



REVIEW COMMITTEE

7.1 - Monitoring of telephone line at switching centers.

AUG 28 1990



PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
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**CASE CLOSED
LOGGED AND FILED**

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFL-CIO
LOCAL UNION 1245, I.B.E.W.
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R.W. STALCUP, SECRETARY

D.J. BERGMAN, CHAIRMAN

RECEIVED AUG 27 1990

- DECISION
- LETTER DECISION
- PRE-REVIEW REFERRAL

Sacramento Division Grievance No. SV-SV-06-89-000-02
P-RC 1394

August 15, 1990

KAREN N. TIERNEY, Company Member
Sacramento Division
Local Investigating Committee

WAYNE R. GREER, Union Member
Sacramento Division
Local Investigating Committee

Subject of the Grievance

This case concerns Company's recording of all telephone communications with Vaca-Dixon Switching Center.

Facts of the Case

On March 8, 1989, Sacramento Region Electric Operations issued a letter to inform interested parties that all calls at Vaca-Dixon Switching Center were to be recorded effective March 6, 1989. The letter indicated there would be no notification prior to the start of any conversation nor would there be a "beep" imposed on the circuits to indicate recording of the conversations.

The reasons given for the recording was to:

1. Clarify misunderstandings from conversations/operations.
2. Provide a record of sequential operations for reconstruction of disturbances.
3. Provide a training tool to improve communications and reporting skills.

Telephone conversations have been recorded in System Gas Control and the Electric System Dispatcher's office since 1986. Since the filing of the grievance, the recording of telephone conversations has expanded to various locations around the system.

Discussion

Union questioned the legality of taping employee's phone calls without their written consent and without the knowledge of the callers. Union lamented the loss of privacy.

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Company responded that the March 8, 1989 letter was intended to put everyone on notice of the recordings but recognized that those callers from outside the PG&E system may have a right to know their conversation was being recorded.

Union expressed great concern that despite Company's stated reasons for recording calls, the information would be used primarily for disciplining employees.

Union cited the Gas Serviceman Audit Procedure as an example of a program initiated by Company as a method of determining training needs but was more widely utilized to audit, then discipline for unsatisfactory work performance. This ultimately led to Ad Hoc Negotiations culminating in Letter Agreement Nos. 84-127 and 86-80.

Union further expressed concern that if the Company taped what it considered to be conclusive evidence, it would not conduct a fair or thorough investigation into the facts before imposing discipline.

Company stated that the purpose for the calls was not to search for reasons to discipline and reiterated the aforementioned reasons for the recordings. Company further assured Union that it would continue to conduct fair and thorough investigations before disciplining employees. The taped conversations may or may not be relied upon to support Company's action.

Additionally, Company indicated that there had been instances where the recorded conversations had been beneficial in supporting employees' accounts of events.

Decision

After several lengthy discussion of this case at various steps of the grievance procedure, the parties agree to settle this case on the basis that the Company has activated the beeper on the circuits to notify all parties that the calls are being recorded. In addition, at those locations where telephone conversations are being recorded, another telephone not subject to recording shall be available for employee personal calls. This is not intended to grant employees "carte blanche" to make personal calls on Company time or expense.

Based on the foregoing understanding, this case is considered closed and such closure should be so noted by the Local Investigating Committee.



DAVID J. BERGMAN, Chairman
Review Committee



ROGER W. STALCUP, Secretary
Review Committee

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