

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal Carrier: A Dangerous Job

Play this video

By Matt Rivers - Multimedia Journalist

Thursday, August 12, 2010 - 8:54pm

Northeast El Paso- You might think it's easy but it's not. Postal carriers have a tough job. That's why we decided to ride along with a mailman for a day to take a walk in his shoes.

"I've got the worst route I think," says mailman Dwaine Halmos.

Because from the first moment out of his truck everyday, there are dogs. Nasty ones. In two hours, we counted over 40.

"It's only when they're aggravated by somebody else or something that they go out and bite," he says.

Carriers in El Paso's district have racked up 95 bites since last Fall. 4 of them belong to Dwaine. The most recent teeth marks came from a bull mastiff.

"It bit me on the left thigh as I was trying to protect myself," says Dwaine.

He isn't alone. Nationally, carriers have been bitten about 4,700 times since October. No one fills ER waiting rooms with bite victims more than postal carriers.

All Dwaine wants is a little more safety. Taller fences and mailboxes on the street are a start. Because guys like Dwaine should get to stuff mailboxes stitches free.

Most people never think their dog would hurt anyone. These people are strangers who walk by the house everyday. The dog does not know why they keep walking by the house. They begin to recognize their smell etc. and react. As the owner of the dog there is no guarantee they won't react badly so take precautions. Nobody wants to be bit. I'm sure mailmen have dogs too. The point is to be aware that the dogs normally protect their family and territory; if anyone threatens that, dogs may react.

* reply

MRN

4 days ago

keeping the mailmen safe. some of it does go on the shoulders on the mailman themselves. I've seen mailmen actually taunt dogs. tease and make fun of them too. now that isn't the dogs fault is it? My grandmother was in the postal service for 10 years never once did she come home with bites from dogs. it could be she was lucky or maybe it was because she took the necessary steps to ensure her safety.

* reply

MariFeisty

6 days ago

As a carrier in San Antonio for 7 years, I have carried over 305 rts in and around the city. Never have I provoked a dog but countless times I have had dogs sneak up behind me to try and bite me. The famous quote of the customer " not my dog",when in fact its always their dog. I have had customers afraid to come out of their house because of that dog.I've had dog break through screen doors to try and attack me, so please, give me a break.So unless you've walked in a carriers shoes,you don't know.

* reply

Albert Vega

4 days ago

dogs? get their side of the story maybe? i'm sure if you did most would assure you that some of these dogs are harmless and would have proven it to you. There are dogs like bark like this all the time! My dogs do it when people walk by my house. They aren't barking because they are mad or they want to bite someone they are barking because they want attention. I'm not saying that these dogs are all innocent. I am saying that it's not the dog owner who solely possesses the responsibility of

* reply

MariFeisty

6 days ago

what do you honestly think those dogs are going to do if you shove the camera in their space? they aren't just going to sit and wag their tail to be pet. I actually lived in that neighborhood very recently, one of the dogs you showed belongs to my family. Utterly appalled. I mean, did you even ask the owners permission to tape these peoples dogs? or even outside of their houses? it's common courtesy after all. You are very much concerned about the postman but what about the people who own these..

* reply

MariFeisty

6 days ago

Great piece on postal carriers and dangers of dogs...you should send it to a national station.

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2. Return to sender, the slow death of the Postal Service

By: Nicki Kurokawa
Special to The Examiner
08/12/10 11:53 AM EDT

Last week, the U.S. Postal Service announced that it ended the third quarter of FY2010 with a net loss of \$3.5 billion, a full \$1.1 billion more than the same quarter last year (that's approximately a 50% increase, for those of you keeping score at home.) Bear in mind, this comes despite the fact that in 2009, "capital contributions of the U.S. government" totaled over \$3 billion (p. 84).

Aside from the obvious culprit (the interwebs! Curse you, tubes!), the USPS also faults mounting pension obligations. The size and scope of the benefits, however, isn't to blame – but rather, the requirement that benefits be pre-funded. (Paying for obligations? Oh, the horror!)

From the USPS release:

The organization's financial situation is compounded by its obligation to pay \$5.4 billion to \$5.8 billion annually to prefund retiree health benefits. This requirement, established in the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 (PAEA), is an obligation unique to the Postal Service.

...

"Securing the fiscal stability of the Postal Service will require continued efforts in all of these areas, as well as further review of retiree health benefit prefunding," said Potter. "It also will require that the Postal Service gain flexibility within the law to move toward five-day delivery, to adjust our network as needed, to develop new products the market demands, and to work with our unions to meet the challenges ahead."

As it turns out, being a government-run enterprise is both a blessing and a curse. Sure, there are a lot of advantages inherent in being a government-run enterprise (including laws that prohibit direct competition from the private sector), but also a lot of strings that come attached as well – including forcing the USPS to carry bulk rate (read: junk) mail at below-cost rates and coverage to remote rural areas at the same price as profitable routes. As Thomas Sowell wrote in 2001, "the net result is that the Postal Service is not only a rare privileged monopoly, it is an even rarer money-losing monopoly because of such politically imposed inefficiencies."

Rate hikes have been mentioned as possible solutions to the problem; however, many members of Congress – including Republicans like Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) – have flat-out rejected increased prices, as they would create hardships for customers. Service cuts have also been mentioned, as has the possibility of taking more holidays; however, this has also been met with stiff resistance.

The Post Office's many problems (even acknowledged by President Obama!), however depressing, are instructive in that they can be easily extrapolated to a number of other government agencies. As the Cato Institute article "The Challenge to the U.S. Postal Monopoly, 1839-1851" notes: "A private postal system was probably not a realistic possibility. Privatization would have led to an 80 percent cut in federal civilian employees and the loss of thousands of lucrative transportation contracts. Some rural areas may have faced higher postage prices, and politicians played that threat to the hilt." There are a lot of vested interests at play, and few – if any – legislators have the political courage to take them on.

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution states that one of the specific powers of Congress is "To establish Post Offices and Post Roads." Unfortunately, if Congress can't successfully do the things it's actually empowered to do, how can we be expected to trust them when they overstep their bounds?

Read more at the Washington Examiner:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/blogs/Examiner-Opinion-Zone/Return-to-sender-100536584.html#ixzz0xCJa5jMm>

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3. How To Prevent Your Unhappy Employees From Going Postal

Bianca Male | Aug. 11, 2010, 1:32 PM | 422 | comment 2

Steven Slater's dramatic exit from his job at Jet Blue yesterday has many employers wondering if a similar situation is likely to happen at their workplace.

Turns out, the answer is yes.

Alexander Hiam, leadership consultant and author of the American Management Association textbook Motivational Management, says that a third of the American workforce is consistently unhappy with their jobs.

Individuals in this group fall into three categories, he says: those who choose to fight (as Slater did), those who choose flight (leaving for a different job), and those who simply freeze (feeling so helpless that they just do the bare minimum to get by.)

None of these options are good for business.

Fortunately, there are some things you can do to find out what your employees are most unhappy about, so you can take action and improve your workplace.

Hiam lays out a three-step process that managers can go through to directly assess employee complaints and instill a procedure for addressing the biggest problems:

1. Collect a list of problems and complaints from all your employees, and share your findings rapidly so everyone can see what the dominant issues are.
2. Form innovation squads to pull enthusiastic employees into the process of generating good new ideas and approaches based on the findings, making the criteria clear in advance for practical, doable proposals so that the teams don't feel let down later if their million dollar project doesn't get funding.
3. Implement the top idea at once, the second-best idea shortly thereafter, and so on, until at least five good ideas are in place and functioning well, then repeat the process.

He notes, "The trick to making this process produce positive momentum is to do it rapidly... Innovating benefits employees and their employers not just by producing improvements, but also by building momentum and setting an exciting pace that draws people out of their slumps."

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