



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 Two**

Time Available vs. Pay For Hours Flown and Credited: Pattern Guarantee Roulette

Our trip was going along just great, until we got an ACARS message from the Captain, "Call crew scheduling." Sounded ominous, but it turned out our next segment had been cancelled due to an inbound aircraft's creeping mechanical, so we were going to be laying over in MSP instead of in IND.

The lead was the first one to the phone as soon as we landed. I figured she would get the skinny from a scheduler, find out where we were staying, what tomorrow looked like for us now that our pattern was messed up. No need for all of us to tie up the lines trying to get the same information.

We were getting home a few hours earlier than originally scheduled—sweet!—but the pattern credit was now reduced by over three hours. I decided to sit time available to keep my guarantee, since it's on a trip-by-trip basis now. I thought I'd just wait and let scheduling know once I got home – and get my pattern guarantee without any real chance of a time available trip assignment.

I finally called scheduling when I got back to base the next day, and a scheduler told me the default is "pay for hours flown and credited," (PF) not time available (TA)! Since I didn't call to make the election between TA and PF soon after I found out about the trip change, I got stuck with PF, and now I'm three hours in the hole this month.

Ah, the best laid plans...

Sections 5.A.9.b. (Pattern Guarantee – Domestic) and 5.B.10.b. (Pattern Guarantee – International) do indeed state that our guarantee is determined on a trip-by-trip basis, as long as we're schedule holders. (Reserve flight attendants aren't guaranteed those hours under this workrule.)

The Time Available Option is described in Section 6.H.2.: *"A Flight Attendant holding a Regular line or Priority line which is projected under his/her pattern guarantee...shall become time available and shall have the option to accept or decline any time available opportunity... **The Flight Attendant shall advise the Company of his/her time available decision at the time he/she has been notified of an underprojection of his/her pattern guarantee.**"*

Here's the thing: you're considered "notified" by crew scheduling if you show up for your rescheduled flight (and, in this case, if you stayed in the right hotel)! You are required to have a valid phone number on file. If that number is your home phone, the auto-dialer will call it at least twice, notifying you of changes to your schedule. If you don't get this message and are made aware of the changes by word-of-mouth from other crew members, you *still* have to make contact with scheduling via CENTRY, ATLAS or VRU to be eligible to make a TA/PF election. Elect the TA or PF option as soon as you can get to a phone or computer. If you think you can wait until after 1700 base local time on the last day your trip operates to make that election, think again: the default when 5:00 p.m. hits is PF, since you're no longer available to scheduling during TA hours.

Your time available days are typically *"on the same days on which the pattern was scheduled to operate,"* although you may request alternate days, *"subject to the approval of Crew Scheduling."* If you actually get approval for alternate days, let us know—that elusive power will be the theme of a future lesson.

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 or fellow flight attendants.