



USPS announces new ESAS delivery initiative test

In a letter dated July 16, the Postal Service informed NALC of a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS). Rather than discuss this concept with NALC in the Joint City Delivery Task Force, USPS chose to test it unilaterally without NALC participation. USPS states that the purpose of this test is to determine if the Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) program can be enhanced to assist in reducing the morning office time for city letter carriers by enabling them to get on the street earlier. EPM is a longtime program established in Handbook M-39 and Handbook M-41 that involves casing non-preferential mail in the afternoon after completing street duties. USPS believes that its new version of this program will enhance customer service by providing more consistent delivery times. The test is scheduled to begin on July 25, 2020, and anticipated to continue for approximately 30 to 60 days in 384 selected sites. The list of test sites can be found on the NALC website.

This unilateral test of ESAS should not be confused with the EPM program outlined in the handbooks. EPM is a long-established program in which letter carriers normally case only preferential and time-value mail in the morning. The casing of non-preferential mail and markup work is done in the afternoon when the carrier returns from the route. This is designed to move the majority of carrier casing time to the afternoon. In an EPM office, city carriers would clock in, withdraw and case only preferential mail, obtain and process accountable items and small parcels and rolls (SPRs), pull-down, obtain parcels, load their vehicles, and leave for normal street delivery. After completion of street duties, city carriers would perform normal return-to-office functions and then begin casing all non-preferential mail. After all non-preferential mail has been cased, the mail will be left in the case until the next morning.

Several guidelines related to the EPM program are contained in Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services and Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities. These and other USPS handbooks can be found on the NALC website.

The ESAS initiative, as described, does not appear to conform to the handbook provisions contained in the M-39 and M-41 relating to EPM and other office activities. The ESAS test requires carriers to clock in, attend any service or safety talk, perform vehicle inspections, obtain accountable items, set up their scanner, retrieve the parcel hamper, line up the SPRs, and retrieve the mail cased and pulled down the previous afternoon. Instead of casing their SPRs, carriers will line them up in delivery order prior to pulling their hot case mail and then immediately clock to the street to load their vehicle and begin delivery. Under the test, there is to be no casing of mail in the morning. Letter carriers will withdraw hot case preferential flats and are expected to route them in order of delivery on the street. Upon returning to the office in the afternoon, carriers will complete the normal return-to-office duties. After completion of these duties, carriers will then case and pull down all mail distributed to the route in preparation for the next day's delivery.

As previously stated, this test, as communicated to NALC, is not fully compliant with Article 19 of the National Agreement related to the applicable handbook provisions. NALC representatives are discussing the issues we have with this initiative with USPS representatives at the headquarters level. Shop stewards and branch officers should monitor the test process, review applicable contractual and handbook provisions, and file appropriate grievances where contract violations occur. Please contact your national business agent's office for guidance, assistance and communication regarding the test.

New stimulus package expected to be introduced soon

There is rising support from Senate Republicans to pass another stimulus package, but it remains to be seen exactly how it will go. NALC is hopeful that the bipartisan and bicameral calls for immediate financial relief for USPS will be part of the conversation between House and Senate leadership, as well as the White House, when negotiations over the next relief package resume later this month.

NALC continues to lobby aggressively for direct financial relief, favorable loan terms and hazard pay for letter carriers. Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for such funding in the next stimulus package. For more information on how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website. Letter carriers should also continue to encourage their family, friends and neighbors to do the same by visiting HeroesDelivering.com.

COVID-19-related MOUs extended until late September

By joint agreement (M-01924), several COVID-19-related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through Sept. 25. These memorandums include temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01910), temporary additional paid leave for city carrier assistants (CCAs) (M-01911), temporary use of the 7:01 rule (M-01913), temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01915) and temporary use of TCAs (M-01916).

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time-limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01925), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime-desired list or work-assignment list (M-01926). Both of these agreements will expire on Sept. 25 as well.

Also extended through Sept. 25 is a USPS memorandum (M-01914) that instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with child care issues related to the pandemic. The memorandum also provides for liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick, as well as liberal annual leave and leave without pay to the extent operationally feasible, treats COVID-19-related leave as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave, and directs that leave taken for COVID-19-related reasons during this time not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

Each of the MOUs and the USPS directive can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System at nalc.org/mrs.

Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive launched



To help fulfill the nutritional needs of the one in eight Americans who face food insecurity, including millions of children, older people and military veterans, NALC has launched a virtual food drive, the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive, to raise funds for food banks nationwide.

"As letter carriers in every neighborhood in the country six and seven days a week, we see the need and we cannot wait while food banks struggle, demand grows and people remain hungry," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

"Each May, NALC's food drive has filled a gap between holiday food donations and the end of free meals in school during summer break," Rolando said. "This year, the economic crisis and the disruption in food donations have made our support even more important. With the right effort, letter carriers could extend this online food drive to help fulfill the needs of local food banks for many months to come."

By visiting nalc.org/food, donors can find a food bank in their area to support with an online donation. The site links directly to donation pages on each food bank's website.

As with the traditional Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, donations will stay in the communities of the donors.

Interest arbitration update

Absent reaching a tentative settlement on our collective-bargaining agreement, NALC is prepared to begin interest arbitration in late September. In the meantime, negotiations continue with the Postal Service in an attempt to reach a tentative agreement for the members to consider for ratification. In the event that these continued talks fail to result in a negotiated agreement, NALC is more than ready for the interest arbitration hearings.

USPS leadership changes

The Postal Service is in the midst of a massive change in leadership, consisting of a new postmaster general (PMG), a yet-to-be-appointed new deputy PMG, four relatively new governors and two brand-new governors who have yet to attend their first meeting of the postal Board of Governors. Initially, at a minimum, NALC expects there will be thorough reviews of postal finances, operations, human resources and marketing, as well as legislative, regulatory and legal matters.

On the operational front, NALC is aware that supervisors are conducting stand-up talks to all employees on initial transportation phases of an operational pivot plan based on some internal documents regarding cost reduction. None of these changes or plans were discussed with or explained to NALC. If history is any indication, management's implementation of any cost-savings plan will likely result in a high number of grievances addressing various contractual violations.

Face coverings

As previously reported, the Postal Service conducted a test regarding the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The styles tested were various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. As a result of the input from carriers who participated in the tests, the Postal Service ordered three types of masks to be made available for purchase by local managers for letter carriers to use.

The three types of masks are all washable and reusable. There is a black cross-strap style, a blue neck-gaiter style and a grey adjustable-ear-loop style. The Postal Service has advised that the masks are available in every district, and that local managers should consult with their respective district office to order. Please contact your national business agent's office if there are problems with such orders.

USPS testing of temperature-measuring equipment

The Postal Service has completed its testing of temperature-measuring equipment and has identified a company that will provide technicians to conduct what they describe as highly accurate COVID-19 testing in postal facilities. As USPS decides if, when and where it would like to proceed with any such virus-related testing of employees, the national parties are discussing the necessary policies, procedures and protocols that would need to be agreed upon before any such testing and contact tracing could be implemented.

NALC Branch Challenge for MDA now underway

With the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult for branches to hold MDA fundraisers, in support of programs such as summer camps as well as medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge in July. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC's 2020 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least \$10 to MDA through his or her branch's donation page.

It's easy to create a fundraising page by going to mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2020 and clicking "create a page." It's that simple. Donations are tracked by branch, with all fundraisers listed on the page.

"Canceling MDA events and camps is disappointing," Davidson said, "but letter carriers are creative, and they don't give up. I look forward to seeing the different ways, including online donor campaigns, that our branches devise to keep resources flowing to MDA in 2020 and to support its vital efforts."

With 25 branches registered, NALC has already raised \$139,500 toward the \$250,000 goal. The top branches for Week One are:

- New Jersey Merged Branch 38—\$3,150
- Pawtucket, RI Branch 55—\$1,475
- Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56—\$285
- Western Wayne Co. Merged, MI Branch 2184—\$280
- South Bend, IN Branch 330—\$210
- Newport, RI Branch 57—\$200
- Rochester, NY Branch 210—\$150
- Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126—\$145
- Cape Girardeau, MO Branch 1015—\$125
- Apopka, FL Branch 5192—\$100

Checks and offline gifts received in July can count toward the NALC Branch Challenge for MDA. Send in donations using the NALC Donation Allocation Form (below) to MDA, 161 N. Clark St., Suite 3550, Chicago, IL 60601.



NALC MDA Donation Allocation Form

- NALC Branch Number _____
- State Association _____
- Auxiliary _____

MDA District/City _____

MDA Contact/Staff _____

MDA Event Name/Event Type _____

MDA Event Date _____ Donation Amount _____

Donor Name _____

Please fill out and mail along with your MDA donation check to:

MDA
161 N. Clark Suite 3550
Chicago, IL 60601

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