

Peak season concerns and updates



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Recently, I have received a variety of questions from members on various topics related to city delivery. I would like to use this month's article to address some of these questions and update the membership.

Parcel delivery concerns

Peak season is in full swing and, accordingly, it seems as if every household in the United States is receiving multiple packages daily. In the last few weeks, I have received increased reports from around the country regarding parcels bearing USPS shipping labels being delivered by other courier services. Sometimes other courier companies will intend for USPS to deliver these parcels and

will apply the USPS shipping label. Then, for whatever reason, the other shipping company will decide to deliver the parcel themselves instead of offering it to USPS for delivery.

This decision to change the delivery company after the USPS label has been applied to the parcel has always been concerning for letter carriers. Some carriers are concerned that when a parcel bearing the USPS label is delivered by another service, customers may mistakenly believe these parcels were delivered by their USPS letter carrier. If the delivery is unsatisfactory for the customer, city carriers feel responsible even if they were never provided the parcel for delivery. I admire this commitment to our customers, and it is unfortunate when these parcels are redirected away from the city carrier who has the experience, knowledge and professionalism to best make these deliveries.

Unfortunately, USPS has no ability to prevent this situation from occurring. If a customer has questions regarding a delivery made by another courier service, letter carriers should politely explain that USPS was not involved in the delivery. The Postal Service is the most trusted federal government agency and letter carriers take pride in providing excellent customer service and being the public face of USPS.

7:01 rule

With recent operational impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic, letter carriers' daily workloads have been uncertain. To protect a full-time regular carrier's right to a full eight hours of work, NALC and USPS agreed to extend a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), M-01913 in NALC's Materials Reference System, regarding Section 432.53 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. This MOU clarifies the ELM language by stating in part:

Any hours not worked between the seventh and eighth hour of a regular scheduled day pursuant to ELM 432.53 are included in an employee's regular rate of pay pursuant to ELM 443.212.g. All delivery service supervisors are reminded that city letter carriers should not be excused under the 7:01 rule unless they have completed their routes and cannot be assigned to any available work in the same wage level for which they are qualified. Undertime can be used to work in route books, case mail for the next day's, delivery, pivoting, etc. Local management at all delivery units must reemphasize to all city letter carriers that they must report to their supervisor whenever they desire to clock out prior to completing a full 8-hour workday, minus time covered by the 5-minute leeway rule.

City carriers who work more than seven hours but do not have enough work to complete a full eight hours may be approved to clock out and still receive eight hours of pay under this provision.

Video technology testing

In June of 2019, USPS began testing the use of video cameras, supplied by USPS contractor Lytx, and GPS technology in city delivery vehicles. The Postal Service hopes to use the technology to identify ways to assist in modifying driver behavior, improve behind-the-wheel performance, and reduce the severity and frequency of motor vehicle mishaps. The Postal Service also hopes that this technology could be used to improve driver safety, reduce tort claims and exonerate carriers involved in vehicle accidents. In addition, this technology could serve as a training and monitoring tool for new carriers, as well as for those considered to be at higher risk. The initial testing was limited to two locations, in the Capital and Santa Ana Districts.

In August of 2020, NALC received notification that the Postal Service intended to expand this testing; however, in a subsequent letter dated Oct. 13, the Postal Service canceled the Phase Two expansion of the test. NALC filed a national-level grievance regarding USPS use of this video technology. I will update the membership if the Postal Service intends to resume testing.

This year has been full of unexpected challenges for letter carriers and, in fact, for people around the world. I am hopeful that this holiday season is the beginning of a better 2021 for everyone. Best wishes for a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you and your families.

