

Patience wearing thin with DOIS dragging out



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Inside the NALC, I am not known for being patient. But I have shown a great deal of patience in the past year. That's how long I have been trying to engage postal management in a serious dialogue on DOIS. Although I am not ready to give up, I must say my patience is wearing paper-thin.

How many times has your manager approached your case to tell you that, according to DOIS, you need auxiliary assistance or overtime? Never? I thought so. Now, how often does a supervisor come over to your case to tell you that "DOIS says" you have less than a full day's work and you should be able to finish and pivot to another route within eight hours? That happens all the time.

Our concerns go far beyond the use of DOIS to manage letter carriers on a daily basis. A year ago we presented a paper to the Postal Service listing a series of DOIS-related contract violations. We have had a couple of meetings where managers acknowledge many of our arguments have merit. But, as you will see, we have a long way to go.

For example, take the recent article in the League of Postmasters' monthly magazine that reported on a meeting with delivery service managers at USPS Headquarters. At that session, a senior operations manager asserted that if city letter carriers had simply performed to standard, the Postal Service would have saved \$220 million last year.

That is an absolute falsehood. I will not sit idly by while top postal managers besmirch the work ethic of the members I'm privileged to represent. Management knows full well that they ordered the programmers of DOIS to omit certain elements that are necessary when calculating standard office time. Lines 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 of Form 1838-C—they all magically disappeared. Leaving them out intentionally distorts the results. The designers of the DOIS system knew what

they were doing and what purpose it would serve.

Another major issue is management's use of "percent-to-standard" to adjust downward allowable office time. USPS has no right under the contract and there is no provision in the existing handbooks and manuals that allows the use of DOIS percent-to-standard for this purpose. But again, the designers realized this formula could further reduce the standard time reported in DOIS.

We have recent reports of a new use of DOIS. Requests for special inspections are being routinely denied on the grounds that "DOIS shows" that the carriers who are requesting the inspections had failed to meet standards. Is that appropriate and in compliance with our handbooks and manuals? Obviously not! I have no doubt that we will prevail in the grievances we have filed.

So, with all the grief DOIS is causing our members, why do I persist in my efforts to force the USPS to get this system right? Because I am convinced that USPS needs an accurate system to help manage delivery operations. I am equally convinced that we could manage ourselves, if such a system were in place.

Using DOIS to help set work-hour budgets would make sense and be fairer than other methods used in the past—but only if the system is fair and contains all the proper elements. City letter carriers bring real value to the Postal Service. Any system that is fair will recognize this fact. That is why I remain determined to help fix this broken system.

But my patience is not limitless and I will not be stonewalled and delayed any longer. If the powers-that-be want a righteous system, we will help them build it. But if they believe the current system serves their needs, it is on to national arbitration we go.

In the end it won't matter which course management decides to follow. We will prevail either way. ☒