



# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

## *FAQ*

### **1. Dual Path v/s Multiple Submissions**

- Dual paths occur when a committee member and management are both working the same issue. It is the responsibility of the committee member to determine if management intends to stay involved or is willing to hand the case over to Professional Standards. The committee member and management should work together to determine if the issue could be completed through the Professional Standards process. If an agreeable resolution is not made the parties are encouraged to elevate the issue to the National Workgroup for resolution or guidance. This however does not limit either parties right guaranteed by law, rule, regulation, or contract.
- Multiple submissions happen when more than one submission on the same issue is submitted, each submitter will get a resolved or unresolved response.

### **2. Is Professional Standards the first step in the traditional discipline process or a stand-alone process?**

The Professional Standards Program is a stand-alone process and should be considered as an alternative to the traditional process. Resolved issues submitted to the Professional Standard Committee cannot be used to support other disciplinary actions. The important thing to remember is that we are trying to facilitate a change at the lowest possible level to prevent the need for a traditional discipline approach.

**3. Is management required to use Professional Standards?**

No. Management is not required to use Professional Standards process. However, Management is encouraged to use the program for issues that are appropriately addressed at the peer-to-peer level as an alternative to traditional discipline.

**4. Can management require all issues to be referred to the next higher managerial level for a decision to use Professional Standards prior to any submission?**

No. Professional Standards was created to be a more efficient opportunity to improve professional conduct than a traditional approach. The intent is not to create a separate level of approval that previously didn't exist. The Front Line Managers are responsible for addressing the types of issues that would normally be submitted to Professional Standards. The intent is to provide them the ability to make a decision to submit an issue to Professional Standards in the same way they make a decision to follow any traditional process.

**5. Can management continue with a traditional process after releasing a case to Professional Standards?**

No. Once an issue has been released to Professional Standards, the Agency shall not pursue action against an employee.

*CBA A52 Sec. 8- ..... The Agency shall not pursue action against an employee while the matter is "in committee" , unless the issue is the subject of an ongoing or current investigation, involves gross negligence, is a criminal offense, or is brought to the attention of the Agency by means other than the PSC inquiry.*

**6. What time frame can be expected when Professional Standards is working an issue?**

Normally, a Professional Standards issue will be resolved within 3-5 days. Some may take longer due to the complexity. There is a requirement for issues to be elevated to the National workgroup level after 45 days to ensure timely processing. The expectation is that committee members will be as timely as possible and not delay the processing of any issue submitted to the PSP committee

**7. How does management or a bargaining unit employee submit an issue to the Professional Standards team?**

The committee member(s) will be identified for each facility and management/BUE may approach any committee member with an issue. Avoid emails, text and detailed phone messages. Face-to-face meetings are encouraged and confidentiality is paramount to the success of the program.

**8. What will Professional Standards accept?**

Any issue that would benefit from the peer-to-peer method of resolution is acceptable such as: Individual conflicts, Ineffective operating methods/techniques, Problems of a professional or ethical nature, Conduct that could lead to discipline and recognizing exceptional performance.

**9. What issues are not appropriate for Professional Standards?**

Professional Standards will not address CBA disagreements, substance abuse, and any immediate threat to the NAS. The program is not designed to address issues related to security violations, legal, medical, or criminal issues or gross negligence.

**10. How is the time spent on Professional Standards accounted for?**

The language in Article 52 states that bargaining unit employees will be on duty time while meeting or facilitating issues under Professional Standards. In accordance with

ATO Technical Labor Guidance Bulletin regarding Cru-X/Art dated 4/12/2012, these activities should be coded in CruArt as Duty Time-Other.

**11. Since the program is voluntary, can a facility choose not to be a part of the program?**

The Professional Standards Program has progressed from the test phase into a nationwide rollout and facility participation is mandatory. This program is supported at the highest levels of both the FAA and NATCA. However, individual employees may or may not elect to participate.

**12. Confidentiality between management for management submissions.**

Confidentiality rules apply to management also.

**13. When will BUEs be briefed and who does it?**

The National Workgroup has developed a BUE training package that is given to each facility's committee member(s) to use to brief the BU. These briefings ideally should occur within a month of the committee training. In most instances these briefings should require about 40 minutes of time.

**14. Can a previous, resolved submission to PSP be referenced in a future action?**

No. A resolved issue cannot be used to support other disciplinary actions. (CBA A52, Sec.7)

**15. How long are committee members selected for?**

There is no set term. Understanding turnover rates at some of our smaller facilities, NATCA is encouraging a minimum one-year commitment.

**16. How do we add committee members?**

If a facility has determined a need for an addition committee member, they should contact the National Workgroup for approval then the FacRep will make a selection to the Professional Standards Committee. The National workgroup is developing an ongoing training plan to provide training to new and replacement committee members.

**17. Who selects committee members?**

The NATCA Facility Representative will select the Professional Standards Committee member(s). The NATCA Regional Vice-President will select the appropriate District chair. The National Workgroup is encouraging that Facility Representatives do not serve as committee members.

**18. Who is responsible for backfill overtime and travel costs associated with training?**

The Professional Standards Program covers the travel costs for identified Committee Members. BFOT and travel costs for additional briefing attendees are the responsibility of the individual facilities.

**19. What is the process of handling issues that occur repeatedly while the original issue is in committee?**

There will also be the possibility of the employee exhibiting the same behavior because they have yet to be informed there is a different expectation. If an issue has been referred to a committee member, and an employee exhibits the same issue, please be patient and give the committee member the opportunity to address the issue. As a submitter, if you are concerned, you have the option of updating the committee

member. If at any time you are concerned with the time needed to process any PSP submission, contact any representative on the National PSP workgroup for resolution.

**20. Are Staff Specialists included?**

Staff Specialists located at an ATC facility will roll into the established facility committee as we roll out across the country. Those specialists at locations that don't have their own committee, like the regional offices, will fall under the purview of the national workgroup. We will be working on briefings for all the individuals as appropriate to coincide with the rollout.

**21. What does committee member training consist of?**

The three-day training course includes a review of EEO and Accountability Board issues, instruction in Conflict Resolution, Mediation, Mentoring, and Communication Skills. Committee members also receive instruction on the Professional Standards process, the Policy Manual, a review of the ATC Code, and the importance of confidentiality. These concepts are reinforced through several scenarios that each committee member participates in.

**22. What training does management receive?**

The management team receives a 90-minute overview of the program. The briefing includes: Program history and oversight, Art 52, ATC Code, Committee member' s roles and responsibilities, a Question and Answer session and how to submit an issue.

**23. What is the history of Professional Standards? (ART 52)**

The program was created to provide a program similar to ALPA' s very successful Professional Standards Program. The PSP National Workgroup was established in April

2010. The goal of the program is to address issues at the peer-to-peer manner to enhance the professionalism of the occupation.

**24. What records are kept for Professional Standards?**

As per Article 52 of the CBA, there are no records of PSP meetings or of specific cases. IAW Article 52 the committee will collect data of a generic nature for distribution and assessment of the program

**25. Why isn't management part of the Professional Standards Committee?**

Committee Members have to be bargaining unit employees because this is a peer-to-peer program. There are three (3) members of management representing the FAA on the National workgroup.

**26. If a Bargaining Unit employee has an issue with management, can they submit it to Professional Standards?**

The Professional Standards Program is a peer-to-peer process and not suited for supervisor issues at this time.

**27. Is Professional Standards suited for conduct issues or performance issues?**

It is suited for both. The program is designed to promote and maintain professionalism. It is well suited for any case, conduct or performance, where professionalism may be an issue.

**28. Is there a difference between the National Workgroup and the National Professional Standards Committee?**

The National Workgroup consists of three NATCA and three FAA representatives. The National Committee consists of the three NATCA representatives only. Therefore, when

an issue rises to the National Committee, the management counterparts are not included. This preserves the peer-to-peer concept.

**29. Is duty time afforded for the Professional Standards program?**

Yes. The language in Article 52 discusses that bargaining unit employees will be on duty time while facilitating issues under Professional Standards. The Professional Standards Program is not intended to create a separate entitlement to duty time outside of any scheduled shifts.

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