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**Royal Mail - Mk 4 Parcel York Container – Next Steps, Phased Introduction and Prior To National Roll Out (All Offices) – Design, Health, Safety, Ergonomic and Training Aspects:**

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

LTB 103/2017 issued on 22 February 2017 provided Branches and Representatives with a detailed report on the history and development of the Mk4 York Container and joint work with earlier Prototypes since 2011, leading up to the Trial of 182 Prototype Units this year in Swindon, Oxford, Reading and HCN. This initial trial of the Mk4 Parcel York Containers has now been successfully concluded. Notably, the Royal Mail Lead Ergonomist, the Royal Mail Delivery Design Principle Engineer, the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department Officials and CWU ASRs in trial Offices have been monitoring the trial equipment, attending regular meetings on site and participating in weekly conference calls as well as surveying staff for feedback which was extremely positive in this Royal Mail equipment trial.

The background is that there had been no fundamental change to the York container design for 20 years, and although the basic design was still sound, it was designed originally for mail bags and letter trays, and there are now increasing numbers of small parcels/packets and strapped bundles in the operation.

It was identified that existing York sleeves were presenting problems with these new traffic streams, e.g. bundles sliding between the existing York container bars and pushing out of the front of the container, in the strapped area, resulting in Safety and transportation problems. Additionally, during trials of the Parcel Automation Machine at Swindon Mail Centre, it quickly became apparent that parcels were becoming stuck in the standard ALP sleeves, which resulted in inefficient tipping into the machine.

Consequently, the M4 York has been designed specifically for small parcels and strapped bundles. It can be used for Letter trays, but existing Yorks remain more suitable for these. Trials have confirmed this container is fully fit for purpose, and the Mark 4 York will now therefore be adopted as a new standard type York container, to be used in appropriate mail streams alongside existing Yorks Mks 1, 2 & 3 of which there are circa 550,000 in Royal Mail Service.

During the trial a number of relatively minor design, manufacturing and build quality issues were noted on the Containers through the trial, and subsequently, the manufacturer has addressed all of these. The key design changes recommended by RM/CWU included a new modified gate locking system with modified tough plastic lock parts on the upper gates and

new reinforced gate metal flaps. Rivets instead of stitching on panels. Improved, reinforced hinges. An additional Lifting strap for ease of lifting and locking of the gate into its stowed position. A new gate locking hook on the side. New reshaped gate metal flaps plus tough Plastic locking parts. Additional Cross tubes added on the base frame to reinforce the structure. These modifications have been thoroughly jointly assessed and improved the units which also fully met with all of the safety, ergonomic and operational requirements. The manufacturers also conducted extensive durability testing, which has yielded wholly positive results. The next stage is to gradually phase the Mk4's into the Royal Mail operation through automation, manual operation, stowing, transportation, loading, unloading, nesting etc through a constant use basis.

Therefore rather than a national roll out of large numbers of these new Containers at this stage, it was discussed and generally agreed that as it was a completely new redesigned Unit that the initial batch should be smaller to enable wider testing within a limited number of sites. Therefore 10,000 Mk4 York Containers have been ordered and purchased from the current York Container Manufacturer and supplier, Hartwell's and around 5,000 will put into service in the following 4 automation sites Swindon MC, Greenford MC, HCN MC, Chelmsford MC as from 16<sup>th</sup> Oct for full use to and from DOs and collection hubs in those areas.

Jubilee, Leeds, Medway and Bristol MC plants will also receive from the 4 main sites and will only use to return with automated mail back to the 4 sites rather than fully using in their areas. They are to be used on Automation traffic streams to achieve maximum benefits and further test them in wider use. It was agreed that by purchasing a smaller initial number and utilising them in a small number of Offices would also allow us to learn more about how these containers perform in greater numbers, in constant use, over a longer period. The necessary safety documentation will be in place, and the mandatory requirement remains that all those using the container must be appropriately trained. The plan is to use the containers in a closed loop operations to/from these Mail Centers.

The Royal Mail Container Management Team and CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department will be jointly monitoring performance and robustness in automation and importantly in the manual operation, concentrating not only on efficiency but on robustness, safety and ergonomics within automation and manual operations and then feeding back to supplier with any issues. CWU ASRs will be fully involved and will play an important role in the monitoring of the Containers during this initial period before any further orders are placed with the manufacturers and before national roll out across all Offices.

CWU Area Health and Safety Representatives will continue to be fully involved in the introduction of the 10,000 units, the roll out and use of the new containers throughout operation, monitoring and reviewing the Containers use, checking robustness and safe condition and use, within the automation and manual operations, feeding back into the ongoing national review process. There will be effective meaningful involvement and consultation between local management and CWU Area and Workplace Health & Safety Representatives on the deployed, training, safe use and monitoring of the Containers.

Staff, Workplace Coaches and CWU Area and Workplace Health and Safety Reps will be fully trained on the equipment, on its safe operation and standard operating procedures. Health and Safety is of paramount importance to both Royal Mail and the CWU and as such Safe Systems of Work and Standard Operating Procedures will be kept under review throughout deployment by the Royal Mail Assets Containers National Team and the CWU Health Safety & Environment Department.

If any of the new Mk4 York Containers are received outside of these agreed Mail Centre Office sites then they will need to be sent back to the designated key automation sites.

If any defects or damage is identified and found on the Containers, there is a damaged/repair process that has been developed (see attached) which must be followed.

Attachments:

- Mk4 York SSoW
- Mk4 York Damage Process
- Mk4 York Design Updates
- Mk4 York Training Brief
- LTB 103/17

Yours sincerely



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