

DOCKET SECTION

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

RECEIVED

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 1997

Docket No. R97-1

RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO INTERROGATORIES OF  
TIME WARNER, INC.  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN  
(TW/USPS-T4-22-24)

The United States Postal Service hereby provides responses to the following interrogatories of Time Warner, Inc.: TW/USPS-T4-22-24, filed on September 11, 1997, and redirected from witness Moden.

Each interrogatory is stated verbatim and is followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

Daniel J. Foucheaux, Jr.  
Chief Counsel, Rate-making

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott L. Reiter

475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20260-1137  
(202) 268-2999; Fax -5402  
September 25, 1997

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

TW/USPS-T4-22 Please refer to the Postal Inspection Service report named National Coordination Audit - Allied Workhours (December 1996) that is included in LR-H-236. The report refers, in the executive summary and at pages 10-12, to Regional Instruction (RI 399) issues. It defines RI 399 as "an understanding between the Postal Service and the clerk and mail handler unions regarding specific allied labor assignments" (Page 1, Footnote 2).

a. Does RI 399 refer to agreements that may differ between one part of the country and another? If they are different, how many different RI 399 agreements are there?

b. What are the most typical "RI 399 issues? Do they, for example refer to what kind of work can be done by clerks and what can be done by mailhandlers? Do they refer to what can be done by casual and/or transitional employees? Please explain as fully as possible.

c. What kinds of restraints do RI 399 agreements place on management's ability to assign employees where they would be of most use at a given point in time? Please explain as fully as possible.

d. The report recommends, and USPS management appears to have concurred, that "a consistent approach toward RI 399 issues is needed to help minimize the impacts of local agreements on plant operations" (Page 11). Please explain what progress has been made in this area since the Inspection Service issued its report

e. Please provide copies of typical RI 399 agreements and, if possible, provide copies of all such current agreements.

**Response:**

a. There is only ONE agreement, the national RI 399 document. RI 399 stands for Regional Instruction 399, an agreement between the Postal Service, APWU and Mail Handlers, which summarizes by operation number certain functions and the primary craft normally associated with that function.

**RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

- b. The most typical RI 399 issues revolve around the gray area that separates one pure operation that calls for one craft/union (e.g. clerk/APWU) from another (e.g. mail handlers/MHU) and the disputes that arise when an operation arguably contains some combination of the responsibilities that delineate the crafts. There are no mail handler transitional employees, but there are clerk transitional employees who can be involved in craft disputes the same as any other clerk. The craft status of casual employees is currently in arbitration.
- c. An important criterion of the RI 399 agreement is that the operations must be effective and efficient. Accordingly, primary craft assignments take the effective and efficient standard into consideration.
- d. The procedure that was agreed upon with the APWU and Mail Handlers Union was to set up RI 399 committees that provide for reviews by representatives at the local, regional, and national levels to try to determine, with some consistency and efficiency, what work belongs to which craft.
- e. A copy of the RI 399 agreement starts on page 167 of LR-H-253.

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

TW/USPS-T4-23 The Postal Inspection Service report "National Coordination Audit - Allied workhours" (December 1966), included in L.R-H-236, states, on page 19 in discussing problems with employees clocked into the wrong MODS operation:

"Supervisors had employees clock into a non-distribution operation at the beginning of their tour until the supervisor made individual work assignments."

It goes on to state:

"Employees used any timeclock and operation number that was convenient. In order to get 'on the clock' as soon as possible, employees used the first timeclock they came to when beginning their tour and returning from lunch. Clocking in on opening unit Operation number to get back on the clock inflated those workhours."

And it also states:

Employees did not know what operation numbers they should be using. Employees clocked into an opening unit and found working elsewhere were unable to identify the operation number which corresponded to where they were working. Some supervisors were also unable to identify which operation numbers the employees should use."

- a. Why is it important for an employee to get "on the clock" as soon as possible?
- b. Is an employee's pay affected by how soon he gets "on the clock"? If the answer differs depending on whether the employee is full-time, part-time, transitional or casual, or on whether or not he works more than eight hours that day, please provide different answers for each case.
- c. Please confirm that mail processing employees in MODS offices normally clock out when going to lunch and clock back in when they get back. If not confirmed, please explain.

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

- d. What happens If an employee forgets to clock out before going to lunch? Will the MODS system assume that he went to lunch anyway? If yes, how long a lunch break will it assume that he took?
- e. Is a given time-clock in a mail processing facility normally set to record one particular operation number? If yes, how easy is it to change that number and who is authorized to do so?
- f. Can an employee use the clock at a 180 operation to clock into a 110 operation? If yes, what does he have to do?
- g. In order to correctly record a move from one operation to another, does an employee have to first clock out, then in, or is it enough to clock into the new operation?
- h. What does it mean to initiate a "move" to a given operation number?
- i. What exactly does an employee do when he clocks in or out of an operation?

**Response:**

- a. As described in b below, an employees pay can be adversely impacted by failing to clock-in on time. An employee cannot, in general, make up missed time at the end of their tour.
- b. An employee's pay could be impacted by the time they get on the clock.

Full time employee - They have a five minute leeway rule that allows an employee to receive 8 hours of pay if on the clock from 7.92 to 8.08. After 5 minutes they would be considered short in hours and would be required to take leave of some kind. If a full time employee was instructed to report for overtime on a nonscheduled day they would receive all hours on the clock as overtime. On a regular scheduled day any work hours in excess of 8.08 hours would be considered as overtime. If employees did not enter a clock ring into

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

the system, there may be some confusion as to when exactly the employee reported for duty.

Part time and transitional employee - Receive overtime in excess of 8 hours in a day, or 40 hours in a week. However, the rounding of 7.92 to 8.08 equaling eight hours does not apply to part time or transitional employees. They receive hours based on their actual clock rings.

Casual employees - Receive overtime only in excess of 40 hours per week. They do not receive any overtime for hours in excess of eight daily.

c. Confirmed.

d. If an employee forgets to enter an out to lunch and does take their lunch, the employee's time will continue to accumulate towards total hours for the day. If the employee enters a return from lunch and did not enter an out to lunch, it would place the employee in an error condition in which the supervisor must enter an out to lunch ring after the fact. If the employee neither clocked in nor out from/to lunch, the hours would accumulate to an extra 30 minutes for the day and the supervisor would enter appropriate rings after the fact.

e. The Employee Badge Reader (EBR) provides up to 15 preset operation numbers on one device. It is not common in Mail Processing to use just one operation on a device. These devices are quite costly and placed throughout the workroom floor. They are changed by the main facility device controller which is located in the time keeping office. A change also requires the labels on the face of the device to be changed.

f. The EBRs provide the flexibility of selecting an operation number from the 15 predefined buttons or entering the operation number using the keypad. The

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

employee would be required to enter in 110 using the 10 button keypad in the bottom right of the EBR. In order to use the keypad however, it must be turned on. It is controlled by the time keeping unit, the same as the predefined keys. If it is turned off, then the employee would be required to go to a device that has 110 predefined.

- g. In order for an employee to make a move, they must select the function MV on the EBR and then the operation number they are moving to. Then the employee would swipe their badge through a magnetic reader attached to the EBR.
- h. "Initiate a move" simply means to select and enter the move for the employee. This automatically stops calculation of the time on the old operation and begins to calculate time on the new operation.
- i. The employee, when they are instructed to clock into an operation, simply goes to the location where they are reporting and enters begin tour, move, or in from lunch, as appropriate, to begin charging time to the operation. Next, they select the operation they are reporting to. Then they simply swipe their employee badge which automatically starts the calculation of time on the operation as well as for the employee's payroll. To stop the accumulation of hours in an operation, they enter move, out to lunch, or end tour as appropriate. There are two different types of automated systems in MODS offices. One is the Postal Source Data Systems (PSDS) and the other is Electronic Time Clock System (ETC). In ETC, the employee has an operation already defined for them in the Employee Master File of the system. If the employee is reporting to their normal job, the employee only

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

needs to select the function and the system will automatically charge the hours to the employee's operation number that is contained in their master file. Any operation other than their base would require them to follow the procedures described above.



**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

TW/USPS-T4-24

- a. Do BMC's use a time-clock system similar to that used in MODS offices? If no, what do they use to keep track of employee time?
- b. Do Non-MODS offices use a time-clock system similar to that used in MODS offices? If no, what do they use to keep track of employee time? If yes, what do they do with the recorded data?
- c. For how many hours will a (1) full-time; (2) part-time; (3) casual; and (4) transitional employee be paid on a given day if the time-clock indicates that he worked 8 hours and 15 minutes? What if it shows he worked 8 hours and 45 minutes? what if it shows 7 hours and 45 minutes?
- d. What is the minimum increment of time for which a mail processing employee is paid on a given day?

**Response:**

- a. Yes.
- b. Non-MODS offices, taken to mean Customer Service and Administrative in this context, would use either PSDS, ETC, or manual time cards to record daily clock rings. PSDS and ETC use plastic badges with the employees name and ID printed on the front. Those badges are swiped through an Employee Badge Reader (EBR) located throughout the building and the data is reported the same as a MODS office. Manual time card offices do not have any automation equipment to track time and attendance. They would use a preprinted form 1230 A/B/C and punch the appropriate time using a Cincinnati clock or write in the time on the back of the form. It allows up to four basic rings (Begin Tour, Out to Lunch, In from Lunch, and End Tour). No tracking of hours

**RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
TO THE INTERROGATORIES OF TIME-WARNER  
REDIRECTED FROM WITNESS MODEN**

against operation number is recorded on this card. The information is reported through administrative channels.

c. If the bargaining unit full time and part time employee was performing work for 8 hours and 15 minutes on a given day, they would receive 8 hours and 15 minutes of pay for those hours. 8 hours would be paid at the straight time rate and the 15 minutes would be paid at the overtime rate. If a casual employee worked for 8 hours and 15 they would also receive pay for 8 hours and 15 minutes. However, the rate of pay would be at the straight time rate provided that any portion of those hours did not cause the employee to exceed 40 hours of work for the week. The same would apply for the 8 hours and 45 minutes. In the case of the 7 hours and 45 minutes, the full time employee would have to take leave for the difference if the employee left prior to completing their eight hours of duty. If the supervisor told the employee to leave prior to the eight hour guarantee, the employee would receive the number of hours/hundredths necessary to bring them to 8 hours for the day. A part time and casual employee would receive exactly 7 hours and 45 minutes.

d. Actual pay would depend on the type of employee and the contract agreement/postal policy associated with that employee as indicated in c. The system will pay the employee as little as one hundredth of an hour (00.01) if that is all the employee is entitled to for the day.

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon all participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the Rules of Practice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott L. Reiter", written over a horizontal line.

Scott L. Reiter

475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20260-1137  
September 25, 1997