

## PWUA asks 40 questions of NZ Post's Paxster "Job Safety Analysis"

A matrix of the risks involving Paxsters drawn up by NZ Post's Health and Safety manager included an estimation of the risk of a fatality in "controlled" situations.

The PWUA became alarmed not only about any "possible" or "certain" fatalities, but especially about the increased risk of a fatality under "uncontrolled" conditions. In some cases Delivery Agents have been bullied under the threat of disciplinary action into working excessive hours to complete their deliveries - working for up to 12.5 hours - and then driving home potentially impaired by exhaustion.

The company is required by law to exercise controls to minimise risks to employee safety. The controls identified include empowering Delivery Agents to decide when delivery must stop for health and safety reasons including fatigue.

The PWUA has told the company that the continual intolerable pressure on some Delivery Agents has pushed the likelihood of a fatality to the

extreme upper end of the company's Paxster risk matrix.

The PWUA does recognise that there are Paxster branches where the manager, team leader, union delegates and Delivery Agents work as a team very successfully. The PWUA gave the company an example of a well run branch.

The PWUA has now offered to assist the senior management to identify and work to resolve significant issues by a joint visit to a Paxster branch which the Union considers is operating under "uncontrolled" conditions.

The PWUA analysis of the Job Safety documents has so far raised 40 questions including:

- What is the fatality risk on the footpath and how is it that the fatality risk on the road is the same
- Whether it is a pedestrian involved in a fatality on the footpath and a Delivery Agent on the road
- How does the company's risk analysis compare with the National Road Safety Committee's "Driver

Fatigue Strategy".

The PWUA offered to meet the company and go through the documents for three reasons:

- A better understanding by the PWUA of the methodology used to create the matrix and other controversial statements in five of the documents - one covering Paxster operation on the footpath and another covering Paxster operation on the road.
- A robust discussion about the different points of view - the company's view of the safety issues and the experience of Delivery Agents driving Paxsters.
- Significantly improved documents which would be of more practical use having included input from the Paxster drivers themselves through the Union.

After a constructive discussion with senior managers in late January the company has agreed to a further meeting on 2 February and in the meantime to answer some of the PWUA questions in writing.

### Back problems from letters with large flats

Many Delivery Agents are suffering pain and discomfort out on delivery from bending forward into their large flat trays to reach and retrieve letters sorted among the large flats.

A modified large flat tray with a divider placed closer to the Delivery Agent reduced but did not eliminate the bending and reaching required.

Until a more permanent solution is found the PWUA recommends the safest method is to sort the BCS into the case together with the PPS. The large flats are then bundled without any letters. Many DAs say that this process is actually a quicker method overall by saving a lot of time outside.

Where local management has not agreed to this process, DAs can fill in an HS1 about any back problems.

Any subsequent instructions to not sort BCS mail into the case should be immediately referred to a union delegate or organiser.

### Paxsters in Europe now require seatbelts

Under a new regulation in Europe Paxsters are required to have combination lap and diagonal seatbelts.

NZ Post management advised the PWUA that as a result all new Paxsters brought in from Norway will have a solid structure behind the driver to provide an anchor point for the diagonal belt.

NZ Post has an order for 20 new Paxsters which will be manufactured to the new European standard.

Drivers in Europe will not be required to wear a helmet on the road or the footpath but will be required to wear a seatbelt when driving on the road.

The NZ Transport Agency currently does not require seatbelts in Paxsters but requires that a helmet be worn. The PWUA is interested in the NZ Transport Agency's view of the European regulation which does not require the wearing of a helmet.

### Adverse weather Safety Alerts

Although NZ Post put out two safety alerts in January about weather conditions the PWUA wants to clarify the right of workers to stop work in adverse weather conditions.

The company had described the actions of a postie walking his bicycle through thigh high water as "extremely dangerous".

Following a request from the PWUA the company has since put out a second Safety Alert about the continuing very high temperatures throughout the country.

The PWUA agrees that a postie or Delivery Agent contact their team leader about any imminent danger. However the decision made by the postie or Delivery Agent about whether or not to continue delivery must be respected by the team leader in any discussion about stopping delivery. A discussion on how to return safely to the branch may then follow.

# Workers' rights at work being restored by the new Government

The new Government has announced the restoring of a number of rights at work which had been steadily eroded by the previous National Party led Government.

New labour legislation which will be introduced into Parliament in February and has the support of the Labour, Green and NZ First Parties includes:

- Employers will have a duty to conclude bargaining unless there is a good reason not to do so.
- Restricting employers from the passing on of Collective Employment Agreement benefits to non-union employees
- Employers will not be able to deduct 10% of workers' wages when the workers take minimal industrial action while still working
- Unions will have access to work-

sites without needing prior approval (but to continue to come at reasonable times and not unduly interrupt business continuity).

Parliament's Select Committee process will be hearing many union submissions objecting to the 90 day "fire at will" remaining in place for employers with less than 20 employees. NZ Post has never sought to have the 90 day provision in the PWUA CEA which allows employees to be sacked for no reason and no right to take a legal case.

Workers have received a diminishing proportion of the national income over the past 3 decades. This year new legislation will strengthen workers' rights to bargain collectively for better wage increases.

## Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa

Website  
www.pwua.org.nz

(Northern)

(pwua.northern@gmail.com)

Freephone 0800 224 611

Organisers 021 798 244  
022 530 3940

(Southern)

(pwu@tradeshall.org.nz)

Wellington: (04) 385 8264

Freephone: 0800 469 798

Central North Island: (06) 952 3738

Nelson: 0800 469 798

Canterbury: 021 679 673

Otago: 027 472 0713

Southland: 027 472 0713

## PWUA to consult members on "Engagement"

The Union had agreed with NZ Post at the CEA negotiations earlier last year to "commence the development of (an) engagement framework".

The principles included:

- The way the parties agree to engage
- The ways the issues are identified
- The obligation to use "best endeavours" to reach consensus on such issues.

The discussions covered NZ Post's objections to the Union taking legal cases against the company and PWUA statements to the news media.

The Union was insisting that, until the matters were resolved by agreement between the parties, or otherwise by legal process, the company agree that:

- Delivery Agents must be paid for their full rostered hours each work

day even if they finish early.

- Overtime is voluntary because there is no "availability" clause in the CEA giving compensation for compulsory overtime - both required by law since 1 April last year.

The senior management team has not agreed to this proposed settlement insisting that:

- There are no set daily hours of work, only a 37:40 working week
- Overtime is voluntary after 11 hours in any one day.

The PWUA will continue to work to create an engagement framework but whether that will be applied to Delivery Agents' rosters and overtime arrangements will only be agreed if the preconditions are acceptable to members.

## Mail officers remain at Christchurch Mail Centre

Mail officer staffing levels have so far not been affected by the new OMS sorting machine in Christchurch.

Sorting skills have been retained and more staff have been employed for video coding, reducing the need for jobs requiring processing only.

The significant increase in overseas mail has seen mail officers made redundant last year being re-employed to sort the increased volumes.

## Call for claims for Convergata CEA

On 1 February the PWUA will be writing to Convergata to "initiate bargaining" for a new Collective Employment Agreement.

Organisers will be visiting the sites to collect claims for the negotiations. From claims collected so far a "decent wage increase" is the top claim.

REDBACK is published by the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa ♦ Trades Hall, 126 Vivian St, Wellington 6011 ♦ pwu@tradeshall.org.nz



POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AOTEAROA (NORTHERN)

PO Box 95211 Swanson Auckland 0653

I hereby appoint the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa incorporated to be my authorised representative under Sections 18 and 236 of the Employment Relations Act 2000. For the purpose of this authority any duly appointed representative of the PWUA is empowered to act on my behalf in any matters related to or arising out of the negotiation and application of any Employment Agreement or any other matter relating to my employment at my request. This authority shall continue in force until revoked by myself, giving two weeks notice.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) .....

Signed .....

Date ..... Appointment No. ....

Employer .....

Branch .....

Home Address .....

..... Phone .....

### Deduction Authority for Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa (Northern)

I authorise my employer to deduct:

\$5.95 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.95 per week when I am on-call, or employed for less than 30 hours per week from my pay and credit the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa Northern District.

Please stop any other deductions from my pay to any other union.