



# On The Move

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## **Award Expands Vacation Picking Rights in Bus**

In 2013, during a dispute over vacation picking rights in the rail locations, the Union discovered a Settlement Agreement from August, 1984 over picking vacations. The agreement provided that “*vacations will be picked by seniority and job classification.*” Ever since, vacations have been picked by job classification in Wyoming Shop, the Rail Maintenance Department, the Facilities and Buildings Department, the Power Department and the Bus and Rail transportation locations. However, in the bus garages, the Germantown Brake Shop and the Utilities Shop, managers decided to ignore the 1984 agreement and set up their own system for picking vacations.

In the bus locations, employees in all job classifications from HVAC Specialist, to First Class General Mechanic, to Maintenance Custodian Driver were placed on a single list; the number of vacation weeks available in the location totaled; and a *location based quota* was set by dividing the total number of vacation weeks in the location by 52. This *artificially low* quota spread open vacation weeks evenly over the entire year, without regard to the summer months and prime vacation weeks linked to holidays, like Christmas and Thanksgiving. By spreading the number of vacation weeks over the whole year, the *location based quota minimized* the number of employees who could be off any given week. As a result, for decades, workers in the bus garages have been short-changed, with many members unable to pick the vacation weeks they wanted.

The vacation quota used in the bus locations never made any sense, because the quota had no connection to the work. Think about it. We pick work assignments and shifts on the basis of job classification. So why would we pick vacations by location? We pick *days off* by job classification, so why wouldn't we pick vacation time off the same way? As a result of the arbitration victory, starting in 2022, there will be an *expansion* of the number of members able to take off in any given week, including in the summer and in the prime vacation weeks. Of the 267 workers in the Buildings Department, for example, 39 can take off during any week (15%), with 52 allowed off (19%) during the prime weeks from June 21–September 6. In contrast, of the 118 workers at Midvale Shop, 7.57 are off per week (7%). A quota of 15% is obviously better than a quota of 7%! That's why bus management fought the union tooth and nail over this issue for years.

While the benefits of the vacation award are clear, some are having trouble recognizing the significance of the victory. That's because they are looking at the case too narrowly. The award involved not only winning a long-ignored right on the bus side, it was also a blow to those bus managers who have been working to undermine the rights of our members on this and other issues, for decades. The next step is negotiating a reasonable, *classification based* quota for 2022.

## **We Must and We Will**