



Simplified address mail

The Postal Service notified the NALC on Sept. 23, 2010, about a “simplified address mail” test. This test only involved flats and other size mail (not letters). The idea is to allow mailers to send mail (excluding letters) without the normal address on each piece. Instead, each piece will just say something like “Postal Customer.”

This test was supposed to last until Sept. 30, 2011. However, we received another notice from the Postal Service dated Dec. 23, 2010, stating that the simplified address mail concept was to be implemented effective Jan. 2, 2011.

We’ve seen this type of mail before, but it was never open to normal business customers on city routes. Overall, I see this change as a good thing. I’d be really surprised if it doesn’t bring us some of the additional revenue and volume we’re looking for this year.

We are currently discussing this change with the Postal Service in an effort to ensure that the simplified address mail concept is implemented smoothly across the country.

OK, the first question I’m asking myself is, “How am I supposed to handle this new type of mail?” Fortunately, that question is answered in our contract.

If you deliver mail on a park-and-loop or foot route, a set of simplified address mail constitutes a “bundle” of mail and you can’t be required to carry more than three bundles of mail. National level settlement M-01663 states in relevant part: “The parties agree that **under no circumstances** will city letter carriers on park and loop or foot deliveries be required to carry more than three bundles.” (Emphasis added.)

Keep in mind that management can instruct you to just put enough simplified mail pieces behind another bundle of mail. However, that still makes two bundles. DPS mail makes three. Anything else has to be collated or cased (no exceptions). Don’t let them get you crossed up on this point. If you receive different instructions than you read here, you should first follow the instructions and when you are done, promptly request to see your shop steward and file a grievance over the matter.

What about mounted/curbside routes? The language in the *M-41 Handbook* (Section 321-322) gives manage-

ment the right to assign us to deliver an unlimited number of bundles of mail. That said, this same language also gives management the right to instruct us to case or collate this mail.

Unfortunately, management seldom makes good decisions in this area anymore. So we move on to this question: “Where should we put the extra bundle(s)?” I’m not saying you’ll be thrilled with the answer, but there are three references in the *M-41 Handbook* (Section 321-322 and 812.5) and another in the *M-39 Handbook* (Section 125.1). Each reference says that letter carriers should work all bundles of mail off the working tray in the vehicle with the addresses facing him/her.

So, what if you’re in a Flats Sequencing System (FSS) environment? How will this work? The same answers apply. No more than three bundles on park-and-loop or foot deliveries and all bundles on the working tray in your vehicle on mounted routes!

There are various methods used by letter carriers around the country to deal with multiple bundles on mounted/curbside routes. If you have developed a method that works for you while using the work tray in your vehicle, I’d love to hear from you. Any ideas and/or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

One more thing: What about individual customers who have requested not to receive this type of mail? With normal address labels, they simply don’t have a mail piece addressed to them. The information we have indicates that there will be a sheet attached to each mailing indicating the addresses not to deliver a simplified mail piece to. It has been reported to us that this list could be different for each mailing.

The Postal Service hasn’t yet explained what kind of procedure will be implemented to alert letter carriers not to deliver simplified address mail pieces to certain addresses on each route.

We’ll continue to discuss this situation with the Postal Service. It seems to me that we ought to be able to find a common-sense solution that works for everyone. In the meantime, I would advise you to follow whatever local instructions you are given to the best of your ability. ☒