

7.1; 102.2; Exh. XVII: For curbing a single meter, the discharge of a Merced Meter Reader is for just and sufficient cause.



REVIEW COMMITTEE

IBEW



PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
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MARGARET A. SHORT, CHAIRMAN

DECISION
LETTER DECISION
PRE-REVIEW REFERRAL

RECEIVED by LU 1245
MARCH 14, 2003

**CASE CLOSED
FILED & LOGGED**

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFL-CIO
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SALIM A. TAMIMI, SECRETARY

Pre-Review Committee No. 13787 Customer Services – Office & Meter Reading Services – Merced

Margaret Franklin
Company Member
Local Investigating Committee

Gary Hughes
Union Member
Local Investigating Committee

Subject of the Grievance

This case concerns the discharge of a Meter Reader for curbing a single meter.

Facts of the Case

An electric meter had been DR (doesn't register) for three months so it was removed and replaced on July 10, 2002. The new meter was set at 00000. The take out read of the old meter was 89282, which is what it had been showing for the prior three months.

The grievant read the account on July 22. He entered a read of 89870 for the electric meter. For the gas meter he entered the "blocked meter" code of M3. On August 15, the supervisor was notified by Revenue Protection Representative (RPR) of a discrepancy as his DR Meter Report listed the removed meter, yet an electric read for that account had been entered on July 22 which was not consistent with the set read of 00000. The RPR requested the read be verified.

On August 15, a Meter Technician verified the electric meter number and the read as 02520. Later that same day a Sr. Meter Reader obtained an electric read of 02528 and a gas read of 8655. Two other Meter Readers were also able to read the gas meters in the months of February through June.

On August 21, the grievant again read this account. He entered an electric read of 02983 and M2 (locked gate) missed meter code.

On August 22 an investigatory interview was held. When the grievant was shown a printout of the meter reads he acknowledged that it looked like he had curbed the meter based on the meter change-out. The grievant knew that curbing results in termination. The grievant declined an opportunity to go to the meter site.

At the LIC, the grievant indicated there was a very tall fence with a padlock at the house at issue. Because he could not get inside the gate to read the meters, he stood on a toolbox that was by the side fence. The toolbox was shaky because he was standing on the edge. He could not see the gas meter so entered M-3, blocked. He focused mainly on the first two dials of the electric meter reading from left to right and entered 99870. He said the device beeped at him so he went back, got on the toolbox again and reread the meter.

On September 6, the supervisor; HR Advisor; Shop Steward; and Sr. Meter Reader visited the site. They found the gate to be unlocked. The customer told the Shop Steward that she occasionally locked the gate.

Grievant was hired as a Utility Clerk August 20, 2001 and transferred to Meter Reading on June 3, 2002.

Discussion

Union opined the grievant read the last three dials correctly, that 870 appears to be an accurate read based on the customer's average usage. He said the usage supports the grievant's explanation that he misread the first two dials but read the last three correctly. Further, Union argued the grievant admitted being a horrible Meter Reader and that coupled with his inexperience caused him to believe the two left hand figures were correct.

Company responded that this case is similar to many others in that a read that bears no rational relationship to a changed-out meter is evidence of a curb. This was established in Arbitration Decision 211. Further, it is unlikely that a Meter Reader actually looking at the position of the dials could mistake an 8 or 9 for 0. As for the gas meter, three other Meter Readers were able to obtain the read; the gate was not locked when the committee visited, and the customer indicated the gate is only locked occasionally. Yet the grievant missed it for two consecutive months.

Decision

The PRC is in agreement that the discharge was for just and sufficient cause. This case is closed without adjustment.

Margaret A. Short
Margaret A. Short, Chairman
Review Committee

3/14/03
Date

Sam Tamimi
Sam Tamimi, Secretary
Review Committee

3-14-03
Date