

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Washington, DC 20260

MANAGEMENT OF RURAL DELIVERY SERVICES Methods Handbook, Series M-38

Transmittal Letter 1

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1 EXPLANATION

.1 This is a new publication developed to assist in the management of rural delivery service. The handbook includes guidelines and requirements for standard operating procedures, day-to-day supervision, administration, mail count, and inspection of rural delivery routes.

.2 In conjunction with the Methods Handbook, PO-603, (*Rural Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*), this handbook provides the basis for the efficient operation of all rural delivery services.

.3 All managers with responsibility for the supervision or administration of rural delivery service must review this handbook and become thoroughly familiar with its provisions and its arrangement of instructions.

2 DISTRIBUTION

One copy of the M-38 Handbook is furnished for:

- a. Postmasters
- b. Carrier Branch or Stations Managers
- c. Delivery Service Managers

3 REVISIONS

Changes will be published as necessary. Postmasters and managers are responsible for assuring that handbooks are kept current.

4 RECISSION

The M-38 Handbook supercedes all National, Regional, and local manuals, handbooks, instructions, and bulletins that are in conflict with it.

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Delivery Services Department

PREFACE

This handbook contains guidelines to assist management in administering and supervising rural delivery services. These guidelines are directed specifically to managers. Instructions for rural carriers are in Handbook PO-603, *Rural Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*. Managers must be familiar with the contents of both handbooks as well as other supporting regulations and instructions to properly manage their operations. Changes to the handbook will be published as necessary and must be entered promptly.

*Prepared by Rural Delivery
Division Delivery Services
Department Operations Group
United States Postal Service*

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CHAPTER 1

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

110 GENERAL

The following authorities have been delegated for the administration of rural delivery services, except where specifically reserved by Regional Headquarters.

120 DELEGATION

121 AUTHORITY OF DISTRICT

121.1 Approve the:

- a. Establishment of rural delivery service at a post office not having such service.**
- b. Elimination of a rural route by consolidation.**
- c. Transfer of territory between post offices or the serving of customers of another office.**
- d. Transfer or relocation of a rural route from one post office to another.**

121.2 Resolve:

- a. Boundary disputes between two or more offices.**
- b. Cases involving the waiver of current requirements for rural route extensions, including hardship cases.**

122 AUTHORITY OF MANAGEMENT SECTIONAL CENTER (MSC)

122.1 Approve:

- a. Extensions, deletions, and remeasurement changes to routes.**
- b. Relief of overburdened routes, auxiliary assistance, and establishment of new regular and/or auxiliary routes. *Note:* Regional approval is required for relief actions that include the conversion of any portion of rural territory to city delivery service.**
- c. The *permanent* withdrawal of rural delivery service in accordance with parts 631.3 and 636.4 of the *Postal Operations Manual (POM)*.**
- d. A driver or helper, at the expense of the carrier, under the conditions established in Article 29, Section 5. of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.**

122.2 Process all actions relating to seasonal rural routes.

122.3 Assure that accurate measuring devices are used in recording rural route mileage.

122.4 Delegate authority to approve extensions, deletions, and route remeasurement changes to offices where it has been demonstrated that the postmaster can properly handle the processing of all related papers and has sufficient expertise in managing rural services.

123 AUTHORITY OF POSTMASTERS

Approve:

- a. And require the use of street names and house numbers, instead of rural box and route numbers in accordance with Part 636.2 (POM) and Part 156.52 (DMM).
- b. The temporary withdrawal of rural delivery service, in accordance with Parts 631.3 and 636.4 (POM).
- c. The use of a relay box at junction points of two or more routes as a means of allowing the exchange of mail between carriers, or a collection box where conditions and mail volumes to be collected warrant such service. (The installation of relay or collection boxes must in all instances be preceded by a careful review of the situation and the' benefits likely to accrue.)
- d. The use of separations at the distribution case for "direct mail" for customers who receive sufficient quantities of mail to justify this procedure.
- e. And certify temporary deviations.

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214

Management of Rural Delivery Services

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CHAPTER 2

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

210 ADMINISTRATION

211 GENERAL

Managers at postal facilities with rural delivery service must be familiar with all regulations and policies pertaining to rural delivery operations. They must manage or supervise rural operations efficiently and effectively and in conformance with regulations and policy guidelines.

212 TYPE OF ROUTES

212.1 Regular Rural Routes

.11 Heavy-Duty Routes

A heavy duty rural route is one based on weekly workload evaluation and office and route time standards. Heavy-duty compensation is authorized on the basis of evaluated time as determined by the office and route time standards after subtracting any relief time. There are three types of heavy-duty routes:

- a. *H Route*-regular carrier works six days a week.
- b. *J Route*-regular carrier has a day off every other week.
- c. *K Route*-regular carrier has a day off every week.

.12 Mileage Routes

Salary for rural carriers serving routes classified as mileage (M) is determined under the Rural Carrier Schedule (RCS) based on the length of the route as determined by the official measurement.

.13 Special Routes

A special route is a route where the compensation is based on route-workload evaluated hours, but the route is not classified as mileage, heavy duty, or auxiliary.

212.2 Auxiliary Routes

An auxiliary route is one which normally evaluates under [39] hours per week. and the carrier is compensated for the hours actually worked.

212.3 Seasonal Routes

A seasonal route is a route where certain boxes are provided delivery for only a specified period of less than one year. Normally, these routes are located in resort or vacation areas. The seasonal period is defined as that period in which the carrier is required to attempt delivery and the seasonal period ends when delivery is no longer required of the carrier.

212.4 Tri-Weekly Route

A tri-weekly route is one on which the mail volume and requirement for service warrants delivery only three days a week.

213 FILE FOLDERS [\[See: Module 14, RR File Folders\]](#)

Postmasters must maintain a file folder for each rural route at their office. (This file is separate from the carrier's official personnel file.) A slide fastener will be placed on the right side of the folder to hold material of a permanent nature. The left side of the folder is used to hold forms and correspondence of a temporary nature, which are disposed of in accordance with Part 351, *Administrative Support Manual* (ASM). Retain the following items in the file folder:

a. *Right Side (Retain Permanently)*

(1) Forms 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, and 4003-A, *Official Rural Route Description, Continuation Sheet*, with supporting data, for extensions, remeasurements, rearrangements, etc. (To reduce bulk, amended Forms 4003 showing only the lines changed may be removed when complete Forms 4003 are prepared that include these changes.)

(2) Seasonal route data.

(3) Authorizations to use street names and house numbers for mail addresses.

(4) Authorization to renumber the route.

(5) Up-to-date route map.

(6) Record of collection boxes.

b. *Left Side (Temporary or Limited Time Retention)*

(1) Copies of memos to customers declining extensions, requesting repairs, etc.

(2) Forms 4027, *Petition for Change in Rural Delivery*, for extensions not approved.

(3) Forms 4024, *Request to Repair Road*.

(4) Forms 4239, *Count of Mail (Rural Route)*, 4239-A, *Rural Route Count of Boxholder Mail*, 4241, *Rural Delivery Statistics Report* and 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation*.

(5) Forms 4248, *Rural Route--Annual Inspection Report*.

(6) Communications or information pertaining to the route that is not needed on a permanent basis.

Note: Material on the left side of the folder is retained one year. Exceptions: Mail count forms must be retained until superseded and replaced by new counts. Route Inspections Forms 4248 are retained two years.

214 COMPLETION AND REVIEW OF TIME AND PAY RECORDS

214.1 Form 4240, Rural Carrier Trip Report

.11 Managers must review the rural carriers' entries and complete items 7 through 12 on Form 4240 each work day. (Use Exhibit 214. 11 for conversion of minutes to hundredths.)

.12 Form 4240 must be examined at the end of each accounting period to ensure that complete, accurate, and current information (i.e. boxes, stops, route mileage, schedule, actual and cumulative work hours, etc.) is shown on the front of the form; and the form is signed by the rural carrier and the postmaster or designated supervisor.

.13 Managers must review the form frequently to insure that the carrier will not exceed 2080 actual workhours (Fair Labor Standards Act, See: Part 214.3) during the guarantee period.

.14 Managers may require carriers providing auxiliary assistance or serving an auxiliary route to use timecards and/or time recording equipment where available.

214.2 Form 1314, Rural Carrier Time Certificate

.21 Managers must prepare certificates of service performed by rural carriers (Forms 1314) and will report all partial failures of service due to the fault of the carrier.

.22 Rural carriers must check and initial the certificate, verifying entries, unless absent from duty on the last day of the pay period.

.23 The completed form is submitted to the Postal Data Center where the amount of pay due each carrier will be computed and a check issued.

214.3 Rural Carrier Annual Workhour Projection and Review

.31 General

.311 In the event any regular rural Carrier compensated pursuant to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Section 7(b)(2) is required to actually work more than 2,080 hours within the 52-consecutive week guarantee period, such carrier shall receive overtime compensation as set forth in Article [9.2] the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement for all hours actually worked in excess of 2,080 up to 2,240, within the guarantee period. In addition, any regular rural carrier

compensated pursuant to FLSA Section 7(b)(2) shall receive overtime compensation for hours actually worked in excess of twelve (12) hours in any one work day, or in excess of fifty-six (56) hours in any work week.

.312 No regular rural carrier compensated pursuant to FLSA Section 7(b)(2) is to be allowed to actually work in excess of 2,240 hours within the guarantee period. In the event a carrier actually works more than 2,240 hours within the guarantee period, provisions of the FLSA require that the carrier be compensated at an overtime rate for all hours actually worked in excess of 40 per week. This will require that the carrier be paid overtime in addition to the compensation already received for the evaluated hours of the route.

.313 For all regular carriers compensated pursuant to FLSA Section 7(b)(2). the fifty-two (52) consecutive week guarantee period shall begin the first day of the second pay period in November, and shall end the last day of the first pay period of the following November.

.314 Rural delivery managers must be conversant with all provisions of [\[Article 9.2\]](#) of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement, especially those sections which address the FLSA compensation requirements. [In 1984, the FLSA provisions of Article 30 were transferred to Article 9.2]

.32 Purpose

.321 To project and analyze rural workhours to avoid the unnecessary payment of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime to carriers.

.322 To identify those carriers working in excess of their evaluated hours in order that corrective action be taken if warranted.

.33 Frequency

.331 The projection and review of rural work-hours must be conducted at the completion of pay periods, 04, 10, 13, 16, 18, 20, 21, and 22.

.332 If a review reveals that an employee may have potential FLSA problems. a projection and review of the workhours of that employee must be conducted on a pay-period by pay-period basis until the problem is resolved.

.34 Responsibility

.341 The postmaster is responsible for the following:

a. Assuring that the workhours of all employees compensated under the provisions of Article [\[9.2\]](#) of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement are projected and reviewed in accordance with Part 214.33.

b. Taking corrective action to avoid the unnecessary payment of FLSA overtime.

.342 The MSC Manager is responsible for the following:

a. Reviewing the Rural Carrier Projected Annual Work Hours printout (issued by Postal Data Centers for PP 04, 10, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24) to identify any employees with potential FLSA problems.

b. Contacting the postmasters of offices where potential problems exist to assure they are aware of the problem and have taken or are taking any action necessary to avoid unnecessary FLSA payment.

c. Supplying assistance to postmasters to help avoid these problems, if necessary.

d. Notifying the district manager of any potential FLSA problems and corrective actions being taken as of PP 10, 16, 18, 20, and 22.

.343 The district manager is responsible for the following:

a. Supplying assistance to MSC managers to avoid FLSA problems, if necessary.

b. Notifying the Region of rural employees projected to exceed 2240 annual workhours as of PP 18 and 20 and the corrective actions being taken.

c. Notifying the Region of rural employees projected to exceed 2080 annual workhours as of PP 22 and the corrective actions being taken.

.35 Projecting Annual Workhours (See Exhibit 214.35).

.351 Determine the base workhours by subtracting the Christmas overtime worked from the total cumulative workhours to date.

.352 Determine average daily workhours by dividing the base workhours (from Part 214.351) by the number of days actually worked to date in the guarantee period.

Note: Do not include any day charged to leave of any type or any day the employee was absent without approved leave.

.353 Determine the gross projected annual work-hours by multiplying the average daily workhours (from Part 214.352) by the number of workdays remaining in the guarantee period and then adding the total cumulative workhours to date to that result. **Note: When computing workdays remaining in the guarantee period, credit 12 days per pay period for H, RCS, and Special Routes; 11 days per pay period for J Routes; and 10 days per pay period for K Routes; then, subtract one day for each holiday remaining in the guarantee period.**

.354 Determine the net annual workhours by subtracting committed or approved leave from the gross projected annual workhours.

Note: Subtract only that leave covered by a signed leave commitment or leave requested in writing and approved on Form 3971, *Request for, or Notification of, Absence*. Do not include leave anticipated by the carrier but not yet requested in writing and approved by management.

214.36 Analyzing Workhour Projections and Identifying Problems

.361 Average Daily Workhours

a. Compare the average daily actual workhours of the carrier (from Part 214.352) to the average daily evaluated workhours for the route to identify the carriers who are working in excess of their evaluated hours.

b. After identifying the carriers who are working in excess of the evaluated hours, determine the cause(s) for the excess hours. In determining the cause(s) consider, at least, the following items:

(1) Carrier's Schedule

(a) Is the carrier's schedule realistic? ([See Part 332.](#))

(b) Is there evidence of waiting time?

(c) Is the carrier reporting as scheduled?

(d) Is the carrier recording lunch breaks accurately?

(2) SOP Procedures

(a) Is the office and carrier equipment laid-out in accordance with SOP guidelines? ([See Part 350](#))

(b) Is the carrier using efficient loading procedures? ([See Part 344.](#))

(c) Is the carrier performing work functions in accordance with SOP guidelines? ([See Part 350.](#))

(d) Is the carrier required to make more than one trip to acquire accountable mail? ([See Part 333.22.](#))

(e) Is the carriers parking area in accordance with [Part 344](#)?

(f) Is the route layout practical and efficient? ([See Part 345.](#))

(g) Is duplication of travel and retracing kept to a minimum?

(h) Are carrier work methods on the route efficient? ([See Part 360.](#))

(3) *Carrier Work Practices*

- (a) Does the carrier use wasteful or inefficient work practices?**
- (b) Does the carrier leave the work area unnecessarily? (i.e., excessive trips to throwback case, to withdraw mail, to the CMU location, to the hold mail area. to load vehicle, etc.)**
- (c) Does the carrier engage in frequent and/or unnecessary conversation?**
- (d) Does the carrier make unauthorized deviations from the official line of travel?**
- (e) Does the carrier return promptly to the office after completing the route?**
- (f) Does the carrier spend excessive time in the office after completing the route?**

(4) *Route Conditions*

- (a) Are there conditions on the route that prohibit the carrier from providing service within the evaluated time? (i.e., temporary detours, adverse weather conditions. adverse road conditions. etc.) If so, can anything be done to correct these adverse conditions?**
- (b) Are customer's mailboxes erected and maintained in accordance with USPS regulations? Particular attention should be given to excessive incidents of temporarily blocked or obstructed boxes which require dismount or excessive vehicle maneuvering by the carrier.**

.362 Gross Projected Annual Workhours

- a. Examine the gross projected annual workhours for each carrier (from [Part 214.353](#)) to identify the carriers projected to exceed 2080 or 2240 annual workhours.**
- b. List those carriers projected to exceed 2080 or 2240 annual workhours and determine the cause(s) why each route is expected to exceed the FLSA limits, (e.g., carrier is working within evaluated hours, however, the total workhours necessary to complete the route will exceed 2080 annually; poor carrier performance; poor route conditions or layout; etc.)**

.363 Net Projected Annual Workhours

Examine the net projected annual workhours for each carrier (from [Part 214.354](#)) identify the carriers who are projected to exceed 2080 or 2240 annual workhours.

.37 Necessary Actions to Reduce Projected Workhours

.371 Average Daily Workhours

- a. Managers must take corrective action to reduce, as much as possible, the average daily workhours of carriers who exceed their evaluated daily workhours. This applies to all carriers even those whose annual projected workhours do not exceed 2080. Remember, if a carrier is allowed to exceed, unnecessarily, the evaluated hours on a route with a low evaluation. the carrier can be expected to experience FLSA problems when the route grows.**

b. After identifying the cause(s) for a carrier exceeding the daily evaluated hours, the manager must:

1) Correct items beyond the carrier's control such as office layout, route layout, scheduling, etc. to the extent practical.

2) Correct items within the carrier's control by:

(a) Discussing wasteful work practices and informing the carrier of the efficient procedures.

(b) Retraining the carrier, if necessary.

(c) Disciplinary action, if warranted. (See [Article 16](#). USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.)

.372 Gross Projected Annual Workhours

a. The manager must contact in writing those carriers whose gross projected annual workhours exceed 2080 (or 2240) and meet with them to determine their leave plans in accordance with [\[Article 9.2.C.7.b.\(2\)\]](#) of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

b. Those carriers projected to exceed 2080 (or 2240) should commit in writing sufficient annual leave to keep their actual annual workhours under 2080 during the guarantee period.

c. If a carrier refuses to commit sufficient annual leave or does not have sufficient leave to reduce the projected annual workhours below 2080. proceed as instructed in [Part 214.373](#).

.373 Net Projected Annual Workhours

a. The manager should determine:

(1) If actions taken to reduce excessive average daily workhours ([see Part 214.361](#) and [Part 214.371](#)) are sufficient to keep the actual carrier workhours below 2080, or:

(2) If it is necessary to remove the high option classification, thereby granting the carrier more relief, or;

(3) If it is necessary to provide relief by adjusting the route and removing some delivery territory. or:

(4) If it is not feasible to adjust the route, is it more cost effective to provide auxiliary assistance or to let the carrier work the FLSA overtime.

b. Once the manager has determined what action is necessary, the action must be taken promptly and the results must be monitored closely to assure that the carrier workhours do not exceed 2080 during the guarantee period.

215 CARRIER'S STAMP STOCK AND FIXED CREDIT

216.1 Issuance or replenishment of stock is ordinarily accomplished at the originating office. However, if the carrier serves customers who receive mail through other offices on the route, the carrier will replenish the fixed credit at those offices in amounts representing sales made on the route to the customers served through such offices.

215.2 Postage stamp fixed credits will be issued to rural carriers unless they prefer to purchase stock with their own funds.

216 SATURDAY CLEARANCE OF RURAL CARRIERS AT SMALLER FACILITIES

216.1 Procedures

At many small offices, it has been necessary to schedule clerical employees on Saturday afternoon solely for the purpose of checking in the rural carrier(s). This creates unnecessary costs: therefore, at these offices the following procedures should be adopted:

a On Saturday morning, give each rural carrier a pouch and a rotary lock. The manager must record on each rural carrier's trip report the lock and rotary number, and the rural carrier(s) must initial the entry as verification.

b. When the carrier returns from the route in the afternoon, the fixed credit, any money collected, all accountable items, and undelivered mail must be secured in the pouch with the rotary lock. The carrier must secure the locked pouch in the place designated by the manager. This place must offer the maximum security available.

c. If a dispatch is available from the collection box in front of the post office, the carrier will deposit prepaid outgoing mail there. If there is no dispatch available from the collection box, if necessary, the carrier will *deposit mail in a pouch, lock it, and place it in the designated location.*

d. On the next delivery day, the carrier and the manager will check the lock and rotary number on the trip report with the lock on the pouch and, if they match, the manager will open the pouch in the presence of the carrier and give the carrier the contents. If the employee who served the route on Saturday is absent on the next delivery day, the manager must check the lock and rotary number in the presence of the replacement carrier. If they match, the manager will open the pouch, verify the contents, and give them to the carrier for disposition. (Instructions for obtaining rotary locks and keys may be obtained from the Management Sectional Center.)

e. In the event the number on the Form 4240 and the rotary lock do not match, open the pouch in the presence of the carrier, and, (1) If it is determined that any of the contents are missing, notify the Postal Inspector-in-Charge immediately.

(2) If it is determined that the contents have not been tampered with, make a notation of the facts on Form 4240 and proceed as described in Part 2 16.1d.

216.2 Keys

In order to implement these procedures, the rural carrier will usually be assigned a key to the post office on Saturday morning, and the key will be included in the rotary pouch with the accountable mail unless it is needed to lock the office. If it is not placed in the pouch, the key will be turned in on the next delivery day.

217 PROCESSING RURAL ROUTE CHANGES [\[SEE Revised Instructions: Postal Bulletin 11-12-87\]](#)

217.1 Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*

.11 Form 4003 will be prepared for the following actions:

- a. To extend or delete service on regular routes.
- b. For changes in boxes and stops because of substantial within area growth.
- c. Route consolidations.
- d. Route remeasurements.
- e. To authorize or discontinue salary protection.
- f. To establish or terminate lock pouch allowances.

.12 In addition, Form 4003 will be prepared with an endorsement added as indicated for the following actions:

a. *Relief to Overburdened Routes*

The form must be endorsed in the upper right-hand corner "Relief to Overburdened Route." See Exhibit 217.12a.

b. *Temporary Route Detour of More Than 30 Days*

The forms [PS 4003] must be endorsed in the upper right-hand corner either "Temporary Change for Duration of Detour" or "Termination of Temporary Detour," whichever is appropriate. See Exhibits 217.12b(1) and 217.12b(2). [\[see revised instructions- Postal Bulletin 11-12-87\]](#)

c. *Establishment of an Auxiliary or Regular Route*

The form must be endorsed either "Regular Route" or "Auxiliary Route" in the upper right-hand corner. Enter a check mark in the block labeled *New Route*, the evaluated hours in the *Base Hour Change* block, and the effective date. See Exhibits 217.12c(1) and 217.12c(2).

d. *Conversion of Auxiliary Route to Regular Status* The form must be endorsed "Conversion of Auxiliary Route to Regular Status" in the upper right-hand corner. Enter the evaluated hours in the *Base Hour Change* block and the effective date. See Exhibit 217.12d.

e. *Discontinuance of a Rural Route*

The form must be endorsed "Discontinuance of a Rural Route" in the upper right-hand corner. Enter the name, State, ZIP Code, and finance number of your post office. In addition, enter "discontinued" in the space for the *Name of Carrier*; enter the route number in the appropriate space; enter zeros in the blocks marked *Prior Length* through *Base Hour Change*; and enter the date the route is to be discontinued in the *Effective Date* block. See Exhibit 217.12e.

.13 Base hour changes may be made on Form 4003 for the following actions only with endorsements as shown:

a. *Relief to Overburdened Routes.*

The form must be endorsed as shown in Exhibit 217.12a.

b. *Temporary Route Deviation for More Than 30 Days.*

The form must be endorsed as shown in Exhibit 217.12b.

c. *Seasonal Routes.*

When it is necessary to increase or decrease the evaluated hours because of the beginning or ending of the seasonal period, check *Seasonal Route* block.

d. *Route Consolidations*

When it is necessary to increase or decrease evaluated hours, the forms must be endorsed in the upper right-hand corner "Route Consolidation." See Exhibit 217.13d.

217.2 Form 4241, Rural Delivery Statistics Report

.21 Regular Routes

Complete Form 4241 as outlined in Part 526.63.

.22 Auxiliary Routes

Complete Form 4241 as outlined in Part 526.633.

217.3 Memoranda

Use memoranda to advise the PDC of the following actions:

a. To select the high or low option at the time of an interim adjustment.

b. To correct errors in rural printouts and Form 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation*, concerning guaranteed salary, FLSA Code, option code, and leave commitment.

c. To discontinue a rural route. The memorandum must include the reason for the discontinuance and the effective date.

217.4 Submissions to the Data Centers

.41 Submit Forms 4003 and memoranda, if any, as outlined in Part 454.

.42 For Forms 4241 for special counts and annual counts, see Part 526.634.

.43 Amended Form 4241 or memoranda requesting changes in guaranteed salary, etc.. must be submitted to the PDC by the MSC manager or designee immediately after the irregularity or error is discovered.

220 SUPERVISION

221 GENERAL

221.1 A postmaster or a designated manager must submit any special guidelines or instructions designed to promote efficiency or maintain discipline to the MSC manager for approval prior to implementing such rules or instructions.

221.2 A manager should perform and organize work to determine any irregularity in work schedules and/or the flow of mail, and interact with other postal managers to work toward correcting all irregularities.

221.3 Managers will not permit suspension or interruption of service on rural routes because of the absence of regular carriers or substitutes; rather, they will assign or employ a suitable person to perform the service temporarily.

221.4 Managers may deliver mail of any class to customers of a rural route or a non-personnel rural unit who call for it when the office is open to the public. Customers of an intermediate post office may call for their mail during office hours at the post office where it is held. This practice is to be discouraged if it seriously interferes with the work of the office or causes extensive delays in the departure of the rural carriers.

221.5 A manager or designated employee will be on duty when the carriers return from their routes on all service days. (See exception Part 216.) [This references procedures for small offices where arrangements have been made for a rural carrier to clear their own accountables on Saturdays and leave fixed credits, accountable items and moneys in a locked pouch.]

221.6 A manager must provide or continue training, as needed and required, for rural employees. (See Part 360, P-23 Handbook, *Orientation and Craft Skills Training*.)

221.7 Managers will consult with rural carriers when significant service changes, including route remeasurements, are proposed for the carriers' routes. The affected carriers will be given an opportunity to submit written statements concerning the changes. (Those statements must be included with management's proposals for changes if submitted for higher level approval.)

222 MAINTAINING DAILY SCHEDULES

222.1 Managers will assure that carriers normally leave to serve their routes no later than 20 minutes after the scheduled departure time. (An exception will be made when preferential mail cannot be cased and strapped out by the end of the 20 minute leeway.)

222.2 Managers may delay departure of carriers when the principal receipt of mail is delayed, provided the later departure will permit the carrier to complete deliveries and still meet the regular dispatch schedule.

222.3 Managers will consider changing the schedules of carriers when receipt and dispatch schedules are changed. ([See Part 332.](#))

222.4 Unless specifically exempted, collections will be returned to the office in time for dispatch on the day collected.

223 DELIVERY REQUIREMENT

223.1 Deliver all First-Class, newspapers, and priority mail (received at the unit prior to the established delivery cut-off time) on the first scheduled delivery.

223.2 Deliver periodicals with an authorized delivery date on that date, provided such delivery does not delay First-Class Mail.

223.3 Deliver other second- and third-class mail not later than second delivery day after day of receipt (day of receipt to begin at 12 Midnight unless the Regional Postmaster General approves a different time). Deliver mail received on Saturday no later than Tuesday. Deliver circulars received on a day preceding a holiday no later than the second delivery day following the holiday.

223.4 Deliver all third- and fourth-class parcels available for delivery that day. A specific cutoff time which allows for sufficient processing time should be established.

224 VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

224.1 Managers must assure that, when required, rural carriers furnish a vehicle which is of sufficient capacity to accommodate the normal mail workload and constructed to protect mail from loss or damage. Vehicles and their equipment, as a minimum, must comply with the applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, U.S. Department of Transportation, and/or applicable State codes pertaining to that vehicle. Vehicles must be maintained in a high standard of repair and mechanical operation.

224.2 Any regular rural carrier or substitute assigned to serve a rural route, who is required by management to furnish a vehicle for that route shall be paid the Equipment Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for the route served. Postal Service vehicles may be furnished permanently or for emergency use. In such instances, the rural carrier will not be entitled to EMA. Long standing use of government or contract vehicles for emergency situations must be reported to the MSC for review.

224.3 Managers must assure that all rural carriers (regular, substitute, and auxiliary) have a valid State operators permit and a SF-46, U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card, in accordance with 214 of the M-52 Fleet Management Handbook.

224.4 Managers must make periodic checks of the carrier's vehicle to assure that:

- a. No mail is being left in vehicle.
- b. It is adequate to accommodate the normal mail workload.
- c. The vehicle offers adequate protection against loss or damage to the mail including possible damage due to adverse weather conditions.
- d. The daily mileage recorded from the vehicle odometer does not excessively exceed the authorized mileage of the route.

Note: If excessive mileage is found, the manager must determine the reason and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

225 INTERMEDIATE OFFICES

225.1 Definition

An intermediate office is any post office located on the line of travel of the rural route that is included in the official route description, and at which the carrier stops (daily) to perform service.

225.2 Delivery of the Mail

Provide customers of intermediate offices and community post offices with rural delivery service if they request the service and erect approved rural mailboxes along the carrier's line

of travel. Deliver on the next delivery trip any mail intended for customers residing on that part of the route already traveled, but improperly addressed to an intermediate office or community post office.

225.3 Supervision

Resolution of irregularities, complaints, and administrative problems involving a route serving intermediate office(s) is the responsibility of the postmaster of the office from which the route emanates.

226 ROADS AND APPROACHES TO MAILBOXES

226.1 Managers are required to:

- a. Keep informed of road conditions on rural routes.**
- b. Endeavor to obtain cooperation from highway officials and from customers in keeping roads passable and in good repair. and approaches to boxes open. Use Form 4024. Request to Repair Roads, for notification.**
- c. Whenever necessary, inform customers through the use of Form 4056, Your Mailbox Needs Attention, and Notice 38, Approaches to Curbside or Rural Mailboxes, to keep the approaches to their boxes clear by promptly removing obstructions, including snow, which may make the delivery of mail difficult or impossible.**
- d. In areas of new construction or other problem areas, assure that customers' mailboxes are erected in accordance with current requirements and are located to promote the efficient and safe delivery of mail.**

226.2 If extensive detours are necessary to effect delivery of mail, customers should, when practical, be requested to:

- a. Relocate their mailboxes temporarily.**
- b. Receive their mail through other customer boxes, or**
- c. Make some other arrangements for receiving their mail until regular service can be resumed.**

227 NON-CONFORMING BOXES

Notify customers with Form 4056, Your Mailbox Needs Attention, of any irregularities requiring attention. If irregularities remain uncorrected for 15 days. a second notice must be provided. After an additional 15 days (30 days total), management may withdraw service until corrections are made as specified in POM, [\[POM, 632\]](#), [\[POM, 623\]](#) and [\[POM, 631.7\]](#).

228 DAILY OPERATIONS

228.1 Managers will require carriers to perform their duties properly and efficiently, taking whatever action is necessary to protect the mail and ensure proper service.

228.2 Managers may permit carriers to assist in separating second-, third-, and fourth-class matter when it is in the best interests of the Postal Service to do so, provided it is without compensation, and is agreeable with the carrier. Consider the implications of the requirements and provisions of FLSA when requesting or permitting this function.

228.3 Managers must determine cutoff time(s) for the various classes of mail and assure that all missorted or missent mail is redistributed and is taken out for delivery by carriers.

228.4 Managers should level the workload of carriers by utilizing the proper curtailment procedures for non-preferential mail. Identify and work mail in order of priority and sequence of receipt.

228.5 Managers must assure that carriers account for and remit daily to the proper persons all Postal Service funds coming within their possession, and make proper disposition of any money entrusted to them as agents of the Postal Service. Money order and registry business records and all reports required of the carriers must be completed before the carriers go off duty.

228.6 Managers will make periodic checks of carriers' work areas to determine:

a. Is carrier's route book complete and current? (Rural carriers must maintain a roster of all customers who are not authorized street and house numbers as their official mailing address, either in their route book or in a card file, Form 4232-A. Managers will examine at least quarterly each carrier's roster of customers and determine its legibility and correctness.)

b. Are the entries of forwarding orders legible and complete?

c. Are rural carriers properly maintaining Form 3982, Change of Address, and Form 1564-B, Orders to Box Section or Other Special Orders, as instructed in Handbook M-37? These forms should be reviewed periodically by the manager to ensure they are being utilized properly.

d. Are Forms 3575, Change of Address Order, being kept in or on the rural carrier's case? These forms must be processed daily by the carrier, forwarded to the CFS/CMU unit, or returned for filing as described in the M-37 Handbook.

228.7 Managers must evaluate the daily service rendered by the employees. Observe carriers to assure that they perform their duties as outlined in Handbook M-37, Rural Carriers Duties and Responsibilities.

228.8 Carriers may stop, not to exceed 30 minutes, for lunch during which time mail and equipment must be protected. Managers must assure that lunch periods are taken at approximately the same time every day, and are of the same duration, to avoid extreme schedule variations. [[See PO-603, Section 152.31](#)]

228.9 Managers must assure that carriers cover their routes in the most efficient manner and, so far as practical, regulate the rate of travel to reach boxes at about the same time each day. Carriers serving non-personnel rural units must be instructed to make every effort to arrive there at or near the same time each day. They must remain at the unit to service customers for such time as may be necessary but, in any event, for no less than 15 minutes.

229 DISCIPLINE

229.1 In the administration of discipline, a basic principal is that discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive. No employee may be disciplined or discharged except for just cause. The delivery manager must make a reasonable effort to correct a situation before resorting to disciplinary measures defined in Article 16 of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

229.2 Managers can accomplish their mission only through the effective use of people. How successful a manager is in working with people will, to a great measure, determine whether or not the goals of the Postal Service are attained. Getting the job done through people is not an easy task, and certain basic things are required, such as:

- a. Let employees know what is expected of them.
- b. Know fully if the employees are or are not attaining expectations; do not guess, make certain with documented evidence.
- c. Let the employees explain their problems; listen! If given a chance. many employees will help solve their own problems. Draw it out from them if needed, but get the whole story.

229.3 Managers must recognize that they have an obligation to their employees, and to the Postal Service, when problems arise to:

- a. Find out who. what, when, where. and why.
- b. Assure that all the facts are considered.
- c. Resolve as many problems as possible before they become grievances.
- d. Admit when the employee's stand has merit, and correct the situation. Make decisions: do not pass this responsibility on to someone else.

229.4 The National Agreement is a contract that governs management and employees in their dealings with each other. However, it is the front-line manager who controls management's attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which

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CHAPTER 3

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

CHAPTER 3

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

310 PURPOSE

Review of delivery operations indicates that even in well managed offices, many hidden inefficiencies are likely to be present. These instructions are designed to assist managers in identifying and correcting ineffective practices. They set forth practical standard operating procedures (SOP) which require the least amount of effort, time, and cost. These procedures provide sufficient flexibility for application in all rural delivery units. The management responsibilities outlined in this chapter assure the immediate and continuing support of managers at all levels for the effective application of the procedures described.

320 RESPONSIBILITIES

321 DISTRICT MANAGERS

District managers are responsible for developing an action plan to complete the implementation of the standard operating procedures. In addition, district office responsibility includes establishing and carrying out specific follow-up procedures which will assure continuing compliance with the SOP.

322 MANAGEMENT SECTIONAL CENTER MANAGERS

MSC managers are responsible for providing the necessary support to postmasters charged with implementing these instructions, for assuring that MSC delivery and mail processing managers work together to achieve compliance with the instructions contained herein, and for overseeing onsite reviews and follow-up.

323 POSTMASTERS

323.1 Implementation

Postmasters having rural delivery service are responsible for assuring that the standard operating procedures described herein are implemented fully, and that these operating procedures and work methods are followed daily.

323.2 Deviation

Authorization to deviate may be approved in writing by the MSC management after review by qualified MSC managers.

323.3 Instruction of Employees in Changed Work Methods

EVERY MANAGER MUST PROMPTLY PROVIDE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDANCE TO EMPLOYEES WHEN WORK METHODS OR PROCEDURES ARE CHANGED. ANY CHANGES MUST BE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT AND NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. EMPLOYEES MUST COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND THE WORK METHODS AND PROCEDURES THEY ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW.

330 OFFICE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

331 GENERAL

The postmaster must plan and organize all activities in the office to achieve the most effective and efficient use of the physical and human resources available. This includes planning an orderly work routine, laying out equipment, and scheduling clerks and carriers to coincide with both the timing of the mail flow and the customer's needs.

332 SCHEDULING

332.1 General

Proper scheduling depends upon an intimate knowledge of operating concepts (e.g. mail flow) plus a complete awareness of the operational characteristics of the unit, Consideration must be given to:

- a. The receipt and availability of mail,
- b. The time required for the carrier to case all mail and perform other office duties before leaving to serve the route,
- c. The time necessary for the carrier to serve the route and return to the office in time for the dispatch of mail collected.

Note: Proper scheduling of available manpower is a major key to the cost effectiveness of the

unit.

332.2 Management's Schedule

The Postmaster or a designee must report sufficiently in advance of the first scheduled carrier's reporting time to insure proper coverage of each route so that the day's activities can be planned. Normally, the postmaster or designee must be on duty when the carrier returns to the office. However, an exception may be made on Saturday. (See Part 216.)

332.3 Carriers' Schedule

.31 The carrier's reporting and work schedule should be planned to prevent lost time. The work schedule is normally determined by the office and route standards shown on the most recent Form 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation*. Carriers should not be scheduled prior to the first receipt of mail.

Example:

Evaluated Hours as Shown on Form 4241-A

Office	Route	Total
16:12	27:25	43:37
Average Daily Time		
Office	Route	Total
2:42	4:34	7: 16

.32 Daily schedules shall be established to coincide with the daily evaluation of the route and adjusted periodically as required. (Schedules should allow time for distribution of sufficient quantity of mail to the carrier prior to the scheduled reporting time.)

Note:

- a. If lunch is taken, the schedule must be adjusted accordingly, i.e. the returning and ending time must be extended by the time taken for lunch.
- b. The carrier's scheduled leaving time could vary according to the route characteristics, i.e. a route collecting a large number of parcels, money order applications, etc. could require more afternoon and less morning office time.
- c. Under no circumstances should a rural carrier's schedule require or allow that the carrier wait for mail to be distributed during the morning or afternoon office time.

.33 Based on personal knowledge of a particular carrier or route, the responsible manager may adjust the schedule based on *less* than the time indicated by the route evaluation, (i.e. if the average evaluated time indicated that 2:42 office time was needed, but the carrier had been satisfactorily working within a 2:20 office schedule, and no significant changes had been

made to the route, a 2:20 office schedule would be proper). This procedure is not intended to reduce the time allowed the carrier to complete the route to less than the total evaluated time of the route.

.34 Carriers may be scheduled to report earlier than normal on days when the preferential mail volume is greater than normal, if it is necessary to maintain the regularly scheduled leaving time. However unless operational needs dictate, *starting times should not be prior to 0600.*

332.4 Maintaining Schedules

.41 Carriers must be trained and motivated to complete their office work so that they may leave the office on time each day. The manager responsible for carrier's schedules must be aware of the daily workload for each route. (See Part 222.)

.42 Managers at all levels must take positive steps to instill in every employee a sense of importance in the need to maintain schedules daily and perform all assigned duties within the allocated time.

333 UTILIZATION OF WORK AREA AND EQUIPMENT

333.1 General

.11 The workroom floor and parking and loading areas must be arranged to minimize walking and to facilitate an orderly flow of mail and equipment. Attention must also be given to selection and layout of authorized equipment which will be used by carriers at intermediate offices.

.12 The work area must be kept clean of extraneous materials and items. Assure that empty sacks and other equipment are placed in designated locations where they will not interfere with work activities or create safety hazards.

333.2 Workroom Floor Layout

.21 Central Markup (CMU)/Computerized Forward System (CFS)

Where practical, locate the case or deposit point on the carrier's line of travel to the distribution case or exit.

.22 Accountable Mail Cage

Locate the accountable mail section near the carriers. Do not allow the carriers to make more than one stop for accountables. An optional method for use in the morning is to take all accountables to the carriers by hand transfer or by using a suitable conveyance.

.23 Hold Mail

Hold mail is to be placed in a central location only when space is not available at the carrier's case.

.24 Equipment Used Daily

Sufficient trays, straps, hampers, forms, and other equipment needed by carriers must be readily accessible. Equipment used daily, such as hampers, may be marked with the route number; except when this restricts operational effectiveness and equipment utilization.

.25 Rarely Used Equipment

Rarely used or temporarily surplus equipment should not be stored in prime space.

340 CARRIER'S BASIC WORK METHODS

341 GENERAL

341.1 Carriers should proceed directly to their cases, record the beginning time on Form 4240, *Rural Carrier Trip Report*, and begin working.

341.2 *Carrier office and delivery work is based upon the one bundle, modified one bundle (see Part 353.2), or the two bundle system.*

Note: There should be no unauthorized methods in operation that conflict with those defined in the SOP, including case layouts, mail flow, etc.

342 CASING EQUIPMENT AND USE

342.1 Equipment

Management will decide the type of case, and the number of cases and wings needed on individual rural routes. Carrier case, Item 124c, has six shelves and is one type of case used on rural routes. Wing cases, Items 143c and 144c, may be used to supplement Item 124c as described in Part 342.2.

342.2 Use

.21 One Bundle System

.211 Cases will be set up generally with two inch separations and two deliveries per separation. Managers may vary the size of the separations and the number of deliveries per separation on specific routes depending upon the volume and characteristics of mail normally received by those routes.

.212 When the 124c case will not accommodate all boxes or deliveries on the route, wing cases (Items 143c and 144c) may be used.

.213 When the use of Items 143c and 144c is necessary, continue the separations evenly into the wing case. Begin with the lowest shelf and extend the separations as necessary. Do this with the remaining shelves and attempt to keep the separations equal in length on all shelves of the wing case.

.22 Modified One Bundle System

The cases and wing cases are the same as for the one bundle system. (See Part 353.3.)

.23 Two Bundle System

.231 Cases will be set up generally with one inch separations for letters with two deliveries per letter separation. Flat separations will be approximately ten inches in width and arranged as instructed in Part 343.24. Managers may vary the size of separations and the number of deliveries per separation on specific routes depending upon the volume and characteristics of mail normally received by those routes.

.232 On routes using the two bundle system, a wing case must not be used for letters unless:

- a. The total boxes serviced exceeds 420; or
- b. The average letter volume cased daily exceeds 2,500 letters.

.233 Consideration will not be given to approving more than two deliveries per separation unless the number of boxes served on a route exceeds the maximum number developed at two per separation (to a limit of 900 per 124/144 letter case combination).

Note: Under no circumstances should a shelf be placed on the top of a letter or flat case.

.234 Items 143c, 144c, or a portion of the letter case must be used for distribution of flat mail by carriers. Wing cases must be on the right side of the Item 124c case where possible. **Exception:** When an Item 144c case is shared by two routes, one route will, of course, have the flat case on the left side.

343 LABELING

343.1 General

The postmaster or designee must assure that all cases in the unit are labeled efficiently and uniformly.

343.2 Carrier Case Labels and Separations

.21 For the one bundle or modified one bundle system, *separations must be labeled from left to right, beginning at the left corner of the top shelf and ending at the lower shelf in the right corner.* Labels must be placed over the separations.

.22 For the two bundle system, begin at the left corner of the lowest shelf and end at the top shelf in right corner. Labels must be placed below the separations.

.23 Labeling must be in the exact line of travel for every delivery on the route. Any unused space should be at the end of the route in the upper or lower right corner of the case, except as stated in part 342.213.

.24 The postmaster or designee may authorize removal of separators when necessary, to provide wider separations to accommodate the normal mail volume received for a single delivery.

.25 Reserve 15 spaces on the lower right side of the bottom shelf of the carrier case or on the bottom shelf of the right wing case immediately adjacent to the letter case for *Undeliverable-as-Addressed* mail (A-Z separations. mark-up mail. etc.).

.26 For routes using the two bundle system. label flat case separations to conform to the letter cast. When possible. flat cases should be labeled with a flat separation corresponding to 1/2 of a letter shelf. Use all shelves in wing case with break points established to distribute flats equally.

.27 When additional deliveries are added to a route, they must be fitted into the case where they will conform to the delivery pattern and sequence of delivery. Except for directs, the case labels must follow the exact line of travel.

.28 Periodically review the case for each route in the unit to determine if the carriers are properly maintaining them.

.29 Rural carriers are required to label or relabel cases as necessary.

344 LOADING VEHICLES

344.1 General

Parking and maneuvering arrangements for rural vehicles should be designed to minimize loading time.

344.2 Procedures

.21 Assign rural carriers parking locations near the exit from which mail is taken for loading pursuant to [\[Article 20\]](#) of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

.22 Parcels should be distributed by route into gurneys or hampers.

.23 The gurneys or hampers shall be located convenient to the carriers.

.24 The carrier will place the letter and flat mail for the route in the gurney, hamper or another suitable conveyance, with the parcels, for transport to the vehicle. Every reasonable effort should be made to eliminate the need for more than one trip by the carrier to load the vehicle.

.25 If the office has a ramp, the conveyance will be wheeled directly from the carrier case to the parking space.

.26 During the loading process, the carrier places the parcels in sequence of delivery in the vehicle.

Note: To be cost effective, loading would require a minimum of effort and time on the carrier's part. Remember, loading must be supervised frequently and timed periodically.

345 DELIVERY

345.1 Maintain a current route map showing the official line of travel of all rural routes assigned to the office. Maps showing highways, roads, and streets can usually be obtained from the courthouse, tax assessor's office, or the county/city engineer's office.

345.2 Review the authorized line of travel and determine if the line of travel being used is the most practical and efficient possible. When reviewing the line of travel, fuel economy must be considered.

345.3 Carriers are required to follow the authorized line of travel out to, back from, and on the route. *Deviations approved for lunch or other purposes* on the route must not be counted as part of the total official route mileage.

350 CARRIER WORK METHODS-OFFICE

351 OBTAINING MAIL [1987 Revision to M-38, Section 350]

351.1 Carriers will withdraw mail from distribution cases when the mail has not been placed on their case ledge by a clerk or mailhandler in accordance with [\[M-38, Part 352.1.\]](#) However, all carriers, including those exempt from general mail withdrawal requirements,

must make a final withdrawal of letters and preferential flats from the designated distribution case before leaving for the route.

351.2 Changes in withdrawal procedures for rural routes will be made in accordance with the following:

a. Managers may change the methods, means, and/or personnel by which such operations are conducted in all offices with rural delivery. When management determines it would be operationally advantageous to change the withdrawal procedures currently used in a unit, the local NRLCA steward (or state steward if a local steward is not available) must be advised of the proposed change. If management proposes a change in withdrawal and the majority of regular carriers in the unit wish to perform the withdrawal function, all carriers in the unit will withdraw all mail, provided they agree to assume the responsibilities associated with daily unit volume recording.

If the majority of carriers elect not to perform the withdrawal function, mail will be provided to them in accordance with Part 352.1. In these cases, management will perform the daily unit volume recording function.

Note: The withdrawal allowance will be credited to any route where a carrier is required to perform any withdrawal function other than final withdrawal from a designated final distribution case before leaving to serve the route.

b. Improvements in efficiency at the individual office and assurance that withdrawal of mail, if by an employee other than the rural carrier, will not normally require the carrier to wait for mail, must be supplied in writing to the Management Sectional Center (District Office). Additionally, when it is proposed to remove the withdrawal function from rural carriers in a unit, an analysis of rural and clerical time required to perform mail withdrawal must be accomplished.

c. Assessments will be on an office-by-office basis at management discretion.

d. Normally, there should be no significant schedule changes resulting from a change in the method of withdrawing mail.

352 WITHDRAWING MAIL

352.1 Withdrawal of Mail by Other Than Rural Carrier

.11 Letter Mail

Letter mail must be placed on the carrier case ledge, either in trays or stacked loose, no more than one row high. The mail must be facing to the right with stamps down, regardless of whether it is worked loose or worked from trays.

.12 Flat Mail

Flat mail must be placed on, under, or near the carrier case and stacked neatly in piles.

352.2 Withdrawal of Mail by Rural Carriers

.21 Morning

Upon reporting, the carrier will sweep the distribution cases of all letter and flat mail. No more than two additional withdrawals should be made in the morning, including the final withdraw as required in Part 351.

.22 Afternoon

Upon returning from the route, the carrier will obtain all letter and flat mail available from the distribution case and place it on the carrier case ledge or neatly in piles beside the carrier case whichever is appropriate.

353 CASING METHODS

353.1 General

The casing systems in use in the rural delivery service are divided into three general categories, the one bundle system, the modified one bundle system. and the two bundle system.

353.2 One Bundle System

.21 General

Under the one bundle system, the carrier will case both letter and flat mail into the letter case separations. Under this system, the size and number of boxes per separation is determined by the postmaster or supervisor after considering the volume and mix of mail on the route. (See Part 342.221 .)

.22 Casing Letters

The carrier cases letters into the case separation.

.23 Casing Flats and Other Non-Letter Size Mail

.231 Flat mail and other odd size non-letter mail that will fit are cased in the same separation as letter mail. These items should generally be cased after letter size mail. However, such items may be cased before letter size mail when it would not result in a delay in the redistribution of missorted mail. Flats and other non-letter size mail that will not fit in the separations are handled separately. (See Part 354.223d for instructions.)

.232 When the one bundle system is used, catalogs that cannot be cased with other mail will be cased and strapped out as a separate bundle.

353.3 Exception (Modified One Bundle System)

In some areas, if approved by management, flats or letters may be sorted and strapped out separately, using just one case. Generally, letters would be sorted and strapped out first, then the flat mail would be handled. This system will be authorized only if it would not result in a delay in the redistribution and delivery of missorted preferential mail.

353.4 Two Bundle System

.41 General

Under the two bundle system letter mail is cased first into the letter separations. When the available letter mail has been cased, the carrier concentrates on the flat mail. Flats are cased into horizontal separations which conform to the break points of the letter separations. After flats are sorted, they are withdrawn from the horizontal separations and sequenced for delivery. Individually addressed merchandise samples which are difficult to handle when mixed with flats are handled separately.

.42 Odd Pieces

Any odd piece of mail mixed with the flat mail (except an obvious average size letters are to be cased with the flat mail. The carrier should not double handle this mail by holding it out and casing it later.

.43 Casing Letters

.431 The carrier sequences letters into one-inch separations with two addresses to a separation. The carrier should stand in the front center of the ledge where case labels can be read easily and any of the letter separations can be reached without moving the feet. With the left hand, the carrier picks up three to four inches of mail. With the letters loaded on the case ledge with stamps down and facing to the right, the letters are automatically in the correct reading position when picked up.

.432 The carrier reads only the essential lines necessary to sort the mail to the proper case separation. If a delivery point receives a volume of letter mail which makes sorting into the normal separation difficult, the *manager* may authorize the removal of one or more vertical separators to provide a sufficiently wide separation. (See Part 342.211.)

.433 The manager may authorize the carrier to sort both letters and flats to a case separation up to 10 inches wide, but this procedure should be used only in unusual situations (e.g. a delivery receiving a large volume of flats and letters). If this wide separation is justified, the carrier should handle or strap letters and flats together in a separate bundle. In these

instances managers must consider firm hold-outs on the distribution case if space is available.

.44 Casing Flats and Other Non-Letter Size Mail

.441 When casing flats, the carrier stands directly in front of the flat separations. The carrier should hold approximately 50 pieces (6 inches) in the left arm while distributing with the right. Carriers should not work from a bundle of flats resting on the case ledge.

.442 As with letter mail, the carrier should read only the essential information in the box number or street address line.

.443 Odd size non-letter mail pieces are sorted into the flat separations if they fit. If not, they are handled separately.

354 PREPARING FOR DELIVERY

354.1 General

After all mail has been placed in sequence of delivery, it must be prepared in a manner that will simplify handling on the route. Some difference in preparation may be necessary, but work methods are very similar.

354.2 Guidelines

.21 Letter Mail

.211 One Bundle System

a. After all available letter mail is cased, the carrier cases the flat mail into the same separations. (See Part 354.221 .)

b. When it will not result in a delay in the redistribution of missorted mail, the letter mail may be cased after the flat mail, if approved by management.

.212 Modified One Bundle System

Use the same procedure outlined in Part 354.213.

.213 Two Bundle System

After all available letter mail is cased, the carrier pulls mail from case in sequence of delivery. Mail is pulled, placed in trays, or strapped out.

.22 Flat and Other Non Letter Size Mail

.221 One Bundle System

a. After all available letter and flat mail is cased, the letters and flats are withdrawn beginning with the last delivery and ending with the first. One of the following methods is to be used:

(1) If the route is equipped with a vehicle suitable for delivering mail directly from a tray, the carrier should place the mail directly into the tray upon withdraw from the separation. As each tray is filled, it is placed in the hamper or gurney. The procedure is repeated until all separations have been prepared for loading.

(2) If the route is not equipped with a vehicle suitable for working mail directly from trays, the carrier should withdraw the mail from the separations and assemble it in a stack on the case ledge. When the stack reaches a workable size bundle (8 to 10 inches), strap the bundle out and place it in the hamper or gurney. This procedure is repeated until all separations have been prepared for delivery.

b. Do not allow carriers to place letters between the pages or within the folds of flat mail.

c. Addressed merchandise samples and odd size non-letter mail should be handled in accordance with Part 354.223d.

.222 Modified One Bundle System

a. After all available flat mail is cased, it is withdrawn beginning with the last delivery and ending with the first. The method in Part 354.221a(1) or Part 354.221a(2) is to be used for preparing the flat mail for loading as appropriate.

b. Addressed merchandise samples and odd-six non-letter mail should be handled in accordance with Part 354.223d.

.223 Two Bundle System

a. When all flats and odd size pieces are cased. one separation is pulled, placed on case ledge, and arranged in sequence of delivery.

b. To arrange in sequence of delivery, the flats are placed to one side on the case ledge. The carrier takes the top flat and, placing it in the middle of the case ledge, sequences all the remaining flats to both sides of the first flat, in the shape of a fan. If the fan shape is not comfortable, sequencing can be done to both sides of the first flat in a straight line. When this method is used, after sequencing, the bottom flat (on the right) is pushed to the left until all of the flats on the case ledge are stacked and ready for strapping or traying. Fit caseable odd size pieces into the bundle after sequencing is completed and flats are assembled into a stack.

c. Do not return the sequenced flats back into the case separations. Strap or tray them out and put them into the hamper, gurney, container, sack, or satchel, as each is completed. This procedure is repeated until all separations have been sequenced and prepared for loading.

d. Addressed merchandise samples can be handled as a separate bundle or pieces as appropriate. Unusual pieces such as odd size non-letter mail and rolls which cannot be cased

with flats will be placed with the proper tray or bundle in delivery sequence.

.23 Directs

.231 Bundles of directs, made up by distribution clerks, should be delivered to the carrier case. These direct bundles do not require rehandling of individual pieces by the carrier.

.232 Holdouts receiving a sufficient quantity of mail will be prepared and delivered to the carrier's case or designated area in sacks. This procedure requires no handling of individual pieces by the carrier. Normally, the sack should be delivered to the customer unopened and the empty sack retrieved on the following day.

.24 Special Instructions

.241 Rural Route Boxholder

This type of mail (letters or flats) will normally consist of one article for each box (or one for each family), and will be handled as a separate bundle or cased at the carrier's option. When more than one mailing must be delivered on the same day, they will be handled as a separate bundle or cased at the carrier's option.

.242 Accountable Items

a. Accountable items are those for which the carrier signs when obtaining them from the designated employee.

b. While accountable mail handling procedures are similar nationwide, methods of delivery to the carrier and the distance of accountable mail section to and from the carrier cases vary. The accountable section should be located so carriers will not have to travel any great distance to the cage. A carrier must be able to obtain all accountable items for the route at one time and one location.

c. Carriers should be called to the checkout case individually or in small groups. Use the "paddle system" or call individual routes one at a time to eliminate unnecessary waiting time. No more than one person should be in line if the operation is properly organized.

d. An alternate method is to take accountables to the carrier. Remember, the advantages of this method are eliminated if the clerk has to make additional trips to obtain additional accountables; therefore, all accountables must be delivered at the same time.

.243 Multi-Delivery Unit Buildings/Use of Apartment House Directories

a. All mail, addressed to apartments or buildings, not having an apartment or room number is entitled to directory service but not in the post office. Apartments and buildings are required to provide directories as described in Publication 17, *Apartment House Mail Receptacles*.

b. Carriers are expected to case mail not bearing apartment or room numbers based on their own personal knowledge. Mail without apartment or room numbers, and unknown to the carrier, is kept separate from other mail for the apartment or building. The carrier may refer to the directory in the apartment or office building to complete delivery of mail. (See Publication 17. Section I). Paragraph I.) *No directories are to be maintained in the post office.*

.244 Markups

a. *Offices with the Central Markup/Computerized Forwarding System.* The undeliverable mail cased into the "A" through "Z" and CMU/CFS separation is to be placed in the designated location as the carrier leaves for the route.

b. *Offices without the Central Markup/Computerized Forwarding System.* The rural carrier will process all markup and undeliverable-as-addressed mail according to instructions in the Handbook M-37.

360 CARRIER WORK METHODS-ROUTE

361 GENERAL

It is as important for the carrier's *delivery methods* to be as efficient and productive as the *office functions*. The delivery unit manager must determine if the carrier is following the standard operating procedures listed below.

362 LOADING

The mail must be loaded in the vehicle in order of delivery. It is essential that carriers maintain the delivery sequence of mail in the vehicle. This permits ready identification and retrieval of mail to be delivered and contributes to an efficient delivery operation. Safety is an important factor and the task of replenishing mail or obtaining the next parcel for delivery is only done when the vehicle is stopped.

363 MAIL SETUP

Usually, it is most efficient to place mail in trays when withdrawn from the carrier case. Letters and flats to be delivered first must be loaded so they are readily available for delivery to the box by the carrier. Parcels must be aligned in delivery sequence in the vehicle convenient to the carrier.

364 SERVING BOXES FROM THE VEHICLE

Generally, the carrier serves mailboxes without leaving the vehicle. Occasionally, it may be necessary to have the carrier dismount to serve a box *temporarily* blocked by snow or a parked vehicle, etc.

365 DISMOUNT DELIVERIES

365.1 The postmaster or designee is responsible for authorizing dismount delivery . The establishment of dismount delivery should not be considered unless it serves:

a . Apartment house complexes or other multiple dwelling units which use or qualify to use apartment house receptacles.

b. Shopping Centers

c. Nursing homes, schools, etc.

d. A delivery point receiving a sack of mail and/or parcel post daily.

e. Single point delivery to a central location.

f. Clustered boxes or neighborhood delivery and collection boxes.

g. Individual, groups, or clusters of boxes, located behind the sidewalk, where solid sidewalks abutting the curb prevent normal rural delivery service from the vehicle. (This type of service must be approved by the Regional Postmaster General or his designee.)

365.2 A satchel should be used for the dismount delivery portion of the route. Extra trips to and from the vehicle must be avoided unless absolutely necessary. The delivery vehicle must be closed and locked at any time the vehicle is not in full view of the carrier.

366 ORDINARY PARCEL POST

If delivery of parcels too large for the mailbox cannot be made (see Part 332 Handbook M-37). carriers must leave Form 3849-A, *Delivery Notice or Receipt*, in the customer's mailbox (apartment house receptacles included). unless the customer has submitted a written statement authorizing such parcels to be left outside the mailbox.

367 SPECIAL SERVICES MAIL

Registered, special delivery, certified, numbered insured, COD, customs, and Express Mail must be delivered to the customer's residence in accordance with instructions in Handbook M-37.

368 COLLECTION OF MAIL

368.1 Carriers must collect mail from customer boxes when the flag is raised and from other approved designated collection points on the route.

368.2 Carriers will collect mail from designated collection boxes as scheduled.

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CHAPTER 4

EXTENSIONS OF RURAL ROUTES

410 GENERAL

Rural mail delivery may be extended to:

a. Customers at city delivery offices who reside outside of a 0.25 mile radius of a postal facility* and outside of city delivery service boundaries if such service is requested and the other requirements are met.

b. Customers at non-city delivery offices who reside outside of a 0.25 mile radius of a postal

facility* if such service is requested and the other requirements are met.

**CAG L offices outside a .50 mile radius.*

420 C R I T E R I A

Extensions should serve an average of at least one family per mile of additional *travel including retrace*. Consider other factors, such as financial transactions, and type and volume of mail.

430 R O A D S

431 GENERAL

Roads generally should be public, must be maintained, and must be passable for carrier vehicles on a year-round basis. They must not be obstructed by gates that are unattended or are not automatic. Where there are streams crossing the road, they must be fordable at all seasons of the year or have suitable bridges to permit carrier vehicle travel.

432 PRIVATE ROADS OR LANES

Extensions may be approved over private roads or lanes provided:

- a. A minimum of *two families* are benefited.
- b. All other requirements are met, including the mileage/family criteria as stated in Part 420.
- c. A letter is submitted, by the person or persons responsible for maintaining the road, that includes the statement; *It is understood that if the road is not properly maintained, rural delivery service will be withdrawn.*

Note: (1) A copy of the letter must accompany the request for an extension.

(2) If the extension is approved, the original letter must be kept on file by the postmaster for as long as service is provided over the private road or lane.

- d. The road or lane has no unattended gates or obstructions that would hinder the immediate access of carrier vehicles or personnel.

433 PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS

433.1 A driveway leading directly to a customer's yard is private and should not be considered public even though maintained by a municipality.

433.2 *Rural service must not be extended onto private driveways.*

434 TURNAROUNDS

Where necessary, a suitable place that would not constitute a hazard to pedestrian, vehicular traffic, or the rural carrier must be provided for the carrier to turn the vehicle around within the

family and mileage criteria.

440 EXTENSIONS

441 GENERAL

An extension should provide service to the driveway entrance for all customers making requests, provided each customer meets the average mileage requirement. Customers who do not qualify under present requirements may place boxes on the regular line of travel of a rural route and receive service.

442 EXTENSIONS TO MOBILE HOME SUB-DIVISIONS, PARKS, AND TRAILER COURTS

442.1 Permanent Type Occupancy

.11 General

These are developments consisting of managed mobile home parks or residential mobile home sub-divisions where lots are permanently assigned; where the streets are public or privately maintained for public use; and where other conditions are similar or identical to a normal residential subdivision. Delivery options are subject to the approval of the local postmaster and are to be considered in the order listed

.12 Single Point Delivery

Delivery is made to the management office or other convenient and suitable, designated place or receptacle. Management must provide final delivery to each resident in such manner that will preclude persons other than the addressee from having access to the mail. Notice 34, *Instructions to Management Where Delivery of Mail is to a Central Point*, provides detailed information on handling and forwarding of mail.

.13 Centralized Delivery by the Carrier

Approved apartment-type receptacles are furnished in a central mailroom or protected outdoor shelter with adequate lighting (see Publication 17, page 5, section B1b).

.14 Delivery to Boxes in Clusters

Approved delivery centers, neighborhood delivery and collection box units, or clusters of approved rural type boxes may be used. Any *Neighborhood Box Units*, etc., installed must be approved by the MSC manager or designee. *Note:* This method is particularly suitable where parked vehicles or other conditions preclude curblin delivery.

.15 Curbline Delivery

Permissible where are conditions permit delivery efficiency with consideration for safety of both the residents and carrier, and where the requirements are met for curbline extension to individual residences. Mailboxes will be grouped at dividing property lines to the extent practicable.

442.2 Transient Type Occupancy

.21 General

These are developments comprising recreational vehicle parks and trailer courts where lots or spaces are only rented, and where the occupants are transient. *The fact that a minor portion of the occupants may reside in the park for extended periods does not qualify it as permanent type occupancy.* Decision must be based upon the normal occupancy.

.22 Providing Service

Service may be provided by:

- a. Single point delivery to the management office.
- b. Single point delivery to another convenient and suitable designated place or receptacle if there is no management office in the park or court. (See Part 442.12.)

443 REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

443.1 Customers' Request

Customers requesting an extension of rural delivery service should complete Form 4027, *Petition for Change in Rural Delivery* (Exhibit 443.1), in accordance with the instructions on the form and submit to the postmaster. A separate Form 4027 must be submitted for each extension requested.

443.2 Management's Responsibility

.21 Upon receipt of Form 4027, management will complete the reverse side of Form 4027, prepare Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, and a sketch of the area.

.22 Form 4003 need not be prepared if the requested extension obviously does not meet the established criteria.

443.3 Completing Form 4027

The postmaster or designee should complete Form 4027 in accordance with the instructions on the back of the form:

- a. Fill in all blocks, Items 1 thru 9. The number of boxes and vehicle stops *must* be shown regardless of the route classification.

- b. If Item 6 is answered yes, or if either Item 8 or 9 are answered *no*, a full explanation must be provided in Item 10.
- c. If Item 7 is answered Yes, a letter must be submitted by the customer as outlined in Part 432c.
- d. Draw a sketch of the proposed extension in Item 10. Indicate the location of a residence and the line of travel using the color coding as prescribed on Form 4027.
- e. Consult with the rural carrier and attach to Form 4027 any statement the carrier desires to make.
- f. The postmaster or designee must sign the form.

443.4 Completing Form 4003

Show the official description of the route on Form 4003, and, if a continuation sheet is necessary use Form 4003-A. Completion should be as follows:

- a. Enter the information required at the top of the form.
- b. Enter the number of boxes and stops regardless of the route classification. The number of stops cannot exceed the number of boxes.
- c. Each line of travel should show a separate direction, including retrace, if applicable (e.g.. *Right on Kreiner Road .50 and retrace*).

Note: The use of compass points or right, left directions on Form 4003 shall be determined by the Regional Postmaster General or his designee.

- d. Enter the exact mileage for each line of travel. State distance in miles and two decimals; e.g. 5.20, .10, 1.50. Measurements are made down the center of the road without deviating to serve boxes, using an automobile odometer which has been tested for accuracy or a distance measuring device if available. Measurement must be made by the postmaster or a supervisor.
- e. Enter the total mileage in the lint labeled *Total Official Route Mileage* on the last page of the official be shown in *New Length*
- f. It is not necessary to rewrite the route description to show the entire line of travel each time an extension is requested. To amend the route description, it is only necessary to:

(1) Complete the applicable items in the top portion of the form.

(2) Show the new direction and mileage for the lines to be changed only (see Exhibit 443.4f(2)). In the exhibit, the line of travel on Line 10 previously read, *Right on McDonald Road to Prine Road 1.00*. The extension west on Jamestown Road .50 and retrace was made from the mid-point of the travel on McDonald Road. After the amendment, travel on McDonald Road is recorded on Lines 10 and 10b and travel on Jamestown Road is recorded on Line 10a. After traveling McDonald Road as indicated on Line 10b, the carrier would proceed to travel Lines 11, 12. etc. If a line of travel is no longer needed, enter *delete* on the appropriate numbered line.

(3) Enter the new total mileage in the total space at the bottom of the form and in the *New Length* space at the top portion in miles and hundredths.

g. A complete revision of Form 4003 showing the entire line of travel should be prepared only when:

- (1) A substantial rearrangement, realignment, or service charge is made to the route.**
- (2) Five Forms 4003 have been issued for amendments to the route.**
- (3) An amendment is made to the route, and it has been five years since the last complete route description was made.**

450 PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

451 POSTMASTERS DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO APPROVE EXTENSIONS

451.1 Form 4027.

Keep a completed Form 4027 on file for each separate change approved.

451.2 M a p

Maintain on file up-to-date map(s) showing the complete lines of travel for all rural routes and update them as changes are implemented. Prepare a new map(s) following a substantial service change or realignment of route(s).

451.3 Form 4003

Maintain a completed Form 4003 on file for each rural route. For minor extensions or deletions, complete the top portion of Form 4003, and show the new description and mileage for only the lines to be changed. Distribute copies of Form 4003 in accordance with instructions on the bottom of the form. Prepare a new Form 4003 providing a complete, updated route description if any of the conditions in Part 443.4g are met.

452 POSTMASTERS NOT DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO APPROVE EXTENSIONS

452.1 Form 4027.

Postmasters must submit a separate Form 4027 to the MSC manager for each change proposed. All information requested on the form should be furnished.

452.2 Submission of Sketch or Map

.21 Sketch

Post office must furnish to the MSC a clear, detailed sketch of the affected portion of the route when a change or extension is proposed.

.22 Map

Post offices must submit an updated, well marked map of the complete route to the MSC whenever a substantial service change is involved, or when the proposed change borders rural delivery service from other post office(s). All post offices must have up-to-date maps on file showing the complete lines of travel for all rural routes.

452.3 Form 4003

.31 A Form 4003 providing a new *and complete* route description must be submitted to the MSC with the Form 4027 and a sketch or map when any of the conditions in Part 443.4g are met.

.32 When none of the conditions in Part 443.4g apply, it is necessary to submit only an updated Form 4003 by completing the top portion and showing the new description and mileage for only those lines to be changed

453 SECTIONAL CENTER REVIEW OF FORM 4003

453.1 Regular Routes

Check for completeness and accuracy. Be sure the total mileage figure is accurate. Add the mileage columns after typing to be sure all totals are in agreement. Check the Social Security number and the carrier's pay step. All blocks in the top portion should be filled with numbers or Terns to:

- a. Show the finance number in six digits (e.g. 016000).
- b. Show the route number in two digits (e.g. 02, 03, 10).
- c. Show prior length and new length in five digits (e.g. show "59.40" as "054940").
- d. Show the social security number in nine digits (e.g. 424-16-1600 as 424161600).
- e. Show boxes and stops in four digits (e.g.. show "520 boxes" and "450 stops" as "0520" and "0450." respectively).
- f. Show the effective date in six digits (e.g. show "January 7, 1979" as "010779").
- g. If Form 4003 is completed showing only an extension, verify that five amendments have not been made or that it has not been five years since the last complete route description was made.

453.2 Auxiliary Routes

Changes to auxiliary routes will be made in the same manner as those on regular routes.

453.3 Seasonal Routes

All seasonal changes must begin and end on the first day of a pay period in accordance with Article [9.2.C.12] of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement. (For example, suppose a route now has a seasonal change from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The seasonal change would be effective with the pay period beginning on or before Memorial Day and would terminate with the beginning of the pay period on or after Labor Day each year.)

453.4 Distribution of Form 4003 Upon Completion of the Review

Distribution of copies of Form 4003 should be made by the MSC in accordance with instructions on the bottom of the form.

454 SUBMISSION TO THE DATA CENTERS

454.1 Form 4003 must be submitted by the MSC or designee to arrive at the PDC not later than 10 calendar days before the effective date of the change.

454.2 Requests for changes to rural routes are to be avoided during the interim period between the last day of the annual mail count and the effective date of the result of the annual count.

454.3 For authorized route extensions , temporary detours of more than 30 days, or seasonal route changes effective during the period stated in Part 454.2 proceed as follows:

a. If the change *was included* on the Form 4241, *Rural Delivery Statistics Report*, submitted for the annual count, submit a Form 4003 with the same information (boxes, mileage, etc.) and showing *the base hour change and the effective date*. This will provide payment to the carrier for the period between the effective date of the change and the effective date of the mail count evaluation.

b. If the change was not included on the Form 4241 submitted for the annual count, submit a Form 4003 with the new information and showing the base hour change and the effective date. Because the Form 4241 (submitted for the mail count) will supercede this Form 4003, it is necessary to submit an amended Form 4241 with the new miles, boxes, and stops for the route.

c. For extensions with an effective date during this interim period. include a memo (Exhibit 454.3c) with the Form 4003 submitted.

454.4 Although it is not recommended, changes can be made on a rural route in two consecutive pay periods.

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CHAPTER 5

ROUTE INSPECTIONS AND MAIL COUNTS

510 ANNUAL INSPECTION OF ROUTES

511 DEFINITION

Inspection of a route is the physical observation of the condition of the route and boxes, the adequacy and quality of the service to the rural public, and the character and performance of the carrier. This inspection is to be made by the postmaster or a designee while accompanying the carrier on the route.

512 FREQUENCY

All routes must be inspected at least once each calendar year. An inspection must be conducted either during or immediately preceding the annual count of mail and all special counts of mail. Additional inspections may be made at other times of the year.

513 INSPECTION ROUTE

Form 4248, *Rural Route-Annual Inspection Report* (Exhibit 513) must be completed in duplicate for each regular and auxiliary rural route. The original of the Form 4248 will be retained in the post office file, and the duplicate copy will be forwarded to the MSC manager.

514 OFFICIAL ROUTE TRAVEL

Use the current Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, on the inspection trip to ensure that the line of travel being followed is correct. While the length of the route shown on the Form 4003 is measured by traveling the most direct drive practical without pulling out to serve mailboxes, make a check of the difference in odometer miles recorded in the carrier's vehicle and the official length shown on Form 4003. Should the two mileages vary widely, the route should be remeasured. (See [Chapter 6 for remeasurement procedures](#).)

515 OBTAINING DATA

515.1 Count of Boxes

Count as a box all boxes currently being served and temporarily vacant dwellings, apartments, and places of business with or without a box erected if which have not been vacant more than 90 days. But do not count abandoned boxes, permanently vacant buildings, dwellings, and apartments vacant more than 90 days, buildings under construction, or dwellings and businesses receiving delivery solely through general delivery or a post office box. In resort areas, transient trailer parks, and transient mobile home parks count only the boxes being served during the inspection.

515.2 Count of Stops

.21 Count the minimum number of potential stop required to serve every box on the route, i.e. the number of times a carrier must move the vehicle in order to serve all boxes on the route as determined by the manager.

.22 Where a group of boxes can be served without moving the vehicle, record one vehicle stop for that group of boxes.

.23 Do not count stops for stoplights, stop signs. etc.

.24 Prepare a worksheet before beginning the inspection to facilitate tallying the boxes and stops. Such a worksheet is shown in Exhibit 515.2a. By numbering the items on the front of a PS Form 4056, *Your Mailbox Needs Attention* (Exhibit 515.2b), you can note mailbox irregularities on the worksheet without delaying the carrier.

516 COUNT OF FAMILIES

516.1 Definition

For Postal Service purposes, the term "family" is considered the same as "household."

516.2 Procedure

.21 Count a single residence as a household consisting of only one family regardless of the number of residents or their relationship.

.22 In duplex or other multi-unit residential buildings, count each occupied separate unit as a household consisting of only one family.

517 REVIEWING ROUTE

517.1 Road Conditions

11. Observe and note road and traffic conditions which hamper delivery service.

12. Notify the appropriate highway official of public roads needing attention using Form 4024, Request to Repair Roads.

13. Send Form 4024 to the owner of private roads that need repair.

517.2 Mailbox Irregularities

21. Note the condition of mail boxes during the route inspection for possible irregularities.

22. Form 4056, *Your Mail Box Needs Attention*, is designed to notify customers of any irregularities noted. The postmaster will prepare a Form 4056 for each box having an irregularity, using the inspection worksheet as a basis.

23. Remind carriers of their responsibility to notify management promptly when they observe mailbox irregularities.

24. If the irregularities remain uncorrected, service may be withdrawn in accordance with Part 623.1, POM.

517.3 Equipment

Review the following items and take appropriate action to correct any deficiencies:

- a. Casing equipment.**
- b. Vehicle used on the route:**
 - (1) Is it adequate?**
 - (2) Is it properly maintained?**
- c. Accident report kit (Item 087-H).**
- d. Carrier supply of stamps and forms**
- e. Carrier's S.F. 46, U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card.**
- f. Does carrier have a valid state driver's license?**

517.4 Carrier Performance

Review the following areas and take action to correct any deficiencies:

- a. Are the carrier's work habits and quality of service satisfactory?**
- b. Does the carrier properly maintain trip Reports, roster of customers, and case labels?**
- c. Does the carrier serve the route in accordance with the latest official description?**
- d. If the route serves an intermediate office, is the carrier's arrival time, leaving time, and work performed at that office satisfactory?**

517.5 General

In addition to the above, check, verify, and/or correct, as appropriate, the following additional items:

- a. Is the carrier's schedule proper and is it observed?**
- b. Can travel be reduced?**
- c. Does the carrier transport city carrier relays?**
- d. Does the carrier transport locked pouches and is the proper time allowance credited or monetary allowance paid for it?**
- e. If collection service and/ or mail exchange is accomplished, is it warranted'?**

520 ANNUAL AND SPECIAL COUNTS

521 INTRODUCTION

These instructions provide standardized and uniform procedures in conducting the count of mail on Rural routes. A careful reading and complete understanding of this material by postmasters and supervisors will ensure the accuracy of the count data, the prompt evaluation, and correct classification of rural routes. Postmasters and supervisors must assure that mail counts are conducted properly and that data reported is accurate.

522 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS - ANNUAL COUNT OR SPECIAL COUNT

At the time of the annual count, or special count, the postmaster must arrange a meeting with each eligible rural carrier to discuss requirements for election of a higher classification for which the rural carrier may qualify. The commitment to use sufficient annual leave to qualify for a higher classification must be made on Form 4241 by the carrier to assure management that the actual work hours will not exceed 2,080 hours during the guarantee period. The leave commitment portion of Form 4241 must be signed by the carrier at the time of the annual or special count.

[\[See: Western Area Mail Count Guidelines\]](#)

523 PURPOSE AND DEFINITION OF COUNT

523.1 The count of mail is the physical counting and recording at specific times of the number of pieces of mail delivered, collected, or handled on rural routes. The count of mail is used to assemble data which provide the basis for the evaluation of the individual route. These route statistics will indicate:

- a. Volume of mail handled.
- b. Amount of office and route time used by the carrier.
- c. Adequacy of service to rural customers.
- d. Efficiency and performance of the carrier.

523.2 The evaluation of a rural route is determined by the mail volume, daily miles traveled, the number of boxes served, and fixed or variable time allowances. (See Exhibit 523.2.)

523.3 These instructions will be followed throughout the year for the annual and all special mail counts.

524 ANNUAL COUNT-COVERAGE AND COUNT PERIOD

524.1 The annual count of mail will be conducted on all rural routes during the last two full weeks of September. (Exact dates are published yearly in the *Postal Bulletin*.) Boxholder mail only will be counted for four consecutive weeks, beginning one week prior to the start of the annual mail count (Note: During special counts, not coinciding with the annual count, boxholder mail will

be recorded only for the two week count period.)

524.2 The annual count of mail will be conducted on all rural routes.

524.3 Extensions approved during the count period may be made effective on the first day of a pay period beginning during the count. (Note: The mileage and boxes, etc., for these extensions must be included on Form 4241. [\[See Part 454\]](#) for extensions that will be effective between the last day of the count and one pay period after the effective date of the new evaluation.)

524.4 At those offices where central markup was instituted and no mutually agreed rural mail count period was possible, the special count may coincide with the annual count.

525 RESPONSIBILITY

525.1 Local Conferences

.11 At least 15 days before the start of the count (the annual count begins with the boxholder count), postmasters will hold joint conferences of supervisors and rural carriers to discuss these procedures and instructions.

.12 Postmasters must advise the Management Sectional Center as soon as possible, but no later than ten days before the start of the count, of any major points of disagreement concerning these instructions so they can be resolved before the count period.

.13 Enter the date(s) of local conference(s) in the appropriate section of Form 4241.

.14 No changes in carrier work methods, casing equipment, or office procedures can be made between the date of the local conference and the mailcount unless these items were specifically discussed at the conference.

Note:

a. It is not necessary that the carriers agree to proposed changes; it is necessary only that the proposed changes do not violate Postal Service policy or the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

b. This section does not limit a manager's right to make operational changes at any time other than the period specifically stated.

525.2 Accuracy of Count

.21 Postmasters or supervisors are responsible for the completeness of all mail count information, the accuracy of the "Total" columns entered on the report forms, as well as the manner in which the count of mail is conducted. The carrier must be afforded adequate time to review the completed Form 4241 before signing it.

.22 For the Annual Count of Mail (or Special Counts coinciding with the Annual Count), the Form 4241 will be available to the carrier in the office for review two days during the 4th week of the boxholder count. Before the carrier reviews the Form 4241, all columns must be completed and totaled.

.23 For Special Counts (not coinciding with the Annual Count) the Form 4241 will be available to the carrier one day in the office for review and signature before the form is submitted to the MSC. This review must be completed promptly to assure that the completed Form 4241 reaches the MSC within the required four days after the last day of the count.

.24 Signatures of the postmaster and carrier are considered verification of the validity of the count data.

.25 When the carrier disagrees with the count data, the carrier need not sign the form. However, the carrier must submit promptly written comments explaining in detail the reasons for objecting and the exact nature of the supposed errors or omissions. The postmaster also must include comments in writing concerning any questions raised by the carrier. Form 4241, together with the letters from the postmaster and carrier, must be forwarded to the MSC office. (Where the disagreement concerns the actual number of pieces counted, every effort must be made to resolve the matter immediately at the local level.)

.26 A prompt written reply to the postmaster will be furnished by MSC offices advising of the decision. The carrier will be promptly informed in writing by the local management of the decision and the reasons therefore.

526 CONDUCTING THE ANNUAL COUNT

526.1 General

All classes of mail handled by each rural carrier will be counted daily during the official count period. Mail must be counted at the facility where the carrier will case the mail, and before it is cased.

526.2 Counting Mail

.21 During the 12 days of the annual mail count on mileage (M or RCS) routes, the carrier will count the mail eight days and the postmaster or supervisor will count four days (picked at random). The postmaster or supervisor will also count the two additional weeks of the boxholder count. The carrier may observe may also count, if so desired, on the days management makes the count.

.22 When in the judgment of management the route borderlines a heavy duty status, the supervisor or postmaster will make the full 12-day count and the complete boxholder count.

.23 On routes classified heavy duty, special, or auxiliary, the postmaster or supervisor will make the count on all days during the count period. (This requirement is applicable where post offices are closed on Saturday and supervisory personnel are not normally on duty.) The rural carrier may observe and may also count the mail. However, mail delivered and collected must be counted by the postmaster or supervisor and entered on the daily count forms. Carriers may observe, if they wish, the mail count on their relief days or on days they are in a leave status. (Any carrier who observes the mail count on a relief day, or while in a leave status, must be in a non-duty status and must not participate in the office work activities.)

526.3 Control of Forms

Care must be exercised by the postmaster or supervisors in controlling mail count forms in order to assure that all entries are proper.

526.4 Casing of Mail by Carrier

.41 The principle underlying the count is that the same mail flow conditions prevail during the count period that are normally in effect the rest of the year. Postmasters and supervisors must see that all mail available up to the normal morning cutoff time for distribution on the day preceding the count is delivered on that day and that all mail available up to the normal morning cutoff time on the last day of the count will be included in the count and delivered.

.42 *Available mail* is that mail distributed and placed on carrier case ledges, in hampers, trays, or on the floor beneath the carrier case, and that which is in distribution cases up to the cutoff or final withdrawal time prior to departure time to serve the route. It does not include mail distributed after the scheduled cutoff or final withdrawal time, or mail received too late for distribution, as long as the requirements in Part 612.1, *Postal Operations Manual*, are met,

Note: The withdrawal of mail from distribution cases by carriers or the placing of mail at or near carrier-cases by another employee will be in accordance with the Nationally established criteria. The withdrawal procedure established for the count period must be the same as that which will normally be followed the remainder of the year.

.43 Mail will be distributed to ensure normal flow on the day preceding the count period and the last day of the count. All simplified address mail available at delivery units will be distributed to rural carriers during the count period: except that where a commitment has been made to a mailer to deliver on a specific date other than the count period, the mailer's request must be honored.

.44 The method of handling or casing boxholder mail shall be at the option of the carrier. However, no time allowance will be granted under Column E of Form 4241.

.45 Carriers who normally case mail upon return to the office after completing their routes are to continue this practice on the Saturday preceding the count and during the count period. Carriers who *do not* case mail upon return to the office after completing their routes will nor do so on the

Saturday preceding the count nor during the count period. All mail is to be recorded on the Form 4239 for the day of the count on which it is cased therefore, mail cased on the Saturday, preceding the count period will not be included in the count. However, mail cased after the carrier returns from serving the route on the last day of the count will be credited on the same Form 4239 used earlier in the day and will be included in the annual count.

526.5 Requisitioning Mail Count Forms

.51 Forms 4239, 4239-A, and 4241 are available at supply centers and will be ordered by management sectional center post offices only. Each management sectional center office will:

- a. Requisition quantities sufficient for the number of rural routes under its jurisdiction and for each intermediate office served by these routes.
- b. Distribute forms automatically to those post offices having rural routes.

.52 Additional requirements will be ordered on Form 7381, *Requisition For Supplies*, during regular requisitioning cycles.

.53 Management sectional centers are cautioned not to 'over-order' Forms 4239, 4239-A, and 4241. Submit requisitions for only the amount of forms that will be required during the annual mail count period and for special counts to be conducted during the year.

.54 Forms 4239 and 4239-A will be supplied to intermediate offices having rural delivery for completion and forwarding daily to the headout office postmaster for consolidation on Form 4241. Form 4241 will not be completed by intermediate offices.

526.6 Mail Count Forms - Procedures

.61 Form 4239, Count of Mail (Rural Route)-Exhibit 526.61

.611 Description

a. Form 4239 is designed to function as a combination daily worksheet and mail count record. This important daily record provides the basic source of mail volume and time data which is transferred to Form 4241 and consolidated for the two week period. (A separate form is used to record each day's mail count.)

b. The postmaster, supervisor, or mileage route carrier responsible for making the count will prepare Form 4239 daily. The Form 4239 worksheets are to be completed as the mail is counted. After completion of the Form 4239 daily, the original will be retained by the postmaster. and the carbon copy will be given to the carrier.

Note: When management completes the Form 4239, upon request it will be shown to the carrier before the mail is trayed or strapped out, to allow verification of the count data.

c. The postmaster, supervisor, or carrier who makes the daily count must sign Form 4239 each

day.

d. Carriers serving heavy duty, special, or auxiliary routes will not make any entries on Form 4239.

e. Form 4239 will be completed at intermediate offices having rural delivery. These forms will be forwarded daily in sealed envelopes to the headout office postmaster for consolidation on Form 4241. Form 4241 will not be completed at intermediate offices.

Note:

(1) On presently classified heavy-duty, special and auxiliary routes, the Form 4239 will be completed in accordance with Part 526.23.

(2) On mileage (M or RCS) the Form 4239 will be completed in accordance with Part 526.21 and Part 526.22.

THE REMAINDER OF THIS CHAPTER HAS UNDERGONE SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS SINCE ORIGINALLY PRINTED. THE [\[WESTERN AREA MAIL COUNT GUIDELINES\]](#) ARE A BETTER SOURCE FOR CURRENT GUIDELINES.

The worksheet must be completed in accordance with the following guidelines:

a. Column A - *Letter Size Mail*

(1) All letter size mail including ordinary letters, cards, newsletter type mail, and circulars 5 inches or less in width which can be cased in the letter separations of the carrier case is entered in this column. Small magazines and small catalogs 5 inches or less in width and 3/8 inch or less in the thickness are included in this column. Detached address labels for sample merchandise, magazines, and catalogs are included in the letter count.

(2) Do not include newspapers, boxholders, flats, and rolls even though they may be cased with letter mail. Each direct bundle distributed and tied out at mail distribution cases is counted as one parcel and entered in Column C. Direct bundles tied out at the *carrier case* are not to be counted as parcels. Registered, certified, COD, numbered insured mail, Express Mail, and other accountable mail are not included in this column.

Note: For special delivery articles, see 525.512f, Column F.

b. Column B-*Papers, Magazines, Catalogs, Flats. Other Size Mail*

Newspapers, flats, magazines, catalogs, rolls, and other non-letter size mail which can be cased for delivery' using carrier casing equipment is entered in this column. This includes catalogs

cased with other mail or cased separately. This does not include odd-sized articles which cannot be cased with other mail for the route and those items specifically referenced in *Column C, Parcels*. *Exceptions*: Simplified address articles, including mail with detached labels, are to be counted as boxholder mail and entered in Column D. Each direct bundle distributed and tied out at mail distribution cases is counted as one parcel and entered in Column C. Direct bundles tied out at the carrier case are not to be counted as parcels. Registered, certified, COD, numbered insured mail, Express Mail, and other accountable mail are not counted in this column.

Note: For special delivery articles, see 526.612f, Column F.

c. Column C-Parcels

(1) Enter the number of parcels of all classes which because of their size and/ or shape cannot be cased in the letter and flat separations (where flat separations are used). This includes articles which cannot be cased and strapped out because to do so would result in damage to the contents (i.e. phonograph records, large photographs, articles marked "Do not fold or bend"). Parcels with detached labels will not be entered in this column but will be counted as boxholders in Column D. Only specifically addressed samples too large to be cased will be included in the parcel count.

(2) Each direct bundle distributed and tied out at the mail distribution cases is counted as a parcel. Direct bundles tied out at the carrier's case are not counted as a parcel.

(3) Registered, certified, COD, numbered insured mail, Express Mail, and other accountable mail are not counted in this column.

Note: For special delivery articles, see 526.612f, Column F.

d. Column D - Boxholders

See Part 526.624c(3)(b)

e. Column E - Boxholders Strapped Out

See Part 526.624c(3)(c)

f. Column F - Registered, Certified, and Special Delivery Articles, Numbered Insured Parcels, and Express Mail

The number of such articles received daily for delivery is entered in this column. Entries in the column preclude entries for the same items in Columns A, B, C, or P.

Note: Where the carrier dismounts or leaves the line of travel to effect delivery or attempt delivery of special delivery mail, the number of special delivery articles will be entered in this column. Otherwise, they are entered in Columns A, B, or C as appropriate. Do not record any articles entered in Columns A, B, or C in Column F.

g. Column G - CODS and Customs Due Received for Delivery

Enter the number of articles received daily for delivery.

h. Column H - Change of Address

The number of orders to change address (Form 3575, *Change of Address Order*, or Form 3546, *Notice to Change Forwarding Order*) received and entered during the count period in route directory or on Form 4232-A, *Customer's Name and Address*, Form 1564-B, *Orders to Box Section or Other Special Orders*, and/or Form 3982, *Changes of Address*, are entered in this column. Form 3546 initiated by the carrier is creditable as a forwarding order, provided it is not a duplication of previous action taken. *Note:* The entry of a new or additional customer's name on Form 1564, *Address Change Sheet*, or Form 4232-A is not to be recorded as a change of address order. There must be no accumulation of change of address orders at the start of the count period.

i. Column J - Marked Up

(1) The number of pieces of all classes of mail marked up is recorded in this column. *Markups are mail undeliverable-as-addressed which require the carrier to endorse the mail with the new address or with the reason for non-delivery specified in DMM 159.1*) including pieces of no obvious value and indefinitely addressed mail.) This includes mail deliverable from the same local delivery unit or other delivery unit. Not included are pieces for which Forms 3579, *Undeliverable 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or Controlled Circulation Matter*, were prepared. Mail missorted to a route must not be recorded as a markup except when it is deliverable from another local delivery unit, if known, in which case it must be endorsed with carrier initials and route number. Missorted and missent mail is included in the original count of mail. This also applies where routes have been adjusted, territory changed, and the mail is routed to the wrong carrier.

(2) Where mailing addresses have been changed from rural route and box number to street name and number, credit must not be given for a markup whether on the same route or where the territory has been transferred to another route. This is considered a handoff and credit is given in the original count of mail. At post offices where the Central Markup/ Computerized Forwarding System is in effect, mark up credits will be given for the following categories of undeliverable mail:

(a) *Mail sorted to the undeliverable-as-addressed separations.* Credit one markup for each bundle of the following categories of mail:

(i) A-Z separations.

(ii) Moved, Left No Address.

(iii) Insufficient Address.

(iv) Attempted, Not Known.

(v) No Such Number.

(vi) Undeliverable-as-Addressed, Unable to Forward.

(vii) No Obvious Value.

(b) *Deceased*

(c) *No Mail Receptacle*

(d) *Refused*

(e) *Temporarily away.* This endorsement is only to be used when returning mail because the retention period as requested by the SENDER has expired.

(f) *Vacant* (obvious value third-class mail addressed to *Occupant* applies only to those rural routes where street and house numbers are used).

(g) *Indefinitely addressed mail*

(h) *Undeliverable as addressed, parcel post.* Do not credit as a mark-up parcel post endorsed only to indicate that an attempted delivery notice was left.

(i) *Excess boxholders.* Carriers will:

(i) Place all excess boxholder mail into an appropriate container (sack, hamper, tray, etc.);

(ii) Endorse a facing slip *In excess of Requirements*, initial the slip, and attach it to the container with the excess boxholder mail; and

(iii) Be given credit for one markup.

j. *Column K-Forms 3579 and 3868 Completed*

The number of Forms 3579 and Forms 3868, *Carrier's Clearance Receipt*, completed are entered in this column. Forms 3579 must be kept current so there are none on hand on the first day of the count. No duplicate Forms 3579 will be completed or counted during the count period. Where the Central Markup/Computerized Forwarding System is implemented, only the number of Forms 3868 completed is entered. Where the Central Markup/ Computerized Forwarding System has not been implemented, *postmasters or supervisors must verify each Form 3579 claimed* to ensure compliance with the provisions of DMM 159.1. Exhibit 159.151 and Part 232.12 of the M-37 Handbook.

k. *Column L-Money Order Applications*

The number of money order applications received on the route is recorded in this column. If the rural carrier resides on the route he/she serves and regularly purchases money orders throughout the year, credit will be allowed. *Postmasters or supervisors will review each application daily.*

l. *Column M - Letters and Flats Collected*

The number of letters and flats collected on the route is entered in this column. If mail is received in bundles, each bundle is to be counted as one piece. Each piece in the bundle is not to be counted. *Mail picked up from a collection box is not to be included.* Actual time required to pick up mail from a collection box is to be entered under Column R, *Other Suitable Allowance.*

m. *Column N - Ordinary and Insured Parcels Collected*

(1) The number of ordinary and insured parcels accepted on the route is entered in this column. That is:

(a) Parcels that require the carrier to weigh, rate, and affix postage to the article or;

(b) Parcels weighing more than two pounds on which postage has been prepaid.

(2) Do not enter obvious letter and flat size mail, including film packs, etc. whether the carrier affixes postage or not. Presacked parcels on which postage has been computed are to be counted as one parcel for each sack. Parcels that are refused by the customer or are undeliverable **SHALL NOT** be credited as a parcel collected.

n. Column O - Registers and Certified Collected

The number of registered and certified articles accepted on the route is recorded in this column. Those articles *returned* where Form 3849-A, *Delivery Notice or Receipt*, or Form 3949-B, *Delivery Reminder or Receipt*, have been left for the customer *are not included* in the count. Time credit for No Response-Left Notice items is included in the time factor for delivery.

o. Column P - Postage Due

The number of postage due articles taken out for delivery is entered. Postage due items *are not* to be included in Columns A or B.

p. Column Q - Loading Vehicle

The time actually used to transfer mail from the carrier's work area to the vehicle, including placing it in the vehicle. This includes the time to take mail from the work area to the vehicle, and the time necessary to return the equipment used to a designated location. Postmasters or supervisors must observe the loading operation daily to assure that efficient practices are followed. The time required to place mail in gurneys or hampers will be included in loading time. In offices where the carrier does not normally withdraw all mail for the route, the required final withdraw from the designated distribution case or other equipment will be accomplished in conjunction with the loading operation and the actual time required included in the loading allowance. **DO NOT INCLUDE THE TIME USED FOR THIS FUNCTION IF THE CARRIER RECEIVES THE WITHDRAWING ALLOWANCE.** Loading time in excess of 15 minutes must be fully explained in the *Comments* section on Form 4241. However, the loading allowance is not to be interpreted as a minimum 15 minutes daily. The actual time shown for loading the vehicle must not include time for arranging parcels in delivery sequence as this is included in the time allowance for those items in Column C.

q. Column R - Other Suitable Allowance

(I) A reasonable time allowance may be claimed for unusual conditions or for other services rendered on a *daily or weekly* basis that are not accounted for under the normal work functions. This does not include time for vehicle breakdowns. Items for which time is claimed under this heading must be authorized by management and must be of a recurring daily or weekly nature. Where weekly recurring safety talks are conducted, actual time will be recorded in Column R.

(2) At those offices where the Central Markup System or the Computerized Forwarding System is installed, actual time will be allowed in Column R for time required to place CMU/CFS mail in the designated location.

(3) Where no office personnel are on duty when the carrier returns from serving the route on Saturday, the carrier will receive actual time allowance for duties performed over and above normal functions on this day and the following work day. (This does not include time spent counting mail or completing count forms.)

(4) Where a carrier serves an apartment building with approved apartment boxes, only the actual time required to travel from the vehicle to the boxes and return to the vehicle is entered in Column R. The standard box time allowance is mechanically granted for each box served; therefore, time making delivery at the box location is not included. Where a carrier is authorized to dismount to deliver mail to other places (businesses, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc.) the dismount time is determined by the same method as for apartment buildings. Time spent at an authorized dismount must not include time spent making delivery, securing signatures for accountable mail, or collecting postage due. *Note:* Dismount time is not the total elapsed time, only the actual travel time from the vehicle to the box location or delivery point and the actual travel time to return to the vehicle.

(5) Those carriers who serve a non-personnel rural unit receive an allowance of 15 minutes daily for each unit served. Boxes located in these units are not included in the route totals for boxes on the route as entered on Form 4241. Any additional time claimed for servicing a non-personnel unit must be adequately justified in the *Comments* section.

(6) Actual Time will be granted the rural carrier for dismount time to serve an intermediate office in the same manner as described above for serving an apartment house if lock pouch service is not provided.

(7) Personal time or time used for purchasing and checking stamp stock at the office where the route starts is not entered; these are automatically granted by mechanical means.

(8) For those rural routes using USPS owned or leased vehicles, actual time allowance will be granted for those related, recurring functions such as servicing the vehicle, where required to do so, and for vehicle inspection. Actual time shall also be given for time required by the carrier to complete vehicle related forms. The postmaster or supervisor must record time under Column R, *Other Suitable Allowance*. Time spent waiting for vehicle repair or tow while on the route is not a recurring function and shall not be granted. If the USPS vehicle is removed from the route, the time granted for vehicle related functions will be deducted, and the route will be adjusted to reflect the new evaluation.

(9) All entries in Column R require justification in *Comments* section.

r. *Column S-Counting Time*

The number of minutes actually used by the carrier who is serving the route to count, observe, and/or verify the count of mail. Record only the time used by the carrier.

s. *Column T-Waiting Time*

The number of minutes carrier spent waiting for mail after the official starting time is entered.

t. *Column X-Intermediate Offices Served Daily-Services Performed at Intermediate offices*

(1) The number of intermediate post offices served daily is shown. Carriers who perform functions or services at intermediate offices for which time allowances are provided will receive appropriate time credit for these services.

(2) All functions performed or services provided at intermediate offices will be recorded daily on Form 4239 and forwarded to the postmaster at the carrier's originating office in a sealed envelope.

(3) Where a carrier purchases and checks stamp stock at an intermediate office, the actual time required to perform this function, not to exceed five minutes daily, should be shown in the *Other Suitable Allowance* column and explained under *Comments*.

The normal frequency of stamp purchases at the intermediate office must be maintained during the mail count period.

(4) When completing Form 4241 for the week, the postmaster at the office from which the route begins will include in the proper *Total* columns the items applicable to the intermediate office and will write in above the signature line the words, *Including services performed at intermediate office*. The functions or services performed must be indicated on the form under *Comments*.

U. Column Y - Weight of Locked Pouches Carried Daily

The weight carried in pounds (rounded to the nearest whole pound) of all mail to and/or from intermediate offices is shown. Carriers serving non-personnel rural units do not receive credit for a locked pouch.

.62 Form 4239-A, Rural Route Count of Boxholder Mail-Exhibit 526.62

.621 Definition

Form 4239-A is designed to function as a daily worksheet and boxholder count record. The total count of boxholder mail and boxholder mail strapped out for the four-week annual count of mail period or the two-week special count period are transferred to the Form 4241.

.622 Use of Form 4239-A for Annual Count

a. For the annual count, boxholders and box-holders strapped out will be counted for four consecutive weeks beginning one week prior to the start of the full mail count.

b. The totals will be entered daily on Form 4239-A and initialed by the supervisor and rural carrier serving the route on that day.

.623 Use of Form 4239-A for Special Counts

Form 4239-A will be used for special counts except boxholders and boxholders strapped out are counted only for the actual two weeks of the special count period.

.624 Completion

a. Complete Form 4239-A for each route at your office.

b. Enter in the appropriate space at the top of the form:

(1) Your Post Office, State, ZIP Code

(2) The number of the route covered by the form.

c. Proceed as follows for Annual Mail Courts and Special Courts coinciding with Annual Count:

(1) Begin boxholder count one week prior to the full mail count.

(2) Count for four (4) consecutive weeks.

(3) Enter following information as appropriate to each column:

(a) *Date Column*

Enter dates that correspond to days shown on the form.

(b) *Column D- Boxholders*

(i) Enter daily number of boxholders taken out for delivery on route. This includes all simplified address mail, including samples with simplified address (DMM 122.4).

When samples are received with detached address labels, enter the total number of samples. (See Part 526.612a, Column A, for recording the label count,) The number of pieces of boxholder mail must not exceed the number of families on the route for each mailing. All boxholders, whether cased or not, are included in this column.

(ii) Enter zero (0) if no boxholders are taken out for delivery.

(iii) Add (at end of each week) boxholders received for that week.

(iv) Enter the total weekly boxholders in the space designated on this form.

(v) Enter the total weekly boxholders in the corresponding space of Column D on Form 4241, *Rural Delivery Statistics Report*.

(vi) Add weekly totals together at the end of the boxholder count to determine the total boxholders received.

(vii) Enter the total boxholders received in the "Total Boxholders" space on this form.

(\iii) Enter the total boxholders received in Columns 59-63 on Form 4241

(c) *Column E- Boxholders Strapped Out*

(i) Enter daily the number of pieces of boxholder mail (counted in Column D) *which the carrier bus cased and strapped out for delivery*. The method of handling or casing boxholder mail shall be at the option of the carrier. Record the data but no time

allowance is granted under this column. The computer program has been changed to preclude time credits.

(ii) Enter zero (0) if no boxholders are cased and strapped out.

(iii) Add (at the end of each week) boxholders cased and strapped out for that week.

(iv) Enter the weekly total in space designated on this form.

(v) Enter the weekly total in the corresponding space of Column E on Form 4241.

(vi) Add weekly totals together at the end of the boxholder count to determine the total number of boxholders cased and strapped out.

(vii) Enter this total in the *Total Boxholders Strapped Out* space on this form.

(viii) Enter the total boxholders strapped out in Columns 64-68 on Form 4241.

(d) *Cross-check the four-week total for accuracy:*

(i) Add totals from weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4.

(ii) Add 24 daily entries.

(iii) Recompute form to identify and correct error, if the totals from i. and ii. above do not agree.

(e) The postmaster or supervisor making the count must verify daily the entries on this form by initialing the *Supervisor Initials* column.

(f) The carrier must verify daily the entries on this form and initial the *Carrier Initials* column.

d. Proceed as instructed in Part 526.622a for *Special Counts* not coinciding with the annual count of mail, except:

(1) Begin boxholder count on the first day of the full mail count.

(2) Count for only a two-week period.

(3) Use the week 1 and 2 spaces on Form 4239-A Form 4241 for these counts.

(4) Enter two-week totals in spaces marked *Total Boxholders* and *Total Boxholders Strapped Out*.

(5) Transfer above figures to columns 59-63 and columns 64-68, respectively, on Form 4241.

e. The postmaster or supervisor must sign the form in the designated space and enter the date the form was signed.

.625 Distribution

a. Retain original Form 4239-A with the Forms 4239, *Count of Mail (Rural Route)*, for the same

route and count period.

b. Give duplicate to the carrier.

.63 Form 4241, Rural Delivery Statistics Report (Exhibit 526.63)

.631 Definition

Form 4241 is the source document used to determine the evaluation of all rural routes.

.632 How to Use Form 4241

a. The totals of Columns A-Y on Form 4239 are transferred daily to the proper lines on form 4241. The weekly totals of Columns D and E on Form 4239-A are transferred weekly to the proper lines of Form 4241. This information may be made available to the carrier. Draw a circle around the day of the week when a substitute serves the route. Typing of Form 4241 is not recommended.

b. At the top of the form show the name of the MSC and its ZIP Code; the name of the post office, State, and its ZIP Code; the name and social security number of the carrier; and inclusive dates of the count period.

Note:

(1) For regular routes enter the assigned regular rural carrier's name and social security, regardless of whether the carrier is on extended leave or absent from the route for any reason. However, if the route is vacant, enter *VACANT* in the block provided for the *Name of Carrier* and make no entry in the block provided for the *Social Security No.*

(2) For auxiliary routes, enter the regularly assigned auxiliary carrier's name and social security number in the appropriate blocks.

c. *Important:* Each box or square at the top of the form and on the Total lines must be filled in with a number or a zero. Be sure the last digit of each number appears in the box farthest to the right in each column. Where you have a three digit number such as 982, and there are five blank boxes on the Total line or elsewhere on the form. use zeroes in the boxes in front of the 982. Thus, 982 would be shown as 00982 in such a case. Be sure to:

(1) Enter numbers as far to the right of each column as possible.

(2) Enter only one number in each box

(3) Beside the signatures. show the date the form was completed.

(4) Emphasize to carriers that *their signature verifies the accuracy* of the count. Note: Be sure to circle the day of the week the route was served by a substitute, including J and K days on heavy duty routes.

.633 Completion

a. Complete Columns 1-20 as follows:

(1) *Columns 1-6* -- Enter your Finance Number (including the State number) in 6 digits. If your State has a 1-digit number, place a zero in the first box on the left, i.e. for Alabama start with 01 and for Ohio start with 38; then add the four digits designated for your office, dropping the last zero.

(2) *Columns 7- 8* --Enter Route Numbers in 2 digits, i.e. Route Number 1 would be shown as 01. Enter a zero in the first box for all routes from 1 to 9.

(3) *Columns 9-13* --The official length of the route obtained from the latest Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, must be shown to two decimal places. However, do not use the decimal point on the form. For example: A route 61.38 miles in length would be shown as 06138 on the form; 45.5 miles as 04550; 101.28 miles as 10128.

Note: All route adjustments (deletions and/or extensions) which are justified and requested shall be submitted at an appropriate date so such changes shall be effective prior to the start of the mail count. However, if approved extensions or deletions are received during the count weeks, they must be processed effective on or before the last day of the count at the beginning of the pay period.

(4) *Columns 14-17* -- Enter the number of mailboxes on the route as of the last day of the count; 487 boxes would be shown as 0487. Count as a box temporarily vacant dwellings, apartments, and places of business with or without a box erected which have not been vacant more than 90 days. But do not include abandoned boxes, permanently vacant buildings, dwellings, and apartments vacant more than 90 days, buildings under construction, or dwellings and businesses receiving delivery solely through general delivery of a post office box. In resort areas, transient trailer parks, and transient mobile home parks only the boxes being served during the mail count period are counted.

(5) *Columns 18-20* -- Enter the minimum number of vehicle stops *necessary* to serve *all boxes on the route* as determined by management. Where a group of boxes can be served without moving the vehicle, record one vehicle stop for that group of boxes.

b. Complete Columns 21-44 as follows:

(1) *Columns 21-32 Carrier's Daily Time Record* - Show the exact time (not the scheduled time) the carrier reported, left, returned, ended, and the actual lunchtime, if any, in minutes for each day of the count period. The columns *Office Time*, *Route Time (less lunch)*, and *Net Total Time* must be totaled in hours and minutes on the line *Total Hours and Minutes*. Convert the hours and minutes to minutes by multiplying the hours by 60 and adding to this the minutes. For example: 30 hours and 18 minutes would be entered as such on the *Total Hours and Minutes* line. On the next line, *Total in Minutes*, it would be entered as 1818 (30 hours x 60 = 1800 minutes, plus 18 minutes = 1818). Note? Include both morning and afternoon office time in

Columns 21-24.

(2) **Columns 33-36**-In those few instances where auxiliary assistance has been authorized pending permanent relief, enter the daily time used **IN MINUTES** in the *Auxiliary Assistance Used* column and enter the total minutes for the two weeks at the bottom of the column.

(3) **Columns 37-39** -- Enter actual time spent daily by the carrier waiting for mail and/or counting mail in the *Waiting and Counting Time* column. Record the total for the two weeks in minutes at the bottom of the column.

(4) **Columns 40-42** -- Enter weight of Locked Pouch Mail. Enter the total weight in pounds (rounded to the nearest whole pound) of all classes including outside pieces transported to intermediate offices. Compute the *Average Daily Weight* (total + 12) and enter this figure in these blocks.

(5) **Column 43** -- Where a carrier is authorized to withdraw all mail from distribution cases, enter the figure "1" on the *Total* line for this column. If an employee other than the carrier daily withdraws mail and places it on the carrier's case ledge, in hampers, trays, or on the floor beneath the carrier case, enter a zero on the *Total* line for that column.

(6) **Column 44** -- Where a carrier is required to deliver or collect pouch mail at intermediate offices, **AND DOES NOT RECEIVE A REGULAR LOCKED POUCH ALLOWANCE**, enter the figure "1" on the *Total* line for this column, Otherwise, enter Zero. Note: If a carrier provides locked pouch service to more than one intermediate office, or makes more than one stop for locked pouch service at an intermediate office, show the total number of offices (or stops) served daily in this column. For example, if a carrier delivers a locked pouch to an intermediate office in the a.m. and picks up a locked pouch from an intermediate office in the p.m.. enter the figure 2 in this column. (See Chapter 7, *Locked Pouch Allowances*.)

c. Complete Columns 45-105 as follows:

(Note: Before totaling the entries for the days of the count period on the *Total* line, verify that all figures transferred from Forms 4239 each day or Form 4239-A each week are correct.)

(1) **Columns 45-68**-Enter the totals for the two weeks on the *Total* line under each column. Do not average these items.

(2) **Columns 59-68**-Enter the totals for four weeks on the total line under each column. **DO NOT AVERAGE THESE ITEMS.**

(Note: (a) For special counts, not coinciding with the regular count, enter only the two week totals. (b) For Columns 64-68 be sure that only those box-holders cased and strapped out are included.)

(3) **Columns 69-105**-Enter the totals for the two weeks on the total line under each column. **DO NOT AVERAGE THESE ITEMS.**

(4) Columns 100-102-Enter the actual *loading* time used in minutes.

(5) Columns 103-105-In the space provided for *Other Suitable Allowance*, enter the total minutes used daily and for the two weeks. Detailed justification must be shown under *Comments* below.

Examples of Allowable Time items:

(a) Collecting mail from collection boxes on routes.

(b) Delivering city carrier relay(s).

(c) Actual time (not to exceed 5 minutes) spent in purchasing and checking stamp stock at an intermediate office. Do not include checking stamp stock at office from which route emanates, personal time, or delivered lock pouch since a flat allowance is automatically provided for these items.

d. Complete *Additional Information Section* as follows:

(1) Line A-Enter number of families served.

(2) Line B-Enter number of *apartment buildings* served.

(3) Line C-Enter the total authorized dismount deliveries.

(4) Line D- *REPORT TYPE* -Enter appropriate code to indicate if report is Annual = A, Special = S, Amended = C. Note: When amending an annual or special count, enter the count data as it appeared on the original Form 4241, except enter the correct data in lieu of the erroneous entry(s).

(5) Line E-Enter "A" if route is currently classified as an auxiliary or enter "S" if route is currently classified as a special route, otherwise leave blank.

(6) Line F, *Tri-weekly* routes--Enter "M" if schedule is Monday-Wednesday-Friday; Enter "T" if schedule is Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday. Leave blank if the route is not a tri-weekly route.

(7) Lines G-M-Check the appropriate box (Yes or No) for each of the following:

G - Is the route currently under the Central Markup System?

H - Is the route subject to seasonal adjustment?

I - Is it a new route? (See Part 611 .)

J ~ Is this route to be discontinued?

K - Is a USPS vehicle regularly assigned to this route?

L - Does the carrier choose to elect the higher route classification?

M - Has the carrier made the necessary annual leave commitment?

Note: Any rural carrier, whose route may be classified in more than one heavy-duty classification, may elect the higher route classification if:

(a) The requirements of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement, Article [9.2.C.7] are met, and

(b) Lines L and M of the *Additional Information Section* of Form 4241 is checked Yes and

(c) The leave commitment statement in the *Comments Section* of Form 4241 is signed by the carrier, Signing this statement fulfills the requirements of Article [9.2.C.7.a.(2)] of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

(8) Line N--Enter the date of the local conference.

.634 Submission and Disposition of Forms 4241

a. *Postmaster's Actions*

(1) *Review of Forms 4239, 4239-A. and 4241*

(a) *Errors-Each* year errors are detected on the forms used for rural mail counts which reflect careless preparation of the forms. These errors result in processing delays at the MSC or PDC, and/or improper classification of rural carriers. Particular attention should be given to Form 4241 to assure that the entries for columns 21-32 have been converted from *Hours* and *Minutes* (space above blocks) to a Total in Minutes only in the blocks provided; and also, that entries in blocks provided for columns 40- 42 reflect the *Average Doily Weight* based on the two-week total weight entered in the space above these blocks. Postmasters must review and double check all data recorded on these forms before submission to management sectional centers.

(b) *Central Markup System*-At offices where Central Markup System is installed, be especially alert in reviewing Columns J and K on Form 4239 and Columns 77-80 and 81-83 on Form 4241 to assure that entries only reflect markup work actually performed by carriers. Continue to record Forms 3868 in Column K.

(c) Use Care - Remember the importance of the data submitted.

(2) *Submission to MSC*

(a) General-Mail the original and the first carbon copy of Form 4241, so they will be

received at the MSC office in accordance with the schedule outlined in the Postal Bulletin each year. Retain the second carbon copy. After the MSC office review, the first copy will be returned to you with needed corrections clearly marked. Compare it with your copy, make all necessary corrections, and promptly give one copy to the rural carrier. Retain the other in your files.

(b) Signature Requirements- The postmaster normally signs Form 4241. However, in order not to delay their scheduled submission to the MSC office, any postmaster who will be absent on leave (annual, sick, convention) will designate an employee to sign the forms. When it is necessary for someone (other than an assistant or assistant to the postmaster) to sign the forms for the postmaster, it should be done in the following manner:

John Doe, Postmaster

by (Title)

b. Management Sectional Center Actions

(1) Management Sectional Center Review of Form 4241

Installation heads at management sectional centers are responsible for reviewing all Forms 4241 for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with instructions before transmitting them to the respective Postal Data Center (PDC) for processing. The following are points requiring especially careful attention:

- (a) Verify that all routes have been counted. (Establish a check list.)**
- (b) Verify the correctness of the post office finance number and route number.**
- (c) Check for the correctness of the official length of the route.**
- (d) Make sure that each box or square is filled in with a number or zero. Columns 18-20 must have the actual number of vehicle stops.**
- (e) Check *Loading* entries for reasonableness in relation to mail volume, especially parcel post.**
- (f) Disallow entries under *Other Suitable Allowance* which appear unreasonable, are insufficiently explained in the *Comments Section*. or are otherwise provided for by automatic time allowances. Disallow all extra time claimed for weather, flat tires, and similar non-recurring factors. Strapping out time is automatically computed and shown on Form 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation*. The postmaster of the office submitting the forms must be advised in writing of the reason why any entry was disallowed.**
- (g) Ensure that the total time, hours and minutes and minutes only, are correctly shown where required.**
- (h) Check the *locked pouch* column to ensure that a time allowance is not claimed for a carrier who receives a monetary locked pouch allowance. (See the Form 4248**

covering the annual route inspection for verification.)

(2) *Submission of Forms 4241 to Data Centers* After carefully reviewing and making all necessary corrections, the MSC manager or designee must submit one copy of Form 4241 for the annual or special mail count coinciding with the annual mail count to the PDC in accordance with the schedule outlined in the *Postal Bulletin* each year. These counts include the 4-week boxholder count. Return one copy of the Form 4241 to the postmaster. Forms 4241 for special mail counts which do not coincide with the annual mail count (2-week boxholder count) must be submitted to the PDC no later than 10 calendar days before the date the Special Mail Count is effective.

c. *Review of Evaluation*

(1) *PDC Actions*

After the evaluation of Form 4241 is completed, the PDC will send to the MSC the following forms and listings:

- (a) Form 4241, *Rural Delivery Statistics Report***
- (b) Form 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation* [Exhibit 526.634c(l)(b)].**
- (c) Rural Route Evaluations, Before and After Listing**
- (d) Rural Route Evaluations, Standard - Actual Time Variation and Special Items**

(2) *MSC Actions*

Upon receipt, the MSC will review carefully these forms and listings as follows:

- (a) Select several routes and manually evaluate the Form 4241 to ensure that the PDC evaluation on Form 4241-A is correct. Use Rural Carrier Time Standards (Exhibit 523.2) and follow the procedure outlined in part 526.7. If any errors are noted, immediately advise the PDC by memorandum. If a change in the evaluated hours results, prepare an amended Form 4241. On Form 4241, write *Amended* across the top of the form and correct the erroneous entry, Submit amended Form 4241 to the PDC immediately along with Forms 4241-A and a memorandum.**
- (b) Place one copy of Forms 4241 and 4241-A, in the rural service file for the route involved.**
- (c) Send two copies of Form 4241-A to the postmaster from which the route emanates. Also advise the postmaster of any corrections made.**
- (d) Send one copy of each Rural Route Evaluation Listing to the district office.**
- (e) Make a post audit to determine the reasons for large variances (more than three hours over or under) between the evaluated route time and the actual work hours of the carrier. Request a report from each postmaster with such routes. (See Exhibit 526.634c(2)(e).) Appropriate attention must be given to ensure that corrective action is taken by postmasters where warranted,**

(3) *Postmasters Responsibility*

- (a) Upon receipt of Form 4241-A, review for accuracy.**
- (b) Check the Form 4241-A to determine the route classification. The classification symbol will precede the route number.**
- (c) If the route has changed classification, it may be necessary for *the postmaster to provide relief day(s) or in some cases to eliminate relief day(s) by the effective date of the new evaluation.* When relief day(s) are authorized on heavy duty routes, they will be provided on Saturday unless another day is mutually agreeable to the carrier and postmaster. Provide a substitute rural carrier to serve the route on relief day(s).**
- (d) Notify the MSC and PDC by memorandum of the relief day(s) assigned the carrier and route. The relief day will be the same day either weekly or biweekly, as appropriate. until the result of the next annual or special mail count is known. If it becomes necessary to permanently change the relief day(s) before the next mail count, notify the MSC and PDC.**
- (e) Each carrier eligible to elect a higher classification for which he/she may qualify is required by the National Agreement to make their selection at the time of the annual or special mail count. A change in the original option selected by the carrier as indicated on the form normally is not considered. However, postmasters or MSC managers may, for good and sufficient reasons, approve a carrier's option change and submit the request direct to the PDC by memo. The request must be in the PDC no later than one week after the effective date of the new evaluation.**
- (f) Give the carrier a copy of Form 4241-A and file one copy in the employee's folder.**
- (g) Place the route copy of Form 4241-A in the official route book.**
- (h) If Form 4241-A indicates that the carrier's performance varied more than three hours between the standard hours and the actual hours, submit a report to the MSC manager giving the cause and the corrective action taken.**

526.7 Manual Evaluation of a Route

.71 Materials needed

The material needed is as follows:

- a. Exhibit 523.2**
- b. Completed Form 4241**
- c. Form 4241-A**

.72 Verification

Verify all totals and other information on Form 4241

.73 Completion of Form 4241-A

.731 Lines 1, 2, and 3.

Using the formula on Exhibit 523.2 compute the allowable time for each rural activity and list it in the proper column of Form 4241-A. Figures used in this computation are those shown on the Form 4241 in Exhibit 526.63. Allow 30 minutes for personal time and [20 minutes for] purchasing stamps. Allow 30 minutes each for withdrawing mail and locked pouch where applicable. To compute strapping out time, add Columns 45-49 and 50-54 of Form 4241, and subtract Columns 77-80. Apply the resulting figure to the formula on the revised schedule 14 for strapping out. When you have completed lines 1, 2, and 3, you will then be ready to finalize the evaluation by completing line 4.

a. Standards

(1) *Office Time* -- Add all entries in lines 1 and 2, divide by 60, and convert from hundredths to minutes.

(2) *Route Time*-Add all entries in line 3, divide by 60, and convert from hundredths to minutes.

(3) *Total Time*-Add office time and route time

(4) *Actual Time* - Take from Form 4241, Columns 21-24, 25-28. and 29-32. Divide total minutes for each by 2, and convert to hours and minutes to determine actual office time, route time, and net total time.

b. Box Factor

(1) The box factor which appears on line 4 of Form 4241-A is the amount of time allowed to serve each box on a rural route for one week. The volume of mail handled during the two week period is directly reflected in this box factor.

(2) The box factor is needed when additions to or deletions from a route are being planned. The number of boxes to be added or deleted, multiplied by the box factor, equals the time to be added to or subtracted from the present evaluated hours. The mileage must then be multiplied by 12 and the time applied to the evaluated hours, as necessary.

(3) To compute the box factor for the route which the Form 4241-A in Exhibit 526.634c(1)(b) describes:

(a) Convert the evaluated hours and minutes (47:39) to minutes	2,859.00
(b) Subtract Mileage x I2 (60:35)	-724.20
(c) Sub-total	2134.80
(d) Subtract the total of the following:	
Purchasing Stamps	30.00
Personal Time	30.00

Withdrawing Mail, if applicable... . . .	00.00
Lock Pouch, if applicable	00.00
Time Allowed far "Other," as obtained from Form 4241	8.00
TOTAL	- 68.00
(e) TOTAL TIME (in minutes)	2066.80
(f) divide the results by number of boxes on route: 2066.80 / 451 =	4.6 box factor

.733 Lines 5 and 6

- a. Line 5 can be completed by transferring the information from corresponding entry on Form 4241.
- b. Line 6 is used to record the results of the route evaluation as it relates to carrier compensation.
- c. Lines 5 and 6 contain route information only and are not necessary to manually evaluate the route.

527 Special Mail Counts [\[See: Article 9.2.C.11\]](#)

527.1 Requirements

Special counts will be conducted only under the following three circumstances:

- a. Substantial route adjustments involving a service change of four hours or more.
- b. Routes changed by the addition or deletion of territory as a result of a consolidation.
- c. When unusual circumstances have negated the validity of the annual count (i.e. implementation of CMU, etc.)

Note: Prints out AAQ120P2 *Rural Route Evaluation . . . , Forms 4241, 4003, and Changes* are sent to MSC offices each pay period (Exhibit 527.1c). This printout shows all rural transactions for the period and must be reviewed thoroughly for accuracy upon receipt.

527.2 Special Count - Coverage And Count Periods

.21 Special counts will be for two weeks and will be made at the initiative of the employer or in response to a justifiable request from the carrier on the affected route.

.22 The special mail count based on provisions above, must be made during the last two full weeks of the first month following the effective date of the interim adjustments except during the months of August and December. If a holiday occurs within the last two full weeks of a count month, the count shall be moved to the same period of the following month.

.23 Special two week mail counts based on unusual circumstances will be made during the first mutually agreeable average volume period.

.24 Managers will furnish all necessary forms to be used in conducting the special mail count.

527.3 Special Count Instructions

.31 Special mail counts will be conducted in accordance with the instructions for the annual count. For special counts not coinciding with the annual count, boxholders and boxholders strapped out will be counted only for the two weeks of the full count period.

.32 For special counts, other than those coinciding with the annual count, the postmaster or designee must submit the completed Form 4241 to the MSC not later than 4 days after the last day of the special mail count, along with a memorandum indicating the effective date of the count.

527.4 Effective Date

.41 The effective date of the Special Mail Count must be the beginning of the second pay period in the calendar month following the count. [\[See: Article 9.2.C.11.b.\]](#)

.42 The effective date of the special mail count must be entered in the *Remarks* Section of Form 4241.

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MEASUREMENT OF RURAL ROUTES

610 Requirement

611 Initial Measurement

612 Remeasurements

620 Procedures

621 Measurement and Remeasurement

622 Length of Route is Unchanged

623 Length of Route is Changed

624 Length of Route in Dispute

625 Action to Correct Route Length

CHAPTER 6

MEASUREMENT OF RURAL ROUTES

610 REQUIREMENT

611 INITIAL MEASUREMENT

All newly established routes must be officially measured. New routes include any route established:

- a. To serve areas where no previous delivery service was offered.
- b. To relieve overburdened routes.
- c. As a result of adjustment of routes.
- d. By a consolidation of routes.
- e. By conversion of highway contract routes.

612 REMEASUREMENTS

Existing rural routes will be remeasured when:

- a. Line of travel is affected.
- b. Adjustments are made to the rural routes of an office.
- c. The mileage recorded during the inspection of a route varies with that recorded on Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*.
- d. It is requested by the rural carrier.
- e. It is deemed necessary by management.

620 PROCEDURES

621 MEASUREMENT AND REMEASUREMENT

The postmaster or designee will remeasure the rural route using a measuring device tested for accuracy. If an odometer is used, drive the vehicle over a known distance to prove the accuracy of the odometer. Do not make the measurement with the carrier while serving the route. Start and end the measurement at the authorized loading and unloading area of the route. The roads must be traveled by the most direct line practical without pulling in and out to service mailboxes.

622 LENGTH OF ROUTE IS UNCHANGED

If it is determined that the route's length before and after remeasurement is the same, place a

memorandum in the route folder indicating the date of the measurement, the method used, and the finding.

623 LENGTH OF ROUTE IS CHANGED

If the correct length is longer or shorter and there is no dispute, complete Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, (covering the remeasurement) and a memorandum documenting the date of the remeasurement and the method used.

624 LENGTH OF ROUTE IN DISPUTE

If the length of the route is in dispute, complete Form 4003, and memorandum as outlined in Part 623. Include in the memorandum an outline of the nature of the dispute.

625 ACTION TO CORRECT ROUTE LENGTH

625.1 Effective Date

When the correct length has been determined, whether longer or shorter, establish the effective date on Form 4003 at the beginning of the next pay period. Process Form 4003 as outlined in Chapter 4, *Extensions of Rural Routes*.

625.2 Pay Provisions

If the Postal Service's records are in error in the length of rural routes and these errors are not clerical, the carrier may be paid only on the basis of mileage shown on the Postal Service's records. Any correction or adjustment to the Postal Service's records on rural carrier mileages may not be paid retroactively.

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710 Definitions	723 Weight Change
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CHAPTER 7

LOCKED POUCH ALLOWANCES

710 DEFINITIONS

711 The term **locked pouch** as used in these instructions refers to that mail which a rural carrier transports either to or from a post office when providing receipt and/or dispatch for that office. Pouch mail service does not include the transportation of equipment, supplies, empty sacks, etc.

712 The term **stop** as used in these instructions refers to the act of providing either receipt and/or dispatch to an office; and during the count of mail, these **stops** are not added to the stop count entered in Columns 18-20 of Form 4241.

720 COMPENSATION

721 GENERAL

721.1 Rural carriers who provide lock pouch service may be authorized compensation for this function. (See National Agreement, Section 30.1.I.) Compensation may be either in the form of a monetary allowance or by the addition of a time allowance to the annual or special evaluation. Carriers are not to receive both a monetary and time allowance credit for the offices so served.

721.2 Rural carriers do not have the option of choosing between monetary or time allowances. This is governed by pouch weight and/or if the carrier is serving a heavy duty or evaluated rural route.

721.3 Where a rural carrier serves more than one office with a locked pouch, the mail for each stop will be weighed separately to determine the average pouch weight for the individual office. When supply and dispatch are provided at the same time. the two will be considered as one stop.

722 DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE ALLOWANCE

722.1 General

The average daily weight of pouch mail for each stop is obtained during the annual or special counts of mail. After the results of the count are received. a determination must be made as to the type of allowance (time or monetary) that shall be granted.

722.2 Rural Carriers Paid Under the Mileage (RCS) Schedule

.21 RCS carriers and their replacements are entitled to additional monetary compensation for carrying pouch mail to offices provided the average daily weight for each stop, including outside pieces, is 50 pounds or more.

.22 If the average daily weight of pouch mail for each stop is less than 50 pounds, a five minute daily (30 minutes weekly) time allowance for each stop at an office is included in the evaluated route time.

.23 If the average pouch weight is more than 50 pounds, the carrier is entitled to a monetary allowance for each stop (at an office) based upon the average weight of the pouch according to the schedule shown in Exhibit 722.231. A memorandum must be prepared to establish the monetary pouch allowance (Exhibit 722.232) and, if the current evaluation of the route includes 30 minutes for each stop, a base hour change should be made on Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, reducing the evaluation 30 minutes weekly for each stop.

722.3 Rural Carriers Paid Under the Heavy Duty or Special Pay Schedule

.31 Heavy duty and special carriers and their replacements are entitled to a five minute daily (30 minute weekly) time allowance for each locked pouch stop at an office if the average daily weight of the pouch mail, including outside pieces, is less than 50 pounds. No monetary allowance will be granted.

.32 If the average weight of the pouch is 50 pounds or more, the heavy duty carrier is entitled to either a time allowance or monetary compensation, whichever will provide the greater annual compensation. If the 30 minute allowance does not place the heavy duty carrier into the next pay hour, the monetary allowance should be granted for pouches averaging 50 pounds or more and the base hours should be reduced accordingly. See Exhibits 122.231, 722.232, and 722.32.

723 WEIGHT CHANGE

If the average weight of the pouch appears to have changed substantially, and the carrier is receiving a monetary allowance, weigh the pouch for a two-week period and adjust the allowance accordingly, using Exhibit 722.231.

724 DISCONTINUANCE OF LOCKED POUCH

724.1 If a locked pouch is discontinued and the carrier is receiving a time allowance, a base hour change should be made on Form 4003. If the carrier is receiving a monetary allowance, a memorandum indicating the discontinuance should be prepared according to Exhibit 722.232 and the appropriate items checked.

724.2 When a rural carrier is receiving a monetary pouch allowance and is reassigned to another route, regardless of the reason, a memorandum must be prepared discontinuing the

monetary pouch allowance. When a rural carrier is assigned to a route that has been authorized a monetary pouch allowance, a memorandum should be prepared to advise the Postal Data Center of the allowance.

725 AUTHORITY

MSC Managers will process locked pouch actions for their own office and for all associate offices except where the MSC manager has delegated this authority to selected postmasters.

EXHIBIT 722.231

TABLE OF MONETARY LOCKED POUCH ALLOWANCES

Pounds	Allowance	Pounds	Allowance	Pounds	Allowance	Pounds	Allowance
50	\$76	76	\$125	101	\$160	126	\$172
51	\$78	77	\$127	102	\$161	127	\$173
52	\$80	78	\$128	103	\$161	128	\$173
53	\$83	79	\$130	104	\$162	129	\$174
54	\$84	80	\$131	105	\$162	130	\$174
55	\$86	81	\$133	106	\$163	131	\$175
56	\$88	82	\$134	107	\$163	132	\$175
57	\$89	83	\$136	108	\$164	133	\$176
58	\$91	84	\$137	109	\$164	134	\$176
59	\$93	85	\$138	110	\$165	135	\$177
60	\$95	86	\$140	111	\$165	136	\$177
61	\$95	87	\$141	112	\$166	137	\$178
62	\$97	88	\$143	113	\$166	138	\$178
63	\$99	89	\$144	114	\$167	139	\$179
64	\$101	90	\$146	115	\$167	140	\$179
65	\$103	91	\$147	116	\$168	141	\$180
66	\$105	92	\$148	117	\$168	142	\$180
67	\$107	93	\$150	118	\$169	143	\$181
68	\$109	94	\$151	119	\$169	144	\$181
69	\$111	95	\$153	120	\$170	145	\$182
70	\$112	96	\$154	121	\$170	146	\$182
71	\$114	97	\$156	122	\$171	147	\$183
72	\$116	98	\$157	123	\$171	148	\$183
73	\$118	99	\$159	124	\$172	149	\$184
74	\$120	100	\$160	125	\$172	150	\$184
75	\$122						

EXHIBIT 722.232

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

OUR REF:

DATE:

SUBJECT: **Correction for Lock Pouch Allowance**

TO:

- **Director, Postal Data Center**
- **U.S. Postal Service**
- **San Bruno, CA 94097**
- **Attention: 9141**

The information submitted on this memorandum will serve as notice to affect the following lock pouch change.

- **Post Office:** San Anselmo
- **Finance Number:** 05-6726
- **State and Zip Code:** California 94960
- **Name of Carrier:** W. Spybuck
- **Salary Step:** 12
- **Social Security Number:** 123-45-6769
- **Rural Route Number:** 01
- **Purpose of Action: (Check One)**
- **Establish LP Allowance at \$ 91.00 per annum.**
- **Adjust from \$ _____ to \$ _____ per annum.**
- **Discontinue LP Allowance.**
- **Effective Date:** 1-25-76

Approved by:

- *Frank A Kreiner*
- Manager, Management Sectional Center
- San Rafael, California

*** Attachment: Form 4003 (Base Hour Change)**

cc:

- **Postmaster Local Office**
- **MSC Manager**
- **Rural Carrier**
- **Official Personnel Folder**

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CHAPTER 8

RELIEF OF RURAL ROUTES

810 GENERAL

811 CRITERIA

Relief of rural routes shall be accomplished when:

- a. Management determines it is warranted,
- b. The evaluated hours of the route exceed 55:47,
- c. The regular rural carrier who is assigned to the route does not or is not expected to meet the requirement to stay within the annual guarantee (2080 workhours) for the route, or,
- d. 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.

812 GROWTH AREAS

In rapidly growing areas, relief should be afforded routes to prevent them from becoming overburdened.

820 PERMANENT RELIEF

821 TYPES

Permanent relief to rural routes may be provided by:

- a. Transfer to territory between existing rural routes.
- b. Establishment of new regular rural routes.
- c. Establishment of auxiliary rural routes.
- d. Conversion of rural to city delivery.
- e. A combination of one or more of the above.

822 METHODS OF PROVIDING RELIEF

822.1 Transfer of Territory between Existing Rural Routes

Attempts should be made to transfer territory to other rural routes at the office, provided this does not result in over-burdening the other routes. Except in unusual circumstances or where the intermediate office concept can be used, transfer to rural routes emanating from other offices should be avoided to alleviate unnecessary *ZIP Code* changes.

822.2 Regular Rural Routes

Establish additional regular routes if possible. Regular rural routes will be considered if the proposed evaluation is [39] hours or more per week. Do not establish a regular route until the exact evaluation is determined by a mail count.

822.3 Auxiliary Rural Routes

Auxiliary routes will be established when there is insufficient work to justify a regular route. Auxiliary routes are operated in the same manner as a regular route except auxiliary rural carriers are compensated for the hours actually worked. Payment for the vehicle will be based upon the current rate as provided for in the National Agreement. All new rural routes must be established first as auxiliary routes until the exact evaluation is determined by a mail count.

822.4 Conversion to City Delivery

.41 As a general rule, conversions from rural to city delivery shall be considered only to:

- a. Provide relief for overburdened routes when all other alternatives are impractical.
- b. Establish clear-cut boundaries between rural and city delivery territory and eliminate overlapping and commingling of service.
- c. Provide adequate service to highly industrial areas or apartment house complexes on rural routes.
- d. Provide service to areas where city delivery service will be more cost effective. (Regional review is required when cost is the basis for conversion.)

.42 Areas considered for conversion must meet all the basic requirements for an extension of city delivery and must be contiguous to existing city delivery service. However, the fact that a given area is fully developed and adjacent to city delivery does not, of itself, constitute sufficient justification for conversion.

.43 All or a part of a rural route may be converted to city delivery service.

823 PROVIDING RELIEF

823.1 General

- .11** When providing relief to one or more routes in an office, all rural routes in that unit should [not] be adjusted simultaneously [unless it is in the best interest of the unit operation to do so. *(1985 Revision to M-38)*]
- .12** When considering rural route relief in a delivery unit, elimination of relief days for all rural routes in that unit [should be considered only if obtaining relief carriers is causing operational problems for that unit. *(1985 Revision to M-38)*]
- .13** Generally, it is desirable to retain heavy duty routes at an evaluated time no lower than [52 standard] hours per week [as practical, i.e., the route should be adjusted to the 43K option category.] However, in some cases this may be impractical. There is no prohibition against reducing a route below [52] hours per week [when it is operationally advantageous]. However, documentation must be furnished as to why it is not practical to adjust the route to [52] hours. *(2000 Revision to M-38)*
- .14** Attempt to retain stable, built-up areas on existing routes. This will reduce the need for future adjustments.
- .15** When possible, restrict route adjustments to routes emanating from the same delivery unit.
- .16** Establish definite boundaries between routes to facilitate distribution and provide a more orderly rural delivery area.
- .17** Keep address changes to a minimum.
- .18** If it is necessary to change addresses, consider using street addresses in areas where street names and house numbers have been assigned. If street addresses are available but not in use, this would be an appropriate time to make the change. If there is a possibility that county or other local officials may plan to assign street addresses, the appropriate official should be contacted as soon as possible so that your efforts can be coordinated to assure only one change of address for customers.

823.2 Specific

- .21** When proposing a change on other than a vacant route, the regular rural carrier affected must be consulted and given an opportunity to comment or submit a written statement.
- .22** In planning the adjustments, all justified service extensions must be included.
- .23** Eliminate and avoid duplication of travel.

.24 Locate the new route(s) in growth areas. Try to make the new route(s) initially light enough to absorb future growth without becoming overburdened.

.25 Complete an *Interim Rural Route Evaluation Worksheet* for each route affected. If the computation results in an interim evaluation of more than [52 Standard] hours, further adjustments should be considered.

.26 All relief proposals must be documented on Form(s) PS 3993, *Delivery Services Comparative Cost Analysis*; PS 500, *Survey of Rural Delivery Service*; and PS 4012, *Brief of Rural Route Changes*.

.27 Proposals to convert to city delivery must include a properly completed Form 697, *Extension of City Delivery Service*, in addition to the documentation required in Part 823.26.

824 PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING RELIEF

824.1 Determining Need for Relief

.11 The MSC manager must:

- a. Review the latest *MSC Pay Period Rural Route Listing*.
- b. Determine what routes are in need of relief.
- c. Establish a priority list.

.12 The postmaster must:

- a. Upon receiving instructions from the MSC manager, prepare a plan for adjusting routes. *Note:* Where a postmaster is aware of the need for rural route adjustments at an office, the postmaster should not wait for instruction from the MSC, but should start a plan immediately.
- b. Obtain assistance and guidance, as needed, from the MSC.

824.2 Developing Relief Plan

In developing a plan, the postmaster and staff should take the following actions:

a. Consult with the rural carriers, informing them that one or more of the routes is overburdened or that it has been determined that adjustment is necessary and that all routes will be relieved to as near [52 Standard] hours as practicable. Provide the regular rural carriers the opportunity to comment on the proposal and present their recommendations in writing. Their comments will be considered before a final decision is reached.

b. On a copy of the current route description, have the carriers show, on each line of travel, the number of boxes served.

c. Determine the approximate number of boxes and mileage to be removed from each rural route to reduce it to the desired evaluated time, using the following method. (This example is based on

Form 4241-A, Rural Route Evaluation, Exhibit 824.2c.) Proceed as follows:

(1) Find the adjusted mileage, number of boxes, and evaluated hours if the route has changed since the last evaluation. For example, suppose the total evaluated time from the latest Form 4241-A is 59:08. Extensions totaling 2.45 miles have been approved and 21 boxes have been added since this Form 4241-A became effective. Use the following formula:

Evaluation from latest Form 4241-A (59:08) changed to minutes 3548 minutes

Additional daily mileage (2.45) time 12 minutes per week. . . 29.4 minute

Additional boxes (21) times box factor (4.0, taken from the Form 4241-A. Exhibit 824.2c)
. .84.0 minutes

TOTAL MINUTES = 3661.4 or 3661

Total minutes converted into adjusted evaluated hours (3661 divided by 60) 61:01

(2) The targeted evaluation for this route is [52:00] hours. Therefore, the route must be relieved to the extent of [09:01] hours (61:01 - [52:00 = 09:01] .

(3) Arrive at a minutes per box for relief purposes by using the adjusted figures. when changes have occurred, and by dividing the evaluated hours. reduced to minutes. by the total number of boxes. For example, using the information from the Form 4241-A shown in Exhibit 824.2c the adjusted evaluated hours (61:01) converted to minutes(3661) divided by the adjusted box count (636) equals the minutes per box (5.76).

(4) To find the approximate number of boxes needed for relief, convert the relief hours [09:01] to minutes [541] and divide by the minutes per box figure (5.76). The results of this computation will reveal a need for [94] boxes to be taken off the route to provide the necessary relief. Since the route averages slightly less than eight boxes per mile (636 boxes divided by 83.80 route miles = 8 boxes per mile), it can be seen that relieving [94] boxes should reduce mileage by approximately [11.75]. ([94] divided by 8 = [11.75])

(5) Note from the worksheet in Exhibit 824.2c(5)(a) that, on this particular route, relief of [94] boxes will reduce the evaluated hours close to the [52:00] hours desired. This is because the mileage changes correspond very closely with the average boxes per mile for the entire route as figured in the preceding example. However, this is not always the case, and in many instances further changes will be necessary in order to arrive at the needed relief. For example, if a route needing relief has a considerable amount of deadheading from the office to the first box served and/or from the last box served to the office, consideration must be given to this fact when arriving at the minutes per box for relief purposes.

Example: The route which was adjusted in the previous example has four miles deadheading to the first box and three miles deadheading from the last box to the office. Instead of arriving at 5.76 minutes per box by dividing total evaluated minutes by the total boxes, it is necessary to reduce the evaluated minutes by the time allowed for deadheading (3 + 4 = 7 miles x 12 minutes = 84 minutes) to arrive at a realistic minutes per box figure. In this instance, the 3661 total evaluated minutes will be reduced by the 84 minutes of deadheading for a new total of 3577.

Divide this by the 636 boxes for a new minutes per box figure of 5.62. Taking the deadheading factor into account will provide results very close to the targeted relief, as may be seen from the worksheet shown in Exhibit 824.2d(5)(b). Though the actual time difference shown between the two worksheets is only 28 minutes, it must be remembered that only seven miles deadheading were involved. Had the deadheading been 20 miles or more, the time difference would have been substantial.

d. Study the consolidated map and make a physical visit to the area in question to prepare a route rearrangement that will result in routes of the proper evaluation and will minimize the impact on mail distribution.

e. Include all justified extensions at this time. (Failure to do so will result in inflated routes within a short period of time.)

f. Ride the line of travel of all routes; verify the count of boxes and stops.

g. The tentative plan of new routes should accomplish the relief of all overburdened routes and result in all routes operating on a six-day basis.

824.3 Submission of Relief Plan

.31 Complete an INTERIM RURAL ROUTE EVALUATION worksheet for each route. (Exhibit 824.31) If the resulting evaluation is not within the [52 Standard] hour guidelines, making appropriate adjustments if possible.

.32 When the plans for adjusted routes appear satisfactory, make an overlay map with the same color code showing the line of travel of each of the adjusted and new routes.

.33 Prepare Form 500 (Exhibit 824.331) and Form 4012, (Exhibit 824.332).

.34 Complete a new Form 4003 for each route involved in the adjustments including all justified extensions.

.35 Prepare Form 4027 for each extension of rural service.

.36 Complete Form 3993 (Exhibit 824.36), in all city delivery conversion cases.

.37 Complete Form 697, *Extension of City Delivery Service*, (Exhibit 824.37) if any conversion to city delivery is involved.

.38 Send the complete file containing the map, overlays, appropriate worksheets, and completed forms to the MSC manager with a recommendation, suggested effective date, and any necessary explanation.

.39 Review equipment needs and prepare Forms 7373 as necessary.

824.4 Action by the MSC

.41 A postmaster may be able to provide relief for rural routes without assistance. However, if it appears that local management cannot resolve the relief problem, a member of the MSC staff should be assigned to render assistance.

.42 If, after thorough review, the recommendation of the postmaster appears appropriate, the MSC manager should consult with the postmaster and select the effective date. Be sure that necessary casing equipment will be available before the effective date of the change.

.43 Authorize the plan for relief to be placed into effect, using a memorandum such as Exhibit 824.431. The memorandum should authorize the establishment of any necessary auxiliary or regular routes, and require a special count of mail on any rural route which has a substantial adjustment (4 hours or more). It should advise the postmaster to notify affected customers of any box relocations needed and address changes, and to notify publishers of address changes by use of Form 3577, *Correction of Error in Address Because of Postal Service Adjustment* (Exhibit 824.432). It should also order the discontinuance of auxiliary assistance.

.44 Relief plans containing actions converting rural deliveries to city delivery service must be approved by the Region.

830 TEMPORARY RELIEF (AUXILIARY ASSISTANCE)

831 AUTHORIZATION

On rural routes where the carrier frequently is making late deliveries, or failing to connect with dispatches, or is working excessive weekly hours, auxiliary assistance may be authorized temporarily until permanent relief can be provided. Exhibit 831.1 is an example of a memorandum which may be used for authorizing auxiliary assistance and ordering the formulation of a plan for relief of overburdened routes. *Note:* Immediate relief by use of auxiliary assistance *must be provided* a carrier when the evaluation or actual time (whichever is lower) exceeds 57:36. See Part 833.

832 DETERMINING TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

Auxiliary casing and/or route assistance may be granted the route. Preference should be given to office assistance.

833 DETERMINING NEED

When determining the need for auxiliary assistance for overburdened routes, both the actual and evaluated hours must be considered. The lesser of the two will be used to arrive at the amount of assistance to be authorized. Auxiliary assistance is provided for the difference between evaluated

hours or actual hours (whichever is less) and 57:36.

Examples:

a. Route 1 is evaluated at 65:45 but the actual hours are 62:35. The difference between 62:35 and 57:36 is five hours; auxiliary assistance may be authorized for that amount.

b. Route 2 is evaluated at 62:19 but the actual hours are 64:47. In this instance, the evaluated hours must be used in the computation, and the auxiliary assistance to be authorized is five hours(62:19 - 57:36 is 4:43).

833.2 Where either the actual or evaluated hours are below 57:36 per week, no auxiliary assistance is afforded.

834 DISCONTINUANCE

Discontinue auxiliary assistance on the date the relief proposals are implemented.

840 CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL ROUTES

841 GENERAL

841.1 Definition

A consolidation of rural and/or highway contract routes (HCR) is the combining of territories from two or more routes which results in the elimination of one or more of those routes.

841.2 Purpose

The purpose of consolidation actions is to reduce the operational and administrative costs associated with rural delivery and/or highway contract service.

841.3 Responsibilities

.31 The Region must review proposals involving the consolidation of encumbered routes.

.32 The district will make the final determination on filling a route vacancy or eliminating the vacancy by consolidation. On encumbered routes, the district manager will transmit the entire proposal to the Region along with the district recommendation.

.33 MSC managers will conduct consolidation surveys upon request of the district manager.

841.4 Routes Eligible for Consolidation

.41 All vacant routes.

.42 Encumbered rural routes evaluating to than 32 hours per week. (See Article [12.4.C.] USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.)

841.5 Prohibitions

Routes described in Part 841.4 cannot be consolidated if one of the following conditions would result:

- a. Any route involved would have an interim evaluation of more than 55 hours 47 minutes weekly.
Note: To assure compliance with this feature, an interim evaluation sheet must be submitted for each route involved in a consolidation proposal. (Exhibit 841.5.)
- b. Customers would be required to change their addresses to that of a post office not located in the State in which they reside.

841.6 Notice of Vacancy

When a rural route vacancy takes place or it is known that a vacancy will occur because of retirement, transfer, etc., the postmaster at the office must immediately advise the MSC manager by memorandum. The MSC manager will send a memo through the district to the Region. The memo must include the date the vacancy occurred or will occur, the reason for the vacancy, the carrier's name and the vacant route number. A list of all rural routes within the office, their evaluations, and their mileage must be included.

841.7 Review of Vacant and/or Substandard Routes

.71 Upon receipt of a copy of a vacancy notice, the District Manager must make a preliminary study to determine whether consolidation is feasible. Forms 4241-A or the printout of the annual count of mails must be reviewed to help in this determination.

.72 Upon receipt of the printout containing the results of the annual or a special count of mail, the district manager must conduct a review of the substandard routes to determine if any consolidation actions are feasible. This review should be conducted in conjunction with adjacent districts as consolidation of rural route actions may extend beyond district boundaries.

841.8 Decision Not to Prepare a Consolidation Proposal

.81 If the district decides that no consolidation action is feasible, the district manager will submit a report to the Regional office with an explanation of what action was considered and why it was not feasible.

.82 On vacant routes where consolidation is not feasible, and there is no reason to hold a vacancy for rural carrier(s) who have been surplus as a result of consolidating encumbered routes, the district manager will notify the MSC manager by memorandum to fill the rural carrier vacancy in accordance with existing personnel policies and procedures.

841.S Decision to Pursue Consolidation Proposal

If the preliminary study referred to in Part 841.7 indicates the possibility of consolidation, the district manager will advise the MSC manager by memorandum to conduct a consolidation survey.

842 RURAL CONSOLIDATION SURVEY

842.1 Pre-Survey Preparation

- .11 Identify the routes to be considered for consolidation.**
- .12 Notify the postmaster(s) and carrier(s) that may be affected of the possibility of a consolidation action.**
- .13 Obtain from the postmaster or postmasters involved, a map(s) showing the rural service of their offices. Also, obtain copies of the current rural route descriptions (Forms 4003).**
- .14 Assure that the concerned NRLCA steward is notified in writing of the USPS intent to conduct a survey and of the possibility that the route may be consolidated and, therefore, not posted.**

842.2 Conducting the Survey

- .21 Study the maps and compare with Forms 4003. Give particular attention to:**
 - a. Unnecessary travel. duplication of travel, or service by other rural routes or highway contract routes (HCRs)-Can it be eliminated?**
 - b. Poor layout of route.**
- .22 Inspect all routes and prepare detailed information on the box count, number of families, number of stops, and mileage for each line entry on Form 4003.**
- .23 Consider the following items before preparing the layout of proposed service:**
 - a. When a rural route at one post office is absorbed by consolidation with a rural route or routes of another post office, will it be necessary to designate the losing post office as an intermediate post office on one of the rural routes?**
 - b. Minimizing changes in the mailing addresses of customers to the extent possible in the adjustment of rural routes incident to rural route consolidations.**
 - c. The provisions of Article [12.4.C.] of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.**
 - d. The time remaining for the highway contract and/or the cost of discontinuing or modifying the contract of any HCR affected.**

e. If carriers are not meeting work standards (performing service within evaluated time) determine the cause and take corrective action. Most common causes are as follows:

- (1) Improper scheduling;
- (2) Lack of endeavor;
- (3) Improper recording of beginning, ending, and/or lunch time;
- (4) Route growth;
- (5) Physical impairment;
- (6) Conditions on the routes;
- (7) Crowded conditions in the office;
- (8) Inadequate or improper case equipment;
- (9) Too much case equipment.

.24 Consolidation should be pursued giving consideration to the following: (Note: It is not mandatory that the items be considered in the order listed.)

a. Consolidation of routes within an office where the vacancy exists.

b. Consolidation of routes within an office adjacent to the office with the vacancy.

c. Consolidation of the route at the vacancy office with a route from an adjoining office(s) and eliminating the route at the vacancy office.

d. Consolidation of rural routes between two or more offices using the intermediate office concept, if it is feasible to do so.

.25 When preparing a layout of proposed service, proceed as follows:

a. Postmasters and rural carriers concerned may be able to provide valuable assistance and should be requested to do so.

b. Attempt to eliminate retraces, duplication, and non-productive travel whenever possible. When carriers are to be routed over roads not presently traveled, be sure the roads are passable the year-round.

c. Prepare the following forms:

(1) Form 500, *Survey of Rural Delivery Service* (Exhibit 842.25c(1) to include:

(a) Statements from the carriers and postmasters involved, or a notation that they declined to furnish a statement.

(b) The date(s) that the postmasters and regular carriers were consulted.

(c) All other specific information required on the form.

Note: Prepare two copies for district, one copy for MSC, one copy for each office involved, and one copy for each carrier. See USPS-NRLCA National Agreement, Article [12.4.C.5]

(2) Form 4012, *Brief of Rural Route Changes* (Exhibit 842.25c(2) to include:

(a) Complete details concerning the number of families either benefited or inconvenienced and the reasons therefore.

(b) Present and proposed evaluations of all routes involved.

(c) The proposed effective date of the consolidation under *ACTION*.

(d) On encumbered routes, which carrier will be surplus and known details concerning the carriers intentions.

(e) If it will be necessary to change customers post office address or if the intermediate office concept will be used.

(f) Any information which you feel is pertinent to the case and that is not covered elsewhere on the Forms 4012 and 500. Use the reverse of Form 4012 if additional space is needed.

(g) All other specific information required on the form.

Note: Prepare three copies.

(3) Form 3993, *Delivery Services Comparative Cost Analysis* (3 copies each route).

(4) Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, in their entirety for all routes involved. (No partial descriptions; complete one set for each route.)

(5) Form 7373, if additional equipment is required, (State if any equipment will be surplus.)

d. Prepare an interim evaluation sheet (Exhibit 841.5) for each route involved in the consolidation proposal. The latest Form 4241-A must be used as the source for Items I and 2 on the interim evaluation sheet (3 copies for each route).

e. Prepare maps showing the delivery territory before and after the proposed consolidation.

f. Prepare an overlay for each route that shows the new travel in red and omitted travel in yellow. Include notes in the margin to indicate where territory is being transferred to or from.

.26 Prepare a narrative description of your basic proposal. its effect on the quality of postal service in the area, and your recommendation. If carriers or postmasters object to consolidation proposal, appropriate rebuttal should be offered. In addition include:

a. Information as to whether or not the present carriers are performing service within the evaluated time, and if they are not, the reasons and actions being taken to correct the problem.

b. If transfer of a carrier is proposed, state:

(1) Distance by suitable road from:

(a) Residence to present post office.

(b) Residence to proposed post office.

(c) Present post office to proposed post office.

(2) Whether the carrier will be required to relocate.

(3) Carriers views concerning transfer. Objections should be clearly explained.

c. If the consolidation involves encumbered routes, state whether the surplus carrier has indicated a preference for reassignment to any known regular rural route vacancy.

842.3 Submission of Report by MSC Manager

.31 The MSC manager will submit a detailed report of the field study, complete with recommendation and supporting forms, to the district manager.

.32 The report on the investigation must include the following:

a. Form 500 (3 copies);

b. Form 4012 (3 copies);

c. Interim Evaluation Worksheet (3 copies for each route);

d. Form 3993 (3 copies for each route);

e. Present and proposed Form 4003 (1 set for each route);

f. Maps showing present and proposed lines of travel complete with overlays;

g. Narrative of action as described in Part 842.26; and

h. Copy of HCR Contract, if applicable.

.33 If at any time during the survey it is determined that a consolidation is not possible, a report to this effect must be submitted to the district manager. The report must include the various consolidation proposals considered and the reason(s) for the negative recommendation. No action is to be taken by the MSC manager to fill the vacancy until advised by the district manager.

843 CONSOLIDATION INVOLVING TWO DISTRICT AREAS OR TWO MSC AREAS

When a consolidation is being considered involving more than one MSC area, or more than one district area, the district Manager having jurisdiction over the office with the vacancy, or in the case of encumbered routes, the larger route, will determine who will conduct the field survey. If district lines are crossed, the district manager with jurisdiction will coordinate efforts with the other manager(s) concerned.

844 ACTION BY DISTRICT MANAGER

844.1 General

District Managers will approve or disapprove all proposed consolidations where a vacant route is involved. Where encumbered rural routes or highway contract routes are being recommended for consolidation, the district manager must submit the entire file to the Region with comments and recommendation.

844.2 Approval

.21 Vacant Routes

District managers will **signify approval on Forms 4012** and make the following distribution when a vacancy is involved:

- a. Original to district file with Form 500 and the MSC manager's narrative report.**
- b. One copy to MSC manager as authority to implement consolidation. Also, return Forms 4003, county maps, and overlays.**
- c. One copy with Form 500 to the Regional office for statistical purposes.**
- d. Equipment-approve Forms 7373 for any additional equipment needed. If the authority is delegated to MSC managers, return forms to the MSC with the case file.**

.22 Encumbered Rural Routes and Highway Contract Routes

.221 When encumbered rural routes are involved, follow the procedures in Part 844.21 after Regional approval is received.

.222 When highway contract routes are involved, the Regional Delivery Services Division must coordinate with the Regional Logistics Division. Upon concurrence, follow the procedures in Part 844.21.

844.3 Disapproval

Notify the MSC manager by memorandum to fill the vacant position in accordance with present personnel policies and procedures.

844.4 Further Review

If a certain item(s) needs correction or clarification, request the MSC manager to give further attention to the specific item(s) before deciding to approve or disapprove the proposal.

845 ACTION BY MSC MANAGER (UPON RECEIPT OF APPROVED FORM 4012)

845.1 Prepare and issue a letter of instructions to the postmaster(s) as appropriate covering the items listed below which are applicable to the consolidation:

- a. Effective date of consolidation and note route(s) to be discontinued.
- b. Review Forms 4003 for accuracy.
- c. Each postmaster will advise affected customers of their complete new mailing address where changes are required. Include new route and box number, if appropriate.
- d. Advise customers about the forwarding procedures for their mail.
- e. Rearrangement of box numbers.
- f. State revised carrier schedules.
- g. Reassignment and posting procedures.
- h. Separate substitute rural carrier.
- i. Update county maps; order new maps if necessary.
- j. Give duplicate copy of letter to all postmasters involved in consolidation.
- k. If applicable, take necessary action to discontinue or modify effected NCR contract(s).

845.2 Copies of the letter of instructions must be submitted to:

- a. District managers
- b. Postal Data Center-Manual Payroll

846 TIME LIMIT FOR CONDUCTING PRELIMINARY STUDY AND FIELD SURVEY

District offices will complete preliminary study and action within ten days after receipt of notification of a vacancy. The MSC manager will submit field survey report and recommendation to district office within 35 days following receipt of the authorization to conduct a survey.

847 CONVERSION TO HIGHWAY CONTRACT ROUTE DELIVERY

Where consolidation is not possible and where the vacant route serves an average of less than one family per mile, consideration must be given by the district manager to converting to box delivery highway contract route. Compare the current cost of serving the route with the projected cost of serving the route by highway contract service. (See Part 910).

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CHAPTER 9

HIGHWAY CONTRACT DELIVERY

910 SUPERSEDURE OF RURAL DELIVERY BY CONTRACT SERVICES

911 REQUIREMENTS

Contract service may be established or extended to provide for delivery and collection service to postal customers served by a rural route under the following conditions:

- a. When a rural route becomes vacant and does not serve a minimum of one family per mile, it may be converted to contract delivery.
- b. Parts of rural routes may be converted to contract service to remove duplication of service.
- c. In cases where segments of rural routes become detached from the rural routes so that it is impractical for the carrier to serve these segments, the segments may be converted to contract service. Detached means a physical separation, such as the construction of a dam, separating a rural route from a portion of its territory. In these cases, delivery will be established to the detached portion of the route as determined by management.
- d. If it is determined to conduct a survey (See Part 912.1) relative to supersedure of rural delivery by HCR service, notify the concerned NRLCA steward in writing of the USPS intent to conduct a survey and of the possibility that the route may be superseded and, therefore, not posted.

912 CONDITIONS

912.1 As required in Part 911a, a physical survey of the route must be made to determine if the route serves less than one family per mile. The survey may be conducted either when it is learned that the route will become vacant or when it actually becomes vacant. Include in the family count all businesses which receive mail on that route but are not operated out of a family-resided

residential properly.

912.2 Once completed, the survey determining the actual family count must be used as a conversion predicate within a reasonable period of time.

912.3 Conversion of rural delivery to HCR normally will not be considered unless a cost reduction would result.

920 CONVERSION OF HIGHWAY CONTRACT DELIVERY TO RURAL DELIVERY SERVICES

921 REQUIREMENTS

921.1 A contract route will not be superseded by rural delivery service during the contract period unless the contractor consents in writing or there is a worthwhile improvement in service.

921.2 A contract route will not be superseded by rural delivery service at the end of the contract period unless there will be a worthwhile service improvement or a reasonable cost reduction.

922 EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions may be made when post offices on routes are discontinued making it impracticable to continue highway contract service.