



Supervisor responsibilities

In an earlier article, I discussed a portion of the National Settlement on the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS), specifically the language that states, “DOIS projections are not the sole determinant of a carrier’s leaving or return time, or daily workload.”

DOIS is basically a software system that manipulates mail volume numbers and the base time for a route and estimates a time to complete that route on that day, which is fed into the supervisor’s hand-held device. The rhetorical question that this reality raises is, what other input can a manager use to determine workload?

Article 19 of the National Agreement covers, among other things, the *M-39 Handbook, Administration of City Delivery Service*, which requires delivery unit supervisors to conduct themselves a certain way. Because it is covered by the contract, their failure to comply with the *M-39* is grievable, as those failures deal with wages, hours or conditions of employment. Let’s look at certain provisions of the *M-39*:

111.2 Daily Operations: The delivery service manager must on a daily basis:

d. Evaluate daily service rendered by the employees. Observe carriers to assure their performance of duties as outlined in *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*.

115.2 Using People Effectively: Managers can accomplish their mission only through the effective use of people. How successful a manager is in working with people will, to a great measure, determine whether or not the goals of the Postal Service are attained. Getting the job done through people is not an easy task, and certain basic things are required, such as:

- a. Let the employee know what is expected of him or her.
- b. Know fully if the employee is not attaining expectations; don’t guess—make certain with documented evidence.
- c. Let the employee explain his or her problem—listen! If given a chance, the employee will tell you the problem. Draw it out from the employee if needed, but get the whole story.

115.3 Obligation to Employees: When problems arise, managers must recognize that they have an obligation to their employees and to the Postal Service to look to themselves, as well as to the employee, to:

- a. Find out who, what, when, where and why.
- b. Make absolutely sure you have all the facts.
- c. The manager has the responsibility to resolve as many problems as possible before they become grievances.
- d. If the employee’s stand has merit, admit it and correct the situation. You are the manager; you must make decisions; don’t pass this responsibility on to someone else.

125.22 Daily Supervision: Delivery unit managers must supervise loading area activities daily to prevent operational delays.

134.21: The manager must maintain an objective attitude in conducting street supervision and discharge this duty in an open and above board manner.

134.22: The manager is not to spy or use other covert techniques. Any employee infractions are to be handled in accordance with the section in the current National Agreement that deal with these problems.

134.3 Criteria for Need: Certain criteria may call attention for individual street supervision. When overtime or auxiliary assistance is used frequently on a route (foot, motorized, parcel post, collection, relay), when a manager receives substantial evidence of loitering or other actions or lack of action by one or more employees, or when it is considered to be in the interest of the service, the manager may accompany the carrier on the street to determine the cause, or meet the carrier on the route and continue until such a time as the manager is satisfied. No advance notice to the carrier is required.

134.4 Findings

134.41: The manager may find:

- a. Routes are not in proper adjustment, and the frequent use or requests for auxiliary assistance or overtime is warranted.

The point is that a supervisor would need to have complied with all of those provisions in order to either come up with evidence that disputes the carrier’s estimate of workload or find that the carrier is indeed giving a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay. More important, in today’s Postal Service, if a supervisor doesn’t comply with these provisions, he or she is in no position to dispute a carrier’s estimate of that day’s workload. ☒