

**schemes:
construction,
assignment, training,
and proficiency**

Handbook M-5—August, 1980

**U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
Washington, DC 20260**

**Schemes: Construction, Assignment, Training, and Proficiency
Handbook M-5**

August, 1980

1. MATERIAL TRANSMITTED

This is a complete revision of Handbook M-5 that obsoletes all transmittal letters.

2. FUTURE CHANGES

Any future changes in M-5 will be made by complete revisions and distributions of the entire handbook. *Transmittal letters will no longer be used.*

3. DISTRIBUTION

- A. Initial. Automatic distribution will be made directly to MSC's and Associate Offices down to Cag H.
- B. Additional copies. Order on Form 7380 from your supply center.

4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This is effective August, 1980.



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

110 INTRODUCTION

The following policies and procedures govern the construction and management of schemes; the assignment of scheme responsibilities; scheme training; and the verification of on-the-job proficiency throughout the postal system.

120 DEFINITIONS

121 REFERENCE SCHEME

A "reference scheme" is an officially published list of all elements of address and their distribution — those that must be learned and those that may be looked up — in a systematic plan to guide mail to its destination, for a specific operation (i.e., Incoming secondary, etc.).

122 SCHEME

A "scheme" is that part of a reference scheme that management requires to be learned by employees whose assigned duties require scheme qualification by examination. "Schemes" consist of 100 items or more. Ninety-nine or fewer items are "memory items."

123 SCHEME SECTIONS

A "scheme" may be divided into "scheme sections." "Scheme sections" may be groups of scheme items within a "scheme" identified for learning or mail processing purposes. A scheme section may consist of

several zones providing the mail is normally worked commingled, on a single case.

124 SCHEME ITEM

A "scheme item" consists of a single set of address and routing information. In the following example, Adair Street contains five carrier splits. This constitutes five scheme items.

Item 1	20 — 60 Adair Street	Carrier 12
Item 2	61 — 130 Adair Street	Carrier 15
Item 3	131 — 210 Adair Street	Carrier 14
Item 4	211 — 240 Adair Street	Carrier 12
Item 5	241 — OUT Adair Street	Carrier 15

125 MEMORY ITEMS

"Memory items" are items, 99 or less, which must be memorized in conjunction with non-scheme distributions. (Any items included with scheme distributions that would be "memory items" if part of non-scheme distributions will be treated as "scheme items" for purposes of the training provisions and the limitation on the number of items allowed for a scheme or scheme section set out below.)

126 CODED MAIL

"Coded mail" is that mail which contains the correct ZIP Code.

127 UNCODED AND MISCODED MAIL

"Uncoded and miscoded mail" is either that mail without a ZIP Code or with an incorrect ZIP Code.

CHAPTER 2

SCHEME CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

210 SCHEME CONSTRUCTION

211 STATE SCHEMES

Each state scheme should be reviewed no less than once every three years. The state scheme is to be constructed by the following steps:

- a.* A density test on uncoded and miscoded state mail only will be conducted to arrange the cities in descending order of density.
- b.* A total uncoded/miscoded sample size of at least 10 times the number of items in a state reference scheme gathered over a period of at least 5 consecutive weekdays, will be used to determine density.
- c.* Separations for all SCF's within the state will be on the state case.
- d.* The remaining separations on the case will be assigned to the highest density direct cities (3-digit or 5-digit) in descending density order.
- e.* The scheme will be made up of the highest density remaining cities which cannot be finalized into the direct city and SCF separations on the case. For this purpose all SCF cities are considered to be finalized, either to a separate city holdout, when warranted by density, or to the SCF holdout, and will not be items in the scheme.
- f.* Low density cities should not appear in the state scheme. As a guideline, the assigned state scheme should be made up of the cities representing 50% of the volume by density not finalized as per *d.* and *e.* above. Larger state schemes must be fully justified operationally. A maximum of 1,000 items may be included in a state scheme.
- g.* The ultimate responsibility for approving outgoing state scheme distribution guidelines rests with the Regional General Manager, Logistics Division.
- h.* It is not necessary to establish a special case to distribute only uncoded and miscoded state mail

except at special concentration centers for state uncoded mail as designated by the Regional General Manager, Logistics Division.

212 INCOMING PRIMARY SCHEMES; MULTI-SECTION COMBINED INCOMING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHEMES

Incoming primary schemes should be reviewed every one or two years or whenever a significant change occurs (e.g., increase in population, change in mail volume, etc.). Incoming primary schemes will be constructed on the volumes obtained from the uncoded and miscoded separations. The scheme is to be constructed by the following steps:

- a.* A density test must be conducted to arrange the streets and buildings in descending order of volume.
- b.* A total uncoded and miscoded sample size of at least seven times the number of streets, buildings and firm directs, selected over a period of at least five consecutive workdays, will be used to determine density. The proportion of the sample taken each day should be representative of the relative volume of uncoded and miscoded city mail normally processed on that day of the week.
- c.* Identify all the scheme items required to finalize each street, building or firm. The highest density street, building or firm, including all its required items, will become the first group of items in the scheme or in the "A" section of the scheme. As an example, if the heaviest volume street requires ten items to finalize, these items would constitute the first ten items of the scheme. The second heaviest volume street might require eight items, and these items would constitute the next eight items in the scheme.
- d.* Continue this procedure until no more than 950 items are assembled. (Although primary schemes or scheme sections may contain up to 1,000 items, they should initially contain no more than 950 items to allow for possible future growth.) This will constitute the entire primary scheme or the "A" section of a multi-section incoming primary. When more than 950 items are justified as the result of a properly conducted

density test, additional sections (up to a total of four) should be added in the same manner by density in descending order. Alternatively, the third and fourth sections may be arranged alphabetically.

e. When more than four sections are required, all but the first two sections are to be constructed alphabetically. Each additional section should be composed of not more than 950 high density items.

f. Extremely low density items are to be lookup items. As such, these items are part of the reference scheme, but not part of the learned scheme, and should be listed alphabetically.

g. Multi-section combined incoming primary/secondary schemes are to be constructed by density. The sampling and density methodologies are the same as those applied to an incoming primary scheme. With multi-sections, it is possible that employees may encounter learning difficulties because of carrier routes being split between the two sections. If this results, management should shift scheme items between sections so that entire carrier routes are kept together in single sections. For example, if 70% of a route's scheme items are in Section B and 30% in Section A, the items from A should be shifted to B. By doing this, all of the route's scheme items would be in one section. If this approach is taken, the office will have to closely monitor the sections to insure that all but the final section has about 950 items; that the final section has the residual items to be learned; and that no section exceeds 1,000 items.

h. There are a number of computer programs in existence that can assist offices in constructing incoming primary and multi-section incoming primary/secondary schemes. Regional Mail Processing can provide information on programs that are available.

213 INCOMING SECONDARY SCHEMES

Incoming secondary schemes will include only those items necessary to finalize volume to carriers, firms, buildings, boxes, etc. The following apply to incoming secondary schemes:

a. Incoming secondary schemes should be reviewed continuously based upon operational requirements.

b. A single section incoming secondary scheme is restricted to 1,000 total items. Sections of multi-section incoming secondary schemes are restricted to 1,000 total items each.

c. Two or more carrier zones can be combined into a single scheme or scheme section, providing the mail is normally worked commingled, on a single case, and the resulting scheme or scheme section does not exceed 1,000 items.

d. Foreign scheme makeup and construction should be treated the same as an incoming secondary scheme.

e. Density may be used as the basis for constructing secondary schemes. However, construction by density is not mandatory.

220 SCHEME ARRANGEMENT

221 COMPLETE DISTRIBUTION IN ONE HANDLING

221.1 At offices with only one ZIP Code area, where complete distribution is accomplished in one handling, the following method is recommended:

Example: (ZIP Code 42951)

<i>Named Streets</i>	<i>Route</i>
*Abbott	5118
Adams Ave	
1-399	5102
400-898 even	5104
401-899 odd	5102
900-1299	5112
1300-out	**RR03
Albany E	
1-699	5110
700-1499	5108
1500-out	5105
Albany W	5109
Arthur Ct & St	5107
Atterson Blvd & Dr	5106

(*Street unless otherwise shown.)

(**Rural Route.)

221.2 At offices with two or more ZIP Code areas, where complete distribution is accomplished in one handling, the following method is recommended:

Example:

<i>Named Streets</i>	<i>ZIP Code</i>	<i>Route</i>
	429	
Aberdeen Hwy.....	03	0301
Adams Pkwy.....		
1-499.....	02	0204
500-899.....	04	0406
900-1599.....	04	0418
1600-out.....	03	0312
Albany Cir, Pl & Ter.....	04	0203
Atterson.....	02	0203

222 PRIMARY SCHEMES

222.1 At offices where a primary case is used to distribute some mail to carrier routes and other mail to delivery units where secondary distribution is required, the following method is recommended:

Example:

<i>Named Street</i>	<i>ZIP Code</i>	<i>Route</i>
	429	
Aberdeen Rd.....	04	—
Adams E		
1-399.....	06	0605
400-899.....	06	0604
900-out.....	05	—
	429	
Adams W		
1-499.....	06	0605
500-999.....	06	0602
1000-out.....	04	—

222.2 At offices where the primary distribution is to delivery units only, with all carrier separations made on secondary cases, the following method is recommended:

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Example:

<i>Named Streets</i>	<i>ZIP Code</i>
	429
Aberdeen Hts.....	04
Adams E	
1-899.....	06
900-out.....	05
Adams W	
1-999.....	06
1000-out.....	04
<i>Numbered Streets</i>	
1st to 16th	429
1-1999.....	06
2000-out.....	14
17th to 24th	
1-1899.....	06
1900-out.....	14
25th & 26th.....	06

223 SECONDARY SCHEMES

Where secondary distribution occurs, the following method is recommended:

Example:

<i>Named Streets</i>	<i>Route</i>
Adams E	
1-399.....	0705
400-899.....	0704
Adams W	
1-499.....	0705
500-999.....	0702
Bryan	
1900-2000.....	0703
2001-2001	
Rooms 100-2399.....	0705
Rcoms 2400-9999.....	0706
Somerset	
700- 799.....	RR05
900-1200.....	*HC12
	(*Highway Contract Route)

224 BOX SECTION MAIL

City schemes shall not show the box numbers assigned to boxholders. One of the following methods is recommended to show post office box information.

Incoming distribution procedures will determine the method or methods used.

a. Box Number Series Indicating the Delivery Units

<i>Box Numbers</i>	<i>Delivery Unit</i>	<i>ZIP Code</i>
		429
3100-3199	Highland Station	03
4000-4199	Southside Station	04

b. Box Sections Shown

<i>Main Office Boxes (42901)</i>	<i>Section</i>
1-999	1
1000-1999	2
4000-4999	4

c. Principal Boxholders by Name Only

<i>Principal Boxholders (42901)</i>	<i>Section</i>
Southern Insurance Company	1
Telephone Companies of America	2

225 SPECIAL SCHEME ARRANGEMENTS

Where schemes have been traditionally established on a special basis, such as by use of the grid (boundary) system, the office should coordinate continuation of the use of the special system with Regional Mail Processing to insure the scheme construction is acceptable.

230 SCHEME CHANGES

231 IMPLEMENTATION

231.1 Major scheme changes should occur only after route inspections and adjustments, or when there is a major change in the mail pattern or mail network. Otherwise, scheme corrections should be consistent with service needs. Scheme changes will not be officially posted more frequently than at the end of each Postal Service quarter. Scheme changes may, however, be unofficially posted prior to the end of the quarter, but only where necessary for mail distribution purposes.

231.2 At offices with primary-secondary distribution, scheme changes shall be avoided between November 15

and January 1. A schedule of route inspections and adjustments shall be made available to the scheme section for coordination.

232 COST

Each installation head is responsible for insuring coordination of activities between Delivery and Mail Processing Managers so that potential savings from frequent or minor route changes are not offset by other related costs. In computing those costs, consideration must be given to scheme change study time, error rate impact, productivity impact, and anticipated changes to the growth pattern in the delivery area.

233 POTENTIAL ITEMS

Potential scheme items (new streets, firms, etc. not approved for delivery) should be recorded and a current file maintained by a central control for information purposes. The file shall contain the street number or name, ZIP Code assigned, and general location.

240 RELATIONSHIP OF PRIMARY MACHINE DISTRIBUTION TO SCHEMES

241 GENERAL

In general, outgoing primary, state and incoming primary distributions on letter sorting machines will be non-scheme using ZIP Codes, augmented by no more than 99 memory items.

242 EXTREME VOLUMES OF UNCODED AND MISCODED MAIL

In complex facilities with extremely large volumes of uncoded and miscoded incoming primary mail, the Regional Director, Mail Processing, may authorize the use of machine scheme distribution for that mail. Any facility requesting such use must provide quantitative justification (e.g., number of hours in which to distribute the scheme, costs of distributing the mail manually, cost savings of utilizing machine distribution, mail volume and the like).

243 SPLSM

When outgoing or managed mail is distributed on an SPLSM and the facility cannot properly distribute that

mail by limiting the distribution to 99 memory items, a scheme will be used.

244 OTHER MECHANIZATION

Machine sorting of other than letter mail will be by ZIP Code and memory item only, unless an exception is approved by the Regional Director, Mail Processing, with a copy of the approval sent to the APMG, Mail Processing.

250 COPIES OF REFERENCE SCHEMES

Copies of reference schemes for each scheme distributed will be maintained at distribution cases as an information source. Any changes in copies of reference schemes that are required to be made by employees will be made on-the-clock. All copies of the reference schemes used or maintained on the workroom floor must bear the following notice: "This scheme is furnished as an aid in distributing mail and is not to be used by postal employees off-the-clock for any purpose, including home study." Any copies of reference schemes supplied to mailers should not contain this statement.

260 ZIP CODE DISTRIBUTION AND DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS

261 ZIP CODE DISTRIBUTION

ZIP Code distribution is the distribution of mail based on the ZIP Code in the address augmented by knowledge of the distributor acquired in training or by experience. It involves the use of the first three or last two digits of the five-digit ZIP Code number, or a combination. All distribution systems must be ZIP Code oriented, and ZIP Code distribution must be performed to the maximum extent. Visual aids may be used when necessary in this type of distribution. In orientation and training of employees engaged in mail processing include a full explanation of the ZIP Code system and its uses. See Personnel Handbook, P-23.

262 DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS

Mail, other than local, is made up, labeled, and dispatched to other installations according to instructions furnished by the General Manager, Logistics Division. Handbook M-22 contains further details concerning the dispatch of mail.

270 LOCAL SCHEME COMMITTEE

271 ESTABLISHMENT

A local scheme committee shall be established at offices with 30 or more full-time and part-time clerks assigned to scheme distribution, and all sectional centers having 12 or more full-time and part-time clerks assigned to scheme distribution. In all other offices the functions of the local scheme committees shall be a proper subject for local labor-management committees.

272 PURPOSE

Local committees function within guidelines and regulations prescribed by the Logistics Division and the Regional Postmaster General and under the immediate supervision of the installation heads. Local scheme committees will determine and recommend scheme qualification requirements, including assignments, study, training and the actual examination and will review programs concerning scheme failures, counseling, assistance, and other problem areas, and recommend corrective measures.

273 SELECTION OF MEMBERS

273.1 Each local scheme committee will include an equal number of management and employee representatives. Committees will be composed of two members total, except that they will be composed of four members at offices with 500 or more full-time and part-time clerks assigned to scheme distribution.

273.2 The manager of mail processing (or his equivalent) or his designee shall be the permanent committee chairman.

273.3 To be eligible for and continue in committee service, employee members must hold positions requiring scheme distribution, must have had at least three years scheme distribution experience, and must have a scheme record with no recurring failures.

273.4 Alternate members, consisting of one management and one employee member, shall be designated to serve on the scheme committee in the absence of one of the committee members.

273.5 If additional members (technicians) are needed for specific agenda items, the agenda shall indicate

their attendance with the approval of the committee chairman.

273.6 The employee organization with exclusive recognition for the clerk craft, in accordance with the terms of the National Agreement, shall designate the employee committee member(s).

274 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND AGENDA

Local scheme committees shall meet quarterly and at such other times as designated by the chairman. The installation head will furnish the region a brief summary covering proceedings at each meeting. Meetings will be conducted on official time. Management and employee members shall exchange agenda items 7 days in advance of a meeting. Each agenda item will be numbered and unresolved items may be an appropriate subject for the next local labor-management meeting.

275 GUIDELINES

275.1 All committee members shall be furnished this handbook.

275.2 A copy of all schemes, directives, changes or implementations affecting scheme distribution shall be made available to all committee members.

275.3 The installation heads, upon receipt of a proposed notice of change in distribution requirements in outgoing sections, shall advise members of the scheme committee 20 days in advance of implementation of the change. (If the office does not have a scheme committee, a notice shall be posted on all official bulletin boards.) Committee members shall also be advised of proposed changes in city schemes seven days in advance of the effective date.

CHAPTER 3 SCHEME ASSIGNMENT

310 REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

311 WORKING SCHEMES 30 HOURS PER ACCOUNTING PERIOD

Schemes will be assigned to employees only when there is a demonstrated need for scheme knowledge. When management has a reasonable expectation that employees will work a scheme for at least 30 hours an accounting period, scheme assignments may be made. If more than one scheme or one section of a scheme is routinely worked on one case and the mail is presented in a commingled fashion, the 30-hour rule applies to the aggregate and not to each section or scheme individually. In unusual circumstances, in order to meet operating requirements, the Regional Director, Mail Processing, may authorize scheme assignments where the reasonable expectation is of less than 30 hours distribution per accounting period. (Copies of the approval will be sent to the APMG, Mail Processing.)

312 TWO SCHEMES OR TWO SCHEME SECTIONS

An employee should normally not be assigned more than two schemes or scheme sections. The Regional Director, Mail Processing, may approve, on an exception basis, the assignment of more than two schemes or scheme sections if operational requirements so dictate. (Copies of the approval will be sent to the APMG, Mail Processing.)

313 2000 ITEMS FOR SCHEME DISTRIBUTION

No employee will be assigned more than 2,000 items for scheme distribution. In non-scheme distribution, an additional 99 memory items may be assigned for a maximum total scheme and non-scheme distribution of 2,099 items. No exceptions are permitted to these maximum limitations.

314 JUSTIFYING EXCEPTIONS (30 HOURS, 2 SCHEMES OR SCHEME SECTIONS RESTRICTIONS)

When management can justify a need either to assign more than two schemes (or scheme sections) or to assign a scheme requiring less than 30 hours of

distribution per accounting period, the manager, in writing, will:

- a. Define the problem and explain why the standard guidelines cannot be followed.
- b. Provide quantitative justification (e.g., number of people now assigned the scheme, hours in which to distribute the scheme, costs of not having the scheme, mail volume, and the like).
- c. Submit the request, with necessary supporting data, through appropriate channels to the Regional Director, Mail Processing, for approval.

315 STAFFING FOR UNCODED AND MISCODED MAIL

315.1 Number of Employees Assigned

The number of employees assigned to the state and incoming primary schemes will not exceed the number required to process the mail from the appropriate uncoded and miscoded separations and from sources outside the receiving office. Local management must insure that mail identified as uncoded and miscoded does not contain unacceptable levels of properly ZIP Coded mail.

315.2 Staffing Determination

In determining the proper staffing level to distribute the mail from the uncoded and miscoded separations and from sources outside the receiving office, local managers should consider: the volume to be processed, operation productivities, the processing time available, and leave replacements required.

316 SPECIAL RULE FOR INCOMING PRIMARY MULTI-SECTION SCHEME ASSIGNMENTS

In incoming primary scheme distribution, each assignment to an employee must include the "A" Section, either as the only section assigned or as one of the sections assigned. Exceptions, based upon operational requirements may be authorized by the Regional Director, Mail Processing.

317 ASSIGNMENTS TO PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

When operations require that a scheme be assigned to a probationary employee, the assignment should be made as soon as possible after the probationary period begins. Where there are several new hires and only one requirement for a scheme (based on application of the 30-hour guideline set forth in 311 above) any method that is fair, consistent and non-discriminatory can be used to determine who receives the scheme assignment.

318 SCHEME ASSIGNMENT REVIEW

Each facility having employees with scheme responsibilities must continually review the appropriateness of scheme assignments and the number of employees assigned each scheme, and be able, at all times, to identify each individual assigned a scheme, and the scheme assigned.

319 RELIEVING EMPLOYEES OF SCHEME ASSIGNMENTS

Employees no longer required for scheme distribution should be relieved of their scheme assignments in writing. Forms 3974, *Verification of Distribution Performed*, should also be annotated, and a copy of the written notification should be attached to it. (See Exhibit 540.) Abide by the National Agreement and local agreements with regard to seniority and reposting.

320 USE OF NON-SCHEME QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES**321 OVERTIME**

For overtime work involving scheme distribution, full-time employees who do not possess scheme responsibilities are not considered to have the necessary skills and therefore should not be part of the overtime desired list selection procedure. However, such employees who have no scheme knowledge or some scheme knowledge may be assigned to scheme distribution (including to overtime work after the overtime desired list selection procedure exhausts employees possessing scheme responsibilities). In such instances, visual aids or reference materials will be provided to allow accurate mail distribution. Such employees will not be held accountable for scheme knowledge proficiency, but they will be held accountable for the accuracy of the distribution performed.

322 REGULAR USE OF NON-SCHEME QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES

If employees who do not currently have scheme responsibilities are regularly working a scheme, additional scheme assignments should be made consistent with these guidelines.

CHAPTER 4 SCHEME TRAINING

410 SCHEMES FOR ASSIGNED AND BID POSITIONS

411 ASSIGNED SCHEMES

411.1 Employees who are assigned schemes by the Postal Service will receive on-the-clock study time as necessary, up to the amount provided herein. (See 432.)

411.2 All scheme training must be accomplished on postal premises. Should operational requirements so dictate, employees' schedules may be changed temporarily so that they can attend formal scheme training sessions with no "out of schedule overtime" liability. (See 434 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*, (ELM)).

412 BIDS

412.1 Except as provided in 412.2, on-the-clock study time will not be provided for any employee who bids for a preferred duty assignment which requires scheme knowledge as a prerequisite to permanent filling of the assignment. (See Article XXXVII of the 1978 National Agreement.) If the senior bidder desires the use of manual scheme training materials, they will be made available for use only on postal premises. Off-the-clock training should be scheduled by the PEDC manager to take place immediately prior to the start of the employee's tour of duty, to the extent possible within the confines of operational feasibility. Only the senior bidder shall be afforded the use of training materials and study time scheduled will be provided at the rate of one hour for every sixteen items in the scheme. An employee who fails to qualify on a voluntary bid will remain in the present duty assignment. Immediately after the end of the deferment period, the senior bidder then qualified shall be permanently assigned.

412.2 Appropriate on-the-clock study time will be afforded to the senior employee who bids for a duty assignment requiring scheme knowledge and who is not qualified on the essential scheme:

a.) after abolishment or written notice of abolishment of the employee's duty assignment by management; or

b.) after failing to retain a duty assignment due to reposting because of change in starting time, duties, or non-scheduled work days; or

c.) due to involuntary reassignment;

provided such employee has not begun on-the-clock study of another scheme.

420 TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

421 ORGANIZATION

Scheme training must be organized and controlled in a structured manner. Where possible, employees should be scheduled in groups to ensure the most effective use of available facilities and training personnel. Scheme training should take place in an environment conducive to effective learning. All materials necessary for the accomplishment of scheme training will be supplied to the trainees by management. If an employee is directed to prepare any training materials, such time will be paid and will not be considered part of the allotted paid study time. These may include, but are not limited to, standard or miniature cases, pencils, maps, paper, carrier listings, street listings, lists of scheme items, flash cards, etc. Trainees may not remove these items from postal premises under any conditions.

422 CONTROL OF TRAINING MATERIALS

Scheme training materials are to be controlled by the PEDC Manager. They are not to be used or released except as expressly permitted in this handbook.

423 TRAINING AT FACILITIES NOT HOUSING A PEDC

All facilities fall within the service area of a PEDC. The training guidelines stated here must be complied with in *all* facilities. References to training activities and requirements at the PEDC should therefore be read to include training activities and requirements at any facility engaging in training. All training must be conducted by employees who are certified as trainers by the PEDC manager. Training in facilities not housing a PEDC poses special problems due to frequent

lack of dedicated training space and training experience. In such facilities, special attention must be paid to the need for coordination between the local officials who will conduct the training and the PEDC Managers and staff who are responsible for certifying the local trainers (who may, for example, be supervisors) and for aiding the local officials with advice and training materials.

430 TRAINING APPROACH

The complete detailed approach to scheme training is presented in Handbook P-49, *Scheme Training—Instructors Guide*. Following are significant highlights of this handbook.

431 ORIENTATION

431.1 General

General scheme orientation is provided only for an employee's initial scheme assignment, not for subsequent assignments. The orientation is designed to instruct the trainee in techniques of scheme distribution and methods of learning a scheme. Areas to be covered include, but are not limited to, the proper use of the training materials, scheme content, scheme function in the distribution process, how to hold mail and place it in a case, proper way to approach a case, etc. The orientation should be scheduled for a single two-hour session.

431.2 Specific Orientation Information

In addition to the general items stated in 431.1, each employee must be told:

- a. The allotted time for scheme study,
- b. No additional time will be given,
- c. The specific training schedule,
- d. The ramifications of scheme failure.

432 TRAINING GUIDELINES

432.1 Study Time

The total study time authorized to acquire the knowledge to qualify on an assigned or bid scheme will depend upon the number of items in the scheme. The

scheme study time will be calculated at the rate of one hour for every sixteen items in the scheme. Increments of less than sixteen items will be calculated at the rate of four minutes per item.

432.2 Training Area

In order to accommodate varying tours of duty, the PEDC will make training space conducive to learning available for scheduled scheme study during the trainee's tour of duty, or immediately before or after the trainee's tour of duty where Section 412.1 is applicable, insofar as such scheduling is practicable.

432.3 Length and Scheduling of Training Sessions

Scheme training for those employees assigned scheme responsibilities will be scheduled for each of the trainee's scheduled workdays in sessions of one hour each. At local option, however, 1½ hour sessions may be used provided 1½ times as much material is assigned to be learned during each session. Training should be scheduled to avoid the latter part of the trainee's tour of duty where there is a greater chance for fatigue. Should there be a requirement for two training sessions for an employee in a single day, two sessions not exceeding one hour each may be scheduled with an adequate break between the two sessions to afford effective learning. Extensive continuous memorization is not an effective form of learning.

432.4 Scheduling Completion of Training

To the extent possible, the training program will be scheduled to ensure sufficient time for the employee to qualify at least seven days prior to completion of the probationary period. The training program for employees bidding on scheme duty assignments who receive paid study time (see 412.2), or senior bidders upon request (see 412.1), must be scheduled to ensure sufficient time for the employees to qualify prior to completion of the deferment period as provided for in the National Agreement.

432.5 Learning Sequence

Where applicable (i.e., state or city primary schemes), the learning sequence shall be such that the employee learns the items or separations with the highest density first. For the study of scheme assignments where density breakouts are not practical (e.g., incoming secondary schemes not combined with a city primary

scheme), the employee learns the items alphabetically by carrier route, or by other accepted means.

432.6 Assistance

Instructional assistance will be made available during all scheduled scheme training. It is not necessary to have direct supervision of the trainee at all times. What is necessary is to have someone available to the trainees for assistance, monitoring of progress and verifying test results. The trainees will need to know that the USPS expects their training time to be spent in productive study or practice.

432.7 Monitoring Performance

Trainee performance in scheme study for assigned schemes will be monitored through the use of weekly review tests. The test will be administered using review tests, in accordance with P-49, *Scheme Training—Instructors Guide*. The time required for the review tests, which will be on-the-clock, will not be considered part of the allocated on-the-clock scheme study time.

432.8 Records

Form 2432, *Individual Training Progress Record*, will be used to record study hours and to document the trainee's performance on the review test.

432.9 Machine Application of Schemes

Schemes to be applied through machine distribution will be learned in accordance with this handbook.

433 PRODUCTIVE MANUAL SCHEME DISTRIBUTION

433.1 Use

Management is to provide productive scheme distribution opportunities where feasible to manual scheme trainees to reinforce formal training. The trainees should be placed in a productive work setting where they are actually performing the distribution using the scheme being studied. An employee should be able to distribute 75% of the scheme mail volume accurately before productive scheme distribution is implemented.

433.2 Time

Productive scheme distribution time will be charged to operations. The amount of time will vary depending on availability of mail, dispatch deadlines, and other operational considerations. Productive scheme distribution time is in addition to the allotted paid scheme study time.

433.3 Monitoring Performance

On-tour mail processing and training personnel must monitor the effectiveness and accuracy of the trainee's performance in productive scheme distribution, through daily sampling of distributed mail. Although no written record is required for productive scheme distribution, feedback on difficulties encountered by trainees should be provided to training personnel so that necessary assistance can be provided.

434 SCHEME QUALIFICATION

434.1 General

Employees assigned schemes will be provided one try on the first workday following completion of the allotted training time to pass a qualification test by correctly sorting 95% or more of the cards in a 100 card test deck in eight minutes or less. Employees bidding for scheme assignments will be provided one try to pass a qualification test at the end of the deferment period. Such an employee may request and be permitted to attempt to qualify no more than two times prior to the end of the deferment period. Should the employee fail to qualify on the two early attempts, the final opportunity at the end of the deferment period will be allowed. The examination will be designed and conducted in accordance with Handbook P-49. The time used to take the scheme qualification test by trainees assigned schemes will be in addition to any paid study time provided for learning the scheme and will be compensable. (For employees voluntarily bidding, the test time is normally not compensable. However, if the test can only be administered during the bidder's normal work hours, the test time will be on-the-clock.)

434.2 Failure to Qualify

.21 If the allocated on-the-clock study time has been used and the employee fails to qualify on the assigned

scheme, action should be taken consistent with the applicable provisions of the National Agreement to disqualify, reassign, or discharge the employee as circumstances warrant. There will be no additional study time.

.22 In the event of a proposed discharge, if the employee passes the test before the effective date of the discharge, the discharge action will be rescinded and the employee will be qualified. No more than one try to pass the test will be allowed each day. Additionally, if the employee requests the opportunity of attempting to bolster proficiency, such employee may be assigned to productive scheme distribution during the period prior to the effective date of the discharge. No training materials or study time will be provided during this time.

435 SCHEME CHANGES

435.1 Learning Changes

Sections 435.3-435.4 provide a means by which distributors can learn certain scheme changes and become responsible for them through productive distribution, without formal training. However, all machine distributors and some manual distributors will learn scheme changes through formal training conducted in accordance with the preceding guidelines for learning assigned schemes. Manual distributors who are provided formal scheme change training following a substantial period of productive distribution using the changes—for example, employees who have distributed mail in accordance with a changed scheme but who, under 562, are afforded formal scheme change training after two successive proficiency check failures—will take a pre-test on the change items before beginning the formal training to determine the items which they need time to learn. Formal scheme change training ends when the maximum allotted training time is used up (no passing of a qualification test is required) or when the employee passes a test by correctly sorting 95% or more of the cards in a test deck containing all the scheme change items studied in a total time produced by allowing 4.8 seconds for each change item.

435.2 Records

Any test results and a record of the paid study time used for formal scheme change training will be recorded on a single Form 2432 maintained for each

employee to cover all changes in a particular scheme for which the employee receives formal training.

435.3 Productive Distribution

In general, minor scheme changes should be learned through productive distribution. As a rule of thumb, a change in a Postal Service quarter of 32 or fewer scheme items should not require formal scheme training to learn. Depending on the number of scheme change items over 32, it may be necessary or desirable to schedule formal scheme training. In no event are scheme changes to be learned off-the-clock.

435.4 Visual Aids

Visual aids reflecting scheme changes must be posted at the cases to assist in the learning of the changes through productive distribution. Loose lists of changes are not to be furnished to individual employees, nor are employees to be directed, encouraged, suffered or permitted to study the change items off-the-clock.

435.5 Formal Scheme Change Training Requirements, Machine Distribution

Changes in schemes applied on letter sorting machines are to be learned through formal training, not through productive scheme distribution. (Formal machine speed and accuracy training is provided only if the number of change items exceeds 10.) See Handbook M-54, *Letter Sorting Machines*.

436 MEMORY ITEMS—MANUAL OPERATIONS

Employees assigned to non-scheme distribution may be required to utilize memory items (99 items or less) in the performance of such distribution. These memory items are to be learned on the job during the course of productive work. Visual aids will be utilized to assist the employee in learning the memory items. Under no circumstances will employees be required, encouraged, suffered or permitted to study or learn such items off-the-clock. (Memory items for machine distribution will be learned on-the-clock. See Chapter 5, Handbook M-54.)

CHAPTER 5

MAINTENANCE OF SCHEME DISTRIBUTION PROFICIENCY

510 EMPLOYEES AFFECTED AND METHOD

511 EMPLOYEES AFFECTED

All employees who distribute mail are expected to do so accurately. In addition, all employees responsible for performing scheme distribution are expected to maintain proficiency in the accurate recall of the scheme items in the scheme distributed.

512 METHOD

512.1 Form 3974, *Verification of Distribution Performed*, has been designed to meet the requirements of monitoring the individual's scheme distribution proficiency. (540 provides instructions which must be followed in using the form, which is set out as Exhibit 540.)

512.2 The form will also be used for monitoring the accuracy of non-scheme distribution.

520 MONITORING SCHEME PROFICIENCY

521 RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisors of scheme distribution operations must monitor distribution by employees to guarantee distribution proficiency. Each supervisor will spot-check each scheme employee's performance one or more times each accounting period. The performance of all scheme employees, regardless of age or years of service, must be checked. Supervisors will schedule the checks throughout the accounting period so as to avoid predictability as to when the checks will be done on particular employees.

522 MORE THAN ONE SCHEME OR SCHEME SECTION

If more than one scheme or scheme section is distributed on one case and mail is normally commingled (e.g., an incoming primary multi-section scheme or combined incoming secondaries), one proficiency check will suffice. If, however, more than one scheme is distributed on one distribution case, but the schemes or sections are normally worked separately (e.g., two incoming secondary schemes or sections), a

proficiency check must be conducted on each scheme or section.

523 ASSISTANCE FOR SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are encouraged to conduct all proficiency checks. However, at installations having review clerk positions, employees in such positions may be used to assist in conducting initial proficiency checks. Such employees may not be used to conduct second proficiency checks or scheduled case re-examinations. Supervisory positions should not be established for the sole purpose of conducting proficiency checks.

524 SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS

It is not necessary that supervisors pass examinations on the schemes they are supervising. It is important, however, that they become familiar with the scheme requirements of the employees they supervise. The proficiency checks may be made by the supervisor using a scheme book for reference.

525 MPLSM OPERATOR CHECKS

Proficiency checks for MPLSM operators will be in accordance with Handbook M-16, *Engineering Data Isolation Techniques* (EDIT), Operating Guidelines, which will fulfill the accounting period proficiency check requirement where the primary assignment is to an MPLSM operator's position.

526 BYPASSING SPOT-CHECK

If a scheme distribution employee, through no fault of the employee's, has not been regularly distributing an assigned scheme, management may choose to bypass a spot-check, with notation as to why on the Form 3974, Item 6i, until after the employee has regularly distributed the assigned scheme for at least 30 days.

527 SAMPLE SIZE

The initial monthly spot-check will consist of verifying 100 pieces that are representative of the normal mail (non-scheme items such as hold-outs or directs should not be excluded). The checks will be made where the

employee usually works. The results will be recorded in Item 6 of the individual's Form 3974, *Verification of Distribution Performed*. The supervisor will discuss all errors with the employee. If, in the discussion, the employee knows the correct distribution or sortation for the errors noted, this fact will be noted on the Form 3974 in the remarks column (Item 6i). Knowledge of the correct distribution will not affect the number of errors recorded. (For the treatment of errors in scheme change items, see 560.)

528 PROFICIENCY CHECK FAILURE

If verification reveals performance to be below the regular case examination standard of 95% correct, the employee is to be advised that a subsequent check will be made within two weeks. The employee will not receive additional study time on or off-the-clock.

529 SECOND CHECK

The second case check will be made on a case on which the employee has been the sole distributor and will consist of verifying 100 pieces that are representative of the normal mail (non-scheme items such as holdouts or directs should not be excluded). The second check results will be recorded in Item 7 of Form 3974.

530 SCHEDULED CASE RE-EXAMINATION

531 NOTIFICATION

Any employee who fails the two successive proficiency checks will be given written notification that an examination of the scheme will be conducted with live mail in 30 days. The written notice will include the date, time, and location of the examination. A copy of the notice will be sent to the PEDC Manager and a copy will be attached to the employee's Form 3974.

532 PRODUCTIVE DISTRIBUTION

During the 30-day period, the employee will be assigned to productive distribution utilizing the scheme to be tested and will perform a minimum of 44 hours distribution. All hours will be recorded on Form 3974, Item 8. If, at the end of the 30-day period, the employee has not distributed for the required 44 hours, the re-examination will be deferred until this requirement is met. Neither study time nor training materials are to be authorized during this period.

533 CONDUCTING THE RE-EXAMINATION

The test will be conducted by a member of the PEDC staff or a supervisor who is not the immediate supervisor of the employee. The mail used for this test must be examined by a supervisor familiar with the operation to determine that it is representative of the normal flow. Non-scheme items, such as holdouts or directs should not be excluded. Two hundred pieces of representative mail will be supplied by the supervisor to the designated examiner, who will again confirm the count and then allow the employee 16 minutes for distribution into a standard case. The examination will be conducted under controlled circumstances to ensure a fair test environment, preferably on the workroom floor. Reference boards are not permitted and a clean case must be used. Since reference boards are not permitted, employees are to be informed prior to the case re-examination that low density (non-scheme) items should be placed into the unknown separation. The pieces properly placed into the unknown separation will not be counted as errors. If an unknown separation does not exist, the mail should be set aside and reviewed by the supervisor. Should the workroom floor not provide a suitable test environment, any site which provides a fair and suitable examination area may be used.

534 EXAMINER RESPONSIBILITY

The examiner will confirm the distribution of the 200 pieces, reviewing with the employee the count, the number of pieces correctly distributed, the number incorrectly distributed and the percentage correctly distributed. An error is any piece of mail not sorted to the designated separation. The results of this examination will be recorded and maintained on Form 3974, Item 9. Failure to distribute accurately 190 pieces of mail (95% correct) within 16 minutes will constitute case re-examination failure. In this case, a copy of the Form 3974 and any attachments will be placed in the Employee's Official Personnel Folder for appropriate action.

535 CASE RE-EXAMINATION FAILURE

If an employee fails a case re-examination, that fact may be relied upon as evidence of unsatisfactory performance, and the employee may be reassigned or disciplined, up to and including discharge, consistent with the terms of the National Agreement. No case checks or case re-examinations for the purpose of

modifying the action taken as a result of unsatisfactory performance are permitted. Neither study time nor training materials are authorized.

540 COMPLETION OF FORM 3974, *Verification Of Distribution Performed* (EXHIBIT 540)

541 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

541.1 Form 3974 should be initiated at the beginning of each calendar year for each employee assigned a scheme, or whenever an employee is assigned or awarded a scheme other than at the beginning of the calendar year. The form must be filled out by someone other than the employee.

541.2 Form 3974 can also be used for checking non-scheme employees for accuracy.

541.3 If more space is required, add additional forms.

541.4 At the end of each calendar year, regardless of the number of proficiency checks, the forms are to be filed at the PEDC. If no PEDC exists, a separate file is to be established. All forms are to be retained indefinitely. (This includes forms for employees who have been relieved of schemes, left unit, etc.)

542 ITEMS 1-5

The following information is required for Items 1-5:

Item 1 – Year

Item 2 – Name of the Employee

Item 3 – Social Security Number of the Employee

Item 4 – Scheme Assigned to the Employee

Item 5 – Employees Tour of Duty

543 ITEM 6 VERIFICATION

543.1 This Item of the form is to contain:

a. *Date of Check*. (Each employee assigned a scheme is to have a proficiency check not less than once each accounting period.)

b. *Scheme Proficiency*. If an employee is checked on the scheme shown in Item 4, the scheme proficiency block is to be checked.

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c. *Non-Scheme Accuracy*. If an employee is checked on non-scheme distribution (ZIP Code), the non-scheme accuracy block is to be checked.

d. *No. of Pieces*. Each check is to consist of verifying 100 pieces of distributed mail.

e. *% Correct*. The percent of pieces correctly distributed is to be entered here.

f. *Checked By*. The supervisor or employee in a review clerk position who conducted the proficiency check must initial the block.

g. *Pass*. If the employee passes the check, with 95% or better correct, the Pass block is to be checked.

h. *Fail*. If the employee fails the check (less than 95% correct), the Fail block is to be checked.

i. *Remarks*. The supervisor may use this block for remarks such as whether or not the employee knew the correct distribution of the pieces incorrectly distributed.

543.2 If an employee is not available for a check for a 30 day period, the reason should be noted across the columns on the next vacant line (e.g., detailed, extended sick leave, annual leave, etc.)

543.3 If an employee is officially relieved of a scheme, leaves the unit and goes to a unit where the scheme is not required, etc., enter the date and enter an explanation across the columns next to the date, "Relieved of Scheme Responsibility," "Retired," etc.

543.4 If an employee performs below the standard of 95% correct, a second proficiency check is to be conducted in two weeks and the results recorded in Item 7.

544 ITEM 7, SECOND PROFICIENCY CHECKS

544.1 This item of the form is to contain:

a. *Failure Date*. The data on which the employee failed the proficiency check is to be entered in this block.

b. *Date Of Second Check*. When an employee fails a proficiency check, the employee is to be given a second check within two weeks following the failure.

c. *No. Of Pieces.* A second proficiency check is to consist of verifying 100 pieces of distributed mail on a case on which the employee has been the sole distributor.

d. *% Correct.* The total number of pieces correctly distributed should be divided by the total number of pieces distributed to determine the percent correct.

e. *Supervisor Name.* A second proficiency check may only be conducted by a supervisor. The name of the supervisor conducting the check is to be entered in the block.

f. *Pass.* If the employee passes the second check, with 95% or better correct, the Pass block is to be checked.

g. *Fail.* If the employee fails the second check (less than 95% correct), the Fail block is to be checked.

h. *Remarks.* The supervisor may use this block for remarks, such as whether or not the employee knew the correct distribution of the pieces incorrectly distributed.

544.2 If an employee fails a second proficiency check, Item 8 of the form is to be completed and a Case Re-examination is to be conducted in 30 days.

545 ITEM 8, DISTRIBUTION RECORD FOR 30-DAY CASE RE-EXAMINATION

545.1 This Item of the form is to contain:

a. *Date.* Each date on which an employee is given productive distribution is to be entered.

b. *Total Distribution Time.* The total amount of time in hours and minutes spent in productive distribution for each date listed is to be entered in this block.

c. *Supervisor Name.* The name of the supervisor recording the time spent in productive distribution is to be entered in the block.

d,e,f. Same as a,b,c. All columns on left (a,b,c) should be completed before using the columns on the right (d,e,f).

545.2 An employee must receive a minimum of 44 hours distribution during the 30-day period prior to the Case Re-examination. If this is not possible, the

30-day period may be extended until the 44 hours are reached.

546 ITEM 9, SCHEDULED CASE RE-EXAMINATION RESULTS

546.1 This item of the form is to contain:

a. *Date.* The date on which the case re-examination was conducted.

b. *No. Of Pieces.* A case re-examination is to consist of verifying 200 pieces of mail distributed in 16 minutes as defined in 533.

c. *% Correct.* The total number of pieces correctly distributed in 16 minutes should be divided by the 200 pieces of live mail to determine the percent correct.

d. *Pass.* If the employee achieves 95% or better correct, this block should be checked.

e. *Fail.* If the employee achieves less than 95% correct, this block should be checked.

f. *Remarks.* The supervisor may use this block for remarks.

g. Examiner

(1) *Name.* The examiner's full name is to be printed or typed in this block.

(2) *Signature.* The signature of the examiner is to be entered in this block.

546.2 The case re-examination is to be conducted by a member of the PEDC staff or a supervisor who is not the immediate supervisor of the employee.

546.3 If an employee fails a case re-examination, refer to 535.

550 COMMON AND RECURRING ERRORS IN DISTRIBUTION

551 REPORTING METHODS

Form 1617, *Missent Mail Notice*, and Form 1639, *Carriers' Report of Recurring Missorted Mail*, are used for reporting missent and missorted mail. From these

and all other sources, lists of common and recurring errors noted in distribution of incoming and outgoing mail should be prepared. Lists should show primary and secondary errors separately.

552 USE OF DATA

Copies of the error lists shall be posted in the work area on cases and bulletin boards and furnished to supervisors. A copy of the list shall be maintained at the installation for appropriate review by responsible postal officials.

553 PROPER USE OF FORM 1639

553.1 Carrier supervisors and station superintendents must take the following actions to obtain the desired results from the use of Form 1639:

- a.* Require carriers to prepare Form 1639 when they notice that recurring errors involving certain blocks are being made by clerks.
- b.* Require carrier supervisors to observe the number of missorts and, if carriers are not reporting errors on Form 1639, take the necessary action to assure proper reporting.
- c.* Forward Forms 1639 to the tour superintendent or other designated supervisor at the secondary distribution unit.

553.2 Tour superintendents or designated supervisors at secondary distribution units will take the following actions:

- a.* Separate Forms 1639 by secondary units and give them to the secondary unit supervisor involved;
- b.* Require secondary unit supervisors to sort Form 1639 daily by the route number reporting the error. At irregular periods during the tour, withdraw mail from the separations for the routes reporting errors to determine which clerk or clerks are making similar errors. The supervisor should advise the clerk of an error when one is noted. If it is found that a clerk is making errors frequently, the supervisor should make a verification of distribution performed, following the instructions in 520.

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554 PROPER USE OF FORM 1617

554.1 PS Form 1617 is a multi-purpose form completed at Associate Offices to report errors in the makeup of mail received from Sectional Center Facilities or at delivery units to report errors in the makeup of mail received from secondary distribution units.

554.2 Supervisors responsible for the distribution of mail at Associate Offices must take the following actions to obtain the desired results from the use of Form 1617:

- a.* Prepare Form 1617 when 10 or more errors in packages, trays, or loose packs are received from the SCF;
- b.* Prepare Form 1617 when a missent sack or tray of mail is received from the SCF. The label must be attached to the completed form.
- c.* Complete Form 1617 in sufficient detail to permit proper analysis of the forms by the origin office;
- d.* Forward Forms 1617 directly to the office where the errors occurred.

554.3 Tour superintendents or designated distribution supervisors at the originating office will take the following actions:

- a.* Review all Forms 1617 received to determine responsibility for the reported errors;
- b.* Forward the Forms 1617 to the responsible unit supervisor for corrective action;
- c.* Require the supervisor or a designee to make periodic examinations of the separations, trays, pouches or sacks designated for dispatch to the office reporting the errors.

554.4 Carrier supervisors and Station/Branch managers must take the following actions to obtain the desired results from the use of PS Form 1617:

- a.* Complete Form 1617 at least once each accounting period reporting all missent mail, by class and category, received that day by the carriers and the Lock Box Unit;
- b.* Forward Form 1617 to the manager, distribution, tour superintendent or other designated supervisor.

554.5 The manager, distribution, tour superintendent or designated supervisor shall take the following actions:

a. Review all Forms 1617 received to determine the extent of missent mail.

b. Separate Forms 1617 by the secondary distribution unit involved and give to the responsible supervisor for corrective action.

.53 Require the supervisor or a designee to make periodic examination of the separation, tray, pouches, or sacks designated for dispatch to the delivery unit reporting the missent mail.

560 ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SCHEME CHANGES

561 FORMAL SCHEME TRAINING

Employees who complete formal scheme training (see

436.1) are thereafter held accountable for knowing the scheme changes.

562 PRODUCTIVE DISTRIBUTION

Employees learning scheme changes through productive distribution (see 436.3-436.4) will not be held accountable for knowing the scheme changes prior to 90 days after the official posting of the changes. Thus, errors involving scheme change items that have been posted less than 90 days will not be counted in determining whether an employee has passed or failed a proficiency check. Ninety days after the official posting of scheme changes, the employee will be held accountable for the scheme changes. An employee who fails two consecutive proficiency tests, however, and is scheduled for a case re-examination, will be scheduled for formal scheme change training on any scheme changes for which the employee became accountable within 90 days prior to the second proficiency check failure.

