**Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to explain key principles and identify changes in the following articles:

- Article 7, Quality Programs
- Article 29, Safety, Health and Environment
- Article 30, Occupational Health
- Article 32, Staff Lounges
- Article 38, Uniforms

**Agenda**

- Objectives
- Discussion Topics
  - Article 7, Quality Programs
  - Article 29, Safety, Health and Environment
  - Article 30, Occupational Health
  - Article 32, Staff Lounges
  - Article 38, Uniforms
- Questions
- What’s Next?
Article 7 – Quality Programs

• This article explains the commitment of both parties to comprehensive quality programs.

Article 7, Section 2
General

• Bargaining unit employees who participate in quality programs initiated by the Department:
  – In a non-representational capacity
    • Duty time
  – In a union representational capacity
    • Official time

Article 7, Section 3
Quality Programs Council Charter

• Facility Quality Councils (FQC) should be established if the facility undertakes quality improvement initiatives.
• Section 3, VII sets forth the responsibilities and procedures for the FQC.
• Union representative participation shall be considered official time.
**Group Activity**

**Knowledge Check**

- John is a union steward. He is representing an employee at a grievance meeting. What kind of time is John using for the meeting?

- Becky is a bargaining unit employee. She is an expert on dietetics computer applications. She has been asked to provide her expertise on a quality initiative for improving how dietetics workers do their job. What kind of time is she on while working on this initiative?

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**Article 29 – Safety, Health and Environment**

- **B.** The Department will abate recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious harm and protect employees in the interim.

- **C.** Specific procedures for preventing and abating safety and health hazards will be jointly developed with the Union through the National, Intermediate, and Local Safety committees. **"**
**Article 29, Section 3**

**Union Participation**

- Union-designated safety representatives at National, Intermediate and local levels
- Joint safety committee at facilities with more than 25 employees
- Local union will be afforded representatives on the committee

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**Article 29, Section 5**

**Reporting Unsafe/Unhealthy Conditions**

- Submit report
- Report is stamped
- Inspection?
  - Yes: Day 15: No notice
  - No: Day 15: Notice of no inspection
- Day 15: Safety Inspection Report
- Day 30: Health Inspection Report

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**Article 29, Section 8**

**Training**

- **In accordance with applicable law and regulations, the Department shall provide training for all duties commensurate with the scope of the responsibilities.**

  **Article 29, Section 8B**
**Article 29, Section 13**

**Temperature Conditions**

- Written plan with appropriate cooling or heating procedures
- Needed if employees are exposed to extreme temperature conditions
- Must account for emergent conditions

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**Article 29, Section 15**

**Mold**

- Department will inspect each facility.
- If mold is present, the Department will:
  - Notify the local union
  - Conduct periodic surface and air samplings
  - Notify exposed employees, in writing, within five days
  - Ensure abatement
  - Conduct sampling every three months
  - Provide Union Health and Safety Reps with mold removal training, opportunity to monitor mold removal and a copy of all tests

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**Article 29, Section 20**

**VDTs and Ergonomic Environment**

- Certain ergonomic and environmental factors contribute to the health and comfort of VDT (Video Display Terminal) users.
- A VDT is:
  - A computer-like display or television-like screen
  - Not intended to be a specific type of technology
**Article 29, Section 20**

**VDT Breaks**

- One ten-minute VDT break per hour of use:
  - For employees who use them full-time
  - Not intended to be work-free

**Ergonomic Equipment**

- Department will provide ergonomic equipment and workstations.
- Process for purchasing furniture and office equipment to address individual requests for workstation modification:
  - Negotiate using a locally-developed, mutually-agreed upon process
  - Negotiate on a case-by-case basis
  - Use the alternative process in the contract (Section 20, C3)

**Strategic Placement of VDTs**
Article 29, Section 20
Ergonomic Environment

- Keyboards: Stable Surface allowing for neutral wrist positions
- Monitors: Adjusts for brightness and horizontal/vertical alignment
- Printers: Utilize noise reducing cover and allow for minimal bending

Article 29, Section 25
Equipment, Machinery and Furniture

- Employees are encouraged to report equipment, machinery and furniture that is causing or has the potential to cause injury.
- Ergonomic assessments and/or recommendations shall be in writing and submitted to the local Safety and Health Committee.

Article 29, Section 33
Ergonomic Lifting

- Department agrees to provide information regarding safe lifting practices.
- Lifting equipment selection must be based on operational and employee needs, physical environment, hazard assessment, injury analysis and Union input.
- Joint committee will review equipment, solicit input and make recommendations.
Article 29, Section 21
Vision Program

- This program is for all AFGE bargaining unit VDT users experiencing eye problems related to their VDT use.
  - If issues exist, employees must first explore options in Section 20.
  - If those options are unsuccessful, then employees may be eligible for having the agency pay for glasses.

To be eligible, your supervisor must certify that:
- You use a computer as part of your job.
- Section 20 efforts did not sufficiently address the issues.
- Based on this certification, you can request reimbursement.
  - "Eyeglasses/contacts of employee’s choice" means the employee has the choice of either glasses or contacts, not a particular style of glasses.
  - Eyewear remains government property.
- You are ineligible if you are on Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP), Leave Without Pay (LWOP) or extended sick leave.

**Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Department cannot contact the employee's personal health care provider without a signed release from the employee.**
**Knowledge Check**

- Larry’s daily duties involve using a computer for most of the day. His eyes have been bothering him for a while. Larry mentions the problem to his supervisor. What should the supervisor do?
**Article 30 – Occupational Health**

- The purpose of this article is to describe how the Union and the Department aid in:
  - Protecting employees from communicable diseases
  - Maintaining a healthful working environment
  - Providing health measures

**Article 30, Section 2 General**

Provided occupational health services:

- Emergency diagnosis and first aid treatment
- In-service occupational examinations
- Administering treatments and medications
- Referrals

**Article 30, Section 3 Service Requirements**

- Occupational health unit will:
  - Provide post-exposure exams and medical surveillance
  - Cooperate with local public health organizations in providing measures against significant public health diseases
  - Provide or make arrangements for health maintenance examinations for all eligible Department employees
**Article 30, Section 4
Occupational Health Services**

- Occupational health services (OHS) unit:
  - Where there are 300 or more employees with no existing health services, arrangements shall be made for a Department OHS unit unless services can be furnished by a nearby OHS servicing other federal employees
  - May be established for locations with fewer than 300 or offered via private/public source, whichever is more feasible
- Employees must notify supervisor when seeking treatment.
- Employee medical records must be kept separate and distinct from other medical records.
- Occupational health services will be provided under the direction of a licensed independent practitioner.

**Article 30, Section 5
Immunizations**

- There is usually no charge for basic vaccines and immunizations.
- If there is a charge, you will be notified in advance.

**Article 30, Section 7
Pandemics**

- In the event of a pandemic, immunizations will be provided at no cost to the employees.
- Employees will not be forced to participate if:
  - They have a medical condition that would be adversely affected.
  - They submit a written statement that the immunization conflicts with their religious beliefs.
**Article 30, Section 7 Pandemics**

- Employees will be issued PPE as needed.
- Employees who are ill as a result of a pandemic will be granted sick leave or leave without pay upon request.
- There will be no charge to leave for employees who are sent home on suspicion of illness.
- Temporary Telework arrangements are appropriate for employees who cannot report to work due to illness.

**Group Activity**

Knowledge Check

- Ricky works as an administrative assistant at the Portland office. Due to an unusually virulent flu outbreak, Management has decided everyone is to get a flu shot. Ricky refuses. What are two reasons Ricky can use to refuse the vaccination?
Article 32 – Staff Lounges

- The purpose of this article is to define Management and Union responsibilities pertaining to staff lounges.

Article 32 – Responsibilities

- Management and the union are both responsible for local bargaining:
  - Local agreements must be consistent with authorized use of appropriated funds
  - Current local CBAs remain in effect unless changed through new bargaining

- Management is also responsible for:
  - Locating staff lounges in areas with reasonable access
  - Providing adequate size to accommodate employees

Article 38 – Uniforms

- This article establishes policies, procedures and responsibilities for the acquiring, wearing, maintaining and exchanging of official Department uniforms.
**Article 38**

**Management Responsibilities**

- Issue full-time uniformed employees at least seven uniforms
- Repair or alter government-issued uniforms
- Replace unserviceable uniforms
- Inform Union of uniform changes at the bargaining level of the proposed change

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**Article 38, Sections 3 & 4**

**Police & Firefighter Uniforms**

- Management will provide to police items in accordance with Handbook 730.
- Management will provide to police and firefighters an allowance for articles not furnished by Department.
- No officer or firefighter will be required to use personal funds for mandated uniform items.

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**Article 38, Section 6**

**Lab Coats**

- All full-time employees who wear lab coats shall be issued a minimum of seven lab coats.
- Pathology and laboratory employees will receive a non-permeable lab coat.
**Article 66 – Technology for VBA Work**

- The purpose of this article is to explain the application of the technology that may be used to administer, track and/or measure the work of VBA bargaining unit employees.

**Article 66 Key Points**

- Technology is not a mandatory subject of bargaining, but the application of technology is appropriate for bargaining at the local level.
- Technology used to administer, track and/or measure work shall be applied in a manner that ensures validity, reliability and attainability.
- Employees who are unhappy with the record obtained through this technology may seek corrective action in accordance with Article 43 – Grievance Procedure.

**Group Activity**

Section Match Up
Section Match Up

1. Pandemic
2. Non-Permeable
3. Vision Program
4. Immunizations
5. Facility Quality Council
6. Ergonomic Environment
7. Duty Time

Questions

What's Next?

Workplace Restructuring