

Pattern of strains, sprains, injury and fatigue emerging under Integrated Delivery

PWUA calls for immediate suspension of the Paxster roll out

The PWUA has written to NZ Post calling for an immediate suspension of the Paxster roll out until agreement is reached over safe operating procedures, and in particular, the supplying of a suitable helmet.

The Postal Workers Union believes that NZ Post's obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act require that the roll out of the Integrated Delivery programme be halted.

The ergonomic hazards presented by the helmet in current use and subsequent reports of pain, discomfort and injury mean that NZ Post is not able to "provide and maintain safe systems of work" - a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

NZ Post already has reports from physiotherapists, HS1s, PWUA reports to meetings of the Integrated Delivery Working Group and anecdotal reports from posties about the on-going hazards associated with the Paxster.

A report last year from a New Plymouth physiotherapist about problems with the helmet referred to "multiple cervical injuries sustained since the release of the Paxster and Kyburz in June 2015."

After almost two years of delays which appear to have been partly the responsibility of a previous health and safety manager NZ Post has now tracked down what may be a suitable replacement. However there is no date for a supply of the lightweight helmets to arrive from the German manufacturer.

There is also a pattern emerging of strains, sprains and potential long term health and safety problems which appear to relate to the method of footpath delivery chosen by NZ Post.

The Union says its members will continue to face a number of hazards associated with the Paxsters until agreement is reached over safe operating procedures.

Health and safety notice issued to NZ Post

Although some delivery branches say they have adjusted well to the new "4 day" Integrated Delivery rosters, the PWUA has had many reports of the problems faced by Paxster drivers in other branches.

Mail has gone undelivered at the Rosedale branch on Auckland's North Shore and staff turnover has led to long working days for the remaining Delivery Agents.

Section 84 of the Employment Relations Act provides for workers to hold a secret ballot to refuse unsafe work. The law provides for what is in fact a legal strike.

PWUA members at the Rosedale Delivery Branch of NZ Post passed the following resolution in a secret ballot on 24 May:

"Any member who believes that their ability to work safely is impaired by fatigue, pain or environmental conditions will immediately cease deliveries and return to the branch."

NZ Post has agreed to attend urgent mediation to try to resolve the issue.

Paxsters at Norway Post

PWUA research has not revealed any other postal service using Paxsters on and off footpaths in the manner used by NZ Post.

NZ Post had claimed to be following the Norway Post Paxster delivery model. However in Norway Paxsters are driven only on the road and not on the footpath.

Also in Norway the limit of parcel size to 2kgs for posties on Paxster delivery means that they can use their Paxsters as a mobile depot and deliver their mail in walking loops. They do not have to lean forward to select their mail at every delivery point while wearing a heavy helmet not safe for the job.

Although NZ Post arranged for modifications to the Paxster steering last year, the PWUA is not satisfied that the improvement is any safer for footpath delivery with its associated tight turning manoeuvres.

IDA in the cities

The PWUA has produced an information sheet for members for when their delivery branch transitions to IDA.

Under its Integrated Delivery Agent (IDA) model NZ Post is abolishing postie jobs and replacing them with a smaller number of Delivery Agents.

All remaining Delivery employees, whether they drive a Paxster, ride a motorcycle or bicycle, or walk, will become Delivery Agents (DAs) covered by new terms and conditions for Delivery Agents in the CEA. This means that all DAs will be paid for actual time worked whatever their mode of delivery. There will be no more Postie Pay Model (PPM).

Both the PWUA and E tū have filed legal proceedings against NZ Post over its 4 day rotating roster because fatigue experts have said that the roster is unsafe. (See also story in next box.) The case is waiting to be heard.

International advice against NZ Post's shifts

Experts that the PWUA has consulted in both New Zealand and Australia have expressed their concerns about long daily work hours and the total hours required to be worked over 7 day periods. (See also Redback August 2016).

They have said the mental and physical demands of the job, combined with the working hours, create risks to the workers and the community that have the potential to cause accidents, injury, illness and fatalities.

NZ Post appears not interested in letter business

To date NZ Post has shown no interest in a PWUA proposal to promote the letter business by following the example of Thailand Post (see also Redback December 2016).

In early December a PWUA representative met with NZ Post and presented a postcard used by Thailand Post in a nationwide sports competition - every two years predicting either the winners of the World Cup or alternately the FA Cup Final.

Entries in the competition can only be made by postcards purchased from and sent through Thailand Post.

The PWUA believes a similar promotion in New Zealand could see

up to 12 million extra mail items posted each year. A spin off may have residents actually using the postal network for other mail items.

The PWUA proposal was to generate revenue with a postcard competition around an event like picking the winners in the annual international Super Rugby competition.

During the meeting the NZ Post representative took no notes and asked no questions.

Despite a reminder to the company, almost six months later there has been no response from NZ Post. Instead NZ Post continues to pull out roadside post boxes.

Had a "gutsfull"? — of NZ Post's post box removals?

NZ Post ignored the 300 signatures on the petition gathered by two 85 year old Dunedin residents and removed their local road side post box. They now feature in an episode of TV2's new series "Gutsfull".

Greenstone TV has produced ten episodes describing them as "a programme that will listen to all your gripes, grizzles and grievances ... going to the next level to help action

change. But often the most successful solutions come from the grassroots".

The programme began screening on Thursday 18 May and the first series runs for 10 weeks.

The "Gutsfull" episode which screens at 8.30pm on TV 2 on Thursday 29 June carries an interview with the PWUA to answer a question about post box removals: "Why is this happening?"

Ratification meetings for new CEA begin in June

A series of ratification meetings to vote on a new Collective Employment Agreement at NZ Post will begin in early June.

The Employment Relations Act requires that the "Terms of Settlement" and a printed sample copy of the proposed new Collective Employment Agreement is available for each meeting.

The PWUA sent out a notice summarising the proposed settlement to all sites on 12 May. Further copies are being posted out with this issue of Redback.

More information about the negotiations will be provided in the report of the PWUA and E tū advocates which will be read and circulated at each CEA ratification meeting.

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Plans for a CEA for DX posties and sorters

Following discussions with DX Mail employees in a number of centres a draft Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) is now being drawn up by the PWUA in preparation for the "initiation of bargaining" with DX Mail.

The Employment Relations Act promotes collective bargaining for workers - a requirement of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of which New Zealand is a member.

DX employees are being invited to put forward improvements which they want to see in their Collective Employment Agreement including annual salary steps, hours of work, and the provision of suitable wet weather and safety gear.

The PWUA will be discussing with its DX members how to select DX representatives for the negotiations.

REDBACK is published by the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa | Trades Hall, 126 Vivian St, Wellington 6011



POSTAL WORKERS UNION OF AOTEAROA (NORTHERN)

PO Box 95211 Swanson Auckland 0653

I hereby appoint the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa incorporated to be my authorised representative under Sections 18 and 236 of the Employment Relations Act 2000. For the purpose of this authority any duly appointed representative of the PWUA is empowered to act on my behalf in any matters related to or arising out of the negotiation and application of any Employment Agreement or any other matter relating to my employment at my request. This authority shall continue in force until revoked by myself, giving two weeks notice.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signed

Date Appointment No.

Employer

Branch

Home Address

..... Phone

Deduction Authority for Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa (Northern)

I authorise my employer to deduct:

\$4.95 per week when I am employed for 30 or more hours per week, or

\$2.50 per week when I am on-call, or employed for less than 30 hours per week from my pay and credit the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa Northern District.

Please stop any other deductions from my pay to any other union.