

December 12, 2001

MANAGERS, DELIVERY PROGRAMS SUPPORT (AREA)
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS ANALYSTS (AREA)

SUBJECT: Automotive Mechanic/Lead Automotive Mechanic Memorandum of Understanding
and Preventive Maintenance Inspections

This office has received several inquiries about the intent of the referenced Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement between the Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union regarding the use of level 8 Lead Automotive Technicians to perform preventive maintenance inspections (PMIs). Before addressing the concerns about the MOU and its effect on work within Vehicle Maintenance Facilities (VMFs), an explanation of how the agreement came about may be helpful.

A task force comprised of union and management representatives visited large, medium and small VMFs. During the visits, the work performed by Automotive Mechanics and Lead Automotive Mechanics was closely observed and recorded. The task force also conducted job evaluations, reviewed complement and operating data, and performed a salary analysis comparison between the Postal Service and several industry benchmarks. The task force presented their findings and recommendations, which included establishing the current levels and the 70 percent ratio between Automotive Technicians and Automotive Mechanics, to senior management. The recommendations were accepted and implemented without change.

Prior to the MOU implementation, there were five basic VMF craft employee positions: two PS-07 positions—Lead Automotive Mechanic and Vehicle Maintenance Analyst, PS-06 Automotive Mechanic, PS-05 Junior Mechanic, and PS-04 Garageman. The post-MOU craft structure has five positions as well: PS-08/09 Lead Automotive Technician, PS-07 Automotive Technician, PS-06 Automotive Mechanic, and PS-04 Garageman. The original MOU only addressed Lead and Automotive Mechanics. It did not take the other old positions into account, so the end result could have been moving from five (5) basic positions to seven (7) positions. This point was recognized by management and negotiated to help avoid potential future conflicts. With the exception of the PS-04 Garageman, former positions were upgraded one level. In addition, the level 9 Lead Automotive Technician position was established. This craft position was created to specifically address situations where VMFs use a craft employee to lead a tour or oversee the operation of an auxiliary VMF.

One misconception that recently surfaced concerns the designation of PMI as level 8 work. Formerly, there was little consistency from VMF to VMF as to what level employee was responsible for performing a preventive maintenance inspection. Since the MOU implementation, there is still some confusion on that issue, and regarding what level of employee is responsible for performing the work generated as a result of the inspection. A PMI is a systematic means to visually and physically inspect and diagnose a vehicle on a regular basis. Vehicle Maintenance Bulletin V-07-98 explains the process in detail, and requires the use of PS Forms 4546A-F. There are two parts to a PMI: the actual inspection and the subsequent work generated by the inspection.

In the past, many VMFs utilized former PS-07 Lead Mechanics and/or Vehicle Maintenance Analysts to perform the inspections, while PS-06 Automotive Mechanics completed the work generated by the inspection. In other VMFs, Automotive Mechanics were permitted or instructed to do their own inspections, both with and without additional higher level compensation, and to complete the resulting repair work.

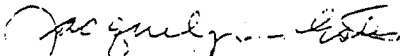
Under the current position structure, it is appropriate for preventive maintenance inspections to be performed as level 8 work. From a business standpoint performing a preventive maintenance inspection is our most critical craft task. As a best-qualified (compared to senior-qualified) position, we want our best technically skilled employees performing this type of work.

In contrast, the repair work generated by the inspection is typically a combination of level 6 and level 7 work. Obviously, a level 7 can, by the nature of the position description, accomplish all of the required tasks. A level 6 Automotive Mechanic can perform the majority of the normal tasks, but items requiring electronic diagnosis, use of computer analyzers, etc., will require either paying the employee at a higher level, or scheduling a level 7 employee to perform those applicable portions of the repair work.

The role of the level 8 and 9 Lead Automotive Technicians is not limited to performing the inspection portion of the PMI. When their other principal duties are completed, and/or the facility workload changes, these employees are qualified and expected to perform vehicle repair work as part of their normal duties.

Delivery Vehicle Operations has participated in teleconferences with several Area Vehicle Maintenance Programs Analysts and their respective VMFs to discuss and clarify issues regarding the MOU implementation. We extend an open invitation to participate in similar teleconferences for any other area that would find this approach beneficial.

Please contact Wayne Corey via cc:Mail or at (202) 268-4104 if there are any further questions or if your area would like to schedule a teleconference.



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