



The route to fair route adjustments

During the regular Thursday session of the NALC National Convention in Boston in July and in the City Delivery workshop, we discussed the fact that management cannot evaluate and adjust a route, without current data, barring a local agreement between the branch president and the postmaster or their respective designees to do otherwise.

Management of Delivery Services, *Handbook M-39*, which is covered by Article 19 of the National Agreement, states in Section 141.19:

Formula for Making Minor Adjustments

A simple formula for making minor adjustments, without mail counts and inspection, may be made in the following manner *if the previous count and inspection data is reasonably current and the same carrier is serving the route being considered...* (emphasis added).

“Hopefully this recent agreement will give the national parties sufficient time to iron out an alternative route adjustment process that makes sense.”

Following the National Convention, President Young signed a National Memorandum of Understanding on Minor Route Adjustments—*Handbook M-39*, Section 141. This agreement appears on the NALC website (go to “Departments,” then “CAU,” then “MRS”) as #M-01690. It states in part:

...the parties are discussing the evaluation and adjustment of routes through the minor route adjustment process outlined in Section 141 of *Handbook M-39*. The following is intended as an interim agreement until these talks conclude:

Unless the local parties mutually agree otherwise, minor route adjustments may only be implemented pursuant to Section 141 of *Handbook M-39*. The evaluation must be made consistent with Section 141.18 and adjusted

consistent with Section 141.19. This requirement includes *availability of reasonably current count and inspection data and the same carrier on the route* (emphasis added).

As mentioned in a previous article, the DOIS national settlement says, in part, “DOIS projections are not the sole determinant of a carrier’s leaving or return time, or daily workload.”

What does all of this mean? Management cannot use DOIS as the sole evaluation of a route. Management cannot use the minor route adjustment procedure to evaluate the length of a route, unless the letter carrier who took the last six-day count and inspection is presently on the route. Management cannot determine the length of a route or adjust a route that is either being withheld as a

residual vacancy to excess someone into it at a later time or is not being posted for bid while they consider it for reversion.

As a matter of fact, they cannot revert a route in the latter scenario, because that would require an evaluation of that route, which cannot be accomplished until the regular carrier who successfully bids on it or is assigned it, pursuant to

Article 41, Section 1.A.7 of the National Agreement, takes a full six-day count and inspection and management uses the results to adjust that route or legitimately determines that they can abolish it.

Hopefully this recent agreement, coupled with present language in the *M-39 Handbook*, will give the national parties sufficient time to iron out an alternative route adjustment process that makes sense to the Postal Service, the letter carrier, and the American public that often suffers from ill-advised route adjustments that are arbitrarily implemented. It also does not bar the local parties (the NALC branch president and the postmaster or their respective designees) from agreeing on an alternative method to adjust routes. 