

City Delivery updates



Christopher Jackson

In this month's article, I am going to address a significant proposed change to *Handbook M-41*, City Carrier Duties and Responsibilities by the Postal Service. I also will discuss a recent update to the Mobile Delivery Device Technical-Refresh (MDD-TR).

Proposed revision to *Handbook M-41*: In October, NALC received notification that the Postal Service had proposed revisions to Section 812.31 of *Handbook M-41*. In its notification, USPS states that the revisions are being made to reflect evolving safety policies as a result of the purchase of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NGDVs).

The Postal Service explains that the NGDV has been engineered and designed with specific safety features that require all doors to be in the closed position when in operation, which is a violation of our handbooks and manuals.

The revisions proposed by the Postal Service to Section 812.31 are as follows:

When traveling to and from the route, when moving between park and relay points, and when entering or crossing intersecting roadways, all external vehicle doors must be closed. When operating a vehicle with sliding driver's cab doors on delivery routes and traveling in intervals of 500 feet (1/10 mile) or less at speeds not exceeding 15 MPH between delivery stops, the right-hand sliding cab door may not be left open under normal operation.

While in the notice the Postal Service refers to the purchase of the NGDV as its reason for proposing this revision, there is no mention at all of the NGDV in the handbook revision. As proposed, the revision would apply to all postal vehicles. This change would greatly diverge from the way letter carriers have been operating postal vehicles with sliding driver's side cabin doors, such as the Long Life Vehicle (LLV), for decades.

For many years, the current provisions of the *M-41* have permitted letter carriers to drive a postal vehicle safely between delivery stops with the sliding driver's side cabin door open if the distance did not exceed 500 feet or the vehicle's speed did not exceed 15 mph and observed the rules of the road. The longstanding practice of driving with the door open while secured in the driver's seat has been heavily relied on by carriers across the country to efficiently complete route assignments.

I believe that the revisions proposed by the Postal Service are unnecessary and unjustified. It is my view that the NGDV should have been designed to accommodate the letter carriers it was created to assist. Instead, the Postal Service intends to infringe on a right that letter carriers have enjoyed for decades, with no evidence to support its safety claim. I have reached out to the Postal Service to secure a meeting on this proposed change, which clearly affects the working conditions of letter carriers, in accordance with Article 19 of our National Agreement.

MDD software update 8.10: In November, the Postal Service detailed the latest update to the MDD-TR, release 8.10. Although the latest release did not contain many new features, there is one that was added in response to requests made by our members. The new feature, called the "On Street Mode Indicator," adds an icon in the bottom left corner of the device, which is intended to provide a visual reminder to carriers that they have completed a "Move to Street" clock ring in the timekeeping application. The MDD-TR will display the "On Street" icon after a carrier moves to a street operation and will remain visible until the carrier moves to an "In Office" operation.

In discussions that my staff and I have had with members this past year, we were informed that carriers often forget to make a move to the street and that many of them would like to have a way of being reminded on the scanner. During our monthly MDD-TR meeting, my staff and I discussed this with postal engineers; they were open to the idea, especially since there are functions on the MDD-TR that are available for use only when a carrier is in the office and not on the street, such as the "Edit Book" and "Change of Address" applications. The request made sense and was implemented. This indicator is just one example of how the carrier's voice can be heard.

I want to thank everyone for communicating your ideas and concerns to me and my staff. Please continue to do so. I will continue to update the membership on any impact these matters may have on city carriers. Be sure to read my article each month and visit nalc.org for updates.

