

# Handbooks and manuals to help on the workroom floor

**A**rticle 19 of the National Agreement incorporates several postal handbook and manual provisions directly relating to wages, hours or working conditions. Many of these handbooks and manuals cover issues directly related to the job letter carriers perform every day and to the workroom floor. A few of these provisions that cover common issues are covered below.

Due to reductions in clerk staffing in offices over the last several years, fewer and fewer clerks are available to check carriers in and clear accountables upon returning from the street. *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services*, Sections 116 and 127 make clear that management has a responsibility to schedule clerks for this purpose.

*Handbook M-39*, Section 116.1 states:

## **116.1 Scheduling Clerks in a Delivery Unit**

Schedule distribution clerks in a unit with decentralized distribution so that service standards will be met and an even flow of mail will be provided to the carriers each day throughout the year. Schedule the accountable clerk to avoid delaying the carriers' departures in the morning and for clearance of carriers on their return to the office.

*Handbook M-39*, Section 127.c states:

## **127 Office Work When Carriers Return From Route**

c. See that clerks are available to check in accountable items as efficiently and promptly as possible.

If no clerk is available when carriers return in a particular office, stewards should discuss the issue with their supervisor and, if appropriate, file a grievance citing a violation of the sections quoted above via Article 19 of the National Agreement.

Another common issue is reductions in casing equipment causing insufficient carrier case setups. *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services* and *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carrier Duties and Responsibilities* contain specific requirements for carrier cases. While management has the right to reduce casing equipment, the resulting case configurations must be consistent with the relevant handbook and manual provisions, some of which are quoted below.

*Handbook M-39*, Section 117.2 states:

## **117.2 Determine Carrier Case Requirements**

Carrier case, Item 124, is the basic letter case for use on all letter carrier routes. The delivery unit manager must determine the need for wing cases for letter mail (Items 143 or 144) using criteria outlined below:

*Handbook M-39*, Section 117.2.b continues:

b. Two Deliveries Per Separation. Letter cases should normally have two deliveries per 1 inch separation.

*Handbook M-41*, Section 221.4 further emphasizes the requirement to limit the number of addresses per cell to no more than two, by stating:

## **221.4 Letter Separations**

221.41 If possible, letter separations should contain not more than two numbers of deliveries, particularly on motorized routes, so mail can be distributed in the order of delivery. This is done by placing mail for one number at the left side of separation and one at the right side.

221.42 When necessary to use three numbers per separation, mail for the middle address should protrude from the case in order to sequence without rehandling.

The language above makes clear that cases should normally not have more than two deliveries per separation.

Chapter 6 of the *Postal Operations Manual (POM)* covers a variety of delivery issues. *POM* Chapter 6, Section 611.1.a states:

## **611.1 Conditions**

The following conditions govern delivery, refusal, and return:

Delivery to Addressee. The addressee may control delivery of his or her mail. In the absence of a contrary order, the mail is delivered as addressed. Mail addressed to several persons may be delivered to any one of them.

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While this may seem very simple and elementary, it can be very important in some circumstances. For example, when pre-sequenced mailings arrive out of sequence, supervisors often have issued instruction to letter carriers to deliver one to every box, regardless of the address. This type of instruction clearly is a violation of the *POM* quoted above.

**These are just a few of the provisions that ensure letter carriers are afforded the resources to perform their jobs accurately and deliver mail securely to our customers.** The NALC website ([nalc.org](http://nalc.org)) contains numerous handbooks and manuals published by USPS that affect our jobs. These are available on the “Workplace Issues” section of the website under “Resources.”