

City Delivery updates



Christopher Jackson

Over the course of the last few years, I've used this column to inform the membership of different pilot tests, initiatives or concerns that conflict with postal handbooks and manuals and our collective-bargaining agreement. I will be using this month's column to revisit these items to serve as a reminder to the membership as they may still be going on in different parts of the country.

Geotab pilot reports

In 2022, the Postal Service awarded a contract to Geotab for use of its telematics technology in all postal-owned vehicles. USPS believes that using technology reduces fuel consumption and improves overall vehicle maintenance and repairs. Installation and use of the devices began in February 2023.

Geotab devices are used to create the following reports: USPS Vehicle Stop Locations Report, which relies on tracking to identify overnight parking locations of vehicles; Maintenance/Fault Report, which provides fault name, code and count for fault issues reported by each vehicle; Battery Drain Report, which provides a list of all vehicles reporting a battery voltage below 11 volts; Low Oil Pressure Report, which provides a list of vehicles experiencing very low oil pressure; In Shop More than 8 Hours Report, which identifies vehicles that spend more than eight hours at local maintenance locations; Idling Report, which displays total time a vehicle idles, including a dollar value to fuel used during that idle based on current fuel cost; Fuel Efficiency Scoreboard Report, which evaluates driving behavior that affects fuel efficiency; and Backing Up While Leaving Report, which shows each time a vehicle backs up while leaving when outside of a USPS location. For more details on the telematics pilot, see my column in the June 2023 *Postal Record*.

Driver Seatbelt Exceptions Report

USPS is now using Geotab data to create a report called the Driver Seatbelt Exceptions Report. This report identifies when a driver seat belt is not engaged while a vehicle is being operated. Based on what I have seen, the report lists the total number of instances, miles traveled and percentage of time a vehicle is driv-

en above 5 mph without the driver seat belt engaged.

Postal management officials have relied on this report to confirm seat belt use in place of conducting street observations. In some cases, these officials have used the report to issue disciplinary action. Geotab reports alone are not sufficient for identifying failures to wear seat belts and should not be the sole basis for any disciplinary action. Relying on the report as a substitute for conducting street observations conflicts with Section 134.22 of *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services*, which states:

134.22 The manager is not to spy or use other covert techniques. Any employee infractions are to be handled in accordance with the section in the current National Agreement that deal with these problems.

Attempts to rely on Geotab data in this manner are not much different than USPS efforts to rely solely on GPS data from Mobile Delivery Devices (MDD) to discipline carriers for stationary events. Like data collected from the MDD, data from Geotab devices is not always accurate and should be investigated by union representatives whenever necessary.

Postal orientation

Toward the end of 2023, I held several discussions with the Postal Service regarding orientation for newly converted career letter carriers. I've found that many of our newly converted carriers are not receiving the benefit of this important orientation.

Newly hired letter carriers take part in a training program consisting of five phases: orientation, driver training, shadow day, Carrier Academy and on-the-job training. This orientation introduces the Postal Service to its new hires. The Postal Service often schedules newly hired career letter carriers, such as part-time flexibles, to attend this same initial hiring orientation with newly hired non-career letter carriers, such as city carrier assistants. The orientation is composed of eight chapters, or "modules," and covers many subjects, such as postal history, employee conduct, safety and employee resources.

The eighth and final module of the orientation focuses on career employee benefits. Because non-career carriers are not entitled to the same benefits as career carriers, the Postal Service will temporarily excuse non-career carriers at the end of Module 7 and continue their discussion with career carriers in Module 8. Non-career carriers are allowed to resume the orientation for a Q&A session after career employee benefits have been reviewed.

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Men's health (continued)

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specific areas of awareness, the real impact comes from continued action throughout the year. Other programs you will have support for:

- ✓ Smoking cessation or quitting tobacco—Program choices or enrollment will depend on program enrollment (High Option or CDHP).
- ✓ Managing diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol with the Priority Health Coaching program.
- ✓ Behavioral healthcare and mental and emotional well-being resources are available through Optum Health® or Cigna Healthcare. Program choices or enrollment will depend on program enrollment (High Option or CDHP).
- ✓ Strengthening joint and muscle health through Hinge Health®.
- ✓ Virtual care for gastrointestinal or digestive issues—OSHI Health™.

Director of City Delivery

City Delivery updates (continued)

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Chapter 7 of the Postal Service's *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* covers training and development. Section 715.2 states:

Postal Orientation

An orientation program is required at all levels for new career employees on their first day of official duty.

It is vital for non-career employees to attend the orientation required by *ELM* Section 715.2 on the first day of their official duty as a career carrier. It is during this orientation that they can review all of the new benefits they are now eligible for with the Postal Service, includ-

ing annual leave, the Postal Service Health Benefits Program, Thrift Savings Plan, Federal Employee Group Life Insurance and flexible spending accounts. Enrollment in these programs can be time sensitive, which adds to the importance of participation in the orientation on the first day of a carrier's career appointment.

If you have recently been converted to a career carrier position and local management failed to provide you with an orientation on the first day of your career appointment, request to speak with your shop steward or branch officer and request that a grievance be filed on your behalf.

Be sure to read my article each month and visit nalc.org for more information.

Director of Retired Members

Retirement questions (continued)

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How can I suspend my health insurance coverage?

Annuitants can apply any time to suspend PSHB coverage to use TRICARE, CHAMPVA or a Medicare Advantage plan. Call OPM at 888-767-6738 to obtain a suspension form. Remember that there is a difference between canceling (permanent) and suspending (indefinite) health insurance. Beware: Annuitants who cancel PSHB cannot re-enroll later.

If you have unanswered questions, be sure to head to the NALC website to access the *Federal Employees Retirement System* or the *Civil Service Retirement System Questions & Answers* booklets or reach out to your branch to see if they have hard copies available. Members are always welcome to call the NALC Retirement Department at 800-424-5186 (toll free) Monday, Wednesday or Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time, or by calling the NALC HQ switchboard at 202-393-4695 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time and asking for the Retirement Department.