



HEROES DELIVERING



A day in the life as told by letter carriers living it

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Postal Service is providing an essential service, and letter carriers are recognized as heroes for delivering during this crisis. Millions of people are in isolation or quarantine in their homes and disconnected from jobs, friends and family. They are depending on letter carriers to be their link to the outside world by bringing needed supplies, documents and medications.

But letter carriers are under tremendous stress at work and at home from putting themselves out in public, delivering mail and packages to every house and business in the country. For many NALC members, much about the way that we work—from preparing to report to the office in the morning to returning from work at night—has changed dramatically.

While there have been a number of new memoranda of understanding and stand-up talks that change the way letter carriers are required to perform their work (all of which can be found at nalc.org/covid-19), each office is unique. So, *The Postal Record* asked letter carriers what the “new normal” is for a day in the life of a letter carrier. Their answers help paint a portrait of how much has changed and what makes letter carriers tick.

We started by asking about how their preparations for going to the office have changed.

“I bring my own mask, gloves, sanitizer and wipes to clean the vehicle. And a tall can of Lysol to spray down everything I touch for the day.”—**Lisamarie Garcia of Los Angeles Branch 24**

“I bring everything related to my workday along pre-sanitized, where applicable, such as my water and lunch containers.”—**Christopher Wetzel of Woodstock, VA Branch 3376**

“I used to eat a fast breakfast, but now I make sure to eat a hearty meal to hold me off as long as possible. I sanitize my personal vehicle before I head to work, pack my lunch in disposable bags and put my phone in a Ziploc bag. When I get to work, the first thing I do is sanitize my whole truck top to bottom. Refill the hand sanitizer.”—**Aaron Thompson of Tulsa, OK Branch 1358**

“I bring my own mask and use hand sanitizer disinfectant to clean my truck, and make sure I have gloves with me to get gas. I carry only a small bag with those essentials and my license and debit card.”—**Kathleen Paolillo Heltko of Connecticut Merged Branch 20**

“I have been methodical about leaving the house by gathering all my things before I put on my shoes, so I don’t step in the house again.”—**Alfredo Dwan of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

“The new steps in my morning routine include: wiping down my pocket items such as my badge, my ink pen, my black permanent marker; washing with soap and water my locker key and rubber thumb. I spray disinfect (151 proof alcohol with just a little water) on my hat and mask. I am a shop steward. I started keeping all the NALC-released COVID info in a three-ring binder. In mid-March, there was something new every day to find, print, read, understand and have on hand to answer questions for my co-workers. It’s a lot of info to keep up with. I read the new info as I eat breakfast. The binder is in a tote bag with other things I have to bring from home.”—**Nona Roop Hall of Roanoke, VA Branch 524**

“The before-work routine has become wake up, take temperature, coffee, make sure I have my mask and hand sanitizer. Try to remember to wear a head band so I am not brushing the hair out of my face and touching my face. Items that I make sure I have every day are my own hand sanitizer, gloves, mask and bleach spray. The



station has supplies, but I will not take the risk of one of those items not being available for me.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

“My ability to get to work has been drastically improved. Traffic is nonexistent.”—**Aaron Thompson of Tulsa, OK Branch 1358**

“I try to play more positive, upbeat music on my way to work to help keep my spirits up.”—**Marc J. Mancini of Pittsburgh, PA Branch 84**

Once at the office, for many, even clocking in has changed.

“The Brentwood Post Office is located in the heart of the pandemic here on Long Island. It became so serious in this area that a few weeks ago a COVID-19 testing site was set up and has been operating just a quarter-mile from the office. The way we operate has changed dramatically. The carriers would all start, en masse, at 7:30 a.m. Now, there are four shifts, to prevent large groups gathering at once. The first shift starts at 7 a.m., with the last starting at 9:15 a.m.”—**James Padilla of Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000**

“I wait in my car until it’s very close to time to start. The entire office is now separated into four different waves to clock in. I use the corner of the time card to punch the buttons on the clock. People I used to chat with every day, I now rarely see.”—**Nona Roop Hall of Roanoke, VA Branch 524**

“My time clock process has changed in the fact that I am usually a couple clicks over my start time to avoid crowding at

the time clock.”—**Kristina K. Pickering of Central California Coast Branch 52**

“We have plenty of PPE in our office... each route got a jug full of sanitizer and a little container on our key chains to take to the street with us. Boxes of gloves and masks.”—**Paul Romanies of Bux-Mont, PA Branch 920**

Vehicle checks take a lot more effort, as sanitizing the workspace has become a priority.

“My vehicle check process hasn’t changed too much. Since Day One, I have always been aware of how filthy our job is. So being a regular on my own route, I have always had my own disinfectant wipes within my truck. The funny thing is, now I won’t get talked to for using my full vehicle check time. I have made it known I don’t wish the custodian staff to clean my case or my vehicle, which is why I do it myself. The less hands and people in my personal workspace, the better.”

—**Kristina K. Pickering of Central California Coast Branch 52**

“I use a Dodge Ram van for my route. When I start my vehicle inspection, first I wipe down the door handles, a 6-inch square where I purposely use to close the door and the lift gate handle. Wipe down the Ram emblem (this is key later). Open the lift gate and wipe down the inside handles used for closing. Wipe down the inside of the back where I lean in to grab parcels during the day. I grab the handle and pull down like I’m spinning the wheel in the “showcase showdown” on “The Price is Right.” Then I make sure to place my hand on the emblem to finish the closure of the lift gate (instead of having to clean

across the entire width of the lift gate). Then I move to the inside driver’s side and wipe down the door, the blinker, the heat/air controls, the cup holder, seat adjusters, the seat belt, buckle and latch, steering wheel and gear shift. Then I get inside and wonder what I forgot and if my hands were clean enough when I started cleaning so then I use some hand sanitizer.”—**Nona Roop Hall of Roanoke, VA Branch 524**

“The very first thing I do in my vehicle is spray the entire cab with the bleach water spray. I let that sit while I perform the outside inspection and then start the 2-ton to finish the inspection. My 2-ton smells like a swimming pool at all times.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

“Our managers clean our cases and vehicles twice a day. We do not have a janitor and the postmaster wants to be sure that everything is being sanitized. Marks on the floor remind us to social distance. We have an entire safety station set up with disinfectant, hand sanitizer, gloves, masks and all the stand-up info posted. All the employees respect each other’s space, so staggered times are not necessary. We support and encourage one another.”

—**Leslie Hardman Nielsen of Springville, UT Branch 2821**

There are other changes in how letter carriers interact with clerks, supervisors and others at the office.

“Sometimes the mail is there at the case and sometimes it’s not. Changes on a daily basis.”—**Calvin Rich of Pasadena, CA Branch 2200**



One carrier now brings these supplies to work on a daily basis.

“The clerks in our office refuse to wear masks as they sort the parcels, even though Michigan’s governor has ordered masks to be worn if social distancing cannot occur. Management keeps telling us we don’t have to follow Michigan’s guidelines because we are federal workers. Our local health department also instituted guidelines to be followed before employees are allowed into a workplace, which we have yet to do.”—**Matthew Amlotte of Alpena, MI Branch 259**

“Management has informed us that custodians are now sanitizing our MDDs [Mobile Delivery Devices] before we use them. Custodians will leave a sheet of paper signed and dated to inform us our MDDs have been sanitized. There are times where I’ve gone to grab my MDD and had to ask the custodian to please sanitize mine next since she hadn’t gotten to mine yet. Usually they comply and we don’t have to wait too long. Other times I don’t see them being sanitized, nor do I see the sheet of paper stating MDDs were sanitized, which is hard to prove on a daily basis. I usually sanitize my MDD throughout the day with my personal sanitizing wipes.”—**Calvin Rich of Pasadena, CA Branch 2200**

“We must stagger times to retrieve scanners to keep social distancing.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

“The interaction with management has changed. We have to remind each other to stand 6 feet apart. PS 3996 are more of a challenge to estimate because of having to return to pick up packages and the time to run them off.

The environment has changed. It used to be fun in the office, joking around with your co-workers. Now everyone just wants to get out of the office.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

“Swing assignments are written down on a whiteboard and unless carriers need overtime on their own assignment, there is no verbal interaction.”—**Alfredo Dwan of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

“We are still filling out 3996s, but management is approving by scanner message, not coming to carrier cases per usual.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

“Some clerks are very good at calling us over to sign for accountables and providing us social distance, but others just stand there near you handing you certified and keys. Old habits are hard to change, unfortunately.”—**Calvin Rich of Pasadena, CA Branch 2200**

“Our clerk rolls around the cart, case to case. They tell us verbally what we need to get from the cart, then they back away and we go out to the cart and grab and sign for all the stuff they just told us about.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“They don’t care about 3996s anymore. Nobody knows how long a day will take when the mail shows up whenever it shows up. We’ve lost, on some days, a third of our workforce. I haven’t worked under 11 hours a day in probably three weeks.”—**Rob Cover of Utica, MI Branch 4374**

With businesses closing and changes of residence,

forwarding and holds are more complicated.

“We put bars in the case for closed businesses. Most won’t put in changes of address and instead pick up mail here and there. I started 10-day holds and was going to send it all back MLNA. There’s no good regulation applying to these times.”—**Rob Cover of South Macomb, MI Branch 4374**

“There are more holds with no extra case shelf space, making our workspace cluttered and crowded. [There are] many closed businesses and holding [of] unclaimed mail from full mailboxes for residents who are away.”—**Mary Kinney of Columbia, MO Branch 763**

“Our office has moved the hold from each carrier’s case to one location to minimize clerks walking to every case.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

“More change-of-address orders are being filed by residents who moved away months ago, so they can receive their government stimulus check. It results in more time spent by me filling out forms to cancel their MLNA and correcting to their new addresses.”—**Mary Kinney of Columbia, MO Branch 763**

Break times in the office are different now, when they are even held there.

“We have smaller groups taking breaks at 8:45 a.m., 9 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. We pretty much just stay to ourselves and text each other. The funny thing is, some carriers FaceTime each other



while they are still in the same building and chat. Pretty cool. But they are being responsible, that is for sure.”—**Richard Ray of Staten Island, NY Branch 99**

“We used to have a full break room where stories and life would be shared every morning. Now, no more than three people have taken a break in the break room together.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“The morning break is chaotic in my office. As the steward in my office, I went around and asked each carrier if they wanted to keep the office break or take two street breaks. About half the office decided to keep the office break. Then with staggered start times, we came to agreement with the postmaster to have the carriers start their office break 30 minutes after punching in. So, break times are at 8:15, 8:45 and 9. It is weird, but working so far.”—**Samuel H. Farley of Elyria, OH Branch 196**

“No office break. Switched to two street breaks. Took a few weeks to get used to because it felt like the day dragged on.”—**Jacqueline Mayes of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

Out on their routes, letter carriers are adapting to the new rules of work.

“We have to touch a lot of things during a workday. It still has to be done to deliver the mail.”—**Mary Kinney of Columbia, MO Branch 763**

“I always used hand sanitizer in collections because I have a compromised immune system before COVID-19, but now I use it a lot more often.”—**Kimberly Arnold of Pasadena, TX Branch 3867**

“CBU and blue box collection points have not changed too much, other than politely asking congregating customers to maintain distance and to hand sanitize after touching these multi-contact surfaces.”—**Christopher Wetzel of Woodstock, VA Branch 3376**

“I have many cluster boxes on my route; some are located outside and some are located inside closed mail rooms. I don’t know which are worse. I have to ask customers to stay back when I am delivering to the outside boxes, which frustrates everyone. Then when I am delivering to my mail rooms, I have to leave the doors closed to keep customers out, which then isolates me from them and the questions they have about their mail.”—**Susan Ugone of Hartford, CT Branch 86**

“Some [businesses] want you to use the mailbox. Some come to the post office to pick up mail. Some Lysol it on sight. One wants you to put it in a file folder. It took some time to not take it personally.”—**Rob Cover of South Macomb, MI Branch 4374**

“My route has many closed businesses. I’m holding the mail for some, delivering some with mail receptacles. I’m sending some mail for business owners who live in town to the carrier who delivers to their home and some to those who also have P.O. boxes.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

“I don’t let anyone touch [the MDD] to sign for accountable mail. I ask if I can sign it for them. Anything with a return card gets a pink slip so they can pick it up at the office.”—**Tish Seymour-Wells of Cleveland, OH Branch 40**

“I spray the scanner down daily with my own supply of bleach and keep it in my possession at all times.”—**Christopher Wetzel of Woodstock, VA Branch 3376**

“More dog encounters have become normal. Some owners get it and others do not, and it has caused extra conflict during these challenging times.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“I have made some new dog friends and have also made some more dog warning cards.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

Many carriers reported that they have had to adjust their work for all of the government offices and businesses that are closed, as well as for the other businesses that have increased packages.

“We take mail to home addresses instead of businesses for those who don’t want to hold it for pickup.”—**Laura Bogart of Hays, KS Branch 2161**

“I have a mall on my route that is closed, but I call the security guard every day and he lets me in to deliver mail to the cluster boxes. I also have a closed nail salon on my route, but the owner lives on the street behind it, so I deliver their business mail to their home. There’s also an eldercare facility, but I now leave the mail on their vestibule instead of taking it to the main desk.”—**Tish Seymour-Wells of Cleveland, OH Branch 40**

“I have a CVS pharmacy on my route, and pickups have increased significantly, and I usually come by to do a



second collection before returning to the office.”—**Charles Milde of Shawnee Mission, KS Branch 5521**

“My public school is closed. They pick mail up at our station. I have a church office open for regular business. I wear my mask into the office. I also have a Catholic school where the office is open to me. I never see anyone, but wear my mask in also.”—**Debra Kluesner of Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491**

One of the biggest changes for carriers on their routes is how they take their breaks and comfort stops.

“I take [breaks] alone and in my truck as much as possible.”—**Debra Kluesner of Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491**

“I can’t eat my morning snack until I pull over and sanitize my hands. I do the same on my lunch break, which I pack and eat in my truck after I also wipe down the steering wheel, ignition, parking brake and my phone.”—**Tish Seymour-Wells of Cleveland, OH Branch 40**

“I have a hospital/medical center that butts up to my route. That used to be the place I replenished my water bottle, heated up my lunch (if need be), and used the bathroom. Now with COVID-19, it’s not a practical option.”—**Kristina Pickering of Central California Coast Branch 52**

“I mostly use a bathroom without hot water, because all the others are closed. It’s fun!”—**J.T. Thorstad of Tacoma, WA Branch 79**

“No one is letting carriers use their bathrooms. We go back to the

station.”—**Richard Ray of Staten Island, NY Branch 99**

“Most bathrooms are not accessible due to closures. The couple I still can get to and use have become critical. I take my lunch at the exact same place each day so I can go use the bathroom and thoroughly wash my hands before going back to eat.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“First the two leasing offices on my route closed, then two weeks later the park bathroom closed. I was thankful for the park having its bathroom open until it finally closed. Once I saw the sign on the door stating that the bathrooms were closed, I got angry. As I walked back to my truck, I had an overwhelming load of feelings from... everything. I cried as I walked back to my truck. Sat for a minute, then proceeded to drive to a bathroom that is not near my route.”—**Jacqueline Mayes of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

Letter carriers take pride in the work they do and often interact with their customers, but that interaction has had to change.

“In all honesty, quarantine has been rough. When the first stay-at-home order was issued, I sent out a handful of personal letters to my customers at risk who would possibly need me to go above and beyond my normal duties. Our customers become a part of our hearts. The communities we serve are often more so our neighborhood than where we live. To make sure they’re OK is a part of what makes the USPS so above and beyond different than any possible competitors. Social distancing

with customers has been rough, but at the same time, if we explained to them how the 6-foot distance is critical, they understand. I always explain to them that if I was to be the cause of any of them to get sick, it would break my heart, especially with how much interaction and touching of mailboxes we do.”—**Kristina Pickering of Central California Coast Branch 52**

“For many customers, I am the only outside person they get to have interactions with each day and it is critical to their mental well-being. I take this very seriously. I had one woman passed out from drinking too much on the sidewalk, and I couldn’t just ignore her. So I woke her up, helped get her on her feet and safely back home before continuing the route. It was scary because I couldn’t keep a safe distance and I simply had to hope she wasn’t sick, too, but I couldn’t leave her. She, like so many others, was simply having a difficult time coping in that moment.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“I cannot shake hands or touch or hug my customer friends. Many cross the street to avoid sharing the sidewalk with me, or retreat inside their house when I approach to avoid us sharing space. Parents restrain their small toddler children from walking toward me for their ‘used to be’ usual hug from me. That makes us sad. I cannot visit my elderly residents or help them like I used to. I can sense the loneliness and desire for connection from many people.”—**Mary Kinney of Columbia, MO Branch 763**

“For customer interactions where I knowingly deliver to those immune



compromised or elderly, I attempt to sanitize my hands prior to delivery.”
—Christopher Wetzel of Woodstock, VA Branch 3376

“One day I was delivering on my route and one of my customers left a mask for me at the mailbox. As instructed, I washed the mask before using, and since that day I have worn a mask. You have no idea how appreciated you are until someone does that for you. And I feel appreciated with every breath. I have a lot of great customers, and many like to meet me by the door to get my mail. But, as of a month ago, I have resolved to discontinue handoffs as much as possible. By my estimation, I have turned down at least 100 handoffs. Most customers are very understanding and encouraging when I let them know what I am doing, and I occasionally let them know how many handoffs I have turned down, reminding them that that number is a reduction of direct exposures they themselves have avoided. ...My customers have been wonderful. While I focus on my work, I do keep my eyes open and see their sense of humor as I walk, like the little girl who wrote ‘Closed’ on a piece of paper and put it on her front door, or the customer who put corona masks on her pink flamingos. The signs of thank you, especially from the kids, are incredibly moving. And the countless thank-yous I get from my people as I walk along. To them, I say the same thing to everyone: ‘As long as I have two feet and healthy lungs, you will get your mail.’”

—Charles Milde of Shawnee Mission, KS Branch 5521

“I feel this is hardest on our elderly customers. They want to see you and

make sure you are OK. We feel the same about them. I have a fear of passing the virus to one of them, even though I do not have any symptoms. I worked in a nursing home and saw how easily the regular flu could spread; I do not want to bring any harm to any of my customers.”
—Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3

“I have a lot of older customers who regularly get medications delivered. A couple customers of mine have higher-risk children and definitely do a lot of online ordering so they don’t have to leave the house at all.”
—Debra Kluesner of Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491

Letter carriers also understand why their work is essential and know what would happen to the communities on their routes if they were not there.

“Small businesses would be completely closed. They rely on my work picking up outgoing parcels every day to keep some money coming in through the door, and I’m the only delivery service that they can count on to come by every day. People would be scared. Just our daily presence lets them know things are OK and not that bad. Take us off the street and panic will set in quickly. I do all the stuff (grocery after work, other pickups, shipping, etc.) for some of my immune-deficient customers so they can safely stay at home until this all ends. They rely on me for all external needs.”
—Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82

“I have customers who rely on me to deliver financial security items, both in

check and statement forms. There is an increase in the elderly now using online purchases to help them social distance and likewise many people who rely on us to deliver other essentials such as medicine, prosthetics and equipment.”
—Christopher Wetzel of Woodstock, VA Branch 3376

“The customers on my route expect to see me out there every day delivering their packages, birthday cards, Mother’s Day cards, medicine and ads. We are the ‘normal’ that the American people look forward to.”
—Samuel H. Farley of Elyria, OH Branch 196

“I transport a lot of medications to the other offices to be delivered, so [customers] would be affected physically and medically.”
—Kimberly Arnhold of Pasadena, TX Branch 3867

“I’ve been on this route for more than 20 years and plan to retire at the end of June. I have developed many friendships and been witness to many life experiences, hardships and changes with my customers. I am sometimes the only person they interact with each day.”
—Mary Kinney of Columbia, MO Branch 763

“I don’t think people who haven’t done this job really realize we are the heartbeat of the community. I have customers who I deliver pharmaceuticals to regularly and I have a couple customers who I do welfare checks on regularly.”
—Kristina Pickering of Central California Coast Branch 52

“I have the elderly customer who trusts you to come into their home to carry packages for them. The customer trying to give you their raincoat because you



got caught mid-loop without yours. My having to wear a hat in the winter on one loop because it upsets Mr. Burns when I don't have it on and he will get up to give me the business if I don't. The customer that has a hot cup of coffee for you every day in the winter and an ice-cold water in the summer, because you have to stay warm or hydrated. People care about us as much as we care about them.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

“Our customers have been lonely. If we weren't delivering, many wouldn't be able to get things from loved ones far away, or essential items you can't find in our small town.”—**Laura Bogart of Hays, KS Branch 2161**

“If I'm not here, my route will probably be keyed out for pivots and overtime. My customers would get their mail late or not at all. I also have a CVS on my route and I used to pick up scripts maybe once a week; now it's at least five a day. If the packages happen to be my customers, they get them delivered the same day. That will not happen if

I get sick.”—**Tish Seymour-Wells of Cleveland, OH Branch 40**

“I have an old-age complex on my route. Many people get their medication delivered through the mail. I also have businesses that have started to do or are doing more shipping with the USPS since they are no longer open to the public. I'm making these pickups every day.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

“We in New York, we had to deal with 9/11, we had to deal with Hurricane Sandy, but I never got so many thank-yous in my entire time with the Post Office. Our customers need us now more than ever. They're getting everything they need delivered to their doors.”—**Richard Ray of Staten Island, NY Branch 99**

When carriers return to the station, many try to maintain social distancing.

“Upon my return to the office, my routine is pretty much the same, but I will keep my distance before sorting through my nixies and forwards. My CVS parcels, which are considered secure, are tubbed, and I often slide the tub over to the supervisor or clerk, instead of making a handoff. Clocking out is still unsafe, but we try to keep 6 feet from one another. Still, there is an occasional person who likes to hang over the clock while carrying on a conversation. As you can imagine, this is usually one of the people who opt not to wear a mask.”—**Charles Milde of Shawnee Mission, KS Branch 5521**

“This is a very awkward situation where safe spacing breaks down due to rush

to dispatch mail every day. We still have to do it all ourselves and it's all in a narrow walkway where it is impossible to safely keep space unless it's done one person at a time.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“We must leave items at the accountable cart and step away for the clerk to clear.”—**Dan Wheeler of Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25**

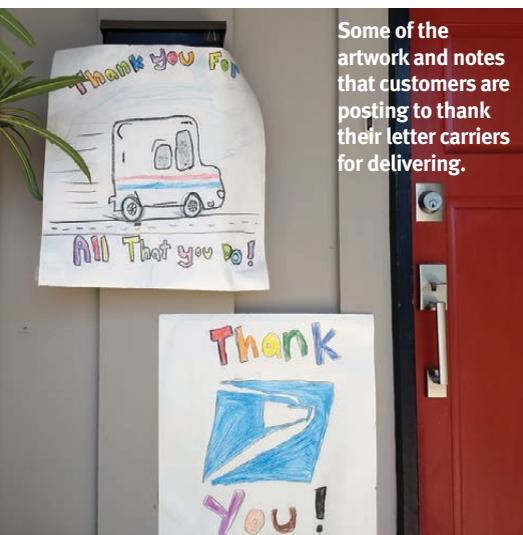
But the day doesn't end there. Letter carriers have to make sure they're safe to return to their homes and their families.

“Before I leave [work], I change into regular clothing. I put my uniform in a plastic bag before I walk in the door. My outer clothing comes off. My wife sprays me with Lysol, takes my plastic bag and my clothing that goes right into the washer, and I take a shower before I do anything.”—**Richard Ray of Staten Island, NY Branch 99**

“Change out of uniform right away. I have two small children and one of them is high risk (heart/lung). If it is my days with them, I will shower before I pick them up from their dad's, who works from home.”—**Debra Kluesner of Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491**

“When I get home, I go through a decontamination ritual of wiping down my car, keys and any items I bring into the house. Early on, I began to play a game I call 'Typhoid Mary'—a dark distraction while trying to think of where I need to kill the dangerous cooties in and around me as I come home.”

—**Charles Milde of Shawnee Mission, KS Branch 5521**





“Once I get home, I immediately throw my uniform on the laundry floor [to not mix with other laundry] then shower. I have told my daughter to not hug me until I shower a few times after she rushes to the door to hug me. I rinse off my iPhone and Apple watch. I even rinse off my prescription glasses. I always hug and kiss my daughter on her forehead; I have limited that.”—**Jacqueline Mayes of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

“After work is an entirely new routine. I make sure I leave my shoes outside and spray myself with Lysol before I walk in the house. I immediately go to the laundry room, change out of my work clothes and wash them. I then go shower before I give my kids a hug. I no longer give them kisses, just in case.”—**Amie Gallo of Salt Lake City, UT Branch 111**

The stress is taking a toll on carriers and their relationships.

“We are working long hours. We are stressed out and burning out. We come home, eat dinner, try and spend some time with the family, then go to bed and get up and do it all over again. Letter carriers take pride in the work we are doing, providing reliable, efficient mail deliveries to all of our customers.”—**Samuel Farley of Elyria, OH Branch 196**

“I don’t think anybody wants to be there, at work, while this town is at the epicenter of the pandemic. We were told that four of our co-workers tested positive. One has returned, after being out for a month. No word on the condition or work status of the other three. And now, I just learned of a fifth

carrier associated with our office who not only has tested positive, but has in fact been hospitalized. But, at the same time we are extremely grateful that we do have a job to go to. So, we soldier on. We social distance on, even with those we’ve known for 25 to 30 years. Don’t shake hands. Don’t even do the elbow touch anymore. I walk past the numerous discarded masks and gloves, laying in the streets and parking lots on my route, throughout the day, and just shake my head. Many people do wear protective goods, but sadly, there are some who still congregate, not all wearing protective gear.”—**James Padilla of Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000**

“I’m both mentally and physically exhausted from this COVID virus. During the day and evening, I keep in touch with my core group. We speak a lot more, as we are all stressed about COVID-19 and the future of the Post Office. With my NALC friends from other states, we reach out more often. We send cards, little gifts and rude memes/GIFs to let each other know we care and that we understand. NALC has given me friendships that I cherish with people I never would have come in contact with otherwise. We are all in this struggle together and any can reach out to me at any time to be talked off the ledge if they need it. I know they would do the same for me.”—**Becky Stockman of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3**

“My wife is out of work because of it all, so she is home all day home schooling our 7-year-old and looking after our 15-month-old. She is stressed and tired by the time I get home from working all day, so I end up doing all the evening

stuff with the kids. So, the day doesn’t end until very late and we are both exhausted all the time.”—**Willie Groshell of Portland, OR Branch 82**

“Having to go to work as well as doing schoolwork with my daughter is extremely stressful and exhausting, especially if a child (any child) has extra needs that need to be met at school. The only other person who helps with my daughter is my mom. She watches her all day for me, so I try to stick to doing the homework at least. I am at work constantly thinking about her homework and wondering what e-mails the school will send next. She has a health condition that I also worry about during this time.”—**Jacqueline Mayes of Seattle, WA Branch 79**

“I think everyone is stressed and scared. Some show it; others do not. Some snap over nothing. But for the most part, we are the same. We are family.”—**Richard Ray of Staten Island, NY Branch 99**

“Before my quarterly daily routine began, I signed up on the [overtime desired list] for the first time ever because my unit needed it.”—**Joe Gibson of Central California Coast Branch 52**

“City carriers are a tough breed, tougher than woodpecker lips. And, not accounting for how we individually might deal with the disease, I think we can navigate the issues, just as we do every day with heavy coverage, excessive tub mail, new ideas to ‘increase efficiency,’ oh, and the weather. If we remember the stuff we had to do to get where we are today, we will all know in our hearts: We got this!”—**Charles Milde of Shawnee Mission, KS Branch 5521**