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# WORKER TURNOVER AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AT UPS

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## Final Report

A RESEARCH PROJECT SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL  
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## Executive Summary

Over the last ten years we have seen a dramatic increase in the utilization of part-time workers by the United Parcel Service (UPS). This increase has been coupled with a stunningly high turnover rate of 150 percent among these workers. This study documents the deteriorating work environment for part-time workers at UPS and finds that a lack of full-time opportunities, a pervasive pattern of management mistreatment, and an alarmingly high injury rate are the primary determinants of the high turnover rate.

Highlights of the study include:

- An overwhelming majority of part-time workers are concerned with the lack of full-time and promotional opportunities at UPS. Over three-quarters of those surveyed were less than "satisfied" with the opportunities afforded them to obtain permanent full-time jobs at UPS.
- While many part-time workers are being underutilized by UPS, a significant number of full-time workers are working more hours than they would prefer. This suggests an inefficient allocation of labor by UPS management.
- The majority of the UPS part-time workers expressed a clear desire for more consistent work schedules and greater input into determining those schedules.
- More than forty percent of the part-time workers and the majority of full-time workers reported that they had suffered one or more work-related injuries in the last five years of their employment at UPS. The injury rate increased to over 65 percent for those part-time workers employed at UPS for more than 2 years.
- A significant portion of the respondents expressed the belief that UPS management lacks the necessary concern for its part-time workforce. Over one-third indicated that top management's concern for its workers was "poor" or "very poor" while close to a third reported that they had been harassed by their immediate supervisor.
- Women and people of color at UPS are particularly concentrated in part-time job positions averaging fewer than 20 hours a week. A third of the female part-time workers reported that they had been treated unfairly by their supervisors or top management because of their gender, while a quarter of the people of color reported that they had been treated unfairly by their supervisor or top management because of their race.
- The primary reasons given by part-time workers for leaving UPS were lack of full-time job opportunities at UPS, an opportunity for a better job with another employer, mistreatment and harassment by supervisors and top management, and, for those who with less than 3 months tenure, not being recalled to work despite being promised a permanent long term position.
- The UPS part-time workforce is extremely young, with an average age of 28 years old. At the same time, 29 percent of those part-time workers who were 40 plus years old reported that they had been treated unfairly by their supervisors or top managers due to their age.

## Introduction

Over the past several years, the use of part-time labor at UPS has steadily increased. In 1991, there were 124,089 part-time workers representing 50.5 percent of the total workforce. In 1995, 57.3 percent of the total workforce was employed part-time (175,038 workers).<sup>1</sup> This signifies a marked increase in the use of part-time labor at UPS. In addition, the UPS workforce is characterized by an extraordinarily high turnover rate, upwards of 150 percent.<sup>2</sup> This turnover has been especially dramatic among part-time workers.

Given the nature of work at UPS, safety is an issue of paramount concern for the workers, the company, and the union. Just since 1990, OSHA has documented over 1,300 violations at UPS, one third of which were designated as "serious". UPS pays almost \$1 million a day in workers' compensation<sup>3</sup> and has an injury rate 2½ times the industry average.<sup>4</sup> These safety issues have seriously impacted the work environment of part-time as well as full-time workers at UPS.

Too often the needs of part-time workers are given less consideration than their full-time counterparts, despite the fact that these workers, although employed only part-time, have "full-time" interests in the work environment which they encounter on a day to day basis. Yet, at UPS, the majority of part time workers are trapped in positions designated to have a dramatically lower rate of pay than the pay rate for positions held by their full-time counterparts. The increased use of part-time labor, combined with the unusually high turnover and injury rate

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from United Parcel Service HRIS reports (1991-1995), provided by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

<sup>2</sup> Figure supplied by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

<sup>3</sup> "Facts About . . . UPS and Worker Injuries." Provided by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

<sup>4</sup> Teamster UPS Update, May 5, 1997. p. 1

at UPS, necessitate a careful review of the issues confronting the part-time workforce. This report outlines the general attitudes and concerns of former part-time UPS workers regarding these and other issues related to their employment experience at UPS.

### **Research Method**

This research is based on a survey of part-time and full-time UPS workers who left UPS within the past three years. The survey included a series of questions regarding the workers' employment experience at UPS and the factors contributing to their departure. The sample was drawn from membership lists containing addresses and telephone numbers of former part-time and full-time employees of UPS centers in Maine and Washington State. The lists were provided by Teamsters Local 340, which represents UPS workers across the state of Maine, and Teamsters Local 174, which represents workers in Washington State. These two locals were chosen because in combination they represent a broad cross-section of UPS employees in both urban and rural communities.

A sample of 391 former UPS workers in Maine and 387 UPS workers in Washington was compiled from the lists provided by the local unions. Although more than three quarters of the workers who leave employment with UPS each year are part-time employees, for the purposes of comparison, we also included full-time employees in both the Washington and Maine samples. Full-time workers represented 16 percent of the Washington sample and 26 percent of the Maine sample of those who had left employment at UPS in the last three years.

The survey was distributed via mail first to the Maine sample and then four weeks later to the Washington sample. The initial mailings were followed up with phone calls and post-

cards to encourage respondents to complete and return the surveys. Computerized data bases were also used to update phone numbers and addresses whenever possible.

Of the 778 surveys mailed, nearly a third were returned marked "undeliverable" by the postal service. Of the remaining surveys, 83 of the Maine surveys and 51 of the Washington surveys were returned completed, representing a response rate of 32 percent for Maine and 20 percent for Washington. The lower Washington response rate is largely explained by the fact that these surveys were mailed out nearly a month later than the Maine surveys so that there was a much shorter time allotted for the surveys to be returned. However, this percentage most likely understates the true response rate of those actually surveyed. In many instances, the addresses included in the union membership lists were upwards of two years old. Because these workers had left employment with UPS, many had moved on to seek other jobs or return to school, leaving no forwarding address with the post-office. Similarly, a majority of the phone numbers were also found to be obsolete, making follow-up phone calls extremely difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, given the out-dated nature of the membership lists, it is probable that a significant number of surveys, though not returned by the postal service, never reached their intended recipient.

### **Respondent Demographics**

As shown in Table 1, the 134 person sample appears to be representative of UPS' hourly workforce in both Maine and Washington. Twenty-four percent of the respondents were full-time workers which accurately reflects the representation of full-time workers in the total population of workers who left employment with UPS in the last three years. Although only 28

percent of the respondents were female, this appears to be consistent with the overall gender homogeneity of the hourly workforce at UPS. Similarly, although minorities constitute only 11 percent of the sample, it is not unrepresentative considering Maine's predominantly white workforce and Washington states' significant, but still relatively small, population of people of color. It is worth noting that none of the people of color worked in full-time positions, possibly reflecting a lack of opportunities for workers of color to bid for the higher paying and more secure full-time positions at UPS.

Table 1 also shows the extreme youth of the UPS part-time work-force. While 28 percent of the full-time respondents were over 40 years of age when they left UPS and 84 percent were over 30, only 7 percent of the part-time workers were over 40 and a little more than a third were over 30. Seventeen percent of the part-time workers were 21 years old or younger and 45 percent were younger than 26 years old when they left UPS. The youthfulness of the part-time workforce should not be surprising to anyone who has seen the job requirements for most of the part-time positions. As reported by several Teamsters we interviewed, the lifting requirements and the work-pace for loader and sorter positions at UPS are so strenuous that many workers come to work dressed for an exercise workout in shorts, sweatpants, and sneakers and have little need or energy for any physical activity outside of their work environment.

Despite their youth, the UPS part-time workers are a relatively educated workforce. Nearly three-quarters reported that they had at least some college education, while 28 percent had at least a bachelors degree. In fact, they are more educated than their full-time counterparts, of whom only 62 percent reported having at least some college education. Over two-thirds of the part-time employees were married, while over 35 percent had at least one dependent. Thus,

although they tended to still be very young when they left UPS, many had families, making it more difficult to live on the relatively low wages prescribed for most UPS part-time positions, and less flexible to seek alternate employment after leaving UPS.

It is particularly revealing to examine the tenure and hours of work of both the part-time and full-time respondents. As Table 1 illustrates, 25 percent of the part-time respondents worked for less than three months before leaving their job with UPS, 29 percent worked from 3 to 11 months, 18 percent worked from 12 to 24 months, and 28 percent of respondents worked for more than 24 months. This contrasts sharply with the full-time respondents, of whom nearly three-quarters had worked for more than 24 months and only 7 percent had worked for less than three months before leaving UPS.

As for the total hours worked per week, 21 percent of the part-time respondents reported that they regularly worked fewer than twenty hours a week, 69 percent worked from 20 to 39 hours, and the remaining 9 percent of respondents worked 40 or more total hours per week while at UPS. The latter percentage reflects the fact that a significant number of UPS workers are hired in positions designated at the part-time pay rate, despite consistently averaging 40 or more hours of work each week. As one respondent wrote in the margins of their survey, many of these workers have spent years receiving "part-time pay for full time jobs." Similarly, 12 percent of the full-time employees reported that they averaged between 20 to 39 hours a week. However, unlike those working in positions designated by UPS to be part-time, they were paid at the full-time rate.



## **Satisfaction with Full-time and Promotional Opportunities**

Table 2 describes the attitudes of former UPS workers towards their overall employment experience at UPS. The findings for both full-time and part-time workers make clear that the majority of former UPS workers were only "somewhat satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" with their jobs at UPS. This is especially true of part-time employees averaging fewer than 20 hours a week, of whom 38 percent reported that they were "not at all satisfied" and 33 percent reported that they were only "somewhat satisfied" with their overall work experience.

With regard to part-time workers' attitudes concerning full-time opportunities at UPS, the results are particularly striking. More than three out of every four part-time respondents indicated being "not at all" or only "somewhat satisfied" with the opportunities offered to them to bid for full-time employment. As Table 2 illustrates, this was especially true of those part-time employees who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week, 59 percent of whom were "not at all satisfied" with the full-time opportunities at UPS. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3a, the lack of full-time opportunities was the most frequently selected reason for leaving UPS for all part-time employees, regardless of total hours worked per week. (Table 3)

There also exists a general dissatisfaction among both former part-time and full-time workers at UPS regarding the lack of promotional opportunities. Forty two percent of all part-time respondents and 45 percent of those who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week reported that they were "not at all satisfied" with the possibilities for advancement at UPS. An additional 29 percent of all part-timers were only "somewhat satisfied." This dissatisfaction was constant across all groups of workers, with only 4 percent of part-time workers and 7 percent of full-time workers reporting being satisfied with their opportunities for advancement at UPS. (Table 2)

The low percentage of respondents satisfied with their opportunities for advancement into full-time employment at UPS may be explained by the fact that over 40 percent reported they initially accepted part-time work in anticipation of attaining a full-time position. Another 17 percent of all part-time workers and 24 percent of those who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week, reported that they were no longer working for UPS because despite being promised long term employment when they were hired, they were never called back to work after a brief stint as a temporary or seasonal employee. As one worker wrote,

. . . UPS goes around hiring people, giving them false hope and security . . . There is an over abundance of packages that cannot be handled with the routine staffing on a daily basis and therefore extra people are needed. Once the . . . situation is taken care of then the extras are let go even though they were given promises of a future with UPS.

### **Work Schedule and Hours of Work for Part-timer Workers**

On average, part-time respondents worked 21.5 regularly scheduled hours per week and 1.8 overtime hours per week.(Table 4) This resulted in an average of 23.2 total hours worked per week for all part-time employees. In contrast, those hired for full-time positions averaged a total of 43.3 hours each week including 38.6 regularly scheduled hours and 5.5 overtime hours each week.

Overall, close to 60 percent of all part-time respondents were “not at all satisfied” or only “somewhat satisfied” with their hours of work. Further, of those who worked fewer than 20 total hours per week, two-thirds reported being “not at all” or only “somewhat satisfied” with their hours of work. (Table 2)

This prevalent dissatisfaction regarding hours of work may be explained by an overall desire by a majority of UPS part-timers to work additional hours. This is especially the case for former part-timers regularly working fewer than 40 total hours per week. As shown in Table 4, among respondents who worked fewer than 20 hours per week, 62 percent indicated a desire to work more hours while none reported wanting to decrease their hours of work. Similarly, 52 percent of the respondents who worked from 20 to 39 hours also indicated a desire to work additional hours. In contrast, only 26 percent of four full-time respondents indicated a desire to work more hours while 42 percent reported they would like to work fewer hours. This suggests that while many part-time workers are being underutilized by UPS, a significant number of full-time employees are working more hours than they would prefer, pointing towards a need for UPS to seriously reallocate the allotment of work hours.

Work schedule consistency appears to be a related concern for many part-time UPS workers. Overall, 29 percent of all part-time respondents and 34 percent of those who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week reported that their work schedules “often changed” or “always changed” from week to week. Consistency of work schedule was also a problem for full-time workers with only 26 percent reporting that their schedules “never changed” from week to week. (Table 4) It is also evident that a majority of workers desire a greater degree of input in determining their work schedules. Close to half were “not at all” or only “somewhat dissatisfied” with their degree of input. This lack of satisfaction was even more pronounced among respondents who worked less than 20 hours per week. Forty percent of these workers reported they were “not at all satisfied” with their degree of input into determining their own work schedules. (Table 2)

As shown in Table 3, when asked to choose from a list of 25 possible reasons for leaving UPS, 19 percent of all part-time respondents and a third of those averaging fewer than 20 hours a week reported that a "lack of consistency with work schedule" was a factor in their decision to leave their jobs. For those averaging fewer than 20 hours a week this was the third most frequently chosen reason. In addition, "degree of input into determining schedule" was selected by 19 percent of respondents averaging fewer than 20 hours a week, making this one of the top ten reasons for leaving UPS. This suggests an overall desire among part-time workers for more consistent work schedules, as well as a desire for greater input in determining those schedules.

### **Satisfaction with Wages and Benefits**

The reduced pay rate for part-time positions was a serious concern for many of the part-time respondents. Thirty-nine percent of all part-time workers reported that they were "not at all" or only "somewhat satisfied" with their hourly wage. (Table 2) Sixteen percent of all part-time workers and 19 percent of those who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week reported that the hourly wage was a factor contributing to their decision to leave UPS. (Table 3) As one part-time worker described, the reduced wage for part-time workers just compounds the problems created by the lack of opportunity to bid for full-time hours and the overall lack of job security:

[T]he wage difference between part-time and full-time workers . . . now is about \$9.00 an hour. No holiday pay . . . no pension, not much hope for full time employment, no seniority, and no security."

As shown in Table 2, many part-time workers also expressed dissatisfaction with health insurance, pension, and paid leave benefits. This was particularly true for those workers who

averaged fewer than 20 hours a week, many of whom did not work enough hours, or had too short a tenure, to qualify for the benefit package available to other UPS employees. Thirty-nine percent of these workers reported that they were “not at all” or only “somewhat satisfied” with their health insurance benefits, while 47 percent reported that they were less than satisfied with their pension benefits, and 41 percent reported that they were less than satisfied with paid leave time including sick days, vacation, and holidays.

### **Treatment by Management**

Close to half (49 percent) of all part-time respondents indicated that they were “not at all satisfied” or only “somewhat satisfied” with the treatment they received from their supervisors. This dissatisfaction exists regardless of total hours worked per week but is especially high for workers averaging fewer than 40 hours a week. Fifty-two percent of respondents who worked fewer than 20 hours per week and 49 percent of those who averaged between 20 and 39 hours a week were “not at all satisfied” or only “somewhat satisfied” with the treatment they received, while a third of the part-time workers who averaged 40 or more hours a week were less than satisfied with the treatment they received from their supervisors. (Table 2)

As described in Table 4, this general attitude among former workers may be explained, in part, by the fact that 32 percent of part-time respondents reported experiencing some degree of harassment by their immediate supervisors at UPS. Fourteen percent of respondents stated they encountered occasional harassment, while 12 percent stated they experienced frequent harassment for minor infractions. An additional 6 percent of former part-time workers said that they were “singled out” for harassment by their immediate supervisors. (Table 4)

As one worker described, this mistreatment by supervisors was both pervasive and demoralizing:

You really can't [put your] finger on what they did or how they treated you. They would just keep giving you more work. If you complained it happened more often. . . . They were never happy with your performance.

Another worker, an ex-Marine, described the treatment he received during training at UPS as so extreme that he "had flashbacks of Paris Island." Still another claimed that "UPS's motivation by intimidation on a daily basis at the local level was unbelievable." He went on to say that the "tactics and head games used [by UPS management] to break down employees should be illegal."

These complains from former workers are not limited to supervisory management -- they extend to the upper levels of UPS management as well. Forty-four percent of all part-time workers and 57 percent of those averaging fewer than 20 hours a week reported that they were "not at all" or only "somewhat satisfied" with the treatment they received from top management. (Table 2) Overall, 30 percent of the part-time respondents and 38 percent of those averaging fewer than 20 hours a week reported that top-management's concern for workers was "poor" or "very poor." An additional 22 percent of all part-time workers and 29 percent of those averaging fewer than 20 hours a week reported that top-management exhibited merely a "fair" level of concern for workers at UPS. This sentiment appears to be even more pronounced among full-time respondents -- only 22 percent rated top-management's concern for its workers as either "good" or "excellent." (Table 4)

The mistreatment by both management and immediate supervisors is particularly striking for women and people of color. Not only are these workers much more likely to be concentrated in the lowest paid part-time jobs, averaging fewer than 20 hours a week, but they are also much more likely to experience harassment and discrimination by both supervisors and top management. As shown in Table 4a, a third of the women in part-time positions reported that they had been treated unfairly by their supervisor or top management because of their gender, while a quarter of people of color reported that they had been treated unfairly by supervisors and top management because of their race.

In the fast-paced and physically demanding work environment at UPS it is not surprising that older workers also reported harassment and discrimination. Twenty-nine percent of the part-time respondents who were at least 40 years old reported that they had been treated unfairly by supervisors and top management. Others reported that they were harassed by UPS management for union activity. As one worker describes:

When I became active in the union, including activities in union organizing, management took a lot of work [from] my route, gave it to other air walkers, and stopped talking to me about a promotion to full-time. They wanted me out and were ready to use the "lack of work" excuse to lay me off -- I left before they had to -- also for health reasons.

Dissatisfaction with the treatment they received from both immediate supervisors and top-management at UPS appears to be a primary determinant of UPS's high turnover rate. Twenty-two percent of all part-time respondents, 33 percent of those who averaged fewer than 20 hours a week and 34 percent of full-time respondents cited "overall treatment by supervisors and management" as one of the top three reasons why they left UPS. As one respondent wrote,

[Management treatment] is probably the major reason for turnover if anyone had the guts to admit it. Upper management wants these things done before they can possible be done come hell or high water! Go! Go! Go! Go Go!"

### **Safety and Working Conditions**

Given UPS's poor safety record and the physically demanding nature of their work, it is not surprising that our research found that both part-time and full-time workers had serious concerns about the safety and working conditions at UPS. Forty-seven percent of all part-time respondents said they were "not at all satisfied" or only "somewhat satisfied" with the working conditions, including safety, which they encountered at UPS. Among respondents who worked fewer than 20 hours per week, 57 percent were "not at all satisfied" or only "somewhat satisfied" with their working conditions, while 65 percent reported that they were "not at all" or only "somewhat satisfied" with the input they had into their working conditions. (Table 2)

As described in Tables 5 and 6, 39 percent of part-time employees and 56 percent of full-time employees reported that they had been injured on at least one occasion during their tenure at UPS. On average, they experienced 2.1 injuries, missing a mean of 131 workdays for each injury. The number of total workdays missed, due to all injuries combined, averaged 68 workdays per person for part-time employees and 308 days for full time employees. These numbers are particularly alarming when we bear in mind that more than half the part-time workers worked fewer than 12 months at UPS before they left their jobs.

For part-time employees, the most frequently cited physical injuries were those involving the hand, arm, and wrist (53 percent). These included repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and "tennis elbow" which came from repeated lifting, bending, and twisting, of heavy packages and equipment. The second most frequently cited injury for part-time



employees involved the back (40 percent); followed by foot and ankle injuries (25 percent); head injuries (13 percent); and leg and knee injuries (13 percent). For full-time employees the most frequently cited injuries were those involving the back (72 percent) followed by hand, arm, and wrist; and leg and knee injuries.

Table 6a describes the factors respondents believed contributed most to their injuries. For both part-time and full-time employees repeated heavy lifting and pressure from supervisors to increase their workload as the primary factors contributing to their injuries at UPS (48 percent of part-timers and 61 percent of full-timers). For part-time workers these were followed by repetitive motion (40 percent), poor workstation design (30 percent), falls or other accidents (28 percent) and the 70 pound weight standard (20 percent). Full-time workers reported that too much overtime (33 percent) and faulty equipment or machinery (28 percent) also played a major role in contributing to on their on-the-job injuries

Many of the respondents reported a series of repeated repetitive motion and weight lifting injuries. One worker reported that she had incurred repetitive motion injuries to both elbows, similar to tennis elbow from repeated use of faulty equipment aggravated by days when she was forced to deliver her entire load of packages for the morning on a hand cart, and deliver them without benefit of a truck, in order to get them all delivered before the 10:30 deadline for overnight mail.

In addition to these physical injuries, nearly a quarter of both part-time and full-time employees reported that they had suffered emotional stress from their work at UPS. For most of the respondents the stress appears to be an outgrowth of the combination of repetition, heavy lifting, constant speed-up, job insecurity, and management pressure and harassment that they

routinely encountered during their work experience at UPS. As workers described the there was simply "too much work -- too little time!"

UPS upper management has to come to grips with the fact that UPS is not equal to life. People are human and need to be treated as such. One can only do so much in one day, but under UPS "routes" and different delivery "schemes": "Next Day", "Before 8:00 a.m.", etc.: and the amount of different types of packages, packaging, etc; the chances of getting the job done properly in the limited time involved is ludicrous.

Table 5 presents a breakdown of reported injuries by type and nature. Each type of injury (back, head, etc.) was classified as either "degenerative" or "non-degenerative". A "degenerative" is defined here, as one that results from the continual execution of one's work duties. Whereas, a "non-degenerative" injury is defined as one caused by a single, isolated event. For the purposes of this classification, two different components of data were analyzed; (1) the circumstances of the injury, as described by the respondent; (2) the factors that contributed to the injury, as indicated by the respondent.

Forty-four percent of all physical injuries reported by part-time workers and 51 percent of the injuries reported by full-time workers were classified as "degenerative" (an injury that results from the continual execution of one's work duties.) The other remaining 56 percent for part-time workers and 49 percent for full-time workers were classified as "non-degenerative" (an injury caused by a single, isolated event.) Thus, about half of the injuries appear to be the result of one-time mishaps, while the other half appear to be caused by the continual execution of strenuous work duties. At 53 percent, injuries to the hand, arm, and wrist, were by far the most common degenerative injuries for part-time workers. They were followed by back injuries (40 percent), foot and ankle injuries (25 percent), leg and knee injuries (13 percent) and head

injuries<sup>5</sup> (13 percent). The most common degenerative injured reported by full time workers were back (39 percent) foot and ankle (28 percent), neck and shoulder (22 percent) and hand, arm, and wrist (17 percent).

Furthermore, the data reveal two distinct trends regarding injury rates. First, there appears to be a positive correlation between tenure and the injury rate; meaning as length of service increases, the injury rate also increases. For part-time respondents who worked less than three months at UPS, there was a 4 percent injury rate; from 3 to 11 months a 33 percent injury rate; from 12 to 24 months a 71 percent injury rate; and for those who worked more than 24 months, there was a 65 percent injury rate. (Table 6)

Injuries are also noticeably concentrated among those respondents who both worked more hours per week and were at UPS for a longer period of time. For example, of those part-time workers who averaged more than 20 hours per week and were employed at UPS for more than 12 months, over 70 percent reported having been injured on at least one occasion. In contrast, there were no reports of injuries for those respondents who averaged fewer than 20 hours per week and who left UPS after less than 3 months of employment. (Table 6)

With regard to post-injury employment, the data points to an across the board perception that management is not doing enough to address the concerns and issues of workers returning to UPS after an injury. As Table 6 illustrates, 42 percent of the part-time respondents and 44 percent of full-time respondents who reported being injured while at UPS claimed that management made "no effort" to accommodate their injuries by changing or adapting work assignments. An additional 33 percent of part-time workers and 44 percent of full-time

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<sup>5</sup>Degenerative head injuries include headaches and brain damage from repeated exposure to fumes.

respondents reported that UPS made only a “minimal effort.” Only 25 percent of part-time respondents and 11 percent of full-time respondents reported that their employer made a “good faith effort” to accommodate their injuries.

Reinforcing this perception that UPS is not doing enough to assist employees, is the fact that many respondents reported experiencing some degree of pain in executing their work assignments upon their return to work. Of all the part-time respondents who reported being injured on at least one occasion, 75 percent said they experienced “some pain” or a “great deal of pain” upon returning to work. Among full-time respondents, 89 percent stated that they returned to work with some degree of pain. Sixteen percent of the part-time workers and 11 percent of the full-time workers reported that they were unable to return to their same job because of their injury.

For many part-time employees, their injuries were just one more excuse used by management to justify laying them off or failing to call them back to work. As one worker describes, “after hurting my back there was no communication or help offered at all. I called several times but there were never any opportunities.”

Sixteen percent of part-time workers and 44 percent of full-time workers reported that their injuries were a primary reason they left UPS. Others cited repeated heavy lifting and poor safety conditions as reasons they left their job. Eleven percent of part-time workers and 41 percent of full-time workers reported that heavy lifting contributed to their decision to leave UPS while 11 percent of part-timers and 31 percent of full-timers reported that poor safety conditions were a factor in their decision to leave. As one worker describes:

...[the] lack of organization in the unloading process is torture on the lumber. Basically all they want is bulls to move stuff. After a while, people get tired of brutalizing [their] bodies day after day with no light at the end of the tunnel. I mean you either have to get willed into a driver position or one has to quit in order for lower [paid] people to even think about getting a chance.

## **Conclusion**

Over the past several years, the use of part-time labor at UPS has dramatically increased. Combined with an stunningly high turnover rate of 150 percent, this necessitates a careful review of the issues and problems confronting part-time workers at UPS. This research represents an important step in understanding both the current nature of part-time employment at UPS and the factors contributing to the high turnover rate among part-time employees.

As the data show, part-time workers have an extremely short tenure at UPS, with most averaging fewer than 12 months of service before they left UPS employment. The part-time workforce is also strikingly young and highly educated, yet the majority are married and more than a third are supporting dependent children. While our study found that most of these workers came to UPS hopeful that their part-time work would turn in to permanent full-time employment, most left UPS extremely unhappy with their work experience and in many cases very bitter about the way they had been treated by management and supervisors.

For most of these workers, the single most disturbing factor about their UPS work experience was the lack of opportunity for full-time employment at full-time pay rates. Three out of four of the part-time workers expressed dissatisfaction with the general lack of full-time and promotional opportunities at UPS. This dissatisfaction was not limited to any certain group of part-timers; it crossed all boundaries of tenure and total hours worked and appeared to be rooted in the fact that a significant majority originally accept part-time employment at UPS

