

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

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.14 – Mail Management Handbook
Chapter 50 - Payment System**

Amendment: 6209.14-1992-1

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Approved by: F. Dale Robertson, Chief

Date approved:

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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51 - Postage Payment

All official mail requires a postage stamp, penalty meter stamp, or proper permit imprint equal to the amount of postage required for the endorsed class of mail. Use of the standard "Postage and Fees Paid" penalty indicia is prohibited.

51.04 - Responsibility

51.04a - Director of Fiscal and Public Safety, Washington Office

The Director of Fiscal and Public Safety is responsible for:

1. Reimbursing the U.S. Postal Service for postage actually set on the meters and the cost of imprint mailing. The Director charges the individual field units based on the amount of postage set on each meter plus imprint, business reply, and other fees by zip code.
2. Identifying and modifying if necessary any unresolved matters related to each unit's postage costs.

51.04b - Forest Service Mail Manager, Information Systems Staff, Washington Office

The Forest Service Mail Manager is responsible for providing the U.S. Postal Service with an estimate for mail obligations based on the prior year payments.

51.04c - Unit Mail Manager

The unit Mail Managers are responsible for:

1. Addressing problems and resolving issues at the local level with the U.S. Postal Service.
2. Coordinating metered mail matters with the Washington Office Mail Manager.
3. Informing the Washington Office Mail Manager about any substantial changes from the prior year's payment.
4. Handling inconsistent amounts directly with the local post offices; it is not necessary to report these matters to the Washington Office.
5. Applying for credit for meter tapes that are spoiled or unused, by completing Postal Service Form 3533, Application and Voucher for Refund, and submitting this form together with the envelope or tape for approval by the appropriate local post office. Retain these forms for audit purposes (FSH 6209.11, Records Management Handbook, sec. 41, File Code 6250).

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6. Evaluating the cost of the accountability system and the security required for the use of stamps as compared to the cost of mailing equipment and meter rental, and determining the most economical method of operation.

7. Establishing local agreements with commercial carriers for pick-up if volume warrants.

51.1 - U.S. Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service Official Mail Accounting System (OMAS) consolidates all official mail activity under one system and makes reports to the Forest Service on a quarterly basis. Local postal units receive recognition for the official mail revenue they earn.

The Forest Service makes payment on a monthly basis to the Postal Service. Quarterly statements from the Postal Service identify meters used at each location for review and reconciliation. The OMAS has been designed to parallel commercial procedures which improve response time, increase involvement, and promote good business practices by users. Unresolved matters should be reported through channels to the Washington Office, Fiscal and Public Safety Staff, Accounting Operations Section (FTS-235-8026; 703-235-8026).

The Postal Service compiles and provides the Washington Office, Director of Fiscal and Public Safety, with a printout indicating the amount of postage charged to units with a computer tape consisting of an itemized listing of postage set on each meter.

All postage fee transactions with the Postal Service are credited to the Forest Service agency account under OMAS. Exchange of money does not take place except for an occasional payment of postage due from another Forest Service unit and purchase of postage stamps. Post office box rentals are paid from imprest funds. Box rent is usually paid in advance but Government agencies pay within the first quarter (U.S. Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual, sec. 951.272b). Postage due is paid by metered tape or postage stamps.

Retain all support data, such as receipts for meter refills, as scheduled in the Records Management Handbook (FSH 6209.11, sec. 41, File Code 6250).

To receive credit for metered tapes that are spoiled or unused, follow the procedure in section 51.04c, paragraph 5. Retain these forms at the unit for audit purposes (FSH 6209.11, sec. 41, File Code 6250).

51.2 - Agency Billing Code Number

Under OMAS, agencies are assigned a 3-digit "P" code number; the Forest Service agency code number is P-016. This number, plus a location cost code number (sec. 12.3), must appear on all

licenses and permits in order for the post office to capture and report data as individual transactions take place.

51.3 - Cost Code Number

For individual location identity, OMAS allows assignment of a cost code number up to 5-digits for internal agency use. This cost code number is the Forest Service standard unit accounting number (for example, 0214 = Region 2, Unit 14). Use the Region, Station, or Area accounting number first, followed by the unit number; make no exceptions. If there is more than one meter at the same location, the cost code number can be the same or use separate unit numbers as necessary. The billing code and cost code numbers are required on all licenses and permits at the time of submission by the requester (sec. 12.3).

51.4 - Postage Stamps

An office with a low monthly mail cost can use postage stamps in lieu of a meter. Postage stamps can also be used by individuals who occasionally mail material on weekends, holidays, or in travel status when access to a postage meter is not available.

Use imprest funds, where available, to purchase stamps, or buy stamps with personal funds and claim reimbursement.

Accountability is required when units use stamps on a regular basis. Maintain records to show the total value on hand, purchases, and issues. Any accountable log sheet is satisfactory for use as long as all information is maintained. Balance this record monthly. Mail Managers must conduct audits as necessary.

52 - Payment for Special Services

52.1 - Express Mail Payment

Payment for express mail is made by a meter stamp or meter tape on the express mail form. Determine the exact cost from a user rate chart.

52.2 - Permit Imprint

(Sec. 12.22). The Forest Service has a nationwide permit imprint number (G-40). Submit a copy of the permit to each Postal Service point of entry. All units using this permit before March 1984 were not required to pay a fee. However, units applying for use after March 1984 are required to pay a one-time user fee of \$50 at each entry post office where the mailing is made. There is no other fee for the use of permit imprints so long as the permit remains active. Application for a permit requires the agency billing code and cost code numbers.

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The use of the permit imprint allows the unit to mail a large volume of mail without affixing postage. The requirements for the use of the imprint are found in the U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual (sec. 145). Consult a local Postal Service account representative for additional information on the proper use of permit imprint mailing.

There are other annual fees for third-class bulk rate permits and first-class presort permit that are separate from a permit imprint fee.

52.3 - Business Reply Mail

Fees for mail pieces returned under a business-reply permit system are accounted for by OMAS as a separate item. The exact cost is compiled by the local post office (sec. 12.21).

52.4 - First-Class Presort Permit

The annual fee is \$50 for the use of this permit; payment is handled by OMAS. This fee is paid by the Washington Office. Permits must include the agency billing code and cost code numbers (sec. 12.22a).

52.5 - Third-Class Bulk Rate Permit

Procedures are the same as for the first-class presort permit (sec. 12.22a and 52.4).

52.6 - Postage Meter License. There is no fee for this license (sec. 12.3).

52.7 - Commercial-Carrier Payments

Establish local agreements for commercial carrier service if mail volume warrants regular pickups.

The Forest Service has a national agreement with the United Parcel Service (UPS) that all field units can use. A unit that wants to use UPS may contact the local UPS office for a shipper number and must give UPS the 10-digit fund, unit, and management code. Each unit responsible for paying its own bill to UPS.