

Mobile delivery device updates



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Last summer, a feature was enabled on the mobile delivery device (MDD) with the intention of providing safeguards to ensure the safety and health of all letter carriers. That feature, known as “Hazard Alerts,” enabled the MDD to notify letter carriers of any hazardous situations that may exist along the route they are delivering. Hazard Alerts allows letter carriers to input into the Regional Intelligent Mail Server (RIMS) any known hazardous situations along their routes so replacement carriers can be warned of those dangers.

The way it works is that carriers can give their supervisors information about hazards on their routes, such as dogs, road hazards or poor lighting situations, for any address.

The supervisor then enters that information into the RIMS database, which then relays the information to letter carriers’ MDDs. Whenever a letter carrier in possession of their MDD approaches an address that has been recorded as having a particular hazardous situation, they receive an alert on their scanner notifying them of the type of hazard, the address where the hazard is, and any additional information to assist them in avoiding the dangerous situation.

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So far, this feature has undoubtedly prevented many accidents and has assisted in ensuring the safety of all letter carriers. However, NALC and USPS received several suggestions from letter carriers throughout the country to improve the usefulness of these alerts and, as a result of that input, some recent changes were made to the feature.

In a nutshell, letter carriers told us the number of alerts they received was overwhelming and at times unnecessary. Specifically, letter carriers who serve the same route daily felt there was no need to be alerted each day to the identified hazards on their routes. After all, those carriers service their routes on a daily basis and they know where the hazardous situations are.

In response to this input, in February, USPS tested and deployed an update to the MDD designed to correct this issue. With this new update, the MDD will only provide the haz-

ard alerts to carriers who are not the regular carrier on the route and will allow the regular carrier to receive the hazard alerts only once a month for a validation process. Inside a validation window between the 1st and 7th of each month, the regular carrier will be alerted of the hazardous condition. The MDD will give the regular carrier the option to remind them of the alert again next month or to delete the alert if the hazardous condition no longer exists. A letter carrier who is not the regular on the route they are delivering will still be alerted once they enter the area of the hazardous situation. Hopefully this update will relieve letter carriers from receiving too many alerts on their MDDs, while at the same time protecting those who are unaware of hazardous situations while carrying unfamiliar routes.

Another recent feature update of the MDD is referred to as “package lookahead.” Now, instead of carriers only relying on their personal observation to remember packages to be delivered each day, the package lookahead option allows letter carriers to view on their scanners the number of packages to be delivered each day, the specific address for each package delivery stop, and the number of packages for each delivery. If the package lookahead feature is enabled on letter carriers’ scanners, they can view the day’s packages by selecting option “P” on the “on street menu” screen. As each package is delivered throughout the day, those addresses and associated packages are removed from the list.

We’ve also been hearing many issues about the daily battery life of the MDD. This is due to the fact that the first MDDs were deployed more than two years ago and, in many instances, their batteries have reached the end of their useful lifespan of 350 charging cycles and now need to be replaced. The recently released MDD Update 5.5 is electronically providing USPS headquarters with the information necessary to determine which batteries need to be replaced. I have been told the Postal Service is taking the proper steps to replace those batteries. In the meantime, MDD Update 5.5 attempts to improve the daily battery life by implementing a quicker sleep mode and shut-off of the scan engine for each scanner. NALC will continue to work with the Postal Service to identify any issues associated with the MDD, as well as explore additional ways the MDD can further be used to assist letter carriers in providing our customers with the exceptional service they expect.

In closing, route inspections are currently being conducted in many places throughout the country. Over the years, NALC has created many resources to help letter carriers gain a better understanding of their rights, as well as management’s responsibilities, during such inspections. Please refer to this month’s Contract Talk on page **XX** for some common questions and answers pertaining to this subject.