

USPS Sorting and Delivery Centers



Special Assistant to the President Doug Lape

On March 23, 2021, the Postal Service announced its long-term strategic plan to stabilize mail delivery. This plan, called the Delivering for America Plan, includes the creation of large delivery units called Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs) across the country. The establishment of these S&DCs involves moving city letter carriers from their current work location to a large facility that can accommodate hundreds of routes.

Whenever full-time letter carrier assignments or career letter carriers are moved from one office to another, the situation must be covered under one of the provisions of the National Agreement.

Currently, there are two possible scenarios when the Postal Service establishes an S&DC:

1. All of the assignments in the city letter carrier craft are moved from an independent, or losing, installation to the S&DC. The losing installation is not being discontinued or consolidated under this process since it remains an independent installation, which is separate from the S&DC. The retail and post office box operations remain under a postmaster in the losing installation.
2. A delivery unit is moved from the jurisdiction of an independent installation to the S&DC. The other delivery units within the original installation remain and do not move.

Article 12 of the National Agreement contains three distinct sections covering the movement of city letter carrier assignments from one installation to the jurisdiction of another. Determining which section of Article 12 governs the movement depends on what happens in the losing installation.

If the losing installation is being discontinued, meaning that no USPS operations will remain in the building, then the provisions of Article 12, Section 5.C.1 would apply. As described above under the first scenario, only the delivery routes are being moved into the S&DC, while other operations will remain.

If the losing installation is being consolidated, meaning that the office will become part of another installation, then Article 12, Section 5.C.2 applies. When this happens, the routes could either remain in their current location or move to a different office within the gaining installation. Under the S&DC model, the losing installations are remaining independent from the S&DC and not becoming a part of a different installation.

The provisions of Article 12, Section 5.C.3 cover circumstances described in scenario No. 2. So far, the

Postal Service has identified only two potential sites where individual delivery units will be moved from independent installations into an S&DC.

In addition to Article 12, the National Agreement contains various memorandums of understanding (MOUs) related to Delivery Unit Optimization (DUO). Under the DUO process, all city letter carrier assignments were moved from a losing to a gaining installation. Under DUO, the losing installation remains independent.

While the movement of assignments under DUO is identical to the transfer of jobs into an S&DC, the DUO agreements did not address issues such as city carrier assistant (CCA) relative standing or a process to evaluate routes both before and after the movement of the assignments. Because of this, NALC and USPS negotiated two new agreements to address these concerns when assignments are moved into an S&DC. The first agreement, MOU Re: Movement of City Letter Carrier Assignments from and Independent Installation to a Sorting and Delivery Center (M-01990), outlines the process for moving the assignments while dealing with the issues left out of the DUO agreements. The second one, MOU Re: Local Memorandum(s) of Understanding due to the Establishment of a Sorting and Delivery Center (M-01991), outlines the process for addressing the local memorandum of understanding from each of the installations involved in the establishment of an S&DC. Copies of both documents are available in the Materials Reference System (MRS) on the NALC website at nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/materials-reference-system.

Currently, there are six S&DCs in operation in the country. The first facility, located in Athens, GA, opened in November 2022. While there are city carrier assignments in Athens, only rural carrier routes were moved into the S&DC. The city carriers working in Athens were all working in this building before the S&DC was implemented.

On Feb. 25, five additional S&DCs began operation: in Gainesville and Panama City, FL; Bryan, TX; Utica, NY; and Woburn, MA. In each of the five additional sites, city letter carriers were moved from their original installations into the S&DC. Going forward, the Postal Service plans to implement eight new S&DCs on June 3, 2023, in Annapolis, MD; Williamsport, PA; Hanover Park, IL; Kokomo, IN; Topeka, KS; Owensboro, KY; Golden, CO; and Pasco, WA.

We meet with the Postal Service on a regular basis regarding the S&DCs to discuss the progress on each site and to discuss our concerns with these facilities. As more information about the S&DC project becomes available, we will update the membership either on the NALC website or in future *Postal Record* articles.