



Branch 2184

National Association of Letter Carriers

AFL-CIO
6969 Monroe
Taylor, MI 48180
Phone: (313) 295-1640

Special Inspection Request

Date _____

Dear _____ :
(Supervisor's Name)

Please consider this letter my request for a special inspection. I believe that I qualify for this inspection under the provisions of Part 271 of the M-39. It is my understanding that this special mail count and inspection is to be completed within four (4) weeks of the request. Failure of management to act within the prescribed time limit is a violation of the National Agreement and would be just cause for entering into the grievance procedure.

Sincerely,

(Carrier Signature)

City Carrier, Route # _____

Note: Prepare in duplicate

264 Disposition of Form 3999-B

Retain the forms at the work unit.

27 Special Route Inspections

271 When Required

Special route inspections may be required when one or more of the following conditions or circumstances is present:

- a. Consistent use of overtime or auxiliary assistance. (When the X-Route process is utilized, routes may be “built up” to no more than 8 hours and 20 minutes during the interim period, see Memorandum of Understanding dated September 17, 1992.)
- b. Excessive undertime.
- c. New construction or demolition which has resulted in an appreciable change in the route.
- d. A simple adjustment to a route cannot be made.
- e. A carrier requests a special inspection and it is warranted.
- f. Carrier consistently leaves and/or returns late.
- g. If over any 6 consecutive week period (where work performance is otherwise satisfactory) a route shows over 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance on each of 3 days or more in each week during this period, the regular carrier assigned to such route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within 4 weeks of the request. The month of December must be excluded from consideration when determining a 6 consecutive week period. However, if a period of overtime and/or auxiliary assistance begins in November and continues into January, then January is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted. A new 6 consecutive week period is not begun.
- h. Mail shall not be curtailed for the sole purpose of avoiding the need for special mail counts and inspections.

272 Manner in Which Conducted

When special inspections are made because of conditions mentioned in 271, they must be conducted in the same manner as the formal count and inspection.

SPECIAL ROUTE INSPECTIONS

THE PROBLEM

Throughout the Postal Service managers and Carriers spend immeasurable time arguing about "Who should work the overtime." Because of that they come to the mistaken conclusion that their problems are Article 8 problems. Most of their problems, however, are the result of **overburdened routes**. Without overburdened routes, we would have a lot less overtime to talk about. "Article 19- Handbooks and Manuals", incorporates the Methods Handbook M-39 into the National Agreement. It identifies for us what a properly adjusted route should be. Section 242.122 of the M-3

"The proper adjustment of carrier routes means an equitable and feasible division of the work among all of the carrier routes assigned to the office. All regular routes should consist of as nearly eight hours as possible."

In a 1987 award (N4N-1K-C 32218 & 34724), Arbitrator Grossman stated:

"...The Parties agree that routes must be adjusted as close to eight hours as possible..."

THE SOLUTION

We can see that a properly adjusted route is an eight hour route. If a route is not properly adjusted, Section 270 of the M-39 tells us what must be done. It contains the provisions calling for Special Route Inspections.

Section 270 of the Methods Handbook M-39 reads:

270 SPECIAL ROUTE INSPECTIONS

271 WHEN REQUIRED

Special route inspections may be required when one or more of the following conditions or circumstances is present:

- a. Consistent use of overtime or auxiliary assistance.*
- b. Excessive undertime.*
- c. New construction or demolition which has resulted in an appreciable change in the route.*
- d. A simple adjustment to the route cannot be made.*
- e. A carrier requests a special inspection and it is warranted.*
- f. Carrier consistently leaves and/or returns late.*
- g. If over any 6 consecutive week period (where work performance is otherwise satisfactory) a route shows over 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance on each of 3 days or more in each week during this period, the regular carrier assigned to such route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within 4 weeks of the request. The month of December must be excluded from consideration when determining a 6 consecutive week period. However, if a period of overtime and/or auxiliary assistance begins in November and continues into January, then January is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted. A new 6 consecutive week period is not begun.*
- h. Mail shall not be curtailed for the sole purpose of avoiding the need for special mail count and inspections (date: October 22, 1984, incorporated into December 24, 1984 award).*

Seldom does management initiate a Special Inspection as called for under Section 271.a, b, c, d, and f. If **anything is done**, management typically tries to assess the situation with a 1-day instead of 5-day count. However, Section 271.e calls for a **5-day count** when **"a Carrier requests a Special Inspection and it is warranted."** Section 271.f identifies the requirements that must be met in order to qualify for a Special Route Inspection under 271.e. Those requirements

- 1. At least 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance**
- 2. On 3 days or more in a week**
- 3. For a 6 consecutive week period.**