



Fred Says...

Fred A. Swinford
Vice President of Appeals

The ETC (Employee Tax Compliance Unit) is not your Friend

You know it amazes me how naïve many of our members are. They get a letter from the ETC (Employee Tax Compliance Unit) and they answer it just as they would a letter from grandma. Let me tell you...these people are not your friends. Their job is simply to review your tax return problem, and gather information from you that will be used against you.

They do not deal in compassion or fairness; they deal strictly in rules and regulations which you have already violated because that is why your tax return is in their possession. They are not there to help you, but they will gleefully help hang you.

Here is what happens. They send you a letter asking you about a problem on your tax return. It can be anything from a simple error to omitted income. You of course have to respond, and that is when the Robot (from Lost in Space) should immediately begin waving his arms and screaming "Danger Will Robinson, Danger."

Your response can and will be used against you but you will never get a Miranda warning. Your response determines whether or not they refer your case to management for possible disciplinary action up to and including removal under Section 1203. As I have always said.....don't load the gun for them.

When you get a letter from the ETC immediately contact NTEU, do not pass go, because you are not going to collect \$200. Don't try to answer it alone because your answer affects the ultimate outcome of the case and may ultimately determine if you are to remain gainfully employed. Your answer needs to be truthful and complete but it is the foundation for any defense you may have against any proposed disciplinary action. Without a good foundation your defense will collapse, and the unemployment line could be your next stop.

NTEU can only help those who help themselves. When the ETC comes calling don't answer the door without NTEU. Remember the old line "We're from the government and we're here to help"? Don't believe it...but if you do, call me because I have the formula for a tablet that will change water into gasoline and I am willing to make a deal (Cash Only).

Fred A. Swinford
NTEU Chapter 9
Vice President of Appeals

9/5/2005