

Setting the Record Straight



November 17, 2020

Recently, Southwest distributed a communication Companywide from Julie and Russell trying to describe terms that may be used as Southwest contemplates reducing the workforce. One misleading or confusing part of that communication, as it applies to IAM represented employees, is the use of the term furlough or layoff.

Under our collective bargaining agreements, the use of either term furlough or layoff has the same consequences. Unless a person accepts severance or otherwise voluntarily ends their employment at a time of reduction, the terms furlough and layoff are interchangeable. A person who is furloughed or laid off are treated exactly the same. They remain on the appropriate seniority list with rights to return to employment. Loss of seniority is clearly spelled out in the contract:

Article 8, J states:

Employees will lose their seniority status and their names will be removed from the seniority lists under the following conditions:

- (1) He quits or resigns.
- (2) He is discharged for just cause.
- (3) He is absent without reporting the absence for three (3) consecutive days.
- (4) He does not inform the Company in writing or by telegram

of his intentions to return to service within seven (7) days of the sending of notice offering to reemploy him.

(5) He does not return to the service on or before a date specified in the notice from the Company **after a layoff** which date should not be prior to seven (7) days after sending such notice; provided such notice was sent by registered mail (return receipt requested) or telegram to the employee at the last address filed by him with the Company.

(6) An employee **who is furloughed** and who is not recalled to service with the Company within five (5) years from date of furlough.

It is beyond clear that furlough and layoff are treated the same.

Please also be aware that Article 16, Severance Pay has a consequence to your employment rights. It states: "Any employee that receives severance pay shall forfeit all rights with the Company." This means you lose your seniority and are considered separated for employment with Southwest Airlines.

While Southwest Airlines may have forgotten it has had reductions in force many times in its past, with layoffs and furloughs, – your union has not!

For correct contract information, rely on your Union and contact your Union rep. Beware of Company communications at this critical time. They may be misleading or inaccurate.

Sincerely and fraternally,



Dave Supplee

**PRESIDENT DIRECTING
GENERAL CHAIR**

POST ON ALL IAM BULLETIN BOARDS