City Delivery updates

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Some time has passed since I last updated the membership on initiatives from the Postal Service. The Postal Service has been busy, and I believe now is a good time to catch up.

MDD Software Version 7.65

In a November notification, USPS detailed a recent software update to the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD-TR), Version 7.65. One feature of the update was the Collection Point Management System (CPMS) Carriage Bolt Survey. In the notice, the Postal Service explained that there are more than 45,000 locks on collection boxes that need to be replaced with new, more secure, electronic arrow locks (eArrow locks).

Headquarters Engineering Systems developed the eArrow lock for use on collection boxes and cluster box units (CBUs) as a solution to the ongoing problem of collection boxes and CBUs being compromised by lost, stolen or counterfeit arrow lock keys. The arrow lock key alone will no longer open the collection box or CBU. The carrier now must open the eArrow lock application on the MDD-TR, which will communicate with the eArrow lock on the collection box or the CBU, then use the Arrow lock key to open the lock on the collection box or CBU. The Postal Service hopes that the survey will help identify collection boxes that have specific types of carriage bolts securing the locks that are scheduled for replacement.

As part of a limited pilot test conducted in four offices, Version 7.65 also included a feature called "Scan Integrity." With this MDD enhancement, employees were no longer able to access the "Delivered 01" scan event while within the geofence of the facilities. If a package was scanned as delivered within the Post Office geofence, the MDD displayed the message, "Delivery scans must be made when at the address on the package." The "Scan Integrity" pilot concluded in November and at this time, USPS indicates that there are no plans to make any changes based on this pilot initiative.

Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC) test–Athens, GA

Beginning in September, the Postal Service also sent notifications of its plans to conduct three pilot tests at the Sorting and Delivery Center (S&DC) in Athens, GA.

Electronic accountable lockers

USPS introduced this pilot with hopes to automate and increase security of the accountable process. A total of five locker banks with 156 available slots have been installed at the S&DC, replacing the registry cages at the location. During the pilot, clerks load the lockers with accountable mail pieces, along with a PS Form 3867, before a carrier is set to collect and sign for them. To access the locker, carriers must either scan their employee badge or enter their employee identification number (EIN) into the kiosk screen. Upon entering their route assignment number for the day, the locker door for the assignment opens so the carrier can retrieve his or her accountable items. The Postal Service explains that a clerk is to be present when carriers retrieve accountable items from the locker and when carriers return at the end of the day to clear accountable items. The pilot test of the accountable lockers began in early October 2022.

Electronic arrow key cabinets

The Postal Service initiated this test, designed to automate and improve security of the arrow key process. Two cabinets have been installed at the location, replacing the previous arrow key system. This cabinet also requires a carrier to either scan his or her employee badge or enter his or her EIN into the display to gain access. Once the carrier has gained access, the cabinet's screen will then indicate what key is available to them. After completion of the workday, the carrier again operates the electronic cabinet to return the arrow key to the slot from which it was obtained.

City carriers should be reminded that any testing of the above concepts does not change any National Agreement or USPS handbook provisions related to the handling of accountable items.

Electronic employee lockers

USPS presented this pilot, intended to update employee lockers with a permanent and more secure place to store their personal items. USPS explained that the lockers are electronic and will replace all existing personal item storage locations at the S&DC. Like the electronic accountable lockers described above, to access the employee lockers, carriers also must either scan their employee badge or enter their EIN into the kiosk screen. The door of the locker assigned to the carrier will open automatically and the kiosk screen will direct the carrier to where the door is in relationship to the kiosk. Postal management is responsible for programming the names of carriers into the locker system.

The Postal Service has not identified an end date for any of the tests being conducted at the S&DC.

There has been much to evaluate over these past months. I will continue to communicate with the Postal Service on these initiatives and make sure that there are no violations of any contractual provisions or postal handbooks and manuals. I will continue to update the membership on any effects these initiatives may have on city carriers and provide more information as it becomes available. Be sure to read my article each month and visit nalc.org for the latest updates.