

# Horizon Air

Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO



## AFA Vacation Bidding Grievance Update

As you probably know, the MEC has been focused and actively working to ensure that inflight management puts out enough vacation weeks for flight attendants to be able to bid all their accrued vacation. Their response to our repeated request has been that flight attendants intend to keep vacation hours for day-at-a-time vacation, medical/maternity leaves, or to cash out when they leave employment. Because of this belief, Inflight management has been under budgeting the annual cost of vacation for Flight Attendants.

As we reached a new contract last year, we were still concerned about vacation issues. As part of the new contract's implementation process, inflight management agreed to "meet and confer" over the vacation issues. In the legalese of the Railway Labor Act, "meet and confer" means to negotiate. There's no requirement to reach an agreement, but both sides must bargain in good faith.

We did meet with various members of management in the summer of 2020 but got nowhere. It appeared to us that they had no intention of changing how they budget and establish vacation weeks for bidding but were simply going through the motions. Next, vacation weeks for the 2021 bid were established by Inflight management, and again were woefully inadequate to cover the vacation hours accrued by Flight Attendants. AFA filed two grievances, one for management's failure to negotiate in good faith, and a second one because of the insufficient vacation weeks available to bid.

The parties agreed to use a National Mediation Board (NMB) mediator to help us work through these issues. We recently finished our fourth and final mediation session with management and the NMB mediator. After much effort from the parties, we were not able to come to an agreement. The mediation sessions fulfilled management's obligation to meet and confer, so we will be withdrawing that grievance. However, we will therefore be scheduling the vacation grievance for arbitration. In arbitration, a neutral arbitrator will determine whether management violated and continues to violate our contract.



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As a result of our NMB mediation sessions, inflight management did increase overall vacation weeks to the 2022 vacation bid as compared to the 2021 vacation bid. Our 2022 vacation bidding will begin in October of this year. While we appreciate these actions, we believe that a continuing violation of the contract exists until inflight management budgets and allows for the expenditure of all vacation hours accrued by Flight Attendants. The amount of increase that inflight management has proposed for our 2022 vacation bid equates to approximately two weeks of vacation per flight attendant. As you will readily see when the vacation bids are published in October, the 2022 vacation bid is drastically underfunded by inflight management again and as a result we cannot bid for and receive our full vacation entitlement.

During the upcoming annual vacation bid process, it is important to bid enough weeks that you are awarded vacation and are not ineligible due to senior bidders above you. After the vacation bid closes if you received a week(s) you don't like or no longer need, our contract allows you to release the unwanted awarded vacation week(s). We must continue to show inflight management that we are not being given enough vacation slots to use our full contractual vacation entitlement. Also, AFA understands that the vacation bidding system is complicated so we are working on a video guide to vacation bidding that will address the most common vacation-bidding errors, along with other bidding dos and don'ts. We will also be available to answer your questions before and during the bidding period. Let us know what else we can do to help.



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