

## SEASONAL ROUTES

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The paragraph above is taken from the National Agreement between the USPS and the NRLCA, Article 9.2.C.13, and is the basic definition of what constitutes a Seasonal Route. The seasonal classification will, if properly administered, result in substantial savings for the USPS via eliminating the repetitive submitting of PS Form 4003 due to the fluctuation of the route caused by the continual addition and subtraction of seasonal boxes. Some offices have reported that some routes require the submitting of this form several times a year due to seasonal boxes. A seasonal route requires only two per year, not including those submitted due to growth or permanent loss. The seasonal classification also greatly reduces the paperwork required by the carrier and thus reduces the office time. In the long run, the seasonal route classification does not adversely affect the salary or pay of the carrier except for minor variations. In the short run it does block the salary in a high and low season, that is averaged for no loss in pay, eliminating the phase in and phase out of the season.

The reduction of work for both management and the carrier reduces the chances of mistakes and therefore is helpful through increased office morale, reduced stress, and savings on the budget, while correcting these costly mistakes. Mistakes of this nature are among the leading causes of low morale and/or grievances in the rural craft.

It should be noted that just the presence of seasonal boxes on a rural route does not justify the classification of "seasonal". To the contrary, classifying some routes as seasonal could increase the costs to the Postal Service. To determine the viability of this classification some points to be considered are:

- 1) length of seasonal period,
- 2) miles affected, if any, and
- 3) the number of seasonal boxes on the route.

Each route in a particular office should be analyzed individually to determine if it should be seasonal without regard to the situation of any other route in that office.

Under normal circumstances savings are realized when the number of seasonal boxes on a route would cause a two (2) or more hour adjustment between the "in season" and "out of season" periods. The "in season" period is when the seasonal boxes ARE being served on the route. When the route adjustment would be less than two (2) hours, it would normally not justify the seasonal classification.

The following is a narrative of how a seasonal route operates relative to a non-seasonal route and outlines the responsibilities of both the carrier and management in maintaining, operating and managing the seasonal route. Only those areas that differ from the non-seasonal route are addressed.

The responsibilities of the carrier include reviewing PS 3982's for change of addresses that are over ninety (90) days old. This should normally be done on a weekly basis. For any address (box) that has not received service for the last 90 days further action is necessary.

#### FIRST DETERMINE IF THE CHANCE IS TEMPORARILY AWAY

If it is a "Temporarily Away" change AND this change includes ALL service to this box then determine if this address is on the "Seasonal Roster": if so, no further action is necessary, if not then this address should be added. (Many address changes do not require further action (i.e. the adding or subtracting from the total box count for the route) due to the box having other people utilizing the same box for receipt or posting of mail, or due to a new resident moving into the residence).

All carriers are required to add all "NEW" boxes on the reverse of their PS Form 4240 when they become active and remove all addresses via the reverse of the 4240 when they have been vacant/dead for **more** than 90 days. IMPORTANT A box with a "temporarily away" change of address on file does not become vacant/dead regardless of the age of the change of address. This type box is only inactive for this period, IS still a good address for that route, and is NOT removed via the reverse of the 4240.

EXCEPTION: A temporarily away change that is pending a permanent change, when all residents have permanently moved from the address, it should be removed 90 days after the original change is in effect.

Carriers on seasonal routes should note on PS Form 3982 the resume delivery date (for all temporarily away changes) when delivery is resumed (if the date was not given by the customer on the 3575 and previously noted by the carrier). All change of addresses (PS Form 3575), including "Temporarily away" must be entered on PS Form 3982 when turned in by the customer (Handbook PO 603, 241.32).

The only other responsibility of the carrier with respect to seasonal routes is to review the "Seasonal Roster" twice a year:

- (1) Just prior to the "in season" period, and
- (2) Just prior to the "out of season" period. The carrier should "remove" all addresses that have not had a temporary change of address, in excess of 90 consecutive days, in the last year.

### DETERMINING LENGTH AND TIME OF "OUT OF SEASON" PERIOD

Management should work with the carrier in determining the length of, and the time of, the "out of season" period. Annually, or upon request of the carrier, a review of the "Seasonal Roster" and the previous years change of addresses (PS Forms 3575) should be made to determine the viability of the length and time of the "out of season" period.

The beginning and ending pay period of the "out of season" period should be mutually agreed on by management and the carrier and should closely correspond to the time the greater majority of the seasonal boxes are inactive.

The length of the "out of season" period should equal the average length of time service was temporarily suspended to the boxes which had at least fifty percent (50%) of suspended service time within the "out of season" period. The length must be whole pay periods only; any fraction of a pay period should be dropped.

Due to conflicts with annual or special, mail counts and the guarantee period, the change from "in season" to "out of season" or vice versa CANNOT occur from the end of August through the first full pay period in November. PDC will not be able to process a workable change during the above period. Therefore, if the beginning and/or ending time falls within the time period referenced above (the end of August through the first full pay period in the new guarantee year) then the actual change over time to be used will be the beginning of the second (2) full pay period in the new guarantee year.

Thus the mutually agreed period should be adjusted to allow for this with the understanding by both parties that the overworking or under-working of the schedule would be exaggerated at the beginning and ending of the change-over and should average out with respect to the 2080 guarantee period.

The only boxes to be dropped (deducted via PS Form 4003) during the "out of season" period will be those boxes having service suspended in excess of 90 days AND at least 50% of the suspended time is within the "out of season" period. (Exception: when the "out of season" period has been adjusted per the preceding two paragraphs, the 50% suspended service time applies to the unadjusted period only.)

If the identified seasonal boxes to be dropped plus any seasonal miles to be dropped equal 2 or more hours, then management should submit a PS Form 4003 at the beginning of the "out of season" period "SUBTRACTING" all seasonal miles and boxes (as identified per the preceding paragraph). The upper right corner of the PS Form 4003 should be checked "Seasonal Change".

At the end of the "out of season" period another PS Form 4003 will be submitted "ADDING" all seasonal miles and boxes (as identified above). Again, the upper right corner of the PS Form 4003 should be checked "Seasonal Change".

PS Forms 4003 for Seasonal Changes should be submitted to the District at least 10 days prior to the effective date of the change.

Due to the nature of seasonal routes, the data used in determining the number of seasonal boxes is the actual number of seasonal boxes that existed the previous year. In the event the actual number in the current year is lower than the previous year (determined by actual count at the end of the "out of season" period), a retroactive change (via PS 4003) will be submitted if such number will affect the carriers salary. This PS 4003 will also be marked "Seasonal Change".

The submitting of PS Forms 4003 for seasonal changes does not negate the necessity of continued submitting of this form for other purposes, including other times of the year when normal two (2) hour adjustments are indicated by changes due to growth or loss of miles and/or boxes.

#### SEASONAL ROUTES AND MAIL COUNTS

- (1) If a mail count occurs during the "out of season" period the number of boxes listed on the "Seasonal Roster" should be subtracted, from the total boxes on the route, when entered on PS Form 4241 and/or 4241X. DO NOT COUNT "SEASONAL BOXES" ON THIS COUNT EVEN IF THEY ARE BEING SERVED.
- (2) If a mail count occurs during the "in season" period the boxes listed on the "Seasonal Roster" will be included on the PS Form 4241 and/or 4241X. SEASONAL BOXES ARE COUNTED ON THIS COUNT. PDC will then make proper adjustments for the seasonal boxes when the "seasonal" PS Form 4003 is submitted in accordance with the above procedures.'

#### ADJUSTMENT OF SEASONAL ROUTES

Adjustment of rural routes will be in accordance with the M-38.823 (Management of Rural Delivery Services) revised, which states that NORMALLY rural routes will not be adjusted below 48 hours. All current "Memorandums of Understanding relating to adjustments and/or Automation and its impact on Rural Routes are to be strictly applied to all routes regardless of seasonal or non-seasonal status. This applies to the basic "out of season" period.

When the "in season" evaluation becomes overburdened and the "out of season" evaluation does not justify a permanent adjustment then management (at its option) may:

- 1) give auxiliary assistance per EL-902, Article 9.2.C.9.b.; or
- 2) Create one or more "seasonal" AUXILIARY routes, to handle the excess hours; whichever is operationally or BUDGETARILY more advantageous to the USPS.

## SPECIAL COUNTS

Special counts will be conducted in accordance with the National Agreement; NOTE: when the "in season" PS FORM 4003, for a NON-L route, is submitted and it increases the route to twelve (12) or more boxes per miles, this will not trigger a special count per EL-902, Article 9.2.C.12.a.(6).

## TRANSITION TO SEASONAL ROUTE

The following are guidelines for use in making a transition to the classification of "seasonal route" for a route that has not previously used this classification.

Care and understanding should be exercised by both management and carrier to ensure cooperation and trust during this period of working together and reaching a mutual agreement on the length of the season (or "out of season" period) and the time this season will occur on that particular route.

All routes stand on their own merit in determining if it should be classified "seasonal". The length and the time of the season for each route in an office will be mutually agreed by management and the affected carrier without regard to other routes in the office.

When it has been determined that a route should be "seasonal" then a "Seasonal Roster" should be created listing all seasonal boxes on that route. A seasonal box is any box that has a "Temporarily Away" change of address (PS Form 3575) in excess of ninety (90) days on any one form within the previous year (do not accumulate separate change orders for the same box). See attached sample "Seasonal Roster". Copies should be made locally.

The initial "Seasonal Roster" for each route should be established by the carrier AND the carrier should receive auxiliary assistance on the route while creating this first roster. Maintaining the roster, after it has been established, is the responsibility of the carrier and the time for maintaining the roster is covered with the time for "change of addresses" during the count. All Change of Addresses during the count (including temporarily away) will be counted regardless of whether the route is seasonal or not seasonal and regardless of whether the route is "in season" or "out of season".

## CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING SEASONAL ROUTES

### **Article 9.2.A.1.s**

s. Compensation provided pursuant to lock pouch allowance, temporary deviations, or seasonal route adjustments will not at any time be considered part of a rural carrier's salary guarantee.

***Comments: This states that additional compensation received for deviations, seasonal routes or lock pouch allowances will not be part of the rural carrier's salary guarantee.***

**Article 9.2.C.13**

**13. Seasonal Route**

A seasonal route is a route where certain families are provided delivery for only a specified period of less than one (1) year. Normally, these routes are located in resort or vacation areas. The seasonal period is defined as that period in which the carrier is required to attempt delivery and the seasonal period ends when delivery is no longer required of the carrier.

The following steps will be taken when serving seasonal boxes:

- a. At the beginning of the seasonal period, the evaluation shall be adjusted by application of a formula based upon (1) the box factor multiplied by the boxes added to or subtracted from the route and (2) the change in miles multiplied by the appropriate factor.
- b. At the conclusion of the seasonal period, the seasonal boxes will be subtracted from the evaluation.
- c. If the seasonal period overlaps the national count or a special count, at the conclusion of the seasonal period, seasonal boxes will be subtracted from the evaluation as in paragraph a. and b. above.

***Comments: Due to the many varied conditions in which seasonal routes operate: length of seasonal period, length of time involved in people moving "in and out", number of people involved, size of route, etc.; each Area determines what is "best" for any given location as seasonal boxes and miles increase or decrease. This does not trigger a mail count in order to determine "L" route status. (Reference Step 4 grievance decision 8/1/89 H4R-35-C-64853)***

