



April 24, 2008

VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS  
NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

SUBJECT: Tools for Injury Reduction ("Good Ideas")—U.S. Postal Service/National Association of Letter Carriers' National Joint Safety Task Force

Consistent with its ongoing commitment to improve safety, the National Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee evaluated several tools designed to reduce injuries associated with lifting, loading, and handling mail. Pilot testing and the Customer Service Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process indicated that three of the evaluated tools may help reduce injuries and Muscular-Skeletal Disorders (repetitive motion injuries related to lifting, reaching, and handling cumbersome or heavier objects).

A description of the approved tools is attached. Local managers who want to use these items should engage their National Association of Letter Carriers—National Business Agent; the Area and District Manager, Safety; and (where in use) the District Safety Committee.

Additional information including testimonials from carriers involved in testing can be found on the Safety and Environmental Resources web page at: <http://safetytoolkit.usps.gov/resources.aspx>.

The "good ideas" tools are:

- Utility/Mail Hooks—plastic rods with a hook to extend the reach of the carrier in loading/unloading mail into and from Long Life Vehicles and Flexible Fuel Vehicles
- Hamper Inserts—inserts used with 1046P hampers to raise the level of trays/tubs of mail loaded into the hamper, to reduce the lift height in loading and unloading the mail
- Mail Elevation Units—"milk crates" used to elevate the height of trays and tubs of mail distributed to carrier cases, reducing bending and the lift height (but care must be taken to avoid increased twisting while lifting). Sort bins attached to carrier cases are also alternatives for raising flats off the floor. (Flats Sequencing System sites should coordinate plans for future equipment based on anticipated flat volume to be handled at the case.)

We appreciate your consideration of these tools, and your continued support in safety improvement.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Tulino".

Doug A. Tulino  
Vice President  
Labor Relations  
U.S. Postal Service

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William H. Young".

William H. Young  
President  
National Association of  
Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

## **Good Ideas” Project: Equipment Description and Ordering Information**

**Note: Use of these tools requires local purchasing, following prescribed internal purchasing requirements. The vendor(s) noted in this attachment are not to be considered as a USPS sole source vendor for the purchase of this tool. Other vendors should be considered when purchasing this tool or a similar type solution. It is recommended that only limited quantities be purchased at one time (purchase in small increments based on employee interest, local needs, and local budgeting).**

**LLV/FFV Mail Hook** is a light weight plastic pole and “hook” approximately 3 feet long (or longer if desired). Letter carriers can use this tool to extend their reach to push or pull mail containers in the cargo area when loading or unloading their vehicle. The tool reduces the bending necessary and sometimes awkward positioning associated with loading/unloading mail containers in the cargo area, helping avoid back, neck, and shoulder injuries. The type of vehicle, employee stature, and delivery method should be taken into consideration prior to purchase.



### **Ordering Information:**

Beckson Manufacturing, Inc.  
165 Holland Ave.  
Bridgeport CT 06605-2136  
Ph: 203-366-3644, Fax: 203-384-6954  
<http://www.becksonmfg.com/>

**Velcro Strips** (for use with LLV/FFV Mail Hooks) are the only method approved by a Vehicle Maintenance Bulletin for securing a mail hook in a postal vehicle. The Velcro strip is affixed to the pole section of the mail hook, and another Velcro strip is affixed to a flat surface (e.g., a rear wall) inside the postal vehicle. The mail hook should always be secured inside the postal vehicle by the Velcro Strips when not in use..

### **Ordering Information:**

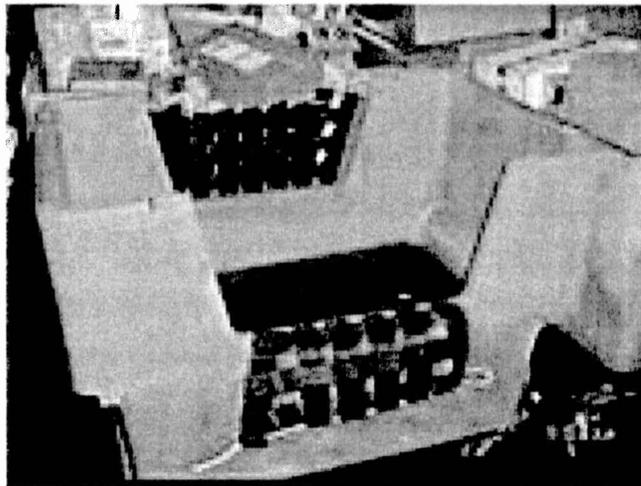
W.W. Grainger, Inc (on-catalog E-Buy order)  
Address: use “branch locator” on website -Ph: 1-888-361-8649  
Item # 6JT64 (see *Vehicle Maintenance Bulletin V-06-03, sect. III*)

<http://www.grainger.com/Grainger/wwg/start.shtml>

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**Hamper Insert** is a flat “platform” that fits on ledges inside the hamper creating an elevated platform. Mail containers placed on the platform are higher, reducing the lifting distance required to load and unload mail into the hamper. This helps to reduce back strains and other lifting injuries.



### **Ordering Information:**

Postal Products Unlimited

500 W Oklahoma Ave.

Milwaukee, WI 53207

Ph: 800-229-4500

Item # 33836

<http://www.postalproducts.com/>

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**Milk Crates (to elevate mail off the workroom floor)** - strong plastic containers inverted & held together to create an elevated horizontal surface. Mail containers put on the elevated surface during distribution of mail to letter carrier cases, and as carriers retrieve the containers or mail from a container, reduce the lifting distance required for employees. Floor space, appropriate placement, and securing the milk crates together safely must be considered when using this tool to avoid impeding access or travel space on the workroom floor. Also, be sure employees do not increase “lifting and twisting” actions when using this tool. Space constraints may not allow elevating all mail containers, however, each foot of mail elevated off the floor can reduce required lifting distances, and over time reduce the exposure to back strains and other lifting injuries. Supervisors and managers can also consider using sort bins attached to carrier cases to elevate mail distributed to carrier cases.



### **Ordering Information:**

Milk Crates: Melmat, Inc. (off-catalog E-Buy order)  
5333 Industrial Drive  
Huntington Beach CA 92649-1516  
Ph: 800-635-6289 / Fax: 714-379-4554  
Item # HLA-24

<http://www.thomasnet.com/profile/189632/melmat-inc.html>

Sort Bins: Postal Products Unlimited (see contact information above),  
item # N1020317 (Right) / item # N1020318 (Left)