PROCESSING RETURNED MAIL AND PHONE REQUESTS

A.   GETTING STARTED: Activities Prior to the Initial Ballot Mailing by EOHQ

1.   <u>Notify Candidates/Observers</u>.   Advise candidates at the Nomination Meeting, and in writing, of their right to observe the processing of returned mail and ballot requests. (*See Sample A "Notice to Candidates*). This is a good time to advise candidates that the *Rules* require that observers must be members in good standing of the local.

Determine and include in your notice:

WHEN: Date you will begin to pick up undelivered mail and time each day you expect to arrive at the post office. Date of the last pick-up prior to the count (usually 3-4 days prior to the Count).

WHEN: Date you will begin accepting phone requests for ballots, (this date will appear in your Local Union Election Plan) and you will stop accepting requests for ballots (usually 3-4 days before the Count).

WHERE: The location of the Post Office at which returned/undeliverables will be received and the location where they will be processed. Include instructions, if appropriate, regarding parking or admittance to the either location.

2.   <u>Setting Up a File System</u>. Keeping accurate records is important in processing mail returned as undeliverable and cross checking requests for ballots. The use of all ballots must be reconciled at the time of the count and even one unaccounted for ballot can cause headaches.

Familiarize yourself with the Election Ballot Report, the roster which accompanied the blank ballots and mailing envelopes provided by EOHQ. Locate the sequence number (3rd column) and Employer Number (6th column). This information will be needed for coding phone requests for ballots.

Set up a system of file folders that will hold Phone Requests for Ballots (see Exhibit C for example) and copies of returned envelopes (CREs) that you will be working from as you search for updated addresses and prepare labels.

3.   <u>Suggested Files</u>

—   CRE COMPLETED: holds CREs where an updated address has been found and a label prepared.
—   CRE EMPLOYER: holds CREs (grouped by employer) ready for phone contact with employers.

- CRE END SEARCH: holds CREs after all searches have been completed and no new address found.
- CRE SEARCH 2: holds CREs where no updated address is available from the employer until the CREs are checked through alternative methods as described on page 3.
- MESSAGE: holds CREs or Phone Requests, in cases where you have called the member and are waiting for a return call.
- REQUESTS IN: holds Phone Requests prior to their processing.
- REQUESTS OUT: holds Phone Requests after they have been processed.

4. Record Keeping. At various times during and after the process, you may be called upon to provide information regarding the processing of ballots. A good record keeping system will help you maintain an accurate count of:

- The number of ballots that have been returned as undeliverable
- Remails – The number of addresses you have updated and mailed a ballot
- The number of requests for ballots received
- The number of ballots mailed as a result of Requests For Ballots
- The persons / addresses to whom you have mailed ballots
- Duplicates – The number of ballots mailed in response to requests from members whose names appear on the Ballot Mailing Report and are thus assumed to have received a ballot in the initial mailing from EOHQ, unless the ballot has been returned as undeliverable.)
- New Ballots – The number of ballots mailed to members whose names do not appear on the Ballot Mailing Report

(a) Using The Ballot Mailing Report For Record Keeping. Certain information should be recorded directly on the Ballot Mailing Report, the roster which accompanied the package of ballots and envelopes you received from EOHQ after the initial ballot mailing. For example:

- Highlight in yellow each member whose original ballot is returned as undeliverable.
- Highlight in blue each member who requests a ballot. (If this entry has been previously marked as returned mail it will turn the entry green)
- Highlight in red/orange each member on the Ballot Mailing Report who receives a new ballot due to a returned mail piece for which an updated address has been found. (You will be highlighting over yellow). If the Ballot Mailing Report is your sole source of record keeping, write in any updated address information below the member's entry.
- Add to the end of the Ballot Mailing Report the name and address of any individual not already listed who is mailed a ballot.

(b) Alternative Methods of Record Keeping. The Ballot Mailing Report, while useful as a record keeping tool, is often cumbersome to use if processing a large number of undeliverables or requests.

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(1)   The Ledger System. A more flexible system uses some version of the forms attached as Exhibits C & D. The LEDGER SHEET (which can be kept as a file or as a binder) is helpful for tracking mailings and phone requests for ballots on a daily basis. The PHONE REQUEST FOR BALLOT FORM provides a way to ensure the individual taking the requests asks the right questions for your records. The attached samples are not the only way to maintain records, however, they have been used successfully in other elections.

(2)   Computerized Systems. A computer data base or word processing program, where available, is often more flexible to operate and makes generating labels and reports simple. This is very helpful for elections in large locals. For smaller Locals, well kept files and a typewriter for the mailing labels may be enough. No matter how they are prepared, the mailing labels you generate will provide the same information. (See sample label on page 8.)

If you elect to keep records on a computer, WordPerfect and Microsoft Word offer mail merge features that allow you to create a format or data file that can be adapted for mailing labels and reports. Database programs such as Paradox, FoxPro, PC File, and Microsoft Access are very good as well. See Exhibit B attached for a sample data set-up and label format. When setting up your data base or mail merge file keep in mind the categories you may wish to sort data by: last name, mail code (see Mail Codes page 8) and possibly by employer. Set-up your data and label format and test the print-out as far in advance is possible. There are ALWAYS glitches!

No matter what system you use, it is best to create a separate data file for each local. Use the same format, but give each local a different file name for each set of files kept per local (e.g., 0705mail., 0710mail., etc.). In a computerized system, it is possible to use one database and sort/search on the "Local" field; however, keeping the locals in separate files prevents the possibility of entering a members information under the wrong local. The separation also makes it easier to generate mailing labels by local. Finally, if there is an error in the database of one local the other locals may remain uncorrupted (in the computer and not legal sense of the word). Remember to back-up your data regularly.

B.   PROCESSING MAIL RETURNED AS UNDELIVERABLE.

1.   At the Post Office. Pick-up returned mail from the Post Office daily. Adhere to the time schedule stated in the Notice to Candidates. Many observers will request that you make their life easier by counting incoming ballots in the lobby of the Post Office. Do not conduct business in the Post Office. If you rush a count or make a mistake, the same observer whose convenience was served may file a protest.

2. __At the Processing Location__.

(a) __Copy and Store Returned Ballot Envelopes__.

- Count the returned envelopes and record the number (See sample Ledger sheet - Attachment D) and record the date the envelope was returned on the Ballot Mailing Report in the appropriate column beside the member's name. If you are keeping records only with the Ballot Mailing Report, perform the second step only.

- Copy the returned envelopes, one to a page, so that the member's name and address is visible. Use the copies of the returned envelopes (CREs) as your records during the address search process. __Do not open the returned envelopes.__

- Bundle the actual returned envelopes together. Attach a slip that states the date and number of ballots received. Store the envelopes in a secure location.

(b) __Prepare the CREs For The Address Search Process__.

- Alphabetize CREs by last name of member.

- Some CREs will contain a sticker with a forwarding address provided by the Post Office. Highlight these names in red/orange on the Ballot Mailing Report and set these CRE's aside for label preparation.

- Highlight the entry for each remaining CRE, in yellow, on the Ballot Mailing Record. If a member has been already been sent a ballot in response to a Phone Request (the entry will already be highlighted in blue), note the date of the Phone Request on the CRE and move it to the CRE COMPLETED file. Do not send another ballot.

- Sort CREs by Employer code and clip together. Place the CRE packs in the CRE EMPLOYER file.

(c) __Contacting Employers through the Local Union TITAN Operator__. You already know the importance of the Local Union's Titan Operator. They will be the normal avenue through which employers will be contacted. Unfortunately, assisting you in this process will most likely not be a top priority for the Titan Operator. Try to enhance cooperation by agreeing on some ground rules. For example; will you call the Operator daily at a certain time with your requests? Will you call when you have X number of returns? Is it better to FAX the information? What information will the Operator need? What kind of turnaround time should you expect? Remember that you only have a limited amount of time to obtain these addresses and re-mail ballots. Let the Titan Operator know the extent of your needs, inform him/her of the beginning and ending dates of the project.

The Titan operator knows his/her job. There are, however, some hints that you can pass on:

- Calling employers fairly early in the day on Tuesday-Thursday usually elicits the best response.
- Where possible, limit calls to an employer to once or at most twice a week - pool information requests.
- Offer to FAX a list of names and social security numbers to employers if you are requesting addresses for more than 4 or 5 employees of the same employer. When communicating by FAX, obtain a commitment as to when you can expect a response. This gives you reason to follow up with the employer.

If the employer is unable to provide an updated address, place the CRE in the CRE SEARCH 2 file, and, time permitting, use the alternative methods described below to generate updated address information.

(d)   Contacting Employers Directly. If you are conducting an election in a local where you believe you are not getting the cooperation you need or where you are being hindered by the local, you may choose to do the address search yourself. In this case you will need to request that the TITAN operator provide you with a list of employers, sorted by the employer ID numbers. The list, which should contain names, addresses and telephone numbers of the employers, will provide you with sufficient information to contact employers directly.

When contacting employers, you will usually be working with someone in their personnel or payroll departments. It is good to establish a continuing relationship with one person. Follow the same directives given under preceding section to obtain the best results.

There are advantages and disadvantages to working directly with employers. A disadvantage is that you are unknown to the employer. If an employer is reluctant to give you information, offer to FAX the request to the employer on your stationary and fax your letter of engagement from the Election Officer. This will give evidence of your authority to obtain information on the employee.

Where an employer's records show an address which appears to be identical to the address shown on the CRE, you have an advantage over the Local Titan Operator in that you may request an employee's telephone number from the employer, allowing you to contact a member directly. However, before calling the employee, carefully compare the address received from the employer with the address on the CRE, as sometimes one transposed, incorrect or missing number in a street address or zip code can cause a mailing to be returned.

(e)   <u>Alternative Methods of Obtaining Members' Addresses</u>. When an updated address is not available from an employer, the address may be found in the phone book or through directory assistance. Crisscross Directories, available in many areas, can be used to provide a phone number for the address you have. Explore the options in your local area. If you can get a telephone number, try calling. Even if a member has moved, you may reach someone at the member's old number (roommate, former spouse, etc) who may be able to offer a new address or telephone number. Sometimes, call forwarding messages are in place and you will receive a message with an updated telephone number.

Three things to remember:

- Never give a member's phone number, especially to the local union.
- Note phone calls on the CRE, including the date and the result of the call.
- When someone returns a message, verify their identity by requesting a social security number and the name of an employer.

(f)   <u>Ending the Search</u>. If all reasonable methods have been attempted, and you have not found a current address for a member, place the CRE in the CRE: END OF SEARCH file.

C.   PROCESSING PHONE REQUESTS FOR BALLOTS

1.   <u>General Guidelines</u>.

- <u>Be consistent</u>. Do not accept phone requests for ballots prior or after the times set forth in your Notice to Candidates. Do not give out statistics regarding mail processing to one candidate without giving information to all candidates.
- <u>Be discreet</u>. Do not give out statistics, unless you are 100% certain of the accuracy of your information. What you say may be written down, repeated, and show up in a protest. No phone number that is acquired by the EO staff should ever be given to the Local Union or any other party.
- <u>Be discriminating</u>. Phone requests for ballots should be made by the individual member. Do not accept requests from a member's wife or family member, shop-steward or any campaign organization. .
- <u>Be complete</u>. A sample Phone Request for Ballot form is attached at the end of this document (See Exhibit C). Use of a consistent form assures that all the necessary information will be obtained for each Phone Request. When using a computer record keeping system, data entry goes faster when the form used and the data base or mail merge file have the same or a similar format. Individual information sheets, or pages that can be cut into separate records make sorting and filing much easier. **Fill out each Phone Request Form completely, date and initial it for the records.**

- <u>Remember the Rest of Your Team</u>. Fully instruct your Adjunct Coordinators as well as any staff members (clericals, receptionists) who may be receiving phone requests for ballots.
- <u>Teamsters Do Not Keep Office Hours</u>. A properly programmed answering machine or voice mail is indispensable when you are unavailable to take requests. When voice mail or a taped message is used, the message should very clearly inform the member of the information to give. Include a request for a phone number. Often messages are left which are unclear or incomplete. Contacting a member to confirm or complete information is an extra step. The recording you leave can minimize the number of times you are required to call back to confirm information.

  SAMPLE PHONE MESSAGE. *"If you are calling to request a ballot for a Teamster election, please leave the following information. Speak slowly and clearly. We need your name (Spell your last name), your telephone number, your address with zip code, your social security number, the number of your local and the name of your employer. Again, provide your name, address, telephone number, social security number, local union number and employer. Thank you."*

2. <u>Processing the Requests</u>

    – **Alphabetize Request For Ballot forms**

    – **Duplicate Ballot Requests:**
        – **Refer to the Ballot Mailing Report** to confirm the social security number and obtain the employer code of the member requesting a ballot. **Highlight** the entry in blue.
        – **Record the employer code, sequence number and status code** on the Request For Ballot form for inclusion on the mailing label.
        – **If a member has already been sent a ballot** in the process of remailing undeliverables (the Ballot Mailing Report entry will be highlighted in red/orange) you may wish to phone the member and inform them that the ballot has been mailed and that they should call back if the ballot is not received in a reasonable amount of time.
        – **If a member's Ballot Mailing Report entry is highlighted in yellow** (their first ballot was returned) locate their CRE in the FILE SYSTEM and move it to the COMPLETED File. Highlight the entry with a blue higlighter over the yellow (to turn the entry green.)

    – **New Ballot Requests:**
        – **When a member requesting a ballot is not listed on the Mail Ballot Report**, record the name of the unlisted individual at the end of the Mail Ballot Report or on the back.

    – **All Requests:**
        – **When a Ballot Request has been processed**, move the Request Form

to the REQUESTS SENT file

- **At the end of the day,** if using the ledger system of record keeping, record the number of ballots requested on the appropriate line of the ledger (See Exhibit D).

D. DAILY MAILING OF RETURNED MAIL AND PHONE REQUESTS

1. Mailing Labels. The first 2 lines of a mailing label offer important information.

```
  1         2    3    4    5

01943   987654321X3646492660790
                              00

First Name MI Last Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
```

A review of the sample label shows the top line to be divided into 5 segments as follows:

Segment 1.: SEQUENCE CODE, a five digit numeric code that acts as a security feature and aids alphabetizing during the ballot count.

Segment 2.: EMPLOYER CODE, a nine digit code which identifies the member's employer

Segment 3: MAIL CODE, a 1 digit alphabetical code which identifies the mailing source of the particular ballot (X is the code used for all Ballots sent in the original mailing).

Segment 4: SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (in sample above, 364649266)

Segment 5: LOCAL UNION NUMBER, always containing 4 digits

On the second line of the label, directly below the Local Union Number, is the STATUS CODE, a 2 digit code assigned by the TITAN System to designate different kinds of members (active, retired, suspended, terminated, etc.)

IMPORTANT: WHEN PURCHASING LABELS, BE SURE THAT THE SIZE OF LABEL SELECTED CAN ACCOMMODATE THE FIVE ROWS OF INFORMATION REQUIRED UNDER THE LABEL FORMAT.

2. Changing the Mail Code on a Label to Identify a Supplemental Mailing. When mailing out ballots upon completion of the processing of returned mail or ballots requested by a member, the original mail code should be removed and replaced with one of the codes listed below. **Replace the X Mail Code of the original ballot mailing with the appropriate Mail Code, as follows:**

- R: Remail. A "Remail" is a ballot mailed when an updated address is found for a piece of returned mail.
- D: Duplicate. A "Duplicate" is a ballot mailed as a result of a Request for Ballot from a member listed on the Election Ballot Report.

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— **N:** **New.** A "New" Ballot is a ballot mailed as a result of a Request for Ballot received from a member not listed on the Election Ballot Report. (mailing label prepared for a New ballot will not contain a sequence number or a status code).

3. <u>Generating the Mailing Labels</u>. If you are generating labels for more than one election, generate and copy the labels from each Local Union separately.

— **Follow the sample label** above when preparing mailing labels. The information you need for each label will have been recorded on the individual CRE or Request For Ballot form. Remember to insert the appropriate Mail Code.
— **Make two copies of the mailing labels for the day,** put the date on both copies and place one copy in the ledger file folder/attach to the ledger. As a courtesy, provide the second copy of the labels to the Local, for updating their records.
— File all processed CREs and Requests for Ballots in the appropriate files in alphabetical order.

4. <u>Preparing New Ballot Packets For Mailing</u>. As stated earlier, do not remove blank ballots from mail returned as undeliverable. Such ballots should remain sealed in their original envelopes. The materials sent to you by EOHQ should, be more than sufficient.

— **Determine the number of ballot packs you will mail** by counting the mailing labels you have prepared and remove that number of blank ballots from secure storage. NEVER LEAVE BLANK BALLOTS UNSECURED OVERNIGHT.

— **Ballot packs consist of the following:**
   — an outer window envelope
   — a return envelope, on which is affixed a new, appropriately coded mailing label
   — a secret ballot envelope
   — a blank ballot

— **Record the number of ballot packs mailed** each day. *(See sample Ledger attached as Exhibit D)*
   — *Section C:* REMAIL ballots
   — *Section D:* DUPLICATE ballots
   — *Section E:* NEW ballots mailed
   — *Section F:* total ballots mailed

— **Ballot packs are mailed by the close of business on the day they are prepared.**

NOTICE TO CANDIDATES
Returned Mail Processing

From and after _____, returned mail ballot packages will be processed as follows:

-1-   Two post office lockboxes at the _____ postal facility are to be used for ballots; a large box to receive and store all voted ballots and a smaller box to be used as the Election Office return address, which box will receive and store all undelivered/undeliverable ballot packages;

-2-   The large lockbox will be wired shut and not accessed until 9:00 a.m. on _____, the day of the ballot count;

-3-   Each weekday morning, shortly after _____ a.m., the smaller lockbox will be accessed by an Election Office representative and returned mail will be removed and processed at the following address: _____

_____

-4-   Returned mail and requests for ballots, received after _____ will be processed daily, until _____.

Candidates or their authorized observers may witness the removal of mail from the post office lockbox and the processing of ballots at _____. Candidates and observers may observe the transportation of the ballots to and from the post office and the location where ballots are to be processed. Candidates or observers shall be subject to the *Election Rules*, as well as the rules and regulations of the U.S. Postal Service.

Candidates are requested to provide the names and social security numbers of any observer authorized to act on their behalf to the undersigned, on or before _____.

_____
Regional Coordinator
Office of the IBT Elections Officer
March 15, 1995

EXHIBIT A

SAMPLE DATABASE / MAIL MERGE SET-UP
ONE RECORD - BOXES INDICATE FIELDS

LOCAL		
LNAME	FNAME	PHONE
EMPLOYERCODE	SOCSECNO.	STATUS
STREET	CITY	STATE	ZIP
SEQUENCE *(FROM ROSTER OR CRE)*	MCODE *(MAIL CODE SEE PAGE 8)*	DATE
COMMENTS		

SORT/INDEX BY: 1) NAME   2: MCODE   3) EMPLOYER

SAMPLE LABEL FORMAT (Be sure the labels you select are large enough for all your information)
To speed of mail delivery use all capital letters and omit punctuation.

SEQUENCE   EMPLOYERCODEMCODESOCSECNOLOCAL
                                STATUS CODE

FNAME LNAME
STREET
CITY STATE ZIP

EXHIBIT B

SAMPLE REQUEST FOR BALLOT

UNION LOCAL			
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PHONE	
EMPLOYER CODE	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	REASON FOR NEW BALLOT	
STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
SEQUENCE NUMBER FROM ROSTER	D N CIRCLE ONE	DATE	INITIALS

SAMPLE REQUEST FOR BALLOT

UNION LOCAL			
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PHONE	
EMPLOYER CODE	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	REASON FOR NEW BALLOT	
STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
SEQUENCE NUMBER FROM ROSTER	D N CIRCLE ONE	DATE	INITIALS

EXHIBIT C

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RETURN MAIL AND REQUESTS FOR BALLOTS LEDGER

WEEK OF: _____

RETURNS AND REQUESTS RECEIVED

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total for Week
A) Returned Envelopes						

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total for Week
B) Requests Received						

BALLOT MAILINGS SENT

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total for Week
C) Remails [R] Address Updated Remail Sent						
D) Duplicate [D] Requested/Sent						
E) New [N] Requested/Sent						
E) Total Ballot Packets Sent						

Comments: