

## CHAPTER 5 ROUTE INSPECTIONS AND MAIL COUNTS

### 510 ANNUAL INSPECTION OF ROUTES

#### 511 DEFINITION

Inspection of a route is the physical observation of the condition of the route and boxes, the adequacy and quality of the service to the rural public, and the character and performance of the carrier. This inspection is to be made by the postmaster or a designee while accompanying the carrier on the route.

#### 512 FREQUENCY

*All routes must be inspected at least once each calendar year.* An inspection must be conducted either during or immediately preceding the annual count of mail and all special counts of mail. Additional inspections may be made at other times of the year.

#### 513 INSPECTION ROUTE

Form 4248, *Rural Route—Annual Inspection Report* (Exhibit 513) must be completed in duplicate for each regular and auxiliary rural route. The original of the Form 4248 will be retained in the post office file, and the duplicate copy will be forwarded to the MSC manager.

#### 514 OFFICIAL ROUTE TRAVEL

Use the current Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, on the inspection trip to ensure that the line of travel being followed is correct. While the length of the route shown on the Form 4003 is measured by traveling the most direct drive practical without pulling out to serve mailboxes, make a check of the difference in odometer miles recorded in the carrier's vehicle and the official length shown on Form 4003. Should the two mileages vary widely, the route should be remeasured. (See Chapter 6 for remeasurement procedures.)

M-38, TL-1, 7-1-80

### 515 OBTAINING DATA

#### 515.1 Count of Boxes

Count as a box all boxes currently being served and temporarily vacant dwellings, apartments, and places of business with or without a box erected which have not been vacant more than 90 days. But do not count abandoned boxes, permanently vacant buildings, dwellings, and apartments vacant more than 90 days, buildings under construction, or dwellings and businesses receiving delivery solely through general delivery or a post office box. In resort areas, transient trailer parks, and transient mobile home parks count only the boxes being served during the inspection.

#### 515.2 Count of Stops

.21 Count the minimum number of potential stops required to serve every box on the route, i.e. the number of times a carrier must move the vehicle in order to serve all boxes on the route as determined by the manager.

.22 Where a group of boxes can be served without moving the vehicle, record one vehicle stop for that group of boxes.

.23 Do not count stops for stoplights, stop signs, etc.

.24 Prepare a worksheet before beginning the inspection to facilitate tallying the boxes and stops. Such a worksheet is shown in Exhibit 515.2a. By numbering the items on the front of a PS Form 4056, *Your Mailbox Needs Attention* (Exhibit 515.2b), you can note mailbox irregularities on the worksheet without delaying the carrier.

### 516 COUNT OF FAMILIES

#### 516.1 Definition

For Postal Service purposes, the term "family" is considered the same as "household."