

Write it up!



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

Another year begins, and on we go. You were on vacation last week and as you walk into the building, you wish everyone a happy new year, clock in, go to your route and case all your mail. You take your office break, and on the way back to your route, you pull the hot case, finish prepping the mail for the day, pull the route down then head for your vehicle. You find that it is not there. You look for a supervisor, ask where it is and find that it is being repaired. Another vehicle is assigned to you.

You're a little behind schedule and you are slightly rushed. You load up, get behind the wheel and take off.

A few blocks down the road, as you make a left turn at the light, you notice that you are having a hard time seeing the oncoming traffic because the windshield is so dirty that your view is hampered.

You complain that you should not have been stuck with this vehicle and that you will do something about it when you see your branch president at the meeting tonight. You are a little annoyed that you got stuck with someone else's vehicle and that it is in worse shape than your regular vehicle. Wow!

You work hard all day and bust through your route. As you rush back to the station, you hear a loud bang and realize you just had an accident. You never saw the car you hit. Damned windshield! You call your supervisor, who gets upset, and now you are on your way to a real ugly evening.

When you finally finish with the accident reports, you head to the branch meeting. Before you confront your branch president, you see the PTF who covered your route last week and ask him why he wrote up your vehicle. He snaps at you and explains that there was something wrong with the brakes and he asks you why you hadn't written it up on your own. You're mad and want to argue with your president, who wants to start the branch meeting.

Tonight's guest speaker is a member of the NALC's District Safety Committee, who addresses the membership about our responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment. The focus of the PowerPoint presentation is the importance of conducting a proper vehicle inspection each and

every day before you take responsibility for the condition of the vehicle. You now realize that you will just look like an ass if you attack your president after that presentation.

The safety message asked you to take responsibility for your safety. You calm down a little and start to think....

Recently, the NALC has been advised that the USPS is saving money by not washing vehicles. This is an issue that affects our image and your safety.

Chapter 7 of the *Postal Operations Manual* covers Postal Vehicle Service. Section 712.4 Vehicle Appearance, provides that:

The clean and uniform appearance of postal vehicles is essential to projecting a positive image of the Postal Service. **Postal vehicles must be washed as needed, but not less than twice each month.** Vehicles must be constantly scrutinized by managers at all levels for paint deterioration; missing, torn, or faded markings; and corrosion or damage to the body. Managers should schedule immediate repairs, as needed. (Emphasis added.)

If your vehicles are not being washed regularly, protect your contract by speaking to your union officials.

Many a time we escape harm on our routes or in our vehicles, not because we are being safe, but rather because we know what to avoid. It could be a low-hanging limb over your path to the next house, faulty emergency brakes, unsafe driving patterns or that dog that you have not reported.

Every hazard that you fail to report might harm one of your fellow workers, if not yourself. Turn in a hazard report (1767) or vehicle repair tag (4565)—an example is shown at right. Be safe and keep an eye on each other.



Where would you begin your vehicle inspection on this one?

U.S. Postal Service VEHICLE REPAIR TAG		
Vehicle No.	Mileage	Type of Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Postal <input type="checkbox"/> Leased
Mechanical irregularities must be reported immediately on this form to the dispatcher or supervisor when vehicle is checked in. Initials are required for valid tag report.		
Check repairs needed and explain under remarks		
Accident	Engine	Brakes
Body	Body	Clutch
Brakes	Brakes	Clutch
Horn	Horn	Clutch
Steering	Steering	Clutch
Transmission	Transmission	Clutch
Carburetor	Carburetor	Clutch
Glass	Glass	Clutch
Other Repairs (Specify)		
Indicate Possible Trouble (If not corrected on first tag, Supervisor to consult garage foreman or contractor)		
Missing	Grab	Loose
Heats Up	Fade	Slips
Pull	Broken	Short Out
Remarks		