7 Postal Vehicle Service

71 Introduction

711 Purpose and Scope

Modal Operations and Requirements is committed to providing efficient mail movement to meet the needs of the mail processing, customer services, and marketing organizations. This chapter sets forth the major policies governing the operation of postal-owned, mail-hauling vehicles operating in the postal vehicle service (PVS). It also includes the operation of leased vehicles. Detailed instructions are contained in Handbook PO-701, Fleet Management, and Handbook PO-702, Accident Investigations—Tort Claims.

712 Policies and Practices

712.1 General

There are a number of policies and practices that the Postal Service adheres to that all managers must be aware of and implement as appropriate. Postal vehicle service responsibilities consist of assigning vehicles, administering vehicle leases, street supervision of vehicles, vehicle safety, PVS accident investigation, vehicle utilization optimization, vehicle accounting and data collection, budgets, fleet performance indicators, identification of surplus vehicles for disposal, and labor relations.

712.2 Warranties and Modifications

The Postal Service uses the warranty provisions of the vehicle purchase contract to the fullest extent possible. The vehicle maintenance facilities (VMFs) are responsible for exercising the various provisions. Maintenance work under warranties must be restricted to the stated (written) warranty provisions. Modifications to vehicles are prohibited unless explicitly approved by Vehicle Maintenance, Headquarters. This includes changing any manufacturer-installed equipment or accessories.

712.3 Vehicle Emissions and Fuel Consumption

The Postal Service complies with the provisions of the Clean Air Act and practices fuel conservation. No one, postal employee or contractor, may change or make inoperative any emissions control device installed on any
vehicle owned or leased by the Postal Service, except if authorized by Vehicle Maintenance, Headquarters. Properly maintained vehicles will achieve maximum fuel economy. Maximize vehicle utility by monitoring individual driver and vehicle performance, and by reviewing regular Preventive Maintenance Service schedules.

712.4 **Vehicle Appearance**

The clean and uniform appearance of postal vehicles is essential to projecting a positive image of the Postal Service. Postal vehicles must be washed as needed, but not less than twice each month. Vehicles must be constantly scrutinized by managers at all levels for paint deterioration; missing, torn, or faded markings; and corrosion or damage to the body. Managers should schedule immediate repairs, as needed.

712.5 **New Product Testing**

To maintain efficient operations it is necessary to know of and evaluate new products to determine their value in Postal Service operations. Control of all testing of all new products (accessories, additives, vehicle components, etc.) resides with Headquarters (Engineering and Vehicle Maintenance).

72 **Responsibilities**

721 **Headquarters**

Modal Operations and Requirements, Logistics, at Headquarters establishes policy, provides administrative support, and furnishes technical guidance for postal vehicle service. Policies and procedures are directed to concerned persons at the areas and districts before implementation by field personnel at processing and distribution centers (P&DCs), processing and distribution facilities (P&DFs), and bulk mail centers (BMCs).

722 **Areas**

Within the area, the manager, Distribution Networks (DNs), has responsibility for coordinating transportation and providing vehicle contracting and postal vehicle service oversight to the P&DCs, P&DFs, and BMCs.

723 **Vehicle Post Offices**

At vehicle Post Offices (VPOs), the postmaster is responsible for the safe, efficient, and economical operation and maintenance of assigned postal-owned or -leased vehicles, under the guidance of personnel from the district.
73 Vehicle Types, Safety, and Maintenance

731 Types of Vehicles in Service

731.1 Cargo Vans, Tractors, Spotters, and Trailers
Cargo vans (5-, 7-, or 9-ton trucks), tractors, and trailers are used to transport bulk mail between P&DCs, P&DFs, AMCs, stations and branches, and associate offices. Spotters are used to move trailers within a BMC yard operation.

731.2 Hired Vehicles
Various sized vehicles are occasionally leased, with or without drivers, by the Postal Service from commercial leasing firms and employed for mail-hauling purposes. Contact your servicing purchasing organization for details.

732 Driving and Safety Requirements

732.1 Vehicle Care and Operation
All drivers of postal-owned and -leased vehicles are responsible for the proper care and handling of vehicles in their custody. Employees are financially liable for loss or damage caused by willful or deliberate misconduct.

732.2 Traffic Laws
Employees driving any vehicle in performance of postal duties must obey all federal, state, and local traffic laws at all times. Postal-owned or -leased vehicles have no special right-of-way over private vehicles.

732.3 Safe Driving
Employees are responsible for the safe operation of any vehicle used while on duty. Managers must emphasize in their daily operation that safety is everyone’s responsibility and must not be compromised. (For more details, see Handbook PO-701, chapter 2; ELM 827; and Handbook EL-801, Supervisor’s Safety Handbook.)

733 PVS Accident Investigations
Immediate and complete on-the-scene investigations by the PVS are required for all accidents involving employees and vehicles. Accidents involving vehicles assigned to Customer Service and Sales will be investigated and processed by Customer Service and Sales or their designated representative. Since even the slightest accident may ultimately result in litigation against the Postal Service, such litigation must be anticipated. Detailed instructions for accident investigation are provided in Handbook PO-702, Accident Investigations—Tort Claims.
Vehicle Accounting

The Vehicle Management Accounting System (VMAS) is a cost-accounting system providing operating cost per vehicle, per mile, and per hour. Also reported is the cost of maintenance and repair, vehicle depreciation, parts, and fuel usage. Additional information is provided on vehicle use and inventories. This system, operated by vehicle maintenance facilities (VMFs), is available to all transportation managers to assist in decision making for efficient transportation operations.

Vehicle Disposal, Reassignment, and Sales

Fleet Operations at Headquarters is to be notified of all surplus vehicles. These vehicles should immediately be turned over to the VMF for disposal, reassignment, or other use. Vehicles that are to be replaced by a new vehicle procurement should be retained until the new vehicles are ready for deployment.

Fleet Maintenance

The VMF is responsible for providing quality and timely maintenance to the Postal Service fleet as outlined in the guidelines established by Vehicle Maintenance, Headquarters.

Equipment, Supplies, and Fuel

General

The costs for equipment, operating supplies, fuel, and lubricants are included in annual VMF budgets through Customer Service channels. Handbook PO-701, Fleet Management; the Purchasing Manual; and Vehicle Maintenance Bulletins contain additional procurement information.

Equipment

Accounting service centers (ASCs) are responsible for budgeting for specialized capital equipment to meet operations or environmental requirements. Equipment for postal vehicle service operations purposes include lift gates, radios, and so forth.

Fuel

All postal employees must use self-service pumps when fueling postal-owned or -leased vehicles at commercial retail outlets and automated VMF fueling stations. The only exception to this policy is in communities that do not have self-service fuel pumps or in states that prohibit them. However, should self-service fuel pumps become available, or if a state changes its laws, postal personnel must immediately change to the self-service pumps. Local VMF management must establish a program for checking oil, water, and other fluids at least weekly, and replenishing them as needed.