



There's definitely a learning curve when it comes to contract language and Northwest policies. Welcome to ***The Curve***, a Council 98 series of lessons learned the hard way.

Sometimes, the most frustrating realities are the ones you wish you could do over. Maybe you watched helplessly as a trip you *knew* you should have held went to someone junior, simply because you didn't understand your legalities. Or that faithful paycheck you expected on the 27th was a big fat goose egg, when you really could have used the cash.

Your Council 98 officers have been there. After all, we're flight attendants, too – we've lived those "aarrrrgh!" moments, and we're happy to pass on how you can avoid a problem, resolve an

issue and prevent others from having a similar experience. ***The Curve*** is brought to you *almost* in real time, taken from actual calls and emails from Los Angeles based flight attendants.

The Curve **Lesson Four**

Exceeding Duty Limitations: Walking The Walk

I thought the trip couldn't get any more gross. It was a five-day DC9 chaser, with a couple of 757 beast flights to Orlando thrown in for good measure. When I saw on the Weather Channel what was coming my way on day four, I figured there was no way I was going to make it out of MSP to my minimum layover in Des Moines.

Sure enough, storms pummeled the Midwest all day. I got out my handy Domestic Duty Limitations chart and calculator the union sent out in an earlier email, and started figuring out how much time I had left before I could legally walk. It was ticking down fast: by my estimation, I had to leave the gate within the next 12 minutes or somebody would be looking to reserve me a room at a 2-star hotel in MSP.

I decided to spring it on scheduling, calling them from the back of a "dash fifty" full of passengers. The scheduler was quite pleasant about it, thanked me for the advisory, told me to call back if we didn't make it out in time. I started gathering up my luggage, seeing that the storm was going nowhere fast, when it hit me: how was I supposed to follow my contract when I'd be leaving an aircraft with less than minimum crew on board? The boarding door was already closed.

It's important to get the pilots "on board" with your duty limitations as soon as possible after you realize you're approaching daily maximum and have contacted crew scheduling. As union members who understand how important it is not to violate contract provisions, pilots can request that the agent not board customers or close

the door until your replacement arrives. Advise the captain that you are in danger of going over contractual duty limitations and ask him or her to notify operations just as you have notified crew scheduling.

In this situation, the flight attendant waited until passengers had already boarded to call crew scheduling, creating a potential minimum crew violation if exercising the right to "walk" after 14:00 on duty (if duty period begins between 0501 and 2159 local; see [Section 5.A.6.a.](#)). The flight attendant ended up working a 15:52 day – 8 minutes shy of being able to start earning the contractual "one and one-half times" pay increase in Section 5.A.6.b. – and didn't even get extra rest in DSM since the *flight time* was still under 8:00.

Want to share your knowledge? Email us at lecsec98@nwaafa.org. We won't use your name, but your story will help educate all of us so we are better prepared to challenge misinformation when we hear it – whether coming from Northwest management or fellow flight attendants – and to follow the provisions in our contract.