

Delivery After Dark

With Day Light Savings Time approaching and the seasonal shortening of daylight hours, letter carriers are once again dealing with delivering mail after dark.

There is no blanket policy regarding delivery after dark because the issue to contend with is whether a particular carrier on a particular route can SAFELY deliver the mail. Bottom line, each carrier must weigh their individual circumstances about the type of delivery to be carried (door to door, walking, mounted, apartments, cluster boxes, etc.), their surroundings (unfamiliar, high crime, steps, animals and hills, etc.) and their experiences in attempting to make after dark deliveries.

Some mail delivery may not be able to be made safely after daylight hours. Most apartments have lighted entryways and don't present the safety hazards that walking on uneven terrain, up and down stairs, going door to door and being exposed to the elements would. Because carriers have the most experience and the best knowledge of what is safe or unsafe in the performance of their duties, and because they are often times held responsible for accidents and injuries that might occur while completing those duties, only the carrier, can make the decision on whether delivering after dark can be done safely.

So, if presented with a situation where you believe you'll be out delivering mail after dark, REMEMBER THAT YOU DO HAVE RIGHTS, and follow these instructions:

1. Inform your supervisor in the morning of your need of auxiliary assistance in order to complete your street duties before dark. THIS MEANS FILL OUT A FORM 3996 - HELP SLIP.
2. Notify your supervisor prior to heading out to the street that you may not be able to complete your duties on the street by dark.
3. When on the street if you realize that you definitely will be out after dark, call your supervisor and make them aware of that reality. Stress your concern for your safety and again request auxiliary assistance.
4. Assuming no help arrives and you are faced with darkening conditions, attempt to continue.
5. IF while attempting delivery, you literally experience a safety hazard (i.e. stumbling, tripping, hear dogs barking, but unable to see that threat, not able to see potential dangers using your LLV/van's outside mirrors ...) call your supervisor. Explain your situation and notify them that you cannot safely continue delivery then return to your station.
6. COMPLETE FORM 1571 - Curtailment form for the undelivered mail.

Be sure to hand the curtailment slip to the supervisor, and ASK FOR A COPY. The copy is for your protection. You could also request a Form 1767 - Notice of Hazardous Working Condition. This will help you document the safety hazards you encountered while attempting delivery after dark.

It is important to note that these instructions are not intended to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about each carrier's safety and the protection of the mail in our charge.

This is also not a blanket policy or approach. It very simply is the responsibility of each carrier to measure their safety and ensure that they are working safely. PERIOD.