

MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY REVIEW (MPFR) / OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

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In my last article, I discussed how the Postal Service is currently in the process of modernizing its network by creating Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs) that will be supported by Local Processing Centers (LPCs), and Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs) consistent with the Postmaster General's 10-year plan, Delivering for America.

As a short recap of that article, RPDCs will be comprised of individual processing and distribution centers that are consolidated into one central mega location. In the next few years, there are plans to create approximately 60 of these RPDCs. These large facilities will process all package volume as well as all originating mail volume for a region. Each of the RPDCs will also serve as a control point for its region, managing the flow of mail in its jurisdiction. This control point is being called a "node" by the Postal Service. Mail will travel in a direct flow from origin to destination point from one RPDC (node) to another (node) by mostly ground transportation.

The RPDCs are being created in either newly constructed or current large facilities that are being modernized. The RPDCs will have common operational designs, engineering layouts, types of machinery, etc. They will also utilize the fastest and most advanced automated package sorters that are available, such as the MaRS and the HOPs machines.

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Each of the approximate 60 RPDCs will be supported by several LPCs. The LPCs will be used to process destination letters and flats and will transfer mail and package volume to the region's delivery operations. These LDCs will be comprised of the current P&DCs in the area of the RPDC.

In the last several months, we have received notifications from the Postal Service of their intent to conduct Mail

Processing Facility Review (MPFR) studies in twenty four facilities. The MPFR study was formerly known as an Area Mail Processing (AMP) review. This is the process that the Postal Service uses to determine if a facility should be consolidated, reconfigured or continue status quo. We will continue to see this process take place in many facilities in the next few years as the mail processing network is being modernized under the Delivering for America plan. This is what will allow the Postal Service to designate what mail will be worked at the new RDRCs and which will be worked in the new LPCs which support them. In this edition's article, I want to discuss this process and what is involved with it since many of your facilities will go through these reviews.

In accordance with Handbook PO-408, Mail Processing Facility Review, a MPFR determines the feasibility of changing mail processing operations to improve the operational efficiency and/or service by making better use of equipment, facilities, work hours and transportation. A MPFR is the consolidation of all originating and/or destinating distribution operations from one or more Post Offices/facilities into other automated processing facilities for the purpose of making those improvements in efficiency and/or service.

The identification of what facilities are candidates for potential consolidations is done by Postal Headquarters, under the Vice President of Processing and Maintenance Operations. It is also Postal Headquarters who prepares the MPFR analysis and gathers the supporting documentation. Region and District management may provide input if needed.

Prior to starting the actual study, the Postal Service gives an informational notice of its intent to conduct a MPFR in the specific facility. This notification is given to the unions, employees, elected officials. In addition, a press release via the news media is issued to the public. The date of the notice represents the starting date for the MPFR analysis. The notifications on the ones that have been conducted thus far also included why the MPFR was specifically being conducted. As an example of this, we received an informational notification on July 12th, stating that a MPFR feasibility study was to be conducted in Augusta, GA to determine whether efficiency and/or service could be improved by consolidating mail

processing operations into other mail processing facilities, specifically Augusta P&DC into the Atlanta RPDC.

In addition to these notifications, once a MPFR has been initiated, it is also posted on <https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/mpfr/welcome.htm>. This link currently shows every facility that has had a MPFR initiated so far under the Delivering for America plan. It shows the facility's current status with the MPFR review along with all public documents associated with it. These include the Notice of Intent, Notice of Public Hearing, Initial Findings, Public Comment Summary and Final Redacted MPFR.

While doing the review, some of the considerations that are used for the MPFR analysis include projected savings, service issues and their impact on the community, transportation and logistic networks, capacity within the processing plant,

President of Processing and Maintenance Operations for his/her evaluation of whether it is to be approved or disapproved.

Upon final decision, notification is sent to the Unions, employees, elected officials and news media of what that decision is. If approved, management will begin the transition period for implementation of the approved consolidation. This transition period timeframe is normally a six-month period or less. If any reassignments and/or excessing are to occur, they will be done in accordance with Article 12 of the National Agreement.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

I also wanted to briefly cover rules for outside employment when working for the U.S. Postal Service. Recently a federal ethics document for USPS employees *Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the United States Postal*

If the initial results of the MPFR support a business case for a change in postal operations, within 45 days of that analysis, a public input meeting must occur. A notification is again given to the unions, employees, elected officials and news media informing them of those results along with giving notification of the public meeting to explain the proposed changes.

the amount of capacity that is necessary, adjustments to employee complement and equipment usage.

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After that meeting and within 60 days of the original notification of intent to conduct the MPFR, the completed MPFR analysis, along with the supporting documentation as well as the public comments is sent to the Regional Vice President for his/her evaluation. If approved by the Regional Vice President, this complete analysis package is sent to the Vice

Service was revised. This document addresses outside employment and business activities. We get asked this question often "Can I work here while working for the Postal Service?"

Some rules have not changed. Some of the activities that current employees may not do are:

- Engage in any employment with UPS, FedEx, Amazon and DHL in any capacity;
- Engage in any sales activities, charitable fundraising or for-profit business activities while on duty, in uniform or at postal facilities;
- Have an interest in any contract for carrying the mail. (Employees may not own a Highway Contract Route or HCR, but make ask for approval to work for an HCR contractor.)
- Consult on postal operations with any person who has competed or will compete for a USPS contract.

Additional information on Outside Employment can be found here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/08/2023-16811/supplemental-standards-of-ethical-conduct-for-employees-of-the-united-states-postal-service>