

G000 The USPS and Mailing Standards

G020 Mailing Standards

Summary G020 describes the *Domestic Mail Manual*. It also covers a mailer's responsibility to comply with all postal standards and the procedures for appealing a classification decision.

1.0 DOMESTIC MAIL MANUAL

Content The *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) contains the basic standards of the United States Postal Service (USPS) governing its domestic mail services; descriptions of the mail classes and special services and conditions governing their use; and standards for rate eligibility and mail preparation. Domestic mail is classified by size, weight, content, service, and other factors.

1.1

Terms Terms in the DMM referring to only one sex apply to persons of either sex. Terms referring to the singular also apply to the plural, unless the context indicates otherwise. The term *postmaster* also applies to an officer-in-charge if the postmaster position is vacant and, in district host cities, to the district manager.

1.2

Copies The *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) is distributed to all post offices and is available online on the Postal Explorer web site (<http://pe.usps.gov>). Copies of the DMM may be inspected during normal business hours at USPS Headquarters, area and district offices, and all domestic post offices, stations, and branches. A copy is also filed at the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration. The public may buy copies by subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (see [G043](#) for address).

1.3

Revisions The USPS reserves the right to change the standards in the *Domestic Mail Manual*. Substantive revisions are published in the *Postal Bulletin* and, when appropriate, the *Federal Register*.

1.4

2.0 MAILER COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

Mailer Responsibility A mailer must comply with all applicable postal standards. Despite any statement in this document or by any USPS employee, the burden rests with the mailer to comply with the laws and standards governing domestic mail. For mailings that require a postage statement, the mailer certifies compliance with all applicable postal standards when signing the corresponding postage statement. Questions on mail classification and special mail services may be directed to local USPS representatives (e.g., business mail entry managers). The Pricing and Classification Service Center (PCSC) can help local post offices answer customer questions on mailing standards (see [G042](#) for address).

2.1

Postage Payment A permit imprint, bulk, or other discount rate mailing is accepted after an examination of the mailing and the accompanying postage statement prepared by the mailer. A USPS employee's signature on the postage statement and the subsequent acceptance of the mailing do not constitute verified accuracy of that statement, and do not limit the ability of the USPS to demand proper payment after acceptance when it becomes apparent such payment was not made.

2.2



Request for Exception to Standards
2.3 To the extent that postage rates, fees for mail services, and basic mail classification and eligibility are prescribed by federal statute or the Domestic Mail Classification Schedule, the USPS is not authorized to waive or except the corresponding DMM standards. Postmasters or managers at post offices, district or area offices, and other field facilities may not suspend or grant any waiver or exception to standards established by the USPS (e.g., regarding mail preparation) unless *specifically* authorized by the DMM. Any mailer's request for an exception to DMM standards must be referred to the PCSC (see [G042](#) for address).

3.0 RULINGS ON MAILING STANDARDS

Local Decision
3.1 **[1-22-04]** A mailer who disagrees with a classification decision by a local Post Office, whether on a pending or a proposed mailing, may send a written appeal to the postmaster within 30 days. The appeal is forwarded to the PCSC. If the appeal concerns a ruling that mail, due to its contents, must be entered at First-Class Mail rather than Standard Mail rates, the PCSC will forward the appeal to the manager, Mailing Standards, USPS Headquarters, who will issue the final agency decision. The PCSC will issue the final agency decision on all other appeals. Only the PCSC manager may rule on an appeal or initial request for a ruling on an exception to a USPS standard in the DMM.

Expedited Oral Decision
3.2 **[1-22-04]** A mailer who receives an adverse ruling from a Post Office, whether on a pending or a proposed mailing, may request the PCSC manager to provide an expedited oral decision on appeal. This request for an expedited appeal may be made by telephone. If the appeal concerns a ruling that mail, due to its contents, must be entered at First-Class Mail rather than Standard Mail rates, the PCSC will forward the appeal to the manager, Mailing Standards, who will determine whether the appeal or individual questions in the appeal can be decided on an expedited basis and, if so, advise the mailer of the decision and then confirm it in writing. For all other appeals, the PCSC manager will determine whether the appeal or individual questions in the appeal can be decided on an expedited basis and, if so, advise the mailer of the determination and confirm it in writing.

Classification While Appeal Pending
3.3 Pending resolution of an appeal, the mailer may, by a letter to the local postmaster, request to mail under a deposit arrangement. The mailer must deposit with the postmaster enough funds to cover postage at the higher rate. If the appeal is upheld, the difference between the amount deposited and a lower rate determined to be appropriate is returned to the mailer. If the appeal is denied, the deposit is not returned. If a balance remains in the deposit after the higher rate postage is deducted, the balance is refunded at the mailer's request.

Decisions on National Rulings
3.4 The manager, Centralized National Cases makes mail preparation, mailpiece design, and rate eligibility decisions for customers in strategic industries as appropriate. Any mail classification decision made initially by the manager, Centralized National Cases may be appealed within 15 days to the manager, Pricing and Classification Service Center, who will issue the final agency decision.

PCSC Decision
3.5 **[1-22-04]** Any mail classification decision made initially by the PCSC manager may be appealed within 15 days to the manager, Mailing Standards (see [G043](#) for address), who has sole authority to render a decision on such appeals.

Corresponding Standards
3.6 Rulings and appeals concerning revenue deficiencies (on past mailings), refunds, or applications for various mailing privileges, rates, or authorizations, are subject to the corresponding standards.