

Sunday parcel delivery test



Christopher Jackson

In the August 2021 edition of *The Postal Record*, I wrote about a test being conducted by the Postal Service involving the work methods for Sunday parcel delivery. Under this test, which began in April 2021 at 81 sites in the WestPac Area, one city carrier assistant (CCA) was assigned to load Sunday parcels for multiple routes into the delivery vehicles in order of delivery, using either Dynamic Routing or the Load Truck feature. Dynamic Routing is a USPS computer program that sequences parcels to create dynamic routes. A manifest of the parcels' delivery locations is loaded into the dynamic routing program, which generates routes with turn-by-turn directions based on those delivery locations. Carriers then follow the turn-by-turn direc-

tions and deliver the parcels in sequence as they are routed. The Load Truck feature involves letter carriers scanning their packages as they load their vehicle. Upon scanning, the MDD provides them with visual and audible information regarding the delivery sequence number of the package and a numbered section (1 through 6) of the vehicle in which the package should be placed.

The initial Standard Work Instruction (SWI) for the pilot test indicated that each loading carrier would pre-load four routes. In July 2021, the Postal Service revised the associated SWI to indicate that only three routes would be pre-loaded by the loading carrier, who would then deliver the third route. The two additional CCAs would arrive later, perform minimal office duties and depart directly to the street in the pre-loaded vehicles. The CCA who loaded the vehicles would then deliver the remaining route.

USPS expanded the test to the other three postal areas (Central, Southern and Atlantic) and added 221 test sites nationwide. In September 2021, I received another letter, which further expanded the test to an additional 276 sites. I believe that, through the time of this publication, all of the identified test sites are continuing to use this pre-load process for Sunday delivery.

On Jan. 24, the Postal Service notified me that they had concluded the Sunday Amazon Load pilot test and intend to implement the initiative nationwide. With USPS's conclusion of the test and implementation of the initiative, I thought now would be a good time to tell you a little more about what NALC has observed regarding the pre-loading process.

Over the summer, NALC City Delivery staff visited one of the pilot sites to observe the test process. During the observation, the loading carriers began at 6:30 a.m. and the delivering carriers arrived in two shifts: two delivery-only carriers at 7 a.m.

and two at 7:30 a.m. The office had scheduled for six dynamic parcel routes to be delivered on that Sunday. However, due to a last-minute increase in the parcel volume, seven routes were prepared by the distribution clerk.

All the parcels had been distributed prior to the arrival of the loading carriers. The routes had been sorted using Dynamic Routing, with the parcels numbered by the clerk in order of delivery, and turn-by-turn directions were printed. In the observed test site, supervision instructed the loading carriers to also use the MDD Load Truck feature when loading the vehicle. The carriers involved stated that it was common practice to use both methods. Supervision instructed the loading carriers to place parcels numbered 1-29 in delivery order working from the front of the vehicle, and then the delivering carriers could "figure the rest out on the street." In practice, this methodology was modified to fit the individual circumstances as the vehicles being loaded were a mixture of LLVs, Promasters and Metris.

The loading carriers had the first routes ready at approximately 7:15 a.m. The first two delivery carriers began at 7 a.m. and clocked to Office Operation 7240 to obtain their vehicle keys and accountable items, set up their scanners and receive instructions from management. Management advised each carrier that the expected goal was for them to complete 20 stops per hour. Letter carriers should remember there is no handbook or manual standard they must meet for parcel delivery.

The first group of delivery carriers waited a few minutes to obtain their pre-loaded vehicles. Each delivery-only carrier was required to take part of the seventh route, which had been distributed, but to which no carrier had been scheduled. The parcels assigned from the seventh route were then loaded by each delivery carrier into their vehicle before they departed the facility.

The loading carriers began the second route of parcels at approximately 7:15 a.m. The loading of the second group of routes was completed at approximately 7:45 a.m. for the delivering carriers who arrived at 7:30 a.m. The loading carriers then loaded the parcels assigned to them for their scheduled route and the extra seventh route and then departed the facility at approximately 8:30 a.m. Based on feedback from the loading carriers, there was no significant difference in the number of parcels distributed among the seven routes.

The Postal Service reports usage of this pre-loading method has created an overall reduction in total workhours for Sunday delivery offices. Beginning Feb. 27, USPS began implementing the process in the rest of the Sunday delivery offices in the WestPac Area. Every two weeks through the end of April, the pre-loading initiative will begin a new phase in another USPS area. According to the schedule provided by USPS, the Central Area will begin on March 13, the Southern Area on March 27 and the Atlantic Area on April 10. Letter carriers with concerns about the pre-loading process for Sunday delivery should contact their shop steward or branch officer.