

3999 process— the letter carrier's role

The PS Form 3999 is used to record all data on the day a manager goes out on your route with you. The times on this form are used to determine the time value of territory transferred from one route to another. Most of the time you spend on the street not delivering mail but doing other tasks related to mail delivery is recorded as “allied time.”

The total time recorded on this form (after any deductions are taken) is also one of the four factors that USPS and NALC representatives consider when they determine an evaluated street time for the route in the Joint Alternate Route Adjustment Process.

The 2011 Joint Alternate Route Adjustment Process (JARAP) agreement has two new provisions dealing with 3999s that we believe will put you in a better position to be sure you get a fair adjustment to your route.

The first new provision requires that, where multiple 3999s have been done on a route, the closest 3999 to the evaluated street time for the route will be used to determine the time value of territory transferred from one route to another. If you had multiple 3999s done on your route since the last time you had an adjustment, you should point out this fact at your initial consultation and, if you can, give a flavor for how many 3999s were done on your route.

The second new provision requires a manager to discuss the 3999 with you within three days after it is done. The manager is required to show you any nonrecurring time recorded for your route and explain why it was recorded that way.

You then have the right to write comments about the time recorded as nonrecurring, the route examiners' written and/or verbal comments, mail volume, etc., from the day the 3999 was done. You also are entitled to a copy of the comments you write. Don't forget to ask for a copy if it isn't automatically provided. All of this information is forwarded to the route adjustment team in JARAP offices.

This new 3999 process is to be followed for any 3999 conducted after March 22, whether or not your office/zone is in JARAP. The new 3999 process also applies to FSS sites. The term “all 3999s” means exactly what it says.

Street functions recorded as “Allied Time” are divided

into three basic categories: function analysis street time, other street time and nonrecurring street time.

We're going to explain many of the various terms used to record time in the nonrecurring category and show you the short version of how to read a 3999. Once you understand what should and shouldn't be recorded under each function and how to read a 3999, you will be in a better position to write comments about the data/comments recorded by a manager/route examiner on the day he/she goes with you on your route.

So what is nonrecurring street time? Generally, nonrecurring street time is a category of allied street time that includes many street functions. Improperly recorded time in some of the nonrecurring time functions can result in improper time deductions taken from the time you spent on the street the day the 3999 was done.

An explanation of each work function that is listed in the USPS computer system as nonrecurring street time follows:

Backtracking—This function is used for a letter carrier to backtrack to deliver a piece of mail that was missed. However, if you have a situation where you are instructed to backtrack to deliver mis-sequenced pieces of DPS or FSS mail on a normal basis, this would be a recurring function and should not be recorded as backtracking or deducted from your street time.

Animal interference—Time spent dealing with an animal attack or avoiding animals is normally a nonrecurring street function. An example of an exception would be when a letter carrier is required to walk an extra distance away from a house to avoid an animal on a daily basis. In this example, the time should be recorded as normal delivery time for that sector segment and not animal interference.

Waiting for relays—This is time spent waiting for mail to be delivered to a relay box on a foot route. If a letter carrier gets to a relay box and the mail for the next relay is not in the box, the time spent waiting for the mail to arrive would be recorded under this function (if it doesn't happen on a normal basis).

Waiting for transportation—This is time spent waiting for transportation. For example, if a letter carrier is required to use public transportation on the route, the time waiting for such transportation would be recorded under this function (if it doesn't happen on a normal basis). ▶

3999s (continued)

Waiting other—All nonrecurring waiting time not covered by any of the other functions is covered under “waiting other.” Managers must take notes regarding reasons for placing letter carriers on this function. You should review the route examiners’ comments and match the time of day written in the comments with the time of day shown on the 3999. Then write your own comments about any of the time that is recorded under the “waiting other” function.

Temporary detail—This function is used to record any duties that are performed on the day of the PS Form 3999 that are not part of the route. For example, if you are given a pivot on another route, the time spent delivering that pivot would be recorded under this function.

Management time—This is time spent away from your normal street duties due to the needs of the examiner performing the PS Form 3999. Time should be recorded under this function only if you completely stop working while time is recorded under this function. For example, if you take a comfort stop at a convenience store and the manager takes care of a personal need at the same time, this time should not be recorded under management time because you would have taken the comfort stop regardless.

Accident—In the unfortunate event of an accident, time spent waiting due to the accident is recorded under this function.

Miscellaneous other—This function is used to cover anything not covered under any of the other functions mentioned. Managers must take notes regarding reasons for placing letter carriers on this function. You should review the route examiners’ comments and match the time of day written in the comments with the time of day shown on the 3999. Then write your own comments about any of the time that is recorded under the “Miscellaneous Other” function.

Replenish—This is time spent moving mail into position for delivery—for example, taking a tray of mail from the back of the vehicle and moving it to the front onto the tray for delivery.

As you can see, there are many work functions that are recorded as nonrecurring street time but are needed to perform mail delivery.

Reading the PS Form 3999

Once you learn how to read one 3999, you’ll be able to read

any 3999 you’ll ever see. Every line on the 3999 will have either an allied time function listed or actual deliveries. The actual deliveries are listed by what are called “sector segments.” A sector segment will list a block number range and a street name. The form will also show the type of deliveries, how many possible deliveries there are, how many deliveries were made, and how much time it took for each sector segment or allied time function.

Refer to the example 3999 (below) while reading the explanations. You should begin reading this form by looking at the second column from the left. This column is called “Block Number and Street Name.” This is where you will see the allied function entries and the street name and block range that is included in each sector segment. For example, the first entry on the form is for the allied time function “Vehicle Load.” The first sector segment entry on the example form is located on the third line from the top. The sector segment is “1000-1098 OAK ST.”

The fourth column from the left is called “Time Enter Block.” This is the time of day that delivery of the sector segment or the allied time function began. On the example form, the very first entry is the “Vehicle Load.” The “Time Enter Block” column shows that the vehicle load began at 10:00:00. Look at the “1000-1098 OAK ST” sector segment again. You can see that this letter carrier began delivering this sector segment at 10:16:21. The times on the form are listed in Hours:Minutes:Seconds.

The fifth column from the left is called “Actual Time Used.” This is the actual time used for the entry. On the “Vehicle Load” entry, you can see that this letter carrier took 00:07:30 (seven minutes and 30 seconds) to load the vehicle and, for the “1000-1098 OAK ST” sector segment, you can see that it took 00:02:38 (two minutes and 38 seconds) to deliver this sector segment. If you add the “Actual Time Used” to the “Time Enter Block,” you should always come up with the total that appears in the “Time Enter Block” for the function on the next line. ☒

Delivery Methods	Block Number and Street Name	Travel Pattern	Time Enter Block	Actual Time Used	Residential					Business					Del PO Bo x or NP U
					Delys. Poss. Other	Delys. Poss. Curb	Delys. Poss. NDCBU	Delys. Poss. Oth-Cen	Delys. Made	Delys. Poss. Other	Delys. Poss. Curb	Delys. Poss. NDCBU	Delys. Poss. Oth-Cen	Delys. Made	
VEHICLE LOAD			10:00:00	00:07:30											
TRAVEL TO			10:07:30	00:08:51											
O	1000 - 1098 OAK ST	E	10:16:21	00:02:38	11				9						
O	1100 - 1198 OAK ST	E	10:18:59	00:03:13						12				10	
	WAITING OTHER		10:22:12	00:02:36											
O	1101 - 1199 OAK ST	O	10:24:48	00:00:36						3				3	
O	1001 - 1099 OAK ST	O	10:25:24	00:08:47	14				8						