

ProMaster recall, continued



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

In my January column, I addressed the recall of ProMaster vehicles in our fleet and the fact that NALC had made an inquiry to USPS.

We asked if any of our ProMasters were affected by the recall, and USPS responded that “the Postal Service has approximately 20,000 ProMaster vehicles, with the majority of these vehicles included in the above referenced recall.”

As a follow-up, presuming some of the ProMaster vehicles in our fleet are affected, we asked what was being done to prevent a tragedy?

In response, USPS advised that:

...Chrysler FCA US, LLC (FCA) has informed the Postal Service of its notification to the National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration (NHTSA) about the intent to recall certain model year ProMaster vehicles due to the potential for thermal events occurring with this model. We have been proactively working with FCA ahead of the recall to ensure the safety of those vehicles currently being used in delivery operations. We are also collaborating with FCA to determine the specifics of the recall, the identification of vehicles impacted, and the overall corrective action needed to ensure the vehicles no longer present the risk of a thermal event. In addition, the Postal Service has contracted with the investigative firm Rimkus to research the cause of all vehicle fires in the Postal fleet. Inspection procedures and safety talks have been prepared for delivery and vehicle maintenance operations in order to communicate the actions that are necessary for recognizing potential fire risks.

The safety and wellbeing of each and every one of our employees is paramount for the Postal Service. We remain confident that the ProMaster vehicles in our fleet will continue to operate safely and the FCA commitment to instituting a timely and effective process to mitigate any issues in order to ensure the safety of Postal Service employees, the mail they deliver, and the general public.

NALC recognizes that the response from USPS does not identify the decision-maker behind the scenes; however, it seems to me that the last paragraph above is a “hope” that no one suffers until the recall correction is put in place. We have made a follow-up inquiry and are awaiting that answer. In the meantime, if you see any smoke around the engine compartment, shut off the engine, secure the vehicle and get out as quickly as you can.

We are advised that management has prepared safety talks on this subject (which we have requested) so if you

have any ProMasters in your delivery unit, the employer should have held the relevant safety talks. If not, reach out and ask them what has been done with that material.

“...Presuming that some of the ProMaster vehicles in our fleet were affected, we asked what was being done to prevent a tragedy.”

Installation Safety Committees

Article 14, Section 4 of our National Agreement provides a forum for the local parties to discuss safety and health items. The agreement states:

At each postal installation having 50 or more employees, a Joint Labor-Management Safety and Health Committee will be established. In installations having fewer than 50 employees, installation heads are encouraged to establish similar committees when requested by the Union...

The agreement further states that if there is no established [safety] committee, the parties are to address their safety and health issues during labor-management meetings.

Do you have a functioning safety and health committee? If not, you should communicate with your local union leadership requesting that we set up a local safety committee as provided for in the contract (provided you have 50 or more employees).

If you have fewer than 50 employees, your postmaster is still encouraged to have such a committee. If the postmaster is not willing, he or she still must address safety and health issues that are placed on the agenda of the required labor-management meetings.

What should we be discussing at these meetings? Article 14, Section 8 identifies responsibilities of the local committee and guides as follows:

The Committee shall review the progress in accident prevention and health at the installation; determine program areas which should have increased emphasis; and it may investigate major accidents which result in disabling injuries. Items properly relating to employee safety and health shall be considered appropriate discussion items...

The above should be viewed as an opportunity for the local parties to truly look at the cause of an accident or injury, and to determine what needs to be done to prevent such accidents/injuries in the future.

Get involved and make a difference.
Keep an eye on each other.