

TO: Joint Trainers

M-01153

The Joint Task Force has reviewed the final set of questions submitted from the trainers who conducted training using the joint publication. The attached is the task force's responses to those questions. Every effort should be made to distribute this information as widely as possible.

William H. Young FOR
Lawrence G. Hutchins
Vice President
National Association of
Letter Carriers

Sherry B. Cagnoli
Sherry B. Cagnoli
Manager, Contract Administration
(NALC/NRLCA)
U.S. Postal Service

Attachment

cc: Area Managers, Customer Services
District Managers, Customer Services
Area Human Resources Managers
District Human Resources Managers

Questions and Answers Concerning the September 1992 Memorandums

This is a supplement to *Building our Future by Working Together*, the USPS-NALC Joint Training Guide on the September, 1992 Memorandums of Understanding, published November 19, 1992. It provides joint answers to questions concerning the interpretation and application of those memorandums and the subsequent December 21, 1992 memorandum.

Q-55 Under the X-Route, is there an option for the full-time carrier to vacate once under the interim adjustment and a second time when the X Routes are fully absorbed?

A No. The option to vacate is a one time option for a regular carrier which may only be used the first time street territory is changed.

Q-56 How will management determine the DPS target percentage? Does it have to be at least 70%?

A Management will determine the DPS percentage from a variety of sources, such as, the expected level of mailer participation in 11-digit barcoding, and the expected level of Postal Service 11-digit barcoding of letter size mail. In the unilateral method, management may determine whatever percentage is operationally feasible so as to effect route adjustments. The parties anticipate that two interim adjustments will normally be sufficient. In the X-route method, the target percentage must be between 70 and 85% unless interim targets are mutually agreed to.

Q-57 Where an NALC Branch President represents carriers in merged cities, can he/she designate a central group of members to the X-Route committee to make decisions for all of the cities they represent or must there be a committee in each installation which is made up of committee members from that installation?

A While the parties at the National Level strongly recommend that an X-Route committee be formed, the formulation and authority delegated to an X-Route committee(s) is purely a local decision.

Q-58 With the "build up" of routes in the X-Route process, if we build up a route and the carrier is on the work assignment OT Desired List, will that carrier have to carry the overtime even if he/she then gets off this list at the beginning of the next quarter?

A Yes. When the parties agree to split the remaining hours of an X-Route after an interim adjustment and distribute these hours to surviving routes by building them up to no more than 8:20, the parties must first decide how efficiency can best be maintained when building up surviving routes and make their decision based on data at the time planning takes place. Carriers moving on or off work assignment/OT lists becomes irrelevant after the parties agree to implement already planned build-ups.

Q-59 Why is the Overtime Desired List a consideration with the "build up" of routes?

A By utilizing the Overtime Desired List when building up routes, the built up routes go to carriers who have indicated a preference for working overtime.

Q-60 If the target percentage is 60%, do the carriers case the mail (DPS letters) until the 60% is reached or do they take the mail to the street with the selected method?

A After managers are satisfied with the quality of the DPS mail received by the carriers, the carrier will stop casing the DPS mail and effect delivery using the selected work method. The target percentage relates to when routes may be adjusted in response to DPS implementation.

Q-61 Once DPS is implemented, but the target percentage is not yet reached, can management pivot to capture undertime?

A Yes.

Q-62 Is there a set range of target percentages in the unilateral process?

A No, but management is obligated to notify the union of the target percentages it selects.

Q-63 Are the adjustments delayed if some of the routes do not receive the targeted percentage of DPS?

A No. The target percentage is developed on a unit basis; therefore when the unit reaches the target, routes should be considered for adjustment.

Q-64 At what point does DPS mail trigger "residual mail"?

A Residual mail is any mail that is not in DPS order once a delivery unit starts receiving DPS mail.

Q-65 Will senior PTF's who are on light or limited duty be converted to full-time vacancies?

A Yes.

Q-66 Will PTF's on light or limited duty be afforded the opportunity to transfer to available full-time assignments.

A Yes.

Q-67 Clerk cases and 49 cell cases are now being used on the letter carrier routes. Do they have to go if inspections are to be conducted?

A The use of clerk cases and 49 cell cases is not a subject covered by the memos. The parties are currently discussing this issue at the National Level.

Q-68 Must Postmasters have district office approval prior to any resolution with the local Union? Does a District Manager have veto power on local resolutions?

A Postmasters have the authority to make the decision. However, just as the local union president may receive guidance from the NBA, Postmasters may receive guidance from the District or Area office. The MOU's do not prohibit this.

Q-69 If DPS mail is received in a delivery unit on more than one dispatch, does that meet the requirement of putting mail in DPS order for two or more consecutive weeks considering the need to collate the bundles?

A DPS mail is one bundle of mail in delivery point sequence. Mail that must be collated before delivery is not considered DPS mail. The number of dispatches is irrelevant.

Q-70 A branch has an LMU that provides that, if 50% of a route's territory is moved to another route, the previous carrier follows the territory and if the incoming carrier does not have 50% of his/her territory being moved at that time he/she becomes excessed and Article 41.3.O is implemented. How is this impacted by the MOU's?

A If the installation elects to use the unilateral method, this LMU provision would remain in full force and effect. However, if the installation is using the X-Route process, Article 41.3.O would not be triggered when the routes are realigned.

Q-71 The Joint Training Manual states in the chapter on TE's (page 54):

Unassigned Regular Rights. When a carrier becomes an unassigned regular as a result of these changes, the carrier is eligible to bid on any assignment within his or her bidding area - including residual vacancies, other positions held pending reversion and positions withheld for excessing.

When a carrier becomes an unassigned regular per 41.3.O, how can he/she have the right to bid on withheld/held pending reversion positions held by full time employees or PTF's on opts?

A In such circumstances the unassigned carrier may bid on vacant held pending reversion positions and positions withheld for excessing. This includes positions that are being held by carriers on an "opt". The "right" to bid on such positions stems from the "TE" memorandum.

Q-72 When applying the Hempstead formula to calculate the estimated impact of automation, may any volume information other than current route inspection data be used?

A No. Only current route inspection data, i.e., data less than 18 months old, may be used to estimate the impact of automation using the Hempstead formula.

Q-73 Is a regular who transfers into an office and becomes the junior part-time flexible after December 21, 1992 "on-the-rolls" for the purpose of making regular under the terms of the new memo.

A Only letter carriers who were Part Time Flexibles on December 21, 1992 are entitled to conversion under the terms of this memo.

- Q-74** An office does not have recent route inspection data (within 18 months). The old DSSA allowed for 10 TEs (400 hours per week). Management has not hired/used TEs to date or has been utilizing less than that full entitlement. Is it correct that, after December 21, 1992, the TE hours in this office could not be increased using the allowance established under the old DSSA formula?
- A** Yes.
- Q** Is it also correct that, in this same example, TE hours could be increased by 40 hours per week for each PTF converted to regular pursuant to the PTF conversion agreement?
- A** Yes.
- Q-75** An office has no recent route inspection data. The old DSSA allowed for 10 TEs (400 hours per week). The 400 hours are being used. Can these hours continue to be used and, in addition, can the allowable TE hours be increased 40 hours per week for each PTF converted to regular pursuant to the PTF conversion agreement?
- A** Yes.
- Q** In this same example, what is the effect on the old DSSA TE hours once a DPS ceiling is established? What is the effect on the PTF conversion hours once a DPS ceiling is established?
- A** See answer to question 46.
- Q-76** My office currently has no transitional employees. We have recent route inspection data that establishes a ceiling for transitional employee hiring at 10 (400 hours per week). Management decides to convert 6 Part Time Flexible employees to regular and hires 6 transitional employees (240 hours per week). What is the remaining transitional employee entitlement?
- A** Your office would now have additional transitional employee entitlement of 4 (160 hours per week).
- Q-77** If 20 minutes is added to a route, is that 20 minutes counted in equalization and opportunities for overtime?

A No. The route would be considered an eight hour route for the purpose of administering the provisions of Article 8.

Q-78 Are residual vacancies that are withheld for excessing, or held pending reversion re-posted for bid when PTFs are converted to regular?

A The parties agree that these vacancies are not re-posted for bid, unless a change to the route of over one hour has occurred on that assignment since the last posting. If changes of less than one hour have occurred, the recently converted PTFs will fill those vacancies on the basis of seniority.

Q-79 In question 30, you indicated that X-Routes normally should not be considered as vacancies for purposes of PTF conversions. What if the X-Route will be in operation for an extended period of time?

A In that circumstance, it would be reasonable for the parties to consider that assignment as an opportunity for PTF conversion.

Q-80 Management accepts a transfer into the installation as a part-time flexible. Later a vacancy occurs at that installation. What has preference for conversion; the Article 41 rights of the transferee, or the rights of a part-time flexible in the commuting area under the Memorandum?

A The parties agree that the rights to conversion under the Memorandum dated 12-21-93 take preference over normal Article 41 rights.