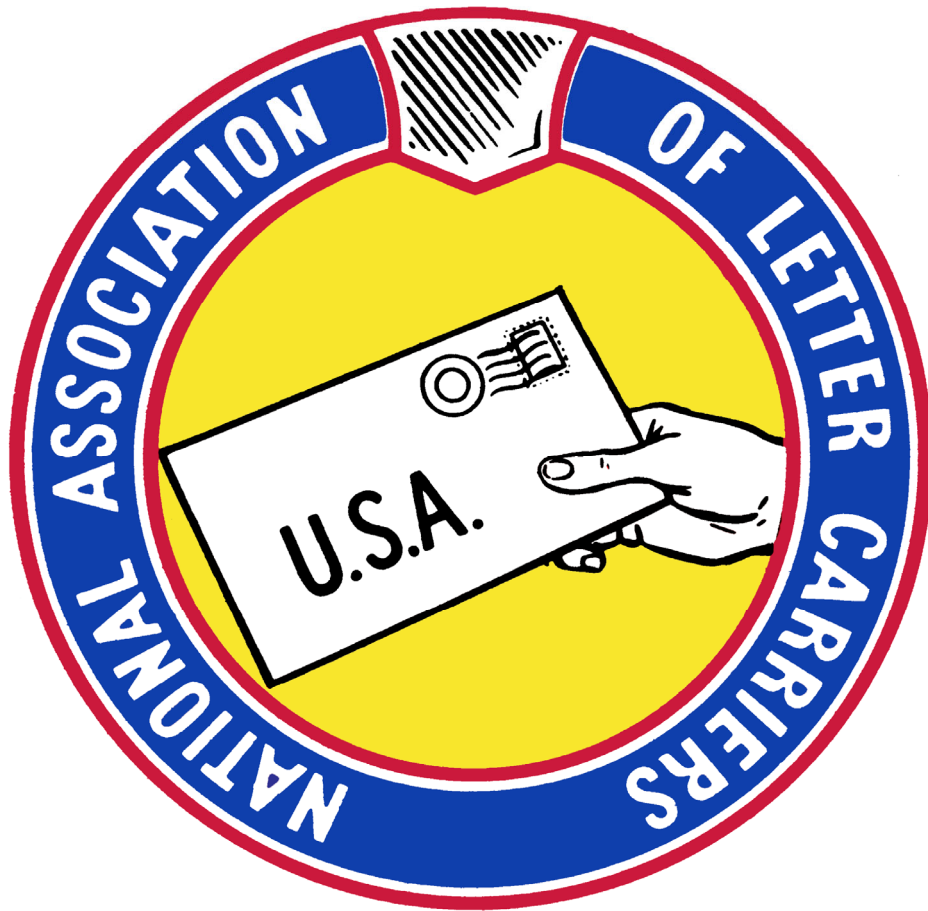


Wake Up! Route Inspection Special Edition... November 2016



*In an effort to reach as many members as quickly as possible, Branch 25 has decided to produce this special edition Wake-Up! It is the first special edition of the Wake-Up!, and hopefully it will serve to prepare the membership for the upcoming inspections. What you are doing **TODAY** will have a great impact on the adjustment of your route. So please, take the time to see how your route will be evaluated and what you can do to ensure that you receive a fair evaluation.*

DANGERS OF 1840B TIME

When it comes to route inspections, one thing you will learn in a hurry is that management has the right to select times. These times will then become your base office and base street times. They will be the times that cause you heartburn in the months and years after the inspection as each and every morning after your route is adjusted management will remind you that “you did that time during inspection.” Or, did you?

They can select between the street time that you demonstrate during the week of count and inspection, or they can select the average street time compiled from an “8 week analysis” when you (the regular carrier) served your route. Now, these selections are not supposed to be based solely on which time is lower, but you can probably imagine how often the greater time is selected. Slim to none.

Often times, it is the 8 week analysis or the “1840B time” that is selected and just as often this 1840B time is significantly lower than your street time during the week of inspection. How can that be?

It’s actually quite simple. In order to get an accurate 1840B time, the data (clock rings and 3996’s) that go into the analysis has to be accurate.

There are many things that lead to inaccurate data. For instance, do you punch properly ALL the time? Have you ever gone “no lunch” to get home early? Well, that no lunch day just took 30 minutes off your street time for the day.

Do you receive or provide assistance? If you receive assistance, and the carrier that provides the assistance doesn’t clock over to your route, your time for that day is reduced by the amount of assistance that you received. It is also damaging if you don’t properly complete your PS Form 3996, you’ll also lose.

The 3996 asks for what portion of your route you are handing off. The reason it does so is that when you are inspected, management will know how much time every delivery on your route is worth. If you hand off a section of your route that is worth 1/2 hour when you do it, but it gets improperly recorded as a section that is supposed to take an hour or more, your 1840B time will suffer as a result.

If you provide assistance to another route, you must be careful to punch properly. If you spend 1/2 hour completing assistance for a section of a route that is listed as 1 hour, and you don’t punch, then your street time for the day will be reduced by 1 hour, not 30 minutes. Then, the 1840B time will be less as a result.

It is not only data collection and data entry errors that can have a negative impact on your 8 week analysis. If you become lax in your responsibilities it will most definitely have a negative impact. Do you have big rubber bands in your truck so that you can rubber band parcels to mailboxes? This is wrong on many levels. First and foremost, you are doing a disservice to the customer. Next, you are robbing yourself of the time to do the job right. It won’t matter if you do everything right during the week of inspection if you’ve established a lesser time during the 8 week analysis.

Speaking of parcels, do you let your customer know when you bring a parcel to the door? The M41 (City Letter Carriers Duties and Responsibilities) is clear on this. The language from the M41 is as follows:

For any parcel that does not fit into the customer’s mailbox or parcel locker (when available), an attempt to deliver must be made at the customer’s door. If no one is available to receive the parcel, follow the procedures in 322.311 and 322.312.

An “attempt” means that you try to place the parcel in the customer’s hands. This means that you are obligated to ring the bell or rap on the door to determine whether someone is home to receive the parcel. It does not mean “ring and run” like some mischievous children. After you ring the bell, wait a reasonable amount of time for the customer to answer the door. REASONABLE does not mean that you enjoy the sunset from the porch when you make a parcel attempt at 3:00PM, nor does it mean that you’re off like the wind in less time than it takes someone to get up off the sofa and make it to the front door. Generally, if you hear someone coming, wait. If there’s dead silence, be on your way. With the increase in parcel volume that we’ve experienced in the last several years, many routes should have grown in time. One of the only explanations for not needing more time is not following proper procedure.

There are other things that will cause your 1840B time to be less than your time during the week of inspection, and I'm not going to pull any punches in pointing them out. Do you sneak around in the office? Do you grab your DPS or FSS when nobody's watching (or in some offices with management's blessing) and rack it? Do you do the same with circulars? How about your parcels, do you look at them in the office?

Let's take a look at how each of those things will give you a longer route. When you are inspected, you won't be allowed to case your DPS, FSS, or circulars. As a result, during the week of inspection it will take you longer on the street. Remember what I said about management having the right to select? Well, they'll select you 1840B time and you'll get territory added to your route. Don't think for a minute that they'll take into consideration that you were breaking the rules during the period of time that the 8 week analysis came from, even if management "vouches" for you. These inspections are all about taking back. Taking back time that you may have earned during the latest rap.

I earlier asked what you did with your parcels in the office. Are you aware that you are not even supposed to look at your parcels until you are loading them into your truck? That's right, there is no provision to see if they even belong to your route or if they are mis-sorted. There is one caveat, if you have a park and loop route, you can turn a letter in your case so that when you get to the delivery point you will know to bypass it and return with the parcel and all the mail. Aside from that, you should ignore your parcels.

If you line up your parcels in the office, you are on office time. This time will not be allowed during the week of inspection, so you will have to line up your parcels as you load them into your vehicle. That takes time, time that you didn't spend during the period of time that your 8 week analysis was conducted. You guessed it, you will be shortchanged again.

What else do you do in the office that saves you time on the street? Do you rearrange your mail to make it "pretty"? Do you deliver your route in a different sequence than it shows on your case? Don't!

Remember something, your office time can get smaller and smaller through automation and further gains in efficiency. That's great. The more efficient the postal service is, the more secure our jobs should be. BUT, as yet, they can't automate the DELIVERY of mail, they can't automate our street time.

This means that you should perform as many functions on the street as is possible, as are allowed. Do you tray your circulars in the office? Hell, do you even put your circulars in order and cut the straps in the office? I wouldn't. Just like with your parcels, I would wait until I was loading my vehicle to tray up my circulars. Now don't get me wrong, if the standard operating procedure in your office requires you to do this work in the office, don't disobey. But if given the choice of performing work in the office or on the street, always choose the street. It won't be pleasant in the blistering heat, the driving rain, or the frosty winter temperatures, but it will yield a more favorable evaluation of your route and that should translate into a less stressful career.

The last thing that I'll touch upon regarding your 1840B time also causes quite a bit of heartburn in many stations. I've received countless calls over the years that carriers are forced to get off the clock in the afternoon with only 5 minutes of office time. The biggest complaint is that 5 minutes is not enough time to dispatch the collected mail and to handle the mis-sorts and mis-sents that you encounter during the day. The simple solution; take care of it on the street. Whether you use a slough tray or some other method, separate your triple m mail, your forwards, and any other mail that needs to be pulled after each loop or after various segments on a curblin or dismount route. Do this and endorse the mail **ON THE STREET**. If you have to collect a collection box, or if you collect outgoing mail from customers, cull it and face it as you go. This will give you the time on the street, and will get you out of the office quicker at the end of the day. It's a win win.

In order for any of this advice to have an impact, you have to start doing it **NOW** and you have to be consistent for the rest of your career.

“They’re Coming to Take Time Away”

When they come to take time away from your route it might not be noticeable to you at first. They won’t come with calculators and red pens but with forms. They will come with hands full of postal forms. PS 1840B’s, PS1838’s and PS 3999’s. If you’re not paying attention it may have already happened before you realize it.

Most carriers are at least a little bit familiar with the “99”, PS Form 3999. The 3999 is used to record all data on the day an examiner accompanies a letter carrier on the street. During the week of inspection an examiner will accompany each letter carrier at least once and probably three times. The times from the 3999 will be used to determine the value of territory transferred between routes. If the data on the 3999 isn’t correctly entered, then the adjustments won’t be correct.

There are two types of mistakes on a 3999. The first is the “honest” mistake that was made because of human error or ignorance of operation. The second is the “dishonest” mistake that is done on purpose to steal time because management knows what tricks to use that aren’t immediately recognizable. The group of managers who will come into your station to conduct the inspection is referred to as a team. Don’t be fooled into thinking that this means they are all on the same page and doing everything the same way. If you review many 3999’s you will find many different methods of entering data.

Every line on the 3999 is used to record actual deliveries the carrier made or what is referred to as Allied time. The deliveries are listed in Sector Segments. The Sector Segment will list a number range and street name. The 3999 will also show type of delivery, how many possible and made deliveries and how much time it took to make those deliveries.

Allied time is broken down into recurring and non-recurring street time. Non-recurring street time is almost always automatically deducted. All deductions should be reviewed. Many non-recurring deductions should not be deductions at all. Some Non-recurring functions that are deducted improperly sometimes:

Backtracking- When a letter carrier returns to a prior delivery to deliver a missed piece. If your stations policy is to go back and deliver miss-sequenced pieces of DPS or FSS then this would not be a deduction.

Animal Interference- Time spent avoiding animals or animal attacks. If this happens on a recurring basis on the route this would not be a deduction.

Management Time- This should only be deducted when the carrier stops working for no other reason than the examiner’s needs.

Replenish Time- This is time spent by the carrier moving mail into position for delivery. This is one of the most common deductions. Management somehow believes that the mail will magically move into the front of the truck on mounted and dismount routes with no extra time. Replenish time is a regular occurrence and should not be deducted!

Relay Time- Relay time is time at a relay box or vehicle preparing the mail for delivery for the next loop on a park and loop or walking route. Many times, examiners will put relay time on a 3999 for a mounted or dismount route and then deduct it. While relay time should not be on those routes most of the time that time should be allocated somewhere else, most likely replenish time.

Travel Within- This is time spent traveling between park points on park and loop routes or time spent traveling between geographic areas without delivering mail. As with relay time, sometimes examiners will incorrectly enter Travel Within and then deduct it.

Personal Needs- This time should not be deducted unless there is proof that a carrier is abusing this time. Just because management thinks the time is excessive doesn’t mean it is.

Waiting Other, Temporary Detail and Miscellaneous Other- These are kind of catch all designations that may or not have explanations with them. Often you will find that these deductions have no comments with them and, if so, should be challenged.

All deductions should have a comment or comments associated with them. If management cannot explain why they are taking the deduction then it is an improper deduction. All deductions should be reviewed. By not reviewing

deductions and not contesting improper deductions management can chip away at time that should rightfully be part of the route.

The 3999 Audit Trail Report is generated by DOIS and shows some of the changes made to a 3999 after it is complete. The first column is Version Number (Ver Nbr). A number “1” is the initial entry and each number after that (“2” “3” ...) is a change to that initial entry. A number “1” without a “2” indicates a deletion of an entry. This means the time was deleted and is gone forever. Unless these edits are investigated then this may be time that was improperly deducted and is now gone. A “1” followed by another number means that the time was changed, possibly up or down. Again, if not investigated then there is no way to tell if the time was deducted or changed properly.

The 3999 can be confusing to those who are not familiar with reading one. Management will often rush through the consultations or just give it to the carrier with no consultation. Please do not assume that all the information on the 3999 is correct. If something doesn't make sense and management cannot give a clear explanation of what it means; if you seem to have lost time, even if it only seems like a small amount, question it. The data should accurately reflect the time on the route. The fact is that often it doesn't. Take the time to understand the 3999 and what it means. The route you save could be your own!

Dan Wheeler
Wake-Up! Publisher



Dan makes a good point when he says that some deductions are “honest” and some are “dishonest”. Over the last 23 years of being involved in inspections, we’ve seen many of each variety in Branch 25. Fortunately, we have some examiners that want to, and do the right thing. Others work from the premise that YOU are a no good, lazy bum who is out to game the system and they try to game you.

There are a couple scenarios that almost always end up in deductions that fall into the “dirty trick” category. First, if you brown bag your lunch, make sure you make management aware of that ahead of time and make it clear that your examiner should also brown bag his or her lunch. Why? Because the time you spend driving the examiner to or from lunch comes out of your route. Also, if your examiner “extends his or her break”, that time comes out of your route. If you’re shooting the breeze with your examiner and you think it’s cool, it’s not. It’s coolly coming out of your street time. Thirty minutes, period!

Comfort stops make me crazy! For years, I have trained letter carriers to try to take their comfort stops when the examiner takes theirs. Why? Well, if your examiner says they need you to take them to a rest room, will you naturally start a stopwatch to keep track of the time? They will! Then, the entire amount of time from when you leave your route to when you return will be deducted from your route. The only way to correct this is to take a comfort stop when your examiner takes a comfort stop. If your examiner doesn't take a comfort stop and you need to, by all means do, but in general try to coordinate. This can mean quite a bit of time.

Do you speed up when you fall behind? Let me explain. If a customer asks for directions and it takes a couple minutes, do you speed up to recoup that couple minutes and get back on time? Don't! The time that the customer talks to you will be deducted from your street time. If you speed up to make up the 5 minutes, then the net impact will be 10 minutes because the actual time you took will be used.

Don't slow down, but more importantly **DON'T SPEED UP!**

DID YOU KNOW?

How many people remember their training? One of the things that I bet you don't remember is the proper procedure for delivering mail on a curbside route. In fairness to you, you may not have been properly trained. At any rate, the following tidbit of information comes from the "Standard Training For City Letter Carriers Participant Guide." I will give a disclaimer along with this piece of information. If you do this be prepared to incur the wrath of management, and be prepared to do it for the rest of your career.

I can probably count on one hand the number of carriers that I know that follow the following rule. Some of you may provide this special edition Wake-Up! to a manager, it's inevitable, and I have nothing to hide. But in the interest of making sure you know the rules, here's one that is for YOUR SAFETY. At first, it will take you a bit longer, but after awhile it will become a fluid motion that will have minimal time impact, but could potentially save your life. You decide what to do with it.

Employees performing curbside delivery, from right hand drive vehicles, shall follow the procedures of:

- On level streets or roads; ***placing the vehicle in neutral***, placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in the mailbox

- On hills; ***placing the vehicle in park***, placing the foot firmly on the brake pedal while collecting mail or placing mail in the mailbox

Another part of the job that frequently causes confusion is the markup. I'm confident that many of your managers are not even familiar with what endorsements are to be done on each piece of mail and which ones are bundled with only the top piece receiving the endorsement. The M41 has the answer.

Carrier Mark-Ups — Individually Endorsed

Enter the number of pieces manually endorsed (1) Deceased, (2) Temporarily Away (retention period for hold mail has expired), (3) Refused, (4) No Mail Receptacle or (5) Vacant (Occupant

Mail Only endorsed *address correction requested, return postage guaranteed, or forwarding and return postage guaranteed*).

922.452

Carrier Mark-Ups — Bundle Endorsed

Also enter one piece for each bundle of carrier-endorsed undeliverable pieces identified as (1) Undeliverable As Addressed, (2) Attempted Not Known, (3) No Such Number, (4) Insufficient Address, and (5) Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM), which is Standard Mail (A) not deliverable as addressed and is not endorsed *address correction requested, return postage guaranteed, or forwarding and return postage guaranteed*.

Speaking of the M41, this manual, "City Delivery Carriers' Duties and Responsibilities" should be at your case in your route book. There are two problems with that. First, many of you may not even have a route book. Second, you probably won't be given the time or care to read the M41 at your carrier case. Don't worry, it's online in multiple places, but definitely at the Branch 25 website under the "Stewards' Page" tab. Invest in your career, spend a little time every now and then reading the M41. You'd be surprised what you'll learn. While you're at it, take a look at all the handbooks and manuals. You may want to start with the M39, "Management of Delivery Services". That book is what your supervisor is ***supposed to do!***

Chapter 2 of the M39 is essentially the *Bible* of the route inspection process. Some of that chapter is a bit tough to understand, but I'm confident that our letter carriers can and will understand it. If you're getting this special edition, you will undergo inspections after the first of the year. That gives you plenty of time to brush up on your rights and responsibilities.

The crux of Chapter 2, however, can be summed up with one line. Do everything during the week of count and inspection the same way you do it every other day during the year. If you are doing something wrong now, it is up to management to correct your deficiency NOW. If there are lawns that you don't cross now for safety reasons, then you shouldn't be crossing those lawns during the count and inspection.

Management will continue to instruct you regarding your daily workload, but there is only

one instruction that a route examiner can give you on the street and that is to do the job the way you do it each and every day. He or she must not tell you to change the way you do something because there is a more efficient way to do it. That is not their purpose. Their purpose is to record. If they instruct you to do something different, obey and grieve IMMEDIATELY.

I can't emphasize enough how important the word immediately is. Let me explain why. Let's say, for example, that your examiner instructs you to cross a lawn that you wouldn't normally cross. You will obey the instruction and the time it takes you to make the delivery will be recorded. The problem is, we won't know how long it would have taken you to make the delivery if you hadn't crossed the lawn. When we file the grievance, we won't know how much time we are grieving for. If you notify your steward immediately, a grievance can be filed immediately and we can attempt to correct the situation.

Most likely, during the week of inspection, your examiner may not like the way you are doing something and he or she will call your supervisor to tell them to come out to your route and instruct you to do it differently. As always, obey and grieve. Communicate with your steward or with the branch office so that we can address things as close to real time as possible.

If you are unsure about anything that you are doing right now, communicate your questions and concerns to us at the Union office. We will be able to advise you whether you are on solid contractual footing, or whether you need to clean up your methods.

Some people that we talk to about preparing themselves for the inspection respond to us that "It doesn't matter, they're going to do whatever they want anyway!" Perhaps they will. But, and this is a big but, if they go astray of the National Agreement we have a great deal of experience and have had a great deal of success addressing their transgressions in the grievance-arbitration procedure.

We have been successful, but we will need your help to continue to be successful. After the inspections are over, management must have consultations with all the carriers. First, at least 5 days before your consultation, management

must provide you with the 1838's from the inspection and at least 1 day prior to the consultation they must provide you with your 1840. The 1838's are just a computerized, totaled version of the yellow 1838C's that you fill out during the week. The 1840 shows all the data from the 1838 on one page. It is basically a one week snapshot of your route.

At least 1 day prior to your evaluation consultation management must also provide you with the route examiner(s)' comments for your route. This is usually not a pleasant experience. You will read what the examiner actually thought about your work practices, what he or she believes that you did wrong, and how much time you should be penalized for these things. You have the absolute right to these comments and you should read them carefully and prepare to talk about them during your consultation. You must also make note about what you disagree with so that if and when we file grievances, you can provide us with evidence that you objected to the deductions taken on your route.

The leadership of the branch will work closely with the shop stewards to protect your rights. Make no mistake, however, that this is an extremely interactive process. We will not be in your vehicle with you. If you are given an improper instruction, YOU will have to make a note of it on your break or lunch and then promptly make your steward aware of it. You will have to assert your rights throughout the process but perhaps most importantly during the consultation process after the inspections. If you are a passive observer, you likely will be trampled upon. Don't let that happen.

The branch will conduct training that hopefully you will attend. But the training, albeit thorough, can't possibly cover each and every situation that you may face. That is why it is paramount that you avail yourself of the various training materials available and familiarize yourself with the M41 and M39. As I stated earlier, they are available online, as is the other training material. Invest in your future by educating yourself to have a successful route inspection.

Stay informed!!

Dave Barbuzzi

TIME ALLOWANCES FOR CARRIER OFFICE WORK

Form 1838		Pieces Per Minute	
Line No.	Work Function	1-Trip	2-Trip
1	Routing letter-size mail.	18	18
2	Routing all other size mail. (Use Notice 26, Maximum Time Allowance for Routing Mail, to convert pieces to minutes.)	8	8
Minutes			
4	Strapping mail in bundles or placing in trays, preparing relays and placing mail into satchels; for each 70 pieces regardless of character (minimum allowance 3 minutes). Strapping mail in bundles for markup at computerized forwarding unit. Lines 1-2-3 combined mail volume (strapping out pieces and markup pieces) is used in determining time allowance at 70 pieces per minute.	1	
8	For each 10 pieces of all classes of mail separated for forwarding or return.	1	
9	Periodicals marked up (for each 2 pieces handled for forwarding or return).	1	
10	For each Form 3579, Undeliverable Periodical, Standard A & B or Controlled Circulation Matter.	2	
11	For each 4 pieces marked up (mail marked Deceased, Temporarily Away, Refused, Vacant (Occupant mail of obvious value) or No Mail Receptacle).	1	
12	For each change of address, including Form 3546, recorded on Forms 1564-B and 3982.	2	
13	Insured receipts turned in.	1	
14	Registered, Certified, COD, Express Mail, Customs and Postage-Due; Keys, Form 3868, signing for, returning funds or receipts, and for partial completion of Form 3849 (name or address for identification). Base minimum allowance is 6 minutes.	*	
15	Withdrawing mail where applicable (from distribution cases, trays, sacks, and/or hampers). Base minimum allowance is 5 minutes.	*	
16	Sequencing and collating by-pass mail. (Representative time in minutes will be allowed for work function.)		
17	Strapping out time (when mail must be placed in order of delivery) see 922.51d. (Representative time in minutes will be allowed for the work function.)		
18	Break (local option).		
19	Vehicle inspection see 922.51f. Base minimum allowance is 3 minutes.	*	
20	Personal needs, etc. (Time allowances are printed on the form for each trip, and must not be changed.)		
21	Office work not covered by form. (Work functions must be identified and approved as being necessary and of a continuing nature.) (Use "Comments" section.) Base minimum allowance is 9 minutes.	*	
22	Waiting for mail (office) and all other office activities <u>not</u> performed on a continuing basis which are excluded in computing net office time. (Use "Comments" section.)		
23	Counting Mail and filling out Form 1838-C worksheet.		

Note: For piece items, grant the next higher allowance in minutes for fractional units. Use actual times for Lines 14 through 19 and Lines 21 through 23 when those functions are performed.

* Computing Standard Office Time Under Columns (e), (f), and (g) on Form 1838:

If the actual time for each of Lines 14, 15, 19, and 21 is less than the base minimum and the carrier performs the function the base minimum must be entered for the Line Item in the appropriate column. If the actual time exceeds the base minimum, an adjustment to that time cannot be shown which is less than the base minimum.

Above, you can see the “Time Allowances For Carrier Office Work” and below you can see a small portion of the chart “Maximum Time Allowance For Routing Mail”. Both of these come directly from the M39. If you have any questions about their application, just ask...

Exhibit 222.214a(5)

Maximum Time Allowance For Routing Mail

Column (A): Letter-size (ordinary letters, cards, and circulars). Column (B): Mail of all other sizes and insured.

1 and 2 Trip Routes			1 and 2 Trip Routes			1 and 2 Trip Routes			Strapping All Mail	
(A) Pieces	Time (Min.)	(B) Pieces	(A) Pieces	Time (Min.)	(B) Pieces	(A) Pieces	Time (Min.)	(B) Pieces	Pieces	Time (Min.)*
18	1	8	864	48	384	1710	95	760	70	3*
36	2	16	882	49	392	1728	96	768	140	3*
54	3	24	900	50	400	1746	97	776	210	3
72	4	32	918	51	408	1764	98	784	280	4
90	5	40	936	52	416	1782	99	792	350	5
108	6	48	954	53	424	1800	100	800	420	6
126	7	56	972	54	432	1818	101	808	490	7