

Contract Administration Unit

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Overtime and pay during December

The rules governing the payment of penalty overtime are found in Article 8 of the National Agreement. The rate of pay for penalty overtime is governed by the provisions of Article 8, Section 4.C, which states in pertinent part:

C. Penalty overtime pay is to be paid at the rate of two (2) times the base hourly straight time rate.

While this provision applies to all letter carriers, determining when the penalty overtime rate is applicable depends on the classification of the employee.

This month's Contract Talk will address the payment of penalty overtime and some exceptions to these rules that occur in the month of December. It will also discuss the assignment of overtime during December.

The entitlement to penalty overtime for full-time regular and full-time flexible employees is found in Article 8, Section 4.D. of the National Agreement, which states:

D. Penalty overtime pay will be paid to full-time regular employees for any overtime work in contravention of the restrictions in Section 5.F.

Article 8, Section 5.F states:

F. Excluding December, no full-time regular employee will be required to work overtime on more than four (4) of the employee's five (5) scheduled days in a service week or work over ten (10) hours on a regularly scheduled day, over eight (8) hours on a non-scheduled day, or over six (6) days in a service week.

The explanation for this section is found on page 8-17 of the 2022 *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)*, which states:

Article 8.5.F applies to both full-time regular and full-time flexible employees. The only two exceptions to the work hour limits provided for in this section are for all full-time employees during the penalty overtime exclusion period (December) and for full-time employees on the ODL during any month of the year (Article 8.5.G). Both work and paid leave hours are considered "work" for the purposes of the administration of Article 8.5.F and 8.5.G.

The rules governing how part-time flexible (PTF) and city carrier assistant (CCA) letter carriers receive penalty overtime pay are found in Article 8, Section 4.E, which states:

E. Excluding December, part-time flexible employees will receive penalty overtime pay for all work in excess of ten (10) hours in a service day or fifty-six (56) hours in a service week.

(The preceding paragraph, Article 8.4.E., shall apply to City Carrier Assistant Employees.)

This language requires the payment of penalty overtime to PTF and CCA letter carriers for all work in excess of 10 hours in a service day or 56 hours in a service week. Part-time regulars are in the same category as

part-time flexibles for penalty overtime purposes.

When determining the entitlement to penalty overtime pay, both the actual hours worked and any paid leave hours are counted. This is explained on page 8-3 of the 2022 *JCAM*, which states:

All bargaining unit employees are paid postal overtime for time spent in a pay status in excess of 8 hours in a service day and/or in excess of 40 hours in a service week. Hours in pay status include hours of actual work and hours of paid leave.

The first exception to these rules, which affects full-time, part-time and CCA letter carriers, involves the payment of penalty overtime during the month of December. In accordance with Article 8, Section 4.C, penalty overtime will not be paid for any hours worked in December. This is commonly referred to as the penalty overtime exclusion period.

Although Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 identify the month of December, in 1985 the national parties agreed that the month of December referenced in these sections is understood to mean four consecutive service weeks, rather than the entire month (M-01508 in NALC's Materials Reference System). The specific period is published each year in the *Postal Bulletin* and *The Postal Record*. The penalty overtime exclusion period for calendar year 2023 will begin pay period 26-2023, week 1 (Dec. 2) and end pay period 01-2024, week 2 (Dec. 29).

The second exception during December pertains to the daily and weekly work-hour limitations. Article 8, Section 5.G provides that full-time employees on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) or Work Assignment List (WAL) may be required to work up to 12 hours in a day or 60 hours in a service week. However, these work limits do not apply to ODL and WAL letter carriers during the penalty overtime exclusion period. Management may, but is not required to, assign ODL carriers to work in excess of the 12- and 60-hour limitations during the penalty overtime exclusionary period.

The maximum hours allowed for PTFs, CCAs and full-time employees not on the ODL or WAL are not governed by the provisions of Article 8, Section 5.G. The rules defining the maximum number of work hours for these letter carriers are found in section 432.32 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*, which states:

Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the postmaster general (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In ad-

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Overtime and pay (continued)

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dition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled workhours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

The Step 4 settlement (M-01272) in case number E94N-4E-C96061540 dated Feb. 25, 1998, clarifies that the 12-hour limit established by ELM 432.32 continues to apply even during the penalty overtime exclusion period.

Similar to the previous reference that paid leave counts toward overtime, the 2022 JCAM, on page 8-19, explains that the 12- and 60-hour limitations are inclusive of all hours, including any type of leave taken.

The third exception during December pertains to letter carriers on the WAL. As stated above, excluding December, WAL carriers are available to work up to 12 hours in a day or 60 hours in a service week. Outside of the penalty overtime exclusion period, management has the right to assign an employee on the ODL to work regular overtime to avoid paying penalty overtime to a carrier on the WAL. This can limit a carrier on the WAL to 10 hours in a service day, even if additional overtime was available on their bid assignment. This is explained on page 8-21 of the 2022 JCAM, which states:

Management may assign an employee from the regular ODL to work regular overtime to avoid paying penalty pay to a carrier who has signed for Work Assignment overtime. This exception does not apply during the penalty overtime exclusion period (December) when penalty overtime is not paid.

During the penalty overtime exclusion period, the carrier on the WAL has the right to work the additional time over 10 hours, since penalty overtime is not paid. Keep in mind, this exception applies only when management wants to assign a carrier from ODL to work the overtime. Management still retains the right to utilize a letter carrier at the straight-time rate or a PTF or CCA at the straight-time or overtime rate prior to assigning additional overtime to a carrier on the WAL. The explanation for this provision is found on pages 8-20 and 8-21 of the 2022 JCAM, which states:

Management may always assign another carrier to perform the work at the straight-time rate rather than assigning overtime to a carrier on the Work Assignment List. Management may also assign PTFs and CCAs at the straight-time or overtime rate (up to the ELM limitations).

If you have any questions related to these or other Article 8 provisions, contact your local shop steward or branch officer. Complete copies of the “M” documents referenced in this article and the 2022 JCAM are available on the NALC website at nalc.org.

Director of City Delivery

MDD-TR translator and more (continued)

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with postal handbooks and manuals. As of the writing of this article, the meeting has not taken place. I will continue to work toward a resolution for these issues. I encourage any member who receives instructions related to this process that violates the language above of the M-41 to inform your local union representative and file a grievance.

Additionally, USPS has provided guidance under this process advising the use of PS Form 1106 to clear carriers of Arrow Key accountability. PS Form 1106 has been

rescinded by the Postal Service since March 23, 2023. The use of this form should be brought to the attention of local union representatives to investigate.

Finally, I want to thank the carriers in the Falls Church Post Office for their time and helpful insight into their experience with the translator application on the MDD-TR. I will update the membership on these subjects once we have an

opportunity to meet with the Postal Service and discuss all available information.

PS Form 1106