

# Updates to the MDD and COTS vehicle pilot



**Christopher Jackson**

**T**his month, I want to discuss recent enhancements to the Mobile Delivery Device-Technical Refresh (MDD-TR) and provide an update on the Rivian Delivery 500 pilot test.

**MDD-TR Test - PS Form 3999:** In April, USPS notified me of its intent to conduct a test using the MDD-TR to collect a carrier's activity and transmit the data to Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) to create a PS Form 3999, Inspection of Letter Carrier Route. USPS states that this will replace the use of the Data Collection Device (DCD) by a route examiner. During the test, an examiner will walk with carriers and

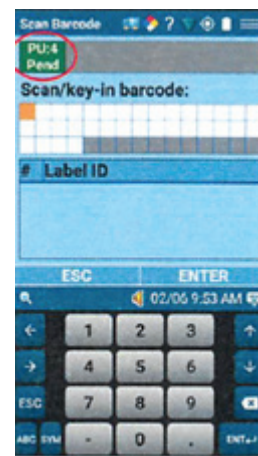
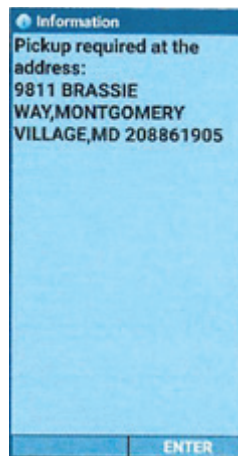
use the MDD-TR, loaded with new software, documenting the carrier's activity as they have with the DCD in the past. The two-day test was scheduled to begin April 1 and involved select carriers at four offices across the country.

**MDD software update 7.95:** Also in April, the Postal Service detailed the latest update to the MDD-TR, release 7.95. The software update includes several new features, including enhancements related to Edit Book and Change of Address (COA) update functions, package pickups and hazard alerts.

With software version 7.95, USPS states that all Edit Book features, including COA update, will be restricted from use on the MDD-TR unless a carrier is in the office. The features will be disabled when one of the following conditions is met: a carrier scans the Depart2Route barcode, a carrier's scanner exits the geofence of their delivery unit, or the 9 a.m. hour arrives. The Postal Service explains that disabling the function after 9 a.m. is done to ensure that the features are not available if no GPS and no Depart2Route scan is detected.

The Edit Book features will be enabled when one of the following conditions is met: a carrier scans the Return2DU barcode, the carrier's scanner enters the geofence of the delivery unit, a scanner is docked inside of an office cradle after 9 a.m., or the 6 p.m. hour arrives. The Postal Service explains that enabling the function after 6 p.m. is done to ensure that the features are available when no GPS and no Return2DU scan is detected.

Another feature included in the update is the Carrier Pickup Enhancement Alert. To avoid missed package



pickups, alerts and reminders have been implemented on the MDD-TR to notify carriers of pickups while on the route. Upon breaking the geofence of an address with a pending pickup request, the scanner will display an interactive popup message, "Pickup required at the address."

When package pickups have been scheduled, the scanner will display a green "PU" bar containing the total number of pickup requests for the route a carrier is currently logged onto. Selecting the "PU" bar will display details of a pickup request, including the barcode label and the address. As pickups are completed, the "PU" total will decrease.

Version 7.95 further provides the Map Display of Hazard Alert & Delivery Instruction feature. Currently, the MDD-TR triggers a dog hazard alert to identify the presence of an animal in a specific area. With the update, alerts are being expanded to be prompted when any device breaks the geofence of an identified hazard, regardless of the route the device is currently logged onto. In addition, a map display is provided to show the proximity of the carrier to the alert. USPS states that the map presents an overview of all hazard alerts or delivery instructions where identified hazards exist on the route.



I have concerns about the time frames applied to the Edit Book

*(continued on page 32)*

## Assault victims (continued)

*(continued from previous page)*

pensation Assistant Coby Jones on the subject of medical evidence required to support claims before OWCP. His column from November 2023 is directly on point, and I therefore quote from that column as follows:

Letter carriers who sustain emotional conditions as a result of assaults, in particular, have had a difficult time finding physicians to diagnose and treat these conditions. It often has taken months or even the greater part of a year before they can receive treatment for conditions that demand immediate attention. This is because OWCP's procedures have required that any causal explanation for acceptance of an emotional injury case must come from a psychiatrist or licensed clinical psychologist with a PhD. FECA Transmittal No. 23-04 changed this by revising FECA Procedure Manual Part 2, Chapter 805, regarding the requirements for a medical specialist needed to establish an emotional condition.

With the revision, only extended occupational disease claims for emotional conditions require a medical report from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist in order to support the explanation of causal relationship required for the claim to be accepted. The revision allows physicians with other specialties or even family physicians to submit medical reports to establish initial claims and provide

treatment. This will be a huge boon for letter carriers who have been emotionally traumatized by assault and are ill-equipped to deal with jumping through bureaucratic hoops. Not only will their claims be accepted more quickly, but they also will receive more promptly the benefits they are entitled to under the FECA such as counseling and wage-loss compensation if they are incapacitated from working due to their condition.

According to the transmittal, the revision is intended to apply to "typically traumatic injuries where the event or events are very specific, unambiguous and are generally clearer to physicians outside the psychiatric specialty as incidents that may naturally result in an extreme emotional reaction." The revision does not apply to emotional conditions in CA-2 occupational disease claims—cases that often involve stress or abuse in the workplace (often with management). These cases will still require a causal explanation from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist for the claim to be accepted.

**Use the information in Coby's column to guide you in your discussions with your physician and your OWCP representative, if necessary.**

And, if you haven't done so already, check to see if your congressional representative has signed on to the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629).

## Director of City Delivery

## Updates to the MDD and COTS vehicle pilot (continued)

*(continued from page 30)*

and COA functions introduced in this update. I also have questions regarding the pilot test conducted on the scanner to create PS Form 3999s. I have requested a meeting to discuss NALC concerns.

### Rivian Delivery 500 pilot update

In my May article, I informed the membership of the Postal Service's intent to pilot test the use of the Rivian Delivery 500 vehicle on carrier routes at the Vienna Post Office in Vienna, VA. Test dates for the pilot have been changed since last month's column; USPS states that test dates for the pilot are now April 4 through May 16.

**My staff visited the Vienna Post Office in May to receive additional feedback from the letter carriers involved in the pilot since our previous visit. In speaking with the carriers, my staff found that the biggest adjustments involved getting used to the vehicle's regenerative braking system when driving, and dealing with the vehicle's size in areas where streets might not accommodate the height and length of the vehicle. However, one of their previous concerns has been put at ease, as the carriers have found that mail placed on the cargo shelves has been secure and carriers have not encountered any issue with mail moving or falling over while the vehicle is in motion.**