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POSTAL SERVICE



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

This is a CD-ROM approved by the US Postal Service Medical Unit to familiarize doctors with the physical demands letter carriers face in performing their duties. This may facilitate an employee's return to work. The CD-ROM is a clear pictorial guide of a letter carrier's work.

This project is a joint effort by the US Postal Service in Portland, OR, and the National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 82.

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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

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## • Typical Work Day

*This segment shows a “day in the life” of an average carrier.*

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## • Physical Demands

*This segment follows the activity requirements in a Duty Status Report to illustrate how the different job duties affect the body.*

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## • Working Conditions

*This segment specifies different kinds of routes and carriers’ work assignments.*

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## • Equipment Used

*This segment shows the equipment carriers use on the job.*

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## • Potential Hazards

*This segment shows possible hazards faced by carriers.*



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

- **Typical Work Day**
- **Physical Demands**
- **Working Conditions**
- **Equipment Used**
- **Potential Hazards**



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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Typical Work Day

The following slides show the work day of typical letter carriers. The physical demands vary from carrier to carrier, but this is a general overview of the job.

# Typical Work Day- Casing Mail

**Carriers case (sort) mail into cases.  
Carriers hold mail with left hand or arm; they  
case with right hand.**





**Carriers case approximately 250-700 letters and approx. 800-2000 flats (magazine-sized mail) each morning. Volume of mail varies.**





# Typical Work Day- Casing Mail

Flat mail usually comes in tubs that weigh approximately 25 lbs. Each tub is lifted from the floor onto the 3' high ledge.





# Typical Work Day - Pulling Down Mail from Case

Carriers pull mail out of the address separation with the right hand into the left hand or onto the left arm.







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**Timeline:**

0930-  
1000

# Pulling Down Mail from Case

Mail is rubber banded and placed into trays or tubs. Carriers then move the trays from the shelf onto dollies, into hampers, or onto the floor.



# Typical Work Day - Pulling Down Mail from Case

Mail is placed into trays or tubs and moved from the tray ledge onto dollies or into hampers.





# Typical Work Day - Carriers also load parcels into equipment.





# Typical Work Day - Some carriers load mail Into a “Baskart”





# Typical Work Day - Pushing Mail to the Vehicle

- Mail is pushed onto a loading dock using whatever equipment is available.



# Putting Mail Into Vehicle

Mail is loaded into the back of the vehicle.



# Typical Work Day - Putting Mail Into Vehicle

Mail is loaded into the back of the vehicle.





# Typical Work Day - Putting Mail into Vehicle

**Mail is also loaded onto the side tray of the vehicle.**





# Driving to the Route

Most carriers drive to the route.



## Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on a Walking Route

Carriers walk approximately 4-12 miles/day, carrying up to 35 pounds of mail on one shoulder.

Some carriers use a double bag to distribute the 35 lb. weight onto both shoulders and onto the hips.







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***Timeline:***

10:30-3:45

**Delivering Mail on a Walking Route**  
Carriers “finger” through each letter and flat in order to separate the mail to ensure accurate delivery. This involves fine manipulation.



# Typical Work Day - Scanning Mail

Carriers scan certain products with a hand-held scanner.





# Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on a Walking Route

Carriers put mail in mailslots, mailboxes, or hand the mail to customers.





# Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on mounted routes

Carriers on “mounted” routes drive approximately 10-30 miles/day, stopping to deliver mail to roadside boxes.





# Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on mounted routes

Carriers on “mounted” routes reach for mail  
on their left to place in boxes on their right.



# Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on mounted routes

Carriers also deliver to cluster  
boxes





# Typical Work Day - Delivering Mail on mounted routes

Some carriers “dismount” in order to deliver  
to cluster boxes.



# Typical Work Day - Picking Up Mail

Many carriers collect mail from Collection  
Boxes.







# Typical Work Day - Returning Empty Equipment and Mail to Office

Carriers drive back to the station and unload equipment and mail.

*Timeline:*

3:45-  
4:00





## Casing Mail in the Afternoon

Many carriers case remaining mail in the case. Letter mail in the afternoon can range from approximately 100-300 letters and approx. 400- 800 flats.



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

Resources:

US Postal Service Medical Unit -

503-276-2082

or

503-249-2215

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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

- Typical Work Day
- **Physical Demands**
- Working Conditions
- Equipment Used
- Potential Hazards





# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

The physical demands of a city letter carrier can vary on a daily basis associated with mail volume. Office duties are estimated to take 2-3.5 hours per day. Delivery duties are estimated to take 4.5 -6 hours per day.

The following slides describe specific physical demands for carrier work. Pictures follow.



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

### Standing/Walking:

**Office work - Standing up to approximately 2-3.5 hours while working inside the office.**

**Walking route with vehicle - intermittent walking to 6 hours.**

**Walking route without vehicle - Continuous walking to approximately 6 hours.**

**Mounted (driving) route - intermittent walking up to approximately 1 hour.**



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

### Sitting:

Walking route without vehicle - .5 hour.

Walking route with vehicle - 1 to 1.5 hours.

Mounted (driving) route - 3.5 to 5 hours.



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

### Lifting:

Most items weigh between 15-20 pounds and are lifted intermittently on a frequent basis.

Lifting and carrying up to 35 pounds is a requirement.

Lifting 50-70 pounds occurs on a rare basis.

Ability to lift a maximum of 70 pounds is a requirement of the position.



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

### Push/Pull:

Requires 5-20 pounds of effort on an occasional basis.

### Bending:

Occurs on an occasional basis.

### Twisting:

Twisting, on mounted (driving) routes occurs on a frequent basis.



# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

### Fine Manipulation/Simple Grasping:

Fine manipulation and simple grasping occur constantly throughout the workday.

### Reaching:

Reaching at, below or above shoulder height occurs up to approximately 2-3 hours in the office.

Reaching at, below or above shoulder height occurs up to approximately 6 hours while delivering mail.



# Physical Demands

**LIFTING UP TO 70 LBS.**



# Physical Demands

**CARRYING UP TO 35 LBS.**





# Physical Demands

## SITTING





# Physical Demands

## WRITING ON FORMS



# Physical Demands

## STANDING







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# Physical Demands

**WALKING 4-12 MILES/DAY**







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# Physical Demands

## CLIMBING STEPS



# Physical Demands

## CLIMBING UP AND DOWN STEPS





# Physical Demands

## WALKING ON UNEVEN SURFACES





# Physical Demands

## KNEELING



# Physical Demands

## BENDING





# Physical Demands

## TWISTING





# Physical Demands

## PULLING



# Physical Demands

## PUSHING





# Typical Work Day - Pushing Mail to the Vehicle

Pushing equipment full of mail takes approx. 10-20 lbs. of force. Pulling or stopping cart full of mail takes approx. 20 lbs. of force (on a level surface).





# Physical Demands

## PULLING AND PUSHING



# Physical Demands

## GRASPING







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# Physical Demands

Carriers “finger” through each letter and flat in order to separate the mail to ensure accurate delivery. This also involves grasping with the left hand and fine manipulation with the right hand.





# Physical Demands

## REACHING ABOVE SHOULDER



# Physical Demands

## REACHING FORWARD

The carrier's hand reaches forward to the case address separation approximately 1'-2' from the body.





# Physical Demands

## DRIVING A VEHICLE





# Physical Demands

## TEMPERATURE EXTREMES



# Physical Demands

## HIGH HUMIDITY





# Physical Demands

**FITTING IN THE VEHICLE (carrier is 6'7")**



# Physical Demands

**REACHING THE GAS PEDAL (Carrier is 4'9")**





# Physical Demands

## PUTTING MAIL IN MAILSLOTS





# Scheduling Challenges

**WORKING QUICKLY, SAFELY AND ACCURATELY**





# Interpersonal Relations

## COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS



# Interpersonal Relations

## DISCUSSING DAILY WORK REQUIREMENTS WITH SUPERVISORS





# Emotional Demands

## DEALING WITH TRAFFIC





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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Physical Demands

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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Working Conditions

The following slides show the different working conditions experienced by carriers due to variations in routes.



# Working Conditions

Volume of mail varies with the time of year and type of route. Walking routes have less mail. Driving routes have more mail.



# Working Conditions

**This carrier on a business route spends four (4) hours or more inside the office casing (sorting) mail.**





# Working Conditions

The total number of trays and/or tubs of mail can range from 7-15 containers of mail.





# Working Conditions

**Some carriers could walk up and down hundreds of stairs each day.**



# Working Conditions

Some carriers push a pushcart to businesses.





# Working Conditions

Some carriers push mail down a ramp.





# Working Conditions

On mounted (driving) routes, carriers deliver mail from the vehicle most of the day.



# Working Conditions

**Sometimes carriers need to dismount from the vehicle to make deliveries.**





# Working Conditions

Some carriers deliver to mail rooms.



# Working Conditions

Some routes combine many different delivery conditions.





# Working Conditions

**A Parcel Post / Relay Carrier loads and delivers parcels and mail sacks all day.**



# Working Conditions

A Collection Carrier drives to collection boxes and dismounts to collect mail.





# Working Conditions

Carriers work in all weather conditions including heat, rain, cold, snow, ice.



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# LETTER CARRIER DUTIES

## Equipment Used

The following slides show the various kinds of equipment used by carriers.

# Equipment Used - Carrier Cases





# Equipment Used - Hamper



# Equipment Used - “Baskart”





# Equipment Used - Nutting Truck or Dolly



# Equipment Used - Large Hamper





# Equipment Used - Spring-Loaded Hamper



# Equipment Used - Hard Plastic “Pumpkin” Cart





# Equipment Used - Hand Truck or Dolly



# Equipment Used - Pushcart





# Equipment Used - Tubs



# Equipment Used - Trays





# Equipment Used - Sacks



# Equipment Used - Scanners





# Equipment Used - Satchel





# Equipment Used - Double Satchel





# Equipment Used - Individual Mail Boxes



# Equipment Used - Mail Slots





# Equipment Used - Mounted Mail Boxes



# Equipment Used - Neighborhood Box Units (NBU's)





# Equipment Used - Centralized Box Units (CBU's)



# Equipment Used - “Gang” Boxes





# Equipment Used - Most carriers drive right-hand drive, 1/2 ton vehicles.



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## Potential Hazards

The following slides show some of the potential safety hazards faced by letter carriers.

# Potential Hazards - Carriers case (sort) mail using repetitive motion.





# Potential Hazards - Lifting

Carriers lift heavy trays and tubs of mail.



# Potential Hazards - Lifting

Carriers lift trays and tubs of mail onto vehicle tray ledges (carrier is 4'9").





## Potential Hazards -

Carriers load mail onto the side tray of the vehicle even when vehicles are positioned close together.



# Potential Hazards

Carriers open and close vehicle doors.





# Potential Hazards

Carriers walk on uneven surfaces.





# Potential Hazards

Carriers walk on wet surfaces.





# Potential Hazards - Carriers walk on slippery porches.



# Potential Hazards - Carriers walk on slick, mossy surfaces.





# Potential Hazards - Carriers also walk on ice and snow.



# Potential Hazards - Dogs

Carriers fend off dogs when necessary.





# Potential Hazards - Bees

Carriers are exposed to bees and wasps.



# Potential Hazards - Reaching

Carriers often reach to case mail.







# Potential Hazards - Reaching

Carriers reach mounted mailboxes.



# Potential Hazards -

**Carriers pull trays of mail closer for easier access (she is using an ice scraper to pull tray of mail closer to her body).**





# Potential Hazards - Carriers reach to scan bar codes.



# Potential Hazards - Bending

Carriers bend to reach some delivery locations.





# Potential Hazards - Many carriers hold mail on the left arm for long periods of time.



## Potential Hazards

**Carriers unlock locks on boxes, mail rooms,  
cluster boxes which requires pronation/supination.**





# Potential Hazards - Falls

Carriers walk up and down stairs and curbs.



# Potential Hazards - Falls

Carriers walk on uneven sidewalk surfaces.



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