FSS Implementation Guide
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Has the COR database been updated/completed to facilitate route adjustments?

    - Carrier Optimal Routing (COR) is a computer software program that is used to configure compact, contiguous, and safe city carrier routes.
    - COR data base preparation is mandatory at all FSS locations.
    - Preparing COR Databases should be one of the first steps initiated when an office is informed of potential FSS implementation.
    - COR Database Preparation is normally the responsibility of the District as it requires trained personnel to prepare the databases correctly.

    Only when the database is complete, is the zone ready for a COR route adjustment to take place. This will allow the unit to take advantage of COR to generate route adjustments after FSS implementation.

2. Has a 3999 been loaded into DOIS on each route within the last year?

    - A complete, accurate and current 3999 must be included in DOIS prior to doing a COR Route Adjustment
    - The 3999 should reflect a safe and efficient manner of delivery, approved by local management.
    - If the 3999 reflects poor street practices, inappropriate street times may be considered during the adjustment process.
    - When conducting 3999's, the following issues should be considered: safety and efficient customer service. The outcome means that routes line of travel have been examined and modified as necessary to maximize right hand turns, minimize left hand turns, minimize dismount deliveries, minimize park points on each route and maximize the number of deliveries per swing. Street hazards such as blind turns, heavy traffic intersections and dangerous animals should be avoided. Walking areas should be free of potential tripping hazards and carriers do not damage customer's property.
    - The carrier has to deliver the route in the line of travel approved by management.
    - Business deliveries should be delivered in an appropriate time frame.

3. Have Pivot Plans been updated to the most current full 3999?

    - Pivot plans need to be created in DOIS.
    - DOIS creates these pivot plans based on the latest complete 3999 input through the DCD.

- Pivot plans can be based on unit needs, either set times, or for special circumstances.
- Pivot plans should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they reflect the current route structure and line of travel.
- Use the following reference: Pivot Plan Job Aide

4. Has the AMSOP II been completed and a passing score achieved?

   - AM SOP II certification is based on meeting specific operational goals and a units ability to pass an operational review of the processes and procedures that have proven successful in meeting delivery unit goals.
   - Some of these requirements are not easily attainable and will require significant efforts on the part of local management to meet these expectations. These efforts will be rewarded by the improved operation of the delivery unit with a resulting focus on productivity and better customer service.
   - The current AM SOP II review and the Guidebook are available for download from the City Delivery section on the HQ Delivery web page.
   - AM SOP certification reviews should be revisited periodically to ensure continued growth and effective management practices.

5. Has an Integrated Operating Plan been established between the Plant and Delivery Unit that will support FSS?

   - A signed Integrated Operating Plan (IOP) must be in existence in order for the delivery unit to be successful. Without timely, consistent mail arrival and an even flow of mail, the delivery unit would see wild swings between clerical and carrier waiting time, and late returning carriers from the street.
   - This IOP has to be updated periodically as mail volume, mail flows and staffing issues arise.
   - The IOP must be acceptable to both the plant and the delivery unit and add value to both by spelling out expectations of both operations. Thus, mail arrival times at the delivery unit, with percentages and anticipated piece volumes must be committed to by the plant.
   - Mail dispatch times, with significant timely dispatches of properly prepared collection mail to the plant at a time critical to the plant must be adhered to.
   - Issues, both positive and negative, have to be reported in a professional timely manner on a regular basis, preferably daily.
   - Failure to comply with the IOP can result in potentially serious service and financial issues to the Postal Service. Resources: Integrated Operating Plan (IOP)

6. Have F4 clerks / mail handlers been trained in standard operating procedures in support of FSS?

- In an FSS environment, clerical break down and distribution of carrier routed mail is almost totally eliminated.
- Only non-machineable sequenced sets must be distributed, and these are generally placed in the carrier 1046 hamper.
- Even with FSS, there will usually be one flat tub of First Class flats from the AFSM to be distributed.
- The other flats historically received will be included in the FSS mail, which is received on the CASTR and is not distributed to the route.
- Parcel distribution efforts must be completed prior to carrier leaving times, as well as accountable distribution and sign out to the carriers.
- The yellow trays and CASTR's must be turned around daily and rerturned to the plant on set trips. This is a clerical function, and is generally done after the carriers have departed for the street.

7. Have carriers been trained on procedures to collate sequenced sets as needed?

- Sequenced mail sets should be handled in the most efficient manner by the carriers on their routes.
- Casing sequenced mail is not the most efficient method and thus is not the preferred handling method.

- Curb delivery routes should take mailings that are complete sequenced sets directly to the street and deliver them along with their other mail. The number of sets handled will vary with the carriers mail volume, vehicle capacity and carrier ability. These sets should be readily available in the front of the vehicle for the carrier to grasp and deliver with minimal twisting and turning of the body, and should not be placed in a way to interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle. If possible, the mail should be placed on the sliding shelf of the vehicle.

- Centralized delivery routes generally case mail to the arrow lock.

    - The carrier should either take the sequenced sets directly to the street, traying them up in the vehicle for easier riffling, or as the carrier parks at the serving location for each group of CBU's, or centralized delivery location, they would riffle through the sequenced set or sets and take those pieces for delivery at that location.

    - Do not handle this mail in the office, creating rubber banded bundles or strapping out the sequenced pieces on centralized delivery routes.

- City delivery park and loop and foot routes are constrained by agreement between the USPS and the NALC that the carrier will handle no more than three bundles when delivering door deliveries. The memorandum of Understanding concerning the Approved FSS Work Methods of November 24, 2008 states:

- City letter carriers serving park and loop or foot deliveries will not be required to carry more than three bundles

- In order to maintain three bundles on pre-sequenced mail days, letter carriers serving park and loop or foot deliveries may only be assigned to either:
    - Case residual mail, then collate with FSS mail while in the office (the pre-sequenced bundle must meet the definition of a third bundle under the Interpretative Step Agreement for case Q98N-4Q-C 001189552) or,
    - Case residual mail, then collate with the pre-sequenced addressed mail during pull down while in the office

8. Has training been conducted on the use of DSMART and is it being used to optimize DPS/FSS?

    - DSMART training is available in several formats. Training is available directly from the DSMART web site and in a more detailed format directly from AMS.

    - DSMART has numerous functions which allow the user to improve their DPS processing. These functions include:

        i. identifying potential missing delivery points by zeroing in on out-of-sort bypass mail,
        ii. Identifying 11 digit bar coded mail that does not match the records in the AMS DPF files,
        iii. Identifying no volume or low volume delivery points, and conducting high rise analysis. This high rise analysis can determine the percentage of 11 digit mail compared to Default mail versus an exact Zip-4 match for high rise addresses.
        iv. Also present is the function to create up to 20 alternate names for business and "H" record addresses. This allows the machine to sort mail with these alternate names to the delivery point, saving further handling in processing and manually by the carrier.
        v. By using the high rise analysis tool, customer notification letters can also be generated that provide proper address specific information to the customer. This tool should only be used in concurrence with your District AMS office.
        vi. As this delivery characteristic information is available only at the carrier and route level, it is recommended that at least one supervisor per unit have DSMART access to keep this information current.

9. Has a review of the bundle break cards for DPS/FSS been conducted to minimize the amount of delivery points required and has the location been input into WebEES?

- Both DPS and FSS allow for bundle breaks to be identified in the processed mail through the use of bundle break cards. The machine would insert a bundle break card at the specified locations to assist the carrier.

- Bundle break card use must be reviewed and approved by local management. This review of the number of bundle breaks and their location is done in the WebEES web page.

- These break points count towards the maximum number of delivery points allowed in the FSS sort plan so they should be used judiciously

- These cards must be returned to the plant each night so that they will be available for use as DPS mail is run. A consistent, reliable process must be followed within each office to ensure that this is done.

Resource: DPS quality tools

10. Has a process been implemented for placarding and returning machineable letter and flat mail to the plant?

Every district must have its own process for placarding and returning machineable letter and flat mail to the plant. This process should include the following:

- Written guidelines for machineable mail issued by plant
  - Follow national SOP: Backflowing SOP

- Protocol for notifying plant of mail being returned by both phone and email

- Log containing details of mail being returned
  - Log maintained at district site and
  - local unit

- Utilization of eMIR for notification of mail preparation errors

- Protocol for placarding mail being returned

- Protocol for providing feedback if upgrade not performed

11. Has station input into WebEES been updated to include holds, non-delivery day, window callers, and COA's.

- Station inputs must be reviewed and updated as necessary, and especially immediately after the FSS route adjustment.

- The use of Station Inputs through web Electronic Edit Sheet (WebEES) reduces the amount of undeliverable mail that the carrier brings back from the street. This includes both hold mail and mail from recent forwards.

- Also input are special sort plans such as for Saturday closed businesses, holiday closed businesses, and break cards needed at special locations such as park points, relay locations, dangerous dogs or hardship dismounts. Break locations indicated should be useful on a daily basis to any carrier delivering that route.

12. Has a plan been created to reschedule clerical reporting times, break times, and required staffing based on the reducing the work load of sorting flat bundles, increased work load of handling CASTRs, and updated IOP's?

- With the implementation of FSS, a significant change in the clerical work load occurs. All automation compatible carrier route flat bundles, both periodical and standard are diverted to the FSS equipment at the plant. USPS published mail flows are modified so that this type of mail is not even presented at the local unit.

- In an FSS environment, none of this work exists. Generally, there is no afternoon receipt of mail from the plant; only sequenced sets may be available for distribution. Instead, the flats arrive from the plant on CASTR's as part of the morning dispatch. The carriers take their mail directly from this piece of equipment.

- Clerical schedule adjustments must be made in conjunction with the implementation of FSS. Route adjustments will occur some period of time after FSS stabilizes for the unit. Clerical schedules must be adjusted to the new arrival times and mail flows prior to scheduling routes to be adjusted.

- The following tools may assist in this process: 08 Onsite Review/Exit Package Programmable PS Form 1994

13. Has a plan been created to review supervisory schedules and make changes as needed?

- The implementation of FSS makes significant changes in the time frames available for supervisors' to perform their work.

- Carrier office time is significantly reduced, while street time is expanded and earlier then previously.

- In this reduced office time frame, the supervisor must observe, interact and manage the delivery operation rather than perform computer or administrative work.

14. Has the need for an office break for carriers been reviewed in light of updated IOP's, updated reporting times, and reduced workload?

- The contract allows for either two street breaks, or an office break and a street break.
- Practical experience has shown that having an office break in the FSS environment can still be beneficial to the Postal Service.
- As office time is reduced and compressed, it is very difficult for the clerical staff to accomplish all tasks in the reduced timeframe. This includes making all residual and missort volumes available, working parcels and SPRS timely, writing up accountables, and ensuring sequence sets have been passed out as directed by management.
- The ten minutes in an office break can end up being an extremely valuable time buffer. Without this buffer, the end result may be excessive waiting time, unexpected delayed mail, and management loss of control.
- Work with your NALC local to review the impact of the office break, rather than simply eliminating it as a matter of course.

15. Since retail businesses may in many cases have their mail delivered earlier in the day due to earlier carrier departure times, has a review been completed to determine any adjustments that may be required?

- Many retail business deliveries do not have permanent mail boxes established; this relegates delivery only to hours when the business is open.
- With FSS, the mail may be ready to be delivered earlier in the day since carriers are leaving earlier for street duties. In some instances, the business may not be open for business and the original delivery line-of-travel may not be appropriate.
- The preferred solution recommended is for the carrier and local management to work to establish delivery to an approved mail receptacle, such as a centralized delivery unit. This allows mail to be delivered at any time, six days per week. It eliminates the need for multiple trips to find the business open, and allows for the customer to access their mail at a time convenient to them. Secondly, it eliminates the need for the carrier to walk with their satchel through crowded store aisles, or for customer's mail to be unattended on a counter while the clerk is busy with customers.

16. Has a plan been established on how to track, document, and reduce carrier waiting time during the transition from FSS implementation to getting routes properly adjusted and scheduled?

- Waiting time must be minimized.

- If waiting time is present it should be documented through time recording systems and reported through management reports to higher level management. Using the ETC, Function 2 carriers would use operation 354.
- Waiting time must be analyzed to determine if it is a one time occurrence or whether it is repetitive. When repetitive waiting time is discovered, operational changes are necessary to prevent future reoccurrences.
- Changes include
    - transportation changes,
    - scheduled reporting changes,
    - staffing modifications, etc.

Operational decisions have to eliminate/control choke points by either through staffing changes or through reduction of work load by back flowing qualified mail or through curtailment. Without an efficient timely clerical operation, the carriers cannot proceed to the street with the required mail or at the required time.

Resources:
Standby Operation 354

17. Has a plan been developed to make adjustments on when vehicles will be inspected in light of the planned changes in an FSS environment?

- Vehicle inspection should be performed as soon as the carriers report. Carriers should buddy up in the checking of turn signals and brake lights.
- Vehicle inspection must be done daily.
- Any defective items or identified problems should be written up on PS Form 4569, and deposited by the carrier in a standardized central location. These repair tags are then reported to the authorized repair facility.
- Local management must observe and monitor the vehicle inspection process. The carrier time spent in this function must be minimized, and as stated, it is critical that a thorough vehicle inspection be conducted. This is not an extra break time or an unofficial smoking break, but a critical function which must be performed.

Resources:
M-41 832.1, 842.1

18. Has a plan been created to conduct training on standardized loading of vehicles when FSS mail is received? When the LLV Stowage System is implemented?

- Carrier loading is a period in time where many offices experience loss of control and a reduction in efficiency, resulting in wasted work hours. As such, delivery supervisors must monitor carrier loading on a daily basis, both in the office and on the loading dock/parking lot.

- A standardized loading procedure, localized for each office should be established by local management. This procedure should consider office set up, distances traveled, normal volume, availability and type of carrier equipment.

- Ideally, each carrier uses their parcel hamper to load their mail into, making one trip to the vehicle for loading. The carrier would level out the parcels within the hamper creating a surface for the loading of trays of residual mail. The trays would be stacked securely in the hamper, and the hamper moved to the DPS rack and FSS CASTR.

- The DPS and then the FSS would be placed in such a manner as to not to shift during movement to the vehicle. Care should be taken by the carrier in removing trays from the CASTR. Proper lifting techniques should be used, and a hydraulic feature of the top shelf allows it to be tilted for easy tray removal.

- If a 1046 hamper is not used for parcels, or if volume is very heavy, this piece of equipment may not be available, and/or the parcel hamper may not be adequate requiring two trips.

- During loading, carriers must not route out parcels in the office or in the hamper. Parcels are to be routed only in the back of the vehicle as part of loading them into the vehicle.

- The loading conveyance used must be selected in conjunction with the volume of mail to be loaded, with an Item 1046 spring-loaded hamper preferred. Using smaller conveyances such as U-carts forces the carrier to use multiple trips and expand loading time. DPS and FSS must also be loaded into the conveyance; individual trips for such mail are not authorized.

- In acquiring the FSS flats, the carrier should consult the manifest, which should be posted prominently near the FSS mail.

- During loading, the conveyance is to be pushed from the rear of the container rather than pulled.

- Once outside the building, the supervisor should ensure that mail is loaded in such a way to be efficient while also protecting the mail from the elements as much as possible.

- While mail for curb routes and centralized delivery boxes served directly from the vehicle is loaded in the front compartment on the sliding shelf, mail for park and loop routes and centralized box units (CBU's) is loaded in the rear of the vehicle and worked from the rear by the carrier.

- The vehicle must not be left idling during loading, nor should the carrier smoke, eat, drink or talk excessively during the loading process.

- Once loading is finished, the carrier should secure the conveyance in the required location and depart immediately for the street.

- The carrier must make any appropriate scans as required.

Resources:
M39 125 Loading Carrier Vehicles

19. Have carriers been trained on handling FSS flats returned to the office and the proper use of the 3M case for flats?

Carriers must be fully trained in the handling of undeliverable mail, including 3M mail.

- While the carrier is on the street delivering mail, they identify mail that is undeliverable. This mail includes forwards from the DPS and FSS, 3M mail from the DPS/FSS including missents, missorts and missequenced, misdelivered mail returned by the customer, undeliverable mail such as refused and "Unknown" and collection mail.
- This mail should be isolated by the carrier into various bundles as they identify it on the street. The carrier should have a container for collection mail where all such mail is placed.
- Some offices use what is referred to as a "sculch tray" for 3M mail. This is simply a tray that has been converted into multiple compartments by the insertion of internal dividers. They are either made locally or are available through companies such as Postal Products Inc.
- When the carrier returns to the office at the end of their day, they must be efficient in their actions to minimize any PM office time.
- They should immediately deposit any collection mail and get cleared of any accountables or 3849's signed.
- If DPS letter bundle break cards are used, these are to be deposited at the time of clearance in the designated location. Letter and flat bundle break cards are to be kept separate. Handle FSS bundle break cards as designated in the current SOP.
- Left Notice and returned parcels are to be deposited in an appropriate container. A well set up office will have convenient containers set up on the carrier's line of travel from the door they come in from the parking lot. The carrier will place any 3M mail, including 3M flats, in the corresponding slot in the 3M case in the office. 3M letters and flats should be placed by the carrier in separate sections. An additional case is not required if space is available in the existing 3M case.
- Empty equipment such as DPS trays would be deposited by the carrier in an appropriate container for return to the plant. Empty FSS trays would be stacked for insertion into empty CASTR's the following day.
- The carrier would deposit any identified forwardable mail, if a later dispatch of such mail to CFS is scheduled. Any undeliverable mail is returned to the carrier case for further handling. Unless specifically authorized, this handling is done the following morning upon arrival of the carrier.

- The PM flow of work should be documented locally in a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and placed in the carrier's route book. This should be referred to periodically in management talks to the carriers to ensure their compliance.
- Periodically, the supervisor should make personal observations on the work room floor and the dock to ensure that the SOP is being followed and that excessive time is not being used. If the carriers PM office time exceeds 5 minutes per route, further observation by local management must be made.
- When due to circumstances PM casing is authorized, it must be done under the direct supervision of a supervisor. If expected standards are not being met, the PM casing operation should be stopped.

Resources:
City Carrier SOP
M-39 127

20. Have supervisors been trained on making route adjustments?

Supervisors should be trained by the district and mentored by the postmaster/station manager in making route adjustments. In order for a route adjustment to be successful, the supervisor has a significant role.

- They must correctly record all work load and work hours.
- They must listen to and utilize carrier input
- They must provide timely, responsible direction to the carriers.
- They must monitor the routes to ensure that proper and approved work procedures are being used.
- Provide input on route segments and potential adjustments.

21. Has a plan been created to train clerks on the scheme changes and re-label distribution cases as needed following the route adjustments?

- Clerks are authorized one hour of scheme training for every 16 scheme items changed. The minimum number of scheme items changed requiring management to provide scheme training hours is 33 scheme items.
- The goal is for the clerk to be proficient in the new scheme on the day the scheme change goes into effect or as soon as possible thereafter.
- This training can be in the form of creating learning aids or scheme boards, and is not necessarily silent studying of the new scheme. There are many different ways in which different clerks prefer to learn scheme changes, it is critical to make time available for the clerks, as well to provide the new scheme well in advance of the effective date.
- Most scheme changes go into effect on Saturday after the carriers have departed for the street. This allows the required changes, such as new labels in carrier cases, as well as distribution case changes to be made over the weekend, rather than Monday morning.
- As soon as possible, preferably within a week after the implementation of the scheme change, it is important to review the change to ensure that there are no

lagging problems. Are there any streets or street segments that were not included in the adjustment package? Is there any variance in the published scheme and the route adjustment paperwork? Is the new scheme information supplied to the mailers consistent with the route adjustment package? These answers can best be supplied by meeting with the lead distribution clerks to determine what mail they are receiving and to review all scheme documents.

Resources:
Handbook EL-912 Article 37

22. Has a plan been created to update Edit books and re-label cases in time for route adjustment implementation?

Updated red books and case labels for the adjustment must be available the day prior to the adjustment going into effect. The Postmaster/station manager should appoint a person for ensuring that this work is accomplished on the day prior to the adjustment going into effect.

Each carrier should insert their new case labels upon returning from the street on the weekend of the scheme change. This action will serve as an additional review of the labels as well as help the carrier familiarize themselves with the adjustment on their route.

23. Has a plan been created to handle the sequenced sets during the transition from the route adjustment implementation until mailers have updated their mailing lists?

- One change that will take time is for mailers to change the mail in carrier route presort bundles and sequenced sets. Postal regulations allow for these mailers to take up to several months to change their mailing lists. The mailer is responsible for sorting the mail under the latest bimonthly Carrier Route File scheme.
- It is recommended that the office contact sequenced mailers and inform them of the scheme change and its effective date. Many mailers are willing to take the time and expense to update their lists earlier than required, as long as the correct information is provided to them.

24. Has a plan been identified to coordinate with maintenance the movement of any carrier cases, lighting, and any clerk cases that are excess to the needs or just need to be relocated?

With the implementation of FSS and the ensuing route adjustment, it is expected that the number of routes in an office will be reduced. In an effort to minimize the amount of carrier casing equipment that the Postal Service will have to purchase during the FSS implementation period, a process for the centralized storage of this equipment has been developed. This Carrier Casing Equipment SOP is available from the web.

This SOP covers:

- Carrier casing equipment (124, 143, 144)
- Case lights
- Flat Coffins

If excess clerical distribution equipment is identified, the District Maintenance office should be notified.

25. Has a plan been created to generate new 3999's for each route following route adjustments during the 60 day review period?

During the 60 day review period, the manager should develop a plan that will allow the completion of a complete full route 3999 utilizing the DCD. As is the case any time you make territorial changes to routes, a new complete day PS Form 3999 must be completed using the DCD and then loaded on the DOIS mainframe.

- Observations made during the completion of the 3999 helps identify any time wasting practices or other performance issues that may be impacting the carrier's street performance. It should also identify safety issues such as U-turns, left hand turns, backing and other unsafe conditions including poor road conditions, vision obscuring vegetation, etc.
- The new 3999 also establishes a base line for daily street time expectations. Therefore it is critical that the 3999 be completed following the approved line of travel, with the carrier following approved postal procedures.
- Conducting 3999's on days with sequenced sets can help set a maximum street time for the route with the carrier.
- You may have to solicit assistance from your District and Area operations staff to help you ensure that all 3999's are completed timely.

26. Has a plan been created to validate carrier's office performance as needed following route adjustments by completing an 1838C?

One method available to validate a carrier's office performance is the use of a one day mail count using PS Form 1838c. Properly completed, this process can validate a carrier's performance and provide documentation on any performance issues identified by the reviewer.

- This one day count may be performed by any postal manager.
- Local management has a contractual obligation to provide a one day prior notice to the carrier that a mail count will be conducted.
- It is suggested that all letter and flat mail sources other than DPS and FSS be manually counted, due to the possibility of NLM bundles being mixed with manual mail during the distribution process.
- The management reviewer is responsible for recording all times and data on the 1838c.

- Managers should strive to conduct at least one one-day 1838c count on every route which was affected by the FSS adjustment process.
- Local management needs to review the form to identify performance issues as well as the comments and observations provided by the reviewer. Carrier's who have performance issues should be re-counted after they have been informed of issues identified and given the opportunity to correct these deficiencies.
- Continued poor performance should be identified as part of the 60 day review including any corrective actions associated with their performance.
- Depending on your situation, you may need to solicit assistance from your Area and /or District Support staff in order to complete all of the one-day counts required in your office in a timely manner.

27. Following route adjustments has DOIS base route information been updated, new pivot plans created, MSP scan points updated, non-delivery points updated in WebEES, 1564-A's updated and printed, and AVUS updated as needed?

In the period after the FSS route adjustment, a number of other administrative functions must be done. These include:

- Update DOIS base route information
- Create new pivot plans
- Update MSP scan points and times
- Update non-delivery points in WebEES
- Update 1564-a's, print and include in carriers route book
- Update AVUS mileages and vehicle/route assignments

Failure to do these administrative functions minimizes the value of the data and reports in our Delivery computer tools. If further route adjustments are made as a result of the 60 day review process, it is critical that all of these administrative functions be updated as soon as possible after the implementation date.