

Grievance 101

A Brief Overview



grievance noun
griev·ance

Definition

: a real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially unfair treatment.”

Synonyms

: ‘injustice,’ ‘wrong,’ and ‘offense.’

By Tracy Erazo

Co-Chair of the Grievance Committee

The dictionary defines ‘grievance’ as “a real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially unfair treatment.” Synonyms include ‘injustice,’ ‘wrong,’ and ‘offense.’

When it comes to a labor-management contract, however, the meaning is slightly different. A grievance is a formal objection or complaint. It’s an allegation by the union that management has violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied one or more sections of the contract that it negotiated with the union.

There generally are two types of grievances: contract interpretation grievances and disciplinary grievances.

Once we ratify a contract with grievance procedures, the company will be required to follow exact language pertaining to pay, proper rest, pairing reassignments, junior assignments, duty day extensions and other aspects of our work and benefits. If management violates the contract, we will have a legal mechanism to push back – the grievance.

Your elected TWU Local officers and union staff who are ultimately assigned to handle grievances will review each claimed violation. When a contract violation has occurred, your union will file a grievance on your behalf. If labor and management representatives can’t work out a resolution, the union may take the dispute to a neutral arbitrator to make a decision. This is often a lawyer who was chosen by the union and management in advance.

If confronted with a contract violation on the job, you should notify crew services and a union representative of the violation, and cite the contract provision being violated. If management persists, you must accept the situation and grieve it later – unless you feel your personal safety is at imminent risk.

Disciplinary cases also can wind up with the filing of a grievance to arbitration.

If charges are filed against an employee, possible outcomes include a settlement at the “local level.”

Joined by a union representative, the affected Inflight Crewmember will meet with local base management. They may agree upon a remedy. An IFC facing termination or lengthy suspension, for example, may agree to a lesser punishment.

If the two sides can’t reach a settlement, the matter goes to a higher management level. If a settlement isn’t agreed upon at this upper level, the dispute will go to a neutral arbitrator. Both sides are able to present evidence and arguments. The arbitrator renders a binding decision. That can’t be overturned and may be precedent setting.

This was just a basic introduction to the grievance process.

We will get more in-depth once our CBA is adopted. In the meantime, continue to follow current policies and procedures.

If something is amiss, do not be afraid to read your ISM to crew services.

Currently, it is the only language we have in place for protection.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Grievance Committee.

We are here for you, always.

In Unity,
Tracy