTE.		
6B. IF ALLEGATION OF UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE, INDICATE SPECIFIC SECTION(S) OF 5 USC 7116(A) THAT HAVE BEEN VIOLATED BY CHECKING APPLICABLE BOX(ES). IT IS AN UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE FOR THE AGENCY TO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (1) to interfere with, restrain or coerce any employee in the exercise by the employee of any right under this chapter;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (2) to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization by discrimination in connection with hiring, tenure, promotion, or other conditions of employment;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (3) to sponsor, control, or otherwise assist any labor organization, other than to furnish, upon request, customary and routine services and facilities if the services and facilities are also furnished on an impartial basis to other labor organizations having equivalent status;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (4) to discipline or otherwise discriminate against an employee because the employee has filed a complaint, affidavit, or petition, or has given any information or testimony under this chapter;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (5) to refuse to consult or negotiate in good faith a labor organization as required by this chapter;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (6) to fail or refuse to cooperate in impasse procedures and impasse decisions as required by this chapter;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (7) to enforce any rule or regulation (other than a rule or regulation implementing section 2302 of this title) which is in conflict with any applicable collective bargaining agreement if the agreement was in effect before the date the rule or regulation was prescribed; or</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (8) to otherwise fail or refuse with any provision of this chapter.</li> </ul>		
6C. PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICE (SEE ARTICLE 7 OF THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT)		
7. STATEMENT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES GIVING RISE TO THE GRIEVANCE (PROVIDE NATURE OF THE INCIDENT, PERSONS INVOLVED, TIME, DATE, PLACE, ETC.)		
8. ACTION REQUESTED		
9. EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE	10. NTEU REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE	



## **APPENDIX D: DOUGLAS FACTORS**

The purpose of this Appendix is to provide information in relation to Section 4 of Article 45: Disciplinary Actions and Section 4 of Article 46: Adverse Actions. Consistent with these Sections (as well as applicable laws, rules and regulations), Deciding Officials will give appropriate consideration to the below criteria (Douglas Factors) when deciding the appropriate penalty for employee misconduct:

- (1) The nature and seriousness of the offense, and its relation to the employee's duties, position, and responsibilities, including whether the offense was intentional or technical or inadvertent, or was committed maliciously or for gain, or was frequently repeated;
- (2) The employee's job level and type of employment, including supervisory or fiduciary role, contacts with the public, and prominence of the position;
- (3) The employee's past disciplinary record;
- (4) The employee's past work record, including length of service, performance on the job, ability to get along with fellow workers, and dependability;
- (5) The effect of the offense upon the employee's ability to perform at a satisfactory level and its effect upon supervisors' confidence in the employee's ability to perform assigned duties;
- (6) Consistency of the penalty with those imposed upon other employees for the same or similar offenses;
- (7) Consistency of the penalty with any applicable agency table of penalties;
- (8) The notoriety of the offense or its impact upon the reputation of the agency;
- (9) The clarity with which the employee was on notice of any rules that were violated in committing the offense, or had been warned about the conduct in question;
- (10) Potential for the employee's rehabilitation;
- (11) Mitigating circumstances surrounding the offense such as unusual job tensions, personality problems, mental impairment, harassment, or bad faith, malice or provocation on the part of others involved in the matter; and

- (12) The adequacy and effectiveness of alternative sanctions to deter such conduct in the future by the employee or others.

In considering these factors, however, it should be noted that they do not necessarily have equal weight, may not apply to every situation, and in some instances may even constitute aggravating circumstances. Selection of an appropriate penalty must thus involve a responsible balancing of the relevant factors in the individual case.

## **APPENDIX E: OFO PERSONAL APPEARANCE STANDARDS- QUICK REFERENCE MATRIX**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>HAIR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be neat, trimmed and properly groomed.</li> <li>• Will not cover more than the top half of the ear, nor extend beyond the bottom of the shirt collar.</li> <li>• Will not be worn in extreme or faddish styles.</li> <li>• Will not interfere with the proper wearing of CBP headgear.</li> <li>• Hair ornaments prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be neat, natural in color, and conservatively styled.</li> <li>• Will not extend below the shoulder or worn in one or two braids, or in a single ponytail down the center of the back so that it does not extend below the horizontal line centered between the shoulder blades.</li> <li>• Braid(s) or ponytail cannot be worn over the shoulder or pulled in front of the body.</li> <li>• Bulk of the hair must not exceed the width of the head.</li> <li>• Will not interfere with the proper wearing of CBP headgear.</li> </ul>
<b>FACIAL HAIR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facial hair will be no longer than 1 inch in length unless required for medical or religious reasons.</li> <li>• Facial hair will be trimmed and well groomed.</li> <li>• Facial hair will not be worn in any extreme or unconventional styles. Absent the existence of facial hair, the employee must present a clean-shaven face.</li> <li>• Ungroomed beard stubble would not be considered neat, clean, and professional.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable.</li> </ul>
<b>FINGERNAILS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall not extend beyond the fingertips.</li> <li>• False fingernails and polish prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall extend no more than ¼ inch beyond the fingertips.</li> <li>• Must be well manicured and clean at all times.</li> </ul>
<b>COSMETICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only cosmetics which are conservative in color and amount shall be permitted.</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX E**

**CBP Personal Appearance Standards-Quick Reference Matrix**

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<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>RINGS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall wear no more than two (2) rings.</li> <li>• Must not be likely to catch on other objects.</li> <li>• Shall be no larger than standard university or college rings.</li> <li>• Engagement and wedding rings count as one (1) ring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall wear no more than two (2) rings.</li> <li>• Must not be likely to catch on other objects.</li> <li>• Shall be no larger than standard university or college rings.</li> <li>• Engagement and wedding rings count as one (1) ring.</li> </ul>
<b>NECKLACES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be concealed (not visible) while wearing uniform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be concealed (not visible) while wearing uniform.</li> </ul>
<b>EARRINGS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May wear plain, stud-type earrings no more than ¼ inches in diameter.</li> <li>• Wearing of more than two pairs is prohibited.</li> </ul>
<b>BRACELETS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibited except for medical alert bracelets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibited except for medical alert bracelets.</li> </ul>
<b>WATCHES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May wear one (1) conservatively styled watch.</li> <li>• Band will be gold, silver, black, or dark blue in color.</li> <li>• Bracelet style prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May wear one (1) conservatively styled watch.</li> <li>• Band will be gold, silver, black or dark blue in color.</li> <li>• Bracelet style prohibited.</li> </ul>
<b>EYEWEAR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be conservative in style and color.</li> <li>• Neon or brightly colored frames or mirrored lenses are not authorized.</li> <li>• Straps may be worn if they are black in color.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be conservative in style and color.</li> <li>• Neon or brightly colored frames or mirrored lenses are not authorized.</li> <li>• Straps may be worn if they are black in color.</li> </ul>
<b>BODY PIERCING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not be visible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not be visible.</li> </ul>
<b>TATTOOS/BRANDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be concealed if obscene, racially motivated, or gang related.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be concealed if obscene, racially motivated, or gang related.</li> </ul>
<b>BODY ALTERATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentional alterations prohibited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentional alterations prohibited.</li> </ul>

[illegible]

## **APPENDIX G: LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM DIRECTIVE**

### **U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

**CBP DIRECTIVE NO. 51711-004**

**DATE: January 25, 2011**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: HRM:BM&W**

**SUPERSEDES:**

**REVIEW DATE: June 2017**

### **U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM**

1. **PURPOSE.** This directive establishes policy and procedures, and assigns responsibilities governing the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Lactation Support Program (LSP), in accordance with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Worklife Programs. CBP's Office of Human Resources Management (HRM), Benefits, Medical and Worklife Division (BM&W) provides oversight for the LSP.
2. **POLICY.** It is the policy of CBP to establish and administer the LSP within CBP.
3. **AUTHORITY.** On March 23, 2010, Congress enacted the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (also known as the Health Care Reform Act) (PPACA), P.L. 111-148. One result of the PPACA was an amendment of Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, 29 U.S.C. § 207 that requires employers to provide:
  - A reasonable break time for employees who are nursing mothers to express breast milk for their nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth each time such employee has the need to express the milk; and
  - A private place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public for employees to express breast milk.
4. **SCOPE.** This policy applies to all CBP employees as defined in 5 U.S.C. § 2105.
5. **RESPONSIBILITIES.**
  - 5.1. The Assistant Commissioner (AC) for HRM is responsible for the overall implementation and administration of this directive. HRM is responsible for managing the LSP and for providing the necessary guidance to managers and supervisors on making lactation accommodations for their employees.
  - 5.2. The HRM BM&W Division is responsible for providing oversight for the LSP; publicizing the availability and provisions of the LSP on CBPnet; and monitoring the usage of the LSP.

**5.3.** The AC for Office of Administration (OA) is responsible for: allocating space for lactation rooms; maintaining room cleanliness and privacy; and including lactation rooms in future renovations and new construction plans.

**5.4.** All program offices are responsible for the following: stocking necessary supplies and equipment; and ensuring non-discrimination to employees who request break time and private lactation room/space under this directive.

**S.S.** CBP supervisors and managers are responsible for providing reasonable break times for employees; notifying OA of any space needs or issues; and providing a private room/space, other than a bathroom, to express milk free from public view or intrusion.

**5.6.** CBP employees are responsible for requesting the use of a private lactation room/space with reasonable notice; providing their own breast pump; maintaining the cleanliness of the lactation room/space and cleaning up any expressed milk spillage; storing all expressed milk in closed containers; and taking all expressed milk home daily.

**6. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY.** Full-time and part-time CBP employees who are nursing mothers are eligible to participate in the LSP. Full-time and part-time CBP employees are eligible to receive paid reasonable break times for expressing milk in the identified private lactation room/space.

## **7. GUIDELINES.**

**7.1.** The LSP includes: Reasonable break times for nursing mothers to express milk and **on-site lactation rooms or space equipped with:**

- At least one chair;
- At least one table;
- A lock on the door (locks from the inside);
- Disinfectant wipes;
- A small refrigerator for milk storage;
- Shelves or cabinets for storage purposes;
- A standard outlet (standard 110Y);
- Paper towels;
- Hand sanitizer; and
- A wastebasket.

**7.2.** LSP Registration and Coordination. The LSP is available to all eligible CBP employees as defined in Section 4. Employees must request the use of the lactation room/space with reasonable notice. Each program office shall appoint a Program Coordinator to manage the LSP for their respective office. Employees should fill out a registration form provided by their program office and e-mail the form to their Program Coordinator to schedule the lactation room/space. If employees have questions about the program, they should contact their Program Coordinator or the CBP Program Manager in HRM.

**7.3.** Lactation rooms/space may be used by all eligible CBP employees. However, employees must register with the Program Coordinator to use the lactation room/space on an ongoing basis. Specifically, employees using lactation rooms/space must do the following:

**7.3.1** Employees using a lactation room/space must ensure the room is kept clean. After each usage, each employee must wipe the table and chair with a disinfectant wipe to have it ready for the next employee's use.

**7.3.2** Employees using a lactation room/space are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the refrigerator, cleaning up any expressed milk spillage, and disinfecting any surface where expressed milk was spilled with a disinfectant wipe.

**7.4.** Prior to taking leave, expectant mothers are responsible for providing reasonable notice to their supervisor and Program Coordinator regarding the need for a private lactation room/space upon return.

## **8. DEFINITIONS.**

**8.1.** Nursing Mother: A mother who is breastfeeding her baby.

**8.2.** Frequency of Breaks: CBP will provide a reasonable amount of break time to express milk. "Reasonable break time" is not defined. However, the requirement is that employers provide reasonable breaks to express breast milk "each time" an employee has the need to do so is suggesting that the length and frequency of each employee's lactation breaks could vary.

**8.3.** Period of Coverage: Under this directive paid reasonable break times will be covered until one year after the birth of the child.

**9. BARGAINING UNIT EMPLOYEES.** This policy does not supersede any procedures contained in existing collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) covering bargaining unit employees in CBP. This policy shall be administered in conjunction with the negotiated procedures contained in existing CBAs.

**10. IMPLEMENTATION.** The implementation of the LSP is based on the PPACA amendment to 29 U.S.C. § 207.



## **APPENDIX H: EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES MOU**

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

And

The National Treasury Employees Union and National Border Patrol Council

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP” or “Employer”), the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), and the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC) (hereinafter referred to collectively as “the Parties”) hereby enter into this initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support our dedicated workforce and help to remove the stigma surrounding the use of mental health services, resources, and treatment. The Parties agree that asking for help or assistance for mental health care, personal wellness, and recovery is a sign of strength, not a weakness. Further, employee mental health is a critical component of the CBP Health and Safety Program. To that end, the Parties are committed to working together to remove the barriers that exist and prevent employees from getting treatment. The parties acknowledge that existing policies and practices are viewed as obstacles for employees who wish to come forward to seek help with their mental health struggles. The Parties intend for this MOU to provide clarity and guidance to proactively engage employees to seek help without stigma, to reduce stressors, and promote a healthy and resilient workforce. It is the parties’ intent for this MOU to serve as the foundation for ongoing collaboration and to commit to engaging in continuing efforts to prioritize and support the mental health and well-being of CBP employees.

### **Section 1. Statement of Commitment**

- A. Employees are encouraged to utilize all available CBP Employee Well Being Support Services as means to foster a healthy and resilient workforce. Such services include:
  - a) CBP Peer Support Program;
  - b) CBP Chaplain Program;
  - c) CBP Veteran Support Program;
  - d) Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- B. Employees will not be subjected to disciplinary or adverse actions, FFDEs, and/or retaliation solely based on the utilization of mental health resources or solely based on notifying the agency that they are possibly experiencing mental health issues and are considering seeking treatment.
- C. Management is committed to providing employees with access to CBP resources such as, EAP, Peer Support, Chaplaincy, and Veteran Support and to support employees who seek private mental health resources.
- D. Seeking or receiving mental health treatment is not an automatic reason to revoke or deny eligibility for access to classified information or eligibility to occupy a critical/sensitive position if disclosed at any time during the period of eligibility. As defined in Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD) 4, certain emotional, mental, and personality conditions can impair judgement, reliability, or trustworthiness. A clearance suspension may be

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required to protect the employee and agency until such time further assessment can be rendered regarding continued access or eligibility.

- E. Employees experiencing mental health issues will be treated in the same fashion as employees who experience physical health issues and will be afforded all appropriate flexibilities such as FMLA, LWOP, sick/annual leave, and temporary light duty. These flexibilities will be granted in accordance with the procedures and timeframes under the respective collective bargaining agreements, regulations, and relevant agency policies including the provisions of this MOU.

**Section 2. Safe Harbor**

- A. CBP has determined that employees who are experiencing mental health issues or conditions (e.g., suicidal ideation, PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse) will be granted a "safe harbor" from being referred for a possible FFDE, for that mental health issue, while seeking and receiving treatment, following the procedures listed below. The parties recognize and acknowledge that an employee who seeks help for a mental health issue or condition is demonstrating good judgment and decision-making. Accordingly, the proper course of treatment (e.g., number of therapy sessions, length of rehabilitation program, duration of care) to help an employee stabilize or recover shall be determined by the employee in conjunction with their mental health care provider(s).
- B. The term "treatment," as used herein, is defined to include utilizing the services of licensed health care practitioners, including psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, counselors, and clinicians, and/or inpatient, residential, and outpatient rehabilitation programs.
- C. While an employee is receiving treatment, as defined above, for a mental health issue or condition, CBP will refrain from ordering that employee to undergo a Fitness for Duty Examination, for up to 12 months unless: 1) the mental health provider recommends such a referral, 2) CBP Medical Fitness Branch find the Certificate of Treatment, "Attachment A" provided presents a reason to make such a referral under the regulatory requirements, under 5 CFR 339.301, 3) exigent circumstances exist, or 4) objective evidence exists the employee's medical condition materially changes, in accordance with 5 CFR 339.301.
- D. An employee is eligible for this safe harbor from a referral to a FFDE for the mental health issue at hand by receiving treatment for a mental health issue or condition, as defined above and providing a completed copy of the Certificate of Treatment form (attached hereto as "Attachment A") no more than four (4) times in 12 months.
- E. The employee will return the completed Certificate of Treatment form to management, upon request, within 30 days. In the event the employee is unable to meet that timeline, the employee will provide the Agency, within that timeframe, with an update on the status of their progress in obtaining the completed form.
- F. If an employee who has self-identified as experiencing a mental health issue or condition refuses to seek treatment, or, after receiving treatment, the employee's mental health care provider deems them unlikely to recover, CBP may consider a Fitness for Duty Examination, consistent with 5 C.F.R. §339.301. The parties acknowledge that referrals for Fitness for Duty Examination must only occur when management, in consultation with CBP's Medical Fitness Branch and/or an Operational Psychologist, determine there is a reasonable belief,

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based on objective evidence, that there is a question about an employee's continued capacity to meet the medical standards or physical requirements of a position, in accordance with 5 CFR339.301.

**Section 3. Fostering an Open Climate**

- A. CBP has determined that supervisors and managers will be trained on the CBP Employee Mental Well-Being Support Services Guidance because any misinterpretation or misapplication of that guidance would jeopardize future efforts to empower employees to self-help. CBP will offer the training on its CBP Employee Mental Well-Being Support Services Guidance to NTEU and NBPC officers and stewards.
- B. If an employee contacts a manager or supervisor with a mental health concern, or a manager or supervisor believes an employee has a mental health concern, absent exigent circumstances (i.e., there is an immediate threat to themselves or others), management will consult with a CBP Operational Psychologist and/or Suicidologist, prior to taking any action including referring an employee for a FFDE or temporarily removing an employee's firearm.
- C. When an employee initially approaches a supervisor or a supervisor initially reaches out to an employee to discuss the employee's mental health, the employee will be advised that they may have a union representative present.
- D. When meeting with an Operational Psychologist, an employee may request to have anyone who supports her/him involved in these conversations (e.g., spouse, friend, union representative, etc.), however, the operational psychologist is not obligated to continue the consultation or accept the consultation if the psychologist believes their presence would be unhelpful.
- E. When an employee confides in a supervisor/manager that they are experiencing a mental health condition or issue supervisors and managers will engage in active listening and assist the employee immediately by providing referrals to available resources and explaining leave options.
- F. If the employee is an immediate threat to themselves or others, management will temporarily remove their firearm.
- G. If, after consulting with a CBP Operational Psychologist and/or Suicidologist, the Agency determines that the employee's authorization to carry a firearm should be temporarily revoked, it will act in accordance with the CBP Use of Force Handbook and applicable collective bargaining agreement. An employee experiencing mental health issues may also voluntarily initiate the temporary transfer and storage of their firearm. The parties acknowledge that the fact that an employee voluntarily surrenders their government-issued weapon is evidence that they are exercising sound judgment.
- H. The temporary revocation of the authority to carry a firearm does not require the automatic temporary revocation of an employee's law enforcement authority.<sup>1</sup> Temporary revocation

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<sup>1</sup> For employees under the 1896 job series, BPAPRA eligibility requires law enforcement authority. The negative impact of the loss of BPAPRA may exacerbate the situation and should be considered in

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of law enforcement authority/credentials in connection with seeking treatment for mental health will be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis, based on reasonable and articulate information available at the time that indicates that the individual retaining their law enforcement status would raise safety concerns of imminent harm to the employee, coworkers, or other third parties. This determination will be made by the appropriate Responsible Official (RO) who is above the rank of supervisor. The parties' commitment to remove the stigma and barriers to seeking mental health treatment will not be attained if law enforcement officers believe that coming forward and/or utilizing mental health services will result in having their law enforcement authority rescinded.

- I. If the determination is made to temporarily remove an employee's firearm, CBP will offer the employee an available light duty assignment and all available leave flexibilities to which they are eligible.
- J. If the Agency has a question about an employee's continued capacity to meet the medical standards or physical requirements of their position based on their self-professed mental health condition or issue or the Agency's perception that the employee is experiencing a mental health condition or issue, the Agency will notify that employee of this MOU and their ability to seek treatment, as defined herein.

**Section 4. Destigmatizing Mental Health**

- A. CBP has determined that, consistent with the federal government's role as a model employer, it has an important interest in eliminating the stigma associated with mental health and well-being treatment. To that end, employees experiencing mental health issues or receiving mental health treatment will not be automatically or arbitrarily barred from performing light duty work. The temporary revocation of a firearm does not render COPRA covered employees ineligible for all overtime assignments. The parties acknowledge that there may be overtime work available that a COPRA eligible employee can perform without carriage authority.
- B. Employees will be eligible for assignment to overtime work associated with the light duty assignment, consistent with the organization's need for such work to be performed on an overtime basis and the medical restrictions placed on the employee. To the extent possible, the employee will not have their work schedules or duties negatively impacted. The Agency will attempt to place the employee in a light duty assignment, to include duties that can be performed virtually, within their current duty location. If the Agency is unable to place the employee in a light duty assignment within their current duty location, the Agency will attempt to place the employee in a light duty assignment, to include duties that can be performed virtually, with one of the other CBP components that allows the employee to remain in their local commuting area.
- C. The Parties recognize that the fear of losing one's income while getting treatment is a barrier to employees seeking help, and that barrier must be addressed to encourage employees to get assistance. To that end, CBP has determined that it will offer available light duty work that

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removal of law enforcement authority. For employees covered by COPRA, law enforcement authority is not a prerequisite for overtime eligibility, though it may be required for certain assignments

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may not require the employee to carry a firearm to employees who avail themselves of the Safe Harbor. Requests for temporary light duty will be approved in accordance with this MOU, the collective bargaining agreements, and applicable policy/directive(s). To the greatest extent possible and upon an employee's request, CBP will allow such employees to work in light duty that provide for the same or similar working conditions (e.g., pay, shift, overtime, telework, AWS, and RDOs) in accordance with respective collective bargaining agreements and current applicable policy/directives as the employee had prior to seeking treatment for a mental health condition or issue.

- D. Employees experiencing mental health issues or receiving mental health treatment may not be barred from working any aspect of their job that is normally performed by employees on light duty work, assuming the mental health issues or treatment would not interfere with the employee performing the light duty work.

**Section 5. Services and Leave**

- A. CBP will offer an employee seeking treatment the opportunity to utilize its Peer Support Program (PSP), Chaplaincy Program, Veterans Support Program (VSP), onsite clinicians, and Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Employees are not required to utilize these programs and are equally encouraged to utilize private, non-CBP services.
- B. Employees may utilize existing programs to include, but not limited to, telework, leave options, alternative work schedule flexibilities, etc., consistent with respective collective bargaining agreements and relevant directives/policies.
- C. To the greatest extent permissible by law, CBP directives/policies and negotiated agreements, CBP agrees to extend to employees receiving mental well-being and support services, work life flexibilities and programs which include FMLA, advanced, paid, and unpaid leave, telework arrangements where eligible, voluntary leave transfer program, and flexible work programs in accordance with current policies and directives.
- D. Employees are entitled to twelve (12) free sessions per issue with EAP, which include onsite clinicians.<sup>2</sup> Employees are eligible to attend EAP counseling services on duty hours, which includes reasonable time to travel to and from the twelve (12) sessions.
- E. The Parties recognize that employees may have greater access to, and be better served by, private mental health counseling and treatment. As such, CBP has determined that, employees shall be eligible to attend private therapy sessions on duty hours, including reasonable travel time, with a mental health care provider that is not affiliated with CBP, for the equivalent number of free EAP sessions.
- F. For any sessions beyond the on-duty free EAP-arranged sessions or employee-arranged private sessions, all available leave and scheduling flexibilities will be made available to the employee.
- G. With the exception of a mental health emergency, provided the initial and routine appointments are made more than 2 weeks in advance of the requested time for the

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<sup>2</sup> If the number of free sessions is increased beyond 12 sessions, Section D, E, and F will be considered to be updated to match the number of sessions available for EAP or private therapy sessions.

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appointment employees will be granted a reasonable amount of duty time to travel to and partake in such EAP counseling services, subject to operational needs. Employees working at busy and/or understaffed ports of entry or sectors in the country shall not be punished or denied duty time, however, based solely on staffing. The Agency recognizes that employees working in such locations are also in need of mental health services and will work to find suitable available duty times during which those employees may travel to and attend counseling services.

- H. In the event an employee is denied duty time to attend EAP counseling services or private mental healthcare services, CBP will inform the employee and provide as much notice as possible. CBP will also inform the employee when duty time is available. CBP will hold a formal meeting with the employee and invite a union representative to attend in an attempt to resolve the issue.
- I. During the formal meeting or at any point in the grievance procedure, if it is determined the employee was improperly denied duty time, the appropriate remedy will be restoration of the employee's used leave as a result of the Agency's denial of duty time.
- J. Supervisors should modify an employee's tour of duty to accommodate the employee's attendance at EAP sessions, to include with onsite clinicians, and private, non-CBP affiliated counseling, to the maximum extent practicable, operational needs permitting. Supervisors may not post information about an employee using EAP services on any schedule, assignment list, or other document or system that is visible to all employees (e.g., paper schedules, schedule request systems, etc.).

**Section 6. Confidentiality**

- A. CBP acknowledges that an employee's request for mental health services, referrals, and information provided about an employee's health condition (verbal, electronic, hardcopy) is considered confidential medical information. This information must be maintained in confidential files separate from an individual's personnel file. For employees represented by NTEU, such information will be maintained in accordance with Article 31 Section 14.A of the NTEU National Collective Bargaining Agreement for employees represented by NTEU, and access to all medical information, regardless of bargaining unit, shall be limited to a "need to know" basis.
- B. Employees will normally provide appropriately requested medical information to the requesting official who will ensure the information is protected. In addition, the employee at their option may provide medical information (e.g., information that includes a doctor's prognosis and diagnosis) directly to a medically certified Agency representative.
- C. In the event a medically certified Agency representative provides medical information to CBP management officials for the purpose of making an informed management decision, the non-medically certified CBP management officials will only review applicable summary medical information in which they have an appropriate need to know.

**Section 7. Collaboration**

- A. The Parties agree to establish collaborative work groups with NTEU and NBPC to examine and make recommendations to management to revise the following programs and/or processes:

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- a) FFDE
  - b) Peer Support/Chaplain
  - c) EAP
  - d) Veterans Support Program
- B. These work groups will be comprised of at least two (2) representatives from each Union and should complete their work in six (6) months.
- C. The Parties also agree that many of the best ideas and practices to facilitate implementation of employee well-being and support occur at the Port, Station, Field Office, and Sector level. In that regard, the Parties agree that employee suicide prevention, mental well-being and resilience is an appropriate subject at Field Office and Sector labor-management relations meetings between the Parties.
- D. CBP will post a copy of this MOU on its website, SharePoint, or other similar system where mental health services are promoted.

**Section 8. Dispute Resolution**

- A. The Parties agree that the implementation of this MOU demonstrates a significant cultural shift in addressing the mental health struggles of our dedicated workforce. Because any misinterpretation or misapplication of this MOU would jeopardize future efforts to encourage employees to seek help, the parties agree to establish a process to administer compliance with this MOU.
- B. This process is to attempt to informally resolve any disputes over the interpretation and application of this agreement. Employees are encouraged to resolve any dispute informally through appropriate management officials prior to raising the issue to the national union representative.
- C. Each respective national union representative may bring local issues regarding interpretation or administration of the MOU to the notice of the appropriate headquarters representative. Failure to first raise an issue via this dispute resolution process does not preclude a grievance from being filed.
- D. If the parties are not able to resolve the issue, the union may follow the grievance procedures in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

**Section 9. Communication to Employees**

- A. Within 30 days of the effective date of the MOU, CBP may hold a series of townhall meetings, which may be held virtually or in-person, at various times over the course of three (3) weeks to provide bargaining unit employees and NTEU and NBPC with information on this initiative. No later than twenty (20) days prior to the first townhall meeting, CBP will issue an electronic mail package which includes: 1) a copy of this MOU; 2) information on the initiative; 3) notice that participation is voluntary; 4) the location of where additional information can be found online; and 5) a point of contact for employees to submit questions and receive responses regarding the initiative.
- B. Employees will be provided a reasonable amount of duty time to review this information in advance of the townhall. NTEU and NBPC representatives will be provided notice and the opportunity to attend the townhall.

CBP Employee Well-Being Support Services Memorandum of Understanding

**Section 10. Effective Date and Termination**

- A. As this MOU is part of the parties' ongoing efforts to encourage employees to seek help for mental health purposes the parties recognize this evolving effort may require revisitation of the provisions herein, therefore parties agree any party to this agreement may reopen the terms of this agreement with written notice to the parties.
- B. This MOU becomes effective thirty (30) calendar days from this Agreement's execution date or upon Agency Head Approval, whichever is earlier.



**CERTIFICATE OF TREATMENT FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ [EMPLOYEE NAME] is:

- I.    ☐ Currently under my care and/or receiving treatment from me, and I am a:
- ☐ Health care practitioner (circle one: psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist, counselor, clinician);
- ☐ and/or
- ☐ Currently a patient in an inpatient, residential, or outpatient rehabilitation program.

2.    At this time, it is expected that the employee will continue to receive care/treatment until \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

3.    I have reviewed the Essential Task List, if applicable, and currently, the employee ☐ DOES ☐ DOES NOT have work restrictions. If the employee is currently subject to work restrictions, please explain the nature of those restrictions below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I-1: REMOTE WORK APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT

CBP REMOTE WORK APPLICATION & AGREEMENT		
<b>Section I – APPLICATION FOR REMOTE WORK</b>		
<b>1. EMPLOYEE</b> (Last Name, First, Middle Initial)	<b>2. JOB TITLE</b>	
<b>3. PAY PLAN/SERIES/GRADE</b> (Example: GS/0201/12)	<b>4. PROGRAM OFFICE/DEPARTMENT/DIVISION</b>	
<b>5. REQUESTED OFFICIAL DUTY STATION</b> (Street, Apartment Number, City, State and ZIP Code)	<b>6. CURRENT CBP DUTY STATION</b> (Street, Suite Number, City, State and ZIP Code)	
<b>7. OFFICIAL TELEPHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>8. OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS</b>	
<b>9. REMOTE WORK ARRANGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION DATES</b> <i>(Agreement should be revalidated at least once every year)</i>		<b>10. TYPE OF REMOTE WORK REQUESTED</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>WITHIN LOCAL COMMUTING AREA</b> (within 50 miles of the Assigned CBP Facility)  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>OUTSIDE LOCAL COMMUTING AREA</b> (exceeding 50 miles from the Assigned CBP Facility)
<b>a. START</b> (YYYYMMDD)	<b>b. END</b> (YYYYMMDD)	
<b>11. EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE</b> <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		<b>DATE</b> (YYYYMMDD)
<b>12. FIRST LINE SUPERVISOR Endorsement</b> <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		<b>DATE</b> (YYYYMMDD)
<b>13. SECOND-LINE SUPERVISOR Endorsement</b> <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		<b>DATE</b> (YYYYMMDD)
<b>14. APPROVING OFFICIAL</b> <i>(Name and Signature)</i>		<b>DATE</b> (YYYYMMDD)

**APPENDIX I-1**  
**Remote Work Application and Agreement**

<b>Section II – Employee Agreement</b>	
<b>Employee Understands and Agrees to the following:</b>	<b>Initial or N/A</b>
1. I will comply with the terms and conditions provided in in the CBP Directive 51250-023, “CBP REMOTE WORK PROGRAM DIRECTIVE” and have had the opportunity to discuss those provisions and other Remote Work expectations with my supervisor and/or approving official.	
2. I will be responsible for obtaining in writing supervisor approval for any credit hours, overtime, and/or compensatory time before working any hours exceeding my scheduled tour of duty. This also includes travel compensatory time when ordered to travel away from the remote worksite (official duty station) and outside the commuting area, when eligible.	
3. I understand that management has the discretion to cancel this agreement and reassign me to a duty location of management’s choosing if management finds the remote work arrangement no longer meets the business and mission needs of CBP.	
4. I understand the any Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) remains the property of the U.S. Government and must be managed and disposed of in accordance with Governmentwide and CBP specific policies and guidance. CBP has the discretion to determine what equipment and services will be provided and what equipment and services are the responsibility of the remote worker.	
5. I understand that I must report any injuries sustained while performing assigned duties or performing employment activities incident to those duties at my official duty station . I understand that my workstation would generally consist of a location in the home where work is performed such as a desk with a phone and internet access. Injuries sustained while performing activities that are not immediately directed towards the actual performance of assigned duties are not covered. Once removed from the office setting, there is no longer performance of assigned duties occurring (i.e., walking away from the desk to get a cup of coffee or go to the bathroom) and injuries sustained away from the workstation would generally not be compensable.	
6. I understand that I must complete the Electronic Telework Program Agreement Package (the Portal) tool online <u>before beginning to Remote Work</u> . ( <u>Instructions for the Portal process can be found here: <a href="#">Remote Work Information SharePoint page</a> (or its successor))</u> I also understand that if my Remote Work Location does <u>not</u> meet the safety standards required in the Portal, this agreement will be null and void, and my remote application will be denied.	
<b>EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE</b> ( <i>Name and Signature</i> )	<b>DATE</b>

**APPENDIX I-1**  
**Remote Work Application and Agreement**

<b>CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION REMOTE WORK APPLICATION &amp; AGREEMENT</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section III –SUPEVISOR Checklist</b></p> <p>Supervisor must use this checklist to ensure that remote work requirements are met and that covered employees understand the policies and procedures of the remote work program. A Remote Worker Agreement is not effective and the employee may not begin Remote Work until the checklist is complete, the employee initiates a remote work schedule request in the Telework Portal, uploads this completed form to the Telework Portal, and the supervisor submits to the appropriate processing group within the Program Office, an SF-52, “Request for Personnel Action” to change the employee’s official duty station.</p> <p>After an item is completed, list the date in the “Date Completed” column.</p>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>A. Remote Expectations have been explained to the employee by supervisor including but not limited to:</b>	
1. The potential impact on pay and travel benefits when changing duty locations, provisions governing locality and premium pay, that the employee must receive the supervisor’s approval in advance of working overtime or compensatory time, etc.	
2. Performance and conduct expectations have been discussed with the employee. Performance Standards are in place and have been signed.	
3. Policies and procedures covering classified, secure, and privacy data including PII have been explained to the employee.	
4. The provisions governing changes to the terms and conditions of the remote work agreement have been explained to the employee, including that they must receive the supervisor’s approval in advance of any changes to the location of the duty station (i.e., remote work site). Failure to obtain management approval may result in termination of the remote work agreement.	
5. Confirms that the employee’s duties and responsibilities are consistent with full-time work at a remote duty station which is not a traditional CBP facility, and that the employee can successfully complete assignments, work self-sufficiently, independently, and is responsive and organized with minimal supervision.	
6. Consideration was given to the work dynamic, job characteristics, and work style preferences and whether this remote work arrangement is a cost effective and efficient means to meet the mission and to retain and maintain talent in the organization.	
<b>B. Remote Work Application and Agreement is Complete</b>	
<b>C. Employee must complete the schedule portion of the Telework Portal, must upload the Remote Work Request and the required training certificates (Cyber-security Awareness and Rules of Behavior &amp; Telework Fundamentals) Instructions for the Telework Portal process can be found here: <a href="#">Telework and Remote Work Information</a> SharePoint page (or its successor)).</b>	
<b>D. Employee has acknowledged receipt of GFE in accordance with CBP Policy.</b>	
<b>E. Request for Personnel Action submitted to appropriate processing office.</b>	

**APPROVING OFFICIAL** *(Name and Signature)*

☐ I am approving the employee's application for remote work. (Following the approving official's signature, the employee must update the uploaded Request with the Approved Agreement before beginning Remote Work.)

- Approved Location Address of Remote Work Official Duty Station:

☐ I have reviewed the employee's Remote work agreement, and I am recertifying the employee's participation in the remote work program. DATE: <INSERT DATE FIELD>

- Approved Location Address of Remote Work Official Duty Station:

☐ I am disapproving the employee's application for Remote Work. See attached "Notice of Denial of Remote Work Application or Cancellation of a Remote Work Agreement" See attached form "NOTICE OF DENIAL OF A REMOTE WORK APPLICATION OR TERMINATION OF A REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT" <INSERT DATE FIELD>

**APPENDIX I-2: TERMINATION OF A REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT**

<b>CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION NOTICE OF DENIAL - REMOTE WORK APPLICATION OR TERMINATION OF A REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT</b> <i>(Complete this section when the remote work agreement is cancelled.)</i>	
<b>1. EMPLOYEE</b> (Last Name, First, Middle Initial)	<b>2. JOB TITLE</b>
<b>3. PAY PLAN/SERIES/GRADE</b> (Example: GS/0201/12)	<b>4. PROGRAM OFFICE/DEPARTMENT/DIVISION</b>
<b>5. CURRENT REMOTE WORK OFFICIAL DUTY STATION, if applicable</b> <i>(Street, Apartment Number, City, State and ZIP Code)</i>	<b>6. NEW CBP DUTY STATION, if applicable</b> <i>(Street, Suite Number, City, State and ZIP Code)</i>
<b>7. DENIAL/TERMINATION DATE</b> (YYYYMMDD)	<b>8. INITIATED BY</b> ( <i>X one</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Management
<b>9. REASON(S) FOR DENIAL/CANCELLATION</b> (attach additional pages if required)	

**10. HAS GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED EQUIPMENT/PROPERTY RETURNED?**

☐ YES      ☐ NO   ☐ N/A

**LIST PROPERTY AND DATE OF RETURN (attach additional pages if required):**

**EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE** *(If employee initiated)*

**DATE (YYYYMMDD)**

**APPROVING OFFICIAL OR SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE**

**DATE (YYYYMMDD)**

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## SIGNATURE PAGE

The signatures to this Agreement set forth the parties' full and complete understanding that this is an accurate statement of the negotiated language agreed to by the respective bargaining teams during their negotiations of this Agreement. The Agreement has been ratified by the NTEU Chapters and will be effective on March 9, 2025.

### **For U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**

 12/23/2024

Troy A. Miller  
Senior Official Performing the Duties  
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National Treasury Employees Union

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Ryan K. Soon  
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Chief Spokesperson, NTEU

 12/19/24

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Jorge Llanos – Chapter 105  
Alfredia Clyde – Chapter 111  
Vincent Salgado – Chapter 123  
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*Edward T Fox* 12-11-2024

Edward T. Fox Date  
OFO Representative

 December 11, 2024

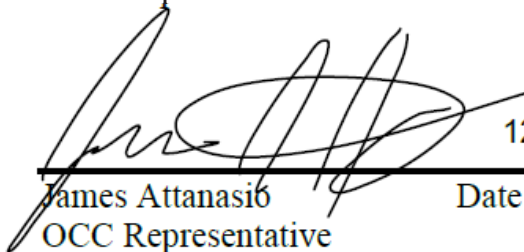
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*Lynn Solano* 12/11/24

Lynn Solano Date  
OT Representative