

City Delivery updates



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In this month's article, I would like to discuss a few notifications recently received from the Postal Service.

Electronic key test

In July, the Postal Service notified me of its intent to pilot test the use of an electronic key to access mail receptacles. The pilot consists of replacing postal arrow locks and keys on mail receptacles with a new electronic lock and key system. A cabinet designed to house the keys has been installed at the Hayward, CA, Post Office, while approximately 45 compatible locks have been installed across the unit's delivery area. The electronic key must be docked within the cabinet on a programmed interval daily to stay valid at the unit. If the key does not complete the docking process, the key will not work the following morning.

Each carrier can retrieve a key from the cabinet by entering their personal identification number (PIN) on its digital keypad. The cabinet will release a key only



A cabinet that docks electronic keys in Hayward, CA

to its assigned carrier. Once programmed, the key will work on the applicable programmed locks for a specific window of time assigned by postal management. Once the window has passed, the key stops working. USPS says it hopes that the electronic lock and key will improve key accountability, security of the mail and provide safety to letter carriers. Testing of the system began July 10 and is expected to continue for approximately three months. Testing of this concept does not change any existing National Agreement or USPS handbook and manual provisions.

MDD software Version 7.75

Also in July, the Postal Service detailed its latest update to the Mobile Delivery Device-Technical Refresh (MDD-TR), release 7.75. The software update includes several enhancements to the timekeeping functionality of the MDD-TR. With the update, a carrier can remain on the clock when moving from one work location to another without creating a clock ring error in the Time and Attendance Control System (TACS) used by the Postal Service to track employee work hours.

Previously, a carrier who began their tour in one delivery unit on an MDD-TR and later made a move to work at a separate delivery unit on another MDD-TR was required to make a second "Begin Tour" clock ring on that new device. Making this second "Begin Tour" clock ring created an error in TACS. With software Version 7.75, the second "Begin Tour" clock ring is now suppressed on the MDD-TR when a carrier moves to another location and should prevent the clock ring error. This version also makes it possible for a carrier to enter a "Begin Tour" in one unit on the MDD-TR. In addition, it allows a carrier to identify a second destination unit where the carrier will be moving to by finance number under the new, "Begin Tour with Travel" operation code option before leaving the initial unit. A supervisor must first add the finance number of the second unit as an option for a carrier to select on the MDD-TR to complete this move on the device. This change allows for travel time between offices after a "Begin Tour" is entered in the initial location.

Other enhancements to the MDD-TR focus on updating a carrier route's edit book. Currently, USPS downloads an Address Management System (AMS) route file to the MDD-TR, which provides an opportunity for carriers to update AMS information on the device. Version 7.75 will allow carriers to update three Address Markers based on their knowledge of a route, by either scanning the Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) label on a mail piece or manually entering an address of a location where a carrier is looking to make an edit on the MDD-TR. The Address Marker options are "Relay," indicating the location of a relay box or the first address of a relay on the route's line of travel; "Park Point," indicating where a carrier parks the vehicle on a park-and-loop route; and "Collection Box," indicating the location of collection boxes on the route.

Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB)

The update also allows carriers to edit the Vacant Indicator regarding occupancy of an address and a Usage Code, to indicate whether an address is residential, business, or a combination of the two in the same way that they can now make edits to an Address Marker. USPS states that carriers can review the changes made with their supervisor prior to cradling the device at the end of the day; however, a supervisor's review is not needed to upload the

changes to AMS.

Some of the updates to the MDD-TR have come from feedback we receive from the membership. I appreciate your input; it helps fuel our monthly discussions with USPS. My staff and I will continue to monitor postal initiatives and provide updates on any effects they may have on city carriers.

