

Fast Fact Friday

Grievance -vs- Gripe

Friday, April 18, 2025

Q1: "What is a grievance?"

A grievance is an employee complaint that their employer violated their rights under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA - or Contract), Company Policies & Procedures, or law. TWU Local 556 is the "sole representative of all Flight Attendants in all grievance matters unless waived by the Union." (Article 19) In short, a grievance is filed on behalf of a specific employee, group of employees, or the entire Membership by TWU Local 556 when it is believed there has been a violation by Southwest Airlines or unjust discipline has been issued.

Q2: "What is a gripe?"

A gripe is an informal complaint (most of the time a VALID informal complaint), which doesn't come with a specific violation of rights of our contractual language, Work & Conduct Rules, or law.

Q3: "What do I do if I think the Contract was violated?"

Contact the Union ASAP. A Member of the Grievance Team will take details from you regarding the situation to confirm whether or not there was a contractual violation, and go through the process of filing a grievance, if necessary.

Q4: "When do I need to contact the Union to file a grievance?"

A contractual grievance needs to be filed within ten (10) days of the infraction, excluding weekends and holidays.

It's important to note that every violation of our Contract does not result in the need for a filed grievance. TWU Local 556 works with Southwest Airlines (Crew Scheduling, Inflight Payroll Audit, Labor Management, and more) to correct situations as they are happening. While a contractual grievance is one tool in the toolbox, our Union rights MANY wrongs without having to go through the headache of filing official paperwork.

A disciplinary grievance must be filed within ten (10) days the discipline is issued, excluding weekends and holidays. Even with disciplinary issues, TWU Local 556 can often come to an agreement with Management to correct errors or oversights without having to go through the sometimes lengthy grievance process.

Because of these strict timelines, it's imperative that you contact the Union Office and speak with a Grievance Team Member as soon as a potential violation has occurred. (214) 640-4300

Q5: "Grievance or Gripe? What if I receive a written warning to my wnco email?"

According to Article 19. 1, a Flight Attendant shall not be disciplined or discharged without just cause except as provided in Article 7 - Probation Period. Whenever there is a possible disciplinary situation and you believe the discipline has not been issued with just cause, including a written warning, please contact the Union Office ASAP. Our Grievance Team can provide helpful guidance and file a grievance, if necessary. ***This is a potential grievance.***

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Q6: Grievance or Gripe? “I’m on Reserve and think Crew Scheduling used me out of order. What should I do?”

Contact the Union for them to research the situation. A Member of the Grievance Team can request information from Crew Scheduling to determine if there was a violation of our Contract language and proceed with securing any compensation owed. If a grievance is needed, the Grievance Team can begin that process. ***This is a potential grievance.***

Q7: Grievance or Gripe? “I was walking through the terminal today and was stopped by an Inflight Supervisor. They told me that my uniform dress was too short. I explained that this was a brand-new dress (unpackaged today - I even have the packaging in my bag!) and was a “TALL”, but they still told me that I was in violation of our uniform appearance standards, and I was going to be “written up.” What should I do?”

If you receive discipline and believe you are in compliance with our Uniform Appearance Standards, contact the Union Office ASAP to speak with a Grievance Team Member about addressing this issue. While the hope would be to resolve this problem without the need of a grievance, the Grievance Team can guide you through the necessary next steps. ***This is a potential grievance.***

Q8: Grievance or Gripe? “Crew Scheduling called me six times on my overnight because they needed me to report earlier. I never answered my phone, but I want to file a grievance because they interrupted my overnight. What should I do?”

Contact the Union for them to research the situation. While there is no language in the Contract preventing Crew Scheduling from calling, this particular scenario has been problematic in the past. Grievance Leaders communicate periodically with Crew Scheduling Leaders to discuss issues that require attention and potential changes in how Crew Scheduling interacts with our Members. ***This is a gripe. HOWEVER, fatigue-mitigating issues need to be addressed with Crew Scheduling Leadership and should be brought to the attention of TWU Local 556.***

Q9: Grievance or Gripe? “The pairings on our bid lines are terrible! I wouldn’t want to work any of them. Why hasn’t the Union filed a grievance about this?”

The language for pairing construction is very narrow, only limiting the number of legs per day, duty day length and scheduled crew rest. As long as our contractual pairing construction language is followed, there is not a valid grievance to be filed. However, feedback can be provided by the Membership to help encourage changes to how Crew Planning builds our pairings. ***This is a gripe. While a grievance cannot be filed, contacting our SchedulingCommittee@twu556.org -and/or- InflightCrewPlanning@wnco.com with constructive feedback on pairing and line construction is always helpful.***

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Q10: Grievance or Gripe? “I was awarded Junior AM Reserve (JAR), but I keep getting trips that have an afternoon check-in. I thought since I was an AM Reserve, I needed to be assigned early morning trips that finish earlier in the day. Can I file a grievance about this?”

The parameters for Junior AM Reserve do not include a required arrival time back into domicile. As long as contact times are followed and check-in for the assignment falls within the contractual language, there isn't a grievance.

This is a gripe. With that being said, constructive feedback on Reserve utilization (especially if the issue is leading to fatigue concerns) is important for our Negotiating Team to hear about. NT@twu556.org.