

**Forest Service Handbook  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.14 – Mail Management Handbook  
Chapter 10 - Mail Program Administration**

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**Responsible Staff:**

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**Digest:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

Revises entire Mail Management Handbook, FSH 6209.14.

This amendment is a reissuance of FSH 6209.14 to conform the format and structure of the Handbook to the requirements of electronic directive issuance.

This Handbook is now available electronically in the National Information Center in the same format as the paper copy. Henceforth, amendments to this Handbook will be issued to Forest Service units electronically on a document basis.

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## **11 - Mail Program Analysis**

Mail managers at each unit should make a periodic analysis of their mail programs.

Include in the analysis: assignment of responsibility; organization of mail stations; incoming and outgoing mail management; quality control standards; messenger service; review classes of mail; quality of mail training.

## **12 - U.S. Postal Service Coordination**

### **12.04 - Responsibility**

(FSM 6250.4).

### **12.1 - Equipment**

Obtain mail sacks and special labels from local postmasters. All equipment used for mail services, such as mail sacks, registry locks, and special mail hampers, is the property of the U.S. Postal Service. Use mail equipment only for processing official mail. Fill mail sacks to only two-thirds capacity and limit weight to 70 pounds.

### **12.2 - Permits**

The U.S. Postal Service requires permits for several of its services. Obtain these permits for each point-of-entry post office except Permit Imprint.

#### **12.21 - Business Reply Mail Permit**

Each unit using Business Reply Mail (BRM) must complete Postal Service Form 3614-A, Application for BRM Permit, at the post office where the mail will be returned. There is an annual fee for the permit. The permit holder is responsible for payment at First Class rates plus a surcharge for each piece of mail returned. The Forest Service-wide BRM permit number is: 10040.

It is necessary to have in excess of 1,000 pieces of mail returned each year before the BRM method of mail service is economical. Units with such a volume of returned mail may use Penalty Reply Mail or preaddressed, postage-required envelopes as outlined in paragraph 3.

If the BRM service is used, the address must be printed, typed, or handstamped directly on the mail piece or a gummed label must be affixed in the address area. Handwritten addresses are prohibited.

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Units anticipating large volumes of business reply mail should contact their unit Mail Manager for assistance. The BRM format requirements are covered in the U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual, part 137.276g and 917.5 (the Postal Service Mail Manual is listed in sec. 05 of this Handbook.) Business reply labels cannot be used on standard size postcards and envelopes.

1. Appropriate Use of Business Reply Mail. Use a return-addressed business reply envelope, card, or label to request a non-Government person or agency to supply information on items of value to the Government. For example, return envelopes may be provided to:

- a. Persons contacted in a public involvement program.
- b. Publishers when asking for free copies of publications.
- c. Other limited actions that are the full responsibility of the Government to obtain, such as updating Government mailing lists.

2. Non-Permissible Use. Do not supply return mail or addressed business reply envelopes, cards, or labels for:

- a. Bidders and contractors who must provide the Forest Service with information required by law.
- b. Persons requesting that their names be added to mailing lists.
- c. Persons who borrowed and wish to return Forest Service films, videotapes, and so forth.

3. Penalty Reply Mail. Units having a small volume of reply mail or anticipating a high volume of return (90-100 percent), can use "Penalty Reply Mail" (U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual, part 137.276d). This allows the unit to apply metered penalty stamps to envelopes or cards containing the pre-printed return address of the Federal Government office. If this method is used, do not place the date on the meter stamp.

Another method is to send a pre-addressed envelope and require the respondent to apply postage.

## **12.22 - Permit Imprints**

(See sec. 52.2 for direction on payments and sec. 41, ex. 01, for a summary of domestic mail classes.) Consider using a permit imprint and bypass the metering

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process if the unit regularly has large volumes of identical mail. A permit for imprint mail (piece rate) authorizes the use of first-class, third-class, and fourth-class imprints.

The Forest Service has been assigned a one-time permit imprint number (G-40) for Service-wide use. Units can use this permit by providing a copy of the approved Postal Service (PS) Form 3601, Application To Mail Without Affixing Postage Stamps, to each entry Post Office.

Permit imprints can be made by printing press, handstamp, lithography, mimeograph, multigraph, address plate, or similar device. They must not be typewritten or hand drawn. The entire imprint must be placed in the upper right corner of the address side of each piece parallel with the length of the piece.

Generally, permit imprint mailings must consist of a minimum of 200 pieces or 50 pounds. A mailing consisting of less than this required minimum will be accepted by the Postal Service as follows:

1. First-Class Mail. An occasional mailing for a mailer whose total daily mailings are not much more than 200 pieces but who, to cooperate with the Postal Service, presents a portion of mailings early in the day.
2. All Classes of Mail. A large mailing which extends over two or more consecutive days and the last deposit, made to complete the mailing, is less than the minimum.

#### **12.22a - First-Class Presort Permit**

A permit is required for presorted mail. The minimum quantity for the first-class presort (rate) is 500 pieces of identical size and weight. Mailings at presort rates must be made by a meter or by a permit imprint. Rates are the applicable full first-class rate, less \$.04 per piece for letters and less \$.02 per piece for postal cards.

#### **12.22b - Third-Class Bulk Rate Permit**

Third-class bulk rate permits often provide large discounts for mailings of identical pieces weighing less than 16 ounces. The permit provides rates measured by pounds or by the piece. Use of third-class bulk rate requires (1) presorting by Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) code, (2) special bundling, (3) ensuring the mailing weighs not less than 50 pounds or consists of not less than 200 pieces, and (4) transporting the mail to the local post office and presenting a completed PS Form 3602, Statement of Mailing Matter with Permit Imprints, or PS Form 3602-PC, Statement of Mailing-Bulk Rate. Mail managers must balance the discount

mailing cost against the preparation requirements and processing costs. Mailings should not be deposited during peak mailing periods.

### **12.23 - Mail Contractor Permit**

The U.S. Postal Service requires an approved application for each contractor who deals with the Postal Service on behalf of an agency. Applications must include the (1) contractor's name and address, (2) name and address of the point-of-entry post office, (3) type of mail service the contractor will use (permit imprint, third-class bulk rate, or postage meter), and (4) expected duration of the contract.

### **12.3 - Postage Meter License**

To use a postage meter, submit PS Form 3601-A, Application for a Postage Meter License, to the postal office where the metered mail will be deposited. No fee is charged for a postage meter license. Upon approval, the postmaster issues a license and returns the application to the requester. Ensure that applications include (1) name of vendor, (2) meter model number, and (3) street address of the postal office where the meter will be set. For billing purposes the Forest Service has been assigned an agency billing code number (P-016) and a cost code number for internal use (sec. 51.3). The cost code number is a 4-digit number using the standard accounting number of each Region, Station, and Area plus the Unit number (for example, 0214 = Region 2, Unit 14). The agency billing code number (P-016) and the internal cost code number are required on all licenses.

## **13 - Metered Mail**

Meter each piece of mail after selecting the most economical class of service available consistent with the mailer's need. Metering provides exact cost per piece which ensures accurate accountability to maintain efficient mail management. Metered mail is entitled to all privileges and subject to all conditions applying to the various classes of mail. Postage can be paid by printing meter stamps or labels with a postage meter on any class of mail.

### **13.1 - Metered Mail Equipment**

To operate a metered-mail system, use a meter and a meter-mailing machine. Postage meters print all denominations of postage with a print "die" and contain two recording counters. One adds and keeps a total of all postage printed by the meter and the other shows the balance of postage remaining in the meter. Lease meters from authorized manufacturers who are held responsible by the Postal Service for the control, operation, maintenance, and replacement when necessary.

Manufacturers listed in the U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual (sec. 144.13) as authorized to lease meters to mailers are:

1. Postalia, Inc., 1423 Centre Circle Drive, Downers Grove, IL 60515-1087.
2. Friden Alcatel, 30955 Huntwood, Hayward, CA 94544-7005.
3. Pitney Bowes, Inc., Walter H. Wheeler, Jr., Drive, Stamford, CT 06926-0001.
4. Rockaway Corporation, doing business as International Mailing Systems (a division of Better Packages, Inc.), 19 Forest Parkway, Shelton, CT 06484-0903.

A separate meter is required for United Parcel Service (UPS) use, but UPS and Postal Service meters are interchangeable on mailing machines.

Electronic scales are cost effective for offices with large mail volumes. By avoiding the task of reading charts to select correct mail charges, the mail-processing speed is increased and accuracy is improved. The speed of an electronic scale allows mail personnel to instantly search for the most cost effective classification consistent with the mailer's need.

### **13.2 - Meter Setting**

Ensure that Forest Service unit meters are set or reset at the appropriate Post Office for not more than 3 months' worth of postage at a time on the meter.

On-site meter setting and computerized postage resetting programs are available on an as-needed basis for an additional fee.

### **13.3 - Mail Contractors**

A unit planning to contract mail services can:

1. Rent a postal meter for the contractor's use;
2. Establish provisions in the contract for the contractor to pay regular postage and then be reimbursed for actual costs, including contracts through the Government Printing Office (GPO);
3. Require the contractor to return the mail to the Forest Service for mailing;
4. Apply for permission for the contractor to use the unit's permit imprints; or

5. Apply for permission for the contractor to use the unit's third-class bulk rate permit.

Official mail pieces must bear the printed return address of a Forest Service office. Dual addresses and/or contractor return addresses are prohibited.

#### **14 - Postage Payment**

The U.S. Postal Service requires payment of a sum equivalent to the postage cost as determined by the Forest Service metered-mail system (sec. 04.1) and the Postal Service Official Mail Accounting System (OMAS) (ch. 50).

The standard "Postage and Fees Paid" penalty indicia envelopes are not authorized for use (FSM 6250.3). All official mail must bear a penalty mail stamp or tape, postage stamp, or permit imprint.

Do not carry money on the postage meter into the next fiscal year.

#### **15 - Commercial Carriers**

##### **15.1 - Services Available**

1. Daily Pick-up. Commercial carriers such as Federal Express, United Parcel Service (UPS), Roadway Package Service (RPS), DHL, and Airborne Express will provide daily pickup service. Check with the carrier in each local area for weight and dimension limits.

2. Insurance. Commercial carriers usually carry some form of insurance to cover loss or damage to items. Do not purchase additional insurance on any shipment by commercial carrier without the authorization of the Secretary of the Treasury as set forth in 40 U.S.C. 726.

3. Shipments to Post Office Box Addresses. Commercial carriers do not make shipment to post office box addresses. Only the U.S. Postal Service has direct access to post office boxes. Complete street addresses are necessary for service by commercial carriers. Some commercial carriers maintain a cross-reference data base (to street and post office box addresses) and will accept some items addressed to post office boxes. When only the post office box address is available, also enter the telephone number of the receiver on the shipping label.

4. Return of Undelivered Shipments. Items either refused by consignees or undeliverable for any other reason are promptly returned to the shipper without additional charge. In cases where the carrier is unable to make delivery of a



package, a nondelivery notice will be left at the consignee's address, stating that delivery has been attempted. Thereafter a second and, if necessary, third attempt to deliver the package will be made without additional charge. After three attempts have failed, the package is returned to sender.

### **15.2 - Acknowledge on Delivery**

The sender may prepare a self-addressed form, provided by the carrier, and attach it to the package with U.S. Postal Service postage affixed. The carrier will obtain the signature of the consignee on the form acknowledging receipt and mail it to the sender.

## **16 - Electronic Mail**

The Forest Service Data General (DG) distributed processing network is the official electronic communication system. The procedures for processing mail electronically are covered in FSH 1309.15, Electronic Office Handbook.

### **16.1 - Facsimile Transmissions**

Messages and information that require immediate receipt may be sent by facsimile transmission (FAX). This service is available at most locations and should be considered an alternative to overnight delivery of documents. A directory of facsimile numbers is in the back of the Forest Service Organizational Directory FS-65. All other numbers are supplied by the sender. It is the responsibility of the sender to provide a valid FAX number and a knowledgeable person to transmit the message. Do not send or receive personal FAX documents on Government FAX equipment.

#### **16.11 - Cover Sheets for Facsimile Transmissions**

Ensure that all material sent on facsimile equipment begins with a cover sheet listing the receiver's and sender's full name, unit, staff, and commercial or FTS phone number.

#### **16.12 - Facsimile Transmission of Documents on the Data General System**

Documents residing on the Data General (DG) system can be transmitted electronically from the DG to a receiving FAX, except that the system does not send graphics, data tables, or spread sheets. Mail to FAX machines is successful only to a Group III or higher machine. The first attempt at delivery is made 3 to 15 minutes after transmission. Delivery is attempted 10 times in 2 hours before failing.

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