

Flat Sequencing Sorters a.k.a., The FSS Machines

Delivery

At the delivery unit, the CASTRs are offloaded from the truck and staged in sequential order in accordance with an accompanying manifest. The manifest also indicates to the postal carriers which CASTR contains their mail. Carriers then load their yellow street trays from the appropriate CASTR into their vehicles for delivery.

CSTs Loaded in Vehicle



FSS-processed flat mail (along with associated letter mail and parcels for each address) is delivered to the customer's mailbox.

*Read along with "Doing Your Job Right
... and Safely"*

Deployment 2010?

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Tomorrow morning when you walk into work, take a good look at your flats. When you get done casing 20 – 25% of them, stop and look at the clock. Ladies and Gentleman, this is the point in time you will be done casing flats after the Flat Sequencing Sorter comes online in your office. Any time you spend casing flats beyond this point is time Management wants to convert to street time.

How much time would it take you to case the other flats? ½-hour? Maybe, if you're lucky. An hour? That's probably closer to reality for most of you. Whatever time it is, it's likely to be time you will find yourself spending on the street. Face it – Management will add to many of our routes.

Most carriers cringe at the thought of an hour of additional street duties – I know I do. My advice to every carrier is to find out what it means to carry mail “by the book” and make that your “Standard Operating Procedure”. What do I mean by that? Quite literally, I mean you should be following all of the rules and regulations, even if they don't make sense to you, or seem to slow you down. After all, this is not “your route” -- it belongs to the Postal Service. It is only your “bid assignment”. The Postal Service is the entity from which you collect a paycheck for performing the duties of your bid assignment, so what is so wrong with performing those duties in the manner in which the Postal Service prescribes?

With the advent of the Flat Sequencing Sorters (FSS) machines, we will likely see close to 7 hours (or more) in street times. Carriers, even those who follow all the Postal Service rules and regulations, are likely to have longer routes than they do now. Those who view themselves as “good workers” because they cut corners are going to find themselves struggling to complete their daily assignments.

Routes should be adjusted to the regular carriers who serve them. If the regular carrier chooses to ignore the rules and regulations, and cuts corners on a daily basis because they want to clock off early, they will find themselves wondering why so-n-so's route has a lot less stops than their route does. And, unfortunately, some carriers resent the fact that other carriers have decided to work smarter, not harder.

I was raised with a small-town work ethic. I'm used to giving my all to do the best job possible. I was taught to look for a quicker/easier way to do things, and if I could find a better way, I was rewarded for my efforts. It took me a long time to figure out that the good 'ol USPS, doesn't want me to think – they just want me to deliver the mail, and they want me to deliver it by their rules. So....even though it takes me longer, I have seen the light. Now, even if it doesn't make sense (and often it doesn't), I perform my duties as I am instructed to by Management.

Mind you, you can't just "put the brakes on" (so to speak), and not expect to garner some attention from Mr. Management. However, there is no time like the present to start slowly implementing the proper practices. The best way I have found to do this is to pick one item to focus on for a particular month.

For instance, are you "saving time" by not shutting your vehicle door between every stop? Or how about not fastening both of your seat belts (lap and shoulder harness), unless you're traveling a long distance, and how about not taking the time to properly curb your wheels or set the emergency brake. Besides violating several postal rules and regulations, you are jeopardizing your own personal safety, although you really might not see it at the time. Focus on that "set" of issues for one month. Starting on the first of the month, make it a point to perform those particular actions as if you are being inspected. Sure, it will be a pain in the rear for the first few days, but by the end of the month, you will have developed a new set of "habits", and more importantly, the correct set of habits.

Most carriers who cut corners do so because they have things they want to do after work. It may seem important to finish early on a given day, but in the grand scheme of things, all it will do is show Mr. Management you are capable of carrying more mail in those eight hours.

How many of you have mounted routes, and don't place the gearshift in neutral or park when making each delivery? Think about it – if you did that every time, it would add up, and the beauty of it is, it is postal policy. Anyone carry flats on their arm to make it easier? Guess what? The M-41 indicates flats are to be worked out of the satchel. No, it doesn't sound efficient to me either, but I would bet money it would result in a reduction of rotator cuff injuries and a reduction in your route.

Let's face it, postal management doesn't want our input. Even though 90% of them have carried mail for five years or less, they have convinced themselves that their "superior intellect" trumps our years of experience. They don't want our opinions on improving efficiency. All they want us for is to be human pack mules and make their numbers to assure their bonuses (now known as Pay for Performance).

Everyone assumes the Union will "take care of them." Actually the responsibility for taking care of each other starts with each individual taking responsibility for their own actions. Start with the simple, yet extremely important things. Fill out 3996s and 1571s religiously and always get a copy of them. (If you don't know what those are, ask your Union Steward). Meet your reporting requirements; if you anticipate your route will take longer than eight hours to complete, notify management and let them make the decision whether to curtail mail, or for you to bring mail back, etc. Do the job the way the rules and regulations prescribe.

Most importantly, take an interest in how to do your job the right and safe way. Your future depends on it and the size of your route will be a result of whether you do or not.

[NOTE: Make sure and read, "Doing Your Job Right And Safely".]