# USPS Headquarters Responds to NAPS Questions

*March 19, 2019* — **USPS Headquarters Responds to NAPS Questions**

Following are USPS responses to written questions and suggestions submitted to PMG Megan Brennan and COO David Williams from NAPS delegates at the 2018 NAPS National Convention at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, CT. Similar questions were combined to expedite the process; questions not specifically directed to the PMG or COO were given to the appropriate personnel at USPS Headquarters.

**Question**

PFP must be made relevant to the stakeholder:

* Total operating expense (TOE) and employee availability should be under corporate goals, not units.
* TOE percentages should be the same across the board. Current breakdown:
  + Finance—40 percent
  + Operations—30 percent
  + Level-26 to -20 post offices—20 percent
  + Level-18 post offices and below—0 percent

**Answer**

TOE and employee availability are directly related to a unit and are controlled by the individual unit. Total workhours are the appropriate indicator for Level-18 offices, not TOE. The Postal Service has and will continue to engage the management associations on PFP indicators.

**Question**

Can you reaffirm your letter on the continued abuse of involuntary reassignments by changing EAS schedules?

**Answer**

The Aug. 31, 2015, memo from the COO is applicable to changing EAS schedules.

**Question**

To COO Williams: You spoke of an area where research is being done on isolated imbalances (re: staffing). I am concerned about the levels of the district safety specialists. We all are conducting Plant and Customer Service duties and are understaffed for the job responsibilities, territory, etc.

There is potential resolution for the Gateway District: More positions and all levels increased from EAS-16, EAS-17 and EAS-19 with pay increases. Former PMG Pat Donahoe was looking into it; Headquarters Safety was looking into it, but there have been no changes.

**Answer**

Human Resources at Postal Headquarters has been conducting studies and reviews of all district jobs. That process still is under review.

**Question**

I went to the Uncasville Post Office this morning and, while in the lobby, saw contractors bringing in spot coolers. It’s very disappointing that, while we have been experiencing record heat, our employees/co-workers have had to work without air-conditioning for over a year. The units in that facility still are not fixed. Why did it take so long to get the spot coolers? Shouldn’t we be fixing the air-conditioning in our facilities for the welfare of our employees and customers?

**Answer**

One of the two compressors failed at the Uncasville Post Office in July; the system struggled to maintain during warmer temperatures. Within a week of the compressor going down, spot coolers were installed to assist during peak temperatures. Uncasville is a leased facility. The Postal Service, working with the building owner and in consideration of peak season, will begin installing new units Jan. 2.

**Question**

NCEO had projected (HP) to provide approximately 65 percent of the necessary training as indicated by MTAT. PMG Brennan mentioned we have all these tools available to us. The MTAT tool is indicating a need and it is not being used at the Headquarters level. Who determines that 65 percent of the demonstrated need for training is acceptable?

The MTAT does not account for attrition, meaning that 65 percent is actually below the real need. What is the plan to correct this deficiency?

**Answer**

We have improved the process by implementing the MTAT tool to identify needs when assigning training. We are looking into the process of automating data input to the MTAT tool, which will produce a more accurate method to identify necessary training.

**Question**

To PMG Brennan: I appreciate your awareness of the retail/fulfillment relationship. However, most of these use other ZIP codes as return addresses. Scanning scores based on five events lose out on the first two events (AE + OE) due to this customer behavior.

These pieces can score no better than 60 percent (DE, AAU and AOE). What can be changed to lessen the impact on these offices?

Is the Postal Service receiving proper payment for these pieces? (If originating on the coast, yet origin ZIP is in the middle of the nation.) What if the piece travels coast to coast?

**Answer**

Parcel return scan performance measures only three scans: accepted, available and picked up/not picked up by agent. The postage is calculated from the pickup site zone.

**Question**

You mentioned a focus on safety, which is part of our NPA. I vigorously promote safety; our employees are told to report every accident immediately. Most accidents do not need medical attention. Management must still report such incidents as accidents and do the paperwork and reports. Why can’t we just report accidents when an employee actually goes to the doctor or seeks medical attention?

**Answer**

The Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Section 821, clearly outlines what accidents are and how they are reported. Section 822 outlines additional reporting requirements for serious accidents, as defined by OSHA.

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**Question**

You discussed a solution for Mondays called load-leveling. Dayton, OH, has been load-leveling for years. However, every Monday, I receive Tuesday and Wednesday mail that I am told must be delivered on Monday; I am not authorized to curtail. I have been told the district manager must be asked to curtail mail and he is not curtailing. I have asked our postmaster and MSCO about load-leveling; they just roll their eyes.

Does the Postal Service plan to change a system that has been changed, but not followed? Plants do not work with Customer Service. Plants must move everything out; if they don’t, they must report to the district manager that everything is not clear on a telecon. It’s a vicious cycle. I then have to report after 1700, 1800, 1900. There is a penalty for being forced to deliver mail that is advanced; it’s out of my control.

**Answer**

The load-leveling initiative was implemented in order to balance the day-to-day workload in the field. Although we are not at 100 percent compliance, the initiative does lessen the amount of mail advanced into Monday expected for delivery. There always will be certain situations or locations where we do not have full compliance.

However, Plant operations support Customer Service and Delivery operations. Plant managers report to the district manager and they have full responsibility to follow the policy. The policy for all plants is to clear committed mail daily and they only can achieve that by working in collaboration with Customer Service and Delivery operations.

**Question**

To PMG Brennan: Does the USPS have any philatelic programs designed for our youth? Can we partner with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, scout organizations, churches, Head Start?

**Answer**

The American Philatelic Society sponsors the Young Philatelic Leaders Fellowship and the Young Stamp Collectors of America programs. The Postal Service has honored scouting and other organizations. The Postal Service welcomes suggestions for stamp subjects that celebrate the American experience through the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC).

**Question**

To COO Williams: As an MLP graduate, I was afforded the opportunity to attend green belt training. I’ve been told if I don’t complete the training by January 2019, I’ll have to pay out of pocket. What is your opinion on this decision without EAS pay increases? How is this possible? My project chosen by management is on Periodical 2C flats in Katy, which is 50 miles from Channelview. I have one supervisor in my office.

**Answer**

The Postal Service does not have any established policy that requires a green belt training participant to pay any out-of-pocket fee nor does it currently require a participant to sign a continued service agreement (CSA). You were afforded the opportunity for green belt training, you took that opportunity and you should see it through.

**Question**

In the Seattle District, we have been informed that it is against OSHA regulations to award employees for safety or post the number of days being accident-free. Why, then, is NPA allowed to be used to reward or punish management employees?

**Answer**

OSHA published a new recordkeeping rule, which took effect Jan. 1, 2017. Part of that rule changed established anti-retaliation protections. Incentive programs should encourage safe work practices and promote worker participation in safety-related activities. NPA incentives regarding the reduction of total accidents do not penalize workers from reporting injuries.

**Question**

To COO Williams: My concern regards Monday Mastering. For years, as a delivery supervisor, the other supervisor and I worked to lessen Monday and expand Tuesday. Why does it take so long to implement changes in the mail delivery to stations from plant?

**Answer**

As with other efforts to improve the operations, there always are opportunity areas that require more effort than others. Mail processing is extremely complex and is dependent on several moving parts. Several things can and will go wrong and require daily mitigation. That does not stop us from continuously improving our process and implementing new projects such as Dynamic Routing Optimization, improving trips-on-time, increasing equipment capacity in opportunity sites and Sunday delivery of packages.

**Question**

Have you considered using retirees to run your experiments and detail surveys? They have valuable knowledge and experience and probably don’t have to be paid as much as employees. Plus, they don’t take away from manpower at station delivery units of plant areas.

**Answer**

We have, but the retirees need to be aware that the pay won’t be in addition to the annuity they already are receiving. A retiree returning to employment is considered a re-employed annuitant; their salary would be reduced (or offset) by the amount of the annuity.

**Question**

To COO Williams: It has been reported we are going to close more plants. Is this true in the Northeast Area?

**Answer**

The Postal Service does not have any current plans for plant closures.

**Question**

To PMG Brennan: Why are telecons scheduled for after normal tours of duty and non-scheduled days?For example, telecons scheduled to start at 5 p.m. when EAS-exempt end time is 5 p.m. and telecons scheduled for Saturdays, an EAS employee’s nonscheduled day.

**Answer**

There is a current project in place to evaluate telecons, in which NAPS has been invited to participate. Telecons that add no value are under consideration to be eliminated.

**Question**

To COO Williams: Considering the Postal Service’s financial challenges, why are clerks allowed to work in PTPO offices at a rate in excess of $20 per hour, instead of a PMR at $12.83 an hour? Why are PTPO offices only allowed one MPR when the EL 312 allows more than one PMR in PTPO offices?

**Answer**

A PMR should be employed as a replacement in a PTPO. It has been determined that only one PMR should be hired as a leave replacement.

**Question**

To PMG Brennan: Regarding the Customer Experience, the appearance and attire of PSEs at window service include colored hair, tattoos, no uniforms, holes in jeans and tank-tops. Do PSEs receive a uniform allowance? Or can they wear anything they want? What happened to pride of service?

**Answer**

PSEs who are assigned as Sales/Service & Distribution Associates (SSDA D/A 81-4) who have met the criteria listed in ELM 932.111g are eligible for uniforms as outlined in ELM 933.2. ELM 931.23, “Personal Appearance,” states: “Supervisors are responsible for continually observing the uniforms of employees and taking appropriate corrective action, when necessary, to ensure employees are properly attired.”

**Question**

To PMG Brennan: The price of Priority Mail used to include two-day delivery. Now, a higher rate is charged and provides the service of delivery date and time—not two-day delivery.

**Answer**

Priority Mail includes flat-rate shipping in one, two or three business days, based on where the package starts and where it’s being sent.

**Question**

Why can we no longer go back to craft without resigning? Craft employees earn more money with raises, COLAs, etc. and are responsible only for themselves.

**Answer**

Non-bargaining-unit employees may be reassigned to a full-time regular opportunity under certain circumstances as outlined in our respective collective bargaining agreements and negotiated MOUs.

**Question**

To COO Williams: In GFA in the 325 areas, we have anywhere from three to five extra trips a week. We are required to take out pieces. The First-Class and Periodical pieces are left behind. I have notified my MPOO and addressed this at a NAPS quarterly meeting. These costs have affected service and my NPA, yet the issue has not been resolved.

I have provided documentation and overtime for my carriers and clerks. I have been addressing this on the MAQ/PAQ. We are 10 months into the year with no resolution. How long should I wait for a resolution?

**Answer**

This issue should be directed to the district manager and escalated to the area if necessary.

**Question**

Rumors are circulating that the HRSSC is closing or at least reducing staff. We are aware hiring will be going back to the field. Calls are coming in questioning our status. Usually some part of a rumor has a segment of truth; what is the truth?

I was hoping to get the opportunity to find out from the source and dispel any rumors. I would appreciate any information you can provide to ease the minds of employees at the HRSSC.

**Answer**

The HRSSC is not closing. That has been communicated many times to the staff. When HERO is fully deployed, we will assess the effect on the workload and review our needs. We will maintain non-career employees there to allow for such flexibility.

**Question**

To COO Williams: We have heard from the PMG and you that we have declining volume, which equates to fewer workhours. Can you please explain how we have added thousands of rural routes from the last count with this declining volume?

**Answer**

In FY18, we added 3,267 rural routes through the addition of 942,000 deliveries covering 51,000 rural miles and 189,000 weekly hours.

**Question**

To COO Williams: When you remove excess equipment, what happens to it? Do we get any salvage monies?

**Answer**

When machines and parts are not repurposed, they are scrapped and recycled for profit.

**Question**

To COO Williams: Regarding Employee Engagement, in the past three months while I have been detailed, I found out 10 pieces of corrective action have been issued, mostly to newer supervisors. How can we stay engaged with employees who are fearful every day for their jobs?

This really demonstrates a failure on the part of all of us to give the mentoring needed to raise new EAS employees to meet challenges. I have heard, but have not yet verified, that the “call” for corrective action came from above.

**Answer**

The issuance of appropriate corrective action is predicated on specific, fact circumstances and should be addressed at the local district level. Also, discipline should not take the place of proper mentoring.

**Question**

If Monday delivery should not include Tuesday and Wednesday deliveries, which impacts POT and back by five and six issues, why are delivery offices not allowed to curtail Tuesday and Wednesday deliveries that arise at delivery offices on Monday? Tennessee District mandates everything goes no curtailing.

**Answer**

This issue should be directed to the district manager.

**Question**

Whatever happened to wine deliveries by the Postal Services? That could provide great financial gain for the USPS.

**Answer**

Current law does not allow for mailing or shipping alcohol—domestically or internationally—by the Postal Service.

**Question**

To COO Williams: With the lack of employee compliment in AOs in F-2 and F-4, which is not something that can be controlled by the local postmaster, what can be done to expedite the hiring process in order for AOs to avoid going six months to a year before their complement is restored in order to achieve their PFP goals?

**Answer**

Implementation of HERO has contributed to expediting the hiring process.

**Question**

With technology being what it is today, why can’t the NPA scorecard be rolled out and made available within a few weeks after the month in which it’s completed?

**Answer**

There are three financial-related indicators applied at the “national” level to all NPA scorecards. These are not available until the second or third week of the month. The task of producing monthly NPA reports involves multiple systems and stakeholders.

Each of the systems has its own “cut-off” time and business rules, so the NPA team must first wait for data feeds from the individual sponsors. Most of those data feeds arrive after the 15th of the following month. Then the data is loaded and validated by the NPA team to ensure the data is applied at the correct reporting level and matches source systems. Next, the scores must be reviewed and approved by the chief financial officer and chief human resources officer before publishing.

**Question**

Why are POOMs asking postmasters to work Amazon Sundays? And if a postmaster refuses, why are they given a difficult time?

**Answer**

Increases in parcels have provided opportunities to gain revenue and new business. Hub operations should be staffed by supervisors. If postmasters and other exempt managers are needed to staff the hub, then POOMs should determine the most effective schedule that provides minimal disruption to the schedules of exempt employees.

**Question**

We need an outline for the NPA mitigation process in order to properly represent each PM NPA mitigation position. Where do we find that?

**Answer**

The Field Unit Mitigation Reference Guide is available on the Blue Page.

**Question**

Is the USPS looking at drone delivery?

**Answer**

Currently, our engineering group is researching [drones]; we’re probably on the periphery of this advanced technology. We’re exploring and recognizing what’s happening in the industry. Right now, we’re not an early adopter, but we’re certainly aware of what’s happening.

**Question**

To COO Williams: Are you saying we don’t process any OR/GREEN mail on DPS for delivery on Friday? If so, upper-management stated that we don’t have any mail in the building on Monday. Has management been informed of your policy?

**Answer**

This issue should be directed to the district manager.

**Question**

Why does the agency still believe in underpaying their VMF supervisors and managers? The pay of VMF EAS employees is based on the PS-8 automotive technician, VMF EAS supervisor PS-9 lead auto technician and PS-10 lead auto technician (A6). The difference in pay is about $5,000 less for the EAS employees versus a topped-out PSID.

I know a VMF manager who has been a manager over five years and still makes less than the PS-10 he manages. This issue has been a topic in consultative meetings for several years and the agency ignores correcting this issue.

**Answer**

The Supervisor Differential Adjustment (SDA) provides a 5 percent differential in salary to an eligible exempt EAS-15 through EAS-19 grade position that directly supervises two or more full-time-equivalent, bargaining-unit employees. Eligible employees receive the appropriate pay per ELM 412.12b., “Supervision of Bargaining-Unit Employees.”