

# Relative standing

**R**elative standing is a form of seniority that was created for city carrier assistants (CCAs) in the 2011 National Agreement. Relative standing is important for a variety of reasons.

Relative standing is used to determine the order in which CCAs are converted to full-time career status. It also is used to determine which CCA will be separated if management makes the decision to separate a CCA for lack of work or for operational reasons upon the completion of a 360-day term. The CCA with the lowest relative standing is always separated if circumstances arise pursuant to Paragraphs h and i in the CCA General Principles found in Appendix B of the 2011 National Agreement.

Relative standing is also used to determine which CCA is awarded a hold-down, as well as annual leave in many places. For all of these reasons, it is important that relative standing is correctly calculated in accordance with the National Agreement.

Relative standing is determined by the original CCA hire date in an installation. For CCAs who were city letter carrier transitional employees (TEs) at any time after Sept. 29, 2007, before being hired as CCAs, the time served as a TE is added, less any breaks in service. Paragraph f of the CCA General Principles found in Appendix B of the 2011 National Agreement addresses this:

f. When hired, a CCA's relative standing in an installation is determined by his/her original CCA appointment date to the installation, using Article 41.2.B.6.(a) where applicable, and adding the time served as a city letter carrier transitional employee for appointments made after September 29, 2007 in any installation

This language is further explained by Question 60 of the March 15 jointly developed Questions and Answers, 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement (M-01870):

**60. How is time credited for transitional employee employment when determining relative standing for CCAs?**

All time spent on the rolls as a city letter carrier transitional employee after September 29, 2007 will be added to CCA time in an installation to determine relative standing. Breaks in transitional employee service are not included in the relative standing period.

When crediting time spent as a TE, it does not matter where an individual served as a TE; all time served as a TE since Sept. 29, 2007, is credited. Question 63 of M-01870 reads:

**63. For time spent as a city letter carrier transitional employee, does it matter where an individual was employed when determining relative standing?**

No. All time on the rolls as a transitional employee after September 29, 2007 counts toward relative standing regardless of the installation(s) in which the transitional employee was employed.

The relative standing credit for service as a city letter carrier transitional employee always remains with that employee even if they are hired in another installation. Question 64 of M-01870 reads:

**64. Does time credited toward relative standing for time worked as a transitional employee after September 29, 2007 transfer from one installation to another once hired as a CCA?**

Yes.

Unlike relative standing credit earned as a TE, relative standing credit earned as a CCA does not transfer with a CCA to another installation. This is addressed in Question 65 of M-01870:

**65. Does relative standing earned as a CCA in one installation move with a CCA who is separated and is later employed in another installation?**

No.

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**“It is important that relative standing is correctly calculated in accordance with the National Agreement.”**

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If this CCA is then re-employed in his or her original installation, the CCA will begin earning relative standing as if this were an original appointment. All time credit earned as a TE after Sept. 29, 2007, is added to this new date. Question 66 in M-01870 addresses this situation:

**66. How is relative standing determined for a CCA who is employed in an installation, then permanently moves to a different installation and then is subsequently reemployed in the original installation?**

Relative standing in this situation is based on the date the employee is reemployed in the original installation and is augmented by time served as a city letter carrier transitional employee for appointments made after September 29, 2007 (in any installation).

*(continued on next page)*

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# Relative standing (continued)

If a tie still exists between two or more CCAs, Appendix B, 1. General Principles, Section f of the National Agreement requires the provisions of Article 41.2.B.6(a) be applied:

## **41.2.B.6. Relative Seniority Standing**

(a) In cases of appointment on the same day, where there is a tie in seniority, the relative standing on the appointment register will determine the more senior carrier.

Question 61 of M-01870 explains how placement on the relative standing roster is determined when two or more CCAs have the same total time credit for relative standing:

### **61. How is placement on the relative standing roster determined when two or more CCAs have the same total time credited for relative standing?**

First, the relative standing on the hiring list (appointment register) will be used to determine the CCA with higher relative standing (See Article 41.2.B.6.[a]). If a tie remains then the formula outlined in Article 41.2.B.7 is applied.

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## **“If you suspect your relative standing is not calculated correctly, notify your shop steward or a branch officer as soon as possible.”**

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New Question 62 in M-01870 explains how Article 41.2.B.6(a) is applied. It also clarifies how relative standing is calculated if more than one hiring register is used and how veterans' preference points are applied when determining relative standing.

### **62. How are the provisions of Article 41.2.B.6.[a] referenced in Appendix B, I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES, Section f. of the National Agreement applied when determining a CCA's relative standing?**

If more than one CCA is appointed on the same day, the relative standing will be determined by the order on the hiring list. If CCAs are hired from more than one hiring list on the same day, relative standing will be determined by applying the rules in Handbook EL-312, Section 441, Basic Order:

- 1) Applicants who claim 10-point preference based on a compensable military service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are arranged at the top of the relative standing list in descending order of final numerical rating in this group.
- 2) Applicants claiming other 10-point preference (XP) and applicants claiming 5-point preference (TP) are placed ahead of nonpreference eligible applicants with the same final rating.
- 3) XP eligibles are placed ahead of TP eligibles with the same final rating.

To resolve any ties, numerical by the last three or more numbers (using enough numbers to break the tie, but not fewer than three numbers) of the employee's social security number, from the lowest to highest.

'Final numerical rating' and 'final rating' as referenced above are determined by adding the individual's score on the entrance exam and any applicable veterans' preference points.

You should be certain that your relative standing is correct. Errors in relative standing are usually easy to identify.

The most common error occurs when more than one CCA is hired on the same day in an installation and the provisions of the National Agreement and the jointly developed questions and answers are not properly applied.

Another common error is not crediting a former TE with time served as a TE after Sept 29, 2007. Former TEs who left the Postal Service a number of years ago sometimes return as CCAs or move from one installation to another. TE time should be properly credited toward relative standing.

Another error sometimes occurs when a CCA is permanently reassigned from one installation to another. These reassignments are permissible if the CCA voluntarily terminates his or her appointment in one installation and is permanently reassigned to another, in accordance with Question 27 of the Questions and Answers (M-01870), which states:

### **27. May CCAs be permanently reassigned from one post office (installation) to another during their appointment?**

Yes, provided the employee's current appointment is being voluntarily terminated. To avoid a break in service a permanent reassignment to a different installation must be effected on the first day of a pay period.

The CCA in this case begins a new period of relative standing. The time served as a CCA in his or her original installation is not credited to the relative standing in the new installation, even though there may not have been a break in service. Any time served as a TE after Sept 29, 2007, is credited toward the employee's relative standing.

Lastly, some errors occur when a CCA returns to the same installation after the five-day break in service. In this case, the CCA's relative standing should not change.

**If you suspect your relative standing is not calculated correctly, notify your shop steward or a branch officer as soon as possible.**