

Flat Sortation System

Effect on The City Letter Carrier

With the ongoing introduction of the Flat Mail Sortation System (FSS), into delivery units, the following is intended as information to assist NALC Branches and their members in preparation for its effect on both.

The FSS Machine is similar to the Delivery Point Sequencing (DPS), processing of letters in that flat mail is sorted and placed in delivery sequence prior to arriving at the delivery unit. However, unlike the extended period that was necessary for increasing DPS volume, the FSS machine will have very little “ramp up” time. Once the machine is on line the City Letter Carrier will receive a large percent of their flats in this manner.

With an operational window of up to 17 hours per day, the FSS Machine will run multiple sorts (delivery units or zip codes) each day. Once loaded with mail for the unit(s) working sort plan, the machine will sort first based upon the delivery location point, (all 1st delivery points, all 2nd delivery points , all 3rd delivery points, etc.) for all routes included in the sort plan and then place it into delivery sequence for each individual route. The size of each sort plan is based upon deliveries as well as the anticipated volume for the unit(s) being sorted.

Immediately after one sort plan is completed that mail can be dispatched and the 2nd sort plan will be loaded and the mail ran. This will be repeated until all sort plans have been completed.

Most First Class and all Sequenced Flats are not targeted for the FSS process at this time. The First Class mail is excluded because it is normally sent directly to the delivery site since it would arrive in the installation for processing after the FSS Machine has completed it’s sortation for that day. Those units that are

processed earliest (usually based upon transportation schedules) will also usually receive a smaller percentage of sequenced flats since some mail for those units would not arrive at the FSS site until after that sort plan has been completed. This later mail will be sent directly to the delivery unit for manual processing and residual casing by the letter carrier. The percentage of flats that are processed by the FSS process currently runs from 65 to 85 percent of that day's mail based upon time of dispatch to that unit. The remainder of the mail will either be sent directly to the delivery unit for manual processing or will be held at the FSS site for processing the next day.

Mail Preparation Office - - -The sequenced flat mail (FSS) will arrive at the unit in special trays containing approximately eighteen inches of mail designed to go **directly** to the street. Since City Letter Carriers are not required to carry more than three bundles while on a park and loop route, on those days when one or more sequenced bundles arrive for deliver the introduction of FSS will generate more than three bundles for delivery. On these days, Letter Carriers on park and loop and walking routes will be instructed to combine the mail in such a manner as to arrive at three bundles. Currently the merging options are:

1. Case Residual Mail, pull mail down and **merge** into the FSS trays. Three Bundles would consist of DPS, FSS/Residual & Sequenced bundle.
2. Case Residual Mail into case, pull mail down and **merge** into the Sequence mail. Three Bundles would consist of DPS, FSS, and Residual/Sequenced bundle.

While no prescribed method has been agreed to, in those offices observed during the FSS test phase, Letter Carriers unanimously preferred the work method involving the casing of Residual mail into an existing Modified Vertical Case and merging Residual mail into FSS in the office (when necessary on sequenced mail days). Since FSS will reduce the amount of flat mail being cased, this will cause

some reduction to the office times for those routes. The amount of time saved will be route specific based upon the amount of mail captured for FSS and the individual carriers casing rate.

Loading Vehicles, Mounted--- While carriers on mounted routes have no limit in the number of bundles they are required to take to the street, any bundles being actively worked should be located on the vehicle's working shelf. (Section 125 of the M-39)

125 Carrier Work Methods — Street

125.1 Loading Carrier Vehicles

The carrier should take all mail for delivery to the vehicle at the same time using a hamper or other assigned conveyance. Avoid extra trips to the vehicle unless they are absolutely necessary due to the quantity of mail. After clocking onto street time, carriers should proceed directly to their vehicles and load the mail in an orderly fashion. When loading the vehicle, parcels must be arranged in delivery sequence where they will be convenient to the carrier. **On curb line routes, the working trays of letter and flat mail should be placed on the vehicle's working shelf with the addresses faced so the carrier can easily read them.** Flat mail is placed to the right of the letter mail.

FSS On The Street--- For those carriers' currently taking sequenced flats directly to the street in the form of a third bundle, there is little difference in how the mail is carried on the street. The street times may increase if for no other reason than the additional trays being loaded into the vehicle prior to driving to the route and the additional satchel loading at each park point with the extra bundles.

Route Adjustments under FSS---with recognition of the USPS's right to implement FSS the NALC entered into the following agreement to protect Letter Carrier's during the process as it relates to the adjustment of routes once FSS is on line and operational in a delivery unit. (This agreement can be found on page #41-51 of the 2009 NALC/USPS Joint Contract Administration Manual).

RE: FSS Implementation

The United States Postal Service and National Association of Letter Carriers, AFLCIO mutually recognize that the delivery point sequencing of flat mail will change the delivery environment, ultimately producing better service for postal customers. The Postal Service experienced significant benefits in 1993 by automating the processing and sequencing of letter mail, as the parties worked together to implement that technology.

In the interest of working jointly on this technology the parties agree to the following:

- 1. Once FSS is fully implemented in a delivery unit, management will determine the methods to estimate impact in a delivery unit and make route adjustments accordingly.*
- 2. Sixty days after implementing route adjustments for FSS, the local parties will review the adjustments to ensure that routes are as near 8 hours as possible. This sixty day period will not count toward the special route inspection process (Section 271, Handbook M-39; Section 918, Handbook M-41). If either party determines that the route(s) is not properly adjusted, then the route(s) will be adjusted in accordance with the provisions of Handbook M-39 or, if applicable, a locally agreed upon adjustment formula.*

The terms of this Memorandum are effective immediately and continue through all phases of Flats Sequencing System (FSS) implementation.

Date: September 11, 2007

While this agreement gives management the right to adjust routes based on some identified impact. The agreement also mandates that Sixty (60) days

after any adjustment the routes must be revisited and if **either party** determines that the route(s) are not in proper adjustment they must be adjusted. Additionally the agreement does not eliminate the USPS and/or a City Letter Carriers request for an inspection under Section 271 of the M-41. However, under current agreement any routes so identified as needing adjustment under either of the above scenarios will be adjusted using the **MIRAP Agreement**.



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