

## Counting Your Own Mail

If a carrier wants to verify the data collected they may count the mail presented to them. The time to verify or count the mail is without compensation.

## Even Flow of Mail

Mail should be distributed to ensure a normal flow on the day preceding the survey period and the last day of the survey period. The manager should not schedule extra clerk hours for the express purpose of clearing out mail volume prior to the survey, and clerk hours should not be curtailed on the day the survey should end.

*Ref: Step 4 Q00R-4Q-C 08138993*

*Washington, DC (168-170)*

**Mail must not be delivered early.** Currently, the Postal Operations Manual, Section 458.2, states in part, "Offices should make every effort to adhere to mailer-requested in-home delivery dates. Do not deliver such mail earlier than the date the mailer has requested."

*Ref: Step 4 E10R-4E-C 15104262*

*Lincoln, NE 68501 (180)*

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

*Ref: PO-603 Section 534*

*Ref: M-38 Section 526.4 (22)*

*Ref: EL-902 Article 30.1.A*

## Withdrawal of Mail

If rural carriers are required to perform any of the withdrawal duties, they are entitled to the withdrawal time allowance.

## Number of Withdrawals

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. Carriers will withdraw mail from distribution cases when a clerk or mail-handler has not placed the mail on their case ledge. **All carriers must make a final withdrawal of preferential letters and flats from the designated distribution case immediately before leaving for their routes.**

Upon returning from the route, the carrier will obtain all letter and flat mail available from the distribution case.

*Ref: M-38 Section 352.2 (23)*

*Ref: PO-603 Section 212.1*

*Ref: Step 4 H95R-4H-C 96076679*

*Largo, FL (24-25)*

*Ref: Step 4 E00R-4E-C 02146601*

*Spencer, IA (26)*

## Required Duties of Carriers Who Do Not Receive the Withdrawal Credit

Carriers who are exempt from general mail withdrawal requirements must make a final withdrawal of preferential letters and flats from a designated case immediately before leaving for their routes. Normally the final withdrawal will be accomplished in conjunction with the loading operation.

*Ref: PO-603 Section 212.22*

If employees other than rural carriers withdraw mail, they must place it on the carrier's case ledge as described in PO-603 Section 212.13 Section 352.11 of Handbook M-38, Management of Rural Delivery Services states, "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."

Additionally, Section 352.12 states "Flat mail must be placed on, under, or near the carrier case and stacked neatly in piles.

*Ref Step 4 J06R-4J-C 11364730*

*Montague, MI 49437 (181)*

Some postmasters require rural carriers to dump sacks and do other things to prepare mail. In an official position letter, signed by William E. Henry Jr., it was clearly stated that if rural carriers are not credited with withdrawal allowance, they should not be required to dump sacks or perform any of the other duties necessary for preparing the mail for casing.

*Ref: Henry Letter (27-29)*

### **Withdrawal – All or Nothing**

There is no provision for a partial credit for a carrier's withdrawal of mail. If a carrier is required to perform a portion of the withdrawal function, such as dumping mail from sacks, then the carrier is entitled to the withdrawal allowance.

*Ref: Henry Letter (27-29)*

When management determines it would be operationally advantageous to change the withdrawal procedures currently used in a unit, the local NRLCA steward (or district representative 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 (DUVRS). The recording of volume means entering the daily linear footage of letter and flat mail received in a single entry in the "Remarks" section of PS Form 4240

(Rural Carrier Trip Report). In addition, they should record the number of box holder sets.

*Ref: Postal Bulletin 21631 (30)*

### **Cutting Straps or Plastic**

The cutting of straps or plastic wrappers is the carriers' responsibility whether they receive the withdrawal allowance or not.

*Ref: Page 478 of NRLCA Magazine August 13, 1983 (31)*

### **Mandatory Mini Mail Survey Stand Up Talk**

**Must be given by COB 2-24-2023**

### **Stand-Up Talk Items for Discussion**

1. Clarify mail processing procedures on the day preceding the survey and the last day of the survey.
2. Carriers have the right to observe survey on their relief days or when they are on annual leave.
3. Carriers have the right to count their own mail for verification while in an on-duty status.
4. Clerk/Supervisor interruptions for official business, being called to the phone or counter, etc.
5. 3982 labels.
6. High Option/Leave Commitment

### **Summary of Mail Survey Principles**

- Procedures used during the mail survey period must be the same as those used during the rest of the year.
- Regular carriers may observe the mail survey of their own route on their relief days or on days they are in an annual leave status. Any carrier who observes the mail survey must be in a non-duty status.
- Regular carriers who are observing in a

non-duty status may not participate in office work.

- The relief carrier is entitled to work his/her scheduled work days during the mail survey period.
- Mail is credited on the day it is cased.
- Mail flow procedures during the survey period must be the same as the rest of the year.

*Ref: Step 4 H1R-4B-C 11305  
Linden, MI (19-20)*

- On the day preceding the survey period, all mail available up to the normal "cut-off" time must be delivered on that day.
- All mail available up to the normal "cut-off" time on the last day is included in the survey and delivered. In Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) System offices, available mail would be cased but not counted upon returning to the office from the route on the day prior to the start of the survey. Conversely, in EPM offices on the last day of the survey, available mail would be cased and recorded
- Prior to the survey period, no extra effort should be made to deviate from normal mail delivery or processing schedules.
- Mail must not be curtailed on the last day of the survey period.
- Withdrawal procedures in effect at the time of the survey should be the same for the rest of the year.
- Rural carriers always have the right to verify the daily count of mail.
- If possible, disputes should be resolved immediately.
- Unresolved disputes should be thoroughly documented by collecting all of the relevant data.
- **It is unacceptable for either management or rural carriers to take actions that affect the integrity of the mail survey.**

*Ref: September 15, 2006 directive from USPS HQ (76-77)  
April 7, 1999 Bothwell Letter (78)*

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## Should Disagreements Occur

Many times there are questionable items and

issues during mail counts. When there are disagreements between the carriers and managers concerning the proper credit of an item, every effort must be made at the time to resolve the dispute. **Carriers should make management aware of each repeated occurrence of disputed items.** When there is a dispute pertaining to a mail piece, an attempt must be made to resolve the issue before the mail in question is delivered. If carriers are unable to resolve the differences, **documentation of all information regarding the item(s) or issue(s) in dispute is critical.** Include in the documentation the issue in dispute, the number of articles and any other relevant information such as dimensions that will be helpful in resolving the disagreement.

*Ref: Mail Count Disagreement Form*

## Column One PARS Labels

Record the total number of stick-on PARS labels received that the carrier affixes to the 3982 (pink card)

## Column Two Letter-sized Manual

Record the total number of letter-sized pieces received that were processed by local clerks. Do not include DPS Letters, S-99 Letters, WSS Mailings, WSH Mailings or Boxholders.

If carriers take DPS mail directly to the street, all the DPS mail they bring back, because it is out of sequence or otherwise not deliverable (hold mail, forwardable mail, missorted mail, etc.), is recorded in Column 2, Letter Size. The fact that the carrier may elect to case that mail during the mail count does not change the recording procedure. DPS mail, which would have been brought back by the carrier, is recorded in Column 2, Letter Size.

### **Inverted DPS Letters:**

Inverted DPS Letters will be credited one additional Random Letter for every 4 inverted DPS Letters in Column 2, Letter Size.

### **Column Three Flat-sized Manual**

Record the total number of flat-sized pieces received that were processed by local clerks. Do not include DPS Flats, WSS Mailings, WSH Mailings or Boxholders. Do not include flats run on automated equipment and received from the processing plant.

If carriers take DPS Flats directly to the street, all the DPS mail they bring back, because it is out of sequence or otherwise not deliverable (hold mail, forwardable mail, missorted mail, etc.), is recorded in Column 3, Flat Size. The fact that the carrier may elect to case that mail during the mail count does not change the recording procedure. DPS Flats, which would have been brought back by the carrier, are recorded in Column 3, Flat Size.

**Backward DPS Flats:** Backward DPS Flats will be credited one additional Random Flat for every 2 backwards DPS Flats. and entered in Column 3, Flat Size.

### **Column Four Actual Time Misc. Activity Total**

Record the actual time used daily for recurring duties that are not accounted for elsewhere in the Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System.

Some examples of this time include:

Those carriers who serve a non-personnel rural unit receive a minimum allowance of 15 minutes daily for each unit served. Additional time above 15 minutes claimed

for servicing a non-personnel unit must be explained in the Comments section.

*Ref: PO-603 Section 372*

Time, if required by management, to answer customer questions across the counter or over the phone, if such duties occur daily or weekly.

*Ref: Step 4 H4R-5R-C 47608  
Sequim, WA (131)*

Actual time to take mail to vacation hold and return to the case, if hold location is not at the carrier's case. No time will be recorded for the separating/casing of individual mail pieces on or into the provided equipment at the designated location. This function should be performed at the carrier's case.

*Ref: Step 4 E00R-4E-C 02161832  
Pequot, MN (139)*

Actual time for re-loading a satchel.

*Ref: Step 4 E95R-4E-C 01259718  
Ellington, MO (142)*

Record actual time used daily to service the Electronic Parcel Lockers (EPLs). Actual time begins once all parcels are located at the EPL and carrier signs in on the keypad and continues until the carrier signs out on the keypad. If the carrier is required to wait to gain access to the keypad, that time is also recorded as actual time.

Time waiting at train crossings, if appropriate.

### **Regular Carriers Working Relief Day**

Many regular carriers have asked if they could require management to allow them to work their relief days during the mail count. Article 9.2.C.5.h states, "**The Employer will not allow a regular carrier to work a relief day in**

**accordance with their personal wishes when a qualified leave replacement is available in the delivery unit”.** Whenever the leave replacement assigned to serve a route is temporarily unavailable or no leave replacement is assigned to the route, the Employer may require a part-time flexible rural carrier to serve the route. If a PTF is not available, the Employer must fill the position in the order outlined below. Management must exhaust all options in each step before proceeding to the next step.

- RCR or RCA employees who are the second or third leave replacements designated for that route,
- Any other qualified leave replacements in the delivery unit,
- Any other available leave replacements office-wide,
- A regular rural carrier on the relief day work list in accordance with Article 8.5
- Regular carriers not on the relief day work list, volunteering
- Regular carriers not on the relief day work list, by juniority.

A regular carrier may volunteer to work their relief day only when steps 1 through 4, above, have been exhausted. Management is not required to seek volunteers nor are they required to select volunteers in order of seniority.

The only exception to the above is when the regular carrier's assigned leave replacement desires a day off and the regular carrier agrees to work for their leave replacement. In this case, the regular carrier would only receive a future "X" day, regardless of their status on the Relief Day Work List. Management would not be required to utilize the Relief Day Work List in this particular situation; however, they would be required to exhaust the matrix prior to allowing a regular carrier to "swap" with the leave replacement. In other words, Article 30.2.D takes precedence over Article 9.2.C.5.

