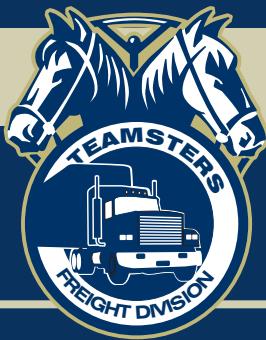


• PLEASE POST •



# ABF CONTRACT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2, 2018

## ABF Bargaining Update: Slow Progress

The second weekly round of bargaining with ABF Freight took place this week for a new collective bargaining agreement to succeed the ABF NMFA that is set to expire on March 31. Unfortunately not a lot of progress was achieved. The Teamsters National Freight Industry Negotiating Committee (TNFINC) has made clear that it wants to reach a new agreement but that any agreement will, among other things, need to address: the restoration of the vacation week that was given up last contract; better protections for road drivers from loss of work due to purchased transportation; protection of health and welfare and pension benefits; and reasonable wage increases.

The union committee has sought to resolve language issues to the extent possible before diving into the hard economics. The company, however, has claimed that its labor and operating costs are too high and that it is essentially seeking a cost neutral agreement and undefined "flexibilities." The full union committee made it clear that it is not interested in concessions and is seeking real improvements.

In terms of language, the company this week proposed some items that seem somewhat off-point. For example, ABF is now proposing to significantly ramp up its drug and alcohol testing regimen by demanding that all employees be subjected to "hair" testing. Drug testing hair samples detects possible drug use (illegal and legal prescription) from weeks and months earlier but does not necessarily test for on-the-job use or impairment. The company also is seeking new "fitness for duty" requirements that would subject employees to discipline. ABF has also rejected the union's demand to prohibit the use of driverless trucks even though the company states that it has no current plans to purchase driverless trucks. The union, however, has not withdrawn its proposal in this regard.

While some progress was made on language issues and negotiations are still proceeding, according to Ernie Soehl, co-chair of TNFINC, "it seems a bit strange that the company, after claiming over and over that its labor and operating costs are the problem, is spending time insisting on a new broader drug and alcohol policy, when, according to the company's own records,

over the last five years only one person has tested positive for drugs in a post-accident test." Also, Soehl added that given the tough work environment and the average age of the ABF workforce, imposing vague "fit for duty" requirements seems to be a "recipe for mischief."

Nevertheless, the union committee remains positive.

"We didn't make as much progress as we had expected this week, but we did advance the ball a little bit," Soehl said. "For example, although no agreement was reached on new protections for road drivers from purchased transportation, we did at least have some productive dialogue." Also, the parties did reach a tentative agreement on some small improvements to the "change of operations" provisions and equipment requirements.

TNFINC is committed to fighting for members' issues and believes that the Teamsters will prevail.

Negotiations are scheduled to resume in Kansas City on February 12.

Visit the new ABF Teamsters Facebook page where members can see the latest updates. Go to "ABF Teamsters" on Facebook. Text "ABF" to 86466 to receive text message alerts (message and data rates may apply).

Or visit [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org) and click on the Freight Division page, then click the "ABF Contract Updates" button. The contract updates page is <https://teamster.org/abf-contract-update>