

Corrected copy

Memorandum of Understanding

National Mid-Term Bargaining
Ground Rules

1. The purpose of these ground rules is to establish a complete and orderly process to govern the national level negotiations under Article 4 of the Master Agreement. The provisions of the Master Agreement concerning mid-term bargaining continue in full force and effect, and the provisions of this agreement must be interpreted in a manner consistent with the terms of the Master Agreement and 5 U.S.C. 7131.

2. The VA will forward all proposed changes initiated above the individual facility level for which there is a bargaining obligation to the 4 bargaining committee members, along with copies of pertinent references.

The union will make every effort to submit a complete initial set of bargaining proposals with a written demand to bargain. The above documents must be received by the Director, Labor-Management Relations Service within 30 days from the date of receipt of the proposed policy by the Chairperson of the bargaining committee. Extensions of this time period will not be a normal course of business. The union retains the right to modify, withdraw, revise or add any proposals once negotiations begin.

3. The parties will make a good faith effort to reach agreement by conducting telephone negotiations. Such negotiations will begin no later than 10 work days after the union Chairperson receives management's counter-proposals. Telephone negotiations shall normally be for up to 3 hours per day commencing at a mutually agreeable time on consecutive days unless the negotiations are concluded sooner. If the parties are unable to reach agreement, negotiations on an ad hoc basis or following the semi-annual meeting shall be set in accordance with the Master Agreement. Face-to-face bargaining sessions will be an 8 1/2 hour period at mutually agreeable times which includes a break for lunch. However, the parties, by mutual agreement, may extend such bargaining sessions as necessary.

4. If more than one issue is to be addressed during a negotiation session, the parties by mutual agreement will establish an order in which the issues will be addressed. Of prime consideration in establishing an agenda and the order in which issues are addressed is the availability of subject matter personnel and time constraints for implementation placed on the Department.

5. Each party may have up to four negotiators. This does not preclude the attendance of experts, at the respective party's expense, by mutual agreement.

6. Each of the union team members will be allotted 6 hours of official time per week and the chairperson will be allotted 8 hours of official time per week to review proposed policies and prepare proposals during the above referenced 30 day time period. This provision shall be administered, with the exception of the number of hours, in the same manner as the official time for district representatives as provided in Article 8, Section 2 of the Master Agreement.

7. These ground rules are established and shall exist for the purpose of furthering the labor-management relationship and expediting policy implementation.

8. These ground rules become effective upon signature of the parties.


For Management


For the NVAC

3-9-90
Date