



November 15, 2000

Mr. Robert C. Pritchard
Director, Motor Vehicle Services Division
American Postal Workers Union,
AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 200054107

Dear Mr. Pritchard:

This responds to your letters of August 23 and September 28 requesting that postal vehicle service (PVS) drivers of **Mack** trucks be permitted to idle the vehicles longer than five minutes.

We understand your concern for the safety of the drivers in regard to the cold weather; however, the drivers do receive a uniform allowance with which they can purchase cold weather clothing. Additionally, while vestibules may not all be heated, they do provide shelter from the elements for the short time that a driver would be standing there. Other postal employees spend a significantly greater amount of time exposed to the elements in winter conditions while performing their regular duties compared to the time spent by PVS drivers.

It is also cost prohibitive to idle the vehicle for longer periods of time just to keep the engine running and the cab heated while the driver is out of the vehicle. One hour of idling per day by just 1/3 of the drivers for 1/3 of the year would cost approximately \$561,600 in fuel costs. Our **Mack** trucks, which are professionally maintained by our vehicle maintenance facilities, should not be difficult to start after the trucks cut off. Vehicles, which may sit idle for one or two tours, do not experience the starting problems anticipated by the union.

Idling the **Mack** trucks for long periods of time also causes abnormal engine wear, such as carbon deposits, acceleration of the deterioration of engine oil, and increases in the amount of water and sulfur inside the engine. This would add costs to the maintenance of the Postal Service's PVS fleet and increase vehicle down time.

And there is no dispute that longer idling times would have an adverse environmental impact through increased exhaust emissions. Accordingly, the Postal Service does not intend to allow PVS vehicles to idle longer than presently permitted.

If you have any questions regarding the foregoing, please contact Joyce Ong at (202) 268-6248.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Sgro".

Peter A. Sgro
Manager
Contract Administration