

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE MATRIX

1. If the person assigned to the auxiliary route has accepted the auxiliary route as a 6 day assignment, where is he/she placed on the matrix if he/she gives up the 6 day assignment?

A. When a substitute, RCA, or RCR who previously elected to serve an auxiliary route 6 days, later accepts a subsequent leave replacement vacancy, the employee will be annotated on the assignment list as the primary leave replacement for that route. If there are blanks on the assignment list for a route in the second and third leave replacement slots, and the employee is qualified on the route(s), the employee may be designated accordingly on the assignment list. (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pp. 25)

2. Can a senior leave replacement carrier bump a junior leave replacement carrier?

A. There is no "bumping" on the matrix under any circumstances. As an example, when the substitute, RCA, or RCR who previously elected to serve an auxiliary route six days, accepts a subsequent leave replacement vacancy, the employee may not bump a leave replacement with less service in the office from a second or third designated assignment.

3. Can each station or branch have its own matrix?

A. No. The matrix must be posted in each office, including stations and branches, and will list all regular rural routes along with the assigned leave replacement and those substitutes, RCAs and RCRs designated as the second and third leave replacements for each route. Stations and branches will fall under the main office and the matrix that is established for that office. Stations and branches can establish a separate list similar to the matrix for each individual delivery unit which provides the qualified substitutes, RCAs and RCRs in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office for each route in the delivery unit. This will assist management when offering an assignment within the delivery unit, once the matrix has been exhausted. (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pp. 23)

4. If the primary, second and third leave replacements for a route are unavailable on a given day, is the work then offered to other qualified leave replacements by seniority?

A. Yes, the assignment will then be offered to qualified substitutes, RCAs or RCRs assigned to that delivery unit, in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office. (Article 30.2.D; Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 Pg. 26)

5. When would a Temporary Relief Carrier (TRC) be utilized?

A. Only after the specific provisions of Article 30.2.D regarding the use of substitutes, RCAs and RCRs are complied with, may management utilize a TRC to serve a route other than his or her primary assignment.

6. How are Temporary Relief Carriers (TRCs) recognized on the matrix?

A. Temporary Relief Carriers (TRCs) may appear on the matrix only as the primary leave replacement. (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 Pg. 23)

7. What is qualified?

A. Qualified is defined as having received training on or having been utilized on the route. (Article 30.2.D.3)

8. Last week there was no one available to carry route 1. Even though I have never been trained on route 1, my postmaster required me to deliver it. Now that I have carried route 1 am I considered qualified on that route.

A. Yes. Since you have been utilized on route 1, your name should be placed on the list showing you are qualified on route 1. (EL-902 Article 30.2.D)

9. I have been trained on two routes. Should I have been given training before I was required to carry this additional route?

A. Yes. A newly appointed rural carrier craft employee or a leave replacement assigned to more than one route will be allowed a reasonable period with pay to become familiar with the route and become proficient. (EL-902 Article 9.2.L.1)

10. If a leave replacement is given the opportunity to select two routes on the matrix that they are qualified on and they decline to make the selection, which routes would the leave replacement be designated for on the matrix?

A. If the leave replacement opts not to make a selection, management would then have the discretionary authority to place the leave replacement's name on the matrix as a replacement for routes on which he/she is qualified, if vacant.

11. Is there a time frame for redoing the matrix?

A. No. When circumstances create a large number of blanks on the matrix due to conversions, auxiliary route assignments, etc., management should review the list to determine if some movement of qualified leave replacements or cross training is needed. (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pp. 25)

12. When redoing the matrix, can management change all the route assignments?

A. No. Should management decide that some movement amongst assignments is necessary, only those qualified leave replacements desiring to change assignments will be affected. (Analysis of Changes to the National Agreement pg. 25)

13. I am an RCA and the senior leave replacement in my office. I have been trained on my primary assignment only. All of the other leave replacements have been trained on three routes. Do I have the right to require my postmaster to train me on three routes?

A. No. When necessary or desirable, a substitute, RCA or RCR who is assigned to one route may be utilized on up to three routes. However, the employee's prime responsibility is to the assigned route. (Article 30.2.C.1 USPS/NRLCA National Agreement 1995-1999)

***NOTE:** It is the position of the NRLCA that training on additional regular routes should be done by seniority. However, absent any contractual language to support our position, management has the discretionary authority to cross train. Discretionary authority must not be used in an arbitrary, capricious or discriminatory fashion. Before the other leave replacements are trained on a fourth route, management would be required to train you on up to three routes. (Step 4, G95R-4G-C 97105440, Prairieville, LA)

14. When the regular carrier is on approved leave for an entire week and the primary relief carrier is not available, the secondary relief carrier is only available for three days, and the third relief carrier is available all week, who gets the work?

A. The secondary leave replacement would carry the route on the days he/she is available and the tertiary carrier would carry the remaining days.

15. If the leave replacement assignment becomes vacant on a primary route due to the RCA becoming regular, quitting, being fired, etc., do you post the second and third assignment?

A. No. When a vacancy occurs in the leave replacement ranks, the primary assignment shall be offered to qualified substitutes, RCAs, and RCRs in that office in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office, without regard to classification.

When circumstances create a large number of blanks on the list due to conversions, auxiliary route assignments, etc., management should review the list to determine if some movement of qualified leave replacements or additional cross training is needed. Should management decide that some movement amongst assignments is necessary, only those qualified leave replacements desiring to change assignments will be affected. (Analysis of Changes National Agreement pg. 25, EL-902 Article 30.2.E)

16. When the senior leave replacement makes his/her second and third selection on the matrix, can he/she select two second positions or two third positions?

A. No. When the employee is qualified on multiple routes the employee will be allowed to choose the two additional routes on which qualified, based on seniority. Qualified is defined as having received training on or been utilized on the route. The employee may appear as the primary replacement for one regular route and because of the seniority of the leave replacement appear as the second leave replacement on two additional routes. Conversely, the employee may appear in the third leave replacement column on two additional routes other than his/her primary route. Management must place the leave replacement on the matrix in the second position(s) if available. If there are no second positions available, the leave replacement would be placed in the third position(s). (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pp. 24)

17. Are substitutes, RCAs and RCRs allowed to be on the matrix in more than one post office?

A. No. They would only appear on the matrix for the office to which they are assigned as the primary relief carrier. However, if the matrix has been exhausted and there is no one available in the office to deliver the mail, then a relief carrier from another office may be utilized in accordance with Article 30.2.D of the USPS/NRLCA National Agreement.

18. What is meant by the term delivery unit?

A. Delivery unit is defined for this purpose as a physical location containing one or more five digit Zip Codes under the control of one postmaster or station/branch manager. (EL-902 Article 30.2.D.3)

19. What happens when the leave replacements in the second and third positions on the matrix are unavailable?

A. If the second and third leave replacements on the list are unavailable the assignment will then be offered to qualified substitutes, RCAs, or RCRs assigned to that delivery unit in the order of the longest period of continuous service in the office. (Article 30.2.D; Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pp. 26)

20. A TRC is initially assigned as a primary leave replacement, then a new RCA is brought into the office. Who has seniority?

A. TRCs do not earn seniority. The RCA would be earning seniority from the date assigned to the office.

21. The primary leave replacement on route 1 has the five day auxiliary assignment, the regular carrier on route 1 is out sick and since I am the next senior leave replacement in the office, I am working the auxiliary route. If after 89 days the leave replacement on route 1 accepts the designation 74 assignment, will the time I have served on the auxiliary route count toward my 90 day qualifying period so I can begin earning annual and sick leave?

A. Yes. If the auxiliary route is awarded to the leave replacement who was temporarily assigned to the auxiliary route, the time served on the route would count toward the time requirement for earning leave in accordance with Article 10.5.B (Analysis of Changes National Agreement 1995-1999 pg. 97)

22. If the auxiliary carrier has accepted the auxiliary route as a five day assignment, must they continue to be on the matrix?

A. No. The employee will only serve on the assigned auxiliary route and as the primary leave replacement on the assigned regular route. (Article 30.2.G.4)

23. Should a leave replacement from a delivery unit be utilized before a leave replacement from another post office is utilized?

A. Yes, all leave replacements from a delivery unit must be utilized before going to another post office, in addition to regular carriers on and off the RDWL.