

Sorting Equipment Rationalization (SER)

The USPS announced an initiative designed to review, evaluate and optimize the utilization of Post Office sortation equipment. Allegedly, benefits from this initiative are to reduce physical footprint, provide a safer work environment, will allow more space for packages and future revenue through space utilization. The Postal service will accomplish this by reducing every assignment down to one piece of equipment.

Handbook provisions branches should keep in mind are:

- ❖ M-41 section 141 Equipment and Supplies reads:
 - “All necessary equipment and supplies required will be furnished by the U.S. Postal Service®”
- ❖ M-41 section 221 **Carrier Cases** reads:
 - “221.11 Small separations (1” or 2” wide) are for letters.”
 - “221.12 Wide separations (approximately 10” wide) are for magazines, papers, and large flats.”
 - “221.41 If possible, letter separations should contain not more than two numbers of deliveries, particularly on motorized routes, so mail can be distributed in the order of delivery. This is done by placing mail for one number at the left side of separation and one at the right side.”
 - “221.42 When necessary to use three numbers per separation, mail for the middle address should protrude from the case in order to sequence without rehandling.”
- ❖ M-39 section 117.2 **Determine Carrier Case Requirements** reads in part:
 - “a. *Case Configurations*. Carrier cases will be six (6) equally spaced shelves for casing letters in a non-DPS environment where either one, two, or modified two-bundle systems are used, and in DPS environments where the composite bundle work method is used. In delivery units where the vertical flat DPS work method is selected by management, carrier cases will be six (6), five (5), or four (4) equally spaced shelves for casing.
 - b. *Two Deliveries Per Separation*. Letter cases should normally have two deliveries per 1 inch separation.
 - c. *Reserve CMU Spaces*. Designate 15 separations, each 1 inch wide, on the right of the bottom Item 124 letter-case shelf or on the bottom of the right wing case for central markup. In offices that have consistently low volumes of undeliverable-as-addressed mail, CMU spaces may be located on the top shelf in the same relative position, uniformly throughout those individual offices.
 - d. *When to Use Wing Cases for Letters*. Do not use wing cases for letters unless the total possible deliveries exceed 420 or the daily-cased letter volume exceeds 2,500 letters and not until all separations in the *Item 124 case have been used*. When a wing case must be used to provide additional letter separations, this wing case (Item 143 or 144) must be placed to the right of the Item 124 letter case.”
- ❖ The M-39 section 117.1.K reads:
 - “k. *Hold Mail*. Instruct the carrier to place hold mail in a central location **only** when space is not available at the carrier’s case.

Management has instructed the AMS department to reduce the cell sizes to two addresses per 1” cell for all Curb and Other delivery and all CBU and Centralized to 1” per Zip +4 or individual box, whichever is smaller.

This initiative also requires local management to “perform carrier consultations”.

If or when management start these consultations please remind carriers of the provisions listed above. Also, carriers should request a written copy of their remarks they give to management.

Should management not consider the carrier’s input and reduce cell sizes in conflict with the carrier’s input, branches should consider the following provisions from Article 5 of the National Agreement which reads (in part):

Article 5 prohibits management taking any unilateral action inconsistent with the terms of the existing agreement or with its obligations under law. Section 8(d) of the National Labor Relations Act prohibits an employer from making unilateral changes in wages, hours or working conditions during the term of a collective bargaining agreement.