

No. 496/20

12th October 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail and CWU National Guidelines/Checklist – Delivery Internal Logistics (Floor Plans)

At the beginning of the year that Outdoor Department started to see an increase in the number of enquiries from Branches regarding the frame configuration referred to by Royal Mail as 'Base and Six'. This is where two walks share the same RM2000 fitting and is a frame layout which in fact has been in limited use within some DOs for the past number of years. Consequently, the department issued a memo to Divisional Reps and ADRs on the 'Base and 6 Frame Configuration' on the 3rd of March 2020.

However, in recent weeks the number of enquiries into the Department has sharply increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and it became clear that Royal Mail were pursuing a proactive programme to deploy new frame and floor layout configurations, mainly centred around Base and 6 in a number of sites under a wider heading of 'Delivery Internal Logistics'. As a result of this, direct representations were made on this matter to Royal Mail and the company confirmed that due to the extraordinary increase in parcel volumes (circa 25% to 35%) and falling letter volumes (circa 15% to 35%) in recent months, that there was a pressing need in many Delivery Units to review and change indoor floor plan layouts to assist with the changing mail profile.

Equally, it was becoming clear from many of the enquiries received from Branches that in a number of sites the position being taken by Royal Mail was that frame/floor plan layout changes were non-negotiable and that such frame/floor plan changes would have a direct impact on current duty arrangements. In some sites, local management had sought to simply serve notice on the intention to impose frame/floor plan layout changes.

Whilst noting our wider concerns and representation made to Royal Mail at the way in which some local managers have approached this subject matter, it was however very clear that the change in mail profile and the growth in parcel workload during the COVID-19 pandemic, have caused real challenges for many Delivery Offices in relation to space and storage issues and solutions. It is equally clear that this particular growth in parcel workload, supported by Royal Mail's own traffic forecast indications, will remain an everyday feature for the foreseeable future with significant parcel growth envisaged along with the increasing volumetric of items. As such, local plans and proposals from Royal Mail to review DOs frame and floor layout configurations and indeed a genuine need at local level, to review current floor plans against this changed mail mix, will not go away or abate.

Against this backdrop, the department entered into talks with Royal Mail in order to restore balance to this subject and these discussions have now concluded with an agreement on the attached Royal Mail and CWU

National Guidelines/Checklist – Delivery Internal Logistics (Floor Plans), which have been endorsed by the Postal Executive.

These National Guidelines/Checklist and accompanying documentation are designed to provide a clear framework for Branches and Representatives in terms of dealing with either local proposals, or jointly developed plans around changes to frame and floor plans.

Whilst the National Guidelines/Checklist are self-explanatory, it is necessary to draw out the following key points:

- The primary objective of Delivery Internal Logistics and the guidelines and checklist is to maximise the space necessary as a consequence of the changing mail mix and volumetric impact of increased parcels and confirm that Internal Logistics is not about any national Royal Mail plan to accelerate closures or mergers of DOs or SPDOs. Where changes to a layout are required to facilitate Delivery Office or SPDO closures, all parties will be made aware and these changes will be dealt with separately in line with current relevant National Agreements.
- Local plans to review and change frame and Office layout configuration should not just focus on a Base and 6 default outcome with a list of other frame/layout options outlined which also include the possible introduction of the Nationally agreed RM/CWU Indoor Work Methods, for sites which have not introduced this previously.
- Any plans on changing the floor layout will need to consider, in advance, any impact to the current duty arrangements, resourcing requirements, IWT (Indoor Workload Tool) and indoor workplan. Where changes are identified the local Rep and DOM will discuss these, including any formal changes to duties. Where this cannot be agreed proposals will be subject to resolution through the I.R. Framework.
- The National Guidelines/Checklist makes clear that where a Base and 6 Frame configuration is deployed, that it does not implicitly mean that one of the duties is required to become part-time.
- Option to introduce or increase double slots as part of the new office layout will need to factor in the current local office arrangements around Door to Door, number of average D2D contracts for deliveries and in particular if the office is currently performing some form of warm calling arrangements on D2D items.
- Any plans should also factor in delivery point growth and ensure that this is taken into account based on forecasted growth within the next six months and where possible projected longer-term plans.
- Any plans should give full consideration to any potential impact on task variety, job satisfaction, and the daily impact on the duty holder in terms of the complexity of the prep task.
- Any changes must also factor in all other layout considerations including the impact to main corridors or thoroughfares at the end of rows of frames, minimise mail transportation distances around the office, space and storage needs for HCT, LWT and other necessary equipment and any revised lighting arrangements for frames.
- All revised indoor operational layout plans must ensure improved safety within the office by applying and maintaining the appropriate space standards, creating a better, cleaner and safer place of work, with the opportunity (without compromising the overall objectives) of a new layout of increase aisle distance from the minimum standards recommend 1800mm to 2100mm.
- That any new frame/floor plan layout will be subject to a Post Implementation Review two to four weeks after any change.

- The National Guidelines/Checklist will be subject to a joint review in 3 months' time and both parties will jointly review the need for further Industrial Engineering studies covering both these arrangements, either as part of further talks between the CWU and Royal Mail in relation to Hybrid Delivery Methods/D2D Warm Calling, as standalone activity resulting from the review of these guidelines, or, as part of the regular review and maintenance/refresh of PVs.
- That all revised indoor operational layout plans must ensure the current local level Covid-19 social distancing measures and arrangements are maintained and are developed in conjunction with full involvement from Local and Area Safety Reps along with all SSoW and agreed processes.

It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct and ongoing impact in terms of the mail profile and mix, which has accelerated already pre-existing space issues and problems within many Delivery Offices. Therefore, and notwithstanding the wider industrial relation climate it was still nonetheless felt both necessary and appropriate by the department and Postal Executive to have in place for Branches and Representatives, a clear and agreed National Guidelines/Checklist in respect to Delivery Internal Logistics (Floor Plans).

Any queries to the content of the above please contact the Outdoor Department reference 230.03 email address: outdoorsecretary@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

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