

CWA Reaches Favorable Settlement in Verizon Copper Network Case in Pennsylvania



In a big victory for Pennsylvania consumers, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) has reached a settlement with Verizon that will require the company to repair and replace bad cable, defective equipment, faulty back-up batteries, and to take down 15,000 double telephone poles.

The settlement is the result of a CWA complaint before the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC) against Verizon for failure to maintain its copper infrastructure in violation of its statutory obligation to provide safe and adequate service to customers.

CWA filed the complaint with the Pennsylvania PUC in October 2015, providing substantial documentation of Verizon's failure to maintain its copper network. In April 2016, the PUC opened a proceeding to investigate CWA's complaint. CWA submitted exhaustive testimony documenting Verizon's inadequate maintenance of copper facilities and service problems that also endangered public and worker safety.

"For nearly two years, CWA documented Verizon's failure to repair the copper network and equipment, in areas where Verizon has chosen not to build out its FiOS fiber network," said CWA District 2-13 Vice President Ed Mooney. "We submitted those findings, along with substantial and expert testimony about the issue, spotlighting the threat to service quality and public safety. This settlement is a big victory for Pennsylvania consumers, who pay for and expect their telephone service to work."

"Today's settlement shows that Verizon cannot neglect its copper infrastructure and provide unsafe, inadequate service to its customers in order to maximize profits," Jim Gardler, CWA Local 13000 President, said. "CWA's testimony and evidence of Verizon's neglect spoke volumes. This settlement will help improve service quality and safety for Pennsylvanians. CWA will continue to monitor the issue and regularly meet with Verizon to review progress."

Here is what Verizon agrees to:

1. Cable Replacements: There is a list of cable replacement requests made in 2015 and 2016 that identified faulty cable in communities across the state - urban, suburban, and rural. Verizon will conduct an engineering review of these requests, determine which should be completed based on objective criteria, share this information with CWA, and complete all cable replacement projects within 18 months.

2. Remediation of copper plant in 30 communities served by wire centers (e.g. central offices) with the worst record of service performance and customer trouble reports (e.g. out-of-service or noise on the line). These are primarily in rural areas of the state. Verizon will allocate additional resources to maintenance or rehabilitation of the infrastructure in these areas. The first 15 areas will be completed within 18 months, the next 15 areas within 36 months.

3. Telephone poles. There are more than 15,000 "double poles" across Pennsylvania. This occurs when Verizon has failed to move its equipment from an old pole that was replaced with a new one by another utility (e.g. the electric company). In many cases, these are dangerous conditions - poles are falling, leaning, rotting, partially cut off, etc. Verizon will remediate 15,000 double poles over the next 36 months at a rate of 5,000 per year.

4. Remote terminal batteries. Verizon has neglected routine testing and replacement of batteries in remote terminals. During a power outage, when a battery in a remote terminal in a neighborhood goes out, telephone service fails. Verizon will inspect and replace, as necessary, batteries in Remote Terminals, with priority to those serving 911 and police departments.



5. Repair and call answer time. Verizon will report repair and call answer time on a quarterly basis to CWA.

CWA will be provided information about the locations of cable replacement, copper plant remediation, and remote terminal battery replacements, with quarterly progress reports on the cable replacement and copper plant remediation. In addition, CWA will meet with Verizon twice a year to review progress.

The Agreement is enforceable by the Pennsylvania PUC.



LABOR NIGHT AT
NATIONALS PARK

Friday, July 28, 2017 - 7:05PM



Washington Nationals –vs– Colorado Rockies

Tickets are \$15.00 each and will be sold on a first come/first served basis by calling the Local on 301-595-2108. Only a limited number of tickets are available. Call today !!

"Our Code of Conduct. Integrity is at the core of who we are."

Or at least so says the cover of Verizon's 2017 Code of Conduct book.

You know the book I'm referencing..... The one that you are allocated about a half hour to supposedly read from cover to cover....When in actuality you quickly click your way through the CBT (computer based training), while the screens touch on a few key points here and there. The one that won't allow you to log off the computer unless you certify that you read the book in its entirety, and that you understand it all. The book that Verizon will throw up in your face if you ever make a mistake. "You were covered on the Code of Conduct, so you must know that your actions violate it. You don't deserve to breathe Verizon air and you must be terminated!"



Each and every one of you needs to be clear that Code of Conduct training is actually a brief overview of 38 pages that can cost you your job, and you need to react accordingly.

Let me apologize up front if the tone of this article comes across as angry and negative, but that is exactly how I am feeling. I'm angry about our members being put in harm's way because they listen to and trust supervisors who tell them to do wrong. Let me be clear that I am not accusing all supervisors of doing this; I'm addressing the minority in management who are guilty of instructing our members to lie or cheat, and who then get laryngitis instead of speaking up and admitting it.

I'm frustrated when our members who should know better do as the supervisor says, without questioning policies and practices that smell rotten. I'm outraged when I hear about our members who follow the supervisor's direction because they don't even realize they have been told to do wrong. And I'm livid when the supervisors get amnesia and deny ever telling our members to take the action they told them to take. Integrity? Accountability? I think not.

I'd like to give a few examples of the hypocrisy at Verizon that fuels my anger. While some supervisors and managers were fired last year, others are still on the payroll today who cheated as far as technician "Repeats" are concerned. Verizon calls it a "Repeat" when a customer calls back in within 7 days of an order or repair visit for another dispatch, and they consider it a black mark on the results of the first technician who went out to the customer. Instead of taking the time to investigate if the second call is because of something the first tech didn't do, or did wrong, the Company merely pulls a report. If the customer calls for a second visit within 7 days, the first tech gets a "Repeat". It doesn't matter if the customer called back in to change or add other services, or because his set-top box stopped working. It's considered a "Repeat" for the first tech and it hurts his results. Instead of supervisors trying to determine that the second visit was through no fault of the first tech and removing the "Repeat" from his score card, some supervisors and managers invented a devious little game that went something like this: The supervisor would match up repair reports with customers their techs had visited within the past week. The supervisor would then cancel the customer report, but send a tech to fix the customer's problem while on NPW (non-productive work) time. The supervisor had the problem corrected basically "off the books", so it appeared that this supervisor and the techs who reported to her had better results than the supervisors who weren't cheating. Section 3 of the BCOC says in part: "You must create accurate records that reflect the true nature of the transactions and activities that they record...." and "Verizon does not tolerate falsification of improper alteration of records.....". This begs the question as to why supervisors who played this little "NPW Repeat Game" are still on the payroll if integrity

is truly at the core of who Verizon is.

Sales offices open up a whole other can of integrity worms. While they have yet to successfully bargain to pay our Consultants on commission, years ago Verizon decided to put 20% of supervisors' and managers' pay "at risk". They only get paid 80% of their salary, and have to "earn" the other 20% based on their teams' sales results. I got sick to my stomach when I first heard of this plan, because I knew it would result in the bad supervisors encouraging our Consultants to do whatever it took to reach high sales numbers, whether they followed the rules or not. While I'm not psychic, that's exactly what happened. Some supervisors have told some of our members to split one order into two in order to either get more sales credit, or to give the customer promotional credits he is not supposed to be entitled to. I assume the logic is if you save the customer money on his installation charges, hopefully he will buy more services, which will increase sales results, which equates to a larger paycheck for the boss man. You could have knocked me over with a feather when I heard the most recent scam direction given by a supervisor: In order for a customer to get free installation charges and a \$10 monthly credit on their bill, the customer is supposed to place their order themselves, online. However, if the customer attempts to place the order online and is unsuccessful, the Consultant is authorized to complete the order for the customer, and to apply the bill credit and free installation charges. Many of our members have verified that their supervisor told them to follow this sleazy process instead: When a customer called into the business office to place an order over the phone, he told the Consultants to go to Verizon.com and start the online order, as if they were the customer, then to finish the order as the Consultant in the CSSC systems!!! By doing this, it appeared that the customer had tried to place the order online but was unsuccessful, therefore permitting the Consultant to give the monthly credit and waive the installation charges. Once again, hopefully these extra credits equate to increased sales, and a bigger pay day for the boss. As of today, two of our new members are fired for doing exactly as their boss told them to do.....The boss, by the way, is still coming to work every day. The first page of the BCOC says "Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We are honest, ethical and upfront because trust is at the foundation of our relationships with our customers, our communities, our stakeholders and each other." **Newsflash, Verizon: Your foundation is cracking.**

I'm giving this level of detail in my article to get all of our members to think about what they do before they do it. Please re-read the BCOC, in its entirety. If you have any concerns that an action might place you in violation, ask your supervisor, manager or the Verizon Compliance Guide before you do it. CYA by putting the question and getting the answer in writing (i.e. an email), or if you get the answer verbally and you're the least bit uncomfortable with it, send a confirmation email to the person who answered, repeating the answer and asking them to confirm that you understood their answer correctly. Always remember that the BCOC states that you may never violate the Code or any company policy even if a supervisor directs you to do so. Don't lose your job because you follow an unethical practice that your supervisor told you to follow.

I'll close with one final quote from Verizon's BCOC: "Ethical behavior does not simply happen; it is the product of clear and direct communication of behavioral expectations, modeled from the top and demonstrated by example." I propose that Verizon begin practicing what they preach.

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

The Right To Refuse Unsafe Work

Thousands of workers die or are injured because of on-the-job accidents each year. Many more are exposed to unhealthy conditions that cause serious illnesses years later.

When does a worker have the right to refuse dangerous work?

On February 26, 1980, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling which more clearly defined a worker's right to refuse work where an employee(s) has (have) reasonable apprehension that death or serious injury or illness might occur as a result of performing the work. The unanimous decision came in a 1974 case against Whirlpool Corporation in which two workers refused to crawl out on a screen from which a co-worker had fallen to his death only nine days earlier.

In its decision, the court emphasized that the OSHA Act provides a worker with the right to choose not to perform an assigned task due to reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury coupled with a reasonable belief that no less drastic alternative is available. Further, the Court held that a worker who utilizes this OSHA Act protection may not be discriminated against for such action.

In light of the Supreme Court's decision, what should CWA members who are faced with an imminent danger situation do?

The Supreme Court has said that a worker may refuse unsafe work where she/he has refused the job in good faith. Good faith may be interpreted as an honest belief that the job was unsafe and unusually and objectively dangerous.

Good faith can be demonstrated by the manner by which you refuse unsafe work:

- Explain the hazard to the supervisor and your steward,
- Offer to do other, safe work until the hazard is corrected,
- Give management a chance to respond before doing anything else,
- If the condition isn't corrected, call OSHA and request an "imminent danger" inspection,
- Do not walk off the job. If management won't fix the hazard, force them to take the next step. Make sure you have expressed your reasons for refusing the job and your willingness to do other work, clearly and in the presence of your steward and/or other workers.



Personals

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Carey Bryan Singleton Jr. father of **Ken "Moose" Singleton** who died on June 19, 2017.

Kenneth Yodris, father of **Theresa Scott** who died on June 12, 2017.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Tina Mischou

Randall Ellington
Keith Boone
Eric Moore
John D. Moore
Lawrence Huver, III



Ken Singleton (Moose)

Benjamin Jones
Wendell Johnson
Aaron Brown
Michael Mann
Robert Soroka

Micki Wade

Lyndon Higgins
Justin Thrun
Myron Willis

Tony Meeks

Craig Scott
Chad Worthington



RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

It should come as no surprise that the latest news from Capitol Hill is that there is a serious effort led by the Republican Legislators to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act. It is estimated that 23 million Americans will lose health care coverage as a result of this legislation and insurance rates will increase significantly.

It should also not surprise you that those designing the new legislation stand to gain the most in the form of tax breaks. President Trump's budget staffer, Joe Grogan, was a drug industry lobbyist, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, is a heavy investor in the pharmaceutical industry. FDA Commissioner, Scott Gottlieb has been collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees from pharmaceutical companies. This should alarm current retirees as to the future cost of our health care and the availability for coverage for future seniors and retirees. If this concerns you at all, please call your legislators now on Capitol Hill by dialing 202-224-3121 and they will connect you to the appropriate office..

Please make plans to attend our July 12, 2017 RMC meeting at 11:00am to catch up with some friends and enjoy the luncheon.



Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Thinking about retiring? You may want to check out one of the listed workshops presented by Nettworth Financial Group for a retirement check-up and a free meal!! If you plan to attend, please RSVP by calling 877-534-2860. Seating is limited.

Benefits Workshop

July 11th - 6:30pm, Lake Presidential Club, 3151 Presidential Golf Club Dr, Marlboro
July 13th - 6:30pm, Ruth's Chris, 106 Crown Park Ave, Gaithersburg
July 20th - 6:30pm, Ruth's Chris, 301 Severn Ave, Annapolis
Aug 23rd - 6:30pm, Elks Lodge, 2210 Old Washington Rd, Waldorf

Hosted By: **NettWorth Financial Group**
Scott Ferguson, Financial Advisor*

Social Security Workshop

July 15th - 10:00am, CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville
July 19th - 6:00pm, Elks Lodge, 2210 Old Washington Rd, Waldorf
Sep 26th - 6:30pm, Ruth's Chris, 106 Crown Park Ave, Gaithersburg
Sep 27th - 6:30pm, Ruth's Chris, 301 Severn Ave, Annapolis

REGISTER ONLINE:

www.nettworth.net/marylanddcvirginia
Or Toll Free: (877) 534-2860

Retirement Preparedness Workshop

Aug 10th - 6:30pm, Ruth's Chris, 106 Crown Park Ave, Gaithersburg

Seats are limited. You must register to attend.

By: **Matt Klingman**

One LTSD Down - Nine LTSD's To Go

As I type this, Verizon has just declared the first long term service difficulty, (LTSD). The LTSD was formerly a horrible beast that reared its ugly head week after week destroying any hope of our members achieving any semblance of life balance. Verizon wanted as much money as they could, as quickly as possible, so they scheduled more installation orders than the existing workforce could possibly complete in an 8 hour day. If you didn't like all the forced overtime, well Burger King was hiring. So we held our signs, raised our fists and chanted our chants on the picket lines and were successful in limiting LTSD's to a more manageable size, ten weeks instead of the previously unlimited amount. With this limit imposed, jobs were created. Full time, term and summer hire technician positions were made to support the work demand. We should all be proud of the LTSD limits we negotiated last year. Is this LTSD company created? Yep, I'm pretty sure that it was called based upon the number of FiOS orders. Even while working overtime, please always use your safety equipment so you can go home in the same condition you came to work in.

Local 2108 Calendar

JULY 2017

4 Independence Day
Local Office Closed



- 12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 28 Labor Night at Nationals Park - 7:05pm
Washington Nationals vs Colorado Rockies

AUGUST 2017

- 2 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 7-8 76th CWA Convention
Pittsburgh, PA



- 9 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 9 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, July 12, 2017, 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, July 12, 2017, 11:00am



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Matt Klingman - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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