ATTACHMENT 3A1

# PRACTICAL POINTERS TO PROCESS PROMPTLY

# A ULP CHARGE

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## OFFICE ORGANIZATION

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## CASE PROCESSING TIPS

## GENERAL OFFICE ORGANIZATION TIPS

### A. Organization of the day/week in Office

1. Keep a daily list--" To Do," "To Call," "To Write"

2. The first thing in the morning, read decisions for one hour or work on a thorny research issue or write a difficult dismissal letter.

3. Keep some kind of calendar on the desk or wall--it is good to be able to take it along in briefcase.

4. Keep a one page list of all current cases, date of filing and status.

5. Make use of sticky notes attached to files as reminder of status/next step in investigation.

6. Maintain current phone numbers and fax numbers of parties in a take-along phone book.

7. Make sure your voice mail message is current.

### B. Computer and Word Processing Tools

1. Macros:

   - Legal analysis & case cites by issue
   - Affidavits
   - Other forms: fax sheets, service sheets, memo, MOA's
   - Address macros — use the last name for the command
   - Forms: letters, complaints, fax, affidavit, affidavit fax, withdraw form, file memo form, dismissals, etc.

2. Computer file/folder organization

3. E-mail to parties

4. Cut & Paste: affidavit to FIR. Excise factual and legal facts to dismissal letter carefully
5. Quick correct — great for such things as “FLRA”, “7116 (a) (1) (2)”, etc.

6. “Sidekick” entries (calendar) and file case cover entries:

   - “Events” section of the calendar — keep an entry for each case, with a short note of what you are waiting for or intend to do next. As the case progresses keep moving and changing the entry for each case. At the same time, on the cover of the actual file jot the Sidekick entry date so that you will be able to find it if a party surprises you and sends you what you want earlier than you have anticipated.

   - “To Do” section of the calendar — here you store cases that are on long-term hold (deferred for example), and completed cases that are in the hands of the Regional Director for decision (this list simply rolls over each day until you click it off).

   - Contacts — Keeps a card for each contact. You can add the person’s phone number to the “title” of his/her card, which allows you to see the phone number on the index list of cards without having to open up the specific card.

7. Folders — See example that follows

8. File names — Place all communications and documents for each case in an “investigation” folder (h:\agent name\investigations) using the case number followed by a description — when it comes time to write up a report all documents for the same case are together (See example below).

**<u>COMPUTER FOLDER/FILE ORGANIZATION</u>**
**<u>c:\My files\</u>**

| | |
|---|---|
| **AFFIDAVIT** | **POLICY** |
| ABCD\ | Admin\ |
| Davis.222 | Advice\ |

- Toms.222
- Squirt.222

DGA\
- Hode.222
- Jones.222
- Tips.222

CAA\
- Fore.222
- Libra.222
- Walls.222

Forms\
- Opening.page
- Lined.page
- Closing.page

Union\
- Brown.222
- Jones.222
- Smith.222

Witnesss\
- Brown.222
- Jones.222
- Smith.222

VAMC\
- Brown.222
- Jones.222
- Smith.222

**MEMO**

MOU\

Forms\
- Confirming.ltr
- FAX
- Info.ltr
- Inquiry.ltr
- Itinerary
- Memo.wd
- Affidavit.ltr

Misc\
- Service.reps

- Appeals\
- OGC\

**PROCESS**
- Dismiss\
- FIR\
- Forms\
- Macros\
- Organize\
- Settle\

**REPRESENTATION**
- ABCD\
- CERTS\
- DGA\
- Election\
- Forms\
- HOG\
- VaSpring\

**TRAINING**
- IBB.ng\
- Main.agenda\
- Main.ibb\
- Main.partner\
- Main.statute\
- Misc\
- Pdi\

# CASE PROCESSING TIPS

## A. Contacts with the parties

1. To encourage parties to be cooperative and responsive, you need to build trust, confidence and respect. Remember--trust is built up over time, but it may be lost in an instant.

2. Assess both representatives' personalities and skills and adjust your communication methods accordingly. Learn the theories and facts before expressing any views about the case.

3. Call early from the date of assignment. After one week if there is no response/contact, then send a letter. From the beginning, if you suspect the party may not be fully cooperative and/or responsive, set specific reasonable response dates for documents or answers to questions and confirm these time deadlines in writing. Consider putting the case aside for a few weeks, but make sure that the parties are actually doing something for you during those early weeks. At least the next call is not the first, "cold" call and you have some idea as to what you are facing.

4. Explain the process and keep parties posted on the status of the investigation.

5. Explain what evidence is needed to support/refute an allegation based on the case law. When advising parties of an RD decision, refer back to this discussion in reviewing what evidence did or did not come to light in the investigation.

6. Use confirming letters used early in the case to help confirm key facts.

7. Keep the parties posted on the potential date for investigation or contact.

8. Use fax and e-mail. Encourage the parties to use e-mail because it allows you to put the evidence and positions into your computer investigation files.

9. Follow through on what you tell the parties you are going to do (call them or send them something).

10. Return phone calls. Check for messages when you are out of the office and try to return the calls. As stated above, make sure that your voice-mail message is current at all times.

11. If you do not know, or are unsure of an answer to a question, do not hesitate to tell the party that you have to check out the answer before you respond.

12. Do not require the parties to provide information that you do not know if you will need, i.e., do not waste their time.

13. Check with others in your office as to how they have dealt with the parties in the past.

14. Be as straightforward with the parties as you possibly can. The relationship you establish with the current case may affect how easily you will be able to deal with them on other future cases.

**B. Organization at the on-site investigation**

1. Set a schedule & clear official time for witnesses prior to arrival.

2. The investigation should be conducted in a private room with a phone--not the Union office or an office in or near the Personnel Office or Director's Office.

3. Union space is fine as long as it is reserved for the use of the investigation.

4. Keep a running list of documents and witnesses needed.

5. Make sure to have the phone number and schedule of the Union rep/Agency rep to contact if necessary.

## C. How to conclude a case upon completion of investigation

1. Prepare a pre-Agenda memo ASAP after the investigation is finished (while it is still fresh in your mind). Schedule the time for the necessary research and writeup.

2. Keep track of the pre-Agenda writeup and schedule an Agenda for the case.

3. Get the decision to the parties, by phone, fax, etc.

4. Schedule a time to do the final actions-dismissals, complaints.