

Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers

The Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers has been rolled out nationwide. For the first time since the inception of the standard training program, all new city letter carriers will attend. The intention of the program is to provide new letter carriers with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully perform their duties.

In a joint letter between NALC and USPS, Re: Standard Training Program for Letter Carriers (M-01879 in the NALC Materials Reference System), the parties recognized the importance of quality training and agreed to set some expectations for implementing and monitoring the program. Those expectations are as follows:

- City carrier academies will be established in all USPS districts. Each carrier academy will use the Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers. New city letter carriers will participate in all aspects of this training program.
- It is our expectation that the parties at all levels of our respective organizations will work cooperatively to ensure that all aspects of the training as prescribed in Course 10025512 are completed properly. Any issue regarding the city carrier academy will be addressed through an alternative dispute resolution process. Local disagreements will be forwarded to the appropriate USPS Area Manager, Labor Relations and the NALC National Business Agent, or their designees. If the issue cannot be resolved at the area/regional level, it will be forwarded for resolution to the USPS manager, Labor Relations Policy and Programs and NALC Director of City Delivery, or their designees.
- Each USPS district will provide a list of prospective city letter carriers to the appropriate NALC national business agent(s) as early as administratively practicable. The list will include the new employee's name, location of the academy, dates and times the employee will attend the academy, and the installation where the employee will be assigned.
- The national parties will review and update the Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers annually, or more frequently if needed.

This training program consists of five separate phases designed to provide new carriers with the information and skills necessary to be successful in their new careers. The program relies heavily on experienced city letter carrier instructors and facilitators to provide hands-on training and classroom instruction. The five phases of the program are as follows:

Orientation—The first phase of training for city letter carriers is to attend orientation. Orientation gives new employees an introduction to the Postal Service. Many issues are covered such as postal history, how mail is processed throughout the system, employee conduct, safety, and employee resources. New employees will also take the oath of office. Orientation is scheduled to take 16 hours.

Driver training—Phase 2 of the training is focused on

driver instruction. New city carriers will spend 11.5 hours focusing on right hand drive vehicles, defensive driving, and the safe driver program. Carriers will also be familiarized with the long-life vehicle (LLV). The last component of driver training is for carriers to receive their right-hand driving privilege certification. Carriers who have not yet completed driver training and received their right-hand drive certification may not operate right-hand drive vehicles.

Shadow day—A new and critical step of the training program is to provide a shadow day. An eight-hour shadow day must be provided for new letter carriers at their assigned duty station prior to the academy. During the shadow day, newly hired carriers will observe a city letter carrier for eight hours to become familiar with the duties of a letter carrier.

New carriers should not be performing duties or handling mail on their shadow day. This is outlined in the *Standard Training for City Letter Carriers Administrator Guide*, which states:

- Newly hired carriers are only to observe the full range of carrier duties and are not to deliver mail or drive Postal vehicles. A jump seat should be provided for the ride-along portion.
- Newly hired carriers must attend Welcome to the Postal Service and take the Oath of Office before permitted to handle mail.

The shadow day provides new letter carriers with a glimpse of what letter carriers do on a daily basis, and also helps them understand whether delivering mail is a good fit for them. Local union representatives and fellow letter carriers can help ensure that new carriers do not touch the mail or perform duties during their shadow day by notifying the branch president if they see any violations of the above guidelines.

Available resources at the district levels may affect the order in which these first three components occur.

Standard training for city letter carriers (Carrier Academy)—During the Carrier Academy, a certified city letter carrier facilitator delivers 32 hours of classroom instruction. This includes lecture sessions, hands-on practice and discussion. The program provides working knowledge of city carrier responsibilities; safety on the job; recording work hours; classes of mail; carrier case configuration; carrier route books; mobile delivery devices (scanners); account-

(continued on next page)

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Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers (continued)

able items and extra services mail; casing mail; forwarding; returned and undeliverable mail; pulling down the carrier case; leaving the office; delivery types and mail receptacles; delivering the mail; collecting outgoing mail; returning to the office; and marketing postal products and services.

The recommended class size is four to 12 learners, with a facilitator-to-learner ratio of 1:6 to provide classroom interaction, group exercises and discussions between the new carriers and the classroom facilitator. These classrooms are designed as working delivery units and equipped with, among other things, working electronic badge readers and mobile delivery devices. New carriers get experience casing and pulling mail, handling Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) mail and Flats Sequencing System (FSS) mail, and even delivering mail on mock routes. Mock collection and delivery setups include park-and-loop, curbside, discounts, cluster box units and collection boxes. Each class should include EAS (supervisor or managerial position) support personnel. EAS support personnel do not facilitate at the academy; however, they are responsible for supporting the learning process in the academy, and are there to assist the course instructors with indoor and outdoor hands-on activities. Another important aspect that EAS support personnel help with is to make sure new carriers are being paid for their time spent during training. They can also ensure new carriers are matched up with, and report to work at the same time as, their on-the-job instructor in their employing office at the conclusion of the academy.

On-the-job training—After completing Carrier Academy, new carriers receive on-the-job instruction with a qualified on-the-job instructor (OJI) at their assigned duty station. This phase of training includes a series of lessons, demonstrations and practices that instruct the new carrier in the tasks of a city letter carrier, such as conducting vehicle inspections, setting up the scanner, handling undeliverable mail, using the throwback case, pulling down the mail, loading the vehicle, and identifying types of mail, just to name a few. On-the-job instructors should have completed Job Instructor Training course #21505-00. The on-the-job instructor conducts the training to help coach and reinforce the classroom training from the academy. The on-the-job training requires a minimum of 24 hours to complete but may be extended to 40 hours if needed. On-the-job instruction should be one-on-one training and should occur during a normal delivery day, including all office duties. The instructor completes the Individual Training Progress Sheet (PS Form 2432) daily to ensure the new carrier receives all of the appropriate training.

The *Standard Training for City Letter Carriers Administrator Guide* states:

On-the-Job Training (OJT) course #10021876 is completed at the assigned duty station. The core of the course is a se-

ries of lessons, demonstrations, and practices that instruct trainees in the tasks of a city letter carrier.

Qualified on-the-job instructor (OJI) city letter carrier conducts OJT coaching to effectively reinforce classroom training. OJT should encompass three days based on the On-the-Job Training Guide. OJT may be extended from 24 hours up to 40 hours if necessary.

On-the-job instructors are to be given adequate time to prepare before administering on-the-job training to ensure that all materials are current and available, and time to become familiar with the *Standard Training for City Letter Carriers Participant Guide*. Current OJIs must get a refresher with the new program and all of the new and updated materials if they have not done so. Management will allow four hours for each OJI to review these materials upon their initial use.

City letter carriers used as facilitators and instructors for the academy and the on-the-job training should be selected from a list of candidates provided by and agreed upon by the district manager and the national business agent or their designee. Management must use a trained OJI and cannot select any carrier of their choosing. The *Standard Training for City Letter Carriers Administrator Guide* states:

Step 1: Select qualified city carrier classroom instructors, on-the-job instructors, and EAS delivery support personnel. While selection of city carrier facilitators and on-the-job instructors is management's responsibility, the selection will be made from a list of candidates provided by and agreed upon by the district manager and the national business agent or their designee.

Step 2: Classroom instructors shall have a minimum of one-year experience as a city carrier. Selection of qualified, enthusiastic employees as instructors and on-the-job instructors is critical to the success of the city carrier training program.

Step 3: Selected classroom instructors will receive course instruction from an area trainer as designated by the national parties.

This training program was designed by many individuals from both the U.S. Postal Service as well as NALC, and for the first time a process was developed and agreed upon in which disputes arising from the administration and execution of such a training program can be resolved. To ensure that the training is being employed effectively, each phase of training should be adhered to as set forth in the guidelines prescribed in the *Standard Training for City Letter Carriers Administrator Guide*.

On-the-job instructors, fellow city letter carriers, and NALC representatives such as shop stewards are the eyes and ears on the workroom floor needed to observe deviations from these guidelines. There should be a local effort to converse with new carriers to see if they are provided the training and shadow day appropriately. If there are any issues, they should be reported to the branch president who in turn can report issues to the national business agent.