

USPS delivery initiatives updates



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In recent months, USPS has introduced several new delivery initiatives that have created concern for many city letter carriers. Each of these delivery initiatives was implemented unilaterally by the Postal Service without NALC participation. The National Agreement provides a mechanism for NALC and USPS to jointly discuss and consider testing of new delivery initiatives through the City Delivery Task Force; however, USPS Delivery Operations chose to begin several new tests without agreement by the task force. I want to use this month's article to update you on the status of these tests.

Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS)

The ESAS pilot test required carriers to clock in, attend any service or safety talk, perform vehicle inspections, obtain accountable items, set up their scanners, retrieve the parcel hamper, line up the SPRs, and retrieve the mail cased and pulled down the previous afternoon. Under the test, no mail was to be cased in the morning. Carriers were to withdraw hot case preferential flats and route them in order of delivery on the street. Instead of casing their SPRs, carriers would line them up in delivery order prior to pulling their hot case mail, and then immediately clock to the street to load their vehicle and begin delivery. Upon returning to the office in the afternoon, carriers would complete the normal return-to-office duties. After completion of these duties, carriers would then case and pull down all mail distributed to the route in preparation for the next day's delivery. This test, as described, while similar to the long-standing Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) Delivery Program, did not fully comply

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with the requirements of *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services*, and *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*.

NALC filed a national-level grievance disputing the unilateral implementation of this test. I am happy to report that NALC and the Postal Service have settled this grievance and agreed that the ESAS pilot test would be terminated as of Aug. 19. The settlement also states that any future modifications or al-

ternate applications to EPM, as outlined in USPS handbooks, would be subject to discussion through the City Delivery Task Force. This settlement, M-01927, can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System (MRS) on the NALC website.

Post Office Sortation Equipment Reconciliation (SER)

On July 31, USPS notified NALC of a new delivery initiative titled the Post Office Sortation Equipment Rationalization (SER). In the original correspondence, SER was characterized as a “review” that would solicit “feedback” from employees regarding potential consolidation of casing and sortation equipment. However, USPS subsequently released a stand-up talk that revealed that the Postal Service had instructed local management to reduce casing equipment and cell sizes, causing widespread violations of the handbooks and manuals while making casing more difficult and less efficient.

On Aug. 17, NALC filed a national-level grievance on the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of SER. As of the date of this writing, the SER initiative has been halted pending our discussions with the Postal Service on the program.

Article 34 office activities study

On April 19, 2019, USPS notified NALC of its intent to conduct a study of letter carrier office activities. According to the Postal Service, this data will be collected by a third-party contractor, Deloitte, and the information may be used in collective bargaining. USPS also stated that the information may be used to evaluate and, if necessary, create new office standards. This test was supposed to begin in early 2020; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed.

On July 31, NALC received the data collection schedule and a list of the routes identified for the study. NALC was informed that data collectors would be counting the mail and observing the regular carrier perform office and loading/unloading duties in the morning and the afternoon on the selected routes. The data collection began on Aug. 3 and continued through September. NALC representatives visited each test site prior to the study to explain the process. These representatives then returned to the sites after data collection was complete to obtain feedback from the carriers involved in the study. To date, USPS is still awaiting the results of the study from the third-party contractor. NALC Headquarters will be monitoring any action that USPS may implement resulting from this study and will exercise its rights as necessary in accordance with Article 34 of the National Agreement.

For more information on these and other initiatives affect-ing city letter carriers, please visit my City Delivery page on nalc.org. This year has presented many challenges for city carriers, but you have succeeded in overcoming adversity. Thank you for your continued strength, bravery and perseverance.