



October 9, 2012

MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (AREA)
MANAGERS, LABOR RELATIONS (AREA)
MANAGERS, DELIVERY PROGRAMS SUPPORT (AREA)
DISTRICT MANAGERS
MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (DISTRICT)
MANAGERS, OPERATIONS PROGRAMS SUPPORT (DISTRICT)

SUBJECT: Interest Arbitration Decision - Mitigating the Impact of Standards Changes

In accordance with the July 3, Clarke Interest Arbitration Decision, several rural time standards have been changed and will be implemented on October 20, the effective date of the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count. As noted in the decision, the Chairperson of the 2012 USPS/NRLCA Interest Arbitration Panel requested that the U.S. Postal Service mitigate the impact of these standards changes on individual rural carriers to the extent that it can reasonably do so.

In response to the Chairperson's expectations, the attached guidelines have been provided to assist offices in planning for route adjustments following the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count. This information is intended to address the initial impact of these standards changes and is not applicable to route adjustments occurring under other circumstances.

If there are any questions regarding this information from district representatives, please contact your area office for assistance. Any questions from the area offices should be directed to Reggie Rabon, Headquarters, Labor Relations or Bob Olohan, Headquarters, Delivery Programs, respectively.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy M. Perron".

Cathy M. Perron
Manager
Contract Administration (NRLCA)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Schaefer".

Elizabeth A. Schaefer
Manager
Delivery Programs

Attachment

Rebuilding Rural Routes Impacted by 2012 Standards Changes

These guidelines are specific to the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count and the implementation of the revised standard allowances on rural routes resulting from the July 3, Clarke Interest Arbitration Decision.

Determining the Impact

DPS Letter Mail: On routes with an assigned right-hand drive (RHD) Employer provided vehicle, the appropriate rate for Column three, delivery point sequencing (DPS) letter mail will be 43 pieces per minute. The impact of this change will be calculated as follows:

1. The number of DPS letter mail received and recorded in Column 3 during the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count.
2. Multiplied by .0101 and then divided by two (the number of weeks of the mail count).
3. Equals the weekly impact of the DPS letter mail standard change in minutes.

Prepaid Parcels Accepted: Parcels that are prepaid and weighing greater than two pounds are now recorded in Column 22, Carrier Pickup Item/Prepaid Parcel over two pounds. In most instances, a credit will also be provided in Column 21, Carrier Pickup Request/ Prepaid Parcel Event. These parcels were recorded in Column 23, Parcel Accepted, Ordinary, Insured, and Collect on Delivery (C.O.D.), in previous mail counts. A determination will be made at the local level, with district approval, as to whether an individual rural route has been substantially impacted by this change and if so, to what extent. The following factors should be considered when making this determination:

- A decrease in the total number of parcels recorded in Column 23 during the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count when compared to the 2011 mail count.
- A corresponding increase in the totals in Column 21 and Column 22 recorded during the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count when compared to the 2011 mail count.
- Route adjustments involving large volume parcel shippers (i.e., CMRA, CPO, etc.)
- Large volume parcels shippers no longer in business or have moved off the route.

Dismount Distance: The dismount distance allowance has been changed to 0.00429 minutes per foot. The change in walking speed also applies to the appropriate office functions credited in Column 17, *Other Suitable Allowance*. The impact of this change will be calculated as follows:

1. The number of feet recorded in Column 19, Authorized Dismount Distance, during the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count.
2. Multiplied by 0.00145 and divided by two (the number of weeks of the mail count).
3. Equals the impact of the Authorized Dismount Distance standard change. This will be an increase in minutes to the route.

Route Rebuilds

In all instances, routes will be rebuilt for the initial DPS letter mail implementation (first count under the DPS letter mail standard) and DPS flats prior to any rebuild for the impact of the standards changes in accordance with the appropriate implementation procedures. Management will adjust the route by transferring territory from other routes in the same office and the same 5-digit zone.

If sufficient territory is available, the first consideration for rebuild will be those eligible impacted routes that are less than 40:00 standard hours per week. These routes will be rebuilt for the net impact of the standards changes or up to 40:00 weekly standard hours, whichever is greater.

The next consideration for rebuild will be for routes evaluated at 40:00 or more standard hours per week. These routes will be rebuilt for the net impact of the standards changes or to the 43K classification; whichever is less, provided sufficient territory exists. If sufficient territory is not available, management will distribute the available buffer as equitably as possible, yielding to operational rationale and feasibility.

It is expected that reasonable efforts will be made to complete all rebuilds within six (6) months from the effective date of the September 2012 National Rural Mail Count. Local management should recognize that the 2013 National Mail Count is scheduled to be conducted from February 9 through March 3, 2013; and plan route rebuild adjustments accordingly.

Management will utilize the following in adjusting routes for rebuilding the impact of standards changes:

- Adjust overburdened routes to approximately 52:00 standard hours (43K).
- Adjust or eliminate auxiliary routes.
- Consider consolidation, which is defined as the combining of territories from two or more routes which results in the elimination of one or more of those routes, of:
 - Any newly vacant routes or other regular routes in the office when a new vacancy exists.
 - Residual vacancies withheld pursuant to the October 2, memorandum of understanding (MOU).
 - Any encumbered routes evaluated less than 37:00 standard hours per week.
- Adjust any residual vacancy, in whole or in part, withheld in accordance with the October 2, (MOU), as necessary, to obtain the amount of rebuild.