

National Postal Mail Handlers Union



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DATE: June 2, 2015

TO: All Local Union Presidents
National/Regional CAD
All RI-399 Swat Team Members

FROM: Paul V. Hogrogian, National President
Thomas J. Branch, Manager, CAD

PVH
TJB

RE: Craft Determination, Small Parcel Sorter System (SPSS)

We are pleased to enclose a copy of a June 1, 2015 letter that sets forth the Postal Service's determination of craft jurisdiction for employees operating the Small Parcel Sorter System (SPSS), which is currently deployed in five pilot test locations, and will be deployed shortly in twenty-six other facilities around the country. As set forth in the attached letter, the Postal Service has determined that "the primary craft for all duties associated with the operation of the SPSS is the Mail Handler Craft."

The assignment of the mail handler craft to all duties on the SPSS includes retrieval of packages from staging areas, operation of a container dumper and dumping packages onto an incline belt, the singulation or separation of all packages, the facing and feeding of packages to an induction belt, all sweeping (removing full containers and replacing with empty containers), and transporting all full containers to a staging area. The standard configuration on the SPSS includes five induction stations and 196 discharge chutes, although different configurations are possible.

More details about this assignment and the SPSS are included in the attached letter, and will be discussed in future correspondence. We also plan to circulate, as promptly as possible, additional information about deployment locations, the timing of deployment, and the actual positions to be filled.



Should you have any questions about this letter or its implementation in any particular facility, please contact the National CAD. Please note that, as stated in the USPS letter, any SPSS machine that currently is utilizing clerk craft employees should be reassigned “as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 90 days from” June 1, 2015. If you are encountering resistance or opposition from management when implementing this letter, please contact the National CAD so that we can address particular implementation problems with postal headquarters.

Please disseminate this memorandum and the attached letter as you deem appropriate.

cc: Mark A. Gardner, National Secretary-Treasurer
National Executive Board



June 1, 2015

Mr. Paul V. Hogrogian
President
National Postal Mail Handlers
Union (NPMHU)
1101 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4304

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Dear Paul:

This letter is in regard to the jurisdictional craft determination for operation of the Small Parcel Sorting System (SPSS). On April 23 members of the RI-399 National Dispute Resolution Committee (NDRC) visited the West Valley Processing & Distribution Center (P&DC) to observe the SPSS in operation. By the enclosed letter dated April 28, the Postal Service asked the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) to provide input regarding which craft should be the primary craft for operation of the machine. The Postal Service received input from both unions by letters dated May 7.

The SPSS is designed to provide additional processing support for the growing package needs of small parcels weighing 20 pounds or less. As indicated in previous correspondence and the February 10 briefing provided to the unions, the Postal Service plans to deploy 26 SPSS machines, in addition to the 5 pilot test locations.

The standard configuration for the SPSS includes five (5) induction stations on one platform with 196 discharge chutes to wiretainers, pallet boxes or spinner sack racks. Parcels are dumped onto incline belts leading to each induction station. The operator then singulates, faces and slides packages to the induction belt. There will be no keying operation associated with the SPSS. The system collects weight & dimensions of every package, and includes a Postal Furnished Equipment (PFE) Top-read camera, with OCR enhancement, to identify barcodes. Packages are discharged to the appropriate wiretainers, sack or pallet box, and sweepers remove the containers for transfer to the appropriate dispatch area.

Recent enhancements to the pilot machine, as indicated in the enclosed April 28 follow up correspondence, include:

4. Larger carrier cell size – allowing larger packages to be processed;
5. OCR capability – providing improved address and barcode readability; and
6. VCS capability – providing remote coding capability through the REC site.

The duties performed in operation of the SPSS include:

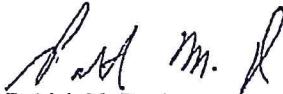
- Retrieval of packages from a staging area
- Operating a container dumper and dumping packages onto incline belt
- Singulating/separating packages
- Facing/Feeding packages to induction belt
- Sweeping packages (removing full containers and replacing with empty containers)
- Transporting full containers to a staging area

The duties performed on the SPSS are similar to those performed on the Automated Package Processing System (APPS) and the Automated Parcel Bundle Sorter (APBS), with one distinct difference. On the APBS, the employees singulating and facing the mail also perform keying duties. Where keying is involved, the work is normally assigned to the Clerk Craft. However, the SPSS, with OCR and VCS capability, eliminates the need for any keying whatsoever. Therefore, the duties performed on the SPSS are most similar to those performed on the APPS, where no keying is involved.

After reviewing the equipment operation, carefully considering the input from the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and applying the principles of RI-399, the Postal Service has determined that all duties performed on the SPSS are most similar to the duties performed by a Mail Handler. Accordingly, the primary craft for all duties associated with the operation of the SPSS is the Mail Handler Craft.

The actual number of employees required to perform the duties associated with the SPSS at any time will be determined based on local configuration and operational needs. In the test sites where the SPSS is already in operation and clerk craft employees have been utilized for machine testing, assignment of the appropriate craft in accordance with this determination will be made as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 90 days from the date of this letter.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Devine
Manager
Contract Administration (APWU)

Enclosures

(CA2015-342)