

# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **TELECONFERENCE IMPROVEMENT - MONITORING PROGRAM**

### **Purpose**

The NAPS national office has developed a plan to address members' concerns about postal teleconferences where members are subjected to demeaning, threatening and abusive behavior from their managers or higher level postal officials. This concern was highlighted in visits made by the resident officers during the 2013 NAPS area and state conventions. Postal officials who attended these conventions heard, first-hand, about abuse and threats and even cases where profanity was used in teleconference settings.

There was a commitment by postal officials in attendance at the conventions that they would correct teleconference problems. However, until these issues are corrected, NAPS members will continue to be on the receiving end of poorly managed teleconferences.

### **Background**

Teleconferences are a useful and necessary method for sharing information with various groups without resorting to travelling to a physical meeting location. Teleconferences can be efficient in providing information, sharing and receiving feedback and improving operations.

Most of today's teleconferences held between levels of postal management are managed professionally by the leader of the call. Of the thousands of teleconferences that are held at all levels of the Postal Service on a daily and weekly basis, most are beneficial and well managed.

However, there are instances where teleconferences are not productive, where the presiding teleconference leader uses tactics and techniques that are abusive, demeaning and threatening. This behavior may potentially violate provisions of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) in addition to common business practice etiquette.

During NAPS visits to Area and State Conventions, a recurring topic that was heard from the membership was ongoing abusive and demeaning treatment on postal teleconferences. Some members who attended NAPS conventions experienced such abuse and made it a point of discussion. Members of postal leadership who attended and participated in NAPS conventions shared the same opinion that is held by the leadership of NAPS; that teleconferences should be managed professionally, with dignity and respect for all participants.

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## The Plan to Improve Postal Teleconferences

To further this organizations' objective to address the concerns of our 25,000 active members, many of whom participate in multiple teleconferences on a daily/weekly basis, the three resident officers will be coordinating an effort to identify and report instances where NAPS members report bullying, the use of threats, abusive or profane language in teleconference settings.

The plan to improve postal teleconferences will provide a resource for NAPS members to report teleconferences that the member deems to be inappropriately managed. NAPS HQ gathered contact information for all District Managers and District Managers of Human Resources, many of whom NAPS already enjoys a good working relationship.

When NAPS headquarters receives a report from a member, who has an apparent issue with the demeanor of a postal teleconference, the reported abuse will be thoroughly vetted at NAPS headquarters. In order to efficiently address reports of abusive teleconferences, the three resident officers have been designated to cover specific NAPS areas as identified below:

<u>President</u>	<u>Exe. Vice President</u>	<u>Secretary/Treasurer</u>
Southeast Area	Northeast Area	Illini Area
Texas Area	New York Area	MINK Area
Pacific Area	Mideast Area	Michiana Area
Rocky Mountain Area	Capitol/Atlantic Area	Northwest Area
Cotton Belt Area	Pioneer Area	North Central Area
Central Gulf Area		

Once a report of teleconference abuse is received at NAPS headquarters, the designated resident officer will contact the respective District Manager, and/or the Manager, Human Resources (District) from where the report was generated to discuss the allegations made by the NAPS member.

However, prior to contact with postal officials, if the initial report from a NAPS member does not clearly define the problem or more information is necessary to determine the validity of the allegation, the resident officers will communicate directly with the respective NAPS member to clarify and validate the allegations.

## How NAPS Members Can Initiate a Report

There are four (4) steps that must be followed by a member who wants to report a teleconference where bullying, the use of threats, abusive or profane language is being used in teleconference settings.

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## **Step One: Document the incident(s)**

When a member is participating in a teleconference where bullying, the use of threats, abusive or profane language is being used in teleconference setting, the member will forward the following documentation to NAPS headquarters:

- The name of the postal District
- The name of the postal official directing the teleconference
- The name(s) of attendees or the offices that were on the teleconference
- The date and time of the teleconference
- The problem with the teleconference in specific terms; i.e. the actual language used, if people were threatened, bullied or abused in any way
- Provide NAPS HQ with the member's contact information – cell phone, non-postal email address

## **Step Two: Send information to NAPS Headquarters**

Once a member has completed the pertinent information to the questions shown above, the information should be sent within three (3) days of the teleconference incident from a non-postal computer to NAPS headquarters at: [napshq@naps.org](mailto:napshq@naps.org).

## **Step Three: Follow-up by NAPS headquarters**

The resident officers will review the report filed by the member via NAPS email: [napshq@naps.org](mailto:napshq@naps.org). If the report lacks specificity needed to make contact with the local District leadership, the resident officer designated to handle the teleconference incident will contact the respective member for additional information. This follow-up will assist the resident officers in ensuring that sufficient facts are at hand to move the issue forward.

## **Step Four: Contact with District Officials**

Once a resident officer has made contact with District officials, NAPS expects the matter to be addressed locally and that the teleconference abuse to be resolved. NAPS will benchmark the success of its *Teleconference Improvement-Monitoring Program* by relying on each NAPS member's expectation of how they should be treated on postal teleconferences. All reports will be logged and maintained at NAPS headquarters for future reference for any repeat offenses.

If a member has reported an abusive teleconference and is not remedied, the member should initiate an additional report and forward the issue to NAPS headquarters again. The resident officers will confirm the abuse is continuing and was not resolved locally. NAPS will make contact with District leadership again. If issue is not resolved immediately, the respective resident officer in charge of the case will elevate the issue to the USPS Area office and if necessary USPS headquarters for resolution.

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## **Maintaining Member Anonymity**

It is NAPS intention to maintain the anonymity of members who report teleconference problems to NAPS headquarters. NAPS will not provide the name of the member making the report to USPS leadership. NAPS will maintain anonymity in the following manner:

- When a report of teleconference abuse is received, it stands to reason that there are multiple participants on the teleconference. This is why NAPS is asking for a list of attendees (or offices) to be provided to NAPS headquarters.
- NAPS will contact District leadership about the alleged abusive teleconference and address what was said to those participating on the teleconference.
- Based on the information a member provides, NAPS headquarters will report to District leadership the name of the individual in charge of the teleconference and recommend the District first initiate contact with the teleconference leader to provide them with NAPS allegations. If necessary, NAPS will recommend District leadership contact several of the individuals who were on the teleconferences to validate or confirm the alleged teleconference abuse.
- Once the report gets to this stage, NAPS members must stand up for the dignity and respect for both themselves and others who are being subjected to poor treatment and abuse on teleconferences. Should a member either report abuse or be a witness to abuse or poor teleconference behavior this will be the member's opportunity to bring the problem to the attention of NAPS and postal management.
- Many times management is already aware that an individual is treating his/her subordinates poorly. The lack of good judgment by senior officials in correcting this type of poor behavior actually condones and promotes this bad behavior. The **Teleconference Improvement and Monitoring Program** is an opportunity for NAPS members to become proactive in their actions to correct teleconference abuse towards them and other EAS employees.

## **Conclusion**

NAPS believes that holding all levels of postal management accountable for their actions is key for the Postal Service to achieve breakthrough performance to ensure it is successful now and into the future. NAPS further believes members must hold themselves to high standards of performance. In addition, NAPS members must hold all levels of postal managers to such standards when it involves treating their subordinates with dignity and respect. While operational deficiencies may exist in an individual's performance, such deficiencies should be discussed constructively in private, and not on a teleconference.

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In order to promote this initiative, NAPS has developed a special section on its website –[www.naps.org](http://www.naps.org) for members to review. Furthermore, NAPS Executive Vice President has written an article for the August 2013 issue of *The Postal Supervisor* highlighting this initiative. The **Teleconference Improvement and Monitoring Program** will also be promoted at upcoming training seminars. Finally, NAPS has produced a **Teleconference Improvement and Monitoring Program** PowerPoint presentation that can be used in the field at branch meetings. Please contact NAPS headquarters for copies.

Please forward teleconference abuse reports, questions and comments to NAPS headquarters via email at: [naphq@naps.org](mailto:naphq@naps.org).

The NAPS resident officers are committed to supporting this process in order to improve teleconferences and the work environment of its members. This initiative will only be successful if NAPS members are willing to report teleconference abuse by following the instructions that have been provided.

NAPS Headquarters