

# Doing Your Job Right

**..... And Safely**

*Prepared for you by Gloria Moore*

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**N**ational is presently working on a new route inspection process where management may be allowed to adjust routes by using the volumes they have input into DOIS and the hours the carrier used delivering that mail over an approximate year's time. I would *highly* suggest that you immediately start keeping a record of your daily volumes (unless you really believe your supervisor knows how to count mail!), make-up of the mail (i.e., coverages, sloppy flats, etc.), keeping copies of your 3996s, your total work hours and auxiliary assistance, and that you learn how to perform the street duties by the book. Remember... you will be spending almost your entire workday on the street when FSS (Flat Sequencing System) kicks in. If you don't learn now how to work both safe and smart, you will be stuck with an overburdened route, a boss breathing down your neck and will not be able to carry mail for 20-30 years and in to a healthy retirement.

The following are some useful tips on accomplishing that goal:

1. Do not sandwich flats.
2. Do not case any DPS - take it all to the street, even if it's out of order. Sit in your truck under a shade tree and sort the S-999 mail (mail put in front of the DPS that does not have suite/apt numbers) that they are determined to put in the DPS. You may be required to sort through the S-999 mail for apartments while standing at the gangbox.
3. Do not fill out any part of the 3849 in the office.
4. Do not carry flats on the forearm -- work them out of your satchel. Pull 3<sup>rd</sup> bundle flats from the back of the flats in the satchel. Carrying mail on your forearm is the main cause of torn rotator cuffs. The symptoms include pain, decreased range of motion, weakness and a deep ache. These symptoms are often worse at night or in the morning. If large tears are left alone, they often lead to arthritis, due to continual rubbing and inflammation of the joint.

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*Remember: Once you develop an injury, you will more than likely have pain from it for the rest of your life. Take a little more time to do the job right, give good customer service and take care of your health.*

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5. Come to complete stops at stop signs and right-on-red signals. Do not speed. Obey all traffic laws. The USPS will not pay the traffic fine and increased insurance premium, even though you were hurrying to make their "5 o'clock window".

6. Completely secure the vehicle when you have to go to the door for a certified and/or parcel, etc.
  - a. Turn off the engine.
  - b. Put gear selector in Park.
  - c. Curb the wheels.
  - d. Put parking brake on.
  - e. Roll up both of the windows.
  - f. Lock the doors.
  - g. If you have to go out of complete sight of the vehicle, all mail on the selection tray should be moved to the back and the sliding door should be closed and locked.
  - h. Upon return, the carrier should ensure the accountables are still there.
  - i. Roll both windows back down.
  - j. Prior to leaving the parking space after being away from vehicle, carrier should look around the truck to make sure no children are playing near it.
  
7. Do not use four-way emergency flashers when vehicles are legally parked or proceeding down main lines of travel. Except where it is prohibited by local ordinance, you may use emergency flashers to indicate a slow rate of travel, as well as frequent starts and stops when delivering mail to a series of curb boxes located on congested high-speed arteries. The flashers should be activated when vehicle is:
  - a. Double parked or improperly parked due to emergency situations, such as mechanical failure or road obstruction.
  - b. Disabled and exposed to moving traffic.
  - c. Being towed.
  - d. Parked or stopped on a curve or in an area where visibility of other drivers is obscured.
  - e. Providing mail delivery to a series of curb boxes on congested high speed arteries.
  
8. Use turn signal when pulling away from curb to go around parked cars, garbage cans, etc.
  
9. Always use both seatbelts when the vehicle is in motion, even when on curblines routes. The shoulder harness may be removed to reach a hard-to-get-at box, but should be immediately put back on before moving the vehicle.
  
10. Always close all the doors when the vehicle is in motion. The driver door may be opened when delivering curblines boxes. Always close the door when crossing an intersection. **Remember:** Crossing an alley is considered an intersection - close that door.

11. Put gear selector in Park or Neutral with your foot firmly on the brake at each and every curblane box delivery – and at NDCBU’s serviced from the curb.
12. When you need a comfort stop, you can drive a little further to go to a clean restroom. You don't have to use a dingy one just because it is closer. Take as many comfort stops as needed – it is unhealthy to ‘hold it’.
13. Make sure and take your entire 30 minutes for lunch. Your body needs the rest, nourishment and fluids.
14. Make sure and take your entire 10-minute breaks.
15. On hot, humid days:
  - a. Drink lots of fluids – avoid caffeine – stop and hydrate OFTEN.
  - b. Carry a soft, dry towel to wipe the sweat away.
  - c. Take some paper towels or a washcloth with you that you can pour iced water on and rub it on your face, arms, legs and on the back of your neck to help your body ‘cool down’. Heat stroke can be deadly!
  - c. Stop and rest in the shade for a couple minutes to help ward off heat stroke.
  - d. High humidity impairs the body's ability to cool itself, thus increasing the risk for heat-related illness.
16. On cold days:
  - a. Wear layered clothing that can be added or removed as the weather changes throughout the day.
  - b. Take an extra pair of dry, warm socks, gloves, ear muffs and face mask that can be changed if they become wet. Frostbite can affect hands, feet, noses and ears (extremities furthest from the heart).
  - c. Wear a good warm hat to keep body heat from escaping through the top of your head.
  - d. The chilling effect of cold air and wind on exposed skin is very real and potentially the cause of frostbite.



17. Be courteous to customers and take the time to answer their questions.

18. Do not finger mail while driving between deliveries – do not hold any mail in your hand or on your lap when the vehicle is in motion. Keep both hands on the steering wheel.
19. Upon returning to your vehicle after lunch, break, comfort stop, delivering an accountable, etc., always roll down both windows and let the vehicle "breathe" a few seconds before getting in. During summer the inside can heat up to over 150 degrees since we are not allowed to leave a window cracked.
20. Make use of all your mirrors. Do not pull away after a stop without thoroughly checking all of the mirrors. Move your vehicle only when you are absolutely certain that it is safe to do so, especially if children may be nearby. If necessary, get out, circle your vehicle, and check underneath it to make sure.
21. Do not rubber band individual deliveries while pulling down. You are to perform a tertiary sort on each piece of mail prior to delivery.
22. Do not deliver buckets of mail without first verifying that all the mail in those buckets are for that customer.

## **Right Mail. Right box. Every day.**

23. Do not case mail into buckets on the floor. There should be a space on your case for every single delivery on your route. When it becomes full, rubber band that bundle and place it in your gondola in a bucket, then start over.
24. If parcels won't fit in the mailbox, don't rubber band them to the box. Attempt them at the door. Do not ring the bell, drop the box and run. Wait for the customer to answer and hand the box and their mail to them. If you don't have specific permission from the customer to leave parcels on their porch, leave a notice and have them pick it up at the post office. You are responsible if it disappears.
25. Take the time to neatly and completely fill in all information on the 3849, Left Notice slip.
26. Absolutely, positively DO NOT carry mail on your forearm!! This can't be said enough times. Work the mail out of your satchel. Period. DO NOT give them a reason to say you can carry a 4<sup>th</sup> bundle! Think about it: one in your hand, two in your satchel and one on your arm = four!
27. Seek shelter during thunderstorms – never under a tree and especially not a lone tree. If you feel your skin tingle and your hair stand on end, lightning may be about to strike. When this occurs, crouch as low as possible, standing only on your toes. Never lay flat, because your body will take the full charge if lightning does strike.
28. Park and Loop carriers should get in the habit of 'planting both feet' prior to putting mail in the receptacle. This will keep you from 'spinning on one foot' while making deliveries and will make delivery safer.

**“WHEN ACTIVE LETTER CARRIERS ON THE  
WORKROOM FLOOR DO NOT TAKE AN ACTIVE  
ROLE IN THEIR LOCAL UNION, THEY HAVE NO  
COMPLAINT ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.”**

Thom Green, Former President NALC Branch 116, Fort Wayne, IN

29. Do not ‘cram’ mail in the box. Treat the customer’s mail like you would like yours treated. Take that extra few seconds to arrange the mail so it goes in the box neatly. If the box is too full, remove all the mail and leave a notice that their mail has been ‘Put on Hold’.
30. Take time to properly close mail receptacles.
31. Do not make your bundles too big. Holding too much mail in your hand is the main cause of trigger finger. Trigger finger is a condition in which one of your fingers or your thumb catches in a bent position. Your finger or thumb may straighten with a snap — like a trigger being pulled and released. If trigger finger is severe, your finger may become locked in a bent position.  
  
Often painful, trigger finger is caused by a narrowing of the sheath that surrounds the tendon in the affected finger. People whose work requires repetitive gripping actions are more susceptible. Trigger finger is also more common in women than in men, and in anyone with diabetes.
32. Place all of the mail in the box with one hand movement, unless the bundle is so big that it causes you to ‘over grasp’. Break the bundle down and use two hand movements or both hands to place the mail in the box.
33. Learn to swap shoulders with your satchel. Carrying it on one shoulder all the time can cause neck and back injuries and can cause your spine to curve. It’s best to use a satchel with a shoulder harness or waist belt. Try different heights for the satchel to see what is most comfortable for you. Make sure the shoulder pad is in good condition.
34. Perform a full vehicle inspection *every day*.
35. If you’re not allowed to cut/remove bands/straps on certain mailings on office time, each one of those bundles taken to the street is counted as a parcel. Include this on your 3996.
36. Do not finger mail when walking up or down steps or curbs, when crossing streets, or at any time it would create a safety hazard.

37. You should cross lawns to deliver mail only if there is, in your opinion, no safety hazard, such as a dog, slippery surface, snow, uneven terrain, or unusual obstacles, and only if there is no objection from the patron.

**WITHOUT THE NALC...  
WE WOULD ALL BE 'TES' !  
GET INVOLVED.  
ATTEND UNION MEETINGS.**

38. When collecting mail from a street box or a mail chute receiving box, or when delivering mail to apartment house boxes or neighborhood delivery and collection box units (NDCBUs) that are equipped with an arrow lock, remove the key from the lock after opening the box to avoid personal injury or damage to your clothing or keys. Keep the chain for your mailbox keys securely fastened to your belt loop and place the keys and chain in your pocket when you are not using them. Dangling, swinging keys and chains can be dangerous. NEVER attach it to your vehicle key!
39. Park in designated parking spaces only. NEVER park in fire lanes, handicapped parking spaces, etc., even if you're only going to take a few minutes.
40. Do not cut through parking lots. Use designated traffic lanes only.
41. There is no standard or minimum street pace that a carrier is required to maintain. Set a safe, normal pace that you are comfortable with that minimizes exertion. Give a fair day's work, but don't run or take risky shortcuts. Do your assignment the exact same way every day.
42. If you do have an accident/slip/trip/or fall, call management IMMEDIATELY. Do not wait until you get back to the office. Even if you don't think you are injured, make the call and have them tell you what to do. Not all injuries show themselves immediately.

*At all times put your personal safety FIRST.*