

DOIS: What you should know

All of the information contained in the article can be found in three reference documents: the National Agreement, the M-39 (Management of Delivery Services), and the M-4I (City Delivery Carrier Duties and Responsibilities). There are two reasons that I must write this article. First, management is still using DOIS as a tool to harass letter carriers, even though they should be using it as a tool to ESTIMATE daily workload. Secondly, each and every letter carrier needs to be informed of their rights and responsibilities when dealing with management attempting to intimidate them with their DOIS numbers.

DOIS is not found in the M-39, the M-4I, or the National Agreement. DOIS does not constitute an enforceable standard or work measurement system. Finally, "No carrier shall be disciplined for failure to meet standards, except in cases of unsatisfactory effort which must be based on documented, unacceptable conduct that led to the carrier's failure to meet office standards" (M-39 Section 242.232).

Why is DOIS not an enforceable standard or work measurement system? There are many reasons. Mail volume is entered into DOIS, for the most part, as a linear measurement. Then there are conversion factors for letters and flats that convert these linear measurements to numbers. The only accepted way to determine an office standard is with actual piece counts; not conversions based on estimates. Ten different managers could come up with ten different linear measurements for the same ten routes. There is no consistency.

DOIS also has a percent to standard built into the formula. Postmasters are pressured by POOMS (Post Office Operations Managers) about the percent to standards in their office. The Postmasters then pressure their supervisors to make the numbers. Guess whom the supervisors pressure? That's right....YOU! So, let's talk about percent to standards. During a mail count and inspection, each carrier gets an accurate evaluation of their office time for that week! I say, that week, because that is the only week that the mail and all associated office duties are recorded completely. During the week of inspection, there may be days when a carrier is over standard and days when the carrier is under standard. Factors such as mail volume, mail hygiene, mail flow and many others contribute to whether you are over or under standard. At any rate, it would be extremely rare indeed if someone used the exact same percent to standard on each day of a count and inspection. That same percent to standard is entered into DOIS each and every day, however, regardless of any other circumstances.

Next, comes our associated duties and allied times. Again, all entered into DOIS. Let me ask you this: do you have the same number of accountable mail each day? Do you have the same number of markups, forwards, change of addresses to record? I doubt it but according to the world of DOIS you do. Shall we get a little more technical? Ok, lets do that. Has your route changed at all since the last inspection? Were you the carrier on the route during the last inspection? According to DOIS, you were and the route hasn't changed. The reasons listed above are why DOIS can only be used as a tool to estimate workload. Sure, many of us have heard our supervisor, postmaster, or OIC inform us that we are "undertime" so they expect us to have an eight hour day. Hopefully, this information you will allow you to respond intelligently.

You might want to ask what your actual piece count was, how many markups are you credited for, forwards, COA's, parcels, ... etc. After you do and they can't give you an answer, inform them that you do need the time you requested on your 3996. If they are non-responsive or refuse your request for overtime, ask them what they would like you to do with the mail that you cannot deliver in eight hours. They have to approve overtime, curtail mail, or give you auxiliary assistance. If they say, "Be back in 8" without any assistance or curtailment, take out the route and call from the street before 3 PM. When you call, let management know that your morning estimate is still accurate and that you need to know what they want you to do. We have been fighting this same fight for years, only the faces have changed. The knowledge that you will gain by reading the contract and postal regulations will put you ahead of most supervisors that you'll encounter on the workroom floor. Knowledge is Power!

M-41 Carrier Handbook

131.4 Reporting Requirements

- 131.41 It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.
- 131.42 Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail. Management will instruct you what to do.
- 131.43 Complete applicable items on Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control, if overtime or auxiliary assistance is authorized in the office or on the street.
- 131.44 Report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered - including all mail distributed to the route but not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number pieces of mail.
- 131.45 Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, in which case you must record all facts on Form 1571.
- 131.46 Before you leave the office, enter on Form 1571 the mail curtailed: when you return, add any mail which was not delivered and which was returned to the office. Follow any special local procedures set up to identify errors and corrective actions for mail returned because it was out of sequence.
- 131.47 Complete portions of the Edit Book, as required by management, or Form 1621, Delivery Management Report, according to instructions on reverse of form.

M-39 Supervisors Handbook

122 Scheduling Carriers

122.1 Establishing Schedules

122.11 Consider the following factors in establishing schedules:

- a. Schedule carriers to report before 6 a.m. only when absolutely necessary.
- b. Fix schedules to coincide with receipt and dispatch of mail. At least 80 percent of the carriers' daily mail to be cased should be on or at their cases when they report for work.
- c. Schedule carriers by groups. Form groups of carriers who make the same number of delivery trips and whose office time is approximately the same.
- d. Generally, schedule carriers of the same group to begin, leave, return, and end at the same time.
- e. Schedule so that delivery to customers should be approximately the same time each day.
- f. Make a permanent schedule change when it is apparent that one or more days' mail volume varies to where it is causing late leaving.
- g. Schedule carriers' nonwork days accordance with the National Agreement.

122.12 Post all schedules and keep them up to date.

122.2 Carriers' Leaving Schedules

122.21 Establishing Leaving Schedule

The leaving time for the carrier is determined by the following:

- a. Workload. The normal workload for the route;
- b. Availability of Mail. The time all the mail for the same day's delivery is available;
- c. Necessary Office Time. Time required to case this mail, withdraw, tray or strap out mail, obtain parcel post, and complete other required office duties; and
- d. Business Hours. Normal community business hours.

122.22 Maintaining Leaving Schedule

Carriers must be trained and motivated to complete their office work so that they may leave the office on time each day. The delivery unit manager must be aware of and record the daily workload for each route, and:

- a. Provide assistance where necessary for carriers to meet scheduled leaving times;
- b. Recognize when a judicious use of curtailment of non-preferential mails is appropriate, and
- c. Use carrier late leaving reports to help determine performance efficiency and also to indicate possible training needs. Delivery managers at all levels must take positive steps to instill every employee with a sense of importance in the daily need to maintain schedules and perform all assigned duties within the allocated time.

122.3 Authorizing Overtime and Auxiliary Assistance

122.31 Before overtime or auxiliary assistance is authorized, determine whether:

- a. Carrier can complete delivery with scheduled time.
- b. Leveling the daily workload can be achieved by observing provisions in Section 612, Postal Operations Manual.

122.31 When relief is essential, use the following criteria (not necessarily in the order listed) in determining the most economical manner in providing it:

- a. Use overtime when it would be more economical than providing auxiliary assistance. Consider time in traveling to and from the route, drive-out cost or carfare cost, availability of replacements, delivery time, and conservation of fuel.
- b. Use auxiliary street assistance in the field when it would be more economical than using overtime or providing assistance in office and/or there is no replacement available who is proficient in casing mail. Before authorizing street assistance, consider impact of use of additional fuel.
- c. Use auxiliary assistance in the office when it would be more economical than using overtime or providing auxiliary assistance in the field. The following must also be considered:
 - (1) The replacement must have full knowledge of the route and be able to case mail with reasonable proficiency.
 - 2) The replacement is employed in casing mail at a time when the regular is not in the office or on duty or where a separate case for flats and papers is available and the replacement would not interfere with the regular. Managers must instruct employees performing casing assistance not to load letter separations with large pieces and flats that would impair sorting additional letter mail.
- d. Keep up to date a list of replacements most familiar with individual routes. Delivery services managers must use good judgment in determining the most efficient and economical methods of assigning over time or assistance on high volume days to maintain normal delivery schedules.

122.33 The employee, upon request, will be provided a Form 3996, Carrier Auxiliary Control, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided the employee.

Prepare Form 3996, Carrier Auxiliary Control (see exhibit 28) as follows:

- a. Items C, D, and E. Enter the date (C); route number and name (D); lunch place and time, if applicable (E).
- b. Item F. Place an X in the space below the number indicating the case shelf containing the mail for which assistance is being requested. The bottom shelf of the letter separations is designated No. 1. When assistance is required for less than a full shelf of mail, enter the portion of shelf infractions. The portion should be identified as follows: L R 1/4; M Y; (L-Left, R-Right, M-Middle of the shelf.)
- c. Items G, H, and I. Indicate if keys and/or carfare are required and if there is accountable mail for delivery on the route.
- d. Item J. Show the reason in detail for requesting assistance. The phrase "Heavy Mail" is not suitable explanation. (Omit reason for requesting assistance during the Christmas period)
- e. Item K Under Estimated Work, the carrier must enter the estimated hours and minutes of the amount of assistance being requested.
- f. Present form to manager.
- g. Item L – Auxiliary Assistance. If assistance is approved the manager shall initial Form 3996 and return it to the carrier for completion of route information.
- h. Overtime. If overtime is approved, the manager shall initial the form and enter near his initials the amount of overtime in minutes. After advising the carrier, the form is then deposited in a designated place for use later when the timecard or printout is verified.
- i. Street Assistance. When street assistance is approved, the regular carrier shall complete the additional sections of the form as follows.
- j. Item M Show transportation information as indicated
- k. Item N. Indicate the delivery starting point and the blocks on each street to be delivered
- l. Item O. List the points where relays will be found
- m. Item- P ... Carrier Assistant. Before leaving, enter name and time beginning and ending office work if auxiliary assistance is given in office. Enter begin and end travel to time for street assistance. Enter the begin and end delivery time used to actually deliver all of the assistance. After completing actual assistance, enter the begin and end travel from time in the appropriate spaces. Deposit the form in designated place or give it to the manager.