

2024 Union Pacific Mechanical Agreement Employees Transfer to Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation (Metra) FAQ

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document provides general guidance to Union Pacific (UP) Mechanical employees working in Commuter Operations under ARASA, BRC, IAMAW, IBEW-M, NCFO and SMART-ME. Other unions and functions transferring to Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation (d/b/a Metra) will be addressed at a later date. Specific information may depend on union agreements or an individual's circumstance.

Transfer Process

- When is this happening?
 - Metra is working with UP and impacted unions to transition employees and work in Spring 2024.
 - UP employees across all shop crafts are planned to transfer to Metra on the same day.
- Which unions have signed the implementation agreements?
 - As of 1/22/2024, IBEW-M and SMART-ME have signed the implementation agreements. The implementation agreements define a process for contract employees to transition into jobs at Metra.
- How do I sign up to transfer to Metra?
 - A communication will be issued to employees, providing a 2-week window during which you can sign up to show your interest in transferring through UP's LMS system.
- What information do I need to provide at the time of sign-up?
 - When you sign up to express your interest to transfer to Metra, you will also be signing an acknowledgement that you are OK with UP releasing your personnel information to Metra. This will allow Metra to start its pre-employment screening.
 - Additionally, a website and QR-code will be posted around work sites so you can access Metra's dedicated hiring site for UP transfer employees for you to create and complete your application with Metra.
 - Metra will provide more information and guidance closer to the sign-up date.
 - Employees can visit <https://metra.com/uptransfer> to view helpful documents relating to the UP transfer.
- How will I know if I have a job at Metra?
 - You will receive an offer letter showing your offered position, pay rate, start date.
- Will there be paperwork to fill out?
 - Yes. Metra personnel will visit UP work locations to assist with filling out forms and collecting signatures. E-signatures will also be required with your web application.
 - You will need to verify authorization to work status by producing one of the accepted forms of documentation. (See the [I-9 List of Acceptable Documents](#) located on <https://metra.com/uptransfer>)

Compensation

- What will my pay be?
 - Pay rates are negotiated between each union and Metra. Details will be contained in union's respective implementing agreement.
- How will I be paid?
 - Via direct deposit to your bank account. At the time of transfer, Metra HR representatives will work with employees to set up direct deposit with Metra's Payroll.
- When are pay dates?
 - The 13th & 28th of each month. Compensation is paid in arrears. For example:
 - 1/1/2024-1/15/2024 is paid 1/28/2024
 - 1/16/2024-1/31/2024 is paid 2/13/2024
- Will buy-outs, early retirement, or signing bonuses be offered to transferring employees?
 - No.

Health Insurance & FMLA

- What is the insurance coverage, and how much is the premium?
 - Medical insurance will remain the same through United Healthcare and Highmark BlueCross-Blue Shield. Metra is under the same National Health & Welfare Plan as UP.
 - Metra employees pay \$230/month, regardless of how many dependents they have.
 - For more detail, refer to the **2024 Metra Contract Employee Benefit Summary** and the **National Railroad Health and Wellness Benefits Package** located on <https://metra.com/uptransfer> webpage.
- Is the Iron Road Healthcare (IRHC) plan offered at Metra?
 - No, the IRHC plan is not offered to Metra employees.
 - You will be moved to the National Health & Welfare Plan. You can elect United Healthcare or Highmark BlueCross Blue Shield.
- Will I have to re-enroll in insurance or FMLA?
 - No. Metra is coordinating with UP and United Healthcare to carry over each employee's health insurance coverage and FMLA status.
- Will there be a waiting period for benefits?
 - No. Metra is working to carry over each employee's benefit status. Whatever insurance or FMLA coverage an employee is eligible for on their last day at UP, it is Metra's intent to carry that over to Metra without interruption.

Retirement

- What will happen with Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) benefits and status?
 - RRB contributions will continue through Metra.
 - Each employee should keep their service record and contributions and continue building upon that.
- Is there a 401(k), and can I roll over my existing plan?
 - Yes, you can enroll in Metra's 401(k) plan.
 - Yes, you can roll over an existing 401(k) into Metra's plan.
 - Metra does not offer 401(k) matching. Instead, each union agreement has provided for deferred compensation payments.

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- What is a 457 plan?
 - Tax-advantaged retirement savings plan offered to government organizations, similar to a 401(k). Employees can enroll in a 457 plan in addition to or instead of the 401(k) plan.
 - Resources will be provided during Metra's new hire orientation to help navigate your choices.
- What does Metra contribute towards deferred compensation?
 - As of 1/1/2024, Metra contributes \$1.60 per straight time hour to an employee's deferred compensation plan. That amount increases each year and is negotiated with each union.
 - Below is a table of each union and the plan Metra contributes to:

Union	Plan
ARASA	TCU Pension Plan
BRC	TCU Pension Plan
IAM	RTA 401(k) Plan
IBEW	RTA 401(k) Plan
NCFO	SEIU Pension Plan
SMART-ME	SMWIA Pension Plan

Time Off

- How many days of vacation will I have for the remainder of 2024 following transfer date?
 - Subject to union agreement, Metra is coordinating with UP to carry over each employee's unused vacation days for the remainder of 2024.
 - Scheduled vacations should not be impacted in 2024.
- How will my 2024 vacation be calculated?
 - Metra is under the National Vacation Agreement, which means that you will earn the same amount of vacation days as you would have earned if you had continued working for UP.
 - It is based on years of service and days worked in the previous year.
 - Your days worked at UP in 2024 will be counted towards your 2025 accruals.
- How many personal days will I have?
 - Metra employees have 5 personal days per year.
 - Based on your start date at Metra, and the union's respective implementing agreement, you will receive a prorated amount for the remainder of 2024.
- How many sick days will I have?
 - Metra employees have 3 sick days per year.
 - Based on your start date at Metra, and the union's respective implementing agreement, you will receive a prorated amount for the remainder of 2024.
- How many holidays will I have?
 - Depending on your union's respective agreement, you receive 11 or 12 paid holidays per year.

Other Benefits

- Is there an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

- Yes. Resources will be provided in the new hire orientation/onboarding process.
- Is parental leave available?
 - Yes, 4 weeks of paid leave that can be taken in two week increments over a 1-year period following the birth or adoption of a child.
 - Details about your eligibility relative to the timing of the transfer will be handled during the transition period.
- Are tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness available?
 - Yes, both are available to Metra employees.
 - Tuition reimbursement is available up to the IRS annual limit (currently \$5,250).
 - As a Metra employee, you will be eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
- Are discounted gym memberships and other perks available?
 - Metra participates in Perks At Work, which provides discounts to numerous products and services. Information will be provided during onboarding.
- Do employees ride public transit and/or the Metra free?
 - Yes, Metra employees can opt in to receive a Regional Transit Pass. This pass can be used for free rides on Metra, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), or Pace Regional Bus.
- What benefits do employees on Military Leave receive?
 - Metra follows the State of Illinois Service Members Employment & Reemployment Rights Act and the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
 - An employee who performs uniformed services will be granted a military leave of absence, with no loss in length of service or status for the period of time called to such duty or training. The employee will also be paid any difference between their military pay and regular pay. All fringe benefits will be continued in accordance with state and federal law.

Union-Related Matters

- What will happen with my seniority?
 - This depends on your union's respective implementing agreement. Metra is working with your union to determine how to best protect your seniority.
- What will happen with my work location, assignment, and schedule?
 - Metra is working to keep things consistent to the greatest extent possible, however there may be modifications to individual assignments based on union's respective agreements and operational needs.
- Can I bid on another job or another district at Metra, such as the Rock Island District?
 - Yes, but your seniority rights will be dependent on your respective union's implementing agreement. You would not be able to out-bid a current Metra employee.
 - Similarly, current Metra employees could bid on a job at a UP location, but they would not be able to out-bid a current UP employee.
- What will happen with my discipline and attendance record?
 - Metra is requesting discipline & attendance history from UP for transferring employees.
 - Employees will have their history converted into Metra's discipline or attendance step program to carry over current status.
- How much are union dues?
 - This is determined by your union.

- You may choose to allow Metra to automatically deduct your union dues from your paycheck to send to your union. The automatic deduction form will be provided to you closer to time of transfer.
- What happens with apprenticeships?
 - Apprentices will transfer into Metra's apprentice program, with credit given to service completed so far.
 - You may need to complete additional training to meet Metra's curriculum requirements.
- What will happen to the Mechanic in Charge (MIC) positions? What union agreement does the position fall under?
 - The MICs are defined by an agreement that is signed by multiple unions. Individuals are covered under the agreement that they originally came from. For example, MIC – Carman position is covered under the BRC union agreement.
 - Continuation of these positions are dependent on the union implementation agreements.
- Am I able to transfer to Metra while out on a leave of absence?
 - This is dependent on your union's respective implementation agreement. More information will be available after an implementation agreement is signed with each union.

Company Policy-Related Matters

- Am I required to have a COVID-19 vaccination?
 - Metra has suspended its vaccine mandate as of May 11, 2023, to coincide with the lifting of national and state emergency declarations.
- Will I be subject to a background check?
 - No. Metra is waiving this requirement for UP transferred employees.
- Will I need to take a drug test?
 - Potentially. Metra is seeking relief from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to waive federal pre-employment drug testing requirements for certain employees.
 - Employees not included in the relief from federal testing requirements will be subject to pre-employment drug testing.
 - Metra is a Drug-Free Workplace. All employees will remain subject to company policies and applicable federal requirements regarding drug and alcohol testing.
 - Employees subject to Rule G will transfer over with their current follow up schedule.
- Will I need to take a pre-employment physical?
 - No. Metra is waiving this requirement for UP transferred employees.
- Is there a company nurse?
 - No. Metra has an HR Medical department to handle medical related issues.
- Is there a PPE/boot allowance?
 - A \$200 digital voucher is available to employees annually (money does not carry over).
 - Employees can use the voucher toward purchase of approved footwear, high-visibility garments, and prescription safety eyewear.
- Will I have a company phone?
 - Depends. Employees may be issued a mobile phone if it is determined necessary by Metra management. Employees will have access to a company phone at their job sites.
- What about company email and computers?

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- All employees that request a Metra email address are issued a Metra email address.
- All employees will have access to work kiosks at the shops, where they can access the Metra intranet, log onto the Employee Portal, and use certain programs.
- Any employee who currently uses Maximo will be issued new user credentials with their Metra email address.
- As determined necessary by management, employees will be issued company laptops.
- How will I clock in/out at work?
 - You will punch in and out by typing in your Metra Employee ID into a Kronos timeclock.
 - Staff will be available during the transition period to help guide employees.
- What about the Storehouses?
 - Storehouse personnel will remain UP employees for now and transfer at a later date.
 - Employees should continue routing Storehouse requests as they normally do until directed otherwise. Eventually, orders will transition to Metra's system.

Contact Metra at UPquestions@metrarr.com with any further questions.