

Delivery, Retail & Customer Service Operations Political / Election Mail Guidebook

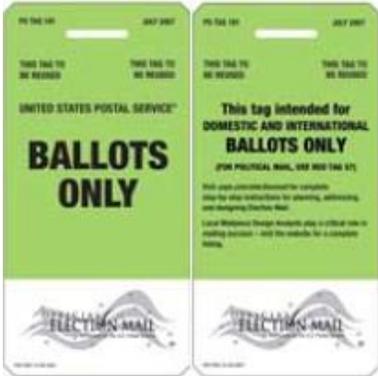


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Definitions: Election and Political Mail	6
Election Mail	6
Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots	6
Service Type Identifiers (STIDs)	6
Political Mail.....	7
Political Message Mail.....	7
Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing.....	7
Employee conduct.....	8
Hatch Act:	8
Anti-Lobbying Act:	8
Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
Headquarters Election / Political Mail Support.....	8
Area Operations Support.....	8
District Managers / Operations Support & District Coordinators	9
Manager, Post Office Operations (MPOO) / Postmasters / Manager, Customer Service Operations (MCSO) & Supervisors.....	9
Function 4 Distribution / Retail Clerks.....	10
Carriers (City, Rural & HCR)	10
Area and District Coordinator Lists	10
Link:	10
Feedback and Issues Loop.....	11
Election Mail Task Force Program.....	11
Ambassador Roles and Responsibilities.....	11
Runway to Election Day.....	12
Election Day Checklist Review.....	12
Special Edition Retail Digest.....	13
Handling Ballots.....	13
Return By Mail Guidance For Voters	14
Standard Work Instructions.....	15

Handling Missent Election Ballots	15
Pitch-Catch-Clear Process for Election Ballots.....	16
Election Day Hand to Hand Exchange Local Managers.....	17
Clearing Election / Political Mail - Delivery & Retail Units	18
Political / Election Mail All Clear Certification for Delivery Units.....	19
Forms	21
Delivery Unit Political Mail Receipt & Delivery Log.....	21
Delivery Unit Election and Political Mail Checklist	22
Appendices.....	23
2020 September – December Scheduled Elections	23
Delivery, Retail & Customer Service Operations Political / Election Mail Stand-Up Talks	24
Mail-In Voting is on the Rise Stand-Up Talk	24
Ready to Deliver Election Mail for the Nation	24
Election-Related Activities and Official Election Mail.....	26
Handling of Missent Ballots and Election Mail VP Letter	28
Handling of Missent Ballots and Other Election Mail Stand-up Talk - All Delivery Units	29
Handling of Absentee Ballots with Insufficient or No Postage.....	29
Official Election Mail Stand Up Talk.....	30
Political Mail Stand Up Talk	32
Lobbying Restrictions.....	33
Voter Registration Forms and Absentee Ballot Request Forms in Retail Facilities	35
Business Reply Mail (BRM) Permits — Third-Party Vendors.....	36
Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) and Political Campaign Mail Stand-up Talks.....	37
EDDM Retail Political Mail Stand-up Talk 1	37
EDDM Retail Political Mail Stand-up Talk 2	38
Frequently Asked Questions.....	38
General Frequently Asked Questions	38
Election Mail Frequently Asked Questions	39
Political Campaign Mail Frequently Asked Questions	42
Sample Tag 191	43
Sample Tag 57	44

Election Mail Enclosed Red Placard 45
Election Mail Enclosed White Placard 46
Clarifying Operational Instructions..... 47
2020-09-25- Additional Resources for Election Mail Beginning October 1..... 52
RDOI-FY21-Retail ad Delivery Guidance on Postmarking Ballots October 2020..... 55

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Postal Service's number one priority between now and the November election is the secure, timely delivery of the nation's Election Mail. The Postal Service is committed to fulfilling our role in the electoral process when public policy makers choose to utilize us as a part of their election system. We provide election officials with a secure, efficient and effective means to enable citizens to participate in elections.

The purpose of this Delivery Operations guidebook is to establish a nationally standardized procedure to process and deliver Political Mail, including Political Campaign and Political Message Mail, and Election Mail.

Identification of Election and Political Mail via the Tag 191 (Election Mail) and Tag 57 (Political Campaign and Message Mail) respectively, are important components of our process. Both will require thorough and precise documentation prior to distribution and delivery into our political mail logs.

Official Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Election Mail includes Mail-In Ballots, Balloting Materials, Voter Registration Cards, Ballot Applications, and Polling place notifications. Balloting materials for elections for federal office may be sent without prepayment of postage to: Member Armed Forces in active service, Member U.S. Merchant Marine, Spouses and dependents of the above, and Expatriates. Any American voter living overseas can mail his or her completed ballot back to the United States free of charge at the nearest American embassy, consulate, or Diplomatic Post Office (DPO). If an overseas voter has authorized access to a military base, he or she can mail a ballot free of charge at the nearest Army Post Office (APO) or Fleet Post Office (FPO).

Tag 191 – Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots, is a green container tag used by election officials to identify trays and sacks of ballot mail destined for either domestic or international addresses. Tag 191 should not be used for sample ballots or other types of Election Mail. Tag 57 – May be used for all Political Mail, including Political Campaign Mail and Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail for use by registered Political Candidates, Campaign Committees, and Political Party Committees. Political Message Mail is for use by Political Action Committees (PACs), Super-PACs, and other organizations engaged in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

The number of "Vote-by-mail" states and mail-in voting volumes will increase in 2020. Proper ballot handling and processing, both outgoing and incoming, will be critical. ALL return ballots must be cancelled on our AFCS's and AFSM 100's or hand cancelled. The cancellation mark represents the date the Postal Service accepted custody of the mailpiece and may be used to determine whether a ballot was returned in a timely manner by some states.

Each district will have 2 Election and Political mail coordinators; one representing operations for plant operations activities and the other representing Marketing for outreach and communication between the Election Commissions and the USPS.

DEFINITIONS: ELECTION AND POLITICAL MAIL

Election Mail

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process including:

- Mail-in ballots
- Balloting materials
- Voter registration cards
- Ballot applications
- Polling place notifications

Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots

A green container tag used by election officials to identify trays and sacks of ballot mail only destined for either domestic or international addresses. Tag 191 can now be ordered online and mailed directly to local election offices.



Service Type Identifiers (STIDs)

The Postal Service has developed customized Service Type Identifiers (STIDs) specifically for ballots to improve ballot mail visibility. These STIDs have proven instrumental in identifying and tracking ballots on-hand and in the mailstream. In addition, STIDs have increased the visibility of outbound and return ballot mail within the automation environment.

STID processing leverages Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) scan data that is available via Informed Visibility (IV) reports.

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act Materials (No Postage Required)

Balloting materials, such as postcard applications, ballots, voting instructions, and return envelopes, may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to overseas military personnel, their spouses and dependents accompanying them, and U.S. citizens residing abroad. Certain other individuals may be eligible. The absentee ballot provisions for mailing without postage are for election for federal office, including special elections of a federal nature. They are not for local elections. [DMM 703.8.0](#).

Political Mail

Includes Political Campaign Mail and Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee (federal, state, or local), or a committee of a political party (ex. Democratic National Committee, Republican Congressional Campaign Committee) to promote political candidates, referendums, or political campaigns. Political Message Mail is Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Political Mail may be sent for any public election—partisan or nonpartisan—for which there is a ballot. Political Mail is identified using red Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing.



Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing

A red container tag designed to provide visibility to any form of Political Mail while it's in the mailstream. It can be used for any *political campaign mailing* by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, and committee of a political party, or *political message mailing* by a political action committee (PAC), super-PAC, or other organizations engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization. A registered political candidate or party is an individual or organization recognized by a government election control authority (national, state, or local), according to Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM).

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Hatch Act:

Federal law that restricts the political activity of federal and postal employees while on duty, on postal property, wearing an official uniform or using a government vehicle. It also prohibits candidates campaigning for election to public office on leased or owned postal property. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse; learn the do's and don'ts of the Hatch Act.

Anti-Lobbying Act:

Federal law prohibits Postal Service employees acting in their official capacity from engaging in grass roots lobbying campaigns that directly or indirectly encourage the public to contact government officials on support or opposition of pending or proposed legislation. It also prohibits use of Postal Service funds to pay for material intended to influence a jurisdiction or an official of any government, to support or oppose any legislation, law, ratification, policy, or appropriation either before or after its introduction.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Headquarters Election / Political Mail Support

- Following up on any escalated issues
- Updating Vice Presidents Processing & Maintenance, Delivery, Retail with any outstanding, unresolved items with any outstanding, unresolved items
- Provide Support to Field as Subject Matter Experts
- Address barriers and escalate to Chief Logistics and Processing Officer and/or Chief Retail & Delivery Officer if unable to address

Area Operations Support

- Ensuring Districts complete required Election / Political Mail audits
- Validating District Managers are addressing deficiencies as required
- Address barriers and/or escalate to HQ for assistance
- Reviewing consolidating findings from District Election and Political Mail Coordinators
- Provide guidance to District Coordinators
- Address any barriers within control
- Escalate concerns to Area Vice President, Regional Vice President, HQ

District Managers / Operations Support & District Coordinators

- Election / Political Mail service talks are distributed to the Field and documented as completed
- Compliance audits are conducted daily at all processing and delivery facilities
- Send consolidated findings from Compliance Audits to Area
- Notification is given on high volumes of UAA Election / Political mail
- Daily All Clear is received from all units
- Ensuring processing facilities complete required Election / Political Mail audits
- Ensure Plant Managers are addressing deficiencies as required
- Reviewing deficient items and ensuring action plans are enacted to abate deficiencies
- Supporting local teams with resources to abate deficiencies
- Escalating issues to Area, Local Election / Political Mail Coordinators, and Division Directors, Area Vice Presidents Retail & Delivery

Manager, Post Office Operations (MPOO) / Postmasters / Manager, Customer Service Operations (MCSO) & Supervisors

- Ensure Stand Up talks are given to Clerks and Carriers, documented as completed and posted on the workroom floor
- Conduct Compliance audit
- Communicate all findings from Compliance Audits with employees
- Designate a FIFO staging lane for all Election / Political mail received
- Ensure an Election / Political Mail Log is maintained that will be used to document the arrival and delivery of each mailing
- At a minimum, the documented records must include the following
 - a. The name of the mailer
 - b. A sample, photocopy, or description of the mailing
 - c. The date and time the mailing was received for dispatch or delivery
 - d. If applicable, the approximate number of pieces not delivered before the Election Day deadline and/or the date of requested delivery and the reasons why delivery was not timely
 - e. The approximate volume of any USPS Marketing Mail consigned to waste upon instruction by the mailer
- Ensure Election / Political Mail log is used to also document UAA pieces
- Ensure all Election BRM procedures are being followed (Postage due mail is to be delivered and not Return to Sender)
- Ensure employees are familiar with Tags 57 & 191
- Ensure employees know how to handle Military/Overseas/Mail-in ballots
- If a significant amount of a campaign mailing is deemed undeliverable as addressed, postmasters must inform the applicable campaign office before any action to dispose of such mail. Postmasters should also coordinate any such situations with their District Political Campaign Mail Coordinator
- Ensure daily all clear is submitted to District
- Ensure all political and election mail in Hot Case is connected to carriers already on the street
- Ensure all curtailed/delayed Election / Political mail volumes are recorded accurately into CSDRS daily

- Ensure Back door audits are being conducted daily as carriers are returning from the street, questioning any Election / Political mail returned from the street not delivered

Function 4 Distribution / Retail Clerks

- Ensure all postal sacks and trays identified as Election / Political mail are opened, examined and distributed
- Upon opening the sacks and trays, report any discrepancies to immediate supervisor
- Distribute all Election / Political mail to carrier cases upon arrival to unit
- Remove Tag 191/ 57 once mail has been distributed
- Report high volumes of UAA Election / Political mail to supervisor
- BRM, including Ballots must be processed and delivered daily
- All balloting materials, including ballots, with or without sufficient postage must be delivered (POM 171.3)
- Be sure to conduct sweeps at Retail units of lobby drops, wall units, retail counters and collection boxes
- DO NOT Tray Ballots/ Election Mail, put them in the normal collection mail container
 - Ensure that Ballots/ Election Mail is dispatched and handled in transit with collection mail
 - Ensure that Ballot(s) that is/are accepted at the retail counter or retrieved from collection boxes should not be held out or separated from the other letter or flat size First-Class Mail pieces.
- DO NOT delay delivery of Election Mail
 - Some Election Mail, including ballots, will be short paid and some will contain no postage at all
 - Record the postage due and begin the process to collect the appropriate postage from the appropriate board of election
 - DO NOT delay the accurate delivery of the mail

Carriers (City, Rural & HCR)

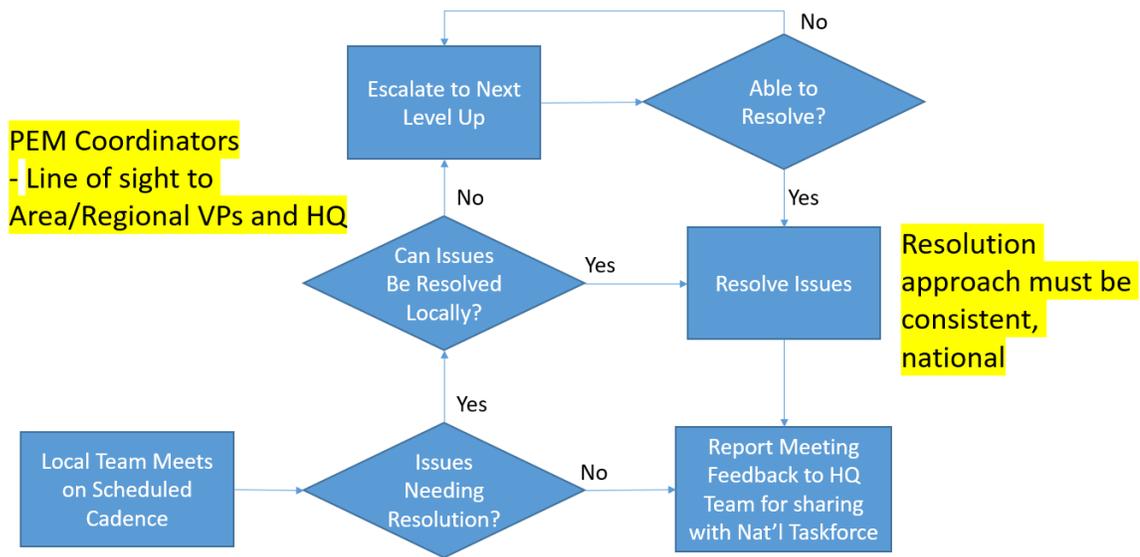
- Ensure all available Election / Political mail is taken to the street for delivery on day received
- Report high volumes of UAA Election / Political mail to supervisor
- All balloting materials, including ballots, with or without sufficient postage must be delivered
- Ensure no mail is left in carrier vehicles
- Double check all collection points to ensure no mail is left

AREA AND DISTRICT COORDINATOR LISTS

Link:

https://blue.usps.gov/delret/L3do/city/Info/2020_Political_and_Election_Mail_Coordinators_Contact_List.xlsx

FEEDBACK AND ISSUES LOOP



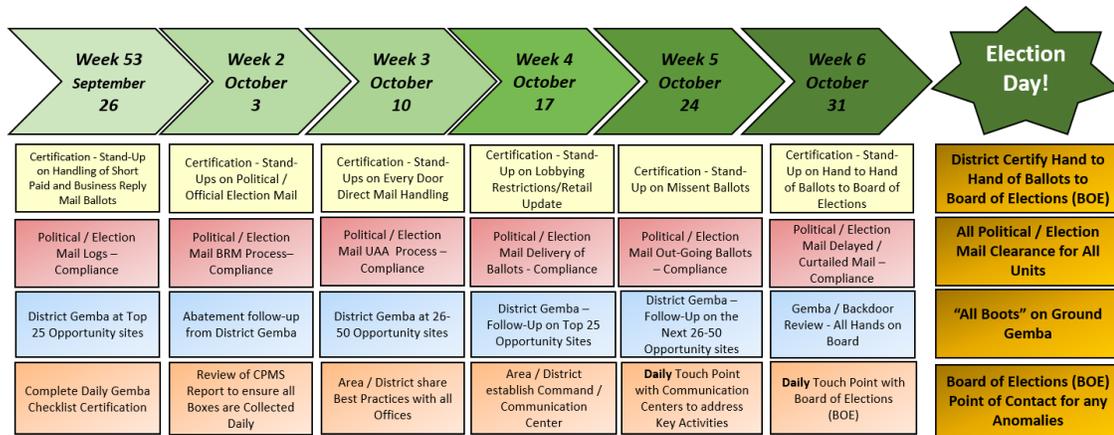
ELECTION MAIL TASK FORCE PROGRAM Ambassador Roles and Responsibilities

See something - Say something; Work to get issues corrected quickly.

- Conducts service talks with all employees
- Identifies issues through daily walk-throughs
- Abates issues on-the-spot when it is feasible to do so
- Communicates the findings and related information to management
- Participates in delivery unit audits
- Point of contact for the delivery unit regarding checklist observations
- Completes Election day checklists, inputs results into dashboard
- Assists the supervisor with orientation of new employees regarding election mail procedures
- Office has point of contact for local Board of Elections
- Has calendar of important dates

RUNWAY TO ELECTION DAY

Critical activities need to be completed each week leading up to Election Day.



Election Day Checklist Review

Elections are now beginning. It is critical that all processes and contingencies that have been developed are flawlessly executed. Below are action items to be reviewed based upon your facility type. Please take a moment to ensure that all items are in place and policies are being strictly adhered to.

Delivery Units

- BRM is processed and cleared the same day
 - Do NOT hold due to insufficient funds
 - Verify there is a primary and backup BRM clerk
- Ensure all ballots received are delivered timely
 - Do NOT hold due to short postage
- Ensure all logs are up to date with full information
- Ensure any online certifications and "All Clears" are completed and accurate information is provided
 - This reporting is to start two weeks before the primaries in your city, county or state and continue two weeks after the actual general election date listed in the 2020 Election Calendar (posted on the City Delivery Blue Page)
- Verify Self Audits are being completed. This is not a paper exercise
- **Coordinators - Resolve any and all issues the same day!**
- Any late arriving or delayed volume AFTER the election date, must have complete documentation including:
 - Name of mailer
 - Sample, photocopy or description of mailing
 - Date and time mailing was received for dispatch or delivery

- Approximate number of pieces that will not be delivered before the deadline
 - If instructed to consign to waste, track the approximate volume
- Any mail received after carriers depart to route MUST still be delivered if it is the day of the election
 - Treat as express/recovery mail
- Communicate with all employees to ensure awareness of elections and importance of timely delivery

SPECIAL EDITION RETAIL DIGEST

Handling Ballots

RETAIL DIGEST <i>Inform. Engage. Achieve.</i>		
September 25, 2020		Special Edition
Contents		
<p align="center"><i>Be sure to share/distribute a copy of this week's Retail Digest to all retail associates!</i></p> <p>Need to Know1</p> <p>HANDLING BALLOTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Us!1 		
Message Category	Program Office	Message
Need to Know	Retail Operations	<p>HANDLING BALLOTS</p> <p><u>Collection Mail</u></p> <p>DO NOT Tray Absentee Ballots/ Election Mail, put them in the normal collection mail container. Absentee Ballots/ Election Mail is dispatched and handled in transit as ordinary mail. Absentee Ballot(s) that is/are accepted at the retail counter or retrieved from collection boxes should not be held out or separated from the other letter or flat size First-Class Mail pieces.</p> <p><u>Short Paid Ballots or Other Election Mail</u></p> <p>DO NOT delay delivery of Election Mail, including balloting materials. Some Election Mail, including ballots, will be short paid and some will contain no postage at all. It is critical that this mail is promptly delivered as addressed to avoid any negative impact on election results or the Postal Service. Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policies, ethics and law. Please record the postage due and begin the process to collect the appropriate postage from the appropriate board of election but DO NOT delay the accurate delivery of the mail.</p> <p>If you have any questions please contact the Subject Matter Expert.</p>
		<p>Unless specified differently in the article, please contact your District Retail Specialist or District Retail Manager for any inquiries and/or feedback regarding any of the above articles. The USPS Retail email account is also available for providing comments.</p> <p>To be added to the <i>Retail Digest</i> distribution list, please do so via eAccess (click on "Distribution Lists," then search for and request "Retail Digest Subscriber"). Click here to be directed to the eAccess login webpage.</p> <p align="center">Click here for the <i>Retail Digest</i> Archive.</p>
Contact Us!		

RETURN BY MAIL GUIDANCE FOR VOTERS

It's important to understand your local jurisdiction's rules and requirements for participating in an election. If you are eligible to vote by mail and choose to do so, you should plan ahead to give yourself enough time to complete and return your ballot by your state's deadlines.

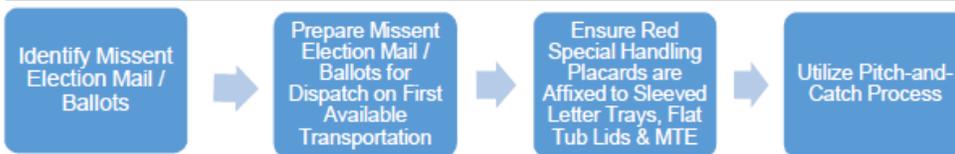
Some jurisdictions automatically mail ballots to all eligible voters. In jurisdictions that require eligible voters to request a ballot in order to receive one through the mail, we recommend that domestic, nonmilitary voters request their ballot as early as their jurisdiction allows.

If you are a nonmilitary voter located in the United States and you choose to use the mail to return your completed ballot, our general recommendation is that, as a common-sense measure, you mail your completed ballot before Election Day, and at least one week prior to your state's deadline. Some states may recommend allowing even more time for mailing completed ballots.

STANDARD WORK INSTRUCTIONS

Handling Missent Election Ballots

Standard Work Instructions:	Handling Missent Election Mail / Ballots	Delivery: Election Mail / Ballots
Purpose:	Identify and redirect missent election mail/ballots on first available transportation back to plant	
Updated on:	09-25-2020	Version 1



	Important Steps	Key Points
 	<p>Identification and redirection of missent Election Mail / Ballot</p>	<p>Delivery Units will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify missent Election Mail/ballots Place missent election mail/ballots into dedicated letter trays or flat tubs Cover mail using sleeves for letter trays and lids for flat tubs Affix red Special Handling placards on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sleeved trays flat tub lids Mail transportation equipment (MTE)
 	<p>Complete the Pitch-and Catch Process</p>	<p>Delivery Units must contact Plant via phone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify Manager, Distribution Operations/ Plant Manager of dispatched mail. Verbally communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truck number Time truck left Driver's name <p>Delivery Units send an email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include: Plant manager/supervisor, POOM, Postmaster, Local Political Mail Coordinator, Manager, Distribution Operations. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time the call was placed Who they spoke with Type of container the mail is in (i.e. a flat tub in an APC) <p>Plant replies "to all" via email to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the truck arrived Who handled the mail (Supervisor/MDO name) Time mail was processed

Pitch-Catch-Clear Process for Election Ballots

Standard Work Instructions:	Pitch-Catch-Clear Process for Election Ballots on Deadline Day	Tracking: Political & Election Mail
Purpose:	Establish a standardized Pitch-Catch-Clear Process to deliver ballots from Processing Plants to Board of Elections (BOE) on deadline day	
Updated on:	06-09-2020	Version 1.0

Preparation	Plant Dispatch	Pickup from Plant	Arrival at Delivery Unit	Deliver ballots to Election Board
-------------	----------------	-------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------

	Steps	Key Points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders and local post office POC information (email & phone number) which include but are not limited to the following managers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant, In-Plant Support, Operations Program Support, Distribution Operations, Transportation and Network Systems, Customer Service, as well as Postmaster, Dock Supervisor, and District Political Mail Coordinator Communicate the contact list to all parties Notify all parties of the Pitch-Catch-Clear Process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant Dispatch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For ballots that are dispatched to delivery units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TANS manager consolidates the list of delivery units, dispatch times, and total number of ballots TANS manager sends "Pitch" email (cc: all stakeholders) and follows up with a phone call to delivery units receiving ballots TANS manager performs All-Clear
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pickup from Plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For ballots that are picked up by Board of Elections designee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage ballots in designated location After ballots are collected, MDO or Dock supervisor sends email confirmation to all stakeholders MDO performs All-Clear
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrival at Delivery Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager Customer Service or Postmaster verifies the number of ballots annotated in "Pitch" email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If correct, send "Catch" email to stakeholders confirming receipt of ballots If incorrect or ballots have not arrived as scheduled, send email within 60 minutes to TANS manager and also make a phone call for investigation and request follow-up (cc: stakeholders) Once mail is distributed, verify workroom floor is clear of all mail Ensure ballots are delivered timely
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver ballots to Board of Elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon return to office, report to management on duty confirming that all ballots are delivered to Board of Elections Management performs All-Clear certification Management sends "Clear" email to stakeholders

Election Day Hand to Hand Exchange Local Managers

Standard Work Instructions:	Election Day Process for Local Managers	Delivery: Election/Political Mail
Purpose:	Coordinate Hand to Hand Exchange to Ensure All Ballots are Delivered Timely to the Board of Elections (BOE)	
Updated on:	09-23-2020	Version 4

Maintain list Board of Election (BOE) Location list

➔

Designate Points of Contact (POC)

➔

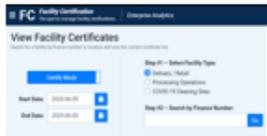
Coordinate Hand to Hand Exchange

	Important Steps	Key Points
   	<p>Hand to Hand Exchange within designated delivery area</p>	<p>District coordinator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and maintain list of jurisdiction boundaries • Maintain log with BOE contact information • Conduct touchpoints with local BOEs and Postmasters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Postmaster / Managers will be POC for local BOE • Designate HUB locations within Postal BOE jurisdiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure facilities with multiple BOEs separate accordingly • Report and address concerns via internal link https://electionmail.usps.gov/ElectionMail_ISSUES.cfm <p>Postmaster will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine cutoff times for timely delivery to BOE • Communicate with all stations within area of responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anticipate Vote by Mail volumes ○ Expect volumes of absentee ballots ○ Expect volumes to be mailed by BOE for last minute ballots • Communicate BOE concerns to District coordinator and to: https://electionmail.usps.gov/ElectionMail_ISSUES.cfm
 	<p>Hand to Hand Exchange within Local Post Office</p>	<p>Local Postmaster or management designee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a list of local BOE contacts with drop off locations and times • Record and report volumes received or returned from/to each BOE • Knowledge of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery requirement of ballots on day of election ○ Latest drop off time for ballots to be counted ○ Postmarking requirements (hand cancel if necessary) • Arrange hand to hand delivery of late arriving ballots • Complete daily All Clear https://facilitycerts.usps.gov/FacCert_HOME.cfm

Clearing Election / Political Mail - Delivery & Retail Units

Standard Work Instructions:	Standard Work Instruction For Daily Clearing of Incoming Political/Election Mail	Tracking: Political & Election Mail
Purpose:	To ensure all Political/Election Mail received is delivered daily	
Updated on:	09-23-2020	Version 1.0

Front Office Retail Area	Back Office PO Box Section Workroom Floor	Vehicles, Collections Dock	Reports
-----------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---------

Steps	
	<p>Verify front office/retail areas are clear to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Point of Sale (mPOS) cart • Dutch door • Postage Due area • BMEU/BRM area • Lobby Mail slots • Self-Service Kiosk • Retail window area – under the counter/drawers
	<p>Verify back office/post office box section/workroom floor are clear to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor desks • Post office box staging area • PRS/Firm caller areas • Hot case/3M case/Throwback case • Accountable cage/area • Hold mail area • Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM)/Nixie mail/Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) • UBBM/Nixie mail/PARS • Carrier cases/carrier satchels • Empty equipment (trays, tubs, hampers etc.)
	<p>Verify all clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrier vehicles (including rural POV) • Loading dock • Collection dock • Vestibules
	<p>Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political/Election Mail log with copies or samples of mailings • CSDRS • CPMS reports • AM/PM certification • All Clear certification

Political / Election Mail All Clear Certification for Delivery Units

Calendar year 2020 is going to be a very busy Political / Election Mail season. In addition to the Presidential election, all 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the United States Senate will be up for election. 11 gubernatorial races as well as numerous other state and local elections will also be up for election.

During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers many political campaign mailings, frequently in large quantities. These mailings are made up of individual candidates and their campaign organizations, as well as by local, state, and national committees of political parties. There are also large numbers of ballots mailed out to local and military voters and the Postal Service is responsible for properly handling outgoing and return ballots.

To ensure that we are delivering these mailings to the American Voters in an efficient and timely manner, the Postal Service will be requiring all delivery units to certify, on a daily basis, that their unit is clear of all Political & Election mail committed for delivery that day. This means the carrier cases, clerk distribution cases, staging areas, the dock, the window area and all delivery vehicles need to be checked. **This reporting is to start two weeks before the 2020 General Election on November 3, 2020 and will continue until two weeks after the General Election.**

The Political / Election Mail All Clear Certification link for Delivery Units has been re-designed.

Go to the Political / Election Mail Blue Share page at this link:

<https://networkops.blueshare5.usps.gov/sites/pco/Elections/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Political / Election Mail Toolkit



2020 Election Mail Program Kit (KIT 600)

Election Mail

ALL CLEAR CERTIFICATION

Election Mail Internal Tickets

USPS Political Mail Tickets

Select “Delivery/Retail”, mark any of the next three boxes that apply to your unit. Select your Area, District, MPOO and Facility/Unit. If the unit has not yet certified for the day, you will see this window. Click on the red “Respond”.

Status	Area	District	MPOO	Facility Name	Due Date	Frequency	Certificate Name	Completed By/On
Respond	Eastern	Philadelphia Metro	MPOO 6	Main Office Phila Box Sec	2020-02-18	DAILY	Delivery/Retail All Clear Political/Election/Yard Mail Certification	N/A

You will have four questions to answer. Both must be answered for your unit to be in compliance for certification. At this time, it is recommended not to click the “N/A” button. Only answer Yes or No.

Click the **Submit Response** button or your entries will not be saved.

NOTE: All questions must be answered in order for this certificate to be marked as compliant.

Is your facility using the [Operational Clean Sweep Search Checklist in POMO-07-2020](#) to complete the “ALL CLEAR” certifications below as required? *

Yes
 No
 N/A

Is your facility using the official logs from [POMO-07-2020](#) as required, not your own local customized log? *

Yes
 No
 N/A

I certify that this facility has been validated and is clear of ALL committed POLITICAL Mail. *

Yes
 No
 N/A

I certify that this facility has been validated and is clear of ALL committed ELECTION Mail (including ballots). *

Yes
 No
 N/A

If “No” was selected for any question above, please provide an explanation here:

One of the most important public functions for the Postal Service is serving as a trusted partner in our nation’s electoral process. Thank you for keeping our country strong by ensuring messages from election officials, return ballots, registered political candidates, committees, and parties are processed as quickly as possible so they can be delivered to America’s voters.

Delivery Unit Election and Political Mail Checklist

Manager/Supervisor Name:								
Date:								
Office Name:								
Zip Code of Office:								
District:								
Retail Counter				Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate any findings)	
1	Has the retail area been cleared of all outgoing mail and dispatched?							
2	Have all unit collection boxes, including lobby drops, been collected and dispatched on every available transportation, including the final dispatch of value (DOV), and does CPMS show all points collected?							
3	Has all election mail been consolidated with outgoing collection mail and not held out separately or trayed? Check retail counter (on top and under), collection prep area, PO Box section, Dutch Door area, supervisor desk, mPOS cart (if applicable), distribution cases, hotcase, throwback case, and lobby drop boxes.							
Back Office				Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate any findings)	
4	Does the unit maintain a Headquarters-approved political/election mail log and is it current with sample photocopies? (Record date of last entry)							
5	Is the unit familiar with the required service talks? Are they posted on the workroom floor and being shared with employees?							
6	Does the unit know how to handle military, overseas and absentee ballots?							
7	Does the delivery unit have a contingency plan to deliver late arriving/missent political/election mail?							
8	Is the unit clear of Business Reply Mail (BRM) today? If no, comment.							
9	Does the unit have the 2020 Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Short Paid Ballots memos posted near the area where the BRM is worked?							
10	Are the postage due/short paid election mail procedures being followed? Absentee ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment. DO NOT delay delivery of balloting materials. Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policies, ethics and law.							
11	Is the unit free of curtailed and delayed political/election mail? (distribution case, RFS location, PO box section and supervisor's desk)							
12	If there was delayed/curtailed political/election mail, was it properly reported in Customer Services Daily Reporting System (CSDRS), identified on your HQ approved political log, and your election coordinator notified?							
13	Is all available mail being dispatched on earliest possible transportation?							
14	Are back door audits and satchel checks being conducted to ensure all election mail has been dispatched? Check all empty MTE prior to dispatching: check trays and tubs and turn sacks inside out.							
15	Are all delivery and collection vehicles checked in the PM verified to be free of Political/Election mail?							
16	Is the Political/Election Mail "All Clear" certification being completed daily?							
Carrier Cases				Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate any findings)	
17	Are carrier cases clear of political/election mail? Are carriers aware of the policy to hold unknown recipient mail for ten days before returning to sender?							
18	Are carrier cases clear of mail pieces overlooked after strapping out?							
19	Has management verified that non-forwardable Political/Election mail is not co-mingled with Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail? Non-forwardable include: unendorsed: non-profit, standard, and marketing mail. Address Service Requested (ASR), Change Service Requested (CSR), Electronic Service Requested (ESR), Forwarding Service Requested (FSR), Return Service Requested (RSR), Temp-Return Service Requested (TRSR)							
20	Is Undeliverable as Addressed and Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (reference DMM 507.1.1) being properly recorded on the Headquarters-approved Destination Delivery Unit log?							
Additional Process Checks				Yes	No	N/A	Comments: (Action taken to remediate any findings)	
21	Is Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (carrier cases and PO Box section being worked/processed daily?							
22	Is Undeliverable as Addressed - letters (PARS) and flats (FPARS) trayed and parcels processed in RFS and dispatched to the plant?							
23	If the unit has an on-site Bulk Mail Entry Unit, is a Headquarters-approved political/election mail log present and current with sample photocopies?							
24	Are red tag 57 and/or green tag 191 being used in the unit to identify Political Campaign Mail/Official Election Mail? Tag 57 is used to identify containers with Political Mail in it. Tag 191 is the green tag used to identify Ballot Mail. This tag is only used on trays or sacks.							
25	Contract Postal Units, Village Post Offices, Community Post Offices - cleared of all outgoing mail and dispatched?							
Neither this document nor any information contained within it can be disclosed or distributed to any third party without the written consent of the US Postal Service.								

APPENDIX

2020 September – December Scheduled Elections

Date	State	Type
1-Sep	Massachusetts (Statewide/Federal)	Primary
8-Sep	New Hampshire (Governor /Statewide/Federal)	Primary
8-Sep	Rhode Island (Statewide/Federal)	Primary
15-Sep	Delaware (Governor /Statewide/Federal)	Primary
3-Nov	U.S. Senate in Arizona	Special General Election
3-Nov	U.S. Senate in Georgia	Special General Election
3-Nov	Louisiana (Statewide/Federal)	Primary
3-Nov	U.S Election Day	General
5-Dec	Louisiana (Statewide/Federal)	General

DELIVERY, RETAIL & CUSTOMER SERVICE OPERATIONS POLITICAL / ELECTION MAIL STAND- UP TALKS

Mail-in Voting is on the Rise Stand-Up Talk

Over 3,000 counties in the United States are responsible for conducting elections for local, state, and national offices. To increase voter turnout and make it more convenient for citizens to participate in elections, many counties have adopted policies such as “No Excuse Absentee Voting” and “Vote-by-Mail.” These alternatives to the traditional obligation of going to a polling station on Election Day provide the Postal Service™ with an opportunity to increase First Class Mail™ volume and revenue, and enhance the value of mail. It is critical that we maintain our usual high-level of service to ensure that all Election Mail is processed and delivered in a timely manner.

Here's what you need to do:

- Be alert for the green Tag 191 which identifies ballot mail.
- Be alert for the Official Election Mail logo that is used to identify individual pieces of election mail. The logo may be printed in black, blue, or red ink.
- Promptly handle all ballot and official election mailings and give each one equal care and attention.
- Immediately report any problems with ballot mail or official election mail to your supervisor. Supervisors are to report problems to the 2020 District Election Mail Coordinator.

With your help, the Postal Service will be able to retain this new and growing volume of mail-in ballots.

Ready to Deliver Election Mail for the Nation

The Postal Service's number one priority between now and Election Day is the secure, on-time delivery of the nation's Election Mail — and we are ready to deliver for our country. There has been a lot of media coverage — including many reports with inaccurate information — about Election Mail. To clear up any confusion, and to ensure compliance with a recent court order requiring certain practices, management has been given operational instructions. These instructions will remain in effect until further notice. Specifically:

- **Overtime.** Front-line supervisors and managers will continue to schedule work hours based on workload. Overtime is authorized and instructed to be used as necessary to fulfill our mission and expeditiously move Election Mail.
- **Hiring.** The Postal Service has not implemented a total hiring freeze. EAS hiring was suspended August 7, because of the realignment of our reporting structure. This suspension does not impact hiring for craft positions. Craft positions will continue to be filled in accordance with collective bargaining agreements.

- **Retail Hours.** The Postal Service will not reduce retail hours before the November elections. Natural disasters, civil unrest, or lack of employee availability due to the coronavirus pandemic may necessitate temporary changes, but local managers are not permitted to reduce retail hours without review and approval by both Area and Headquarters management.
- **Collection Boxes.** The Postal Service has suspended the removal of any collection boxes until after the 2020 elections. There may be temporary removal or covering of boxes due to extreme weather, national security incidents, or local events such as wildfires or civil unrest. It is critical that any collection boxes damaged — for example, by hurricane or a car accident — be reported and replaced as soon as possible.
- **Late and Extra Trips.** Late or extra trips have not been banned; they should not be restricted if they are reasonably necessary to complete timely mail delivery. Managers are authorized to use their best business judgment to meet service commitments. Focusing on the transportation schedule does not mean that mail should be left behind — it should not. Instead, processing and transportation schedules should be aligned to help reduce late deliveries and unnecessary costs.
- **Mail Processing.** No mail processing facilities will be closed or consolidated, and no letter or flat sorting machines will be removed before the November elections. We have more than sufficient capacity to process current and anticipated mail volumes with our existing machine supply. Available machines will be returned to service if Headquarters or the Regional Vice President determine that doing so is necessary to fulfill our Election Mail service commitments.
- **Election Mail.** We will continue to expedite Election Mail that is entered as Marketing Mail, as is our long-standing practice. Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously. To make this possible, please expand processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day.

Please also continue to prioritize Election Mail, including ballots entered with Green Tag 191, when loading trucks, and continue to use standardized log sheets to track Election Mail. Conduct daily “all clears” to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and processed accordingly.

The Postal Service and our Postmaster General have repeatedly reaffirmed our commitment to the timely delivery of Election Mail. You can help us meet that commitment and prove that we are ready to deliver. Our country and our customers are counting on us.

Thank you for your attention and thank you for your service to our customers every day.

Use of Lobbies and Postal Property for Election-Related Activities

Information for Postmasters and Station Managers Regarding Use of Lobbies and Postal Property for Election-Related Activities

Every election cycle brings numerous requests for the use of Postal Service lobbies and grounds for election-related activities. Employees should respond consistently with the regulations summarized in [Poster 7](#) (39 C.F.R. § 232.1) and applicable lobby management policies, including those contained in the Postal Operations Manual (POM).

Prohibited Placements

Do *not* allow the following items to be placed, displayed, or collected in a Post Office lobby, or anywhere on Postal Service property:

- Ballot boxes/receptacles.
- Freestanding signs, including campaign signs, or other structures, including tables, chairs, or furniture.
- Nonpostal flyers, pamphlets, and other unauthorized literature, including partisan materials featuring photographs of elected officials, candidates, or political party symbols.

Note: Retail Operations at Headquarters is responsible for policy guidance over the use of lobby floor and poster space for nonpostal purposes. (See POM 125.351). Lobby bulletin boards are reserved solely for display of official Postal Service and other approved governmental announcements. (See POM 125.361).

Prohibited Activities

Do *not* allow the following activities to take place in a Post Office lobby, or anywhere on Postal Service property (except for street frontage perimeter sidewalks that are not physically distinguishable from adjacent municipal or other public sidewalks):

- Any activity conducted in support of a campaign for election of an individual to any public office (partisan or non-partisan), including:
 - depositing, posting, displaying, or distributing campaign literature.
 - asking for or collecting signatures to put a candidate on an election ballot.
 - asking for or collecting contributions for a partisan organization or cause.

Note: Refer any questions about these prohibited activities, including the exception for street frontage perimeter sidewalks that are not physically distinguishable from adjacent public sidewalks, to the Law Department field office in your area.

Non-partisan Voter Registration Activities

During an appropriate period before an election, and *under very limited circumstances*, non-partisan voter registration activities may take place in public areas of postal facilities. (See 39 C.F.R. § 232.1(h)(4)). **Refer any requests by any organization to conduct voter registration activities on Postal Service property to the Law Department field office in your area.**

Help with mailings:

You may also be contacted by election officials and politicians asking for help with their Mailings. [Publication 632 – State and Local Election Mail – User’s Guide](#) and [Publication 631 – Official Election Mail Graphic Guidelines and Logos](#) are great references for election mailings. As always, your Mailpiece Design Analyst and district BMEU are available to help with election mail. For postal employees, the internal site, Election 2020 <http://blue.usps.gov/marketing/election.htm> is a great resource. A special site was created for election officials, at usps.com/electionmail. For assistance with political mail, contact your district Marketing Manager or Political/Election Mail Coordinator

Mail-in ballot handling:

Contact your local election officials prior to the elections in November to develop a process for handling mail-in ballots that arrive in your Post Office™ on the day of the election.

Insufficient postage or unstamped ballot handling:

From now until the November elections, we can expect to see ballots in the mail. All mail-in ballots, except those bearing the indicia “US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406” require postage. Nonetheless, some ballots will be shortpaid and some will contain no postage at all. It is critical that this mail is handled correctly to avoid any negative impact on election results or the Postal Service™.

Employees must be aware that absentee balloting materials are handled differently than other unpaid or shortpaid mailpieces as directed by [Postal Operations Manual section 171.3](#).

- **Ballots addressed to an election office, with or without sufficient postage, must be delivered.**
- **Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment.**

All employees must adhere to Postal Service™ policy as follows:

- Shortpaid and unpaid absentee balloting materials must never be returned to the voter for additional postage. The Postal Service will attempt to collect postage from the election office upon delivery or at a later date. Do not delay delivery of balloting materials.
- Account for ballots with insufficient or no postage using existing procedures for postage due mail. Attempt to collect the postage due from the election office at the time of delivery. However, **ballots must be delivered even if the receiving election office refuses to pay.**
- Military and overseas ballots bearing indicia “US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406” are not shortpaid and no additional postage is needed. [DMM 703.8.0](#).
- Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policy, ethics and law.

Employees with questions or concerns about handling absentee balloting material should contact their supervisor or District Political Mail Coordinator.

Handling of Missent Ballots and Election Mail VP Letter



September 30, 2020

All Delivery Units

SUBJECT: Handling Missent Ballots and other Election Mail

Identifying and redirecting missent mail is an important part of normal delivery operations. This is especially critical in an election year. Any delay in correct delivery of Election Mail, especially ballots, could risk impacting our customers' right to have their vote counted.

All employees should monitor and ensure that any missent Election Mail is returned to the plant on the first available transportation. The pitch-and-catch process illustrated on the attached "Handling Missent Election Mail / Ballots" Standard Work Instruction must be implemented effective immediately.

The Standard Work Instruction explains the steps that must be taken to redirect missent mail including who should be contacted and the items to be verified by both the Delivery office and the Mail Processing. In addition, the instruction includes images of the Special Handling tag and the Official Election mail logo to identify mail pieces.

Thank you for listening and for your commitment to help make processing and delivering Election Mail a priority for our customers this election season.

E-SIGNED by ANGELA.H CURTIS
on 2020-09-30 14:50:06 CDT

Angela Curtis
Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations

E-SIGNED by Joshua.D Colin
on 2020-09-30 15:08:10 CDT

Joshua D. Colin, Ph.D.
Vice President, Delivery Operations

E-SIGNED by Michael.L Barber
on 2020-09-30 15:15:48 CDT

Mike Barber
Vice President, Processing and Maintenance Operations

475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260
WWW.USPS.COM

- 2 -

Management: Please print the attached Standard Work Instruction and make available to all employees by posting on a bulletin board and other visible areas.

Handling of Missent Ballots and Other Election Mail Stand-up Talk - All Delivery Units



Stand-Up Talk

September 2020

Handling Missent Ballots and other Election Mail

Audience: All Delivery Units

Identifying and redirecting missent mail is an important part of normal delivery operations. This is especially critical in an election year. Any delay in correct delivery of Election Mail, especially ballots, could risk impacting our customers' right to have their vote counted.

Carriers, clerks and supervisors should monitor and ensure that any missent Election Mail is returned to the plant on the first available transportation. Place missent Election Mail into a dedicated letter tray or flat tub. Sleeve trays and use flat tub lids. Affix a red Special Handling Election Mail placard to each tray and flat tub **and** to the postal equipment used to transport the mail to the Processing and Distribution Center. A pitch-and-catch process must be in place to notify the plant of the expected arrival time.

Implement the pitch-and-catch process as illustrated on the attached "Handling Missent Election Mail / Ballots" Standard Work Instruction.

The Standard Work Instruction explains the steps that should be taken to redirect missent mail, including the delivery office contacting the plant by phone and email and the plant confirming a response by email. The instruction outlines who should be contacted and the items to be verified by both the delivery office and the plant.

The instruction also includes images of the Special Handling tag and the Official Election mail logo to watch for on mailpieces. Please review the Standard Work Instruction for details.

Thank you for listening, and for your commitment to help make processing and delivering Election Mail a priority for USPS this election season.

[Note to person delivering stand-up talk: the Standard Work Instruction should be printed and posted on a bulletin board or other visible area and the location should be pointed out to employees for details.]

Handling of Mail-in Ballots with Insufficient or No Postage

Throughout the election cycle, we can expect to see ballots in the mail. All mail-in ballots, except those bearing the indicia “US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406” require postage. Nonetheless, some ballots will be short paid and some will contain no postage at all. It is critical that this mail is handled correctly to avoid any negative impact on election results or the Postal Service.

Employees must be aware that absentee balloting materials are handled differently than other unpaid or shortpaid mailpieces as directed by [Postal Operations Manual](#).

- **Ballots addressed to an election office, with or without sufficient postage, must be delivered.**
- **Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment.**

All employees must adhere to Postal Service policy as follows:

- Shortpaid and unpaid absentee balloting materials must never be returned to the voter for additional postage. The Postal Service will attempt to collect postage from the election office upon delivery or at a later date. Do not delay delivery of balloting materials.
- Account for mail-in ballots with insufficient or no postage using existing procedures for postage due mail. Attempt to collect the postage due from the election office at the time of delivery. However, **ballots must be delivered even if the receiving election office refuses to pay.**
- Military and overseas absentee ballots bearing indicia “**US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406**” are not shortpaid and no additional postage is needed. [DMM 703.8.0](#)
- Willful delay of absentee balloting material or other election material is a violation of policy, ethics and law.

Employees with questions or concerns about handling absentee balloting material should contact their supervisor or district political mail coordinator.

Please do your part to ensure all absentee balloting materials in the mail are handled promptly. With your help, the Postal Service will be able to retain this valuable mail volume.

Official Election Mail Stand Up Talk

Elections are the bedrock of our system of government. With every election, mail-in ballots and official election materials prepared by election officials flood the mailstream. Mail volume grows every week leading up to the election. During this time, it is critical that we maintain our usual high-level of service to ensure that all Election Mail is processed and delivered in a timely manner.

Here's what you need to know about Official Election Mail:

- Election Mail is any piece mailed to or from an authorized election official that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. It includes:
 - Ballots
 - Other balloting related materials, like applications
 - Voter registration cards
 - Polling place notifications
 - Voter reply mail

- Election officials are encouraged to use the Official Election Mail logo on their Election Mail to help distinguish it from other mail. (Show the sample Official Election Mail logo to the attendees.) The logo is a registered trademark that election officials have the option of using to give their mail greater visibility while in the mailstream. The logo may be printed in black, blue, or red ink.
- Election officials are encouraged to use Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, to identify ballot mail while it's in the mailstream. (Note: Tag 191 is to be used only to identify ballots. It should not be used to identify containers of other types of Official Election Mail, such as polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other ballot related materials.)
- After the ballot mail has been fully processed, Tag 191 should be removed from trays and sacks and retained for reuse. (Show the sample Tag 191 to the attendees.)
- Election officials can order Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots, online and they can be mailed directly to their office. Order Tag 191 by visiting <http://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/> or contacting your Business Mail Entry Unit at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/1623>.

Here's what you need to do:

- Be alert for the green Tag 191 which identifies ballot mail.
- Be alert for the Official Election Mail logo that is used to identify individual pieces of election mail. The logo may be printed in black, blue, or red ink.
- Prioritize and promptly handle all ballots and other Election Mail. Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously to the extent feasible so that it is generally delivered in line with the First-Class Mail delivery standards.
- Immediately report any problems with ballot mail or Official Election Mail to your supervisor. Supervisors are to report problems to the district election mail coordinator.
- [Note: The presenter of this talk must share the attached samples of the Official Election Mail logo and Tag 191 at the appropriate times during the talk.]

Official Election Mail Logo

The design specifications for the trademarked Election mail logo are detailed in [Publication 631, Official Election Mail – Graphic Guidelines and Logos](#). The log may be printed in black, blue or red ink.



Tag 191, Domestic and International Mail-In Ballots



Political Mail Stand Up Talk

The American electorate votes on numerous political offices and issues. Citizens cast ballots every 4 years for president, every 2 years for one-third of the U.S. senators and all members of the House of Representatives, and at varying frequencies for governorships and other state, county, and local offices and referenda measures. During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers many political campaign mailings, frequently in large quantities. These mailings are made up by individual candidates and their campaign organizations, as well as by local, state, and national committees of political parties.

Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and with equal care and attention. Any delay in delivering political mailings must be documented. Be alert for the red Tag 57. We must properly handle and timely deliver any political mailing.

As stated in the *Postal Operations Manual (POM)* section 492.53:

Managers, Business Mail Entry, and postmasters must keep documented records of all political campaign mailings that are deposited or received at their offices, with particular attention to those deposited or received too late for timely delivery.

At a minimum, these documented records must include the following:

- f. The name of the mailer.
- g. A sample, photocopy, or description of the mailing.
- h. The date and time the mailing was received for dispatch or delivery.
- i. If applicable, the approximate number of pieces not delivered before the Election Day deadline and/or the date of requested delivery and the reasons why delivery was not timely.

- j. The approximate volume of any USPS Marketing Mail consigned to waste upon instruction by the mailer.

Each delivery unit is to maintain a Political Mail Log that will be used to document the arrival and delivery of each mailing. This is also used to record the number of Undeliverable as Addressed pieces for a political mailing. The PM Log can be found on the City Delivery Blue Page.

https://blue.usps.gov/delret/L3do/city/Info/2020_Delivery_Unit_Political_and_Election_Mail_Log.xlsx

If a significant amount of a campaign mailing is deemed undeliverable as addressed, postmasters must inform the applicable campaign office before any action to dispose of such mail. Postmasters should also coordinate any such situations with their Area Political Campaign Mail Coordinator.

Contact your district Political Mail Coordinator if political mailings arrive in your unit too late to be delivered before Election Day. They will contact the mailer for instructions.

In summary, the key points from today's service talk are:

- Handle all political campaign mailings properly and expeditiously.
- Be alert to the red Tag 57, even though its use is optional for eligible mailers. Tag 57 is to be saved for re-use after political mail is distributed.
- Document all Campaign/Political Mail on your unit's Political Mail Log.
- Any delays in distributing or delivering of political campaign mail prior to the Election Day must be reported to your district Political Mail Coordinator.

One of the most important public functions for the Postal Service is serving as a trusted partner in our nation's electoral process. Thank you for keeping our country strong by ensuring messages from registered political candidates, committees, and parties are processed as quickly as possible so they can be delivered to America's voters.

Lobbying Restrictions

Overview

In general, federal law prohibits Postal Service officers and employees acting in their official capacity from engaging in grass roots lobbying campaigns that directly or indirectly encourage the public to contact government officials in support of, or in opposition to, proposed or pending legislation.

The law does not prohibit Postal Service officers and employees from communicating with Congress through proper official channels in furtherance of normal, recognized executive-legislative relationships. Nor does it prohibit them from carrying-out the Postal Service's legitimate informational activities, such as reporting on the activities of its programs and responding to requests for information. It also does not prohibit the Postal Service, under appropriate circumstances, from reporting on justifying and rebutting attacks on its policies.

The Anti-Lobbying Act

The Anti-Lobbying Act, 18 U.S.C. §1913, prohibits, among other things, the direct or indirect use of Postal Service funds to pay for material intended to influence a Member of Congress, a jurisdiction, or an official of any government, to support or oppose any legislation, law, ratification, policy, or

appropriation either before or after its introduction. The history of the Anti-Lobbying Act reveals that the Act is intended to prohibit “grass roots lobbying,” i.e., appealing to the general public to contact the government about a specific piece of legislation. Pursuant to a specific exemption, federal and Postal Service officers and employees may do three things: respond to requests from Members of Congress and other government officials; communicate with Members and other officials “through the proper official channels” at their request; and initiate communication with them about legislation “which [Postal Service officers and employees] deem necessary for the efficient conduct of the public business.”

Publicity and Propaganda Provisions

Two “general provisions” in the annual Appropriations Act that funds free mail for the blind and overseas voting prohibit the use of appropriated funds to produce propaganda in support of, or in opposition to, legislation. The shorter of these two provisions forbids the use of official funds “directly or indirectly, including by private contractor, for publicity or propaganda purposes within the United States” that are not authorized by Congress. The more detailed of these two provisions forbids the use of appropriated funds for any “publicity or propaganda purposes,” or for “the preparation, distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress, except in presentation to the Congress itself.” Communication undertaken pursuant to “normal, recognized executive-legislative relationships” is specifically excluded from the coverage of this provision.

Applying the Laws to Official Conduct

Postal Service funds may not be used, directly or indirectly, to fund a “grass roots” lobbying campaign designed to affect legislation at the federal or state level. Accordingly, a series of letters on official stationery sent to mass mailers urging them to write to their elected representatives to support specific legislation would constitute a prohibited direct expenditure under the Anti-Lobbying Act. Likewise, a Postal Service officer would violate the Anti-Lobbying Act by delivering an address at a meeting of mailers convened at Postal Service expense urging mailers to “write Congress” to oppose specific legislation. Examples of prohibited indirect expenditures include the Postal Service’s provision of facilities, equipment, telephones, etc., to a private lobbying group for a “grass roots” lobbying campaign supporting specific legislation. The Publicity and Propaganda provisions of the Postal Service’s Annual Appropriations Act permit the Postal Service to provide information about its programs and activities. However, “publicity of a nature tending to emphasize the agency’s [or its program’s] own importance” is prohibited, as is communication that directly or indirectly appeals to the public to contact government officials in support of, or opposition to, pending legislation. By way of example, a Postal Service employee may not participate in a press conference organized by a non-governmental advocacy group called to criticize a legislative proposal, nor may he ghost write statements for a grass roots lobbying campaign.

Additional Advice

Advice concerning the Anti-Lobbying Act as well as the Publicity and Propaganda provisions of the Postal Service’s annual Appropriations Act is always available to Postal Service employees by calling the Ethics Help Line on (202) 268-6346 or by sending an e-mail inquiry to ethics.help@usps.gov.

Voter Registration Forms and Absentee Ballot Request Forms in Retail Facilities

As we move closer to this fall's elections, Post Offices and Stations may receive requests to use USPS lobbies and grounds for election-related activities. Employees need to be aware of Postal Service guidelines regarding the placement of voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms in retail facilities.

While our regulations generally prohibit the deposit of any pamphlets or other literature on postal property, Postmasters or installation heads are permitted to allow the deposit of voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms in the Post Office Box lobby area of retail facilities if there is adequate space available for such materials.

If you have additional questions please contact the [Subject Matter Expert](#).

Thank you for all you do!

Business Reply Mail (BRM) Permits — Third-Party Vendors



Retail Stand-Up Talk

October 1, 2020

Business Reply Mail (BRM) Permits — Third-Party Vendors

Recently, the Postal Service has seen more third-party vendors requesting Business Reply Mail (BRM) permits on behalf of client organizations — without the client's approval.

BRM permit applications from third-party vendors must include the client's written authorization on the client's letterhead. The letterhead must display the address where mail will be received. Written approval must be provided regardless of who is paying for postage.

Serious issues can occur if the BRM permit process isn't handled properly:

- The organization may refuse mail.
- Only one unique ZIP +4 Code can be assigned to a delivery address. If an organization tries to obtain a BRM permit for an address with an existing +4, the application will be denied.

If a local office or Business Mail Entry Unit is contacted to create a BRM, that request must be sent to the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center (or MSSC). Please see your manager or supervisor for details on how to contact the MSSC.

Finally, an important reminder during this election season: We're expecting a greater number of BRM permit requests from state election boards or their designees. These permits must be created only by the MSSC to ensure proper formatting and approvals have been obtained. Please make sure these permit requests are forwarded to the MSSC.

Thank you for listening. And thanks for all that you do for our customers every day.

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) and Political Mail Stand-up Talks

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) service from the U.S. Postal Service allows anyone to have their mailings delivered to specific neighborhoods, ZIP Codes, or even entire cities by a Postal Service Letter Carrier. Businesses and organizations simply identify the neighborhoods they want to target, print promotional pieces, and then take their mailings to a post office. Once accepted, USPS ensures that every piece gets delivered directly to every door on the selected routes.

EDDM can be used for Political Campaign Mail and may be submitted to Bulk Mail Entry Units (BMEU). EDDM that is entered at a BMEU must be presented with a PS Form 3602. The same rules that apply to EDDM commercial mailings, apply to Political Campaign Mailings. There are standard EDDM compliant flat sizes that provide the mailer with ample space to include important campaign messages. EDDM acceptable dimensions include rectangular with four square corners or finished corners that do not exceed a radius of .125". It must be more than 10.5" in length or 6.125" in height or .25" thick. The max weight for EDDM- Retail is 3.3 oz. and 15.9 oz. max per piece for EDDM-BMEU. Mailers may also choose to include designs or UV coating to enhance the piece, which may increase the response and success of the campaign. The larger formats provide more space to include valuable information to help educate the audience, so they can make an informed decision at the polls.

For additional EDDM questions, contact the Customer Care Center (Helpdesk) at 1-877-747-6249

EDDM RETAIL POLITICAL MAIL STAND-UP TALK 1

Political Mail is an easy way to create material promoting political candidates, referenda, or campaigns or engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization. Political Mail may be sent from a political candidate, federal, state or local campaign committee, political party, or a political action committee (PAC), super-PAC, or other organization engaged in campaign activity, issue advocacy, or voter mobilization. The Postal Service is committed to providing you with the tools necessary to implement a successful political mail campaign. Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) allows mailers to advertise to their community for less. There is no need for a mailing list and there is no permit or addressing requirement.

Direct Mail is one of the most powerful tools to get messages to voters. Political mailings/ EDDM benefits will be:

- **Cost-effective** by mailing to specific areas or addresses, and the format can be as inexpensive as a postcard.
- **Targetable** by things such as household income, gender, zip codes, and geographic location with Every Door Direct Mail®.
- **Personalized** with messages and graphics to tell the story of your candidate or message.

The Postal Service is striving to make doing business with us easier and more convenient for customers on the go.

For any additional information regarding election mail or EDDM, contact your District Retail Specialist or District Retail Manager.

EDDM RETAIL POLITICAL MAIL STAND-UP TALK 2

Upon receipt of an EDDM Retail Political mailing, Retail Associates will follow the Every Door Direct Mail Retail SOP for Manual/EMOVES Offices or Every Door Direct Mail Retail SOP for POS ONE. After the acceptance procedures and payment have been completed, all EDDM Retail Political mailings will be placed at the designated staging area determined by Local Management. Delivery Unit Managers/Postmasters will be required to review all Retail EDDM Mailings to identify any EDDM Mailing with political messaging.

EDDM Political Mail SOP Link:

http://blue.usps.gov/customerservicesoperationsandretail/policyandprocedures/standardoperatingprocedures/domesticops/doc/every_door_direct_mail_logging_political_mail_sop.doc

All mailings that meet the classification of Political Messaging Mail must be entered onto the Delivery Unit Political EDDM Mail Receipt Log.

Political Mail Log Link:

http://blue.usps.gov/customerservicesoperationsandretail/policyandprocedures/standardoperatingprocedures/domesticops/xls/political_mail_retail_eddm_receipt_log.xls

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is there a time ordered checklist that each unit must be in compliance?

Although there is no time ordered checklist, HQ has provided the Delivery Unit Election and Political Mail Audit Form that should be completed daily via self-audits and expectation is that District personnel conduct random daily audits prior to and not concluding until 2 weeks after primaries/elections. It is also important that Back door audits are conducted daily as carriers are returning from the street, questioning any Election / Political mail returned from the street not delivered.

2. How many units (or, is it all units must receive (pass) a review / audit) must be reviewed by their District staff?

All delivery / retail facilities regardless of size are expected to conduct and pass reviews.

3. Who at the District is responsible to complete these review / audits?

All management personnel within the district should be completing reviews / audits as this does include self-audits within your own facility.

4. Is there a Website that units can enter their review / audits?

There is not an HQ website to enter audits/reviews, each district / area is responsible for keeping all audits readily available for easy reference and follow-up if needed.

Election Mail Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is official election mail?

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. It includes ballots, balloting materials, voter registration cards, ballot applications, and polling place notifications.

2. Is political mail sent by candidates running for elected offices considered to be Official Election Mail?

No. Official Election Mail does not include political campaign mail.

3. What is Tag 191?

Tag 191, *Domestic and International Mail-In Ballots*, is a green container tag used since Nov. 2007. It may be used by elections officials to identify trays and sacks of their ballot mail destined for either domestic or international addresses. The tag provides greater visibility to ballot mail during Postal Service handling.

4. Can Tag 191 be used on any mailpiece that displays the Official Election Mail logo?

No. The green Tag 191, *Domestic and International Mail-In Ballots*, may be used only to identify ballots addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag is not to be used to identify containers of other types of official election mail, such as polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other ballot-related materials. Tag 191 also may not be used by organizations or individuals to send materials that promote political candidates, referendums, or political campaigns. To identify political mail, mailers may continue to use the red Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*.

5. Is Tag 191 required to be on containers of Official Election Mail?

No. The use of Tag 191 is recommended, but not required.

6. Is Tag 191 reusable?

Yes. Once containers of official election mail have been emptied, Tag 191 should be removed from the trays and sacks and retained by Postal Service employees for reuse.

7. Since election officials are not supposed to use Tag 191 on non-ballot mail such as polling place notices and voter registration forms, can they use Tag 57 to identify their mailing containers?

No. Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*, is only to be used to identify trays and sacks of political campaign mail sent by a registered: political candidate; campaign committee; or committee of a political party to promote political candidates, referendums or political campaigns (partisan or nonpartisan). Tag 57 also can be used to identify political message mail.

8. How do Post Offices get a supply of Tag 191?

Post Offices can order Tag 191 from the Material Distribution Center (MDC) using normal ordering procedures. Post Offices should maintain a sufficient supply of Tag 191 to meet the needs of their local election officials. Tag 191 is available in Pub 223, *Forms and Directives Catalog*. Orders for Tag 191 will be limited to 10,000.

9. What is the Official Election Mail logo?

The Official Election Mail logo is a unique registered trademark that may only be used by elections officials. The logo design features an interpretation of the stars and stripes of the American flag and the words, "Official Election Mail" and "Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service." The design, color, and placement specifications for the logo are detailed in Publication 631, *Official Election Mail Graphic Guidelines and Logos*, which is available online at <http://about.usps.com/publications/pub631.pdf>

10. Why was the Official Election Mail logo created?

The logo was created by the Postal Service in cooperation with the Joint Election Official Liaison Committee to help federal, state and local elections officials carry out their responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

11. Who can use the Official Election Mail logo?

The Official Election Mail logo can be used on any mailpiece created by an election official that is mailed to or from a citizen of the United States for the purpose of participating in the voting process. Official Election Mail includes balloting materials, voter registration cards, absentee applications, polling place notifications, and voter reply mail. Use of the logo must comply with the design specifications in Publication 631, *Official Election Mail Graphic Guidelines and Logos*.

12. Are election officials required to use the Official Election Mail logo?

No. Use of the logo is not required; however, the Postal Service does encourage election officials to use the logo on their official election mail materials. The Official Election Mail logo helps recipients recognize a mailpiece as important and distinct from other mail. The logo also serves to identify official election mail to Postal Service workers and distinguish it from the thousands of other mailpieces that are processed daily.

13. Does use of the Official Election Mail logo provide upgraded service for official election mail during Postal Service processing?

Use of the logo is not intended to upgrade the level of service paid for or substitute for required postage. However, the logo increases the visibility of Election Mail as it travels through the network, and thus helps enable the Postal Service to identify Election Mail so that it is appropriately prioritized and processed expeditiously.

14. Are there any Postal Service publications to help elections officials with preparing their mail?

Yes. Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail User's Guide*, is designed to help elections officials make decisions involving the design of their mailpiece, address list cleansing, class of mail, options for reply mail, and obtaining postage discounts. Publication 632 recommends that elections officials consult with the local Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) before mailing and includes a checklist that elections officials can follow to help them achieve a successful mailing. Quick Service Guides (series 240 for Std. Mail letters and 340 for Std. Mail flats, Kit 600), available at pe.usps.com, are also helpful for mail preparation guidelines.

15. Can all ballots be mailed free of postage?

No. Only balloting materials, such as postcard applications, ballots, voting instructions, and return envelopes, may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to enable persons in the following categories to apply for registration and vote by absentee ballot (in federal elections only) when absent from the place of voting residence and otherwise eligible to vote as an absentee:

- a. Members of the Armed Forces in active service and their spouses and dependents.

- b. Members of the U.S. Merchant Marine and their spouses and dependents.
- c. U.S. citizens residing outside the territorial limits of the United States and the District of Columbia, and their spouses and dependents residing with or accompanying them.

All other types of ballots and balloting materials must bear postage using a permit imprint, postage meter, adhesive stamp or other acceptable method of postage payment prior to mailing.

However, short-paid and unpaid absentee balloting materials must never be returned to the voter for additional postage. The Postal Service will attempt to collect postage from the election office upon delivery or at a later date.

16. Are there requirements for mailpieces sent without prepayment of postage under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)?

Yes. To be mailable without prepayment of postage, mailpieces must be sent to or from qualifying individuals, must bear the “Postage Paid 39 USC 3406” indicia and meet other formatting requirements under DMM 703.8.2. In addition, to be mailable without prepayment of postage, these balloting materials must be deposited at a U.S. Post Office, an overseas U.S. military post office, or an American Embassy or American Consulate.

17. When I see the indicia that reads, “Postage Paid, 39 USC 3406,” does that mean the mailpiece only has .39 postage?

No. That refers to Title 39 of the United States Code and the specific statute found in Section 3406. Under this federal statute and the DMM the Postal Service is required to carry UOCAVA balloting materials expeditiously and free of postage to qualifying individuals, including active duty military members, merchant marines, U.S. citizens living overseas and eligible spouses and dependents. These mailpieces are not short-paid and no additional postage is needed.

18. Are there mailpiece design requirements for UOCAVA ballots?

Yes. Qualifying mailpieces must be formatted to meet the design requirements in DMM 703.8.2.

19. Can absentee ballots for state or local elections be mailed free?

No. The provisions in DMM 703.8.0 for mailing free absentee balloting materials only apply to ballot materials for *federal* elections.

20. If ballots are found in the mailstream without postage or with insufficient postage should the normal procedures for short-paid mail be followed?

No. Short-paid and unpaid absentee balloting materials must never be returned to the voter for additional postage. The Postal Service will attempt to collect postage from the election office upon delivery or at a later date. Do not delay delivery of balloting materials. Uniformed (military) and overseas absentee ballots bearing an indicia “**US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406**” are not short-paid and no additional postage is needed per DMM 703.8.0.

21. Do all ballot mailings bear an address correction service request endorsement? If so, how is this handled?

There is no requirement for election mail to utilize an address correction service request endorsement. Election offices may use one, if desired, to obtain a notice that a voter has submitted a change-of-address for the purpose of mail forwarding. This would allow the election office to contact the voter to determine if they have actually moved or if they are simply having mail forwarded for a reason not related to a move.

If the election office does not request an address correction service, then they may not learn that a voter may have moved for as much as one year after the move, during which time the Postal Service forwards the mail to a new address.

22. The local elections office asked our Post Office if they could place one of their ballot collection receptacles in our lobby. The ballots dropped into the receptacle would not have postage affixed and would not enter the mailstream. The election official said they would retrieve the receptacle on Election Day. Can we allow the election office to place their ballot collection receptacle in our lobby as a convenience to voters?

No. Postal Service policy does not permit placement of an elections office ballot collection receptacle in a Post Office lobby.

23. What election-related materials are allowed to be placed in Postal Service lobbies?

Employees should respond consistently with the regulations summarized in [Poster 7](#) (39 C.F.R. § 232.1) and applicable lobby management policies, including those contained in the Postal Operations Manual (POM). Remember, voter registration forms and ballot-application forms may be displayed in the Post Office Box lobby area if there is adequate space. Refer any questions to the Law Department Field Office in your Area.

24. Is there a website where elections officials can get information on mailing?

Yes. Direct election officials to the Elections Officials' Mailing Resource site on *usps.com* at www.usps.com/electionmail.

Political Mail Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is political campaign mail?

Political Campaign Mail is defined as materials mailed at Commercial First-Class or Standard Mail prices for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or committee of a political party. This includes any **public election — partisan or nonpartisan** — for which there is a ballot.

2. What is Tag 57?

Tag 57, *Political Campaign Mailing*, is a red container tag designed to provide visibility to political campaign mail while it's in the mailstream.

3. What kind of mail can use Tag 57?

There are two types of mail that are allowed to use Tag 57. The first being any political campaign mailing by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. Secondly, "political message mailings" from Political Action Committees (PACs), Super-PACs, or other organizations that endorse specific candidates, engage in political issue advocacy or promote voter mobilization may use the tag.

4. Is the use of Tag 57 required on all containers of political campaign mail?

No. The use of Tag 57 is optional, but the Postal Service does encourage mailers to use the tag to identify trays and sacks of political campaign mail and political message mail while it's in the mailstream.

5. Is Tag 57 reusable?

Yes. Once containers of political campaign mail and political message mail have been emptied, Tag 57 should be removed from the trays and sacks and retained by Postal Service employees for reuse.

6. How do Post Offices get a supply of Tag 57?

Post Offices can order Tag 57 from the Material Distribution Center (MDC) using normal ordering procedures. Post Offices should maintain a sufficient supply of Tag 57 to meet their local needs.

7. Are the handling procedures for partisan and non-partisan political campaign mail different?

No. Non-partisan political campaign mailings must receive the same treatment as partisan political campaign mailings.

8. Where can I find the Postal Service procedures for handling political campaign mail?

Specific responsibilities for handling political campaign mailings are detailed in *Postal Operations Manual* (POM) 492.

Sample Tag 191



Sample Tag 57



Election Mail Enclosed Red Placard

From: _____

Date: _____

SPECIAL HANDLING

**ELECTION MAIL
ENCLOSED**

To: Designated Election Mail Area

Election Mail Enclosed White Placard

From: _____

Date: _____

SPECIAL HANDLING

**ELECTION MAIL
ENCLOSED**

To: Designated Election Mail Area

September 21, 2020

OFFICERS, PCES, AND PAY BAND MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Clarifying Operational Instructions

The number one priority for Postmaster General DeJoy and the Postal Service between now and Election Day is the secure and on-time delivery of the nation's election mail. Effective October 1, 2020, the Postal Service will make additional resources available in all areas of operations, including collection, processing, delivery, and transportation, to satisfy increased demand and unforeseen circumstances. These additional resources will include, as needed, additional staffing, additional transportation, and expanded mail processing windows and delivery trips, among others. Further guidance on use of additional resources will be provided separately.

To address any misinformation and clear up any confusion about the status of the Postal Service's practices concerning Overtime, Hiring, Retail Hours, Collection Boxes, Late and Extra Trips, Mail Processing, and Election Mail, these Clarifying Operational Instructions detail practices as they currently stand related to those topics.

As you may also be aware, a federal district court recently issued an order imposing certain requirements for the handling of mail. These Instructions are also intended to provide guidance to assist in carrying out the specific directives required by that order, as they relate to current operational practices.

The approach to the matters outlined in these Instructions will remain in effect until further notice and supersede any previous guidance provided on these specific topics that could be seen as conflicting with these Instructions, whether from Headquarters or the field.

1. Overtime

Postal Service Headquarters has not imposed, and will not impose, any nationwide changes that ban or newly restrict overtime prior to Election Day. Overtime use has not been banned, nor have any caps been placed on overtime hours. Front-line supervisors and managers will continue to schedule employees' work hours and oversee employee overtime, including planning for any needed prescheduled overtime, directing unscheduled overtime, and approving employee requests for overtime work based on the workload. Supervisors will continue to set schedules with the goal of matching the expected earned work hours with appropriate staffing. Management will continue to monitor the use of work hours and overtime so that it can identify and address problems that may be the cause of work not being performed within expected work hours or managed inefficiently.

The Postal Service's consistent practice in the past is to use justified and approved overtime hours where needed to deliver the mail on time, and that practice will continue. Overtime has been, and will continue to be, utilized as necessary to fulfill our mission. As will be discussed in more detail in the forthcoming guidance regarding the use of additional resources starting on October 1, use of overtime necessary to expeditiously move Election Mail should be approved.

2. Hiring

Postal Service Headquarters has not implemented a total hiring freeze. Because of the realignment of the Postal Service's reporting structure announced on August 7, 2020, Postal Service Headquarters has suspended hiring for EAS positions to ensure proper placement of any current employees that may be impacted by the restructuring. Although hiring of EAS positions has been suspended, there is a process in place to request exceptions to fill critical EAS positions.

The suspension of EAS hiring does not impact the filling of craft positions. Craft positions will continue to be filled pursuant to the applicable collective bargaining agreement. The Postal Service has hired, and will continue to hire, new employees to address staffing shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and otherwise.

3. Retail Hours

Postal Service Headquarters has not directed or authorized a reduction in retail window hours. Evaluating retail hours is part of an annual process to optimize the Postal Service retail network. The Postal Service was in the process of gathering data to make decisions regarding retail hours based on customer demand. Given both congressional and public concern, the Postal Service will not be adjusting retail hours prior to the November 2020 elections.

There may be unforeseen circumstances beyond the Postal Service's control that necessitate the temporary change of retail hours or the temporary closure of a retail facility such as natural disasters, or conditions that reduce employee availability or create an unsafe environment for employees like the COVID-19 pandemic or civil unrest. However, local managers are not permitted to reduce retail hours without review and approval by both Area and Headquarters management.

There are Village Post Offices (VPO) and Contract Postal Units (CPU) that on occasion decide to terminate their contract or close due to uncontrollable circumstances. If the Postal Service is unable to negotiate an extension of services with these non-postal entities, there is no choice but to honor the contract termination. The Postal Service is currently in communication with those VPOs and CPUs that have indicated they intend to terminate their services prior to the November 2020 elections to determine whether an arrangement can be made to extend their services until after the elections.

4. Collection Boxes

Pursuant to the Postmaster General's August 18, 2020 directive, the Postal Service has suspended the removal of any additional collection boxes until after the 2020 elections. The Postal Service regularly reviews the need for, and location of, collection boxes in accordance with the Postal Service Postal Operations Manual. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that mail collection within areas served by letter carriers is accomplished in a cost-efficient manner, while still meeting customers' needs. Over the last seven years, the Postal Service has removed an average of 3,100 collection boxes per year. This year, approximately 1,500 collection boxes have been removed.

Although the Postmaster General has suspended the removal of collection boxes between now and the November 2020 elections, it is important to note that there are instances where removal of a collection box is necessary. In the event of extreme weather conditions, collection boxes may be removed or covered to prevent damage. During events that involve national security, collection boxes along the transportation route may be temporarily removed for public safety. Similarly, localized events such as wildfires or civil unrest may necessitate a temporary removal of a collection box. These removals are temporary and collection boxes must be returned as soon as possible.

Between now and the November 2020 elections, it is critical that, if any collection boxes are damaged (for example, by hurricane or a car accident) and taken out of service, that they be replaced as soon as possible. If a collection box is in an area that is restricted for security or safety reasons, any request to cover or remove a collection box must be raised through appropriate communication channels. Communication between local office and District/Area/Headquarters channels is critical. Postmaster/Station Managers must notify their District Manager when there is an issue with a collection box. District Managers must notify Area Retail & Delivery Operations Vice Presidents, who must notify the Vice President of Delivery Operations to ensure all leadership is aware of the issue and can oversee the removal and subsequent replacement of the collection box.

Postal Service Headquarters is not planning to reinstall collection boxes that were removed as part of its routine review prior to the Postmaster General's statement concerning operational commitments issued on August 18, 2020. To be clear however, no additional collection boxes should be removed until after the election, other than on a temporary basis, and only for the reasons described herein.

5. Late and Extra Trips

Adherence to transportation schedules has long been a priority of the Postal Service. Because noncompliance with transportation schedules was a chronic problem that was causing late deliveries and unnecessary costs, there has been an organizational focus on adhering to the transportation schedules over the last two years.

After the Postmaster General took office, he reemphasized the need to ensure that the Postal Service's trucks run on time and on schedule, with the goal of mitigating unnecessary late and extra trips. This effort does not mean that mail should be left behind, (it should not), but rather that processing schedules should align with transportation schedules. Moreover, the Postmaster General has not banned the use of late or extra trips; when operationally required, late or extra trips are permitted.

Consistent with the court order referenced above, transportation, in the form of late or extra trips that are reasonably necessary to complete timely mail delivery, is not to be unreasonably restricted or prohibited. Managers are authorized to use their best business judgment to meet our service commitments.

6. Mail Processing

Pursuant to the Postmaster General's August 18, 2020 directive, and consistent with the order of the federal district court, no mail processing facilities will be closed or consolidated until after the November 2020 elections. Moreover, the Postal Service has suspended all removal of letter and flat sorting machines until after the November 2020 elections. During Fiscal Year 2020, approximately 700 letter and flat sorting machines were disconnected and/or removed. These reductions were made pursuant to volume modeling and equipment reduction targets for various mail processing equipment sent to the Area Vice Presidents for review and implementation on May 15, 2020, consistent with longstanding Postal Service practice. The reduction targets, which were based on significant volume reductions in letter and flats mail volume, and with the further decline due to COVID-19, were broad targets for reduction, with the final decisions regarding machine removal being determined after discussions between local management and Headquarters. Postal Service Headquarters has determined not to make any further removal of equipment until after the November 2020 elections.

Because removed machines are generally disassembled for their usable parts, with such parts being removed to maintain or enhance other machines, there is no current plan to return removed machines to service. Over the past month, however, a limited number of machines that were disconnected, but not dismantled and removed, have been put back into service. We have more than sufficient capacity to process current and anticipated mail volumes with the existing machine fleet.

As of September 18, 2020, Headquarters has approved all requests to reconnect machines directed to the Headquarters Director of Processing Operations and has provided Regional Vice Presidents with authority to reconnect machines where doing so is necessary. Specifically, if it is determined that it is necessary to add processing capacity to fulfill our service commitments with regard to Election Mail, available processing equipment will be returned to service. Any requests to reconnect a sorting machine reduced since June 2020, because it is believed that the machine is necessary to ensure the timely processing and delivery of Election Mail should be made by the relevant installation head to the relevant Regional Vice President. Any request will be processed within three days, as required by the order of the federal district court.

7. Election Mail

The Postal Service and Postmaster General DeJoy have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to the timely delivery of Election Mail. Election Mail is defined as "any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process." This includes ballots, voter registration forms, ballot applications, polling place notifications, and similar materials. This specific mail qualifies as Election Mail both when it is sent to voters from election officials at the state and local levels and when it is returned by voters to those officials. This is distinct from "political mail," which is sent by political candidates, political action committees, and similar organizations in order to engage in issue advocacy or to advocate for candidates or other things, such as initiatives, that may appear on a ballot. See Postal Bulletin 22551, July 30, 2020, at 4.

Consistent with the court order referenced above, we will continue to prioritize Election Mail that is entered as Marketing Mail regardless of the paid class. Election Mail identified by the official Election Mail logo or other Postal Service visibility tools will continue to be prioritized pursuant to our long-standing practice. In that regard, please continue to use standardized log sheets to track Election Mail through processing and continue to conduct daily "all clears" as previously instructed to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and mail scheduled or "committed" to go out is processed accordingly. Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously to the extent feasible so that it is generally delivered in line with the First-Class Mail delivery standards. In that regard, to the extent necessary, please expand processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day. Please also continue to prioritize Election Mail, including ballots entered with Green Tag 191, when loading trucks.

Consistent with our long-standing practice, we recognize that it is sometimes not operationally feasible to deliver Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail in line with First-Class Mail delivery standards. This is particularly true with respect to Election Mail Marketing Mail volume that would require air transportation to meet First-Class Mail delivery standards, as this volume typically travels through our ground transportation network, and our systems do not permit Marketing Mail to travel by air. We intend to seek clarification on this item, to make sure that the court understands this limitation and that it is consistent with the court's order.

8. Nationwide Changes in Service

Under the applicable law, the Postal Service cannot make changes to the nature of Postal Services without first seeking an advisory opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission. Consistent with the order of the federal district court referenced above, the Postal Service will not make any changes to our retail, delivery or processing operations, that will generally affect service on a nationwide, or substantially nationwide, basis, prior to the upcoming national election.

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions regarding Logistics and Processing Operations, please contact Mike Barber, Vice President, Processing and Maintenance Operations. If you have any questions regarding Retail and Delivery Operations, please contact Joshua Colin, Vice President, Delivery Operations or Angela Curtis, Retail and Post Office Operations.

We are continuing to evaluate our legal obligations and will circulate updates as necessary.



Kristin A. Seaver
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer
and Executive Vice President



David E. Williams
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations
Officer and Executive Vice President

September 25, 2020

OFFICERS, PCES, AND PAY BAND MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Additional Resources for Election Mail Beginning October 1

The November 3, General Election is fast approaching. While normal First-Class and Marketing Mail volumes are down considerably, the volume of Election Mail will be at an all-time high this season. COVID-19 has changed the way millions of people will vote this year, and many are turning to the United States Postal Service to deliver their ballots. Recognizing our important role in the democratic process, the Postmaster General has reiterated that our number one priority is the proper handling and timely delivery of all Election Mail, especially ballots.

Effective October 1, additional resources are being made available for District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers to utilize, as they determine, to support the timely and expeditious handling of the increased volume of Election Mail, which is defined by the Postal Service as any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process, such as ballots, voter registration cards, ballot applications, and polling place notifications. District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers are authorized and instructed to use these additional resources to ensure that all Election Mail is prioritized and delivered on time. These resources are in addition to the existing processes and procedures for Election Mail.

These resources include, but are not limited to:

1. Processing

As previously provided in the Clarifying Operational Instructions distributed on September 21, Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously to the extent feasible so that it is generally delivered in line with First-Class Mail delivery standards. Processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment should be expanded as necessary to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day. Further, to the extent possible, Election Mail received after the Critical Entry Time should be processed and advanced as if it arrived prior to the Critical Entry Time, unless doing so would disrupt on-time service for Election Mail received prior to the Critical Entry Time.

Other additional processing resources are also authorized and instructed to be used to ensure that Election Mail stays current and moving through the Postal Service's network. This includes, but is not limited to, early cancellations the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely.

2. Transportation

Extra transportation resources are authorized and instructed to be used to ensure that Election Mail reaches its intended destination in a timely manner. This includes, but is not limited to, extra trips from all points of processing and delivery (e.g., retail units and plants), as necessary to connect Election Mail to its intended destination or the next stage in Postal Service processing.

3. Delivery/Collections

Extra delivery and collection trips are authorized and instructed to be used to ensure, to the best of our ability, that completed ballots entered on Election Day reach the appropriate election official by the state's designated deadline on Election Day. This includes, but is not limited to, early collections the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely, and delivery of ballots found in collections on Election Day to election boards within states requiring ballots be returned by a designated time on Election Day.

4. Overtime

Overtime is authorized and instructed to be used to support these additional resources and the completion of the additional work, as needed.

In addition, to further support the timely delivery of Election Mail, and consistent with our practices in past election cycles, the use of extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations is authorized and expected to be executed by local management between October 26 and November 24, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot.

These extraordinary measures include, but are not limited to, expedited handling, extra deliveries, and special pickups as used in past elections, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters or completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination (e.g., Priority Mail Express, Sunday deliveries, special deliveries, running collected ballots to Boards of Elections on Election Day, etc.).

We will continue to communicate closely with election officials to encourage them to send ballots earlier. We have also educated voters across the nation to request their ballots early (if they are required to request a ballot) and to return their ballots early, if they plan on using the mail for one or both legs of the journey.

Despite our best efforts to educate and communicate, however, we know that there will be entries of ballots to and from voters that will require us to take the extra steps set forth herein to ensure timely delivery. The additional resources available beginning October 1, and our robust practices and procedures that we employ every election cycle as described above, will help ensure that we are able

to do everything in our power to meet our customers' expectations that mail will be delivered in a timely manner when our customers use the mail to facilitate or participate in the electoral process.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in delivering America's Election Mail.



Kristin A. Seaver
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer
and Executive Vice President



David E. Williams
Chief Logistics & Processing Operations
Officer and Executive Vice President

KRISTIN A. SEAVER
CHIEF RETAIL & DELIVERY OFFICER
AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



October 7, 2020

CHIEF RETAIL & DELIVERY OFFICERS, DISTRICT MANAGERS, and POSTMASTERS

SUBJECT: Retail and Delivery Guidance on Postmarking Ballots October 2020

With the 2020 General Election fast approaching, the intent of this Service Talk is to clarify a few procedures concerning the postmarking of ballots.

Command Center

Retail and Delivery Operations has recently established a dedicated, cross-functional Command Center team at Headquarters. The Command Center's mission is to provide guidance and answer questions the Field has related to Election Mail and ballot handling. Contact the Command Center immediately if you encounter a situation involving Election Mail (including postmarks) that is not directly addressed in this Service Talk.

For example, you should contact the Command Center if you:

- Are contacted by a Board of Election, including if a Board of Election (or an Election Official) returns a tray of ballots and asks you to postmark the ballots;
- Get postmarking questions from a specific mailer;
- Need clarification around the Postal Operations Manual (POM);
- Need help answering a customer's question; or
- Have questions about Election/Political Mail logs.

You can reach the Command Center at 1-877-672-0007.

Retail Units

Retail Unit Employees at Post Offices, stations, and branches must accept custody of any ballots presented to them at a Retail Window by a customer. If any such customers ask to have the ballots postmarked, Retail Unit Employees *must* hand-cancel the ballots. This service is authorized for all mailpieces presented at retail under Postal Service policy, is to be provided free of charge, and is to be provided regardless of the postage-payment indicia on the mailpiece (stamp, meter strip, precancelled stamp, Business Reply Mail, etc.). Retail employees may use the round dater to perform requested postmarks. A zero meter Postage Validation Imprinter (PVI) label is also appropriate if the PVI is from an authorized unit. The date applied should *always* be the current date that the customer presented the mailpiece; DO NOT "backdate" the postmark. Do not tray ballots; all ballots should be tendered loose in collection mail to mail processing facilities.

Delivery Units That Receive Mailpieces that Have Gone Through Mail Processing

The Postal Service's policy is to make every effort to postmark all ballots mailed by voters, and we take this policy very seriously. We have taken significant steps this year to strengthen the

475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260
WWW.USPS.COM

postmarking process. For mailpieces that have arrived at a Delivery Unit after processing, the Delivery Unit should not alter the ballot envelope in any way.

This means that, in the rare instances where a ballot goes through processing and arrives at a Delivery Unit without a postmark or without a legible postmark, Delivery Unit employees must NOT postmark the ballot. This is because the postmark contains the Postal Service's official representation of the date on which the Postal Service accepted custody of the mailpiece, and there is no way for Delivery Units to make that determination at such a late stage. Applying a postmark with an inaccurate date undermines the integrity of the postmark and the credibility of the Postal Service.

Accordingly, if a ballot that has gone through processing is found with a missing or illegible postmark at a Delivery Unit, including when casing mail, during Business Reply Mail processing, or at caller service, take the following actions:

- Do not round-date the ballot, for the reasons described above.
- Do not delay delivery.
- Call the Command Center immediately, at 1-877-672-0007 for guidance and deliver the ballot.
- Document the issue in your Election/Political Mail log.

We understand that, at or near Election Day, there are authorized units that accept custody of ballots and deliver those ballots locally. Further guidance will be forthcoming for such units on October 20, 2020. In the meantime, such units should call the Command Center immediately for guidance upon acceptance

E-SIGNED by Kristin.A Seaver
on 2020-10-07 07:46:47 CDT

Kristin Seaver