

Delivery After Dark

We have been getting numerous phone calls at the Union Hall regarding delivery in the dark and what a carrier should do if they are instructed to deliver late in the day. This is an issue that comes up every year and there always seems to be a question as to what a carrier should do if they are faced with this situation, so I will cover the steps that you should take.

If you are instructed by your supervisor to deliver after dark, you cannot refuse to make this delivery based solely on the fact that it is dark. You are responsible for making a legitimate attempt to deliver the mail. No one can tell you what that attempt entails; it is a judgment call that you must make based on the circumstances. You must evaluate the delivery and determine if you can safely make the delivery.

If you feel that you can safely make the delivery, you still need to take extra care while making the delivery and remember that even if you can make delivery to houses on the relay, you may need to curtail delivery to addresses that cannot be delivered safely.

If you do not believe that you can safely deliver the mail, you should inform your supervisor as to what the conditions were that kept you from making the delivery safely. You should keep notes anytime this happens so that you will be able to recall later why you could not make the delivery if you are interviewed for discipline over this issue.

The other issue that seems to be on the increase relates to vehicle backing accidents. From what I can gather, the majority of the accidents have involved newer employees driving the new delivery vans. For those of you have not yet seen these vans, my opinion is that they are ill suited for mail delivery. They do not have side windows and the mirrors are not sufficient to back these vehicles. I understand that they do have rear cameras; however, the camera is no substitute for mirrors that allow the driver to see all around the vehicle.

My advice to anyone driving these vans is to avoid backing up in any vehicle unless it cannot be avoided. Be aware of your surroundings when you park the vehicle and try to avoid putting yourself in a situation where you have no choice but to back up. If you do find yourself in a circumstance in which you have to back up, look all around the vehicle and ensure that there is nothing behind the vehicle that you could possibly strike.