

# Performance Engagement Tool (PET)



**Christopher  
Jackson**

**T**he Performance Engagement Tool (PET) is the most recent computerized data-generating workload projection program designed by the Postal Service. Just like other USPS workload projection tools of the past, such as Delivery Unit Volume Recording System (DUVRS) and Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS), PET is used by supervisors to project how long it will take letter carriers to perform their daily duties. PET works by attempting to compare a letter carrier's past street time performance and mail volumes with the current daily situation and then uses that information to determine how long it may take a letter carrier to perform his or her duties that day.

The office time projection generated by PET only considers how long it would take a letter carrier to case and pull down the day's volume of letters and flats, based on 18 pieces per minute for casing letters, eight pieces per minute for casing flats, and 70 pieces per minute for pulling down letters and flats combined. The office time projection allows for no fixed office time to perform necessary daily functions such as vehicle inspections, stand-up talks, retrieving mail from the throwback case, withdrawing mail, and retrieving or signing for accountable mail. These are just a few of the required daily office duties not accounted for in PET's projections. If a station has an office break, in some locations that time will be factored into the equation, but some locations do not consider office breaks when making the projection.

**The street time is also projected differently in certain locations.** In some offices, supervisors will select one of four different street time options and apply that time to today's equation for PET to utilize in projecting the street time for today. The four options are:

1. The average street time for the same day of the week for the previous six weeks. For example, if today is Monday, then one of the possible street time selections is the average street time recorded in DOIS for the previous six Mondays. If today is Tuesday, then the projection is the average street time recorded in DOIS for the previous six Tuesdays, etc.
2. The average street time for all delivery days during the previous six-week period.
3. The most recent PS Form 3999 time.
4. The base street time.

In some parts of the country, the only street time option for supervisors to select from are the PS Form 3999

time (the amount of time it took the last time management walked with the letter carrier) or the base street time. While USPS has instructed its supervisors to compare the mail volume for previous days to the current day when deciding which street time to select for PET, none of these projections take into account daily situations such as weather, parcel counts, traffic, construction, etc.

**While this most recent attempt at projecting a letter carrier's daily workload may apply a different formula than used by any other management projection tool in the past, what hasn't changed are the responsibilities and reporting requirements outlined in *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services* and *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*.** Letter carriers are still responsible for estimating the amount of time it will take to complete their assigned duties, and management still has a responsibility to manage that workload within the confines of the handbook language as well as previous national-level settlements regarding the use of any such time-projection tool.

Letter carriers have the right and NALC has the ability to challenge the use of any workload projection tool as the sole determinant of a carrier's daily workload or its utilization as the basis for disciplinary actions. These rights were granted and have been settled many times in the past in national-level settlements such as M-01664 and M-01769 (the reference numbers for these settlements in NALC's Materials Reference System). National-level settlement M-01664 was signed on July 30, 2007, and national-level settlement M-01769 was signed on Sept. 16, 2011. These settlements very clearly state that daily workload projections by management are not the sole determinant of a carrier's leaving or return time or daily workload, and the resulting projections from using tools such as PET cannot constitute the sole basis for corrective action.

Workload projections, which do not take into account the full amount of time necessary for letter carriers to complete their daily assignments, create a breeding ground for disputes when letter carriers fill out a PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control, requesting overtime or auxiliary assistance.

*Handbook M-41, Section 131.4* states that it is a letter carrier's responsibility to inform management when they are of the opinion they will be unable to finish their assigned daily duties in the scheduled time.

*Handbook M-39, Section 122.33* states:

The employee, upon request, will be provided a Form 3996, Carrier - Auxiliary Control, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided the employee.

If the Performance Engagement Tool is being used in your office in contradiction to M-01664, M-01769 or these handbooks, then ask to see your shop steward so he or she can investigate.