

## ProMaster: To see or not to see



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**W**hile attending the Colorado state convention last year, I sat in on a demonstration related to the forward visibility of the ProMaster and the potential for tragedy. The presentation was given by Arvada, CO Branch 4405 member Joann Hertel.

Later that same day, the delegates of the state association adopted a resolution that was then forwarded to NALC for action at the Detroit National Convention. A recommendation of approval was issued by the NALC Executive Council and the resolution was then adopted by the delegates.

Following the convention, we reached out to Safety at USPS Headquarters. They pushed back, saying:

...The Ram ProMaster is a commercially available product available to any consumer. No modifications were made for the United States Postal Service. The vehicle has passed all National Highway Transportation Association safety tests and was approved for manufacturing. A review of the public safety records associated with this vehicle do not indicate any visibility issues.

That is an easy out for management. The feedback from the carriers who have to drive the ProMaster showed that there are concerns about visibility. Prevention should not come into play only after a tragedy. Think about that commitment to safety.

Once Safety at USPS Headquarters put up its stop sign, engineering also pushed back. Hopefully, we will get management to move on this. In the meantime, drivers of ProMasters should factor in an obstructed view and should take a few extra steps before moving the vehicle.

**We conducted a simple demonstration of the concern,** and the two photos on this page should help explain it. We placed an orange cone about four feet from the front bumper of the ProMaster. The cone stands 28 inches tall, which is a little taller than most toddlers. One of the drivers who participated in the testing, a 5-foot-7-inch woman, said that she was unable to see the top of the cone. The driver said that to see the cone, she had to lean forward over the steering wheel, half out of the seat. We believe that management simply should provide pot-lid mirrors to assist with viewing the blind spot, but management drew a line in the sand and said no.

In the photos on this page, you will see what I am at-



**In the left photo, the orange cone—at 28 inches high, taller than most toddlers—is barely perceptible from the driver's seat. The photo at right shows the view of what could happen if letter carriers are not vigilant about what is in front of the vehicle. A simple solution would be pot-lid mirrors to help with visibility, but management has rejected the suggestion.**

tempting to convey. The first photo shows a barely perceptible portion of the very top of the cone; the second photo shows the view from the side showing what could happen if we are not vigilant about what is ahead of us. Don't assume that no one has stepped in front of your path.

**Article 14 of the National Agreement states that the employer is required to develop a safe work force.** Many times it pretends to do so but falls short if any additional cost is involved.

In a recent arbitration decision on the subject of safety and equipment, an arbitrator observed that:

Neither Party has reported any accidents relating to the use of the Nashville Containers since their implementation on March 27, 2018. This undisputed fact is reassuring, but it does not mean that the containers are inherently safe or the appropriate tools to be used by letter carriers to transport mail to their vehicles...The safety of a piece of equipment involves more than its inherent characteristics. Where the equipment is used, and by whom, are also important considerations...

Hopefully we will not experience a tragedy before getting management to adopt a fix for the forward-visibility issue. Keep an eye on each other.