

S900 Special Postal Services

S920 Convenience

## S921 Collect on Delivery (COD) Mail

**Summary** S921 describes COD mail, the classes of mail that may include this service, and when COD may and may not be used.

### 1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

**Description** Any mailer may use collect on delivery (COD) service to mail an article for which the mailer has not been paid and have its price and the cost of the postage collected from the recipient. If the recipient pays the amount due by check payable to the mailer, the USPS forwards the check to the mailer. If the recipient pays the amount due in cash, the USPS collects the money order fee(s) from the recipient and sends a postal money order(s) to the mailer. The amount collected from the recipient may not exceed \$1,000. COD service provides the mailer with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record is maintained by the USPS.

**Eligible Matter** COD service may be used for Express Mail, First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and any Package Services subclass if:

- 1.2
  - a. The mail has the complete names and addresses of the mailer and addressee.
  - b. The mailer guarantees to pay any return postage, unless otherwise specified on the mail.
  - c. The goods shipped are ordered by the addressee.

**Ineligible Matter** COD service may not be used for:

- 1.3
  - a. Collection agency purposes.
  - b. The return of merchandise about which some dissatisfaction arises, unless the new addressee consents in advance to such return.
  - c. The mailing of only bills or statements of account, even with the addressee's consent. If a legitimate COD shipment of merchandise is mailed, the balance due on a past or expected transaction may be included in the charges on a COD article, if the addressee consents in advance to such action. In such a case, USPS indemnity is limited to the value of the article lost or damaged, not the full COD charges to be collected.
  - d. Moving-picture films mailed by exhibitors to moving-picture manufacturers, distributors, or exchanges. Such films may be sent as insured mail or, if sealed, as registered First-Class Mail.
  - e. Articles sent to or from an APO or FPO address, including official mail and shipments to Armed Forces agencies.

**Additional Services** Purchasing COD service allows customers to then purchase restricted delivery service or a return receipt. The following additional services may be combined with COD if the applicable standards for the services are met and the additional service fees are paid:

- 1.4
  - a. Delivery Confirmation (not available with Express Mail COD).
  - b. Registered mail.
  - c. Signature Confirmation.
  - d. Special handling.



**Fee and Postage**  
1.5 The applicable COD fee must be paid in addition to the correct postage and the fees for other services requested. The amount to be collected or the amount of insurance coverage desired, whichever is higher, determines the COD fee. The fees for COD service include insurance against loss, rifling, or damage to the article or failure to receive a postal money order or the recipient's check. Postal liability for failure to receive the recipient's check or a postal money order is limited to loss in transit.

**Altering COD Charges or Address**  
1.6 The mailer of a COD package may alter the COD charges or direct delivery to a new addressee by filing a request with the postmaster at the office of address and paying the applicable fee. The request must show the post office and date of mailing, the COD number, the name and address of addressee shown on form, the name and address of new addressee if applicable, and the new COD charges or delivery to be made without collecting COD charges.

**Notice to Mailer**  
1.7 A mailer wanting a notice of undelivered COD mail must request Form 3849-D by checking the proper box on the COD form. The request may also be placed on the address label. It must appear conspicuously, directly under the return name and address of the mailer and separate from other instructions, as follows: "Form 3849-D Requested." A mailer's request may include directions to send the notice to the mailer or designated representative. When the mailer's representative is designated, the representative's name and local or nearby address must be shown in a bordered space with instructions, reading: "Do not deliver to mailer's designated representative without collecting COD charges," or "Deliver without collecting COD charges to mailer's designated representative."

**Registered COD Mail**  
1.8 Sealed domestic mail of any class bearing First-Class postage may be sent as registered COD mail. Such mail is handled the same as other registered mail. The maximum amount collectible from the recipient on an individual parcel is \$1,000. Indemnity may be purchased up to the registry limit of \$25,000 by paying the applicable registry fee for the value declared. The total fees charged for registered COD service include the proper registry fee for the value declared plus the registered COD fee. The mailer must declare the full value of the article being mailed, regardless of the amount to be collected from the recipient. The registered label and the COD form must be affixed to each article. The registration number is used for delivery receipt and indemnity claims.

**Express Mail COD**  
1.9 Any article sent COD also may be sent by Express Mail next day and second day service. Such mail is handled in the same manner as other Express Mail. The maximum amount collectible from the addressee on an individual article is \$1,000, and indemnity for failure to collect or issue payment is limited to \$1,000. Express Mail postage and the proper COD fees must be paid. Both the Express Mail label and COD form must be affixed to each article. The Express Mail article number is used for delivery receipt and indemnity claims.

## 2.0 COD FORMS

**Form 3816**  
2.1 Mailers must complete barcoded Form 3816 (see [Exhibit 2.1](#)) and attach it either above the delivery address and to the right of the return address, or to the left of the delivery address on parcels. If more than three articles are sent at a time, the mailer may use Form 3816-AS.

**Privately Printed Form 3816-AS**  
2.2 If authorized, a mailer may use a privately printed Form 3816-AS. The privately printed form must be nearly identical in design and color to postal-provided forms, with COD article numbers that can be read by automated postal equipment. A

minimum of three reproduction samples must be submitted to the business mail entry manager serving the mailer's location for review by the mailpiece design analyst. Once approved, the analyst issues a block of COD numbers to be used by the mailer.

**Form 3816**  
Exhibit 2.1

DELIVERY EMPLOYEE - Remove Copies 1 & 2 at Time of Delivery			
Collect the amount shown below if customer pays by CHECK made payable to the mailer.		Collect the amount shown below if customer pays in CASH (includes MO fee).	
Check Amount \$		Cash Amount \$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Registered Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Express Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Form 3849-D Requested		 * 1 4 0 8 9 8 4 4 9 *	
Date of Mailing	<input type="checkbox"/> Remit COD Charges to Sender via Express Mail	EMCA No.	
FROM:		TO:	
Delivered By	Date Delivered	Received By: (Print Name and Sign)	
Check Number	MO Number	Date Payment Sent to Mailer	Date Form 3849-D Sent
PS Form 3816, December 1994		Copy 1 - Delivery Unit	
<small>1. DO NOT allow the recipient (addressee or agent) to examine the contents before payment. 3. If payment is by check, enter check number above.            2. DO NOT deliver this article until payment is collected.</small>			

**Nursery Stock**  
2.3

A firm that mails nursery stock (the sender) may print special COD forms if the forms have instructions for disposing of shipments not delivered immediately, include a remittance coupon to be returned with the money order or recipient's check, and meet these conditions:

- a. If the firm does not want the undeliverable parcel disposed of to the highest bidder, the firm's instructions on the back of the delivery office part of the COD form (1), and on the remittance coupon (2), should read as follows:
  - (1) "If recipient refuses to pay charges for any reason, deliver at once without collecting the charges. Notify sender at once if parcel is not delivered and, if no reply is received in 30 days, destroy parcel. See remittance coupon for further instructions."
  - (2) "Return this coupon with money order. If parcel is delivered without collection of charges, or is destroyed after 30 days, check disposition and send coupon to sender in penalty envelope."
    - Delivered to addressee without collecting charges.
    - Destroyed after 30 days.
- b. If the firm wants the undeliverable parcel disposed of to the highest bidder, the firm's instructions on the back of the delivery office part of the COD form (1), and on the remittance coupon (2), should read as follows:
  - (1) "If addressee refuses to pay charges for any reason, deliver at once without collecting the charges. Notify sender at once if parcel is not delivered and if no reply is received in 30 days, sell to highest bidder and remit proceeds, less commission. If sale cannot be made, destroy parcel. See remittance coupon for further instructions."
  - (2) "Return this coupon with money order or addressee's check. If parcel is delivered without collection of charges, is destroyed after 30 days, or is sold, check disposition and send coupon to sender in penalty envelope."
    - Delivered to addressee without collecting charges.
    - Destroyed after 30 days.
    - Sold for \$\_\_\_\_ remittance, less commission, herewith.

### 3.0 MAILING

- Identifying Number**  
3.1 COD articles are identified by a number that appears on each section of the COD form. When Express Mail COD service is used, the mailer must place the completed Express Mail label and the COD form on the front of the article. The Express Mail article number is used for delivery receipt and indemnity claims. When registered COD mail service is used, the mailer must place the completed registered label and the COD form on the front of the article. The registration number is used for delivery receipt and indemnity claims.
- Numbering for Large Volumes**  
3.2 A mailer who regularly mails a large volume of COD mail must ensure that a unique COD number is used for each article mailed.
- COD Forms**  
3.3 The mailer must securely affix a COD form to each COD article. The form must show article number, names and addresses of mailer and recipient, amount due mailer, and amount of money order fee necessary to make remittance. The mailer may use USPS forms or privately printed forms approved by the USPS.
- Indelible Ink, Mailer Errors**  
3.4 The particulars required on the form must be filled in by ink, ballpoint pen, typewriter, or computer printer. The USPS is not responsible for errors that a mailer makes in stating charges to be collected.
- Addressing Forms**  
3.5 The name and address of the person to whom the remittance is to be sent must appear in the proper spaces on the COD form and in the return address area on the COD article itself, with the postal endorsements for return if undeliverable. The return address on the COD form must be the same as the return address on the COD article, except that a mailer using a privately printed COD form may print a different address on the remittance coupon where payments are to be sent. The mailer's address where undeliverable articles are to be returned must appear on the other parts of the form. Only domestic addresses may be used.
- Receipt**  
3.6 A mailer of one or two parcels per mailing receives a section of Form 3816 as a receipt. If three or more COD articles are presented for mailing at one time, the mailer may use Form 3877 (firm sheet), provided by the USPS at no charge, or privately printed firm sheets. (Privately printed or computer-generated firm sheets that contain the same information as Form 3877 may be approved by the local postmaster; the mailer may omit columns from Form 3877 that are not applicable to COD mail.) The mailer submits the forms in duplicate and receives one copy of the postmarked form as a mailing receipt after the entries are verified by the postal employee accepting the mailing. All entries made on firm sheets must be made by typewriter, ink, or ballpoint pen. Alterations must be initialed by the mailer and accepting employee. All unused portions of the addressee column must be obliterated with a diagonal line.
- Where to Mail**  
3.7 COD mail must be mailed at a post office, station, or branch or through a rural carrier or a nonpersonnel rural unit. It may not be placed in a post office maildrop or in or on a street letterbox. It may be placed in, but not on, a rural mailbox.
- Rural Carriers**  
3.8 COD articles may be given to rural carriers for mailing. The articles must be prepared properly and stamps for the required postage and fees affixed. If the mailer wants insurance for an amount more than the COD amount to be collected, that amount must be shown. The USPS assumes no responsibility for any article or money left in a rural mailbox until the carrier issues a receipt. Customers at nonpersonnel rural units must meet the rural carrier at the unit for COD service.



**Delays** Mailers may report delays in remittance (more than 60 days for domestic mailings) to the Postal Inspection Service, giving all necessary particulars.

#### 4.0 DELIVERY

Delivery of COD mail is subject to [D042](#). Except for Express Mail COD, a postmaster may restrict delivery of COD mail if the amount to be collected makes the carrier a potential target for theft or if previous experience indicates that the addressee will be unavailable to receive the article at the time of delivery. If payment is by check, the recipient's check, made payable to the mailer, may be accepted by the USPS employee upon the recipient's presentation of adequate identification. If payment is made by cash, in addition to the COD amount a money order fee is collected from the recipient.

