

Reversion of city letter carrier positions



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From time to time, when a city letter carrier position becomes vacant and management believes that position no longer has enough work to be considered a full-time assignment (less than eight hours of work), the Postal Service will consider the assignment for reversion. This means the position will not be reposted for bid and may no longer be considered a full-time assignment if the reversion is left unchallenged by the union. Recently, throughout the country, we have seen an increase in the number of city letter carrier assignments under consideration for reversion by the Postal Service.

This uptick in the number of reversion considerations is due in part to a USPS initiative referred to as “bid re-alignment.” The purpose of this initiative is to identify vacant duty assignments that may no longer support a full-time position. The problem with some of the reversion situations we have seen is that the methodology being used to evaluate letter carrier positions is normally applied to the evaluation of jobs outside of our craft, and is in contradiction to the agreed-upon methods of determining whether a city letter carrier assignment is full time. As a result, some branches have been receiving notices of the Postal Service’s intent to revert assignments based on improper information.

In 2012, NALC and the Postal Service agreed to the proper procedures for determining whether an established city delivery route is full time. The agreement (M-01796) states the determination will be made using one of the following procedures:

- A six-day mail count and inspection in accordance with the provisions of *Handbook M-39*
- A route adjustment pursuant to Section 141 of *Handbook M-39* (provided the data used is reasonably current and from the regular carrier assigned to the route)
- Evaluation through a national jointly agreed-upon route evaluation process
- Evaluation through an authorized locally developed joint route evaluation process

I, along with the other members of NALC’s Contract Administration Unit, have begun preparing some guidance for branch representatives to use when grieving an improper reversion of city letter carrier positions. This information will be finalized soon, and we will make it available to the regional offices for distribution to the branches as needed.

Another program that began last year in the Baltimore installation, and has recently expanded to other parts of the country, is called Where Is My Package. The program began as an idea of the local branch president and the district manager to address the high rate of customer complaints concerning package delivery in their area. Their ideas resulted in a program in which NALC and USPS partnered locally to investigate the complaints by speaking directly with employees responsible for making the deliveries.

The program uses carrier coordinators selected by the local NALC branch president to speak with their fellow letter carriers in the delivery unit to discuss and resolve customer complaints as a result of packages being mis-delivered, improper tracking results, improper scans, etc. The decision to use carrier coordinators to investigate problems came as a result of the idea that the questioning of letter carriers by their peers, instead of by their supervisors, would allow employees to answer questions more freely. Additionally, the parties agreed there would be no discipline issued as a result of the answers letter carriers provided during the investigation of customer complaints. The stated goal of the program is not to place blame on letter carriers, but to fix any issues that caused the complaint and ultimately to provide our customers (mailers and recipients alike) with a high level of service.

While NALC and USPS at a national level have not entered into a partnership regarding the Where Is My Package program, the branch presidents I have spoken with who have agreed to take on this task in their installations have been providing me positive feedback of their experiences so far. I have been told the program has produced positive results in regard to decreasing customer complaints and increasing employee engagement.

If this program is introduced in your office, it will more than likely begin with a meeting between local NALC branch presidents, local USPS supervisors and members of the Where Is My Package team, who will provide a detailed explanation of how the program works and its results from other areas where the program has already been established. An office’s participation in the program is up to branch presidents. If they choose for their office to participate, they will then select who will be the carrier coordinators for their offices. Those carrier coordinators will then be trained on their roles and responsibilities.

If branch presidents are asked to participate, they should contact their national business agent to discuss any questions they may have about participating in the program. Local union representatives should ensure no discipline is issued to letter carriers as a result of participating. In the meantime, I will be sure to provide any updates I receive regarding the Where Is My Package program.