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USPS-APWU Joint Contract Interpretation Manual – September 2025

Unencumbered (unassigned) Scheduling Requirements

Article 37, Section 4.B

Can the schedule of an unencumbered full-time regular employee be changed from the schedule the employee worked immediately prior to becoming unassigned?

Response: Yes, as long as the employee is notified within the first 28 days of becoming unassigned. Thereafter, the employee's schedule cannot be changed again until 180 days after the date the employee's schedule was last changed upon becoming unassigned.

Section 4.B

If an unencumbered full-time regular employee's schedule is to be changed within the first 28 days, must the actual change take place within 28 days?

Response: No. The employee must be notified of the schedule change within 28 days. After such notification, the actual schedule change will begin the following work week. No out-of-schedule premium is paid as a result of such schedule changes.

Section 4.B

If an unencumbered full-time regular is not notified of a schedule change during the first 28 days, can the employee's schedule still be changed after 180 days?

Response: Yes. The 180-day period begins on the date the employee became unencumbered.

Section 4.C

In what order must unencumbered employees be assigned to the same or higher level?

Response: After the assignment of preference eligible clerks, Article 37.4.C.1 requires that unencumbered employees be assigned in the following order: 1) currently qualified employees, 2) partially qualified employees, 3) employees not currently or partially qualified.

Article 37.4.C.5 is applied in the following order:

- (a) currently qualified: Offer by seniority, assign by seniority;
- (b) partially qualified: Offer by seniority, assign by seniority;
- (c) not currently or partially qualified: offer by seniority, assign by seniority.

If you have specific questions, please contact your Steward or call the Union Office at 210-271-0853.