



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

MIC IN ALASKA REGION WFO USES TYPE OF WORK SCHEDULE AS SOLE REASON TO DENY EMPLOYEE ANNUAL LEAVE REQUESTS AND DENY REINSTATEMENT OF RESULTING USE OR LOSE LEAVE

(February 15, 2018) Picture requesting to take your hard-earned annual leave so you can spend time with your family during the holidays, and having it denied, putting you in a “use or lose” leave situation. Since you have denied leave, you request reinstating this “use or lose” leave, and that is also denied. While at the same time, your office’s MIC took 80 hours of her own leave and spent the holidays with her family? Welcome to the reality of WFO Fairbanks, Alaska.

Like many NWS field offices, WFO Fairbanks has been critically short staffed for more than a year, down five forecasters and one HMT by the fall of 2017. During this period, MIC Melissa Kreller denied bargaining unit staff leave requests. In denying the requests, the reason given was not due to this staff shortage, but because the bargaining unit employees in the office work an Alternative Work Schedule (AWS). This, along with the MIC being able to freely take leave during the same time period, has had a demoralizing effect on the employees; yet NWS leadership continues to make statements on the *NWS Insider* and at all-hands meetings that they have the employees’ best interest in hand. “*This is so disturbing that management has stooped this low,*” said NWSEO Executive Vice President Bill Hopkins.

The denial of employee leave and the denied leave restoration, in combination with the MIC’s use of leave and her blaming the denials on an AWS is shocking. NWSEO believes that these employees’ annual leave should be restored immediately and that the Alaska Region Director fill the vacancies at WFO Fairbanks and other Alaskan offices.

WFO Fairbanks continues to be short staffed and currently down three forecasters.

-NWSEO-

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**