

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR THE RELIEF DAY AND PTF RURAL CARRIER PROVISIONS IN THE EXTENSION TO THE 1995-1999 USPS-NRLCA NATIONAL AGREEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The one year Extension to the 1995-1999 USPS-NRLCA National Agreement contains extensive changes to the relief day and leave replacement provisions. These guidelines provide a summary of the changes and are intended to assist management with implementation of these provisions as they relate to the relief day issue.

RELIEF DAY WORK LIST

A new provision allows regular rural carriers who desire to work their relief days to place their names on a relief day work list in the delivery unit. In order to implement this new provision immediately, there will be a two-week initial implementation period for regular rural carriers to sign the relief day work list. This period will begin May 6, 2000 and end May 19, 2000.

At the beginning of this period, management in each delivery unit with rural delivery will establish a list for regular rural carriers to sign indicating their desire to work any relief day needed until the end of the guarantee period. This list will be effective May 20, 2000. If it is necessary to work a regular rural carrier on a relief day, management will select the senior rural carrier on the list with the applicable relief day. Each occasion thereafter, management will rotate the assignment to work the relief day among the rural carriers on the list with the needed relief day.

The regular rural carrier selected to work the relief day will serve on his or her assigned regular route. The leave replacement that would have otherwise been working that route will be utilized on the rural route in the delivery unit without coverage for that day. If the leave replacement has never served that route, but is qualified on other routes in the delivery unit, management may change assignments with another leave replacement who has experience on the route needing coverage. Substitutes, RCAs and RCRs serving primary assignments and those assigned to auxiliary routes may not have their assignments changed. Management may also assign a TRC to serve the route needing coverage and place the RCA on a route on which he or she is qualified.

If routes in the delivery unit still do not have coverage after exhausting the relief day work list, management will select regular rural carriers not on the list

that have indicated they want to work their relief day on that day, before mandating regular rural carriers, not on the list, by juniority.

Management may bypass a regular carrier (whether they are on the relief day work list or not) if it would cause the carrier to exceed the hours of the annual guarantee or fifty-six (56) actual hours within one (1) week.

Only regular rural carriers whose names are on the relief day work list will be provided one of the three compensation options described below when working the relief day.

It must be emphasized that management must utilize available leave replacements in the delivery unit before assigning a regular rural carrier to work the relief day. Qualified leave replacements must be utilized prior to assigning other leave replacements in the office to work the relief day.

COMPENSATION FOR WORKING RELIEF DAY

All regular rural carriers, not on the relief day work list, who work the relief day will receive compensation at 50% of the carrier's daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as scheduled by the Employer.

Regular rural carriers on the relief day work list who work the relief day will select one of the following options:

1. An X day to be immediately scheduled by mutual agreement between the carrier and the Employer. The scheduled X day must be within the next twelve (12) weeks.
2. Compensation at 50% of the carrier's daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as scheduled by the Employer.
3. Compensation at 150% of the carrier's daily rate of pay. The carrier will not receive an X day.

The regular rural carrier must make his or her election of the above options, no later than the day of the worked relief day.

Regular rural carriers working relief days on or after May 20, 2000 who do not receive the corresponding earned X day within the twelve (12) week period, will receive 100% of their daily rate of pay in lieu of the X day that was earned on or after May 20, 2000. The period from the beginning of the guarantee period through the end of the Christmas period is not included when counting the twelve (12) weeks.

Regular rural carriers who earn an X day for working relief days from the beginning of the guarantee period through the end of the Christmas period must receive the X day within the same pay period in which the relief day was

worked. Regular rural carriers who do not receive this corresponding earned X day within the same pay period will receive 100% of their daily rate of pay in lieu of the X day.

Regular rural carriers who worked their relief days prior to May 20, 2000 and have not received the corresponding X day will not receive compensation in lieu of the X day. The X days earned prior to May 20, 2000 must be scheduled as soon as possible.

RECORDING TIME FOR REGULAR RURAL CARRIERS WORKING THE RELIEF DAY

Effective May 20, 2000, Days Assigned Carrier Absent (DACA) codes '3' and '5' will be used to indicate the appropriate compensation for regular rural carriers who work their relief days. These codes will be recorded on the *Regular Rural Carrier Time Certificate*, PS Form 1314. The hours worked on the relief day will be recorded on the PS Form 1314 in the 'Travel Hours' block until PS Form 1314 has been modified. In those situations where regular carriers are not entitled to additional compensation for working the relief day, DACA code 'R' will be recorded in the appropriate block.

The appropriate method for recording compensation for working the relief day on the PS Form 1314 is explained in the following exhibits.

Exhibit #1

This exhibit applies to: 1) regular rural carriers on the relief day work list that select the compensation option that provides 50% of the carrier's daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as scheduled by the Employer, and 2) regular rural carriers that are not on the relief day work list. In either case, when the carrier works his or her relief day, the carrier will receive an additional 50% of the daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as scheduled by the Employer.

Enter DACA code '3' for working the relief day in the appropriate block. The actual work hours for that day must be recorded in the 'Travel Hours' block.

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PS Form 1314, May 1994

The carrier shall be given carrier-reimbursed services in compliance with Postal Regulations.

REGULAR RURAL CARRIER TIME CERTIFICATE

Signature: Emma Tom

Date: XX-XX-XX

Carrier: WD

Exhibit #2

In this exhibit, the regular rural carrier is on the relief day work list. He has selected the compensation option that provides 150% of the carrier's daily rate of pay and will not receive an X day.

DACA code '5' is entered on PS Form 1314 in the appropriate block for working the relief day. The actual work hours for that day must be recorded in the 'Travel Hours' block.

WEST		R		XX-1234		E 321-43-68765		71		K004		B 00		XX	
1	52.50														
2	42.00														
Name of Relief Carrier		Name of Regular Carrier		DACA Code		Actual Work Hours		Actual Rate		Daily Rate		Total Rate		Total Hours	
Perron C		678 90-1234		5		08.00		08.00		11.00		08.00		11.00	
This certifies that the above carrier rendered service in compliance with Postal regulations.															
REGULAR RURAL CARRIER TIME CERTIFICATE															

Exhibit #3

Regular rural carriers who work the relief day and who exceed 56 actual work hours in a week will not be eligible to receive an additional 50% of the daily rate of pay, in addition to receiving an X day within twelve (12) weeks as scheduled by the Employer. This applies to carriers on the relief day work list as well as those carriers not on the list. These carriers will receive 150% of the carrier's daily rate of pay for working the relief day. They will not earn an X day.

When this situation occurs, DACA code '5' must be entered on the PS Form 1314 in the appropriate block for working the relief day. The actual work hours for that day must be recorded in the 'Travel Hours' block.

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1	57.00														
2	52.00														
Name of Relief Carrier		Name of Regular Carrier		DACA Code		Actual Work Hours		Actual Rate		Daily Rate		Total Rate		Total Hours	
				5		08.00		08.00		11.00		08.00		11.00	
This certifies that the above carrier rendered service in compliance with Postal regulations.															
REGULAR RURAL CARRIER TIME CERTIFICATE															

ASSIGNMENT OF NON-SATURDAY RELIEF DAYS

Management may assign non-Saturday relief days in limited situations. In those offices where there is an insufficient number of leave replacements and one or more regular carriers are working relief days on more than infrequent occasions, it may be necessary to change the relief day on one or more K routes.

When management determines it is necessary to change the relief day on one or more K routes in an office as a result of the above considerations, the formula provided in Article 9.2.C.5.b. must be applied to determine the number of non-Saturday relief days permitted in the office (including stations and branches). The following is the formula to be used:

Number of leave replacements in the office, minus the number of auxiliary routes, divided by the number of rural routes authorized a relief day, minus .10, multiplied by the number of routes authorized a relief day, rounded down to the next whole number, subtracted from the total number of regular routes authorized a relief day. This is the maximum number of K routes that management may require a non-Saturday relief day.

The following is an example of application of the formula:

- An office has 13 regular routes (12 K routes and 1 J route) and 2 auxiliary routes.
- The office has a total of 10 available leave replacements.
- The formula requires that you start with the total number of leave replacements assigned and working in the office and subtract the number of auxiliary routes:
 $10 - 2 = 8$
- Then divide by the total number of regular routes authorized a relief day:
 $8 \div 13 = .615$
- Then subtract .10, a pre-determined flexibility factor:
 $.615 - .10 = .515$
- Then multiply this factor by the total number of routes authorized a relief day and round down to the next whole number. This number is the minimum number of routes on which management must authorize a Saturday relief day:
 $.515 \times 13 = 6.7$ rounded down to 6 (routes)
- Subtract this number of routes from the total number of routes authorized a relief day. This final result is the maximum number of K routes on which management may require a non-Saturday relief day:
 $13 - 6 = 7$

In this example, management may require no more than 7 K routes to have a non-Saturday relief day.

Management will determine the non-Saturday relief days available for regular rural carriers to select. It is advisable that non-Saturday relief days are evenly spread throughout the week and not grouped to a few single non-Saturdays, e.g., all Mondays and Fridays. This will reduce the likelihood of having to reassign non-Saturday relief days in the future as a result of creating or expanding a PTF assignment.

Management first offers regular rural carriers assigned to K routes with a Saturday relief day the opportunity to change the routes' relief day to a non-Saturday. The only rotating schedule available for management to offer is Friday/Saturday. Each Friday/Saturday rotating relief day or any pair of Friday/Saturday relief days counts as one Friday relief day. Regular rural carriers assigned to K routes with a Saturday relief day that select a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday relief day will be given an incentive of allowing the route's evaluation to increase to 53:00 to 55:00 standard hours through normal growth, and will not be adjusted below this level, except as provided in appropriate regulations.

If a sufficient number of carriers do not select a non-Saturday relief day and the formula provides for additional non-Saturday relief days, management may assign the remaining non-Saturday relief days to K routes in the office. This assignment begins with the junior carrier assigned a K route with a Saturday relief day. The incentive provided to carriers who select a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday relief day is not applicable when management makes the assignments based on juniority.

POSTING NEWLY CREATED AND VACANT ROUTES

The vacancy notice for all routes authorized a relief day will identify the relief day of the route on the posting. All J routes will be posted with a Saturday relief day. All K routes will be posted with a Saturday relief day unless the route had a non-Saturday relief day when vacated. In this case, the route will be posted with the same non-Saturday relief day. All newly created routes with an authorized relief day, will have a Saturday relief day listed on the vacancy notice.

When awarding the residual vacancy (K route) to a PTF, substitute, or RCA, the relief day will be designated at the exclusive discretion of management. If the formula outlined in Article 9.2.C.5.b. requires assignment of a Saturday relief day, a non-Saturday relief day will be designated for the awarded route and a Saturday relief day will be offered to carriers with non-Saturday relief days in the office pursuant to Article 9.2.C.5.e.

ASSIGNMENTS TO AUXILIARY ROUTES

Leave replacements currently assigned to serve an auxiliary route six days per week, will continue the six-day assignment. Leave replacements currently assigned to serve an auxiliary route, as well as all other leave replacement

duties in the office, will be given the opportunity to elect one of two options. These leave replacements may elect to: (1) serve the auxiliary route six days per week, or (2) serve the auxiliary route and their primary assignment on the regular route only. Those employees who elect to serve the auxiliary route and their primary assignment on the regular route will not serve on any other routes in the office. The effective date of this election will be May 20, 2000.

All auxiliary routes in offices where relief days have been changed to non-Saturday in accordance with Article 9.2.C.5.b. of the Agreement will be six-day assignments. Employees assigned the auxiliary route and primary regular route at the time management begins to change relief days to non-Saturday, must elect whether to serve the auxiliary route six days per week, or relinquish the auxiliary route and continue as a leave replacement on the regular route to which assigned and other routes in the office. Leave replacements assigned auxiliary routes as six-day assignments will not be utilized on any other auxiliary route or as a leave replacement on any regular route. The effective date of this election must be within 30 days of the date management began the process of changing relief days.

PART-TIME FLEXIBLE RURAL CARRIER

A PTF rural carrier position has been established to help resolve the leave replacement problem. The position will be available only in those offices where there is a shortage of leave replacements and management has been unsuccessful in all other hiring efforts of RCAs or TRCs.

Maintain Hiring Registers

Management must continue to make every effort to expeditiously fill leave replacement vacancies when they occur. Regular rural carriers shall have the right to require that a leave replacement be assigned to their route. Management has a reasonable period of time to obtain an RCA or TRC for the route after the carrier's request. The reasonable period has been defined as approximately 120 days. A PTF assignment may be created only after management has been unsuccessful in obtaining RCAs or TRCs for leave replacement vacancies on K routes during this period. Management must ensure that the process to recruit, test, and hire RCAs is continued.

District Review

The district is responsible for ensuring that managers are making every effort to fill leave replacement vacancies with RCAs or TRCs during the reasonable period prior to creating a PTF assignment. Managers should be cautioned that unsuccessful attempts to hire in the past are not sufficient to forego efforts to hire RCAs or TRCs during the reasonable period and immediately create a new PTF assignment.

When a regular rural carrier requires that a leave replacement is assigned to his or her route in accordance with Article 30.2.A.2., and local management believes they may be unsuccessful in obtaining an RCA or

TRC, the postmaster should advise the appropriate manager at the district office. Management at the district office will guide the postmaster to ensure every effort is made to obtain an RCA or TRC during the reasonable period provided, prior to being required to create a PTF position.

Creating a PTF Rural Carrier Position

If management is unsuccessful in its initial efforts to obtain RCAs or TRCs to serve on a K route, management may create a PTF position. PTFs must be assigned as the primary leave replacement on more than one regular K route. The PTF rural carrier assignment will only be established with K routes. The assignment will include no less than two (2) K routes and no more than five (5) K routes. No two routes designated as primary assignments may have the same relief day. Routes may be added to or deleted from the PTF assignment as needed provided the number of K routes assigned continues to be no less than two (2) and no more than five (5). If the PTF is assigned a K route with a non-Saturday relief day that changes classification to a J route, the route's relief day will be changed to Saturday and will be removed from the PTF's assignment.

The PTF rural carrier may be utilized on any regular route in the office where the primary leave replacement is not available. They may not be assigned an auxiliary route, but may be utilized on any auxiliary route in the office where the assigned leave replacement is not available. On a weekly basis, the PTF is entitled to evaluated hours equal to the total of one day's evaluation of each of the primary assignments in accordance with Article 30.2.O of the National Agreement. The PTF rural carrier is a leave replacement employee. They cannot be a dual appointment and will not be eligible for higher level, non-bargaining detail assignments.

Posting the PTF Rural Carrier Assignment

PTF assignments must be posted for all substitutes and RCAs in the office that have completed their probationary period. The notice must inform bidders that a PTF cannot later decline conversion to regular status. The notice will be posted at the post office of the assignment, including stations and branches, for ten (10) calendar days.

Awarding PTF Assignment

The assignment will be awarded within ten (10) days. First consideration will be given to the substitute rural carrier bidder having accrued the longest period of continuous service as a substitute rural carrier and auxiliary rural carrier in that office. Next consideration will be given to the non-probationary RCA bidder having the longest period of continuous service as an RCA in that office. The successful bidder will be placed in the PTF assignment within twenty-one (21) days of the award.

District-Wide Postings

If the PTF assignment is not filled as a result of the posting at the post office where the vacancy exists, management will post the vacancy within ten (10) days for all substitutes and non-probationary RCAs within the

district. The notice will be posted for fifteen (15) days at each office within the district. The order of consideration shall be the same as postings at the vacancy office.

PTF Rural Carrier Benefits

The PTF rural carrier is a career position (Designation Code 76) and will receive benefits in accordance with ELM provisions.

PTF Rural Carrier Conversion to Regular

It is not necessary for PTF rural carriers to bid on vacant regular routes in the office to which they are assigned. The residual route will be awarded to the PTF with the longest period of service in the office as a PTF. The PTF will then be converted to a regular rural carrier. If there is more than one vacancy, the PTF with the longest period of service in the office as a PTF will choose among the vacancies. The PTF cannot decline conversion to a regular rural carrier in his or her office. Substitutes and RCAs will only be considered for vacant regular routes if there are more residual vacancies than PTFs in the office. A PTF will be allowed to bid on district-wide, regular route postings and will be considered after regular rural carriers who have submitted bids.

CHANGES TO THE RURAL ROUTE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

Effective with the extension of the 1995 National Agreement, the U.S. Postal Service will revise the Methods Handbook M-38, Management of Rural Deliver Service, Section 823.1 to include the following provisions.

823 Providing Relief

823.1 General

.11 When providing relief to one or more routes in an office, all rural routes in that unit should not be adjusted simultaneously unless it is in the best interest of the unit operation to do so.

.12 When considering rural route relief in a delivery unit, elimination of relief days for rural routes in the unit should be considered only if obtaining relief carriers is causing operational problems for that unit.

.13 Generally, it is desirable to adjust evaluated routes to as near **52** standard hours per week as practicable, i.e., the route should be adjusted to the **43K option category**. However, in some cases this may be impractical. There is no prohibition against adjusting a route below **52** hours per week when it is operationally advantageous. However, documentation must be supplied with the route adjustment documentation on as to why it is not practical to adjust the route to **52** hours.