



Rural Daily Operations Training Handbook

United States Postal Service

Great Lakes Area

August 2004

Daily Operations

INTRODUCTION

The 2000 National Agreement between the USPS and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association, entered into as of February 3, 2002, provides us with many new challenges in dealing with rural delivery. The implementation of these changes will be complex and trying, at times. This collection of definitions, documents, forms, and instructions has been developed to assist postal managers and to ensure compliance with the intent of this agreement. Some of the material in this guide includes excerpts and references from Handbook F-21 (Time and Attendance), Handbook M-38, Management of Rural Delivery Service, Handbook PO-603, the Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities, and Handbook EL-902, the 2000 - 2004 National Agreement, and various documents and memorandums issued by the United States Postal Service. The information contained in this guide supplements these publications and is not intended to supersede or replace them.

These materials have been assembled to assist you in the daily management of rural delivery. Rural carriers play an important role in the service we provide to the public, as well as the financial well being of the Postal Service. The information provided here will assist in managing rural routes in the most efficient manner possible.

Rural carriers function as a Post Office on wheels, providing many of the same vital services performed at a Post Office. In addition to delivering mail, the rural carrier provides rural and suburban customers with money orders, stamp purchases, and other special services. The rural carrier makes it possible for the customer to receive these services without having to make a trip to the Post Office.

The old concept that "rural delivery manages itself" can no longer be applied. Rural delivery requires the same degree of attention that the city delivery and clerical operation require. The supervision and administration of rural delivery is every Manager's responsibility. The materials contained here are not intended to replace, substitute, or supersede any official regulations, directives, or manuals; they are merely here to provide you with the tools to achieve success.

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Manuals and Handbooks

- **Handbook PO 603, Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities (June 1991)**
- **M38, Management of Rural Routes (July 1980)**
- **Handbook EL902, Agreement between the USPS and NRLCA (2000-2004)**
- **F21, Chapter 5, Time and Attendance Handbook**

Evaluated Compensation System

The US Postal Service Rural Carrier is paid on a different system than the rest of the Postal Service employees. The rural carrier is paid on an evaluation that was based from a mail count on their route. The rural carrier receives a daily evaluation regardless of the number of hours worked. The rural carrier may work less than the evaluation or may work more on other occasions. He/she takes leave in full days as if they were salaried instead taking leave in hours.

Article 3 – Management Rights

The Employer shall have the exclusive right, subject to the provisions of this Agreement and consistent with applicable laws and regulations:

- a. To direct employees of the Employer in the performance of official duties;
- b. To hire, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees in positions within the Postal Service and to suspend, demote, discharge, or take other disciplinary action against such employees;
- c. To maintain the efficiency of the operations entrusted to it;
- d. To determine the methods, means, and personnel by which such operations are to be conducted;
- e. To prescribe a uniform dress to be worn by letter carriers and other designated employees; and
- f. To take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out its mission in emergency situation; i.e., an unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action in a situation which is not expected to be a recurring nature.

Route Classifications

Each route falls under a classification that identifies the number of days the carrier works. Figure 1 list the times for each classification. Carriers work under FSLA section 7(B) rules. They get paid for a job based on an evaluation that establishes a base. They do not get paid by the hour. The pay period is the base for the evaluation. There are 12 working days in a pay period.

K Routes : 1 relief day every week. 10 working days over the 12 day pay period. This route receives two relief days during each pay period.

J Routes: 1 relief day every other week. 11 working days over the 12 day pay period. This route receives one scheduled relief day each pay period.

H Routes: 6 days per week. 12 days per pay period. No relief days.

A Routes: Auxiliary routes. 6 days per week (normally of less than 39 hours per week).

L Routes: High density route having 12 boxes or more per mile. Any route (H, J, K, A) may be an "L" route. See page 5.

Figure 1
Classifications

"H" ROUTES		<u>ROUTE CLASSIFICATIONS</u>		* Normally, these "K" Route categories (shown below) should only be used as interim route classifications pending route adjustments.	
41	(40:30 to 41:29)				
42	(41:30 to 42:29)				
43	(42:30 to 43:29)				
44	(43:30 to 44:29)				
45	(44:30 to 45:29)				
46	(45:30 to 46:29)				
		"J" ROUTES			
		41	(44:11 to 45:15)		
		42	(45:16 to 46:21)		
		43	(46:22 to 47:27)		
		44	(47:28 to 48:32)		
		45	(48:33 to 49:37)		
		46	(49:38 to 50:43)		
				"K" ROUTES	
				40	(47:24 to 48:35)
				41	(48:36 to 49:47)
				42	(49:48 to 50:59)
				43	(51:00 to 52:11)
				44	(52:12 to 53:23)
				45	(53:24 to 54:35)
				46	(54:36 to 54:47)
				47*	(55:48 to 56:59)
				48*	(57:00 to 57:36)

High/Low Option for Rural Carriers

When can a carrier elect high option (Article 9.2.C.7.b):

- a. At National or Special Count
- b. When a one-hour change has occurred. Either an interim adjustment, seasonal change or a major route adjustment
- c. At the beginning of the guarantee year

To be eligible to elect high option:

- a. Must be in a 6-8 hour leave earning capacity
- b. Must sign a leave commitment (4015A or count form)
- c. Carrier has demonstrated he/she will not exceed 2,080 work hours

Low Option:

- a. A carrier may elect to go to low option at any time
- b. It must be at the beginning of a pay period
- c. They must put the request in writing
- d. A 4003 needs to be submitted to your Customer Service Analyst the pay period prior to the effective date

“L” or Non-“L” Routes

An “L” route has 12 or more boxes averaged over all the miles of the route. Since the mid 1980s, “L” routes have received less time for regular boxes. These routes are typically in suburban areas. (1.82 per box versus 2.00)

To determine the density of the route, divide the number of deliveries by the number of miles. The route must be 12.00 or more boxes per mile or it is not an “L” route. As of the 2000 contract, each regular box factor is 9% less than a Non “L” route.

Only a count can change the status of the route. If a route has sufficient number of boxes to become an “L” route, then a count is scheduled in accordance with the contract. It is not an automatic change. In addition, if a route loses enough deliveries to become a Non-“L” route, it must be counted to become a non “L” route.

A newly created auxiliary route can not be an “L” route. It must be counted to convert this to the “L” route status.

Routes that qualify for “L” or “Non-L” status meet the criteria set for a Special Count. Special counts will be conducted during the last twelve (12) working days in September or during the National Count, whichever would happen first.

2080/2240 ISSUES

The guarantee year is usually from November to November (some times starting in October). It was associated with the National Mail count, until the count was moved to February in 2002, from contract arbitrations. When a carrier exceeds 2,080 work hours during the guarantee year, any hour worked in excess of 2,080 will be paid at an overtime rate. This is in addition to any other overtime previously earned in the year.

All actual hours worked by the regular carrier count toward 2240, including training and QWL-EI activity. All actual hours worked by the regular, except for those listed below are counted toward 2080:

- Christmas Overtime
- FLSA Overtime - over 12 hours/day or 56 hours/week
- Relief days worked where the carrier chooses to be compensated (DACA Code 5)

Any employee that exceeds the 2240 hour limitation must be compensated in accordance with Section 7(a) of the FLSA. The employee shall receive overtime compensation for all hours actually worked in excess of:

- 2080 hours in one year
- 40 hours in one week
- 8 hours in one day

If you are utilizing the 4240 Timekeeping program, actual work hours should carry forward on each 4240 printed.

2080/2240 Preventive Maintenance

- PS 4240 – Daily review, including review of lunch and breaks
- Office layout.
- Case layout and labels.
- Properly scheduled starting times.
- Growth management.
- Efficient work habits.
- Adherence to SOP's.
- Proper use of Matrix and Relief Day Work List.
- Efficient line of travel.
- Leave Replacements Hiring/Retention.
- "X" Days taken before the end of the guarantee period.

2080/2240 Action Plans

- Ensure proper recording of work hours on PS4240 (top right – accumulated hours)
- Documentation and discussion with carrier.
- Corrective action to include preventative maintenance items.
- Take DPS to the street.
- Breaks & lunches are recorded (10 minutes a day will add up to over 50 hours a year).
- Bypass carrier for opportunities to work their relief day.
- Schedule any "X" or "O" days the carrier has on the books as soon as possible.
- Obtain written leave commitments (signed 3971's).
- Allow use of LWOP, at carrier's request (management may not mandate)
- Adjust route.
- Assign route to "low option".

Unacceptable Action Plans

- Auxiliary assistance.
- Administrative Leave.
- Sick Leave.
- Required the use of LWOP.

2080 HOURS ANNUAL GUARANTEES

EVALUATED HOURS:											
*35	*36	*37	*38	*39	*40	*41	*42	*43	*44	*45	*46
											**20
										65	*2060
									110	*2015	
							155	*1970			
						200	*1925	* EVALUATED HOURS			
					245	*1880					
				290	*1835						
		325	*1790	** DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTUAL HOURS WORKED AND 2,080 HOURS							
		380	*1745								
	*425	***1700									
470	*1655	***ACTUAL HOURS WORKED ON THE ROUTE -- WHERE CARRIER MEETS THE TIME STANDARDS AND USES 26 DAYS OF LEAVE AND 10 HOLIDAYS (45 WEEKS OF ACTUAL WORK).									
515	*1610										
***1565											

The guarantee year has another rule. If for any reason, the evaluation of the route falls below 36 hours (36H), the carrier will continue to earn a minimum of 36 hours.

As the Postmaster or manager, it is your responsibility to ensure all mails are delivered timely, accurately and efficiently. To do so, the carriers must have the proper tools to accomplish their part of our mission

Casing Equipment

Casing equipment is very important to sequence the mail. The requirements are found in the PO 603 handbook. It describes the methods and styles of casing. The Postmaster authorizes the type of equipment and number of pieces. Within the rural craft, once authorized it is considered the correct style. Management can not change styles on an encumbered route unless carriers are going over their office/total evaluation on a consistent basis and casing equipment may contribute to this issue. Management may change the style and method on auxiliary routes or on vacant routes. It is imperative that management inspect and modify casing equipment when needed prior to route posting.

The normal case setup is a 124 with wings sufficient to the number of deliveries. For a one bundle setup, the correct method is two inch separations with one or two addresses for each separation. Management does not have to allow more than three pieces for a route. Typically, one 124, two 144s would allow up to 720 inches in a 6 row setup.

A larger number of cases could increase the possibility of repeated trauma syndromes. Repeated turning and twisting as the carrier cases can cause carpal tunnel syndrome or rotator cuff injuries. If a carrier has a setup that is not described in the PO 603, it is up to local policy to allow sufficient number of pieces to case in.

Labels

The labels must be placed from a left to right sequence. There are several different styles in label placement. Most common is to start in the lower left corner and proceed to the lower right corner prior to starting on the next higher shelf left to right. A second common style is to start at the upper left corner and proceed to the upper right corner. Then proceeding to the next lower shelf, left to right. A less common but allowed style is to proceed from one left corner (upper or lower) and proceed through that one piece prior to going to the next piece. For additional information, please reference PO603, 213.3.c.

Label placement is dependent on casing style. If starting from the lower left, mail is cased above the label. If beginning on the upper left corner, mail is cased under the label. The equipment was manufactured to have labels under the mail. For the labels to be above the mail, the label must be taped. This is allowed, but should be changed when the route becomes vacant.

Edit Books

CLASS labels must be used. Edit Book maintenance keeps the labels accurate and in delivery sequence. Names for the customers are not required if on a number and street address system. The names may be included. If on a RR box number addressing system, either the names should be on the labels or a directory kept at the case. The labels may not be cut and pasted together. However a rural carrier may write names on the labels. Addresses must be added through AMS and the Edit Book.

The use of Edit Books has evolved in the last few years. The reverse side of the PS 4240 was used to record all new addresses that were added to the route. The PS 1621 replaced the reverse side of the 4240. Now the edit books have replaced the PS 1621. The time for completing the edit book is equal to the amount of time it took to add in or delete addresses on the reverse of the 4240 for no additional time.

Each delivery is to be in the Edit Book. The residences that do not receive delivery are call 'non stats'. These houses may receive mail at the local office in a PO Box or in another box. For the P O Box deliveries, the address should be coded as a 'N'. The house that receives mail at another box is to use the address of the delivery point and the in care of endorsement. The delivery address is then annotated with a 'drop 2' designation.

The Edit Book sequences the deliveries in order and reflects the sequence of automated mail the carrier receives. The edit book should be used to verify the delivery order, regardless if the carrier cases DPS or takes it directly to the street.

Mail Flow

The manager has the right and responsibility to manage the flow of mail through the delivery unit. The myth that rural carriers carry all mail every day is not true. On Mondays, a greater percentage is given to the carriers. It is not realistic to expect a carrier to carry a much greater amount of mail in the same amount of time on the other days. Typically, the rural carrier will take all mail given to the route everyday, therefore curtailment at the distribution case is recommended on days with heavy volume.

The key to managing rural routes is to ensure all carriers are out on time and back for the dispatch, providing consistent delivery. There should be a plan in place, if the dispatch is not met, to ensure the mail gets to the plant for processing. Regular carriers can not be forced to take the mail to the plant or another collection point if missing dispatch in the home office.

Mondays and days after the holidays usually have abnormally heavy volumes. Curtailment is a tool that should be used to ensure carriers leave and return close to their scheduled times. In addition, starting time changes on those days, in conjunction with mail volume, can also help get the carriers out and back on time (M38, 333.34).

A regular carrier is to expect a full day's relief for his scheduled relief day. If the regular normally curtails mail, expectations of the RCA should be the same. If the RCA put in a full day and due to the volume of mail was unable to case & deliver all mail, the regular would not be entitled to assistance either. New RCAs may not be able to case and carry all mail. Mail held at the distribution point away from the case is a strategy you may want to use. Mail at the case is considered to be available for delivery.

SOPs

Standard Operation Procedures are guidelines for the carriers and managers to follow. The SOPs should be the daily expectations for the carrier to meet and what he can expect in support to get his job done. Managers must provide the correct equipment and environment for the carrier. Attached at the end are sample SOPs that may be used.

Stamp stock is a required time given to all carriers to replenish the stock to sell to the customers. It is a 20-minute weekly standard time for ALL routes. If the carrier brings PS 3276R (orange stamps by mail envelope) to the unit for filling, it is an acceptable procedure for unique requests

only. The carrier should have sufficient stock on the route to fill the normal day. The carriers are not to go to the lobby and wait in line with the customers for the window clerks. Stock should be available for purchase in the morning or from the clearing clerk in the afternoon.

Daily SOPs

- General Management Information

If management requires a regular rural carrier to make a second trip to deliver mail that was **NOT** available to the carrier before leaving the office to serve the route, the manager or supervisor will pay the carrier for the second trip for that day. However, if the mail **WAS** available to the carrier and the carrier was unable to fit the mail or parcels into the carrier's vehicle, the carrier will not be compensated for the second trip. The additional miles can be added to the route deviation block on Form 1314.

The use of cellular phones is strictly prohibited on postal property unless authorized by management. The use of cellular phones is strictly prohibited on a rural route unless it is an emergency or the carrier has obtained prior approval for business purposes. The carrier must never use a cellular phone while driving the vehicle. (MOU)

Carriers do not curtail or delay any class of mail unless authorized by management (PO 603, Section 132.1).

Management should use Form 4584 (street observations) at least semiannually to observe the carriers performance on the street.

Mail that has arrived at the delivery units with specific in home dates should not be delivered before the date requested by the mailer. For example, catalogues arrive in the unit on March 1, with an in home requested date of March 3, 4, or 5. This mail should not be delivered before March 3 even though it is available on March 1.

Rural carriers should be recording their daily mail volume in the remarks column of the Form 4240 (if required) (PO 603, Section 212.11).

When snow, vehicles or other objects temporarily block access to individual mail boxes, the carrier must dismount to make the delivery when such service can be provided without undue physical exertion or risk of personal injury. Customers should keep the approach to their mail box clear by promptly removing the obstruction, including snow, which may make the normal delivery of mail from a vehicle difficult or impossible. The supervisor or manager should inform the customer through the use of Form 4056 (Your Mail Box Needs Attention) of any obstructions preventing the carrier from serving the box for the vehicle (PO 603, Section 313.2).

If a carrier consistently records waiting time in the remarks column of the Form 4240, the manager or supervisor should determine if the carrier's start time needs to be adjusted. Form 8127 should not be used for waiting time

- Withdrawal of Mail (PO 603, Section 212.1).

Rural carriers must withdraw all mail from distribution cases for their route that has not already been placed on case ledges by a clerk or mail handler, as directed by management. Normally

no more than two additional withdrawals should be made in the morning. (Measure and record the mail if the route is so authorized/required.)

Rural carriers must make a final withdrawal of preferential letters and flats from a designated case before leaving for their routes. Normally, this mail is withdrawn on the line of travel out the door to load. This final withdrawal must be made by rural carriers even though they may be exempt from withdrawal requirements (PO 603, Section 212.14).

Withdrawal is the time to procure all mails in the office by the carrier. It is 30-minute weekly standard time for ALL routes. In some offices, the carriers may take longer than the 30 minutes weekly however, will not receive additional time.

Make sure start times are set up accordingly. Carriers' walking around collecting mail increases the congestion in offices. Which, in turn, increases the time spent in the office in non-productive activities.

There should be no more than two trips in the morning to withdraw mail. More times indicates the carriers are reporting too early for the volume withdrawn. Withdrawal can not be abolished in a unit by management without a consensus from the carriers. The carriers do get to vote on the withdrawal issue. If the unit is a new unit (totally remodeled or new facility) management can abolish withdrawal unilaterally?

-Carrier Casing Equipment (PO 603, Section 213) – see page 6

-Labeling Carrier Cases – see page 7

-Parcel Delivery Procedures

Carriers are required to take each parcel on the route to effect delivery. If the customer is usually available, the carrier's do not leave a 3849 at the first attempt. They are required to attempt a second delivery on the next day. (PO603, 332)

Parcels must NOT be left outside the box or in unprotected locations unless the addressee has given written directions for an alternate delivery. (PO603, 331.22).

The carrier must leave it in a location that is concealed and protected from weather. (PO603, 331.222). Placing a parcel in a plastic bag and rubber banding it to a customer's mail receptacle is NOT an acceptable practice.

On the next few pages, you will find a generic Standard Operating Procedure. You may use this. You are allowed to make changes if it pertains to your office. This SOP gives to the carrier the expectations of his duties that should be completed daily. Placing the SOP in the route book is not sufficient. You must also explain the expectations to the carrier in order the carrier to be held to those standards.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR RURAL LETTER CARRIERS

AM OFFICE FUNCTIONS

Report to work promptly as scheduled and in a timely manner unless approved in advance by Management. (PO-603, 120a)

Immediately upon reporting, record actual reporting time in ink, in column 2 of the PS 4240 (*Rural Carrier Trip Report*), and begin work. Complete PS Form 4240 daily to accurately reflect the actual hours and minutes worked each day. (PO 603, 211) Record all break times: (i.e. lunch, smoke breaks, etc.) under column 6. (PO-603, 120f)

Rural Carriers may stop for not more than 30 minutes for lunch during which time mail and equipment MUST be protected. Lunch periods may be split into segments that may be taken in the office or on the route. Time spend consuming coffee away from their cases in the office or on street is part of the 30-minute lunch period. This time must be annotated on the 4240. (PO603, 152.3)

In offices with carrier withdrawal, as directed by your Supervisor, withdraw, measure, and record (if applicable) from the distribution cases all mail for your route that has not already been placed there by a clerk. Changes in withdrawal procedure can only be made in accordance with M-38, 352. (PO-603, 212.1)

Normally, no more than two additional withdrawals of mail are made by the carrier during A.M. office time. (M-38, 352.21)

Rural carriers must make a final withdrawal of preferential letters and flats from a designated case before leaving for their routes. Normally, this mail is withdrawn on the line of travel out the door to load. Rural carriers must make this final withdrawal even though they may be exempt from withdrawal requirements. (PO-603, Section 212.22)

Carrier returns any mis-thrown mail to distribution case when withdrawal is made. (PO-603, 242.22)

Begin casing mail in the method prescribed for your office as proficiently as possible. Do not engage in time-wasting practices while performing casing duties. (PO-603, 220)

When casing flats, use the proper methods for the offices prescribed casing method. (PO-603, 223)

Letter mail is to be picked up with left hand (a solid handful) and cased with the right hand. (PO-603, 222)

Take out daily all mail intended for delivery, unless specifically authorized otherwise by your Supervisor. (PO-603, 132.1)

Standard B mail will normally be cased in the afternoon when you return from your route. However, on light mail volume days, it is permissible to case some Standard B (BBM) provided you can maintain your scheduled leaving time. (PO-603, 224.1, 224.2)

Obtain your accountable mail and keys through the prescribed office method. Take reasonable precautions to protect the sanctity of accountable mail. (PO-603, 252)

Properly handle Form 3575 and Form 3982 and all mail associated with these forms. Place Undeliverable-as-addressed mail and CMU/CFS mail in proper location as you prepare to leave for the route on your way to load vehicle. (PO-603, 240)

Strap out all mail cased, and if necessary, mark each tray in sequence of delivery. Mail may be placed in tubs, or trays, instead of strapping out. Mail should then be placed directly into your transport hamper or BMC. (PO-603, 260 & 535.12q)

Properly endorse each piece of mail that qualifies as an individual mark up. Endorse only the top piece of mail for bundle mark ups. (see categories below). Place in proper bins in the throw back case. (note: leave UBBM at your case for the nixie clerk). Ref PO-603, 242.2

Individual Mark-ups

CFS Corrections
Attempted Not Known
No Such number/street
Refused
Vacant (1st class mail addressed to occupant)
Undeliverable Parcel
Deceased
No Mail Receptacle (this doesn't apply to PO Box mail)
No Record (returned from CFS)**

*** most of these should go in some other category*

Bundle Mark-ups

CFS Letters
CFS Flats
UBBM
Other UBBM
Extra Boxholders (1 bundle count per mailing)
Insufficient Address (goes to clerks)
Undeliverable-as-addressed/Unable to Forward
POBox Mail

No Mark-up credit given

Missen/Missort
Loop Mail
Mail the is delivered by another route in the office
Mail with a street address but is delivered in PO Box
911 conversions (whether on the same route or transferred to another route)
Mail for which a Form 3579 has been completed

Make final withdrawal of preferential mail from the designated distribution case immediately prior to leaving the office. Place this mail in sequence of delivery and deliver with other mail. Place Hot-Case card in appropriate slot as required. (PO-603, 262.2)

Retrieve MDCD scanner and initialize it. If malfunctioning, report the problem to Supervisor. The 5 digit route # should read 56401 etc: (56 = zip, 4 = rural route, 01 = route #) (PO-603, 263)

Load all mail into vehicle in delivery sequence in a manner that will ensure no time is lost on the route searching for the proper bundles or containers. Sequencing of parcels into delivery order should not be done on loading time. (PO-603, 262.1)

Just prior to leaving for the route, record, in ink, in column 3 of Form 4240 the actual departure time from the office. Then complete PS Form 4570 (Vehicle Time Record) or AVUS procedures, if using a LLV or other Postal owned vehicle. (PO-603, 263)

Identification Badges are provided to EACH Rural Carrier and should be displayed on the outer garment over the left breast during official duty hours. When this is not practical, the identification badge is worn in plan view on the belt or as prescribed by the installation head. This includes RCA's and TRC's. (EL-902, Article 30.1.O)

ROUTE FUNCTIONS

Provide and maintain a vehicle (if no USPS provided vehicle is assigned) of adequate size, properly equipped, that that reflects a professional and positive image of the Postal Service, to serve the route safely and efficiently and in accordance with federal, state, and local motor vehicle laws and regulations. The vehicle must be equipped with all the necessary equipment such as-chain or snow tires, warning lights or signs. (PO-603, 120e and 141.2)

Carrier properly uses seat belt. (PO-603, 171.512)

Protect all mail, monies, and postal equipment entrusted to you. (PO-603, 120c)

Deliver your route in accordance with the authorized line of travel as described on Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*. (PO-603, 311)

Carriers are expected to make every reasonable effort to serve all customers on the route. During emergencies or adverse weather conditions a temporary route deviation may be necessary. Advise your Supervisor immediately, if such deviations or interruptions in service occur. (PO-603, 312)

Delivery of parcels, or Special Services Mail, must be made or attempted in accordance with PO-603, 331.21, 331.22, 341.12, & 341.2

Scan all appropriate barcode mail (at time of delivery) with MDCD scanner. If scanner fails, mark information on Form 3849 and notify your Supervisor upon return to office.

Provide stamps or stamp services sufficient to meet the needs of your customers. (PO-603, 380)

Collect mail from collection boxes in accordance with CBMS schedules. Report any deficiencies to Postmaster or Supervisor upon return to office.

Present a neat, clean, and professional appearance reflecting a positive postal image. (PO-603, 120b)

Rural carrier(s) scan barcodes in accordance with PO-603, 280 (Postal Bulletin 21990,1-28-99)

Display a helpful and courteous attitude to postal customers. (PO-603, 120g)

Do not engage in controversies with customers or other members of the public when on duty.

Return to the delivery unit immediately upon completion of your assigned route duties.

Maintain the necessary skills to satisfactorily and safely perform their duties. (PO603, 120h)

Maintenance of mailboxes and roads. (PO603, Section 131.1)

Rural carriers must assist postmasters and supervisors in obtaining the cooperation of customers and road authorities in keeping approaches to boxes open and roads passable.

PM OFFICE FUNCTIONS

Upon the return to the office, complete PS Form 4570 (Vehicle Time Record) or AVUS, if using a Postal owned vehicle. Then enter the time of return , in ink, in column 4 on PS Form 4240. (PO-603, 411)

Deposit collected mail in the proper separations (Letters and Flats) in the designated outgoing mail location. Rural Carriers are required to make two separations. Management may dictate more and the carrier is compensated under "COLUMN R" during a count. (PO-603, 420)

Dispose of any empty equipment in the designated location.

Clear accountables in accordance with office procedures. (PO-603, 422)

Rural carrier(s) return the MDCD scanner to the appropriate cradle or return as prescribed by office policy. (PO-603,281.3)

Case all available PM mail, including any Standard B mail that you were not able to case in the AM, unless otherwise directed by your Manager. (PO-603, 224.2, 461)

Once all prescribed duties for the day have been completed, record the actual time, in ink, in column 5 on PS Form 4240, also enter the total lunch/break times, if any, in column 6. (PO-603, 470)

In offices where no other personnel are available, make sure the mail, the postal facility, and its contents are secure before leaving. (PO-603, 480)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Conduct yourself in a manner that will reflect credibility on both you and the United States Postal Service.

Make a conscientious effort to develop and maintain the skills necessary to satisfactorily and safely perform all duties assigned. (PO-603, 120h)

Maintain current and accurate customer and route data on your AMS Edit Sheets, and Route Description (PS 4003). Report any new growth as it occurs on a regular basis, report vacant deliveries after 90 days. (PO-603, 230)

Repeated hand-offs to other routes should be reported to your Supervisor.

Practice good safety habits both in the office and on the route, and refrain from doing anything that would jeopardize your safety or the safety of others. Report any hazardous or unsafe conditions to your Postmaster or Supervisor. (PO-603, 270)

Maintain carrier route book located at case per PO-603, 232.

RURAL CARRIER “DO NOTS”

DO NOT engage in outside employment or outside activity that interferes with his/her duties and responsibilities (PO-603, 163.2).

DO NOT act as an agent for, or have an interest in, the manufacture or sale of rural mail receptacles requiring USPS approval. He/she may order boxes for customers if they realize no profit (PO-603, 163.3).

DO NOT circulate or encourage the circulation of petitions for changes in service (PO-603, 164.1).

DO NOT directly or indirectly cooperate with or assist publishers or others in obtaining the names and addresses of customers on his/her route (PO-603, 165).

DO NOT carry unauthorized persons in the vehicle while on duty nor employ a driver or helper without the approval of a postmaster or supervisor. Another rural carrier may be authorized to accompany a rural carrier on the route for training purposes (PO-603, 166.1 & 166.2).

DO NOT request or accept fees from customers for the delivery or collection of mail nor require the payment of postage for mail in excess of prescribed rates (PO 603, 167).

DO NOT exhibit mail to other than the addressee or the addressee’s authorized agent (PO 603, 169).

DO NOT open, read, or search mail (PO 603, 169.2).

DO NOT extend service without prior approval of a postmaster or supervisor (PO 603, 164.2).

Management SOP

Daily Functions

Managers are expected to maintain the daily functions, all necessary forms and time keeping for carriers. Each route should have a file away from the case to assist in maintaining accurate records.

ROUTE FILES (ASM 13 determines retention periods)

What is required:

PS Form 4003
PS Form 4241-A
PS Form 4241-A (From count)
PS Form 4241 (From count)
PS Form 4248 (From count and yearly inspection)
PS Form 4239's (From count)
PS Form 4240's (From last Accounting Period)

Manager Must Maintain a File for each Route

Left Side - Temporary Forms

Any Memos
4027s not approved
4024s - Request to repair roads

Right Side - Permanent Forms

All 4003s
All 4241-As
Maps

Managers are responsible for providing sufficient and correct casing equipment for each route. Management determines the type of carrier casing equipment used on each route (PO-603 213.1).

Managers ensure that all labels are from AMS, current and in the approved line of travel. Rural Carriers are required to use CLASS labels. They may not cut & paste. However they may write the last names of customers on the labels. Make sure they are neat and legible, as this could be a cause in regards to RCA retention.

Carrier MUST maintain Edit book and change 1621 codes
CLASS labels must be used and current
No handwritten labels
Must be in exact line of travel
Case area must be kept clean
No extraneous items to be kept in case.

Managers must manage mail flow to ensure a full day relief for regular carriers. This should be done at the distribution case.

Managers must ensure carriers are using proper casing techniques

Managers may authorize any curtailment of mail.

Managers must ensure that all mail is available for withdrawal if office has withdrawal. If the office does not have withdrawal, managers must ensure that all mail is at the carrier's case in a timely manner as not to have carriers waiting for mail.

Managers ensure that each carrier maintains stamp stock sufficient to the needs of the customers on the route. If the carrier has a fixed credit, managers ensure that the audits are done on time. Managers can not require carriers to wait in line at window to purchase stamps or have packages rated.

Managers must have the work room floor in a safe and efficient layout.

Managers are responsible to ensure all carriers have a clean and professional appearance.

Managers must perform an annual route inspection (PS Form 4248) at least once per year. If the route counted in that calendar year, a route inspection is performed in conjunction with the count. If the route does not receive a count, the route must be inspected anytime within the calendar year.

Managers must complete a Driver's Observation at least twice a year (PS Form 4584).

Managers must submit updated 4003 when boxes have been added/deleted, extensions requested or other route changes in an accurate and timely fashion.

Managers must set rural carrier schedules based upon the receipt and availability of mail, route evaluations and other service considerations. Management must notify carriers with reasonable advance notice when they change a carrier's schedule.

Management must ensure that carrier's report to work as scheduled and leave the office within 20 minutes of their schedule leaving time. Carriers casing DPS mail may leave late provided they maintain their scheduled return time as listed on the Form 4240. (PO603, 152.2)

EDIT BOOK AND PS 4003

PS Form 4003 versus the Edit Book

The Edit Book is the responsibility of the carrier to maintain. The policy at one time was for the carrier to add or delete addresses on the reverse side of the PS 4240. Then a change was made to maintain the addresses on a PS 1621. Carriers are now required to make changes on the Edit Book. The carrier should annotate any new address and show where, in the line of travel, the address should be. The Edit Book should reflect the correct number of deliveries on the route.

Edit books should be kept at the carrier case. Management submits the edit books to Address Management Systems as instructed by the district.

Management is responsible for sending an updated Form 4003 to the Customer Service Analyst, Operations Programs Support. The PS 4003 is the "Official Rural Route Description" showing the number of deliveries, mileage and line of travel.

The Edit Book does not update the PS 4003. The number of deliveries should be identical or very close to the number of active deliveries in the Edit Book. The Form 4003 submitted must not include the box count for possible deliveries. The Form 4003 is submitted for the actual count of ACTIVE deliveries. Boxes vacant more than 90 days and possible new deliveries are not included in the box count on the Form 4003.

Submitting the edit book does not update the box counts on the carrier's Form 4241. The Form 4241 and the carrier's pay can only be adjusted when the Form 4003 is processed.

The PS 4003 should be submitted to your Customer Service Analyst when the carrier receives a one-hour increase. If your district has a different policy, that policy should be followed. It must have an effective date in the future.

Maintaining the PS 4003 will pay the carrier correctly based on the miles and boxes on the route. The Edit Book does not affect the PS 4003. The two forms have parallel information. Neither changes the other.

For all practical purposes, the 4003 is your Rural Carrier's paycheck. Accuracy is very important, as are timely submissions. Their pay is based from what you submit. Please verify ALL entries.

PS 4003s and Extensions

The PS 4003 is the official line of travel for all rural carriers. It has the number of deliveries, mileage, dismount and distance, vehicle information, high or low option and if the route is an L or non-L. There is a large amount of information on a simple form. The PS 4003 is to be submitted to your CSA ten days prior to the effective date (M38, 454.1)

The rules for extension are found in the POM, PO 603 and M 38. The additional travel including retrace must not exceed one mile for each new delivery. A PS 4027 must be completed for each new extension. A new residence on the present line of travel is not an extension and does not

require a PS 4027. Within a quarter mile of a non-city delivery Post Office, most requests can not be granted. The office should follow the policy as set forth by the district and the POM.

OFFICIAL RURAL ROUTE DESCRIPTION, PS Form 4003

PURPOSE:

The 4003 has the route description and all pertinent information for each specific route. The 4003 is to be submitted to the District any time there is a change in deliveries, dismounts, mileage, etc. This is the form the District processes to change route data. The top of this form has 15 different options, one must be checked to indicate why the PS 4003 is being completed. Following are some explanations and instructions regarding those options:

ADJUSTMENT – This box is checked for an “Interim Adjustment”. It involves an increase or decrease in the number boxes and miles, resulting in a minimum 1-hour change. There may be a base hour change required on adjustments.

CONVERT TO REGULAR – Use only when instructed to do so by Operations Programs. Whenever box and mileage growth or territory consolidations cause an auxiliary route to reach an evaluation of thirty-nine (39) hours, it will normally be converted to a regular route. (It shall be counted and officially evaluated before posting.)

EXTENSION – Use when additional mileage is added to a route through extension of curb line or central point deliveries. Mileage increases should be accompanied with a PS 4027 (Petition for Change in Rural Delivery.) The appropriate line(s) of Form 4003 must show the new line of travel with the additional mileage.

OPTION ELECTION – Rural carriers can elect Low Option at any time. This box is checked when making such a choice. A rural carrier, who qualifies, may elect High Option only at the time of a National or Special Mail Count; an Interim Adjustment; or at the beginning of guarantee year.

COLL/COMP – This box denotes a change in the number of collection compartments on the route.

DISCONTINUED – This is used when an entire Rural Route is discontinued and whatever remains is consolidated by other routes and/or P.O. Boxes.

LOCKED POUCH – Check this when adding or deleting a “Locked Pouch” to any route.

PARCEL LOCKER – This box denotes a change in the number of Parcel Lockers on the route.

VEHICLE DATA – This is checked whenever a Government Vehicle is placed on or removed from a route. The box below must be checked with EMA or Government Vehicle.

***The following six options all have an asterisk (*) after them.
These require a Base Hour Change to be calculated.
Using the Interim Evaluation Worksheet.***

CONSOLIDATIONS* – This involves transfer of territory from one route or office to another. The changes in mileage and boxes are considered to be part of a Consolidation. Consolidation will result in a route becoming discontinued.

NEW ROUTE* - When territory adjustments result in the creation of a new auxiliary route; or where delivery is extended into a community that formerly did not have it, and new routes are created. If a full route is being transferred from one office to another office entirely, contact the Eagan ASC for assistance in this transaction.

DETOUR* - Any temporary route deviations of more than thirty (30) calendar days duration shall be added to the evaluation and the salary shall be adjusted accordingly. All salary changes will be come effective at the beginning of the first pay period following the completion of the first thirty (30) days of the detour and at the beginning of the first pay period after the deviation is terminated. (NOTE: In this instance, the CSA should complete the Interim Adjustment)

SEASONAL ROUTE* - A Route where certain residents are provided delivery only for a specified period of less than one year and when the seasonal period ends, delivery is no longer required (for a period of more than 90 days). These routes may be declared “Seasonal” following a Mail Count and a box is checked on the PS 4241. At the beginning of the seasonal period, the evaluation shall be adjusted by application of a formula adding the “seasonal boxes and miles”. At the conclusion of the seasonal period, the seasonal boxes are subtracted from the evaluation. The PS 4003 initiates these adjustments.

HARDSHIPS* (see POM 631.42)

Changes in the mode of delivery authorized for a delivery point are considered where service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship on an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery mode must be submitted in writing. (NOTE: In this instance, the CSA should complete the Interim Adjustment)

Approval of hardship requests are to be based on humanitarian and not economic criteria; however, rural delivery customers requesting a hardship extension must also meet current criteria for extension of rural delivery service (POM 653). Each request for a change in delivery service should be evaluated based on the customer’s needs; a request should not be denied solely because of increased operational costs or because a family member or other party may be available to receive mail for the customer.

Approval of exception to current method of delivery due to hardship is temporary, and shall be void when the hardship ceases to exist. The prevailing mode of delivery will then be reinstated.

REMEASURED* - Rural Routes will be remeasured upon request of the rural carrier or when the Employer determines it necessary. A District form for “Measurement of a Rural Route” must accompany the PS 4003. This will also adjust the E.M.A. for the route.

Make sure that you enter an “Effective Date” on the PS 4003 that corresponds with the beginning of a pay period. The Effective Date must be included and be the first day of a pay period.

Adjustments

It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that all routes are in compliance with the contract. Territory adjustments are often required. The most common reason to adjust a route is because the route is overburdened. It will require an adjustment.

It may be necessary to adjust several routes in order to properly adjust the routes that warranted an adjustment. When adjusting other routes (domino effect), that did not require an adjustment, you should keep their evaluation as close to the same as operationally possible. Their bank time may be used.

Basic Relief Proposals

A. Specific criteria ([M-38 Section 811](#)) Relief of rural routes shall be accomplished when:

1. Management determines it is warranted.
2. The standard hours of the route exceed 55:47 (Note: this is specifically waived for automation-impacted routes).
3. The regular rural carrier assigned to the route does not or is not expected to meet the requirement to stay within 2,080 actual workhours during the guarantee period.
4. The regular carrier is unable to return from the route in sufficient time to allow for the processing and dispatch of mail collected on the route, or adequate service cannot be provided because of the time of delivery.
5. The rural carrier requests relief (if operationally feasible).
6. DPS Rebuilds.
7. Corrective action is considered because weekly time required to serve the route consistently varies more than three hours, either below or in excess of evaluated time. Exceptions may be made for carriers 55 years of age or older, and carriers who have served continuously for 25 years or more, provided their conduct and efficiency are satisfactory. (PO 603, 151.2)
8. Line of travel changes that provide route efficiency.
9. Consolidations or Zip Code changes.

Only in very limited situations can a rural route be discontinued or abolished. Consolidating offices or consolidating substandard routes within an office are some occasions. This would require Delivery Programs being involved from the beginning of the consolidation. The analyst would be assisting to ensure any discontinued route would be in accordance with the contract.

When a route is adjusted downward, the level to which is specified by the contract. Routes are to be adjusted to 52 standard hours or a 43K unless for operational reasons, DPS rebuilds or high growth routes. (M38, 823) If an auxiliary route needs to be created, we may adjust to lower than the 52 standard hours.

For example, if you have one overburdened route in your office and there isn't an auxiliary route. That is an operational reason to adjust a route below 43K from an overburdened status as an auxiliary route should be at least 12 hours per week. Housing additions should not be 'chopped'

up between several carriers. It isn't efficient. The route may need to be left at a level above or below a 43K because it isn't operationally feasible.

When adjusting routes for carrier requests, 2080 work hour problems or rebuild losses due to DPS, the levels for rebuilding the route are different. A 2,080 work hour problem will be adjusted to the level which makes sense. An H route may be adjusted to a lower level or upwards to give the carrier a relief day. A 40K could be adjusted downward as the daily workload needs to be reduced for the carrier.

When a carrier requests an adjustment, it is not necessary to make the adjustment because of the request. It should be considered only if it is operationally sound. It could be the carrier is requesting less work and willing to accept a smaller salary. There isn't a contractual obligation to act upon a carrier's request.

If a route is adjusted within its own territory for making the line of travel more efficient, there isn't a requirement to rebuild or leave the route at its pre-adjustment level. If territory is moved between routes, the requirement to leave the route at its pre-adjustment level comes into effect. An auxiliary route would be a buffer to rebuild from. An overburdened route would also be a buffer.

Operational issues and policies:

1. Attempts should be made to transfer territory to other rural routes at the office, provided this does not result in creating overburdened routes.
2. Attempt to retain stable, built-up areas on existing routes. This will help minimize the need for future adjustments.
3. Establish definite boundaries between city, rural, and HCR routes, where practicable, to facilitate distribution and maintain an orderly delivery area.
4. Keep address changes to a minimum.
5. Include all justified extensions of service.
6. Eliminate and avoid duplication of travel.
7. Normally adjustments will propose potential regular routes - with evaluations of 39 hours or more per week - if practicable. Where residual territory or "pockets" of high growth are isolated, creation of more than one auxiliary route may be indicated. All newly created routes are established as auxiliary routes until the exact evaluation is determined by a mail count. New auxiliary routes must be 12+ hours per week. They are created as non-L routes. A special mail count must be performed if the new auxiliary qualifies to be an L route. Do not convert a 39+ hour auxiliary route to a regular route until the evaluation has been determined by a mail count and District management has agreed.
8. All transfers of territory must meet sector-segment coding requirements and must be verified by local Address Management Systems Unit staff.
9. Finally, it is recognized that local geography and the method of providing relief may require slight deviations from these guidelines.

STEP 1: PLANNING AND NOTIFICATION

Depending on the complexity of the proposal, the effective date of adjustments may be 30 days in the future. Regular rural carriers have a contractual right [\[Article 30.1.J.\]](#) to be notified in advance of any route adjustments and to submit comments or proposals in writing. The knowledge and insight they can offer about their routes can be an invaluable asset to the manager, and can help ensure that the best possible service results. The first step in developing a relief plan is to advise the carriers that an adjustment proposal is being developed and the reasons for the proposal. Provide a specific but reasonable deadline for submission of written comments and proposals to be sure that they can be considered.

SUMMARY OF STEP 1: NOTIFY CARRIERS OF ADJUSTMENTS AND SOLICIT WRITTEN COMMENTS AND PROPOSALS.

STEP 2: GETTING CURRENT DELIVERY DATA

Using a current copy of the route description, have carriers indicate the number of boxes served for each line of travel. Make sure the edit sheets are up to date. Data from the most recent route inspection is helpful here. If the data exists by each line of the PS 4003 and there have been few changes, carriers may review PS 4003s and verify the box data. *Note: It will be even easier for you to make adjustments and resulting scheme changes if you have a record of deliveries per sector-segment.*

RURAL ROUTE ADJUSTMENT DATA WORKSHEET

If you don't have a current map showing the delivery area and line-of-travel for each route, make the maps now. You can color code directly onto a map, or use overlays. Identify each route with a distinct color, and sketch in new streets or extensions as necessary. Contact your AMS unit for a copy of your delivery area map.

SUMMARY OF STEP 2:

- GATHER CURRENT DELIVERY DATA IDENTIFY ALL DELIVERIES (BY AMS SECTOR-SEGMENT IF POSSIBLE), GROWTH, AND JUSTIFIABLE EXTENSIONS.
 - PREPARE A MAP OF THE DELIVERY AREA
-

DETERMINING AND USING THE BOX AND VOLUME FACTORS

[\[PS Form 4241-A\]](#), does not show the Box Factor, but instead shows the Volume Factor. The total time for each box can be determined by adding the Volume Factor and the appropriate Box Factor. Volume factors are unique to each route.

Example: (Assuming the Volume Factor on the PS 4241-A is a 2.5)

NON-"L" ROUTE

Regular Boxes

Volume Only Factor ...2.50 (PS 4241-A)
Box Factor 2.00
Time per box4.50

Centralized Boxes

Volume Only Factor ...2.50 (PS 4241-A)
Box Factor 1.00
Time per box3.50

"L" ROUTE

Regular Boxes

Volume Only Factor ...2.50 (PS 4241-A)
Box Factor 1.82
Time per box4.14

Centralized Boxes

Volume Only Factor ...2.50 (PS 4241-A)
Box Factor 1.00
Time per box3.50

NON-"L" ROUTE

In the following illustration, 43 boxes are added to a non-"L" route; 22 of them regular boxes and 21 of them centralized delivery type. The Volume Only Factor is 2.5.

- No. Boxes43 X Volume Only Factor 2.5 = 107.50
- No. Regular Boxes 22 X 2 minutes = 44.00
- No. Centralized Boxes 21 X 1 minute = 21.00
- Total Time Added = 172.50
- Hours & Minutes = 2:30

"L" ROUTE

In the next illustration, we will assume 43 boxes, 22 of them regular boxes and 21 centralized are being added to an "L" Route. The Volume Only Factor is 2.5.

- No. Boxes43 X Volume Only Factor 2.5 = 107.50
- No. Regular Boxes 22 X 1.82 minutes = 40.04
- No. Centralized Boxes 21 X 1 minute = 21.00
- Total Time Added = 168.54
- Hours & Minutes = 2:31
- Any increase in Miles traveled would be added at the rate of 12 minutes per mile.
- When boxes are transferred from one route to another use the correct *Volume Factor* of the route from which the boxes came.

STEP 3: DEVELOP AND FINALIZE ADJUSTMENTS

Review the carriers' comments and proposals concerning the amount of relief, areas to be added or removed, etc.

Using the map and the individual route data, look for adjacent areas of routes having the target number of relief deliveries and develop specific adjustments.

After this step, you may be close to your target number of deliveries for the route, but slight differences in time value due to different *volume-only factors* can have an impact. Therefore, you need to complete an [Interim Evaluation Worksheet](#) for each route and determine the specific evaluation.

The worksheet identifies each element in the proposed routes' evaluations. You will need the proposed total mileage, the proposed boxes (and on what route they originated), any discounts, any weekly allowances for "other" time - recurring functions like safety talks or collection boxes - and a few other items from the most recent PS Form 4241-A generated by a mail count.

Prepare a complete new [PS Form 4003, Rural Route Description](#), for each route. Discuss the proposed adjustment with the carrier(s), and allow them to review the new PS Form 4003 and Interim Evaluation Worksheet. While concurrence with the nature of the adjustment is not required, there should be no disagreement over technical data: the number of boxes, mileage, evaluation, etc.

If an option will be available, discuss it with the carrier to determine eligibility and preference. The higher classification may be elected only if:

1. It is demonstrated that the carrier's actual work hours will not exceed 2,080 during the guarantee period (with consideration of Christmas overtime);
2. The carrier agrees in writing to use sufficient annual leave to assure actual work hours will not exceed 2,080; and
3. The carrier is in a 6 or 8 hour leave category. [PS Form 4015-E](#), (Rural Carrier Agreement to Use Annual Leave Earned to Reduce Actual Work Hours), must be signed in the event of a change from low to high option.

Indicate any option selection and comments in the designated sections of the 4003 and the worksheet, then sign and date it. Update edit sheets using either the resequencing page in the edit books or a similar form.

SUMMARY OF STEP 3: IDENTIFY SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENTS, PREPARE INTERIM EVALUATION WORKSHEETS, COMPLETE NEW PS FORMS 4003, UPDATE THE EDIT SHEETS AND REVIEW WITH CARRIERS. RETAIN ONE COPY OF THE ABOVE, AND ALL NOTES AND "WORKSHEETS", FOR YOUR FILES.

If additional casing equipment is necessary for implementation of the adjustment, indicate how much and what type. Specify the requested effective date, and submit your letter, the maps, and the originals. The district must review the proposal thoroughly. If the adjustment appears appropriate, the district designee will approve it.

The district designee will notify the postmaster of the approval (or disapproval!), ensure processing of Forms 4003 and asking them to coordinate the effective date with Address Management Systems.

ADJUSTMENTS IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

1. Notifying customers needing to relocate their box and/or change their address.
2. Ordering and Shipment of additional casing equipment.
3. Instructions for use of PS Form 3577, *Correction of Error in Address Due to Postal Service Adjustment*, if needed.
4. Discontinuance of any auxiliary assistance.
5. Timeframes for any route bidding or mail count activity that may result.
6. Preparation of CLASS worksheets, where applicable.
7. Ordering new CLASS labels for adjusted routes.
8. Any authorizations to change the official complement (staffing Leave Replacement Vacancies).
9. Additional carrier training required. [See: [Article 9.2.M.1. & 4.](#)]

Finally, the postmaster must notify all employees of the effective date of the changes. Local distribution schemes and cases must reflect route changes, and carrier case labels will have to be changed out. Route books and individual route maps will have to reflect the adjustments, and PS Forms 3982, *Changes of Address*, will have data transferred to routes in accordance with the transferred territory. Route adjustments are always effective on the

first day of a pay period, a Saturday. Managers must plan these activities accordingly and ensure a smooth "first day" for both customers and employees.

Hardships (POM 631.42)

Changes in the mode of delivery authorized for a delivery are considered where service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship on an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery must be submitted in writing.

Approval of these requests should be based on humanitarian and not economic criteria; however, rural delivery customers requesting a hardship extension must also meet current criteria for extension of rural delivery service (POM 653). Each request for a change in delivery service should be evaluated based on the customer's needs; a request should not be denied solely because of increased operational costs or because a family member or other party may be available to receive mail for the customer.

When a physician's statement is required, ensure only the doctor's determination that a hardship does exist. Do not request any medical documentation or a description of the customer's problem.

The Postmaster must give a letter to the customer that informs the parties that the hardship delivery will be discontinued upon the residence being vacated or circumstances have negated the need. Mail delivery will resume to the prior delivery method. Maintain a copy of the authorization in the route's file and carrier's route book

DETOURS

When a detour begins, you will show the daily deviation on the carrier's timecard if the route is 40+ miles. After 30 days, a PS 4003 must be prepared. The effective date will be the beginning of the next pay period. Therefore up to the day the PS 4003 is effective, the carrier will be paid under deviated miles. An interim evaluation worksheet must be completed and submitted showing a base hour change with the PS 4003. A base hour change will be made and could result in an increase of salary. When the detour ends, a PS 4003 must be completed being effective at the beginning of the next pay period. The route will be reverted back to the evaluation prior to the detour beginning. Any additional boxes and mileage will show as bank time.

PS 4241-A

Once the PS Form 4003 has been processed, a PS 4241-A will be generated. If the information submitted was insufficient to make a base hour change or contributed enough time to make a 1 hour change, the new data will be reflected on lines 4, 5 and 6 of the 4241-A. If the information submitted on the PS Form 4003 was insufficient to make a base hour change, the route data on line 5 will not change. However, the time accumulated toward the next change or "Time in the bank" will be reflected in the Comments Block at the bottom of the PS 4241-A. To verify that the route is receiving the correct EMA, look in the "Miles" block on line 3. That reflects the paid miles for EMA purposes. It will change as the mileage increases to .51 miles or greater.

The PS 4241A is a result of input to the Eagan ASC rural database. Most of the inputs are a result of changes to the PS 4003s. The form has the base hour information until a one hour change has made. The base information is what the carrier is being paid. The additional miles and boxes added become 'banked time' toward the next change. The accumulated bank time is

shown in the Comments section. This bank time may be positive or negative. Once 60 or more minutes has been reached, a change in the base hour is made. All PS 4241As are mailed from the Eagan ASC.

There are three copies that go to each office. One with carrier's personal information (i.e. salary, Social Security Number, etc.) is for the carrier. It is marked with as **CARRIER** on the bottom of the page. A second and third copy do not have the personal information. One is marked for the **CARRIER'S ROUTE BOOK** and one is for the **POSTMASTER** or carrier route file. Retain the copies in accordance with the Administrative Service Manual (ASM) section 352.

UNDERSTANDING THE PS 4241-A

There are four reasons for PS 4241As to be generated: National or Special Count, Interim Adjustments, Option Election and change of carrier (bid reassignment).

NATIONAL or SPECIAL COUNT 4241A:

The PS 4241A generated due to a National or Special Count will have all pertinent Line numbers and boxes completed. It will indicate 'Withdrawal Time', 'Column R Time' and show 'Standard' and 'Actual' times. In addition, all data, such as; mileage, dismounts & distance, boxes, stops, NDCBU collection compartment & parcel lockers will reflect what is actually current on the route as of the end of the count.

INTERIM ADJUSTMENTS:

The PS 4241A will reflect changes made from "Interim Adjustments". This will either show as bank time or reflect in the number of boxes and/or miles.

The first type of 4241A is for changes made for less than one hour. The 4241A will not reflect the updated box counts or mileage on Line 5. However, the bank time should have increased to reflect the changes submitted. Line 3 of the 4241A will indicate a mileage change if the EMA has changed; this figure is rounded. This may be from growth and extensions made to the route. The term interim is used for any change outside of a count. It refers to a change in the base and is temporary until the next count. This becomes the 'banked' time, if less than an hour change has occurred.

The second type of 4241A for an interim adjustment is when a one hour change has been made on the route due to growth or adjustments. When a one-hour change has been reached, the base hour will change to incorporate the additional time (60+ minutes). The 4241A will now reflect the correct number of boxes, mileage, dismounts, etc. However, there will no longer be any bank time. Any additions, miles, etc were incorporated into the new base hour.

The third type of 4241A for an interim adjustment is the base hour changes that did not result from growth or extensions, but are from hardship deliveries, re-measured routes, adding Postal Owned vehicles, detours and seasonal route. These are required changes in the base time. Again, the 4241A will reflect the correct number of boxes, mileage, dismounts, etc.

These changes may place the carrier in a higher evaluation, with the possibility of high or low option. This is one of the three instances that a carrier may elect "HIGH" option if they qualify. It is extremely important to indicate high or low option on the 4003 and highlight this election when submitting to your CSA. If the carrier does elect high option, they must sign a leave commitment (4015A).

For assistance in calculating what it takes for a one hour change on your route(s) or how bank time is figured:

There are two factors that are used in determining the time for each new box. One is the Box Factor. The box factor determines the time for each new box based on the type of box it is.

- A regular box (non-L route) 2 minutes a week
- A regular box (L route) 1.82 minutes a week
- A central box 1 minute a week

The other factor is the Volume Factor. The volume factor is different for each route. It is set from the count and changes only from a new count. It is found on Line 4 of your latest 4241A. Adding the volume factor to the box factor will give you the time for each new box.

Miles are computed on 12 minutes for each additional mile or increment thereof.

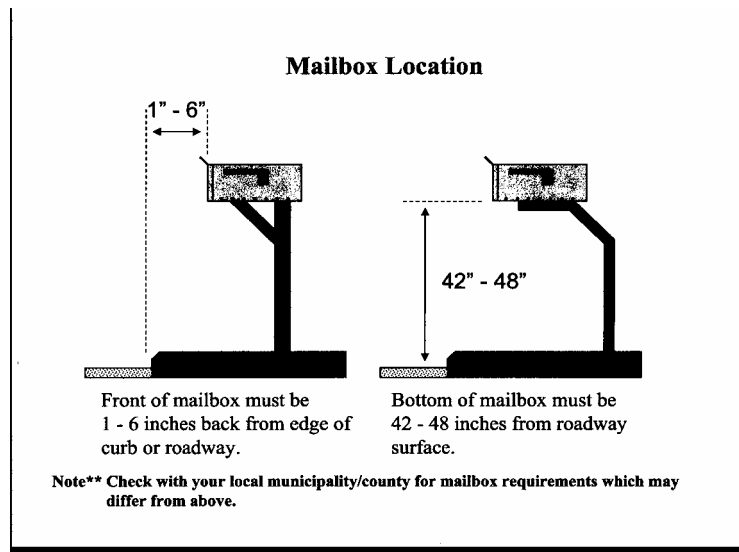
PS 4241As are printed when the carrier selects High Option at the appropriate time. And if there is a change of regular carrier, a PS 4241A is printed to reflect the current regular employee.

Growth Management

It is the responsibility for the managers to plan the growth in each office. Carriers are responsible for notifying management when there is new growth, or demolition on their route. Auxiliary routes should be created in your high growth areas. Try to realign the auxiliary route to cover the high growth territory. Follow the "Growth Planning" instructions from Headquarters (handout) on establishing new delivery.

The line of travel should be planned as if the entire addition became live at one time. That will allow for proper placement of the mail boxes. Boxes should be grouped on the property lines in twos or greater when possible.

Mailbox Placement



The mail box should be placed in a convenient location for the carrier to service. It should not be a safety hazard to the carrier or customer. The actual location of the box is at the discretion of the Postmaster. Unless it is in an authorized turn around, it should not be in the driveway of a customer.

The bottom of the mailbox should be 41 to 45 inches (PB 22102, dated 5/15/03) from the surface of the road. The front of the mailbox should be 1 to 6 inches from the edge of the travel portion of the road. It should be in an easy to approach location. An apron may need to be constructed for delivery if the carrier would remain on the road surface in extremely busy or high-speed traffic. Safety is paramount in placement.

The boxes should be placed in the current line of travel. Safety concerns and duplication of travel must be considered when establishing the line of travel. Any custom made mailbox should meet all requirements and be approved by the local Postmaster. If a route is adjusted or extended, it may be necessary for the mail boxes to be moved and placed in the new line of travel.

Bidding Vacant Routes

The posting and award process for vacant routes is found in Article 12.3 A and B in the National Bargaining Agreement. It must be posted within 30 days of becoming vacant. There are circumstances where an additional sixty (60) day extension can be made. The vacancy remains posted for 10 days prior to closing. After closing, the award must be made within 10 days and the carrier moves to the route within the following 21 days after the award, except in the month of December which is optional. In accordance to the MOU .7 on limited duty, the carrier must be able to perform the duties of the route if temporarily incapable to do within one year of the award.

The process of the awarding is unusual when compared to the bids used by city carriers or clerks. It is a closed process once the posting has reached the time limit. Only the carriers who tendered a bid on the original vacancy can participate in the process. The most senior bidder must be offer the vacancy. He/she may decline the award. If they decline, offer the vacancy, in order of seniority, to the carriers who bid for the original vacancy.

Once the initial vacancy is awarded, the newly vacated route becomes a residual bid. Each residual bid must be offered to each of the carriers who bid on the original vacancy by seniority. If the carrier did NOT bid on the original vacancy, they are not allowed to participate in any residual vacancies. When a route becomes vacant from a carrier accepting a residual bid, the process does start again with the most senior carrier being able to accept the residual. Any carrier who accepts a vacancy may accept any other residual vacancy when offered. There isn't a limit on the number of routes that a carrier may accept.

Once all residual vacancies have been offered and accepted, the last remaining residual vacancy is offered to the senior RCA that bid. The senior RCA may elect not to become a career employee. Then it is offered to the second senior RCA. It is possible for the original vacancy to be offered to the RCA with several other carriers changing routes. Any leave replacement vacancy needs to be filled in accordance with the contract.

If there is a PTF Rural Carrier in the office, the award will be different. The PTF carrier can not decline the residual vacancy. The PTF vacancy does not have to be filled if the routes assigned to the promoted PTF can be assigned to other PTF carriers or possibly be filled by hiring additional RCAs or TRCs.

Scheduling

It is the responsibility for the Postmaster or Manager of each unit to ensure all routes are scheduled for service. It may be one person to cover the route or a plan to pivot out the route with several people. It has been a myth that rural routes do not require any scheduling. There are offices without complete coverage of RCAs or may have different relief days than Saturdays. It is important that all units have a rural carrier schedule.

How do you set up daily scheduling? Use the 4241A from the latest National Count. This will list the Standard Office and Route Times for the week. Divide those figures by six to develop daily times. Using the typical office start times for your routes, you should be able to devise a leaving schedule based on these times. We suggest you use the Standard rather than the Actual time. Actual may be what the regular can accomplish; it also has casing DPS which has no office time. We can hold a carrier to the times listed as Standard Times.

Establishing schedules (PO 603, Section 150)

Rural carrier schedules must be based upon the receipt and availability of mail, route evaluations, and other service considerations. Management must notify carriers with a reasonable advance notice when they change a carrier's schedule.

Management must ensure that carriers are not given excessive office time, report to work as scheduled, and leave the office within 20 minutes of their scheduled leaving time. Carriers casing DPS mail may leave late provided they maintain their scheduled return time as listed on Form 4240 and they meet their customer's anticipated window of delivery (PO 603, Section 152.2).

Management may delay a carrier's leaving time due to heavy first-class volume or the late arrival of dispatches (PO 603, Section 153.2).

Management may permit or schedule rural carriers to report to work earlier than normal on days when mail volume is expected to be heavy in order for the carriers to maintain their regularly scheduled leaving time (PO 603, Section 153.3).

Matrix

The scheduling matrix was developed to help management contractually cover vacant routes. If the primary RCA is not available, use the matrix to determine which RCA is next to be scheduled. The matrix is a list of all regular routes showing the first, second and third assignments for each RCA. The matrix MUST be used to fill vacancies if the primary RCA is unavailable.

The RCAs in the office must have a primary assignment. This is either assigned as the 'sub of record' on a regular route or as the carrier on an auxiliary route. RCAs can be on the matrix as a primary and carry an auxiliary route as the primary. Your auxiliary route does NOT appear on the matrix. In this situation, they are not allowed any other selections as secondary or tertiary. If the RCA has selected to carry the aux route 6 days a week, the RCA can not carry any other route. If the RCA is a primary on a route and 5 days on the auxiliary (5 + 1), those two routes are the only route that the RCA may carry. The RCA can not be forced to carry any other route in your

office unless an emergency situation would exist. Nor can that RCA demand to carry any other route.

All other RCAs should have a primary, a secondary and a tertiary selection for coverage. If selected, a RCA could have two secondary and no tertiary selections; or two tertiary selections and no secondary selections. But all RCAs should have three selections if not carrying an auxiliary route. TRCs are on the matrix as primary coverage only. TRCs do not get secondary or tertiary assignments.

Beyond the three selections, a list should be kept in the office for each route showing qualified RCAs. If no RCA on the matrix is available for coverage, the scheduling falls to the senior qualified RCA. If no qualified RCA, then schedule the senior non qualified RCA.

As mentioned, a mandated carrier does not want to work. An offer to replace that regular carrier with an RCA from another office is allowable. It relieves the regular carrier from the mandate. Prior to working any carrier from the Relief Day Work List, all RCAs must be scheduled to work or have an approved request not to work.

Relief Day Work List

The relief day work list is comprised of carriers who have volunteered to work their relief day when needed. For those familiar with overtime-desired lists, it is similar but not identical. This does NOT entitle the carrier(s) to overtime. The list is posted for carriers to sign during the **last two weeks prior to the beginning of the new rural guarantee year**. This is the only time the carriers may sign the list. The carrier must have a scheduled day off in order to sign the list. If a carrier is promoted during the year, they must wait until the following October to sign.

When the carrier signs the form, he/she is volunteering to work when needed. The selection is made on a rotating basis, as needed. When selected to work, the carrier must work. If a carrier is on leave, they are considered to be not available and not selected to work. The carrier must inform Management if they are available during any leave period. If a carrier misses a turn to work on the rotation, there is not any obligation to have a 'make up' opportunity to even out the days worked. That carrier is skipped without consequence.

There is a serious consequence if the carrier is on the Relief Day Work List and works too many relief days. DACA Code 5 hours go directly towards 2240 hours and not 2080. If a carrier exceeds 2240 hours within the guarantee year, the carrier's time will be reevaluated on FSLA section 7A. That will be paying the carrier as if he was hourly from the beginning of the year. It could result in an invoice and the carrier owing the Postal Service several thousand dollars.

Formula Office

A carrier on a "J" or "K" route may have a different day than Saturday for a relief day with the mutual consent of the Postmaster and carrier. This does not call for invoking the formula if done on a voluntary basis. A "J" route is entitled to a Saturday relief day. However, you may assign either week one or week two as the relief day. If the office has too few RCAs to have effective relief days, the local Postmaster may invoke the formula for relief days in the office. This would change the relief days from Saturdays to non Saturdays without mutual agreement between the carriers and the Postmaster.

Prior to invoking the "formula", you should arrange for a meeting with your carriers. Explain the shortage of sub situation and if DACA Code 3 and 5 usages would continue, you, by contract, will invoke the formula and change relief days. However, if they would agree to take a different day off and/or switch X for R with their subs, there would be the possibility of NOT having to

invoke the formula. Many carriers would prefer this voluntary method, as it allows them control and flexibility. When they receive X for the R, it lets them to choose the X day rather than management selecting the X day for DACA Code 3 usage. Also, remember, if you do invoke the formula, the RCA that will be assigned to any auxiliary route will only be allowed to cover the auxiliary route six days a week. They are not allowed to carry any other route in your office, unless there is an “unscheduled emergency”.

If you must invoke the formula, it would give a number of carriers on “K” routes entitled to relief days on Saturdays and non-Saturdays based on a formula found in the contract (Article 9.2.C.5.b.). This will allow the office to share the number of RCA’s among the routes that do not have a primary RCA assigned. Saturday will be the primary relief day. The Postmaster may assign the remaining days as needed. The formula can not be implemented unless the office meets the following three criteria:

- There must be a shortage of leave replacements.
- Regular rural carriers are working relief days on more than an infrequent basis.
- The office has been unsuccessful in its hiring efforts. Offices must have made a reasonable effort to obtain RCAs or TRCs to fill leave replacement vacancies.

Additionally, the district CSA must be informed and agree that all factors do exist in the office prior to invoking the formula. A lack of hiring effort is enough to prevent the relief days from being changed. Offices need to try all methods of advertising to elicit potential RCA/TRCs to apply for the job.

When the relief days are changed, “J” routes have preference to Saturdays as a relief day. Management has the right to select which Saturday of the pay period is the relief day for “J” routes. Having half of the “J” routes with Day 1 of the pay period versus Day 8 will extend the ability to meet all relief days. Saturday will have the greatest number of relief days. The maximum relief days for any non-Saturday is equal to the minimum of Saturday relief days.

If a carrier who does not have a relief carrier makes a written request for a relief carrier to be assigned, the 120-day clock starts in regard to promoting to a PTF position. A PTF is a career employee who will cover 2 to 4 regular routes on the relief days. The PTF is guaranteed the evaluation of each route he/she carries. The PTF satisfies the contractual requirement of each route having a leave replacement. The PTF must carry the route of the carrier on the relief day. Any unassigned day, the PTF may carry any route. If a regular carrier is requesting extended leave, it is covered by other RCAs in the office.

Newly hired RCA’s

Newly hired RCA’s should have received a Shadow Day in your office, new employee orientation, 24 hours of Rural Academy and a minimum of 24 hours “in office” training before being allowed to carry a route in your office.

It is highly recommended that you follow the guidelines you will receive from Human Resources when your new RCA/TRC is hired. These guidelines were determined to provide a comprehensive 24 hours of “in office” training. Do NOT send your new RCA/TRC on a route until the 24 hours of training has been completed. Helpful training suggestions include having the new RCA ride the route utilizing the 4003 without performing mail delivery, accompanying the regular during delivery, studying the edit sheets, etc. The 24 hour time frame suggested training is not carved in stone. If you feel that the carrier will require more, please schedule additional time. The first day the RCA is scheduled to deliver the route, you may want to monitor their

progress. There have been reports of new RCA's working twelve hours on their first day. This lends to the retention issues.

It will prove beneficial to your office if you allow the new RCA to become proficient and comfortable on their primary route prior to training on other routes in your office. An RCA may be trained on up to three routes. There is no limit to the number of routes a TRC may be trained on.

RCA Covering Relief Day(s)

On the regular relief day, the route 'belongs' to the primary leave replacement. The regular can not tell the RCA that he wants to work. It is up to the RCA to request a non scheduled day. During a count, the regular may observe the count in a non-pay status. But the regular can not bump the RCA from working. If the office is under the work day relief formula, RCAs may be moved on relief days for coverage as qualified replacements.

When the primary RCA is serving full-time on a vacant J/Kroute or during the absence of the regular carrier, a relief day shall be granted. (EL902, 30.2.H) The relief day does NOT have to be that of the regular carrier.

When the RCA is assigned to a route or serving the route full time, the employee is entitled to work at least the evaluated hours of the assigned route and then may be replaced to avoid payment of overtime or additional overtime. In the case of the J or K route, this entitlement to the route evaluation is only limited to five days.

- On a K45 (9 hours a day) the RCA is entitled to 45 hours. If by day 4 the RCA has 45 hours, you may give them two days off to avoid additional overtime. The RCA that works 5 days with actual time of 39 hours will be paid the evaluation of 45 hours. The RCA that works 5 days with actual time of 41 hours will be paid 40 hours and one hour overtime.
- On a K40 (8 hours a day) the RCA is entitled to 40 hours.

RCA's Full Day Relief

The replacement carrier is compensated on the relief day for the full-day evaluation. Accordingly, the replacement should perform the normal duties on the relief day the same as the regular carrier on any other day. The reverse is equally true. Regular carriers should not fail to complete the days work and expect the relief carrier to take care of it the next day.

There may be instances due to exceptionally heavy mail volume, adverse weather conditions, etc. where some mail may be curtailed for operational or service reasons. Time records may show that leave replacement worked longer hours than the respective route's evaluation due to these mitigating factors. This would show that the leave replacement has fulfilled the requirement of "normal duties". This would indicate that the leave replacement has rendered a fair day's work for a fair day's pay (Article 34.1).

RCA Requesting Non Scheduled Day(s)

A RCA may request to take leave or a non scheduled day. This should be requested on a PS 3971 as any other carrier would. The block 'Other' would be the correct request. If the regular carrier has agreed to work in lieu of the RCA, this can be done without going to the relief day work list. The regular must agree to work the relief day to for an X day (DACA code R) without any premiums. The carrier must sign the PS 3971 as agreeing to cover for the RCA. This is not

to be considered as an opportunity on the relief day work list if the carrier is next on the list. If the carrier does not agree to working for DACA code R, you may refer to the matrix to get the route covered. You may also utilize the Workday Relief List, however, you may deny leave to an RCA based on the fact it will incur overtime. The regular carrier should work with the RCA in the X for the R day. This helps to promote RCA retention.

The RCAs are hired to work every Saturday to provide relief to the Regular Carrier. However, as with any employee, there will be situations that RCAs will need time off. There is not a set number of Saturdays that RCAs may be scheduled off. Use your discretion when approving or disapproving these requests.

As a reminder, when an RCA/TRC is resigning, please forward the following information to Human Resources. PS Form 2574, Official Personnel Folder (OPF) and the date the employee last worked. If this information is not sent to HR, the carrier remains on the Master List. This may cause a problem not only with our percentage rate but with invoking the formal and abiding by the contract.

Timekeeping

The PS Form 4240 is the official record for the rural carrier. Until full implementation of RTACS and EBRs (electronic badge readers), the carrier is required to sign the form when reporting to work, leaving or returning for the street and upon leaving the office. The PO 603 states that the carrier must sign as the action takes place, not to return and fill the form out after the fact. A carrier should not leave for the day without completing the day's entries. It is the manager's daily responsibility to complete the form for daily hours worked and initial. If using the computer program, it does not replace the need to complete the hard copy daily.

Whenever the regular is not working the route, the RCA should indicate in the remarks column that he is covering for that day. Management **MUST** indicate the correct DACA code for the day(s) the regular is not on the route or working on the relief day. Any time the regular works is to be included in the daily total. This also includes any time for supplemental payments. This is the official time record that shows if the employee was 'on the clock'. All times from the PS 4240 are totaled and placed on the PS 1314(A) time cards.

The PS 1314 and 1314A are the time cards used to input the time. If filled correctly, the input to RTACS is easy. If not correct, RTACS will give you error messages. The errors must be corrected prior to the RTACS input or the carrier will not be paid. Errors on the PS 4240 will make errors on the PS 1314. You must go back to the PS 4240 to discover the error in order to be able to input into RTACS.

The PS 1314 is only for regular carriers. The leave replacements (substitutes) when working are entered on the card below the regular's hours. The card must cross foot in the number of days worked. Total days worked plus leave must equal twelve days. The relief days and leave days taken must equal the number of days the leave replacements worked. Only holidays will reduce the number of worked days and not require a leave replacement worked.

The PS 1314A is for leave replacement carriers. The leave replacement may not require a PS 1314A completed for a pay period. The 1314A is only for auxiliary routes, auxiliary assistance, training or other work not on a regular route. If the RCA is only on training hours, both the work hours and the training hours must be completed. When a RCA is assisting on a regular route, a PS 1314A must be completed with the regular route number. PS 1314As for Routes 998/999 should only be used when the RCA is working and not designated to a specific route.

EMA & Vehicles

What is EMA? The rural carrier is responsible for furnishing all vehicle equipment needed to handle the mail safely and promptly unless a Postal Service owned or leased vehicle is assigned to the route. When the carrier furnishes the vehicle, equipment maintenance allowance (EMA) is paid. The EMA rate is paid to the regular assigned carrier for all days considered workdays, or to the relief carrier(s) for the number of trips recorded. All Regular Routes receive an equivalent to a minimum of 40 miles EMA.

RCA's receive EMA as any regular carrier when delivering a regular rural route. When a RCA is carrying an auxiliary route, the RCA receives EMA in a different manner. The formula under which EMA is paid compares the Daily EMA of a route versus an hourly rate. The EMA is first computed using the mileage multiplied by the current EMA rate. It then compares the number of street hours by the current rate of \$4.75 per hour. It will then pay the carrier the higher of the two. Typically, the RCA receives an hourly rate for the day. This is how EMA is computed on auxiliary route or giving auxiliary assistance.

RURAL ROUTES WITH LLV'S ASSIGNED do not receive EMA, however....The route evaluation will automatically include as follows:

- 24 minutes per week for completing Form 4570 daily (or AVUS), daily vehicle checks and subsequent vehicle repair tags.
- Formula: (Route miles x.06) x 4.5 minutes for each vehicle fueling.

EMA for the carriers is a function of the timecards. For regular routes, the alpha character preceding the SSN indicates Postal Owned or carrier owned vehicle. A G will be for Postal owned and an E indicates the carrier will be paid Equipment Maintenance Allowance for his vehicle. If a carrier uses a LLV when on EMA, the GT Veh block on the time card must be used. Enter the number of LLV trips to deduct the EMA paid. Conversely if the route has a LLV, the number in the GT Veh block will pay the carrier to use his vehicle. A regular or RCA must not receive EMA when it is not warranted (using LLV). The carrier should be annotating the PS 4240 when a vehicle is used that is not the normal type of usage.

Double Checks in Regards to timekeeping and management

- Ensure the proper use of "Absence Codes".
- Make sure management understands DACA codes "R", "3", and "5".
- Check for payment if regular carrier does not complete the route (vehicle breakdowns, emergency situations, RCA Training, etc.). Regular carriers do not receive the day's pay if they are unable to complete the route due to vehicle breakdowns (carrier's private vehicle), illness, or emergencies. The RCA required to complete the route records their time on Form 4240, or if two RCA's are sent to complete the route, the Form 4240 will be recorded with a "dummy" for the day and each RCA that assisted in completing the route will be paid on the Form 1314-A for the actual time worked and actual miles.
- The use of "O" days is not to be abused. They should not be accumulated.
- Work hours for rural employees must be transferred to the proper LDC when these carriers are used for duties other than rural delivery.
- Determine if RCA's have work hours on two different time documents in the same day. If so, check these days closely to determine if an RCA received duplicate pay.

- Determine if auxiliary assistance is provided on a regular or an auxiliary route and another rural employee received evaluated time for working the same route.

Overtime for regular carriers can happen outside the Christmas period. The carrier must work over 12 hours in any single day or over 56 hours in any week. This time is entered on the PS 1314 in the Daily Overtime block. This is paid in addition to any normal overtime of the route. Overtime for RCAs is paid when the RCA works over 40 hours in a week. Christmas overtime is paid only at the designated period as stated in the Postal Bulletin. Christmas overtime is paid in accordance with the instructions.

RTACS

RTACS is the rural version of TACS. If the office has city routes, the office should be using RTACS to enter the PS 1314(A) s. The time cards should be printed and kept as if the time cards were sent to the PSDS data sites as past practice. No time should be entered without a source document to substantiate it. Any change in the route status should not be made with the administrative module. Doing so may result in the carrier not being paid. Any changes in the route (such as K to J) should be made with the PS 4003s and sent to the rural analyst.

All adjustments must be made via PS 2240Rs. TACS Adjust pay routines (as with city carriers) can not be made. As of 2004, EBRs for rural carriers were not on line for use. When the EBRs come on line, the rural carriers will be exchanging the swiping of badge cards for signing the PS 4240.

PS 2240R

If there is an error made in paying the rural carrier, a PS 2240R is used to correct the pay record. The form shows what the carrier should have been paid. The comments block is used to explain why or what has happened requiring the form to be used. Attach any copies of supporting documents to the PS 2240R. As payroll adjustments are quite costly to the Postal Service, please verify all entries on the 1314 & 1314A's prior to submission. Once the 2240R is completed it is sent to the Scanning Center for entry into the rural pay system for adjustment.

SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT - PS 8127

When a carrier works outside the compensated duties, he is eligible for supplemental pay. Supplemental pay is given in three methods; auxiliary assistance, banking time for an "O" day or compensated on a PS 8127. The time accrued for an "O" day is for what the carrier performs duties outside their normal duties. Upon accrual of 8 hours, the employee is entitled to one day of paid administrative leave, referred to as an "O" day. "O" days earned should be scheduled as soon as practical and should not be allowed to accumulate.

A PS 8127 is paid instead of auxiliary assistance or banking time for an O day. It is paid at a national average rate and not at the carrier's own rate of pay. The fields on the PS 8127 must be filled out completely. Only one PS 8127 may be submitted for a pay period. If there are an additional actions during a pay period, use the Justification block to indicate action, date and time to be paid. Under the Time in Minutes block, put the total amount paid. Make sure the carrier and Manager has signed prior to submitting to your Customer Service Analyst.

Auxiliary assistance can be the most cost efficient method used rather than supplement payments. The O day is paid at the carrier' normal pay rate. . The PS 8127 is paid on a national

average for all regular carriers. The RCA is paid at a lower rate. The RCA must be paid for a minimum of two hours if not already working on the day of assistance. Therefore to bring an RCA in for less than two hours of assistance isn't good business strategy.

The following are acceptable activities that a carrier may be either compensated via an 8127, receive auxiliary assistance or accumulate "O" time:

- Attending savings bond meetings.
- Combined Federal Campaign meetings.
Training in Delivery Point Sequencing (DPS) procedures.
- Completion of the employee opinion survey.
- If a carrier on a route being compensated under DPS standards is required to case all or a significant portion (125 pieces or more) of its DPS mail, due to machine failure or other problems.
- Attending information or training meetings as directed by headquarters, Great Lakes Area or District Manager.
- Assisting in AMS street reviews.
- Other approved duties not incorporated into the carrier's evaluation.

Examples of work that the carrier should NOT receive additional compensation for are as follows:

- Performing ongoing case label maintenance
- Sorting address cards.
- Attending weekly safety talks.
- Giving aux assistance to another route
- Casing or carrying mail on their own route.
- Edit book maintenance.
- Attending mail count conferences.
- Any duty that was built into the route evaluation during the mail count.
- Duties as listed in the PO-603
- Customer contact on the route.

LEAVE

Each rural carrier should have their own leave replacement carrier. Article 10.2, NRLCA, EL-902, states "It shall be the responsibility of each rural carrier to plan annual leave at times when a leave replacement is available." If the route has a primary assigned RCA/TRC, it is easier to schedule leave. If a leave replacement is not assigned to the route, it is management's responsibility to attempt to schedule as far as possible in advance.

A carrier earns and uses leave in one day increments. A regular rural carrier must take a full day of leave. There is no procedure to give partial day relief to regular carriers. RCAs who are in leave earning status may take any amount of leave for a day. The limit for RCAs for a total of work and leave hours must be 40 or less hours in a week.

If a carrier does not have a leave replacement, management should attempt to approve the leave using another RCA in the office. It is management's responsibility to inform the carrier's whose route has the assigned RCA that it is their intent to use the RCA on any particular date. The carrier with the primary assigned RCA has first priority to the RCA. Once informed and without any objection, the RCA may be assigned to cover the open route. At that time, the RCA is scheduled and is not available to the primary route for coverage.

When a carrier requests a week's leave, the carrier may use any combination of leave. If the carrier has X days banked, the carrier should use these days. X days will become ineligible for use after 12 weeks and require a payroll adjustment to the carrier, with the carrier being compensated at 150%.

Saturday Leave

Saturday leave is found in the contract, article 10.4. No other craft has this agreement. The carrier may request to take leave on a Saturday using annual or LWOP at his discretion. The only reason that the leave may be denied is if there are no leave replacements available. It does not matter if the RCA is assigned to another route, there must be a RCA available to grant the leave. Excessive use of LWOP on Saturday will result in a loss of Annual leave in the next year.

Free Saturdays are available for H and J routes. Any week where the carrier takes 6 days of leave, one day of leave will be "free" to the carrier. The carrier can only take 40 hours of leave in one week. The DACA codes on the time cards must reflect as if the carrier was taking 6 days of leave. The carrier must have sufficient leave for the 6 days of leave. A free Saturday may bridge over two pay periods. It can not be coded on the time card. The leave must be indicated on the time card and the Eagan ASC will 'refund' the leave in that pay period.

Sunday Work

No regular carrier can work Sunday. There isn't a method to pay for Sunday work. RCAs can work on Sunday. RCAs will be paid under route A998/999 for actual hours worked. A PS 8127 is not to be used for a regular carrier working on Sunday.

Christmas Overtime

Christmas is the only period where a regular carrier may earn overtime for working over the evaluation and less than 12 hours daily or 56 hours weekly. It begins the first Saturday in December and ends after Christmas as declared in the Postal Bulletin. The carrier may work in excess of the daily time one or two days during the week. He will not be paid for overtime unless the carrier works in excess of the paid evaluation (i.e., 43 hours on a 43K). The overtime is based on the number of days the regular works multiplied by their daily evaluation. Any day of leave is considered to be one day of evaluation, not 8 hours. For example:

40K (8 hours a day) – Carrier works 4 days at 33 hours and one day of sick leave. This carrier will be paid one hour of Christmas Overtime. ($33 + 8 - 40 = 1$)

45K (9 hours a day) – Carrier works 3 days with 30 hours and two days of annual leave. This carrier will be paid 3 hours of Christmas Overtime. ($30 + 18 - 45 = 3$)

Postmaster's should exercise caution and not just give out overtime due to the Christmas season. It is important to monitor mail volume and parcel count and compare to the latest count data to determine if it is actually warranted. Carriers should be casing and carrying their mail as they have done all year. A carrier can not start casing DPS just to extend his time.

To avoid overtime, auxiliary assistance should be considered (remember that RCAs called to work must have at least two (2) hours of work available). The RCA may be scheduled to do parcel runs to assist more than one route. It may be casing mail for the regular or taking part of the regular route. Again, please monitor the usage of Christmas assistance and Christmas overtime. There have been many instances where Regular's continuously came in under their

evaluation due to over scheduling Christmas assistance. RCA hours are more cost effective than overtime to a regular carrier. But it should be avoided if at all possible.

It is imperative that you administer and adhere to a Sick Leave policy especially during this period. You may think you have Christmas Overtime under control by scheduling auxiliary assistance on Friday, but your efforts would prove unsuccessful if the Regular called in on Sick Leave.

Transfer Hours

Rural carriers are Function 2A and have one working LDC (LDC 25). All work hours will be accrued under LDC 25 regardless of function. In the clerk and city carrier crafts, work hours are accrued under the function the employee is performing. Such as city carrier training hours will accrue under training LDC 92, street functions under LDC 21, window functions accrued under LDC 45, etc. If a rural carrier performs a function that is not part of the rural craft, the hours would require a transfer in a pay period after it happened. Work hours transferred in the present pay period will correct all non rural LDCs. It will not correct LDC 25.

Limited duty hours entered as DACA E will automatically transfer to LDC 68. Training hours are part of LDC 25 and additional hours are included in the annual budget. They can not be transferred to LDC 92 or 94. To transfer hours, all hours must be recorded on a PS 1236 for documentation. In FLASH, rural hours are inclusive and are not broken down. In the Rural Reporting System, each office can see how the hours were paid by route. The Rural Reporting System (RRS) is a component of WebEIS.

New Guarantee Year

The oddest 'year' in the Postal Service is the Rural Guarantee year. It typically begins with the first full pay period in November. It may start in the last week in October. It is the time frame that all work hours are accumulated in to satisfy FSLA section 7(B) evaluation requirements. Prior to 2000, all national rural counts were conducted in September to be effective at the beginning of the guarantee year. This is a point where carriers may elect the high option. If the carrier has not counted recently, a PS 4015A should be signed which the carrier is agreeing to take annual to maintain the FSLA 7B salary.

RCA Transfers

RCAs who have completed their probationary period may request a transfer to another Post Office in accordance with article 30.2.F. If the gaining office accepts the employee's request for transfer, the losing office must release the RCA. The transfer will be effective within 30 days of notification to the losing office.

Vehicles

Vehicles receive compensation outside the carrier's salary. This is called Equipment Maintenance Allowance. The rural carrier must provide a safe and reliable vehicle to service the route. This is made known to the carrier when hired. The Postal Service encourages right hand drive vehicles when possible. There is a \$500 incentive payment for any regular carrier who purchases new a right hand drive vehicle. It is not available for used vehicles or to RCAs.

TRAFFIC SAFETY (PO603, Section 171)

Rural Carriers have no special driving privileges on public streets and roads. They are subject to the same traffic laws and regulations as other drivers. The carrier must obey all local and state

traffic laws. Managers must never relax their concern for traffic safety. Managers must ensure that rural carriers drive safely at all times.

SEAT BELT REQUIREMENTS (PO603, Section 171.51)

Rural carriers who furnish their own vehicle must wear seat belts between their home and place of employment and their place of employment and home. Seatbelts must be worn when traveling to and from the route and postal units. This means that seat belts will be worn from the unit to the first stop and from the last stop to the unit. Whether driving a postal-owned or privately owned vehicle, if the vehicle is a right-hand drive vehicle, seat belts must be worn anytime the vehicle is in motion.

Other traffic safety requirements

Only passengers on official postal business are permitted to ride in vehicles during postal operations. All passengers must use seat belts and, if necessary, use an approved auxiliary set, facing forward and equipped with a backrest. PO603, Section 171.6

Rural Carriers are covered by FECA when in their line of travel to and from the Post Office as long as they are driving the vehicle they will be using to deliver the mail. FECA does not cover vehicle damages.

Carriers are not covered by the Tort Claims Act while traveling to and from work.

Any deviation from the line of travel voids FECA's obligation to the carrier. Postmasters must have a copy of the line of travel for each rural carrier on file in case of an accident.

Vehicle doors must be closed when traveling to and from the route and entering or crossing intersecting roadways. PO 603, Section 171.7

A sealed Vehicle Accident Report Kit, Item 087-H, must be carried in a vehicle when it is used for official business. Postmasters must provide this kit to carriers.

If a carrier loses their license, they may hire a driver to help them service their route. The driver must meet all Postal Service requirements for drivers. If the route has a Postal Owned vehicle, the carrier may elect not to use the Postal Owned vehicle as to hire a driver. It would be management's prerogative to return a vehicle to the route in the future.

The Postal Service has a strong commitment to safety. Any line of travel that has unsafe turning points needs to be addressed. The Postal Service endorses extensions for safety. To hire a rural carrier is a million dollar commitment. To endanger that commitment is not a safe or intelligent business decision. The rural craft is the most exposed to danger craft of the Postal Service due to daily driving of long distances.

Vehicle breakdowns

Privately owned vehicles: If the regular carrier does not complete the route due to vehicle breakdown, emergency situation, etc.), they do NOT receive the day's pay if they are unable to complete. A day of leave would be charged to the regular carrier. The RCA who completes the route will receive the route's evaluation and EMA for the entire day.

Government vehicles: Anytime spent for LLV breakdown is accumulated as "O" time.

RURAL CARRIER SUBJECT MATTER AND REFERENCE INDEX

ACTIVITY	MANUAL	REF #	MANUAL	REF #
Absence without permission	ELM	666.82		
Accident Kits	PO 603	173.12		
Accident Reporting	ELM	821.12	PO 603	173
Accident Reporting Forms	ELM	541.3		
Accountable Clearance	PO 603	422		
Accountable Mail	PO 603	313.3	PO 603	252
Acts of God	EL 902	30.1.H	F21	582.2
Address Cards, correcting	PO 603	165		
Administrative Leave	ELM	519	F21	582
Advanced Sick Leave	ELM	513.5		
Affixing postage	PO 603	352.2		
Annual Leave	ELM	513	F21	581.11
Appearance (neat/clean)	PO 603	120.b		
Auxiliary Route (filling)	EL 902	30.2.G		
Authorized Passengers	PO 603	171.6		
Awarding a Vacant Route	EL 902	12.3.B		
Behavioral and Personal Habits	ELM	666.2		
C.O.D.	PO 603	341.3		
Carrier Cases	PO 603	213	M38	342.1
Carrier Knowledge	PB21628	Page 16		
Carrier Rights in Route Adjustments	EL 902	30.1.J		
Carrier Route Book	PO 603	232		
Carrier Supervision	M38	220		
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Casing methods	PO 603	223		
Casing letter mail	PO 603	222		
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Certified Mail	PO 603	313.3	PO 603	341.5
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Christmas Allowance & Proc.	F21	567	EL 902	9.2.K
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Code of Ethical Conduct	ELM	661		
Collection box	PO 603	353		
Collection of mail	PO 603	350		
Conduct on Postal Property	ELM	660	POM	221.6
Conduct work in a safe manner	PO 603	270		
Conflict of Interest	ELM	661.4		
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Curtailing of mail	PO 603	132.1		
Customer Receptacle	DMM	D041		

Customs Duty Mail	PO 603	341.8		
DACA Codes	F21	581		
Damage Mail	POM	431.65		
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Dependant Care	ELM	515.2		
Deposit of collected mail	PO 603	420		
Detours over 30 days	EL 902	9.2.C.13	F21	572
Deviation Approval	PO 603	152.32	M38	345.3
Deviation Payment	EL 902	9.2.J.6	F21	572.1
Discipline Procedure	EL 902	16		
Dismount Policy	PO 701	245.27		
DPS machine failure	PO 603	541.41		
DPS formal review	PO 603	541.42	PB21937	Pg. 53
Dual Appointments	ELM	322.6		
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Driver's License	PO 603	172		
Driving	POM	720		
Driving Record	P11	265.62		
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EEO	ELM	670		
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Formula	EL 902	9.2.C.5		
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This is an index of subject matters relevant to Rural Delivery. The listed references are not, in most cases, the only source for the listed subjects.

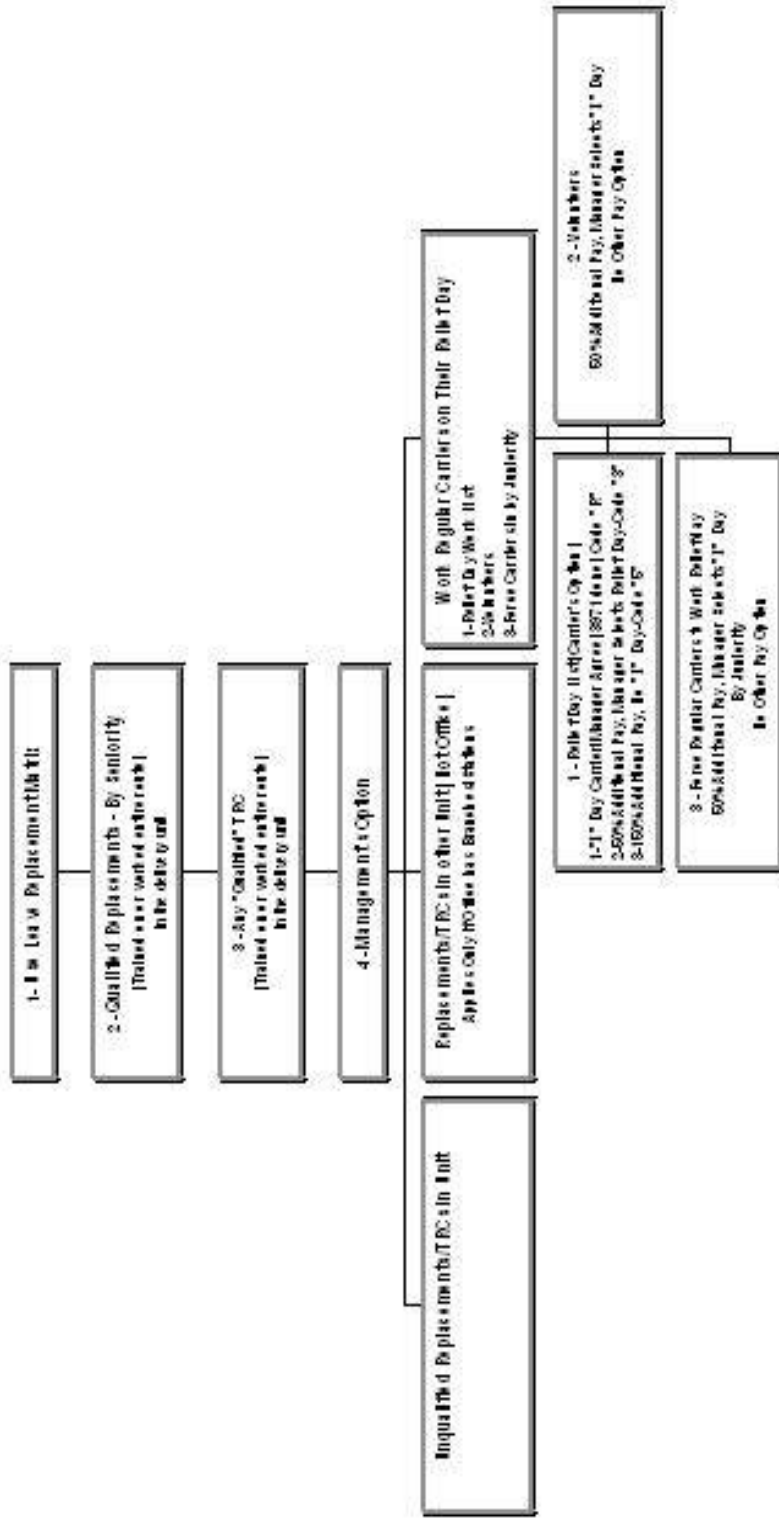
**Filling a Vacant Regular Rural Route Flow Chart
(In Contractual Order - PTF site)**



Note: "X" Days must be taken within 12 weeks of relief day worked, regardless if Option 1 or 2 was selected, except from the beginning of the guarantee period through the Christmas period, when "X" days must be taken within the same pay period. Also during this period, the 3-day notice of Management's selected "X" Day is not required, but notice should be given as far in advance as possible.

Great Lakes Area

Filling a Vacant Regular Rural Route Flow Chart
 [In Contractual Order - Non PTF site]



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Great Lakes Area

