



ASSIGNMENT OVER OBJECTIONS

What it means and what to do about it.

Even for employees in union-represented positions, management has a near absolute right to make work assignments. This includes the right to assign work that may be outside of your job description, subject only to the Union's right to negotiate over any impacts.

Sometimes an assignment will be closely related to the work you already perform and will seem a natural part of your job. Other times, the work is so far outside your normal functions as to feel wrong. And sometimes, the work may seem downright dangerous.

Here's what you can (and can't) do:

SPEAK UP!

- Ask your supervisor about the nature and specifics of the assignment and express any concerns you may have.
- See clarification as to whether you are being ordered to perform that duty. Notify your union representative if you have concerns over safety.

CONFORM AND OBEY THE ORDER, BUT...

- **Fill out a copy of the VSEA "Assignment Despite Objection" form** and ask your supervisor to sign it confirming that you have been ordered to perform the work. If your supervisor refuses to sign, get verbal confirmation that you have been ordered to do the work, and keep track of it.
- **Under the narrowest of circumstances**, you are permitted to refuse an assignment if and only if you reasonably believe that death or serious injury may result. Your refusal to perform the work could lead to discipline for insubordination, so your belief must be based on objective facts and not your personal feelings.