Management constantly tries new ways to establish office and street standards for letter carriers. There’s one simple reason – if they have a time standard they can hold you to, they don’t have to do their job and physically supervise employees.

There have been several Step 4 Agreements and arbitration decisions over the years that have addressed the setting of arbitrary standards. This doesn’t seem to stop the next brilliant supervisor from trying it again, however. Most recently, there has been a push to hold carriers to one hour of office time and 22 minutes of load time. These are two separate issues, but many of the same cites will apply to both. As such, there will be a grievance template for setting office standards, and a template for setting street standards, but they will be similar.

Remember, any instructions to take no more than one hour of office time should trigger a carrier to ask for further guidance before exceeding that time. The carrier should request what to do with the remainder of the mail that is not cased and should fill out a 1571 documenting any delayed or curtailed mail (and keep a copy). The carrier SHOULD NOT skip basic office functions to make this arbitrary leave time. Bulletin boards should be read, edit books should be updated, breaks should be taken, etc.

It is also good to remember that setting arbitrary standards can rise to the level of harassment and bullying. There will be a separate template for Joint Statement violations, and it may be a good idea to consider adding this argument if it applies. Remember, this is a serious charge so use it when appropriate and when the evidence supports it.