



*The communications union*

Version 1 July 2007

# LIGHTEN THE **LOAD**

CWU Safe Working on Delivery Guide



*Helping you to collect, sort and deliver safely*

Health & Safety Department  
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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Safe Working On Delivery Guide is to help ensure the risks to health and safety on Delivery work are properly controlled and to achieve a reduction in accidents at work, stress and ill health within Royal Mail Letters Delivery in order that fewer numbers of members get hurt as they go about their daily business and can perform their walk more effectively. To be successful in this, it is essential that the parties involved, Royal Mail Letters and the CWU work together in order to achieve these aims, listening to one another and becoming problem solvers, deploying safety improvements, active compliance with risk control measures and safe systems of work.

Delivery Office Managers, working with CWU Health and Safety Representatives and Delivery Staff is the best way of realising health and safety benefits. We need everybody to play their part in keeping the walk logs complete and up-to-date, and ensuring the information is used, to protect yourself and your colleagues.

## ROYAL MAIL IS ONE OF THE WORST

Yes, Royal Mail is one of the worst! Royal Mail employs 0.7% of the UK population but is responsible for nearly 10% of the UK's musculoskeletal injuries each year! Royal Mail's track record on Safety is not good enough. Did you know, for example that Royal Mail's Safety Record is four times worse than the transport industry? Within Royal Mail Letters, the majority of injuries to our people occur on delivery. The causes can be quite varied, but typically, manual handling, slips & trips, dog attacks, and cycling accidents are common causes. Musculoskeletal disorder injuries are the most common Work-related ill-health problem in the UK affecting a million workers in Great Britain and are the biggest cause of absence from work. Lifting and handling is the main cause of injuries in Royal Mail.

However, Royal Mail says that it takes your health and safety very seriously and this means ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to protect your safety by ensuring the working environment is risk free – so make sure you play your part by taking the safety rules seriously and not taking any chances with your health.

# DELIVERY SAFETY CHECKLIST

## RISK ASSESSMENTS

Staff must be involved in assessing risks in the workplace and developing safe systems of work – the Union Safety Representative **MUST** be consulted on matters affecting safety of staff. Risk assessments must be signed and dated by the manager and reviewed every 12 months or following a change or an incident/accident.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Management should have in place a systematic Workplace safety inspections routine or Safety Observation and Feedback Tours (SOFTS) and additionally one of the main functions of a union safety representative is to carry out periodic safety inspections to help identify potential hazards. (*Refer to the Area Safety Representative for further information*). It works best when Royal Mail Letters and the CWU co-ordinate Inspection programmes and deal with the issues identified. Royal Mail HQ will also carry out periodic audits of Offices to check health and safety compliance.

## WORKPLACE

Is any place or places a member works or frequents during the course of his/her duty inside and outside.

## WALK RISK ASSESSMENTS

Involving completion of WPQ1's delivery and WPQ2's drivers must be completed and risks recorded on the WPQ3's along with a clear suitable and sufficient action plan taken to deal with the risks including any staff training requirements.

## WALK ROUTES

Must be as safe as possible and acceleration methods appropriate. All routes should have been planned on the basis of no use of private cars.

## WALK LOGS

Supplement the information from WPQ1's/2's and it's essential that they are accurate and up to date with information on delivery hazards, pouch drops etc to assist with health and safety accident prevention measures.

## SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Everyone must be made aware of the SSOW's! Royal Mail has developed a set of SSOW's which provide minimum standards and it is Royal Mail's policy that it is essential that everyone on delivery knows and follows the SSOW's. Managers are under instruction to make sure DO staff are aware of the location of the SSOW manual, they must read it and make sure they know how to do their job safely including the provision of any necessary information, instruction, training and supervision where necessary.

## POUCH WEIGHTS

Must be monitored and adequately controlled – the maximum pouch weight is 16kg first pouch, 2nd pouch must not weigh more than 16kg, 3rd pouch 12kg, 4th pouch 10kg, 5th pouch 10kg and 6th pouch 8kg. However, the Max Pouch weights must be reduced if walking up slopes greater than 1 in 12 to 8kg and reduced to a Max of 5kg if walking up slopes greater than 1 in 8 or the delivery walk is one that predominantly goes up and down stairs etc. For young people under 18 the maximum weight of a pouch must not exceed 10kg. Cycles

can only carry one pouch of 16kg max. Cycle panniers can only carry 8kg max each side. REMEMBER: Follow the pouch weighing procedures and only carry one pouch at a time.

**\*Note: Some Areas have introduced an alternative, simplified Pouch Weight arrangement as follows:** *The maximum pouch weight is 16kg first pouch and the maximum weight of all following pouches must not weigh more than 11kg and such arrangements can continue with the same monitored and adequate controls to avoid excess weight being carried).* **REMEMBER/IMPORTANT:** All weights are 'Maximum Weights' not 'Target Weights'. Additionally, individual capability may also need to be considered in certain cases when carrying out a Walk Risk Assessment.

## **POUCH DROPS**

Management must provide and deploy sufficient Pouch drop off facilities, whether pouch boxes, pillar box inserts, safe drops, van drops or other arrangements. All foot deliveries require replenishment solutions such as pouch boxes or authorised safe drop points. These should be in the appropriate location to prevent excessive dead walking and be secure and sanctioned by the manager.

## **DELIVERY WALK**

Do not exceed the 3.5 hours maximum delivery span. Attend work at your normal start time and do not start early. Take a proper meal break before commencing the walk. All these things avoid stress, fatigue and ill health. Do not rush as your walk should be planned to enable sufficient time to complete it without rushing and do not take short cuts on delivery and stick to the official route. Rushing and short cuts lead to accidents, fatigue and stress.

## **WELFARE FACILITIES & TOILETS**

Due to the potential for delivery staff to be away from their unit for extended periods of time it is necessary to ensure there is suitable and sufficient access to welfare facilities particularly sanitary conveniences. Access to toilets is a human right – doing without is not an option and where there are no toilets available on the delivery walk or adjacent delivery walks then a return to the unit is necessary.

## **TRAINING**

Never use equipment you have not been trained on.

## **TROLLEYS**

Before the introduction of a trolley on a delivery walk, a 'terrain assessment' must be carried out as part of the walk risk assessment process to ensure that the terrain is suitable in particular for High Capacity Trolley (HCT) use. The correct lifting and handling techniques must be used and they must not be overloaded. The Safe Systems of Work for Trolleys must be followed at all times. The local walk risk assessment must be completed including consultations with security and the local authority before deployment. The HCT is intended to be used on level or undulating surfaces where small inclines do not cause any additional force to be exerted. Use of HCTs in all circumstances will in any case be subject to local risk and safety assessments undertaken by the manager in consultation with the local Safety Representative. If accelerating HCT's then they must be loaded/unloaded either using a vehicle with a tail lift or via the approved ramp following the *Safe System of Work (SSOW)* for HCT ramps. The weights below are maximum subject to a local terrain assessment.

**These are the only trolleys currently authorised for use:**

- **Three pannier trolley** (being phased out), max load 54 kg and Max, gross weight is 80kg with 18kg per pannier

- **Lightweight golf trolley** – max load 32 kg and max gross weight is 38.6kg with 16kg per pannier
- **High Capacity Trolley** – on flat/undulating terrain the max load is 70kg and the Max gross weight 105kg. On steep terrain the max load is 40kg and Max gross weight 75kg. When using a HCT you must load the front section with light/bulky items and mail to be delivered first. The rear section should be loaded with most of the bundles of mail. When approaching steep hills, ensure that only the rear section is loaded with letter mail in order to restrict the load to below 40kg.

Your Delivery Trolley should be in good condition - if not report defective or faulty equipment immediately.

### **CYCLE DELIVERIES**

Before using a cycle, carry out the daily safety check and report any faults. All cycles should have a next service label or tag displayed on them. Cycle mechanics must have sufficient time and resources to maintain the cycles to the correct safety maintenance schedule. Staff must carry one pouch in the rack only plus additional mail in panniers if fitted. (16kg Pouch, 8kg per pannier). Cycle Delivery Staff must wear their cycle helmet and high visibility Jacket which are compulsory.

### **ACCELERATION & RECOVERY**

As part of the Walk Assessment – Ensure that sufficient acceleration and recovery methods/transport to and from delivery start and finish are in place and that appropriate mechanical aids and equipment is provided on all routes.

### **SEVERE WEATHER**

Ensure that in extremes the Severe Weather Policy is referred to in relation to precautions and as to whether deliveries should be suspended. Do not ignore severe weather or attempt to deliver in extremes e.g. floods.

### **CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR**

Wear your correct official clothing (uniform) and footwear which has been designed for the job. Ensure it is in good condition and can protect you from the weather. Do not wear worn out shoes. Good condition footwear can not only protect against slips and trips accidents but can avoid foot injuries and fatigue. Order replacement uniform in good time.

### **SUN SMART & SKIN SAFE**

Ask for a CWU 'Sun Smart-Skin Safe' fact card. In summer when the sun is intense and temperature at its highest, make sure you cover up and avoid skin exposure to harmful sun rays. Use sunscreen/sunblock cream to form a barrier against harmful sun rays. Take regular breaks to regulate the length of exposure to sun and to avoid heat stress. Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and take a bottle of water out with you on your delivery walk on hot days. (Appropriate water bottles carriers and bottles can be ordered and obtained by Area management from Swindon supplies and fitted to cycles and trolleys). Assess the risks and consider reducing the weight of all pouches to say 11kg max. When inside the Delivery Office, ensure the temperature is controlled and there is sufficient well maintained ventilation or air conditioning systems (many failed last summer).

### **AVOIDING DOG ATTACKS**

Never attempt a delivery if menaced or intimidated by a dog or where a dog is loose. Never accept an owner's assurance that a dog is safe or friendly. Never put your fingers through a letterbox. Report all incidents and hostile, hazardous dogs to management in order for it

to be dealt with under the Royal Mail Dog Attacks Procedure and reported to the Local Authority Dog Warden and Police in cases of injury.

### **AVOIDING ASSAULTS**

Ensure walks are “Threat Assessed” under the new “WalkSafe” procedure in order to assess whether additional protective measures are required on high risk walks. To deal with a steady increase in assaults on Postal delivery workers Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union have introduced “WalkSafe” to assist staff who are verbally and physically assaulted. Under the new policy, Royal Mail Management must sit down with CWU Branch Safety Representatives to examine the threat of assaults and build measures into the delivery walk Risk Assessments, taking what ever action is necessary to minimise the risks on the streets.

### **PRIORITY SERVICES ITEMS**

Do not carry more than the maximum number allowed. Do not expose yourself to risks. If it is a high risk area then refer to the “WalkSafe” threat assessment procedure as it may be necessary to reduce the number or remove these items completely on certain walks. The important thing is that a Walk Risk Assessment must be carried out and such assessments based on local knowledge and previous incidents may override these standards to ensure the most appropriate safety and security protection levels are maintained at all times. (A maximum of 8 Special Delivery (SD) individual items per walk may be carried each day, of which no more than 3 may be higher value SD items, a maximum of 48 SD individual items per walk each week of which no more than 18 may be higher value SD items. Walks exceeding this standard number of items per week must to be Risk Assessed to determine the appropriate method of delivery and whether it needs to be motorised. Ideally collection and deliveries in town centre areas should be motorised. For the full details on Motorised/ Vehicle SD Delivery/Collection refer to Royal Mail Internal Information Special Delivery Pipeline Conveyance Guidelines for the collection, delivery and distribution of SD items.

### **AVOIDING SLIPS & TRIPS**

Inside the DO – ensure passageways, walkways and stairs are clear of obstructions, litter and spillages at all times e.g. labels, bag-ties, strapex, etc. If not get it cleaned up and do not ignore it. Outside on the walk, wear decent footwear and watch your step. If part of your walk involves uneven, unsafe, dodgy surfaces, especially “unadopted land” (which is not owned or maintained) then report it to your manager and get it risk assessed.

### **FLOORSPACE**

*The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*, require that the workplace must have sufficient floorspace area, all workstations (Sorting Frames) should have sufficient space and arranged so that tasks can be carried out safely and comfortably. The floor and walkways must be kept clear of obstructions.

### **YARD RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Management must undertake a Yard Risk Assessment to ensure hazards are controlled. Make sure people and vehicles are safely segregated, pedestrian routes are marked and on-site parking organised and controlled. Van keys should be removed during loading/unloading and PPE (Safety Shoes and High-Visibility tabards) worn as appropriate.

### **MAIL BAGS**

The maximum mailbag weight is 11kg. No more than one should be carried at a time. Any bags over 11kg should be moved by two people. If moving bags a long distance use a container or trolley.

## **AVOIDING DRIVING ACCIDENTS**

If you drive a Mail Van then the 'Pre-Use' Drivers Vehicle checks must be carried out as per the van log book. A 15 minute break must be taken every two hours of driving to avoid fatigue. Wear seat belts at all times as Royal Mail drivers are not exempt and do not use a mobile phone whilst driving as it is both dangerous and illegal. Stick to the Highway Code and stick to the speed limits at all times – Do not rush as that is when accidents occur!

## **PRIVATE MOTORCYCLES, MOPEDS, AND SCOOTERS, ETC**

These are banned from use in Royal Mail and must not be used. Many are unsuitable for deliveries and are dangerous, especially when carrying a load in bad weather. In the event of an accident if using an unofficial means of transport you could be held liable and face serious consequences such as prosecution and disciplinary action.

## **PRIVATE CARS ON DELIVERY**

Do not use unauthorised private cars on delivery. In fact it is far better and safer not to use private cars on delivery at all which is in line with the union's policy. Why risk an accident, injury, loss or theft of your own private property. Wear and tear, fuel costs and any damage must be met by you along with any losses like your no-claim bonus, parking fines and fixed penalties etc. When things go wrong and accidents happen, many members regret having used the car. When it is broken down, banged up or worn out and off the road, Royal Mail will not help you. You are not paid for using your car and you do not need to use it – **DON'T** is our advice. Use only official means of transport. Using private cars on delivery is a mugs game.

## **REPORT ALL ACCIDENTS**

Accidents should be reported as soon as possible to the Manager who will complete an on-line electronic accident report form and report it via 'ERICA' (*Electronic Reporting of Incidents for Collation and Analysis*).

## **SERIOUS AND IMMINENT DANGER**

Management must have a plan or appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger. However, in situations where for whatever reason there is an absence of guidance or instruction and in the light of the knowledge at their disposal at the time, staff may take appropriate steps to stop work and immediately proceed to a place of safety in the event of them being exposed to serious, imminent and unavoidable danger.

## **LOW LEVEL LETTER BOXES**

When delivering to low-level letter boxes at the base of a house front door, do not stoop down to ground level whilst still carrying your pouch of mail weighing up to 16kg (35lbs), as it can cause a risk of back strain, especially if you're delivering to several on your round. If you have a lot of Low letter boxes on your round they should be risk assessed using the WPQ1 and the Manager should transfer these to his/her action plan and implement risk controls as necessary e.g. team briefs, training, letters to customers etc.

And - Don't extend your fingers through letter boxes when delivering letters - Springs, Dogs or Cats can snap at them and injure you !

## **BUSINESS PREMISES**

When delivering to business premises use the pedestrian entrance and route - If you encounter any hazards on the premises of difficulty delivering safely, report it to your manager.

## **BUILDING SITES**

When delivering to building sites - do not enter the site - construction sites are dangerous places for unauthorised people. Deliver to the site entrance hut or letter box only.

## **YOUR MANAGER'S LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The management has a legal duty to ensure your health and safety while you're at work, providing you with a safe workplace, safe working practices, safe equipment, carry out risk assessments, first aid facilities, give you safety information about hazards, provide instructions, training and supervision where required and consult with the Union's Safety Representatives.

## **WELFARE FACILITIES**

The management must provide adequate facilities for your 'welfare at work and make sure that ventilation, temperature, lighting, toilet, washing and rest facilities all meet health, safety and welfare requirements.

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

Your rights as an employee to work in a safe and healthy workplace are given to you by law, and can't be changed or removed by your manager.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and take reasonable care not to put other workers and members of the public at risk by what you do or don't do at work. You must follow the employers health and safety policies and safe systems of work. You must report any safety shortcomings and faulty equipment etc.

### **NEED ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR HELP?**

Contact your CWU Area Safety Representative as follows:



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London  
SW19 1RX  
[www.cwu.org](http://www.cwu.org)

**020 8971 7200**

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*Produced by the CWU/HQ Health, Safety & Environment Department  
in conjunction with the CWU/HQ Outdoor Department.*



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