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To: gina.turcotte@maine.gov
Date: 8/2/2007 5:44:05 PM
Subject: Early Leave Dispute 080207

Thursday, August 02, 2007
3:48:21 PM

I was informed today that my taking sick time and leaving at 2:00pm 'was going to be documented', for what reasons I'm still not sure. This is being written as an addendum to the documentation submitted by my supervisor, Laurie Carrier, about this event.

Our unit was short by 2 employees today which increased the level of stress amongst my peers, myself and my supervisor, especially considering one of the 4 employees present is not fully trained to take customer calls independently. Customers were particularly prickly today (maybe due to the increased hot/humid weather of the day) and difficult customer problems were not easily resolved.

Around 1:05 I received a phone call from Jen, the branch manager (I believe) of the Portland BMV branch office, about a customer who was trying to renew her license but who was currently suspended in New Hampshire. Jen's understanding was that she needed to clear up her suspension in NH before a renewal would be issued in Maine. Jen called the main office to relay a question from the customer,

"If the driver is still suspended in New Hampshire and was so at the time of the issuance of her work-restricted license (which the driver was honest about), why is she now not able to obtain her license renewal even though her NH suspension was irrelevant at the time of the w/r license issuance??"

I told Jen that the answer was something I would have to get from Laurie as I wasn't sure how to explain that as I am still learning the nuances of OUI law and restoration/renewal requirements. I put Jen on hold and went in search of Laurie, to no avail. I walked around the floor in search of Laurie, also to no avail. I waited in my section for a few minutes for Laurie to return. After 5 min or so I finally decided to ask Linda Grant. When I arrived at Linda's office she was on a phone call so I waited outside her office. I believe I was waiting at least 5 minutes all the while scanning the corridors looking for another supervisor, such as Laurie or Bob O'Connell. Eventually Mr. O'Connell came walking down the hall so I began to walk back to my section and ask for his help. The entire time I was intently looking for a supervisor to be available I never once saw Laurie return to our unit.

I was standing in front of Laurie's cubicle explaining the question and customer's history to Mr. O'Connell when Laurie came walking out of her cubicle and observed our interaction. (I was very surprised to see her as I never saw her return) As Mr. O'Connell was explaining to me that the law states that because this driver is a validly licensed driver in the state of Maine, that the OUI occurred in NH and that she has satisfied all of her restoration requirements in Maine, and she is not a CDL licensee, that she is able to renew her license with no difficulty from Maine. However, she still needs to resolve her suspension in NH. This renewal would be allowed regardless of what the PDPS inquiry is reporting. The only time a PDPS inquiry even needs to be performed, according to Mr. O'Connell, is when the driver is a commercial-licensed driver.

It was at this time that Laurie interjected, with an observably abrasive tone and attitude, "GINA, we have ALREADY discussed this a couple weeks ago." I responded by saying that my understanding from her was that there was no differentiation with the commercial status at the time of renewal – that ALL suspensions must be satisfied for ANY license to be renewed. Based on my observation of Laurie's posturing, tone, pitch and volume of voice she was obviously irritated by at least 1, if not 2, things... 1) that I failed to remember what she had told me (although I've worked for the OUI unit for a total of only 7 months and have been working independently with customers for only 4 months), and/or 2) that I sought out assistance from Mr. O'Connell as I have already been advised to not seek his help except in circumstances where a supervisor is immediately needed and none available on the floor. I was also previously advised if I again sought his help unnecessarily I would be subject to disciplinary action. This statement was made to the OUI unit as a whole, but immediately on the heels of an event where I had sought Mr. O'Connell's input when another supervisor was readily available.

As I was feeling mildly attacked by Laurie, and because I had a branch waiting for me to return with an answer, I politely excused myself and returned to my phone call. I relayed the information to Jen at which time she stated that she was very confused as her training has always been to the contradiction of what I just relayed to her – essentially, what she and I believed to begin with – that the driver must satisfy all USA suspensions in order to renew a license. This, she stated, was

what she has always believed and enforced with her branch's customers.

Jen and I spoke rhetorically for a few moments about our independent and collective confusion and what steps she was going to take next with this customer. I reminded her that she has authorization from Mr. Robert O'Connell to give this driver a license. She, at that moment, instructed her employee to issue the license to this driver with detailed notes stating Mr. O'Connell personally authorized this license. Jen said she was going to transcribe detailed notes about this customer event and the results. I asked Jen if she would please reference my name in her notes for future review.

From the moment Laurie exited her cubicle and interjected into my conversation with Mr. O'Connell, I began to feel sick to my stomach; I was shaking, and I couldn't focus on anything but keeping myself calm, collected and under control, in tone, movement, and unspoken attitude. After ending the call with the Portland branch office, I returned to opening and stamping my mail for the day. As I sat there and tried to focus on work, I couldn't fight off the uneasy feeling of nausea building up in my body so I got up from my desk and informed Laurie that as soon as I had my mail sorted and completed I would be leaving for the day under sick time as I did not feel well. She said "ok", while having a stunned look on her face, obviously surprised that I was leaving.

I completed my mail duties, cashed out my cash drawer, shut my system and phone down and went and asked Laurie if there was anything she needed from me before I left. She responded, "no". A minute or so later Laurie came to my cubicle and informed me that "this event will be documented". I responded by saying, "I'm sure it will be... and I will also have my input." She then asked me if I would like to talk with her now about it and I said that I did not think that would be a smart thing to do at that moment. She looked at me with a puzzled look on her face so I clarified for her that I would not be comfortable speaking with her right now. She said that if I had something to say she would give me the opportunity to say it in private. I again said that I needed to leave and that I would speak with her when I returned.

I gathered my personal items and left the office.