

# Postal Service considers fleet with mix of NGDVs and commercial vehicles

**F**or approximately 10 years, the Postal Service has been going through the process of acquiring the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) to replace the current fleet of aging vehicles. The route to get from design to production of the NGDV has involved years of development and testing by USPS, with the active involvement of the NALC and letter carriers from across the country. As the time approaches for the first NGDVs to be produced and delivered, the Postal Service has determined what it considers to be the best mix of vehicles for the future.

The current fleet consists of both purpose-built vehicles and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vehicles. The two purpose-built vehicles currently in use are the Long Life Vehicle (LLV) and the Flexible Fuel Vehicle (FFV). The LLV and FFV are both right-hand drive (RHD) vehicles that were designed specifically for the Postal Service. The COTS vehicle

fleet includes both left-hand drive (LHD) vans, like the Ram ProMaster and the RHD Mercedes Metris.

In December 2021, the Postal Service issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) pertaining to the acquisition of the NGDV. This statement, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act, outlined the Postal Service's choices for replacing the current fleet and the environmental impact of each alternative. According to the FEIS, USPS operates a delivery fleet of approximately 212,000 vehicles, of which about 165,000 are LLVs and FFVs. The remaining vehicles are a mixture of LHD and RHD COTS vehicles.

In the FEIS, the Postal Service explained its proposed action plan for replacing the existing fleet. Under the USPS's adopted plan, between 50,000 and 165,000 NGDVs would be built and deployed over a span of 10 years. According to the FEIS, the fleet of NGDVs

would be made up of both an internal combustion engine (ICE) and battery electric vehicle (BEV) powertrains. Under this plan, at least 10 percent of the NGDVs would be BEV, with the remainder being ICE vehicles. The FEIS also outlined three alternative plans for replacing the current delivery fleet; however, each was rejected by the Postal Service. Those were:

- The first alternative called for the purchase and deployment of up to 165,000 RHD ICE COTS vehicles, which would replace the LLV and FFV fleet. Currently, the only RHD ICE COTS vehicle available for purchase and use within the United States is the Mercedes Metris. Due to regulatory standards, RHD vehicles built for use overseas are not available to the Postal Service since they do not meet Environmental Protection Agency requirements. While the Metris would allow letter carriers to deliver to curbside boxes, this vehicle does not have sufficient cargo capacity to accommodate the current parcel volume.
- The second alternative called for the Postal Service to purchase and deploy only LHD COTS vehicles. Under this plan, these vehicles would be 100 percent BEV, like the Ford E-Transit, which the Postal Service plans to purchase and deploy in 2024. Unlike the LLV, FFV and Metris, LHD vehicles are not suitable for curbside delivery, so letter carriers would not be able to safely deliver mail to these types of addresses.
- The third alternative would be for the Postal Service to take no action to replace the fleet and to instead keep using the LLV and FFV long



The Next Generation Delivery Vehicle

The Postal Service is considering commercial off-the-shelf vehicles, such as the Ford E-Transit, as part of the vehicle fleet.



past their expected usable life. Under this plan, USPS would continue to repair the current vehicles whenever possible.

In September 2023, the Postal Service issued a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the NGDV, which outlined a new plan for replacing the current fleet. As in the FEIS, USPS laid out three alternatives for acquiring and deploying new trucks to replace the current fleet of LLVs, FFVs and COTS vehicles. The SEIS defined both the total number of vehicles the Postal Service would purchase and how many of each vehicle would be deployed. The three proposals were:

- Under the first alternative, which is the one preferred by the Postal Service, a total of 106,480 vehicles would be purchased and deployed. Of these, 60,000 NGDVs would be built, with 75 percent of them being BEV and 25 percent being ICE. Under this option, the NGDVs would be a mixture of front-wheel and all-wheel drive, depending on the expected need for each type. In addition to the 60,000 NGDVs, the Postal Service would buy 14,500 RHD COTS vehicles, with all of them being gas-powered. The remaining vehicles purchased under this alternative—31,980 in total—would be a mixture of LHD and RHD COTS vehicles or NGDVs. Any additional NGDVs purchased would be made up of 66 percent BEV, with the remainder ICE. The makeup of the remaining vehicles would depend on the availability of vehicles. Regardless of the type of vehicles acquired, 62 percent of the 106,480 would be electric and the total time to purchase and deploy the entire amount would be six years.

- Under the second option, the Postal Service would purchase 106,480 NGDVs, with 62 percent being BEV, over the course of eight years.
- The third alternative is the original preferred option outlined in the FEIS. Under this plan, USPS would purchase and deploy a maximum of 165,000 NGDVs over the next 10 years. At least 10 percent of any NGDVs bought under this option would be BEV, with the rest being ICE vehicles.

As the process moves forward, with the first NGDV planned for delivery from the manufacturer (Oshkosh Defense) in June 2024, NALC will continue to meet with the Postal Service regarding the replacement of the delivery fleet.

Since the beginning of this process, NALC has played an integral role in the design of the NGDV. During regular meetings with USPS representatives

from engineering, safety, delivery and labor relations, as well as with employees of Oshkosh Defense, NALC has raised the concerns voiced by letter carriers across the country about the current fleet and what is needed in a new vehicle.

The goal of NALC has always been to ensure that the Postal Service acquires a delivery vehicle that provides a safe and comfortable working environment for letter carriers while providing sufficient space to accommodate the current volume of parcels and mail. As the time approaches for the Postal Service to begin deploying new vehicles, NALC will continue to meet with USPS regarding the process. If the makeup of the anticipated fleet changes, or if the Postal Service issues another environmental impact statement that alters its preferred option for replacing the current vehicles, NALC will update members on the NALC website and in *The Postal Record*. **PR**

**Please note:**  
**There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February 2024 *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to LCPF during 2023.**