



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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• 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.

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- **Physical Demands**
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- **Equipment Used**
- **Potential Hazards**

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.



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 “Basket”



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.



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.



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Resources:

US Postal Service Medical Unit -

503-276-2082

or

503-249-2215

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- **Physical Demands**
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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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



Physical Demands

WALKING 4-12 MILES/DAY



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



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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Physical Demands

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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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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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