



# BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD SIGNALMEN

## OFFICE OF FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Local Lodge # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Greetings:

The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen welcomes you to employment with \_\_\_\_\_. BRS and your employer have a collective bargaining agreement covering your employment. BRS Local Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_ has jurisdiction over the territory on which you are employed and will welcome your affiliation with it.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement contains a Union Security provision. Your rights and obligations under the Union Security clause are discussed below and on the back of this letter.

**NEW EMPLOYEES:** The Union Security provision and BRS Constitution require you to apply for membership, or pay equivalent non-member fees in this BRS Local Lodge within 60 days after commencing work, subject to the rights stated on the reverse of this letter. This requires payment of a membership fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and dues in advance in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the period \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. You started work on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ and the 60-day period ends on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. Failure to comply will subject you to termination of service. An application for membership is enclosed which must be filled in, dated, signed and returned with the membership fee and dues in the amount indicated to the undersigned.

**RETURNING MEMBERS:** If you hold a BRS withdrawal, transfer or membership card, the Union Security provision and BRS Constitution require you to deposit the card and initial dues payment including advance dues with the undersigned within 35 days after returning to work, subject to the rights stated on the reverse of this letter. This requires payment of dues in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the period \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. You started work on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, and the 35-day period ends \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_.

**RETURNING FORMER MEMBERS:** If you are a former member who was not in good standing at the time you left service, reinstatement for your membership is required by the BRS Constitution, subject to the rights stated on the reverse of this letter. This requires payment of a reinstatement fee in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and dues in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the period \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. An application for reinstatement form must be obtained from the undersigned. Our dues rate is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per quarter payable in advance.

Under Article I, Section 167 of the BRS Constitution, "A member failing or refusing to pay his quarterly dues in advance or failing to furnish required information shall be considered as delinquent and not maintaining membership after the expiration of the first calendar month from the beginning of the quarter for which dues are payable."

Payments to the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. However, they may be deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_

Although BRS membership is voluntary, those electing not to become members are still required by the Union Shop Agreement to pay the equivalent of dues, fees, and, for railroads, assessments. Employees who are not members of BRS, but who pay agency fees as a condition of employment, may request a reduced fee based on their objection to union expenditures, which are not germane to collective bargaining. Only union members may exercise membership rights such as the right to attend union meetings and vote for officers and contract ratification. BRS believes it is in the best interests of all employees to join our union and participate in our activities. The rights regarding union security and agency fee objections are summarized below.

## **YOUR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO UNION SECURITY AND AGENCY FEE OBJECTIONS**

The rights and responsibilities of union membership are set forth in the BRS Constitution. Members are eligible to hold office, attend union meetings, and vote for union officers and contract ratification. Membership, however, is not required and is voluntary. Non-members do not enjoy the above listed rights. In the event your Collective Bargaining Agreement contains a Union Security provision, that agreement requires no more than the payment of an agency fee equal to the uniform membership dues, fees and, under the Railway Labor Act, assessments, as a condition of employment. Non-members are not required to pay, over their objection, for those activities not germane to collective bargaining. There is a procedure for non-members to file such objections and to challenge the calculation of germane expenditures.

Employees who are not members of the BRS, but who pay agency fees as a condition of employment, may request a reduction in that fee based on their objection to union expenditures which are germane to collective bargaining. Among those expenditures treated as not germane to collective bargaining which nonmember objectors are not required to support are those for the election of candidates for public office, including contributions to any political party, political organization or candidate; for efforts to recruit new members; for lobbying except lobbying directly related to ratifying or implementing a collective bargaining agreement; for dues to the AFL-CIO; for contributions to charitable and educational groups, and for a prorated portion of the cost of the union publications devoted to the coverage of subjects specified above or other non-germane subjects. In the past, approximately 5% to 10% of the international union's expenditures have been non-germane to collective bargaining with a much lower percentage for locals and general committees. Among those expenditures treated as germane to collective bargaining which non-members are required to support are those for contract negotiations, grievance adjustment and arbitration, and internal governance and administration.

Non-members wishing to file an objection may do so annually by notifying the International Secretary-Treasurer, 917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630, of his or her objection in writing, postmarked during the month of November. Members who resign from membership may file an objection within 30 days after tendering their resignation. New hires may file an objection within 30 days of first receiving this notice. Objectors will then receive an advance reduction of fees, based on the percentage of non-germane expenditures during the prior fiscal year.

Objecting non-members are given a full explanation of the basis for the reduced fee charged to them. That explanation includes a certified public accountant's report as well as other financial data upon which the fee reduction is based. Objectors have the option of challenging the union's calculation of the reduced fee before an impartial decision-maker appointed by the American Arbitration Association. That portion of the objector's fee reasonably in dispute is held in escrow during the period that a challenge is being pursued.

The complete text of BRS's objection procedures is published annually in the The Signalman's Journal, and will be provided upon request. The procedures do not apply to employees working in Canada.