

The Art of Keeping Cars Moving at PDX

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Find out how our Salima McRae keeps Portland International Airport moving with a smile, and what she actually spends most of her time doing on the job.

How would you describe your job to a first grader?

I am the lady with the lime green vest and a whistle standing in the middle of the crosswalk directing traffic; the lady that can point you in the right direction for transportation and/or hotel shuttles; the person that passengers waiting on the curb are happy to see and waiting drivers would rather not see. My official title is parking control representative (PCR).

I cater to everyone who utilizes the terminal roadways at PDX. My title may be parking control representative, but I am a customer service representative. On an average day, I spend most of my time assisting passengers by answering their inquiries about vendors and services at the airport. I ensure the public side of the terminal roadways are safe and accessible for passenger pickup and drop off.

What attracted you to this job and how did you land it?

I have worked at PDX for most of my career with different airlines; PDX is like a second home. I was working as a corporate travel agent but wanted to return to PDX, and luck had it that there was an opening for a PCR with the Port of Portland. I was excited because I had former coworkers that were working at the Port and had nothing but good things to say about

the culture. The position fell right into my area of study and was the perfect fit. I was very confident about landing the job because I felt that I was the perfect candidate. Plus, I had my winning smile.

What should everyone know about airport roadway traffic?

PDX is growing, and the same goes for foot and vehicle traffic. The Port works hard so that drivers have signs that help them navigate the roadways during busy hours and PCR's controlling the curb traffic and passenger crossing. It is the combination of signs and representatives that allows PDX terminal roadways to run smoothly and safely. We are going to have some growing pains, but we know how the saying goes: "No pain, no gain." The pain might be a little more traffic, but the gain is a beautifully functioning airport.

What is one thing about you that would surprise people?

People are always surprised that I am a mother of two because they always assume I am much younger than my actual age.

What did you want to be growing up and how does it relate to your job now?

My mother always tells the story of how I wanted to be an Air Force pilot and had the green jumpsuit that I wore on a regular basis. However, like most people, what I wanted to be changed with time. But in the end, my life came into full circle because I have been working in different capacities at the airport. I am where I wanted to be as an adult and now I have an opportunity to be a vital part of the Port team.