



Minor misuse

We have completed both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of the NALC Route Protection Program and copies have been mailed to each NALC branch president. Additionally, every city letter carrier member of the NALC has been mailed a *Route Protection Program Pocket Handbook* to use during route counts and inspections. The handbook provides letter carriers with a quick and convenient reference guide to use during inspection week regarding proper procedures for evaluating and adjusting routes. It also provides helpful information on pre-count, week of count, and post-count requirements.

Chapter 2 of the Route Protection Program provides

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NALC representatives with information necessary to advise and assist letter carriers and to monitor management’s compliance with the handbooks regarding the inspection, evaluation, and adjustment of letter carrier routes. Information is provided on pre-inspection and post-inspection requirements as well as on the many inspection week issues. Utilizing the sample 1838-Cs from Chapter 1, Chapter 2 includes detailed information on the proper completion of Forms 1838 and 1840. Also included are sections on Form 1840-B, Form 3999, consultations, and grievances.

Chapter 3 of the Route Protection Program is a detailed review of the minor route adjustment process found in Section 141 of the *M-39 Handbook*. Management must maintain routes in reasonable adjustment throughout the year. If the necessary adjustments are only minor in scope and nature, the procedures in Section 141 of the *M-39* can be used to make minor adjustments, as long as the previous count and inspection data is reasonably current and the same carrier is still serving the route. Otherwise, adjust-

ments must be made using the mail count and inspection process found in Chapter 2 of the *M-39 Handbook*. Additionally, Section 141.18 of the *M-39* is explicit regarding information that management must review to determine the current actual time being used on a route, and Section 141.19 is specific regarding the formula used to make adjustments.

In some areas of the country, management ignores the minor route adjustment provisions of their handbook. In most cases, these managers have no interest in maintaining routes close to eight hours. Rather, their intent is to adjust routes based on some pre-determined computer estimate generated from unreliable data. They make minor

adjustments even if the same carrier is not on the route or if current route inspection data is not available. They use the process even when the necessary adjustments are beyond minor in scope and nature. They ignore the actual current evaluation of the route. Instead, they determine office times based on unreliable formulas derived from a selected

volume analysis. In some cases, they determine street times from a one day “evaluation.” None of these procedures are provided for in Section 141 of the *M-39 Handbook*. As a result, grievances are filed on management’s misapplication of the procedures as well as their maladjustment of the routes.

Additionally, letter carriers should hold management accountable when their abuse of the minor route adjustment process results in overburdened routes. Section 271.g of the *M-39 Handbook* states that if over any six consecutive week period a route shows over 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance every day for three or more days each week during this period, the regular carrier (upon request) shall receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within four weeks of the request. These special inspections must then be conducted in the same manner as formal counts and inspections, which are explained in detail in Chapter 1 of the Route Protection Program. ☒