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29 November 2005

Dear Ray

Amendments to Royal Mail's Conduct Code

On the first of January 2006 new license conditions take effect for all postal operators. One element of these conditions concerns mail integrity. In order to be certain of our compliance with these conditions we propose to make a minor amendment to the conduct code and I attach these for your comments. As you will appreciate we have a relatively short period of time to make the amendments and properly communicate these out. I will therefore need to have any observations or comments by 6th December 2005. I am writing in similar terms to Brian Scott.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jon Allen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter 'J'.

JON ALLEN

Head of Employee Relations

Royal Mail Conduct Code Agreement

17 **MAIL INTEGRITY** - SAFEGUARDING CUSTOMERS' MAIL

UNEXCUSED DELAY TO MAIL

The responsibility for safeguarding the mail and giving it prompt and accurate treatment is one of the most important duties of all employees.

Various actions can cause mail to be delayed, e.g. carelessness or negligence leading to damage or loss of customers' mail, breach or disregard of a rule or guideline. Such instances are to be distinguished from wilful delay although they may also be treated as misconduct, and in more serious instances could also result in dismissal.

Furthermore, Royal Mail does recognise that genuine mistakes and misunderstandings do occur and it is not the intention of the Business that such cases should be dealt with under the Conduct Code beyond counselling for the isolated instance. The key is that employees should do their job to the best of their ability and, if in doubt, ask for their manager's advice and guidance.

WILFUL DELAY

Wilful delay of mail is classed as gross misconduct, which if proven could lead to dismissal. The test to determine whether actions may be considered as wilful delay is as follows:

Deliberate action taken by an employee that causes mail to be delayed is called wilful delay. Where proven, such breaches of conduct can lead to dismissal, even for a first offence; indeed Wilful Delay is a criminal offence and can result in prosecution.

Agreed guidelines are contained at Appendix 3.

Appendix 3 to Conduct Code

MAIL INTEGRITY - SAFEGUARDING **CUSTOMERS' MAIL** **AGREED NATIONAL GUIDELINES**

1 STANDARDS

Royal Mail's future depends upon continuing to give our customers the highest possible standards of service. One of the most important duties of all employees is to provide customers with the service they have paid for and have a right to expect. Product specifications dictate the timing of collections, processing and delivery of items within the product pipeline (due process). Mails operations are geared up to meet these requirements to ensure that we as a Business get it right first time, every time.

2 TRAINING/LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

a) It is essential that our employees are given the correct training and support if they are to provide an excellent service to our customers and complete their work entirely in accordance with the requirements of the job. When this is not possible to do this, for any reason, arrangements should be in place to enable employees to alert their manager at an early stage in order to avoid compromising service standards.

b) Delay to mail is a serious matter and it is, therefore, incumbent on all Royal Mail employees to ensure all items are processed in accordance with the local arrangements. All employees will be made aware of these local arrangements and the specific requirements of the particular job(s) they will perform. Every time mail is delayed, for whatever reason, Royal Mail's employees should attempt to correct the problem efficiently and effectively as soon as possible.

3 DELIVERY

3.1 PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT

a) Where an employee feels that on completion of preparation he/she may experience difficulty in completing his/her delivery within the authorised time allotted, he/she should approach his/her manager as soon as possible before setting out on delivery. It will be for the manager to discuss any problem and advise the employee what particular action should be taken.

b) When an individual has requested assistance on delivery, but the manager feels that assistance is not required, this decision along with the advice given to the employee will be recorded and associated with the daily traffic volume records. The employee can have access to this record and may ask to see it prior to commencement of his/her delivery. In addition to recording the employee's request, the employee will be

instructed to ring his/her local manager prior to a specified time or as soon as possible if full completion of delivery workload within the time allotted proves not to be possible.

3.2 AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF DELIVERY

- a) If an individual is prevented from completing their delivery for any reason, it is essential that this is reported immediately either by returning to the office or by telephone (telephone costs will be refunded). A written record will be kept.
- b) All employees should be informed of the local authorised arrangements, in writing, preferably in plastic card form if available.

4. GENERAL

- a) Employees must be made aware that mail must NEVER be taken home at the end of a delivery. Correct endorsement procedures and correct use of the pouching off wallet, if appropriate, will avoid this.
- b) Although the main aim will be to avoid the circumstances that may pose operational difficulties to an employee and to find ways of overcoming any potential problem at a very early stage, it is also important that all employees are made fully aware of the implications of delaying mail and possible consequences.
- c) Measures shall be put in place to advise staff on the course of action to be taken when difficulties arise when managers are unavailable.

5. SAFEGUARDING CUSTOMER MAIL (ROYAL MAIL CONDUCT CODE)

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