



SMWIA
SHEET METAL WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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Railroad Department

How We Are Organized and Represent Our Members

Our Railroad Department includes a Director of Railroad Workers, International Representatives, 41 Local Unions and the SMWIA District Council of Railroads. The Department and Director are located in our International Office in Washington, D.C., and two (2) International Representatives work in various regions of the country.

Generally, wages, health insurance, vacation and other benefits for our members employed by freight railroads are negotiated on a national basis, although, the contracts are between the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association and each company. Other contracts with freight railroads, Amtrak and commuter railroads are negotiated by International Representatives on a local basis.



There are 56 SMWIA Local Unions whose members work in one phase or another in the Rail Transportation Industry. The officers of these Local Unions protect the jurisdiction of the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association and with the Local Union members collectively work to enforce our Union Contract with each employer. Problems that cannot be resolved by the Local Union Committee with the employer are referred to a General Chairman in the District Council.

The Sheet Metal Workers' International Association United States District Council of Railroads was chartered in 1982, an amalgamation of eleven (11) District Councils that dated back to the 1930s. The officers of the SMWIA Railroad District Council are the General Chairman, Secretary Treasurer and three full-time elected General Chairmen located in different areas of the country who assist the local unions and handle day to day problems with enforcement of the contract. There are also five members of the Council's Executive Board. The District Council's office is located at 24 Columbine Avenue, Merrick, New York 11566, and the telephone number is (516) 485-4571.

General Chairmen meet and negotiate over problems and claims with the local management and/or the Labor Relations Department of a particular railroad. Claims, grievances and disputes that cannot be settled between the Labor Relations Department and the General Chairman may be referred to arbitration. The arbitration cases can be filed in two ways. 1. An arbitration case can be taken to the Second Division of National Railroad Adjustment Board in Chicago, Illinois and presented to a neutral party for resolution. The Board has an equal number of Labor and Management representatives who hold hearings and argue cases before the neutral referee. An SMWIA International Representative is a member of the National Railroad Adjustment Board and presents the Sheet Metal Workers' position in cases before the Board. 2. An arbitration case can be brought to a Public Law Board or Special Board of Adjustment by the General Chairman. A neutral arbitrator is chosen jointly by the General Chairman and the respective Railroad Labor Relations Department. The parties will present their cases and the arbitrator will render a binding decision.

The Sheet Metal Workers' International Association was a founding member of the Transportation Trades Department (TTD) of the AFL-CIO. Founded in 1990, the TTD consists of Labor Unions whose members work in rail, transit, trucking, aviation, bus, marine, and related industries. We seek collectively to promote the unionization of the Transportation Industry, protect our members' jobs and the Union contracts that provide good wages and benefits within that industry. Also, through TTD we work together to effectively monitor laws and workplace regulations ranging from worker and public safety protection to federal labor standards and employee protection. The Unions with members employed in the Rail Industry formed a Rail Division of the Transportation Trades Department. The Rail Division meets regularly to plan joint initiatives to effectively represent workers in the Railroad and Shipyard Industries.

For more specific information about the TTD, the following link will take you directly to their web site:

www.ttd.org.

Retirement Benefits

One of the first benefits the Unions successfully fought to establish for railroad workers was a uniform pension system under the Railroad Retirement Act. The Railroad Retirement Act applies to workers whose employer is engaged in the transportation of products or passengers by rail and Unions who are Railroad Retirement Act employers. The Act is administered by a three (3) member Railroad Retirement Board and is a unique agency of our Federal Government with one Labor, one Management and one Public Member. While Congress has the final authority to change the Railroad Retirement Act, during the last 40 years the only changes in the Act were products of negotiation and agreement between Labor and Management. After Labor and Management agreed on the necessary changes, Congress acted on each such agreement. The Railroad Retirement Act replaced the failed private systems on various railroads and was the forerunner of the Social Security System.

For your convenience, use the link to the Railroad Retirement Board's web page (www.rrb.gov) for information about benefits under the Railroad Retirement Act and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. Contained in the Board's web page are informative bulletins on a variety of subjects generally in a question and answer form.



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