

# New uniform items



**James W.  
"Jim" Yates**

**L**etter carriers are the face of the Postal Service to the customers we serve. While there are more than 650,000 Postal Service employees, the letter carrier is whom the public sees daily as we deliver mail along our routes.

City letter carriers are easily identified by the uniforms we wear. This easy identification informs the public who we are, as we may be walking away from our postal vehicle while in their neighborhood. A uniform also projects a neat and professional appearance.

The National Joint Labor-Management Uniform Control Committee was established in Article 26, Section 1, when the first contract between the USPS and NALC was signed on July 20,

1971. The committee meets at least once every three months and has jurisdiction to consider all non-cost matters pertaining to the Uniform Allowance Program. Matters discussed by the committee include, but are not limited to, the uniform for which allowances are applicable, as well as the design, color, quality and fabrics of authorized reimbursable items.

As early as NALC's 47th biennial convention, which was held in 1970, resolutions have been brought to the floor concerning uniforms and Article 26. Over the years that followed, more than 130 uniform-related resolutions have been approved by national convention delegates. These resolutions cover many topics, including the amount of the uniform allowance, potential new uniform items to be included in the program, and uniform fabrics and colors.

The NALC uniform committee includes city carriers from around the country, covering many different climates. The members are Stafford Price, Chicago, IL Branch 11; Lisa Schleich, Grand Junction, CO Branch 913; Gregory Klopfer, Jamaica, NY Branch 562; Marc Adams, Suffolk, VA Branch 1112; Stephanie Baiungo, Las Vegas, NV Branch 2502 and myself.

For many years, NALC representatives on the uniform control committee have been advocating for improvements in city carrier uniforms. Funding continues to be our biggest hurdle for adding new items or updates to the program. However, I'm pleased to announce that two new items will be added to the uniform program this year:

- **New performance polo shirts:** There have been many advancements in fabrics since the current polo shirt was introduced into the uniform program. The new polo shirt is a 100 percent polyester performance fabric that offers moisture-wicking comfort to keep you cool and dry throughout the day. It will be the current light blue shade, with a left

dress pocket and USPS eagle over the pocket. These new polo shirts will be available beginning April 1. The current polo shirts will continue to be offered.

- **New scanner pocket pants:** These new pants will offer a scanner pocket on each leg. The pocket is of a Welt design, with the opening on the side of the pant leg and the pocket on the inside of the pant. As currently designed, the new pants are a slimmer fit than the current pattern. They will be offered in both men's and women's designs in summer and winter weights. The women's design will be featured in both straight and curvy fits. The pants will be available later this year. The current style of pants will continue to be offered.

The new uniform items, along with all other uniform items, are subject to the USPS "Made in the USA" policy. This policy was announced in October 2018, and all manufacturers had to comply no later than Sept. 30, 2020. This policy requires that all materials, apparel, garments, accessories, insignia, footwear and applicable findings be domestically sourced and assembled in the United States.

Adding a new uniform item is not a fast process in the best of times. Myra Warren, the NALC's former director of life insurance, began discussions surrounding both of these new items several years ago. The pandemic has further slowed production of all uniform items and led to countless backorders, creating frustration for everyone involved.

Do not wait until the last minute to spend your uniform allowance. Vendors are not permitted to charge for items that have not shipped. If you are spending your allowance just prior to your anniversary date, confirm with your vendor that the items you are ordering are in stock.

## Short-term disability insurance

**City letter carriers are not provided with disability insurance.** If you are ill or injured and have exhausted your sick and annual leave, your only option is leave without pay. You will need an additional source of income.

In my November 2021 *Postal Record* article, I introduced the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA)'s new short-term disability insurance: MBA Individual Disability Income (MBA IDI). Disability income insurance helps cover you when the unexpected happens. It helps ensure that you have the money you need and are better able to continue living the lifestyle you've worked for if you become hurt or too sick to work.

For more information about the MBA IDI plan or any of the MBA products, please call the MBA office toll-free at 800-424-5184, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., or call 202-638-4318, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time. You also may visit our website at [nalc.org/mba](http://nalc.org/mba).