

TAB 5

**RURAL DELIVERY
STANDARD OPERATING
PROCEDURES**

RURAL STANDARD OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

TACTIC: Standardization of Rural Delivery Management

The U.S. Postal Service is adopting a strategy to implement standardized methods for managing all rural delivery units. The key components of this standardization effort are:

1. Establishment of standard rural delivery procedures at every rural delivery unit
2. Required training for all supervisors and managers with rural carrier Responsibilities—a list of all recommended courses can be found in Appendix H: Rural Management Training
3. Standardization of specific responsibilities for each level of management
4. Establishment of annual Rural Delivery Standard Operating Procedure (RDSOP) reviews
 - RDSOP certification requirements will be in place for all delivery units with 10 or more rural routes and all national "vital few" delivery units identified following the completion of each Postal Quarter
 - "Vital few" units are described as those units with hours above standard that have the largest impact on national performance. Headquarters will provide this list at the beginning of each Postal Quarter based on the performance of the previous quarter.
 - Units that are designated as "vital few" for successive quarters will require follow-up as directed by the ¹Senior Operations Manager (SOM) to ensure progress is being made
 - Certification is described as achieving 85% on the over all RDSOP review and a rating of "Acceptable" by the Senior Operations Manager in each of three categories
 - Employee Utilization
 - Route Strategies
 - Performance Management
 - All other units (those not identified as "vital few" or with less than 10 routes) require an annual self audit on a schedule determined by the District Manager
5. Establishment of a requirement for development and approval of action steps for units identified as "vital few"
6. Establishment of management expectations using specific indicators:
 - Year-round performance in percent to standard hours
 - Annual performance to BPI goals resulting from national mail count

¹ "Senior Operations Manager" (SOM) is defined as the direct report manager of the unit manager—MPOO's, MCSO's, and EAS 26 & PCES Postmasters.

MANAGEMENT DUTIES

Outlined below is a detailed description of the specific duties for each level of management to ensure the successful implementation of the standardization strategy:

Supervisor, Customer Service or Postmaster directly supervising carriers

- AM Office
- PM Office
- Regular carriers exceeding evaluated hour
- Replacement carriers unable to work within evaluated hours
- Scheduling
- Workload Management

Unit Manager or Postmaster²

- Daily oversight requirements
- Identifying and correcting inefficiencies
- General requirements to oversee rural operations, including the coaching and mentoring of front-line supervisors
- Controlling overtime, auxiliary assistance
- Hiring and retention
- Formula Implementation
- Casing equipment configuration
- Action plan development

Senior Operations Managers

- Oversight requirements
- Direct participation in RDSOP reviews
- Action plan review and approval

² "Unit Manager" is a generic term for the manager responsible for the overall operation of the unit—Postmasters and Managers, Customer Service.

Customer Service Districts

- Oversight requirements
- Provide necessary support and direction to Senior Operations Managers in assessing the performance of rural delivery units and participating directly in the RD SOP review process
- Action plan review and approval
- Identify and adjust overburdened routes
- Implement strategies to improve retention
- Implement relief day formula when appropriate
- Hire PTF rural carriers where appropriate—see <http://blue.usps.gov/delivery/rural/reliefdayformula.htm> for more detailed information
- Implement strategies to reduce premium hours (Overtime, DACA 3, DACA 5)

Area Operations

- Institute the requirement for standardized management of rural delivery operations
- Standardization compliance and effectiveness reviews for Performance Clusters
- Establish requirements to:
 - Adjust overburdened routes
 - Improve retention
 - Implement relief day formula where appropriate
 - Create PTF rural carrier positions where appropriate
 - Reduce premium hours

Headquarters Delivery

- Oversight requirements
- Standardization improvements
- Standardization compliance and effectiveness reviews for Area Operations

**RURAL DELIVERY
STANDARDIZATION**

MANAGING WORKHOURS

RURAL DELIVERY STANDARD OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Supervisor, Customer Service or Postmaster Directly Managing Carriers

Use the Rural Delivery Standardized Operating Procedures (RD SOP) to conduct a "self-audit" and to gain an overall understanding of your responsibilities as a direct supervisor of rural carriers from the perspective of both rural carriers and supervisors, in order to run a successful rural delivery unit. What follows are standardized requirements.

AM Office

- Supervisor/Postmaster arrives before carrier *when possible*
- Review Rural Carrier Trip Report, PS Form 4240, from previous day for proper completion
- Check for unscheduled absences
- Are all rural routes covered?
 - If yes, manage workload.
 - If no, consult Leave Replacement Matrix for primary, secondary, and tertiary assignments. (Note: you may use a PTF before assigning the secondary or tertiary leave replacement)
 - If no leave replacement carriers are available from the matrix and a PTF is not assigned to serve the route: determine the assignment of the route by reviewing the "Order of Consideration" document contained in these Standard Operating Instructions
- Determine if efficient office practices are being followed by each rural carrier (Handbook M-38 & PO 603) and correct inefficient work practices. Use the RDSOP review as well as the "3 hour analysis" to help identify what is driving performance
- Ensure that carriers maintain schedule and leave time
- Observe load time and hot case procedures; periodically time all "other suitable allowance" activities to ensure that actual time credited to route at next mail count is appropriate

Duties while carriers on the street

- Check for delayed mail at each carrier case
- Perform scheduling, timekeeping, 2080/2240 tracking, update 4003s, etc.
- Perform street management as necessary (new carriers, carriers not working within evaluation); correct inefficient practices
 - Validate that carriers are performing all street duties in a safe manner

Duties while carriers on the street (cont.)

- During annual route inspections or when adjustments are being planned, review the line of travel on every route to minimize mileage and maintain efficiency
- Validate that carriers are maintaining edit books as required

PM Office

- Observe carriers PM office activity—correct inefficient practices
- Review all entries on PS Form 4240 for each route for accuracy.
- Complete daily time calculation on PS Form 4240 for each route and initial appropriately

Workhour Analysis

- Every fourth week, following completion of each Form 4240, take the following action:
 - Insert the actual cumulative total workhours from the Form 4240 in the appropriate column on the "Rural Carrier Guarantee Year" form. Note: a copy of this form can be found in Appendix G, and can also be located at http://blue.usps.gov/delivery/rural_delivery.2005.htm
 - Using a locally developed log, record the names and route numbers of the regular and replacement carriers that worked in excess of 3 hours (per week) over or under the route's evaluation (NOTE: for replacement carriers, this only applies if they worked an entire week on one route)
- At the completion of each Postal Quarter, average the number of hours each carrier worked over or under the route's evaluation. Those carriers that averaged 3 hours or more over or under the weekly evaluation over this period will require a completion of the "3 Hour Analysis" spreadsheet that is a separate tab on the RDSOP
- Make a determination of what specific actions may be necessary to ensure that each carrier works within the 3-hour rule for each quarter's performance

APPENDIX E: RD SOP Certification Audit

APPENDIX F: Order of Consideration

APPENDIX G: Guarantee Year Tracking Worksheet

Manager, Customer Service/Postmaster³

It is the responsibility of unit managers to ensure that all supervisors with rural carrier responsibilities have received a rural management training course immediately upon assignment to duties which require rural delivery supervision. Review the list of recommended courses in Appendix H.

Unit managers must become familiar with the Rural Delivery Standard Operating Procedures (RDSOP) to gain an overall understanding of the responsibilities associated with managing a rural delivery unit. It is also recommended that each manager become familiar with the RDSOP review and conduct a "self-review", which will provide further information on what actions are necessary to achieve success in rural delivery operations. What follows are standard requirements. It is the responsibility of the Unit Manager to ensure that:

Daily

- If there are subordinate supervisor(s) in the unit, meet with these individuals to ensure that there are appropriate plans in place to address individual carriers that have demonstrated a consistent inability to work within 3 hours of the route's evaluation over the period of a postal quarter (6 pay periods). Ensure that supervisors are evaluating carriers in this category by using the "3 Hour Analysis" found in the RD SOP Review.
- Spot check Forms 4240 daily for completion and accuracy
- Review instances of auxiliary assistance granted on the previous delivery day and ensure that justification exists for this assistance, such as an overburdened route (routes evaluating greater than 57:36) or instances of open routes being "split" between multiple replacement carriers
- Review all instances of DACA 3/5 usage on the previous delivery day to ensure that supervisors are making the correct decisions on scheduling, avoiding the payment of DACA 3 and DACA 5 to regular carriers working their days off *unless all other replacement carrier options for covering open assignments have been exhausted*

General Requirements

- Conduct a "self-review" of rural delivery operations utilizing the RDSOP review, once per year on a schedule assigned by your Senior Operations Manager (SOM), unless your office receives a review by your SOM, as related to the "Vital Few" identification
- Coach supervisors to manage carrier workload in accordance with the expectation that rural carriers must be scheduled and managed appropriately to ensure that carriers work within a route's evaluation over the course of time

³ The manager with overall responsibility for the delivery unit.

- For carriers not meeting standard workhours on a consistent basis, ensure that that the "3-hour Analysis" worksheet is completed and that specific action items have been identified to address each area of concern annotated in this review
- A Shadow Day or similar concept should be provided to each new RCA hire prior to receiving rural carrier academy training. Following completion of academy training, ensure that newly hired carriers are given on-the-job (OJI) instruction as outlined in the Management Instruction for rural carrier training, entitled "Standard Training Program for Rural Letter Carriers," Course 44503-00. (<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/manage/e710972.pdf>)
- Implement the relief day formula where criteria have been met—working closely with the district
- Consider creating PTF assignments where the relief day formula has been implemented and/or local employment conditions have not produced sufficient leave replacement carriers
- Ensure that every replacement carrier is listed appropriately on the leave replacement matrix. Further, ensure that all newly hired leave replacements are added to the matrix with three assignments as necessary
- Monitor rural carrier 2080 compliance by reviewing the information on the PS Form 4240 every 4 weeks. Take action as necessary to ensure that carriers are taking the appropriate amount of leave to preclude any carrier from exceeding 2080 annual work hours.
- Monitor loading, Column R ("other suitable allowance"), and mark-ups year-round to ensure that the time and workload recorded in these categories matches actual compensable workload and that the most efficient work practices are in place.
- Validate that supervisors are completing Form 4240 and tracking 2080 workhours as required using the "Rural Carrier Guarantee Year" form found in Appendix G.
- Ensure that all new delivery growth is centralized to the extent practical. Work with developers and district growth coordinators to install centralized delivery equipment and/or convert to central delivery mode where possible. Where centralized boxes are not practical, managers must work to minimize travel by grouping mailboxes on posts along the line of travel, on one side of the street whenever possible.
- ⁴Management should make every effort to contain rural route cases to a maximum of 3 pieces of equipment per route, arranged in a "U" shape to maximize casing efficiency.

⁴ Exception—As other equipment previously authorized such as Items 125/126, 140, 145/146 (One-Bundle Sliding Shelf-OBSS), etc, becomes unserviceable, a regular route becomes vacant, or a new route is established, Item 124-D and other equipment, will be established as necessary

- Where there are currently more than three pieces of equipment for one route, management should take the following into consideration:
 - Each case should be a 6-shelf configuration
 - Each case is arranged with two addresses per 2-inch separation—or a combination of 1 and 2 addresses per 2-inch separation based on average volumes that will limit each route to three pieces of casing equipment
 - For vacant and auxiliary routes, management may change the casing method to a two-bundle system where space constraints exist. Using the two-bundle system, any route with less than 420 deliveries will require a maximum of two pieces of casing equipment (this allows for the required spaces for undeliverable mail and Forms 3982).
- Ensure that parking locations are as close to the building as possible
- Work with all property owners to provide regular updates to tenant listings in multiple unit dwellings
- Ensure that supervisors are regularly reviewing individual carrier performance data from PS Form 4240 to determine which carriers have not met weekly standard hours on average over the past Postal Quarter. Require the completion of the “3-Hour Analysis” checklist for each carrier in this category based on their performance over the previous Postal Quarter

APPENDIX H: Rural Management Training

Senior Operations Managers⁵

It is the responsibility of Senior Operations Managers to ensure that all unit managers with responsibility for rural delivery operations have received a rural management training course immediately upon assignment to duties requiring rural delivery supervision. Review the list of recommended courses in Appendix H.

Become familiar with the Rural Delivery Standard Operating Procedures and the corresponding RDSOP review to gain an overall understanding of the expectations for unit managers (Managers, Customer Service and Postmasters) in units with rural carriers. Your key responsibility is to regularly review the available data to understand what factors are impacting performance in rural delivery units. You must be directly involved in RDSOP reviews in all rural delivery units with 10 or more rural routes as well as those units identified as "vital few" in your area of responsibility. This will help to ensure that unit managers are taking the appropriate actions to correct the issues identified in these reviews. This is not something that can be delegated to district support staff. What follows are standard requirements.

- Require all units to complete a "self-review" using the RDSOP review process once per year at a schedule determined to be appropriate or as directed by the District Manager
- Validate the accuracy of "self-reviews" during field visits
- Review Rural Route System (RRS) Reports in WebEIS once per pay period for each rural delivery office to determine what specific issues are impacting rural delivery efficiency
- Use RRS Charts in WebEIS to monitor trends in delivery units over time. This will be especially helpful in units where you are monitoring specific indicators such as auxiliary assistance, overtime, DACA 3 and DACA 5 usage, etc.
- Conduct appropriate follow up with unit managers on corrective actions necessary to bring each rural delivery unit within standard workhour expectations
- Work with unit managers to ensure that all loading time, Column R time (other suitable allowance) and mark-ups represent time associated with the most efficient work practices and proper recording procedures
- Directly participate in RDSOP reviews for all offices with 10 or more rural routes as well as all units identified as "vital few." Those offices receiving reviews as a result of being identified as "vital few" may be excluded from the annual review requirement as directed by the district. During the course of this review, spend time discussing BPI goals with the unit manager, including support hours, DPS, loading time, and Column R. Review the methods in place in those delivery units to determine if greater efficiencies can be gained by implementing new procedures

⁵ "Senior Operations Manager" (SOM) is defined as the direct report manager of the unit manager—MPOO's, MCSO's, and EAS 26 & PCES Postmasters.

Senior Operations Managers (cont.)

- Work with unit managers to agree upon a written action plan and specific abatements and dates that will address the causes of less than acceptable performance as identified during the RDSOP
- Submit written action plans for District Manager review and approval.
- Conduct follow-up on all action plans to ensure that approved actions are in place and working. Develop alternate plans when previously agreed-upon actions have not resulted in improved performance, especially when delivery units are on the "vital few" list for successive quarters

District Requirements

- Work to ensure consistent application of standardization requirements
- Provide necessary support to Senior Operations Managers in assessing the performance of rural delivery units.
- Institute accountability for completing required RD SOP reviews
- Review and approve action plans that have been approved by Senior Operations Managers for "vital few" offices quarterly
- Implement strategies to improve retention
- Implement relief day formula and hire PTFs where appropriate
- Implement "selective H-route" strategy where appropriate

Area Requirements

- Establish standardization review process for each district
- Drive RD SOP certification efforts
- Create Area and district-specific rural delivery goals:
 - Overburdened routes
 - RCA Retention rate
 - Premium hours usage
 - Overtime
 - Auxiliary assistance
 - Auxiliary Assistance for training

Headquarters Requirements

- o Provide training to Areas on standardization
- o Provide Areas with "vital few" rural delivery offices following the completion of each Postal Quarter
- o Establish a process to review Area Operations standardization efforts
- o Provide a summary of these results to Vice President, Delivery and Retail
- o Establish annual review process to improve RDSOP and other standardization procedures.