



**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS COUNCIL #53
Affiliated with the AFL - CIO
Mid-Term Bargaining Committee**

Oscar L. Williams Jr., Chair
2nd Exec. V-President
29 Lake Street
Danville, IL 61832-6101

Bill Wetmore, Member
3rd Exec. V-President
2319 Alava Court
Waldorf, MD 20603

Terence J. Watts, Member
5th Dist. Rep., NVAC
VAMC Orlando
Orlando, FL 32803

Willie Haywood, Member
6th Dist. Rep., NVAC
17705 Garden Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44128

Jeff Sladek, Member
13th Dist. Rep., NVAC
VAMC 3601 S. 6th Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85723

October 9, 2015

Adam M. Robinson, Jr. MD, Director
VA Maryland Health Care System
10 North Greene Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Subject: VISN 5 – VAMHCS Facilities and Engineering Service Ending Compress Work
Schedules and Alternate Tours of Duty (AFGE Local 331 and AFGE Local 1923)

Dear Dr. Robinson:

In accordance with Article 47, Section 2 C, of the Master Agreement, the National VA Council #53 is formally demanding to bargain on VAMHCS Facilities and Engineering Service ending compress work schedules and alternate tours of duty cited above in VISN 5 within the Department. Ms. Alma L. Lee will be naming the Union's Chief Negotiator and negotiating team. Please provide the named bargaining team with any information and/or data concerning the cited subject. The negotiations of this matter should normally begin no later than twenty (20) workdays after the Management's chief negotiator in this matter receives our demand to bargain.

Please cease and desist any implementation until the bargaining obligation has been met. The named bargaining team may request a briefing over the cited subject above, before sending any proposals. If you have any questions please contact me at (217) 554-4866.

Sincerely,

Oscar L. Williams, Jr.
Chairperson, Mid-Term Bargaining Committee
2nd Executive Vice President
National VA Council #53

cc: Alma L. Lee, President National VA Council #53
William Wetmore, 3rd Executive Vice President, NVAC

AFGE: Good Government We Are Ready

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Baltimore VA Medical Center
10 North Greene Street
Baltimore MD 21201
(410) 605-7000

Perry Point VA Medical Center
Perry Point MD 21902
(410) 642-2411

Loch Raven VA Community
Living & Rehabilitation Center
3900 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore MD 21218
(410) 605-7000

October 5, 2015

AFGE, Local 331
AFGE, Local 1923

The Facilities and Engineering Service (FES) at the VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) is planning a change in employee tours that will affect all campuses. This plan includes doing away with all compressed and alternate tours and to bring most employees back to the core tour hours of 8AM to 4:30PM, unless there is a legitimate business case or employee hardship that warrants alternate tours. All alternate tours will be determined on a case-by-case basis through discussion with the supervisor, employee and Chief of Facilities and Engineering Services.

The reason for this change is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. To date, the service is severely understaffed by approximately 118 FTEE. Continuing with compressed and alternate tours significantly limits the ability to address facility needs in a timely manner and without the use of overtime dollars.

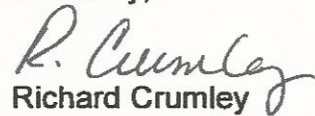
As of the end of Fiscal Year 2015, there were 4,078 outstanding work orders, some dating as far back as 2011. The average turnaround time for work orders that were completed over the last year was approximately 13.5 days. The national standard for work order completion is currently seven days; a standard that this service has yet to meet. Delays in work order completion are a direct result of inefficient scheduling of the staff that FES currently has on board. It is a common occurrence to tell other services around the VAMHCS that work orders cannot be completed due to a particular employee's compressed day off. This can do significant damage to appropriate care for our veterans due to inadequate building conditions, especially in clinical areas.

In addition, with our current staffing, compressed days off pose a significant problem when scheduled employees call out for various reasons. If it is necessary to call in another employee on their day off due to pressing facility needs, overtime pay is required. Fiscal Year 2015 saw the highest use of overtime pay that FES has seen to date. The need for calling in employees on their compressed day off contributed to this usage and would have been completely avoidable had employees been on a regular, non-compressed tour.

The current compressed and alternate tours seen in FES at this time are not conducive to providing efficient and time-sensitive services. These schedules are causing delays in service to the facilities across the VAMHCS and driving up the cost to do business via overtime pay. Delays in service ultimately hurt the veterans that we strive to serve with excellence due to inadequate building conditions. The proposed change in tours will enable FES to provide consistent service and stay within a reasonable staffing budget. It will ultimately drive customer satisfaction scores up and assist with providing better service to our veterans.

If you have questions or concerns with these proposed changes, I would be happy to meet with you.

Sincerely,



Richard Crumley
Chief of Facilities & Engineering Services

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OCT - 9 2015

AFGE National VA Council #53
Mid-Term Bargaining Committee