

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS,
AFL-CIO

X-Route Alternative

The parties have reached agreement on an alternative Route Adjustment strategy - X-Route. The decision to use the X-Route Concept is made on an installation wide basis, even though inspections and planning for individual units/zones may not occur at the same time. In units with more than one delivery unit/zone the planning process is repeated as each delivery unit/zone is inspected, assignments are evaluated and adjustments are planned.

X-Route Process

The X-Route process is an alternative approach to route adjustment in preparation for automation, particularly delivery point sequencing. An X-Route is, in effect, a letter carrier craft assignment held pending reversion. The workload will be divided among remaining routes when agreed upon percentage(s) of letter mail is being received at a unit/zone in delivery point sequence order. The process allows changes to be planned in advance and permits carriers to know what their assignments are expected to be in the automated environment. The X-Route process and time period are considered completed when the unit/zone has achieved the final targeted level of Delivery Point Sequence letter mail and the X-Route work has been distributed.

Pre-Agreement Phase

If there is interest in attempting to utilize the X-Route alternative, local management will meet with the local union to review the provisions of this agreement. This includes a review of the attached Memorandum of Understanding on case configuration, the Work Methods Memorandum, guidance on the Hempstead case resolution and current base count and inspection data. If current route inspection data is not available, plans should be made to conduct route inspections in accordance with Article 41.3.S of the National Agreement to provide a basis to implement the remainder of this agreement.

-2-

If the parties are considering pursuing this alternative, they must be committed to mutual resolution of the outcome. Management will share the following information with the union:

The expected accounting period(s) and year that increases in bar-coded mail generated by the Automation Programs will impact the delivery unit/zone, such as customer prebarcoding, MLOCR, DBCS, and RBCS.

The projected impact on the delivery unit/zone of automated sort schemes, and the basis for the estimate.

Agreement Phase

It must be understood, once the decision to use the X-Route process has been finalized, that decision can only be changed through joint agreement between the local union and management.

Since the planning and adjustment(s) in a delivery unit/zone using the X-Route alternative are a joint endeavor, the parties at the local level must first agree to a joint resolution process, should there be a barrier to full implementation of the parties agreement to use the X-Route alternative.

The parties will then meet to review route examinations for the unit/zone. This exercise is intended to result in agreed upon evaluations.

If the parties fail to reach agreement regarding the use of the X-Route alternative, management may proceed to implement strategies in concert with handbooks and manuals, the Hempstead Resolution, and the National Agreement to accomplish route adjustments. However, the provisions of this agreement are specific to application of the X-Route concept only and are not applicable to any other route adjustment method.

In working out the X-Route adjustment process for the delivery unit/zone, it is recognized and agreed that:

Management must develop the final targeted Delivery Point Sequencing percentage (from a low of 70% to a high of 85%) of delivery point sequencing letter mail for the

-3-

X-Route period. That percentage is then used to estimate the impact on the unit/zone using the projection methodology outlined in the Hempstead resolution. The parties will jointly determine the number and identity of the routes that will be designated as X-Routes using the above estimates of the impact on the delivery unit. While the X-Route concept may not be applicable to all routes within an installation because of limiting circumstances (i.e., geographic considerations), such circumstances will not be a barrier to implementing the concept. This determination as to the non-applicability to certain routes will be made jointly.

The parties must jointly determine what realignment of routes (in-office or street territory) will be necessary to assure that X-Routes are strategically placed to facilitate the transfer of workload as delivery point sequencing evolves. The decision as to when to realign the routes should be based upon the current need for realignment in order to place the routes on as near an eight hour basis as possible based upon the current evaluation from a recent inspection. The parties could decide to defer the proposed realignment of routes until Delivery Point Sequencing was implemented if no significant scheme changes were required to keep routes near eight hours, or they could decide to make the necessary scheme changes for the realignment of routes now if significant scheme changes were going to be needed to adjust routes to eight hours as currently evaluated. In no instance will the parties effect adjustment now based on the future event, except as provided under interim adjustments (below). The regular carrier on any route whose street territory is changed as a result of this adjustment and realignment may elect, on a one-time basis, to vacate his/her route and become an unassigned regular. Such action will not trigger the provisions of Article 41.3.0. All positions vacated in this manner will be posted and filled in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 41.1.

Where exceptional circumstances require further adjustments, they must be jointly agreed to by the parties. The objective is to provide a smooth transition to the Delivery Point Sequencing environment. Such an outcome requires no change in day-to-day administration of curtailment procedures, auxiliary assistance or overtime.

-4-

The parties agree that adjustment strategies for Delivery Point Sequencing will vary based on individual offices, deployment schedules and types of deliveries. For instance, offices that will be impacted by RBCS destinating keying prior to Delivery Point Barcoding and offices further along in the deployment schedule may be at final targeted barcoding levels when Delivery Point sequencing commences and therefore require only one adjustment.

Some offices may initiate DPBC and Delivery Point Sequencing prior to full barcoding levels and require and interim adjustment strategy. Adjustment strategy decisions will be made jointly based on deployment schedules and current automation.

Once the Postal Service has implemented delivery point sequencing and can demonstrate that the routes in a delivery unit/zone are receiving volumes at the targeted percentage, the local parties will implement the preplanned adjustments. Where an interim adjustment strategy will be necessary as described above due to the gradual increasing of DPBC levels, the local parties will meet and make interim adjustments by removing work from the X-Routes and assigning that work to the regular routes which will remain after full implementation of delivery point sequencing.

After the completion of each interim adjustment, the parties will jointly determine the amount of hours remaining on the X-Routes and will jointly decide how to efficiently combine assignments to provide the maximum number of full-time assignments. If this cannot be accomplished in an efficient manner, the parties may jointly decide to either form auxiliary assignments or split the remaining hours from these assignments to the regular routes that will remain once the final delivery point sequencing adjustments have been made. Where this latter option is agreed upon, it is understood that routes will be built up (not to exceed 8:20). If less than 100% of the routes will be built up, the following priority should be observed if efficiency can be maintained:

- (1) By seniority, routes whose regular carrier are on the Work Assignment List.

-5-

- (2) By seniority, routes whose regular carrier are on the Overtime Desired List.
- (3) By inverse seniority, carriers not on any Overtime Desired List.

Incumbents of, and bidders for, routes that are projected to continue after full implementation of automation will know, in advance, what portions of the X-Route a delivery route will receive after full delivery point sequencing is on-line. X-Routes will be posted for bid when vacant, as long as they remain full-time assignments. When an X-Route becomes vacant and is posted for bid, the bid notice will include the anticipated date of elimination.

When an X-Route is abolished, the full-time carrier assigned to that route will become an unassigned regular. He/she may, within 30 days, review the list of residual vacancies within his/her bidding area and use his/her seniority to exercise a preference for that assignment. This may be accomplished by a bid posting limited to unassigned full-time carriers displaced by abolishment of X-Routes or by other means agreed to locally between the parties. (The provisions of Article 41.3.0., where they have been incorporated in the local memorandum, will not be triggered by this process.)

The use of transitional employees in a unit where route adjustments are achieved under the X-Route concept will be in accordance with the relevant National Interest Arbitration Award and any subsequent agreement(s) between the United States Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

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9/17/92