

Mobile Delivery Device updates



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Since the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) was first deployed four years ago, NALC and the Postal Service have worked together to explore ways to best use the scanner's technology. Our aim was to provide letter carriers with as much information and functionality as possible to improve our jobs and better serve our customers.

As I've stated in the past, one of the most important features of the MDD is its ability to communicate and relay data in near real time to allow customers to track their mail and receive near-immediate alerts when they are delivered or attempted. Part of the tracking and alert process involves the scanning of mail that is unable to be delivered

due to improper, incorrect or insufficient addressing. Letter carriers throughout the country constantly provide me with suggestions about how this aspect of the scanning process could be improved, and my staff and I have communicated their ideas with officials at USPS headquarters.

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Many have suggested adding more options in drop-down sections of the main “Scan Barcode” menu. These options would include adding events already available on clerks' scanners, such as “Forwarded,” “No Such Number,” “No Apartment Number,” “No Such Street” and “Insufficient Street Address,” just to name a few. The idea of adding these types of events to letter carriers' scanners is to put the scan in the hands of the individuals actually attempting the delivery. It also gives customers a better understanding of why their mail was not able to be delivered to the address provided by the sender. This could also reduce the number of customer complaints and inquiries regarding the undeliverable item and, in turn, lead to a better customer experience.

USPS heard your suggestions

I'm happy to report that, last month, the Postal Service tested and deployed nationally an update of the MDD software that included a redesign of the “Scan Barcode” main menu options and added many of the drop-down options letter carriers have been suggesting. The four main menu op-

tions are now “Delivered,” “Attempted,” “Return to Sender or Forward” and “Other.”

The sub menu for “Delivered” includes: In/At Mailbox, Front Door/Porch, Left With Individual at Address, Front Desk/Reception/Mail Room, Parcel Locker, Garage or Other location at Address, Left With Neighbor, Authorized Agent and Delivered to Authorized Agent.

“Attempted” has these sub menu options: No Authorized Recipient Available, No Secure Location Available, No Access or Business Closed, Receptacle Full/Item Oversized, Customer Hold and Animal Interference.

For “Return to Sender or Forward”: Forward, Insufficient Address, Return to Post Office for Address Verification, No Such Number, Addressee Unknown, Vacant, Unable to Forward/Forward Order Expired, Deceased, Refused and Returned for Other Reason.

The sub menu for “Other” contains: Dispatch to Military/Diplomatic PO, Return to Post Office Not Attempted/Delivery Delay, Local Weather Delay, Visible Damage, and Out for Delivery/Redelivery. All of these MDD scan options will give letter carriers more specificity in letting their customers know what is going on with their mail and why.

911 developments

While on the subject of the MDD, in September the Postal Service conducted a live field test of an “e911 Alert” function on the scanner at several offices throughout the country. Letter carriers who participated in the test were asked to make multiple calls with the MDD to their local 911 call center using the “911/Emergency” button or “911” icon located on their MDD touch screen. After doing so, the scanner automatically dials 911 and connects the letter carrier to a 911 operator. The test was designed to see how well the scanner could provide 911 with the geographical location of the letter carrier and the phone number of the device. After the test was complete, USPS asked the participating letter carriers to provide feedback on the feature's functionality and the quality of the calls.

Afterward, I met with USPS officials to obtain the results. The Postal Service informed me that more than half of the calls for the MDD e911 test were successful but the quality of the call was poor due to the older technology being used in the device. Also, at least one state's 911 system refused to participate in the test because it couldn't dedicate its resources to the initiative. Additionally, a number of locations couldn't test because the testing window offered by the local 911 center was outside normal business hours.

Once USPS looks further into the data from the test, it will determine what the next steps will be to add this feature to letter carriers' scanners. NALC has been discussing this option with USPS since the introduction of the MDD, and my hope is this added level of security and protection for letter carriers will come sooner rather than later.