

Route inspections, Part 4

Recent *Contract Talk* articles have discussed the route count, inspection and evaluation process found in Chapter 2 of *Handbook M-39*, Management of Delivery Services. In Part 4 of this series on route inspections, we will discuss the route adjustment process.

Once the route evaluation is complete and management determines adjustments are necessary, they must prepare the reverse side of PS Form 1840, Carrier Delivery Route—Summary of Count and Inspection. Once completed, the form will display the following information:

- Office and street times chosen for the adjustment
- Addresses added or removed from the route as well as the office and street time associated with these deliveries
- Adjusted office and street times
- Whether the route has an office break
- Evaluated street time and the source
- Street time used for the adjustment and the reason for the selection of this time
- Method used to transfer office time

Office time: The amount of office time needed for the deliveries is determined by applying Section 243.316 of *Handbook M-39*, which states in part:

243.316 Office Time Column

b. The character of the route more or less governs the method of computing the office time for the territory being transferred between routes. Following are some methods which may be used:

(1) If the deliveries on the route are similar in character, the following simple formula for determining the amount of office time for the deliveries transferred may be used: Divide the average office time of the inspection period appearing on Form 1840 for the route from which territory is being transferred by the total number of possible deliveries. For example: a route has 400 possible deliveries and the average office time for inspection period was 120 minutes: 120 divided by 400 equals .3 minutes per delivery. The total number of deliveries being considered for transfer should be multiplied by minutes or fraction of minutes per delivery.

(2) Another method to determine the office time percentage factor is to divide the average office time for the count week by the average total time. For example: 165 minutes office time divided by 486 minutes total time equals 34 percent. Therefore, the allowance of 34 percent of the total time value of any territory to be added or taken away from a route must be allowed for office time to prepare the mail for delivery.

(3) Another method when utilizing the hand-held computer is to count the mail by ZIP+4 sector/segment so the number of mailpieces delivered in a segment can be calculated to determine the office time allowance for each segment to be transferred between routes. To calculate the office time allowance when transferring particular route segments, any other following three methods may be used.

(a) Apply the current casing standards of 18 (letter size), 8 (other size), and 70 (strap out) to the actual segment(s) mail count from the day of inspection. For example: A segment receives 220 pieces on day of inspection; 180 letters divided by 18 = 10 minutes; 40 other size pieces divided by 8 = 5 minutes; 220 divided by 70 = 4 minutes.

The office time allowance for that segment would be 19 minutes.

(b) Follow (a) above but factor in the percentage of standard office time used during the week of inspection from the carrier who serviced that segment(s) in the most recent inspection. For example: The carrier who serviced the segment utilized .80 of standard office time allowed during week of inspection (19 x .80 = 16 minutes). The office time allowance for that segment would be 16 minutes.

(c) Follow (a) above but factor in the percentage of standard office time used during the week of inspection from the carrier whose route is gaining the segment(s) being transferred. For example: The carrier whose route will pick up the segment utilized .85 of standard office time allowed during the week of inspection (19 x .85 = 17 minutes). The office time allowance for that segment would be 17 minutes.

Note: The effort here is to arrive at the most accurate time allowance for the transferred segment(s), negating the need for corrective adjustments.

Street time: As discussed in previous articles, the goal of any route count and inspection is to adjust routes to as near eight hours as possible. If a route evaluation shows a total daily time in excess of eight hours on most days of the week, management must provide permanent relief by transferring workload to another route.

Permanent relief may be provided in several ways. Section 243.21.b of *Handbook M-39* identifies the methods for providing permanent relief:

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243.21 Routes of More than 8 Hours

b. Permanent relief may be provided by reducing carrier office or street time. Consider items such as additional segmentations, use of routers, hand-offs, relocating vehicle parking, withdrawal of mail by clerks or mailhandlers, providing a cart system for accountable items, etc. When routes require a current adjustment and Delivery Point Sequencing will commence within 6 months, management will adjust using non-territorial, non-scheme change adjustments. Where actual transfer of territory is necessary, see 243.23. If a hand-off is the method selected for providing relief on the street, the time value associated with the delivery of the hand-off must be deducted from the route getting relief and transferred to the gaining route.

On routes evaluated at less than eight hours, permanent additions are made to make the assignment as near eight hours as possible in accordance with Section 243.22 of *Handbook M-39*:

243.22 Route Less than 8 Hours

On routes where the evaluated time is less than 8 hours, make permanent additions by transferring territory through a realignment of the territory in the delivery unit. This realignment could reduce or eliminate an existing auxiliary route, reduce a regular route to auxiliary status, or eliminate it entirely.

If routes are adjusted by transferring territory, the reverse of PS Form 1840 will indicate the proposed changes. Section 243.31 of *Handbook M-39* explains how to record territory transfer on the reverse of PS Form 1840:

243.31 Completing Reverse of Form 1840

Record office and street adjustments, on the reverse of Form 1840 or on a separate sheet of paper, as follows:

243.311 Transferring Territory from One Route to Another. A tentative selection of the block or blocks that can be most efficiently transferred should be made, using a map of the territory. The time used to deliver the mail on each block will be found on the reverse of Form 3999 covering the current inspection of the routes.

243.312 Relief and Addition Columns. Enter an (R) if deliveries are relief and an (A) if deliveries are addition.

243.313 Street, Blockface Numbers, and Sector/Segment Columns. Enter the street name, beginning and ending blockface numbers, and the ZIP+4 sector/segment number for the blockface. Refer to the ZIP+4 printout to obtain the correct sector/segment number to ensure that no segment is split (see 243.231c).

243.314 Transferred To or From Route Number Column. Enter the route number to or from which the block and street is to be transferred.

When transferring delivery territory, management determines the amount of time needed for each sector segment, or range of addresses. This data comes from the PS Form 3999, Inspection of Letter Carrier Route, completed during the week of inspection.

When a route is inspected on more than one day, the parties agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Multiple Days of Inspection (M-01543 found in NALC's Materials Reference System) to the following:

When local management elects to inspect on two or three days, the PS Form 3999 closest to the selected street time on the PS Form 1840 will be used to transfer territory.

As explained in last month's Contract Talk, the front side of PS Form 1840 shows the average street time used by the regular carrier during the week of inspection and the 8-week average from the PS Form 1840-B, Carrier Time Card Analysis. The reverse of the form shows the street time management selected when evaluating the route. Union representatives should ensure management selected the appropriate PS Form 3999 if there were multiple days of inspection.

Upon completing the reverse of the PS Form 1840, management should conduct an adjustment consultation with the regular carrier servicing each route. Letter carriers should take advantage of this consultation to provide feedback on the proposed adjustment. Section 242.3 of *Handbook M-39* requires management to document any time disallowances and provide the PS Form 1840 to carriers at least one day in advance of this consultation:

242.347 All time disallowances and related comments will be noted on Form 1840 or attachments thereto, and furnished the letter carrier at least 1 day prior to consultation.

If management fails to provide PS Form 1840 or conduct a consultation as required, letter carriers should contact a union representative.

Available resources: Union representatives should review Chapter 2 of the *M-39* and Chapter 9 of the *M-41* to become familiar with the route inspection and adjustment process. These handbooks and other resources related to route inspections and adjustments are available on the NALC website at nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery/route-adjustments. NALC members can obtain a copy of the *NALC Route Inspection Pocket Handbook* through their NBA office or the NALC Supply Department. Past Contract Talk articles pertaining to these issues are available at nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/nalc-publications.