

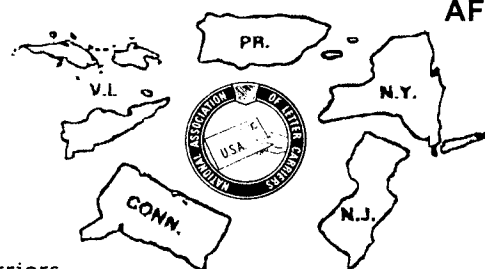
REGION 15 **FLASH**

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PLEASE POST

Darkness, Safety and YOU

As I write this article, I have just received information that a letter carrier was shot and killed in Landover, Maryland. All the details are not in, so I am not going to assign blame or target darkness as the predominate factor.

What I am going to go into are your rights and responsibilities concerning your job and, more importantly, your responsibility to your family.

Your number one priority is being safe. Delivering your mail and returning safe. Completing your day at work and returning safely to your family. Nothing else is as high of importance! No matter what anyone says or anyone orders you to do. If the situation puts your safety in jeopardy, your life in jeopardy, you have a right and obligation to you and your family to refuse the order under safety regulations.

Darkness of itself is not unsafe. Darkness of itself is not a reason to refuse an order. Not being able to see where you are walking is unsafe. Not being able to see the steps you have to walk up and down is unsafe. Not being able to see dogs and other animals is unsafe. Walking in the street because the block does not have sidewalks is unsafe. Delivering in a high crime neighborhood or street after dark is unsafe. We know the dangerous areas and should refuse to deliver there after dark. These are reasons to bring the mail make and refuse the order. If you get disciplined, we will grieve it, but at least you will be safe and alive to grieve it. Please remember this and pass the word to your fellow carriers and especially the new CCAs.

I am not naive and I know that a lot of carriers love the overtime and are willing to work late but remember you and your family can't spend overtime money if you are not here. Be safe, be with your family, and think about what could happen and how your family would be impacted.

For all those carriers that are using the hat lights, the so called miner hats, they are not approved equipment. They are not safe as you think they are. If you are using the light to read the mail, you can't see where you are stepping. If you are looking at your feet, you are going to miss that low hanging tree limb. If you are looking at the handrail, you are missing the step. **DO NOT USE THEM!** The same goes for flashlights. They are not approved equipment. We don't have enough hands to carry the mail, adding a flashlight to the mix is dangerous. **DO NOT USE THEM.**

I am asking all shop stewards to file a class action grievance in locations where management is handing out miner lights, flashlights or permitting their use. They are not approved: they are not safe and should not be used.

Completing the route is not worth it. The extra money is not worth it. What is worth beyond price is your health and safety. Don't let anyone take it away from you.

Be safe