

<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>		<b>Sector Information Minute</b>	
Commercial and Consumer Services, Transportation and Utilities Sector (CACTUS)		<b>SIM 05/2004/50</b> (formerly SIM 2004/07)	
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Target Audience:  
FOD Inspectors

## ROYAL MAIL LETTERS UK - HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INSPECTIONS PROGRAMME 2004/5

The purpose of this SIM is to outline the approach to be adopted in carrying out local management inspections of Royal Mail Letters UK as part of the Sector Strategic Programme, 'other sectors' programme in 2004/5.

1 Royal Mail Group plc is the legal entity and is the client name used for FOCUS records. Due to its size there is split enforcement between HSE and the Local Authorities (LAs). The demarcation follows the company businesses apart from peripatetic accidents/topics, which nearly all come to HSE. A SIM is being produced which contains full demarcation details.

2 The largest business within Royal Group plc is Royal Mail Letters UK (RM) with about 180,000 employees. The business collects, sorts and delivers letters and small packages. It operates around 60 mail centres where mail is automatically sorted. Most bulk mail movements are between the mail centres. Each mail centre feeds to local mail offices where letters are mainly sorted by hand. Mail centres will often have a mail office situated in the same building. All RM premises are allocated to LA enforcement with HSE dealing with peripatetic matters.

3 Typically RM submits in total over 7,000 RIDDORs per year of which around 5,500 occur during peripatetic work activities. Accidents within RM premises have been progressively falling. Peripatetic accidents have been steadily increasing until two years ago. They are now beginning to slowly decline from what is still an unacceptably high level.

4 Various projects have been run by operational inspectors during 2003/2004. These have confirmed the view that the main problem within the company is a failure to implement national policies at a local level. There is little to be gained by concentrating on improving national procedures if these are not being followed. What is required is a prolonged low level inspection program to achieve changes in the local management of h&s. RM needs detailed inspection using its own procedures. It is important to concentrate on the application of existing procedures by local management.

5 In order to have a point of contact with management the inspection should be based on a mail office, mail centre or a combination of both. Comparison on h&s performance could be made if at least two different locations were chosen. To aid selection the sector can provide information on poor performing offices together with suitable contacts within RM. The sector has suggested, as a minimum, two inspectors per division be involved in the inspection to ensure future continuity. A minimum of ten inspector days per division should be allocated. The programme should be planned to extend into 2005/06, when one of the inspectors

should lead similar inspections. In this way we can progressively build up experience of RM procedures and their application. Follow up visits after the initial inspection program are essential to ensure deficiencies are resolved and to maintain the momentum to improve local h&s performance.

6 Local RM contacts should be established and a briefing requested on the offices accident profile with particular emphasis on peripatetic accidents to delivery staff based at the particular office and further information on specified topics, which are going to be covered during the inspection. Consideration can also be given to joint working with the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) dealing with the office. It may be productive to discuss joint working with the Local Authority Strategic Programme lead inspector in the division to build on any existing complementary work. Contact must be made with the Communication Workers Union safety representative prior to the commencement of any inspections. It is suggested that at the end of the inspection program a meeting is held with both management and the union safety representative to provide feedback.

7 The sector will provide on request a package of relevant h&s information to enable inspectors to design their inspection program. There is only one topic, about which the sector would request inspectors take a specific interest. Single daily delivery will be fully implemented by April 2004. Put simply instead of doing one walk (delivery route) twice per day delivery personnel could be doing up to three full walks which will increase the total weight being carried. As part of the preparation for single daily delivery all walks have been risk assessed, in particular for manual handling. This is an ideal time to ensure that this work has been done correctly and all relevant h&s matters have been taken into consideration in designing the walks. Further detail will be found in the information package.

8 The sector does not wish to restrict inspectors by requiring a structured report back as there needs to be some variation between how inspectors carry out the program. The purpose of the program is to challenge RM's local management of h&s and as such different topics may present themselves during inspection. However the sector does need to evaluate the program at year-end and to inform further work to be done in 2005. Basic information will therefore be required on visits made, conditions found, action taken and where opinions are formed on what basis. As inspectors are likely to be unfamiliar with RM close liaison with the sector will be needed during which suitable means of report back can be agreed.

9 As work processes in RM are standardised their h&s procedures are applied nationally. If inspectors find any written procedures needing improvement the information should be forwarded to the sector to take forward to ensure consistency in our dealings with RM.

10 For any matters relating to Royal Mail Group plc and any of its businesses contact the Utilities Section (Nottingham) of CACTUS.

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