

No. 156/22

4th April 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail & CWU Capture Photo on Delivery Joint Statement Addendum

As Branches will be aware the future success of Royal Mail is dependent upon the ability to offer customers products that meet current and future needs and increasingly Royal Mail's large Account Customers are asking carriers to capture a photographic image as proof of delivery; their rationale for wanting this capability is that it helps to reduce 'denial of receipts'. It is with this in mind and further to LTB 054/22 (dated 07/02/22), regarding Capture Photo on Delivery, that Royal Mail are now issuing an addendum to Phase 2 as a consequence of the expansion of the service offering and the impact that this is having on the operation and with customers.

Competitors already offer this capability as do Parcelforce, in order to retain and grow market share and we are committed to act quickly to enable this capability within the Royal Mail Core Network.

Phase 1 was deployed before peak 2021 enabling the Capture Photo on Delivery service for Boohoo Tracked items, initially and subsequently extended to M&S and the Very Group. Phase 2 saw this capability extended to all Tracked Non-Signature Customers from the 10th March 2022.

Background

Following the deployment of Phase 2, i.e. Capture Photo on Delivery for all Tracked Non-Signature Customers, many delivery colleagues have provided feedback, that they have existing agreed arrangements and understandings in place with the receiving customers to leave items in a safe place. The introduction of Capture Photo on Delivery has highlighted these arrangements, the cessation of which could impact on 'Trust at the Doorstep' relationships with receiving customers & delivery colleagues and could lead to an increase in customer complaints.

This Joint Statement seeks to make a change to the current Standard Operating Procedure recognising these existing agreed arrangements between the receiving customer and the delivery colleague. Both Parties have considered using a written physical document for customers to sign in order to confirm these arrangements, however, due to GDPR issues this is not possible. Accordingly, it has been confirmed that this is an interim change only until a digital solution is in place, which will enable customers to express their preference formally. This digital solution is expected to be in deployed pre-peak 2022.

Proposed Change to the Standard Operating Procedure

Delivery colleagues are permitted to leave Tracked 24/48, Standard Barcoded Royal Mail 24/48 and 1C and 2C non signature items in a safe place where a pre-existing agreement or understanding is in place with the receiving customer. Delivery OPG's will have sole responsibility and be free to use their initiative to decide where the item shall be left (based on their local knowledge and experience fully taking into account the security of the item/s and their own safety in line with below):

- For any avoidance of doubt delivery OPG's are not permitted to 'safeplace' any signature product.
- Abide by the existing examples of permitted 'safeplace' locations i.e. enclosed porch, shed, greenhouse, garage or outbuilding. As a reminder the following examples are unacceptable 'safeplace' locations e.g. all bins, including recycle, front or back doorstep and underneath parked cars.
- Where available follow the 'safeplace' procedure on the PDA when leaving an item in a 'safeplace'. This protects the delivery OPG should there be a complaint as Royal Mail will have photographic evidence and a GPS location for barcoded items only. For un-barcoded items or barcoded where the 'Safeplace' option is not available on the PDA leave the items in a 'safeplace'.
- All items left in a 'Safeplace' must be recorded on either a '*Something For You/P739 card*' or for PM/Sunday deliveries on a '*Sorry we missed you card/ P6737 card*'.
- Where there is a customer dispute or complaint as to whether there is a pre-existing agreement in place, the delivery colleague will not face any repercussions or conduct action.

It is acknowledged that this change to the Standard Operating Procedure is based on a pre-existing agreement or understanding between the receiving customer and with the sole discretion of the delivery OPG, using their knowledge and experience. It is accepted that the possibility may exist for an incorrect assessment to be innocently made and the item delivered to a safeplace. It is therefore agreed that where genuine mistakes occur the delivery OPG will not be held responsible.

Involvement / Structures

In order to ensure effective communication and deployment of this change to the Standard Operating Procedure, the Local Joint Working Groups (LJWG) will ensure consistent application across Delivery Offices with the full support and involvement of Workplace Coaches.

Safe Systems of Work and Standard Operating Procedures

Health & Safety is of paramount importance to both Royal Mail and the CWU, therefore prior to any change to the current safeplace process it is agreed that a Safe System of Working, Standard Operating Procedures and all relevant safety compliance documentation will be fully developed and agreed between RM and the CWU National Health & Safety Department.

Review/ Summary

Royal Mail and the CWU both understand the importance of being able to offer consumers a first-class experience to enhance the trust that already exists on the doorstep. It is recognised that Royal Mail's standards, integrity, brand image and focus on quality are of key importance and these must be maintained. Accordingly, RM will share key measures with CWU and the aspects contained within this Joint Addendum which will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the change will not lead to increased customer complaints or breaches of RM's integrity or security and difficulties for front line delivery OPGs.

Any questions of interpretation, implementation or application of this addendum shall be referred to the signatories as a matter of urgency for resolution and any local issues will be subject to the industrial relations framework.

Any queries to the content of the above please contact the Outdoor Department reference 540 , email address: njones@cwu.org

Yours sincerely,

Mark Baulch
CWU Assistant Secretary