RELIEF COVERAGE AND THE CONTRACT

You are a member of supervision in Production Department 666. You have the responsibility to determine if, when, and how vacancies will be covered.

Department 666 manufactures heavy chemicals. It operates on a three shift per day, seven day per week schedule. Its workforce is as follows:

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF MEN	
Repairman	1	
Column Operator	4	
Drier Operator	4	
Intermediate Operator	8	
Standard Operator	4	
Swingman	1	-- 1 day/wk. each on Column, Drier and Standard jobs, and 2 days/wk. on the Intermediate job.
Porter	1	

Although Department 666 is a production unit in itself, it also constitutes a group of departments.

Your immediate supervisor is relatively new in the plant. After an initial meeting with him on relief work, he has asked to talk with you about the following specific questions. How would you answer them?

1) Q -- Your repairman has a three-week vacation. Must you contractually cover his job either with overtime or relief work?

   A -- No. First of all, it's your decision whether to cover the job at all. Secondly, it's your choice, if you choose to cover it, whether to do so on overtime or on a relief basis. See Article 22, S.A. C.(14).

2) Q -- Or, can you cover his absences only when needed?

   A -- Yes. See Article 22, S.A. C.(14).

3) Q -- In cases involving absences of more than three days, do you have the right to determine what type of coverage will be used if coverage is required in any of the aforementioned classifications?

   A -- Yes. See Article 22, S.A. C.(14).

4) Q -- Can you cover your swingman's vacation with both relief work and overtime?

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A -- Yes. You may have a floater who can work part of the swing job, leaving the rest of it to be covered on overtime (or left open).

5) Q -- Can you cover vacations in the Intermediate Operator classification with a reliefman and use overtime to cover an illness vacancy in same classification?

A -- Yes.

6) Q -- Is there any contractual restriction on the number of classifications that can be combined for "vacation" not "relief work" selection, or the number of employees working in the classifications combined?

A -- Yes. If more than 2 classifications are combined, the total number of employees in the combined classifications is limited to 6 maximum. This restriction applices only when 3 or more classifications are involved. See Article 22, S.A. C. (1) & (2).

7) Q -- Must departmental employes apply for relief work in all classifications combined in one grouping to work relief in one of these classifications?

A -- No. They may sign up (if they so choose) for relief work in just one of the combined classifications. See Article 22, S.A. C. (4).

8) Q -- If no employe in the group of departments wishes to work in any of the classifications combined, can a utilityman be obtained, trained, and required to work in the combined classifications?

A -- Yes. If no employe in the group of departments signs up for relief work in any given classification, you may obtain a utilityman for the coverage. This does not restrict you from asking a department employe at a later date if he wants or will accept the relief work. The fact that he did not sign up means he has no right to it over a utilityman, and you have no obligation to offer it to him. See Article 22, S.A. C. (6) & (10).

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9) Q -- Can department supervision arrive at new combinations for relief work and use utilitymen to work these combinations when no departmental employes have applied for relief work in these classifications during the relief sign-up period?

A -- Yes.

10) Q -- In choosing departmental employes to be trained as reliefmen for temporary absences, other than vacations, must you always select the senior applicant?

A -- No. Note the distinction: reliefmen for temporary absences other than vacations. You may select for this relief work a man who can be used with least interference with department schedules. This means least cost. If there is more than one man available (with minimum interference) for such relief work, you should ask the senior man first. The junior man can be required to work it if no one else wants it. See Article 22, Section 4.

11) Q -- If no one in the department signs up for relief work or an insufficient number of reliefmen sign up, are you restricted from verbally contacting and asking a departmental employe to perform such relief work in the Column Operator classification? If not, must you ask on the basis of seniority?

A -- a. No. After the sign-up sheets come down, you are not restricted from verbally contacting departmental employes and asking them to perform relief work, (on the basis that not enough people, or none, signed up). Once a department man is asked, accepts, and begins training, he has the same status as a man who signed up. See Article 22, S.A. C. (6).

b. No. You need not ask on the basis of seniority. (This means you can ask a qualified man who is junior).

12) Q -- If an employe signs up for relief work, can he be required to perform all relief work offered during the relief year -- April 1 through March 31?

A -- Yes; if he has accepted training on that job for that relief year, and if he is the junior trained relief applicant available. See Article 22, S.A. C.(7).

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13) Q -- If a departmental employe is the junior employe who signs up for relief work in the Intermediate Operator classification during the relief year, when has he obligated himself to perform all relief work offered?

A -- The junior relief applicant has obligated himself to perform all relief work offered as soon as he begins training on the job. See Article 22, S.A. C.(7).

14) Q -- Must an employe complete all relief coverages after such coverages begin?

A -- It depends on the circumstances. A relief employe does not have a choice in the matter (except when a department reliefman is given preference for a relief assignment over a utilityman, and no direct cost is involved). See Article 22, S.A. C.(12).

However, supervision does have the choice of moving a man from one relief assignment to another before the first one is completed, as long as no overtime is displaced. Even this restriction is waived if such a movement is necessary to maintain operations. See Article 22, S.A. C.(11) & (14).

15) Q -- Is a departmental employe given preference over a utilityman in regard to relief assignments? If so, under what circumstances is such preference given?

A -- Yes. When department people have signed up for relief work, they have preference over a utilityman for a relief assignment in that classification. See Article 22, S.A. C.(12).

16) Q -- Do you have the right to move a reliefman from one relief assignment to another before completion of the former assignment?

A -- Yes., when overtime will not be displaced, or when such a movement is necessary to maintain operations in a department. See Article 22, S.A. C.(14).

17) Q -- Where two departmental employes are on relief assignments in the same classification, who has the right to the continuing relief assignment when the shorter one ends?

A -- The senior man has his choice (if he declines, the junior man can be required to work the longer assignment). See Article 22, S.A. C.(13).

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18) Q -- Can employes perform relief work in their own classification?

A -- No, except as provided in Article 22, S.A. C.(5).

19) Q -- Can they ever assume different schedules during periods when other employes in their classification are absent?

A -- Yes, but only if the absence is for greater than 30 days. The absence must be due to illness, injury, or relief work (not for vacation). See Article 11, A. S. B.

20) Q -- In the event that two department employes are trained in the relief year for relief work in the Intermediate classification:

a. May the senior man of the two decline a particular relief assignment in the Intermediate classification?

b. If he does, may he be required to work a subsequent relief assignment in the same classification?

A -- a. Yes. The senior man available has a choice. However, once he has refused an assignment, he is no longer eligible for that particular assignment; i.e., he cannot change his mind and bump the junior man.

b. Yes. If the junior man of the two is on a relief assignment, that junior man is no longer available at that time. The "senior" man then becomes the "junior applicant available" and can be required to work relief. See Article 22, S.A. C.(7).

21) Q -- If a reliefman is floating on the day shift in the Column operator classification, and the regular operator on days calls in absent one day, may you use the floater to cover the vacancy?

A -- Yes. This is a relatively new position by management, based on the concept that a man floating in a classification is part of that classification's norman complement, (for as long as he is floating). He is carried on the overtime board in that classification, is paid the applicable rate, and can be asked to perform any of the work of that classification, on straight time while he is floating. This means, however, that particular note of his status must be made under Article 16, Section 23 (b) if a holiday occurs while he is floating.

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22) Q -- When a utilityman has completed a relief assignment in the Drier classification and begins training for relief work on the Standard job, where is he carried on the overtime board and how are his hours determined for overtime board position?

A -- In this set of circumstances, he cannot be on the overtime board, therefore, his hours are not determined. Note that this applies only to a utilityman in training. However, when he does become eligible for overtime (at the start of his first regularly scheduled shift on the relief assignment) his hours in that classification are computed as for a new man entering the classification.

For overtime status of a department employe working relief, see Article 16, Section 22.

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