



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION LOCAL 555

REPRESENTING THE RAMP, OPERATIONS, PROVISIONING, AND FREIGHT AGENTS OF SOUTHWEST AIRLINES
TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA • AFL-CIO • AIR TRANSPORT DIVISION • TWU555.ORG
ESTABLISHED IN 1996 • 2608 INWOOD RD. SUITE 150. DALLAS. TX 75235 • 1.800.595.7672

December 29th, 2017

Michelle Jordan
Labor Relations
Southwest Airlines Co.
2702 Love Field Dr.
P.O. Box 36611
Dallas, Texas 75235-1611

Reference: Alternative Measures and States of Emergency

Michelle,

It has come to our attention that the Company has recently sent out letters, to at least three of our stations, threatening to invoke “alternative measures including declaring a State of Operational Emergency.”

- In at least one case, the Company is waiving its ability to allow shift trades submitted under the twelve-hour window, regardless of the agent’s individual circumstances. Article 23 of the CBA that binds the parties, directs employees who need time off to “secure trades with other employees, request vacation time or, where appropriate, request a leave of absence.” By automatically refusing last minute shift trades, regardless of individual circumstances and need, the Company is boxing an employee into a difficult decision where it might not otherwise be necessary. If your true intention is to make sure that the shift is covered, this may not be the best course of action.
- Additionally, the CBA also lays forth processes by which the Company may assure that they have enough help from shift to shift. And while it has been widely noted that mandatory overtime is not in the best interest of either party, the Union maintains that the same should be said of questionable claims of operational emergencies and Company attempts to waive the benefits that were negotiated in good faith.
- The Union did notice that in one of the letters, there was also an offer of free food, raffles and prizes for employees that make it into work as scheduled. We feel that this is your best and most reasonable course of action towards your goal of minimizing sick calls.
- Finally, should the Company wish to institute a plan where some of the negotiated rights can be set aside, the Union encourages that they be properly pursued within negotiations upon the next opportunity. Making unilateral attempts to bypass the CBA will only further a divide with employees.

While we understand a wish to run as efficient an operation as possible, the Union must strongly caution the Company as to the road which has been pursued with these letters. There has been, to the best of our knowledge, no legitimate intel pointing to any organized absences on the horizon. What we can determine is that it is likely within normal and historic operation for the Company to experience higher numbers of call outs when the weather is bad, during cold and flu season or around holidays. Should these facts bring the Company to desire instituting some sort of “emergency plan” around sick calls, similar to what was negotiated with TWU 556, we look forward to seeing that proposal at the negotiating table for the next CBA. For now, it is our expectation that our members’ contractual rights will not be interfered with, restrained, or coerced and that our members will not be discriminated against for utilizing those very rights.

Sincerely,

Executive Board and Staff of
Transport Workers Union Local 555

Copy: File
Andre Sutton (email)
LEB (email)