

CLIMBING THE SUMMIT INTO THE NEW AGE OF MAIL PROCESSING

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In 1912, the Mail Handler Craft originated as the National Association of Postal Mail Laborers of the United States, representing postal laborers, guards, and messengers, which coincidentally was founded in New Jersey, which is now a part of NPMHU Locals 300 & 308.

During this time period, we performed among other tasks, the back-breaking labor of loading & unloading trucks. We also worked on slides that contained heavy catalogs that were initially manufactured by retail & mail order giants *Montgomery Ward & Co.* (starting in 1872) and from *Sears Roebuck and Co.* and *J.C. Penney Inc.* (the Golden Rule Store).

Over the years, our craft has transformed into the primary craft for operations of advanced sorting technology and for safer working conditions.

This transition to our great craft did not come easy. The necessity and raw ambition for increased Mail Handlers staffing started with National and Local jurisdictional victories, sorting machine modifications and transitioning from manual keying and scheme knowledge distribution to new machinery equipped with up to six (6) sided scanning technology.

The upgrading to the MARS, PILS, the USS(XL) and other similar sorters has transitioned the Postal Service away from the primitive stages of large sorters such as the Battleship in Chicago, IL with its iron and steel structure selling for up to (1) million dollars.

Other expansive Postal distribution centers in states touching the Arctic Ocean down to our favorite, Caribbean Sea location of Puerto Rico also contained tall metal structures modeled after Egyptian Pyramids with a crow's nest for distribution and containerization. Overhead Singulators are also becoming extinct at BMCs, NDCs and STCs, along with NMO Machines with slides perched on wooden 'Sawtooths' for containerization.

The PILS and the AFSM 100 with AHS and AI have also sent the SPBSs, APBSs, FSM 881/1000s and standard FSM 100s with no prepping stations, into a junkyard full of melted down rubble waiting for the next A.I. of, 'who knows what!'

This modernization and changing of the old guard involve the strategic blend of retrofitting, component and software modernization benefiting more timely customer delivery, and the Postal Service's foundation, the Mail Handlers Craft.

These transformative changes have evolved into the following machines where we are the primary craft for their operations, thus increasing our footprint into Postal Service facilities for years to come:

- **SDUS** = Small Delivery Unit Sorter (the Baby ADUS)
- **SIPS** = Single Induction Package Sorter
- **PILS** = Parallel Induction Linear Sorter
- **USS** = Universal Sorter System
- **CCS** = Cascading Conveyor System
- **FRS** = Flexible Rover Sorter
- **MARS** = Matrix Regional Sorter
- **MIMS** = MULTIPLE Induct Matrix Sorter
- **MEWS** = Matrix East West Sorter
- **EPSS** = Enhanced Packaged Processing Systems
- **HDUS** = High Density Universal Sorter
- **HOPS** = High Output Package Sorter
- **AMR** = Automated Mobile Robot Flexible Tray Line
- **MSA** = Sort to Monitor (STM) and Sort to Light (STL)

Within the Postal Network, approximately eighteen Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), including Regional Transfer Hubs (RTHs) exist. These distribution centers and transfer hubs will handle large volumes of mail requiring the installation of several different processing machines: not limited to the MARS, USS (XL), NMO Sorters. This also includes the PILS, which is exclusively staffed by Mail Handlers and has shown to be much more efficient than the APBS.



At RPDCs, High Speed Tray Sorters (HSTS) have also been transformed from being a one (1) induction station sorter into sorters with seven (7) or more induction stations for separating letters and flats onto 84 legs or more for containerization with a belt for recirculating unreadables.

With the advent of these transformative processing machines, the Postal Service continues to install one or more of these machines into existing facilities or into new facilities based on the size of its encompassing area, its population and most importantly, the volume of mail to be processed.

These substantial changes in mail processing should result in increased Mail Handler staffing and require the LDRC and the RDRC if necessary to memorialize the Mail Handlers' functions into the local inventories. Meetings of the NDRC and arbitration may also be required to determine mail handler jurisdiction.

Within each processing region, Local Processing Centers (LPCs) will be located. Some LPCs were initially processing and distribution centers of various sizes. In other cases, the work and the existing machinery are moved into a new facility or new machinery will be installed such as the SDUS, ADUS, SIPS or the PILS. These changes require the convening of the LDRC.

Under Former Postmaster DeJoy's 10-year Plan, numerous small Post Offices and Associate Offices (AOs) will continue to transition into Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs), normally requiring the installation of an SDUS (a Baby ADUS), a RBUS, or a SIPS to process larger mail volume.

Some of these S&DCs had not previously employed mail handlers, while some initially employed mail handlers, but they may have been excessed, and others have reduced mail handler staffing. In all scenarios involving operational changes, the Postal Service is required to notify the National and Local levels, including the RDRC and the LDRC, at least 45 days prior to consolidated facilities occurring and prior to new work, new machinery or operational changes occurring.

This is referred to as the Activation date. Within ninety days of the Activation Date, an Inventory should be completed.

The NPMHU LDRC member should then notify the Local Postal Official in Charge that due to new work, new machinery, operational changes or the consolidation of a facility occurring, the member requests to observe all operations to determine if there are 4 or more hours of continuous mail handler work consisting of one or more work functions within the delivery center in one or more operations designated to the mail handler craft, in accordance with the CBA's RI-399 Implementation Criteria.

National Determinations and National Grievances have made it more than probable that mail handlers will be hired at SD&Cs and mail handler staffing will be increased at LPCs and other facilities where the task involve sweeping containers from machines, loading and unloading trucks and containers, transporting mail, operating motorized equipment, spreading mail to letter carriers. Other duties include separating presort bundles, performing MTE and the preparation, separation and repairing of mail.

When the NPMHU member does not agree with management's determination/s, the member has 21 days to file dispute form/s to the LDRC by certified mail. After another meeting of the LDRC occurs and disputes cannot be settled, RDRC dispute form/s are then filed to the RDRC by certified mail. In addition, grievances for crossing craft under Article 7.2 of the CBA should be filed.

In Summary: NPMHU LDRC requests and disputes should always seek to enforce our jurisdiction and be processed in accordance with the Update MOU of 6/26/2018 and the 2/27/2024 SDC Taskforce talking points that were created by Local Presidents John Gibson, Kelly Dickey, Nick Mosezar and National CAD Representative Tom Ruther. Questions can also be directed to your Regional Director. This MOU and other RI-399 jurisdictional documents can also be reviewed under NPMHU's Online MAILS Research Portal.