

Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Overview:

1. What is the definition of “maintaining routes in proper adjustment” under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

The meaning is the same as under Handbook M-39: “as close to 8 hours as possible”.

2. The MOU includes a reference to an increase in mail volume by 13%. What is the 13% increase used for?

This percentage applies only if there is a 13% increase in average cased mail volume on a route in May and September 2009 over May and September 2008. In such case, the Interim Route Adjustment Process will be used to reevaluate those routes.

3. Is the 13% increase requirement measured by route, unit, or nationally?

The 13% is measured by route.

4. Is total cased mail volume on a route used to determine whether a 13% increase has been realized?

Yes, total cased mail volume from May/September 2009 is compared with total cased mail volume from May/September 2008 to determine whether the route has experienced a 13% volume increase.

5. The MOU addresses a new expedited route evaluation and adjustment process which is to be used if mail volume continues to decline. Has the process been developed?

No, the parties have until June 30, 2009 or June 30, 2010, respectively, to come up with a decision on whether to use the Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process or some other modified process.

6. When does the current National Agreement end?

Midnight on November 20, 2011.

7. Will the parties be able to use a local agreed upon route evaluation and adjustment process after January 16?

This issue will be discussed by the national parties after conclusion of the interim alternative route adjustment process.

8. What is the definition of “delivery unit” under the MOU?

Under the MOU, the phrase “delivery unit” refers to a post office, post office station, or post office branch that has mail delivery functions.

Process:

1. The MOU states “the parties will appoint a joint NALC/USPS route evaluation team in each District”. Is there a prohibition against having more than one team per district?

The requirement under the MOU is to create one District evaluation team. If more than one evaluation team is needed, the NALC National President and District Manager may select members for additional team(s).

2. Who completes the route evaluations?

The evaluation team will be responsible for data analysis and route evaluation.

3. Does the district evaluation team conduct carrier consultations?

No, the route evaluation team is responsible for oversight of the local joint NALC/USPS carrier consultations.

4. Who pulls the data for the route evaluations?

It is expected that this will be completed by the District Managers of Operations Support or his/her designee or district evaluation team.

5. What process is used to employ a period other than May/September for the evaluation?

Data assessment is used when considering whether another period is more representative for the route evaluation. The district evaluation team members must both agree before another period is selected.

6. Can the District Manager grant an exception to the January 16, 2009 deadline?

No, the MOU may only be modified by mutual agreement of the national parties.

7. What happens if the regular carrier is not available for consultation?

The district evaluation team will determine how the consultation will be conducted; however, it is expected that the process will not be unnecessarily delayed to address this issue.

8. How will sites be selected for implementing the Interim Alternative Route Adjustment Process?

The sites will be selected by the Postal Service. The local parties are free to consider recommendations from the NALC.

9. Are units with recently implemented adjustments from a six-day count and inspection included in this process?

Management determines which units are selected for evaluation and may select such sites.

10. If a six-day count and inspection is completed by October 24, 2008, may the adjustment be implemented pursuant to the provisions of Handbook M-39?

Yes, unless management elects to instead use the Interim Alternative Route Adjustment Process.

11. May pending minor route adjustments pursuant to M-39 Section 141 or a local alternative evaluation and adjustment process be implemented?

These adjustments may be implemented only if carrier consultations were completed by October 24, 2008. However, management may elect to instead use the Interim Alternative Route Adjustment Process.

12. Are green routes included in this process?

All routes in a selected unit must be evaluated.

13. Are auxiliary routes in a selected unit included in the evaluation and adjustment process?

Yes.

14. Does the MOU impact sites that are currently implementing the Flat Sequencing System (FSS)?

FSS impact is covered by a separate MOU. Routes in FSS offices are evaluated and adjusted pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding, Re: *FSS Implementation*, once "FSS is fully implemented in a delivery unit."

15. Does the Interim Alternative Route Adjustment Process MOU apply to sites that are scheduled for future FSS deployment or sites that previously implemented FSS and have already adjusted routes pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding, Re: *FSS Implementation*?

Yes, management may select such sites for evaluation and adjustment under the Interim Alternative Route Adjustment Process MOU.

16. If part of the routes within a unit were evaluated and adjusted through a locally agreed upon adjustment process after April 1, 2008, can this unit be selected? If so, what is done with routes already evaluated and adjusted?

The unit may be selected for the interim adjustment process; however, those routes already adjusted through a joint process will be excluded from the initial analysis. Such routes will be reviewed after January 16 by the joint evaluation team.

17. Does Handbook M-39, Section 271 apply to previously adjusted routes?

Yes, Sections 271 applies to all routes.

18. Can management insist that the NALC replace the designated Team Leader?

No, each party selects its members. Any problems with the process that cannot be addressed locally should be promptly elevated to the national level.

19. What kind of training do local team members receive?

The parties at the national level did not envision any elaborate training program to be offered to the local team members. The commitment was to provide training to the District team members and they would communicate in some fashion with the local team in order that they understand their role and responsibilities in this process. It was suggested that the District team provide the local team with the two slides in the District team training that stipulated what the roles and responsibilities of the local team were, as well as the route evaluation worksheet. How that was accomplished was purely a local decision.

20. Are all PS Form 3999's conducted jointly?

The MOU calls for a joint 3999 to be conducted only when the route evaluation team deems it necessary to determine the most representative street time. Management may continue to conduct 3999's for reasons other than described above, i.e., establish a current 3999 for territory transfer, street management, etc.

Data Analysis:

Data Integrity:

1. Who completes the data analysis for the evaluations?

It is completed by the district evaluation team.

2. Who will address identified data integrity issues?

Data integrity issues will be addressed by the local parties. The district evaluation team will address unresolved disputes over those issues, if any.

Volume:

1. In determining the volume of cased letters and flats for the selected period, does the district evaluation team use the total volume for the route or the total volume of just the regular carrier?

The total volume for the route is used to determine the estimated standard.

Office Evaluation

1. Are Line Items 8-13 included in the office evaluation?

Yes. Lines 8 through 21 are included.

2. Does the office evaluation include average cased volume or average of all volume?

The evaluation just includes average cased volume.

3. Is the office evaluation the average for May and September combined or the average for May and September?

It is the average of May and September combined.

4. How are local agreements on additional office time (e.g. wash-up time) considered when determining fixed office time?

Adjustments to the 33/43 fixed office must be determined on a case by case basis, regardless of local agreements. The joint evaluation team determines if such time is necessary on a route by route basis after receiving input from the initial carrier consultation. This means that office time pursuant to a local agreement will not automatically be included in the fixed office time used to determine the Estimated Standard.

Street Evaluation

1. Who completes a new PS Form 3999 when required under the *Street Evaluation* procedures?

The PS Form 3999 must be completed jointly by designees selected by the respective organizations.

2. Can management unilaterally complete PS Forms 3999 on an entire unit that is being evaluated?

No. PS Form 3999 must be completed jointly as stipulated in the MOU. The decision for a joint PS Form 3999 review is made on a route by route basis.

3. If either district evaluation team member determines that a new PS Form 3999 is needed, how is an "average day" determined?

The determination is made by route, with the average day selected by the district evaluation team unless the team delegates the decision to the parties at the unit level.

4. Is cased volume or delivered volume utilized to determine the average day?

Delivered volume, cased volume, and other variables can be used to make this determination.

5. Is the use of COR with the interim alternate adjustment process a joint decision?

It is the intent that COR will be used if the parties agree the adjustment timeline specified in the MOU can be met (i.e., all adjustment packages need to be completed by January 16).

Replacement Carriers:

1. On vacant routes what determines selection of the replacement times and/or replacement carrier?

The district evaluation team determines which replacement carrier may be used.

2. If the regular carrier was not on the route in May or September, can we use another timeframe for the regular carrier?

This will be determined by the district evaluation team.

Consultations

1. Does the carrier have to agree to the consultation or is it just information?

Feedback from the carrier during consultation is an important part of the evaluation process and will be conducted consistent with current regulations.

2. If the carrier is unavailable, is there a timeframe for resolution?

This will be determined by the district evaluation team.

3. How many consultations are there?

We expect there to be two, evaluation and the adjustment consultations.

4. Can a route adjustment be implemented when the regular carrier is not available for consultation?

This situation should be handled in the same manner as a with a regular route inspection with a carrier on extended leave. The local parties should not hold up the package past the timelines outlined in the joint training, but rather move forward and hold a discussion when the carrier returns. If an adjustment needs to be made to the route after the carrier returns it can be handled under the follow-up review.

Adjustments:

1. If a current PS Form 3999 is not available, what procedure is used to transfer territory?

A new PS Form 3999 will be completed.

2. What is considered a current PS Form 3999?

The district evaluation team will make that determination.

3. Who completes the PS Form 3999 for the purpose of transferring territory?

If a current PS Form 3999 does not exist, management will complete the new PS Form 3999.

4. When determining the methods for transferring *Office Time*– is it by route of unit?

Current regulations apply.

5. Does the MOU apply to combination routes?

Yes, if the combination routes are in a selected unit and include city delivery and cased mail.

Miscellaneous:

1. Can the Fixed Office Time of 33/43 (or whatever is agreed to) be used to update DOIS?

Yes, all new base times will be updated in DOIS.

2. Can the actual/estimated standard be used to update demonstrated performance in DOIS?

Yes. This does not change the requirements of the Interpretive Step agreement for case Q01N-4Q-C 05022610 (DOIS).