

Montgomery Village News **Carrier Handbook**



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Becoming a Carrier

The Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc., Communications Department is pleased to share important information about becoming a carrier. With 12,098 homes in the Village, over 40,000 residents and more than 60 delivery routes, you are joining an important team responsible for helping to inform those who live in and around Montgomery Village.

The Foundation's Communications Department oversees the publication of the *Montgomery Village News*, the *Home Improvement Guide*, the *Residents Guide*, the annual calendar, other publications and the Montgomery Village website, www.montgomeryvillage.com. Publications are delivered 24 times each year. As part of the carrier team, it is your job to make sure all publications are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner so that residents can step out of their homes to collect their newsletters without any delays or concerns.

Are You Eligible to Become a Carrier?

If you are between the ages 10 and 18 years old and reside in Montgomery Village, you can apply to become a carrier.

Carrier Responsibilities

Each carrier, upon hire, will receive a copy of the Carrier Handbook, which includes the *Carrier Guidelines and Responsibilities*, an annual delivery schedule indicating all delivery dates and a map of the route showing all the homes on the carrier's assigned route.

Guidelines for Delivering Publications

1. It is preferred that all publications be delivered on the Friday publication date. It is mandatory that all *Montgomery Village News* and related publications be delivered by Saturday at noon following the publishing date on the issue.
2. All publications going to single family homes or townhouses (even townhouses with driveways) must be bagged and placed on the doorstep, except when the entrance to the home is gated. In these cases, the bagged newsletter must be placed by the gate unless the resident requests otherwise.
3. Instructions regarding the delivery of publications to apartment complexes or condominiums, and businesses will be provided to carriers individually.

Picking Up Publications During Office Hours

Publications for delivery may be picked up at the Foundation's Communications Department double doors beginning at 11 a.m. on publication Fridays.

When picking up publications between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on a publication Friday, it is important to let the Communications Department staff know you have arrived. Staff can assist with providing plastic bags and ensuring each carrier has picked up all assigned stacks of newsletters. Staff will also answer any questions or provide additional maps of routes.

Please keep any remaining plastic bags for the next delivery.

Picking Up Publications After Office Hours

Carriers who collect their publications after 5 p.m. on the scheduled Friday can find their stacks of publications under the porch roofs along the front of the Foundation office building. The publications will be stacked by the brown double doors in front of the Communications Department entrance or to the right side of the main building entrance. After picking up papers, return name card to brown mailbox located in the parking lot.

Running Out of Publications and Plastic Bags

On occasion, the publications are miscounted and bound by the printing company resulting in a carrier running out of publications before a delivery is complete. When this occurs, the Communications Department urges carriers to return to the Foundation office and collect additional publications from the paper box located to the right of the main building entrance. Extra plastic bags may also be found there.

If you have too many publications, please recycle them in your home or return them to the Foundation office. **Extra papers should be placed in the brown plastic paper box near the front door.**

DO NOT REMOVE PAPERS OR PLASTIC BAGS FROM ANOTHER CARRIER'S STACK.

Inserts

On occasions, other publications or fliers are inserted into the newsletters by the printer. Other times, the Communications Department staff may require carriers to manually insert publications into the newsletter (Residents Guide and Annual Calendar). Any remaining inserts can be returned to the Foundation during normal business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. unless other arrangements with the staff have been made.

Calling for a Substitute Carrier

The *Montgomery Village News* and related publications are delivered to residents of Montgomery Village 24 times each year, therefore carrier reliability is important. Calls by carriers requesting a substitute carrier are limited to three (3) incidents per calendar year before termination of services will be considered.

Calls made to the Communications Department regarding the inability to make scheduled deliveries and the need for the department to recruit a

substitute carrier must be made by noon (12 p.m.) on the Wednesday prior to a publication Friday.

Please note that carriers can fill in for other carriers as substitutes provided the Communications Department staff has been informed. Carriers who would like to be considered substitute carriers for additional routes can be added to a substitute carrier list. The Communications Department relies on this list whenever a substitute carrier is needed.

Substitute carrier request forms can be found on the *Village News Carriers* page of the Montgomery Village Foundation website. Visit www.montgomeryvillage.com, select *Press Room*, *Village News*, and *Village News Carriers*.

Inclement Weather

All deliveries are to be carried out even in the event of inclement weather. Of course, the safety of the carrier is paramount. If a carrier is unable to deliver an assigned route, carriers are required to notify the Communications Department at 301-948-0110, ext. 2342 or e-mail circulation@mvf.org as soon as possible so a substitute carrier can be located.

Please note that the Foundation follows the county government for snow closure. If the county is closed, the Foundation is closed and the delivery is automatically rescheduled for (the following) Monday or the next opening day of business.

Late Deliveries

Publications are delivered from eastern Maryland and other distant locations. On occasion, traffic and inclement weather will delay the delivery to the Foundation thereby affecting the 11 a.m. pick-up time on publication Fridays. In these instances, the Communications Department staff will send an e-mail to all carriers to alert them of the situation and to announce the revised pick-up time. If carriers or their parents or guardians have concerns about possible late deliveries, contact the Communications Department at 301-948-0110, ext. 2342.

Requests for Stop Deliveries

On occasion while delivering papers, a resident may ask a carrier to stop the delivery of the *Village News* to their home and/or their neighbor's home. When this occurs, the carrier should instruct the resident to call MVF at 301-948-0110, ext. 2342, or give them a "Stop Delivery Request Form" to officially request a stop delivery. Carriers should not take it upon themselves to stop a delivery, unless papers are piling up at a residence. If a carrier notices papers not being removed from a doorstep, and it appears as if no one lives in the house, they should notify MVF. The Communications Department will then log this information and inform the carrier of the stop delivery for the given route through written communication.

The form can be found online at www.montgomeryvillage.com.

Carrier Announcements Online ---

In the event of any change in schedule or the need to make announcements, a Carriers page has been set up on the Foundation website. By visiting this web page, carriers and their parents or guardians can stay informed regarding delays or need for substitutes.

To access the Carriers page, navigate to the *Press Room* menu on the green bar. Then choose *Village News* and then *Village News Carriers*. Carriers can find a current delivery schedule, the current *Carrier Newsletter*, a copy of this handbook, information forms and an online substitute request form on the carrier page.

Strikes ---

The Montgomery Village Foundation's Communications Department follows a "Three Strikes You're Out" policy regarding carriers and substitute carriers. This means that any time a complaint is received regarding inadequate or late deliveries or a spot check performed by the department staff demonstrates a problem with deliveries, a carrier will receive a strike. Essentially, strikes are assigned based on the failure of the carrier to comply with the guidelines included in this booklet and through the *Carrier Newsletter*.

Please note that a strike does not erase after a calendar year (January to December). Strikes continue to accumulate until the third strike is reached, at which the time the carrier will be notified in writing of termination. If a carrier has received only one strike after two calendar years, the strike will be eliminated from the carrier's record, and the process begins again.

Strikes are assigned when:

1. A recipient of the publication contacts the Communications Department regarding:
 - a. Late deliveries, which are any deliveries made after noon on a Saturday;
 - b. Missed deliveries, which means a recipient(s) has not received the publication at all;
 - c. Publications have not been properly bagged;
 - d. Publications are being tossed into flower beds or shrubbery, or the streets or sidewalks;
 - e. Publications are being placed into mailboxes or newspaper boxes; and
 - f. Other pertinent complaints that the Communications Department staff believe to be reasonably justified.
2. The need for a substitute carrier was not called into the Communications Department by noon (12 p.m.) on the Wednesday before a publication Friday.
3. More than three substitute requests were made by a carrier.

Upon receiving a resident complaint or a spot check reveals a problem with deliveries, the Communications Department staff will contact the carrier to fairly obtain both sides of the story. If it is determined that the carrier did not follow the stated guidelines, a written warning will be issued indicating whether or not a strike has been assigned. Three written warnings indicating strikes against the carrier will result in dismissal.

Disputes regarding strikes against a carrier must be provided in writing and mailed or delivered to the Director of Communications, Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc., 10120 Apple Ridge Road, Montgomery Village, MD 20886-1000.

Keeping Carriers Informed ---

Each month, a *Carrier Newsletter* is e-mailed to every carrier providing information about upcoming deliveries and important announcements. Please read the newsletter.

Be sure to check the white dry-erase board when picking up your stacks for any important news and for the next delivery date.

E-mail addresses are important to the Communications Department, because announcements and alerts can be distributed swiftly without having to telephone more than 60 families regarding late arrival publications or other important news. The Communications Department urges each carrier or their parents or guardians to provide an active e-mail address, working phone numbers and a valid mailing address.

Carrier Compensation ---

Carriers are recruited by the Foundation Communications Department and are considered hired contractors for services provided. Each carrier is issued a check for services monthly. At the time of this printing, income over \$600 must be claimed.

Checks issued to carriers as compensation for services must be cashed within 90 days of the check date. Checks not cashed can be reprocessed at the carrier's request, but an administrative fee will be imposed.

The Montgomery Village Foundation sets a standardized rate per delivery paid to carriers. Multiple publications and inserts collectively bagged and delivered to one location are considered one delivery.

- Deliveries going to apartments or condominiums: \$.06 per paper delivered
- Deliveries going to town houses: \$.08 per paper delivered
- Deliveries going to single family homes: \$.08 per paper delivered
- Deliveries going to business locations: \$.10 per paper delivered

Example: If 100 deliveries are made to single family homes, the carrier will receive \$8 for that route.

As hired contractors, the Montgomery Village Foundation does not provide any benefits to carriers, such as paid holidays, vacations, medical or life insurance.

Your Safety is Important

1. Parents are strongly encouraged to accompany carriers on their deliveries to ensure their safety. If at all possible, keep a cell phone handy for emergencies. Carriers who travel alone are urged to do so during daylight hours.
2. According to the guidelines from the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), individuals who use backpacks to make their deliveries should carry no more than 10 percent of their own body weight in the backpack. Backpacks should have two adjustable, padded shoulder straps to balance the weight and prevent shoulder, neck and back problems. Backpacks with belts that go around the waist can help distribute the weight properly.
3. Carriers are strongly urged to use crosswalks and to look both ways before crossing any roadway. Avoid crossing roadways and parking lots from between parked cars.
4. When riding a bicycle to make deliveries:
 - a. Ride on the right side of the roadway. Hazards of wrong way riding are that bicyclists generally are not seen by turning motorists from a perpendicular street; traffic signals and signs are not visible to bicyclists on one-way streets; and motorists do not expect opposing traffic.
 - b. Be visible to motorists by wearing bright clothing (night and day), and reflective clothing at night. Maryland Vehicle Law states that during reduced visibility periods, bicycles shall, at a minimum, be equipped with a front white light and rear red reflector.
 - c. Wear a helmet. Helmet use reduces head injury by 85 percent and the incidence of brain damage by 88 percent. Maryland law mandates helmets be worn:
 - i. At all times while a bicycle is being operated on any highway, bicycle way, or other property open to the public or used by the public for pedestrian or vehicular traffic; and
 - ii. To a person under the age of 16 who is riding on a bicycle including a person under the age of 16 who is a passenger on a bicycle: 1.) In a restraining seat attached to the bicycle; or 2.) In a trailer being towed by a bicycle.

Persons to whom these actions apply may not operate or ride as a passenger on a bicycle unless the person is wearing a helmet that meets or exceeds the standards of the American National Standards Institute, the Snell Memorial Foundation's standard, or the standards of the American Society of Testing and Measurements for protective headgear for use in bicycling.

5. When encountering a dog that appears threatening or of which you are uncertain:
- a. Keep your distance. This minimizes your chances of being bitten.
 - b. Remain calm and quiet. If the dog approaches you, do not scream, shout, run away, make rapid jerky movements or stare at the dog. Keep your arms by your side. Wait for the dog to lose interest in you or until it makes friendly or submissive advances. Otherwise, back away slowly.
 - c. Remain calm if the dog lunges at you. Give the dog something to bite, such as a newsletter or a bag. If you are knocked over, lie on your stomach or curl up into a ball keeping your head turned in and your arms folded over your head and neck.
 - d. If you are bitten, seek immediate medical attention and contact Animal Control at 240-773-5900. If possible, note the address or location of the attack, and notify the Foundation of the incident as soon as possible.

Important Numbers to Call

Montgomery Village Foundation	301-948-0110
Carrier Hotline, Circulation Questions or Substitute Requests	ext. 2342
Montgomery County Police Emergency	911
Montgomery County Police Non-Emergency	301-279-8000
Montgomery County Animal Control	311

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Notes

A series of 20 horizontal black lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for handwritten notes.

Montgomery Village Foundation, Inc.
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