

Park points—revisited



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I recently was in Southern California and asked my branch president, Barbara Stickler, to take me to visit Joel. He was at the USC medical clinic. As we entered, he lit up

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the room with a warm smile, appreciating our visit even before a word was spoken. I had the opportunity to speak with him at length and remain amazed by his positive spirit, his gratitude for being alive and his desire to return to what he did before the accident—that is, to continue delivering America’s mail.

Joel related that shortly after the accident, prior to his being moved from the scene, he had his attention on protecting the mail from any harm. Joel’s thoughts conveyed the essence of what makes letter carriers special. You all care about what you do to serve America, and you do it with great pride.

I had an opportunity to speak with President Rolando about this accident and how I am disappointed with some managers. Last year, following an accident, we (union and management) agreed to prepare a safety message reflecting our commitment to tackle this problem. We developed

a “Safety Depends on Me” message dated March 30, 2012, which, in part, reads as follows:

Don’t let one moment of inattention from you or someone else end your life or make you have to live with something that could haunt you forever.

We ask that you and your supervisors re-visit the selection of each of your park points to reduce your exposure to traffic unnecessarily, while working from the rear of your delivery vehicle. Look for a safer location to park your vehicle, like a nearby side street with less traffic. Always take that extra precautionary measure to stay safe and park in an area with less traffic.

Remember to allow at least 20 feet from an intersection or 30 feet when at an intersection that is regulated by a traffic light.

Do not talk on a cell phone or use headphones to listen to music. We want you to be able to hear your surroundings. Stay alert and be ready for the unexpected. All your senses must be working to their fullest. If someone is speeding or swerving or braking, being able to hear that vehicle may make the difference and give you those extra seconds you need to move into a safer area.

Use Flashers and Strobes when parked and working from the rear of your delivery vehicle. This will increase your visibility to other drivers.....but remember to turn them off when you are ready to pull away.

Also, please remember you can always share concerns with your supervisor regarding safety hazards on your route.

Safety and Health Headquarters

The above message, developed jointly by NALC members on the National Safety Task Force with our management counterparts in safety, reflected a commitment to make a change.

If you have not received this stand-up talk, then your managers have chosen not to give it. If that is the case, speak to your NALC representatives and insist on the message being shared with all of you.

If you hold your breath waiting for some managers in operations to do it on their own, then it’s time to quote from Article 14, Section 1, which in part reads:

It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The Union will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility...

Have you ever wondered why we agreed that management would do something, and followed it with a contractual commitment that we would assist them to live up to this responsibility?

Keep an eye on each other.