

MDD timekeeping feature update



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In April, the Postal Service advised NALC of its intent to begin nationally implementing the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) timekeeping feature, which was previously being tested in various locations around the country. This notification provided NALC with a tentative schedule for the rollout process, which involves nine phases of implementation. To date, USPS has implemented Phases 1 through 3 of the rollout, which includes the pilot locations, North Carolina district and most of the USPS Atlantic area. As more locations have begun using the feature, city carriers have expressed to me concerns with the MDD timekeeping process. I want

to use this month's article to address those concerns and to provide members with some additional information received from USPS during our discussions of the feature.

My staff and I regularly meet with the Postal Service to discuss the Mobile Delivery Device technology and the application software. During these meetings, we provide feedback from letter carriers on recent changes and propose suggestions for future enhancements and/or new features. One of our recent meetings with the USPS MDD team focused on carrier feedback and concerns related to the timekeeping feature.

The first concern NALC addressed with USPS was the time it takes to navigate the multiple menus before the Begin Tour entry is submitted into TACS. When initially clocking in, carriers have reported that it appears to take an excessive amount of time to successfully begin tour. Currently, the timekeeping workflow requires that carriers scan their postal identification badge, and choose the user role (e.g., City Carrier) and user type (e.g., On Street Motorized), route number and vehicle information prior to submitting the Begin Tour entry. We explained to USPS that navigating all these menus prior to the recording of the initial begin tour could be problematic if the carrier did not have a route assignment or vehicle assignment prior to clocking in. There are many occasions in which city carrier daily assignments and vehicles may change last minute due to operational circumstances. We emphasized to USPS the importance of making that initial Begin Tour entry immediate and independent of all the other menus. The Postal Service has agreed to change the current workflow and time stamp of the Begin Tour to reflect the actual time the carrier selects the Begin Tour option im-

mediately after scanning their ID badge and selecting the city carrier user role. Additionally, USPS has agreed to add an audible alert when the carrier selects Begin Tour so carriers are aware of exactly when they are on the clock.

Another concern communicated to NALC is the inconsistency between the way the MDD displays and calculates time and the established USPS timekeeping system. The Postal Service uses a unique timekeeping system that is a variation of the military 24-hour clock. In this system, time is recorded in hundredths (or units) of an hour rather than minutes. Negotiated contractual provisions and official postal handbooks recognize this as the proper timekeeping system for postal employees. Conversely, the MDD displays time in minutes and seconds, which is inconsistent with postal handbooks and manuals. In our discussions, USPS recognized that the two systems were in conflict and is working on correcting this issue within the program software.

Also, I have received reports of concerns related to the timekeeping feature when the MDD is in training mode for new employees attending Carrier Academy. In locations where the timekeeping feature has been implemented, facilitators have reported that new employees often have not yet received a postal badge prior to attending Carrier Academy. Since they do not have an ID badge, these new carriers are unable to log in and access the MDD during the training. USPS verified that despite being in the training mode, there is still a requirement to scan a postal ID badge to log in. USPS recognizes that this is a problem and is working on a solution to perhaps bypass this requirement in training locations or maybe create a specific generic ID badge for use in training facilities. Additionally, USPS inadvertently implemented the timekeeping feature for all training facilities. NALC advised USPS that using the timekeeping feature in training locations where the feature has not been implemented for all employees creates confusion for new carriers. For example, the timekeeping feature has yet to be implemented in the WestPac Area. It is improper for those Carrier Academies to teach the new method of making time clock entries when they will not be using this method. New carriers should be trained on how to make proper time entries consistent with their work location. In our meeting, the Postal Service agreed to discontinue use of the MDD timekeeping feature in Carrier Academy locations where the feature has yet to be implemented.

I always appreciate feedback from letter carriers on the MDD and will continue to use it in my discussions with the Postal Service. I hope this article has clarified some aspects of the MDD timekeeping feature and alleviated concerns for carriers. Going forward, I will be sure to update the membership with any additional information related to this initiative.