

November 1, 2007

Mr. Robert Pritchard  
Director, Motor Vehicle Division  
American Postal Workers  
Union, AFL-CIO  
1300 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-4128

RE: Q90C-4Q-C96014385  
Q90C-4Q-C96014640  
Washington, DC 20260-4100

Dear Mr. Pritchard:

Recently, we met to discuss the above-referenced cases which are currently pending arbitration at the national level.

The issues in these grievances are the proposed changes to Postal Operations Manual (POM) 6, dated September 27, 1995.

**The changes to Chapter 5 and 7 of the POM that were challenged by the APWU in the above-captioned cases shall be rescinded. The Parties agree that, pursuant to Article 19 of the National Agreement, within 30 days of the date of the signing of this agreement, the Postal Service shall propose changes to the POM to include the following language:**

## **532 Basic Service Records**

### **532.22 Regular Service Exceptions**

Form 5398, *Transportation Performance Record*, or Form 5399, *Contract Route Performance Record*, is completed as documentation for transportation service. Generally, Form 5399 is used at associate offices to document service for a specific highway contract route (HCR) and Form 5398 is used to record every HCR trip scheduled to serve that facility. The administrative official reviews these forms and takes any necessary action. Forms 5398 and Form 5399 are filed at the office that completes them.

## **534 Exceptional Service Types**

### **534.5 Extra Trips**

The administrative official is authorized to order a contractor to perform additional trips between points regularly served. If another official requires an extra trip, he must make request to the administrative official of the route. Note: a. Form 5397. Each trip certified for payment must be supported by Form 5397. The original is retained in the office of the administrative official. When need for additional trips is anticipated, postmasters and heads of other facilities are furnished with Forms 5397 in advance. When an additional trip is required by a postmaster or other manager who does not stock Form 5397, the administrative officer provides a Form 5397 to cover the additional trip. b. Supporting Document. The supporting document is the performance record normally maintained by the installation (i.e. Form 4660 for BMCs and Form 5398 or 5399 for other installations).

## **710 General**

### **711 Scope of Material**

This chapter covers in a general way (a) operating policies and procedures for USPS drivers and vehicles and (b) the maintenance and repair of USPS-owned vehicles. (See 713.1 for definitions)

## **712 Scope of Fleet Management**

### **712.1 Fleet Operations**

Fleet operations encompasses local transportation operations, new vehicle requests, vehicle hire, vehicle assignment, vehicle utilization and requirements, accident investigation, dock and maneuvering area design, traffic flow, container operations, and driver training.

### **712.2 Fleet Maintenance**

Fleet maintenance encompasses organization and management controls; maintenance standards and schedules; equipment, parts, supplies, and fuel; operating and budget records; and vehicle maintenance facility (VMF) management. Related definitions follow:

- (a) Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) – a postal facility engaged in the repair and maintenance of USPS – owned vehicles.
- (b) Auxiliary VMF – a detached vehicle maintenance and repair unit functioning in a supportive capacity to VMF.
- (c) Vehicle Post Office – a post office or other operating unit which has USPS – owned or hired vehicles.
- (d) Perimeter Office – a post office or other operating unit which has USPS-owned or hire vehicles but which does not have management authority over a VMF. However, every perimeter office is assigned to a specific VMF for technical guidance and support on maintenance matters.

## **713 Vehicles Used By USPS**

### **713.1 Postal Vehicle Service**

PVS vehicles are under the jurisdiction of managers at designated offices. They are operated by USPS personnel and consist of:

- (a) USPS – owned vehicles – vehicles purchased by the USPS.
- (b) Hired vehicles – vehicles hired by the USPS.
  - 1. From commercial sources
  - 2. From letter carriers

### **713.2 Highway Contract Service**

These vehicles are managed and operated by contract personnel, as described in part 531, *Highway Contract Routes*. Contract vehicles are not covered by the USPS fleet management program except when:

- (a) Turned over to the USPS for unloading mail at its destination (see 735.1b)
- (b) They require emergency maintenance (see 743.2)

### **714 Motor Vehicle Service**

Motor vehicle service (MVS) is a specific category of vehicle service. It pertains only to vehicle movement of bulk quantities of mail. This is distinct from other vehicle operations, such as vehicle movement of mail by letter carriers for delivery and collection.

Note:

- (a) MVS vehicles are usually very large vehicles, some weighing more than 5 tons.
- (b) MVS drivers are motor vehicle craft employees, rather than letter carriers, etc.  
(See also 721.1)

## **715 Vehicle Personnel**

### **715.2 Perimeter Offices**

The position of vehicle operations maintenance assistant (VOMA) may be authorized at a perimeter office and is approved by the Manager, Vehicle Maintenance. The VOMA administers the vehicle operations and maintenance program.

## **716 Vehicle Responsibilities**

### **716.1 Headquarters**

The Office of Vehicle Operations develops vehicle operating and maintenance programs, standards, and criteria for guidance of field personnel.

### **716.2 Areas**

The Manager, Transportation Networks, of each Area is responsible for:

- (a) Enforcing the policies and directives issued by the Office of Surface Operations, and
- (b) Reporting to the Office of Surface Operations at Headquarters all items which impact on the operation and maintenance of vehicles.

### **716.4 Manager, Fleet Operations**

The Manager, Fleet Operations, is responsible for vehicle maintenance, budget management, manpower control, and driver training (See Handbook PO-701) for the VMF post office to which he reports.

### **716.6 Drivers**

Every USPS driver, regardless of craft or position, is responsible

- (a) for the proper care and handling of vehicles, in his custody by following the rules in 723 and
- (b) for immediately informing his supervisor of the revocation or suspension of his state driver's license.

## **720 Drivers and Driving Requirements**

### **721 Driver Categories**

#### **721.1 Vehicle Drivers**

Most drivers of PVS vehicles (see 713.1 for definition) fall into two broad categories:

- (a) Letter carriers who drive vehicles to deliver and collect mail
- (b) Motor vehicle service (MVS) drivers who transport bulk quantities of mail. MVS drivers are motor vehicle craft employees.

There are two divisions:

- (1) Motor Vehicle Operators – drive all postal vehicles except tractor-trailers and spotter tractors
- (2) Tractor-Trailer Operators – drive tractor-trailers and spotter tractors.

#### **721.2 Equipment Drivers**

These employees drive rider-operated industrial mobile equipment, such as fork lifts.

### **722 Driver Licensing**

#### **722.1 Applicability**

Driver licensing provisions apply to all offices which have motor vehicles or rider operated industrial mobile equipments operated by USPS personnel.

#### **722.2 Requirements**

##### **.21 Minimum Requirements**

Any applicant for a driving position must meet the following minimum requirements:

- (a) Must be 18 years old or more
- (b) Must have a valid state driver's license issued by the state in which the installation is located or the state in which the applicant currently resides.
- (c) Must have his past driving record verified.
- (d) Postal employees routinely receive and must respond to inquiries from supervisors and customers. Employees must therefore have a basic competence in speaking and understanding English.

## **722.3 Driving Privileges**

### **.31 General Regulations**

No employee may drive any vehicle or equipment on official business until he has qualified for and has been granted driving privileges.

## **723 Driving Rules**

### **723.2 Passengers**

National policy on passengers is reflected in the Appendix of Handbook EL-801, Supervisor's Safety Handbook. It reads as follows:

"Only authorized passengers are permitted to ride in postal owned, GSA owned, rental or contract vehicles (including employees' privately owned vehicles when used in postal operations). All passengers must use seatbelts. Where conventional passenger seats have not been provided in the vehicle, an approved auxiliary seat, facing forward, and equipped with a backrest and seatbelt must be used. Sitting in other than an approved seat or standing in a postal vehicle while the vehicle is in motion is prohibited."

### **723.42 Repair Tag**

Drivers must check defects requiring attention on Form 4565, Vehicle Repair Tag, and indicate possible trouble, if known.

### **723.45 Emergency Kits/Fire Extinguishers**

Emergency warning device kits and fire extinguishers (see DOT Standard 125) may be carried on any vehicle, but must always be carried on vehicles with 1 ton or more capacity used in the following services:

- (a) Postal-owned motor vehicles regularly scheduled for intercity and airport runs.
- (b) Postal-owned motor vehicles regularly scheduled for use as wreckers.
- (c) Private, hired, contract, or leased motor vehicle equipment operated by Postal personnel or by the owner or lessor.

### **723.5 Accident Reports**

Standard Form 91 (SF-91), *Operator's Report of Motor Vehicle Accident*, must (a) be carried in every motor vehicle owned or operated by the Postal Service and by each employee using a bicycle or light vehicle and (b) be filled out by the driver of any vehicle involved in an accident. See also 736.

## **724 Driver's Training**

### **724.2 Types of Training**

Types of driver training include:

- (a) Initial driver training.
- (b) Driver improvement training for all licensed drivers.
- (c) Remedial driver training.

### **724.4 Motor Vehicle Service**

MVS drivers (see 721.1b for definition) may need special training in the loading, securing, and unloading of containers full of mail or empty equipment. For further information on this subject see:

- (a) Handbook PO-701 Fleet Management
- (b) Handbook PO-502 Container Methods

### **724.6 Reference**

Details of training for all employees who must drive vehicles are specified in Handbook P-23, *Orientation and Craft Skill Training*, or current handbook.

## **725 Driver Contest and Awards**

Awards provide incentives to both management and driver to improve accident prevention and safe driving. The Postal Service participates in the following:

- (a) The annual award for Meritorious Performance in Motor Vehicle Safety.
- (b) The National Safety Council's National Fleet Safety Contest.
- (c) The National Fleet Safety Council's Safe Driver Award.

## **730 Vehicle Operations**

### **731 Request's for Vehicles**

#### **731.2 For New Vehicles**

When new vehicle requirements cannot be met by the existing assigned fleet, submit Form 4515, Vehicle Assignment Justification and Request, in accordance with Headquarters current policies and procedures.

### **732 Postal Vehicle Service vs. Highway Contract Service**

#### **732.1 Types of Service**

There are two general types of vehicle service – *Postal Vehicle Service and Highway Contract Service*. (See 713 for definitions).

#### **732.2 National Agreement Provisions**

The provisions of Article 32.2.F governs the subcontracting of transportation and states:

“For all routes for which the Union submitted a cost comparison, if a contract is awarded, the Union will be furnished the cost of such contract.”

### **733 Vehicle Schedules**

The Operations manager(s) is responsible for (a) preparing PVS schedules to meet delivery and mail processing requirements and (b) preparing Form 4533, MVS Schedule, for all intracity and/or intercity service performed by PVS or letter carrier.

### **734 Vehicle Dispatching**

#### **734.3 Two-Way Radio Control**

Managers of offices with tractor-trailer operations and nonscheduled service may request installation of two-way radio equipment. The decision is made locally.

### **735 Inspections and Reports**

#### **735.1 Inspection of Hired Vehicles**

##### **.11 Policy.**

USPS personnel must inspect all hired vehicles and vans any time they are turned over to USPS custody.

Note:

- (a) For vehicles which are hired by the USPS, use Form 4577, Leased Vehicle Condition Report.
- (b) For contract vans turned over to the USPS for the unloading of mail, use Form 5201, Mail Van Inspection.

##### **735.12 Procedure**

Both forms must be prepared in triplicate. The procedure is the same:

- (a) On Receipt. When accepting vehicle or van, make an inspection:
  1. Enter any defects noted during inspection.
  2. Sign the form and obtain signatures of owner's representative attesting to condition as recorded on form.
  3. Retain original and first copy and give second copy to owner's representative.

- (b) On Return. When returning vehicle or van, again make an inspection:
1. Note any new damage; or state that no new damage occurred.
  2. Sign the form and obtain signature of owner's representative to verify observations.
  3. Return original to file and give first copy to owner's representative.

### **735.2 Utilization Reports**

Vehicle Post Offices must document use of all postal owned and hired vehicles on Form 4570, Vehicle Time Record, or use approved current electronic data collection programs and use Form 4570/or approved program as a source document to complete utilization reports and submit the information to the office's assigned VMF.

## **736 Accident Investigation**

### **736.1 General**

#### **.11 Policy**

The USPS investigates all accidents involving USPS operated vehicles.

#### **.12 Responsibility**

The driver must complete SF-91 (see 723.5). The postmaster or official in charge is responsible for the onsite investigation of all accidents occurring within his area or involving his employees and vehicles.

#### **.13 Counsel**

USPS personnel involved in accidents occurring in line of official duty which result in court action may be defended in all cases, both civil and criminal.

## **740 Vehicle Maintenance**

### **741 Maintenance Objective**

The objective of the vehicle maintenance program is to insure safe, dependable, and economical performance of USPS-owned vehicles at minimum cost and minimum vehicle downtime. Achievement of this objective requires an emphasis on preventive maintenance rather than on repair of deficiencies. Preventative maintenance provides for scheduled lubrication and examination of all vehicles in accordance with established standards, at prescribed intervals.

## **742 Maintenance Organization**

### **742.1 Definitions**

The USPS maintenance organization is based on the concept of the vehicle maintenance facilities (VMF). See 712.2 for related definitions.

### **742.2 Establishment**

Guidelines for the establishments, acquisition, or enlargement of maintenance facilities appear in Publication 190, *Capital Investment Policies and Procedures*; Publication 191, *Capital Investment Implementation Instructions*; and Handbook PO-701, *Fleet Management*.

### **742.3 Staffing**

VMF staffing is based upon planned repair work and is established only in accordance with demonstrated need. VMF staffing must follow established guidelines by the Area. See also 715.

## **743 Vehicles Serviced (or Vehicle Service Policy)**

### **743.1 USPS-Owned Vehicles – Full Service**

The vehicle maintenance program is intended to provide complete maintenance and repair service only for USPS-owned vehicles. VMF's are not staffed to perform service for other vehicles – except as provided in 743.2 below.

### **743.2 Contract Vehicles – Emergency Service Only**

VMF's may perform service for contract vehicles only on infrequent occasions when a bona fide emergency arises. If necessary to prevent serious delay to mail, on-duty USPS employees may repair a minor defect that causes a contract vehicle breakdown near a VMF but remote from the contractor's establishment or public repair facilities. When emergency repairs are necessary, all documents must be properly coded and parts accurately priced.

### **743.3 Private Vehicles – No Service**

Under no circumstances may on-duty USPS personnel make repairs to private vehicles, except contract vehicles. This restriction also applies to private vehicles formerly owned by the USPS. (Once Standard Form 97-A, Agency Record Copy of the US Government Certificate of Release of Motor Vehicle, has been issued, the vehicle must be classified as a private vehicle).

## **744 Types of Maintenance**

### **744.11 Scheduled Maintenance**

Scheduled maintenance examinations allow deficiencies to be discovered and necessary repairs to be made when still minor in nature. This reduces the necessity for expensive, time consuming major repairs. It also reduces vehicle operations costs. Preventing a failure is less costly than correcting it after it occurs.

Note:

- (a) Scheduled maintenance examinations and generated repairs must be performed at such times that results in the least possible interruption of regular mail transportation or delivery.
- (b) Work schedules of maintenance employees must be arranged to provide the greatest number of man-hours to coincide with the periods in which vehicles are not normally in use.

#### **.12 Repair Maintenance.**

Repair maintenance consists of all repair actions resulting from malfunctions, road calls, and other abnormal breakdowns which are not corrected during scheduled maintenance examinations.

### **744.2 Commercial Maintenance**

#### **.21 Criteria.**

In general commercial maintenance and repair services should be considered whenever economically advantageous to the USPS. This may include:

- (a) Minor repair work and lubrication for USPS-owned vehicles assigned to any office
- (b) Maintenance and repair of USPS-owned vehicles assigned to perimeter offices. Provided the estimated cost does not exceed the limit. (See 744.22)
- (c) Special service work such as upholstery repair, glass installation, recapping, and subassembly rebuilding (Note: GSA contracts are given primary consideration.)
- (d) Vehicle painting which cannot be done by USPS facilities with suitable equipment and qualified personnel.

#### **.22 Restriction.**

When the estimated contract repair of a perimeter office vehicle exceeds the amount stated in PO-701, the responsible manager must contact the VMF to which he is assigned for technical advice and to determine where work is to be performed.

## **745 Policies and Practices**

### **745.2 Modification Restriction**

No changes whatever may be made in the construction of a vehicle. The standard equipment furnished by the manufacturer shall not be changed or altered, nor shall any special devices used. Any request to increase the mechanical or operating efficiencies of the equipment, such as reduced driver time, greater vehicle utilization, or increased safety shall be brought, through channels, to the attention of the Office of Vehicle Operations for consideration.

**745.6 Vehicle Appearance**

A clean and orderly appearance of the USPS fleet is an indicator of good maintenance management and is essential to the USPS image. Consequently, vehicles should be constantly scrutinized for paint deterioration and body damage.

Note:

- (a) A vehicle should be completely repainted only when the original paint cannot be restored by normal cleaning or polishing practices.
- (b) If polishing does not restore luster to only one of the colors, then repainting of that color should be scheduled. Paint touch-up on an as-needed basis prevents exterior body deterioration.
- (c) Repairs of minor body damage should be accomplished on the schedule maintenance service.

Please sign and return the enclosed copy of this pre-arbitration settlement as your acknowledgment of the agreement to close Case Q90C-4Q-C96014385 and Q90C-4Q-C96014640 in their entirety and remove them from the pending national arbitration list. If the proposed changes to the POM as specified in this agreement are invalidated by a National-Level arbitration award, those affected portions of this agreement are null and void. If this occurs, the APWU may reinstate the above-referenced grievances in writing, within fourteen (14) days of their receipt of written notification that this agreement has been voided.



John W. Dockins  
Manager, Contract Administration  
(APWU) USPS



Robert Pritchard  
Director, Motor Vehicle Division  
American Postal Workers Union,  
AFL-CIO

Date: 11-2-07