UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Retail Operations Handbook

Handbook PO-209

October 2012
Transmittal Letter

A. Introduction. One of the key strategies of *Vision 2013* is to use cost management, new technology, and workforce planning to improve operational efficiency. Proper day-to-day management, training, and sales skills are key in maintaining costs and improving operational efficiency. Handbook PO-209 serves as a tool for providing Postal Service™ employees information about retail operations.

B. Explanation. This handbook provides direction and guidance for postmasters, managers, and supervisors with retail responsibility. The handbook is the cornerstone to understanding the policies and procedures for day-to-day retail management.

C. Availability. This handbook is available online via the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site:

- Go to *http://blue.usps.gov*.
- In the left-hand column under "Essential Links," click *PolicyNet.*
- On the PolicyNet page, click *HBKs.*

The direct, URL for the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site is *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim*.

D. Rescissions. Any previous applicable directive that is in conflict with this handbook is rescinded.

E. Comments. Submit questions and comments about the content of this directive in writing to:

RETAIL OPERATIONS
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 5621
WASHINGTON DC 20260-5621

F. Effective Date. This handbook is effective October 1, 2011.

Dean Granholm
Delivery and Post Office Operations

Summary of Changes

Handbook PO-209, *Retail Operations Handbook*

Handbook PO-209, *Retail Operations Handbook,* has been updated with *Postal Bulletin* articles through August 23, 2012, as follows:

This chapter, subchapter, part, or section…	**titled…**	**was …**	**in *Postal Bulletin* issue number…**	**with an issue date of…**
Chapter 5, Schedules				
5-3	Office Hours	revised to include provisions on RMPOs and PTPOs for retail units previously classified as EAS Level 16 or below Post Offices	22344	8-23-12

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1 Introduction

1-1 Overview of Duties and Responsibilities of Retail Personnel

Handbook PO-209, *Retail Operations Handbook,* covers the duties and responsibilities of Post Office™ personnel with retail responsibilities. The information encompasses the following positions:

a. Full-time and part-time sales and services associates (SSA).

b. Window clerks.

c. Window/distribution clerks.

d. Window/distribution clerks.

e. Lead sales and services associates (LSSA/T-6).

f. Any other employee who performs duties at the retail counter.

For the purposes of this handbook, all employees who perform duties at the retail counter are referred to as retail associates. The most current descriptions for the SSA and LSSA positions are described in subchapters 1-2 and 1-3 of this handbook.

1-2 Duties of a Sales and Services Associate

The duties of an SSA are as follows:

a. Sell products and services using selling techniques to meet customer needs.

b. Provide product information with courteous customer service.

c. Work and deal cooperatively and positively with customers and coworkers.

d. Identify and analyze problems to develop an appropriate course of action to resolve the situation.

e. Use technology-based business equipment and basic mathematical computations to process customer transactions and produce accurate reports.

f. Follow procedural directions or instructions, either with or without direct supervision, in a safe and timely manner.

1-3 Duties of a Lead Sales and Services Associate

The duties of the LSSA are as follows:

a. Sell products and services using selling techniques to meet customer needs.

b. Provide product information with courteous customer service. Work and deal cooperatively and positively with customers and coworkers.

c. Identify and analyze problems to develop an appropriate course of action to resolve the situation.

d. Use technology-based business equipment and basic mathematical computations to process customer transactions and produce accurate reports.

e. Follow procedural directions or instructions, either with or without direct supervision, in a safe and timely manner.

f. Provide technical direction to one or more associates assigned to sales activities and review their work for accuracy.

g. Open, run, and close a retail Postal Service outlet while planning and organizing the work of a small group of employees to achieve unit goals.

1-4 Basic Retail Responsibilities

1-4.1 Uniforms

Retail employees must maintain a neat, clean, and generally creditable appearance.

1-4.2 Name Tags

All employees are required to wear name tags. Name tags must be visible to the customer.

1-4.3 Promptness and Report as Scheduled

Employees are required to be regular in attendance and report promptly as scheduled.

1-4.4 Courtesy (Employees and Customers)

Treat both employees and customers with respect. Be courteous and obliging in the performance of duties. Refrain from loud talking and the use of profane language. Do not engage in controversies while on duty.

1-4.5 Safety and Accident Reporting

Conduct your work in a safe manner so as to not endanger yourself or others. Report or correct any unsafe hazards or working conditions observed. Immediately report all accidents to management.

1-4.6 Adherence to Postal Service Regulations

Be knowledgeable and follow all Postal Service regulations and procedures to protect mail, postal funds, accountable paper, and Postal Service property. All employees must comply with current Aviation Mail Security instructions.

1-4.7 Vending

Servicing employees (operators) are responsible for performing duties in accordance with Handbook PO-102, *Self-Service Vending Operational and Marketing Program.* They must complete accounting and cost and revenue reports and forms using established procedures.

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2 Rules of Conduct

2-1 Postal Service Regulations

No employee shall engage in criminal, dishonest, notoriously disgraceful or immoral conduct, or other conduct prejudicial to the Postal Service.

2-2 Misuse of Postal Service Funds

Postal Service funds must be kept safe without loaning, using, depositing in an unauthorized bank, or exchanging for other funds (e.g., cashing personal checks). Postal Service funds must be kept separate from personal funds.

2-3 Political Activities

Postal Service employees are restricted in their participation in political activity. Employees excluded are those who are employed on an irregular or occasional basis. These employees are restricted only while in an active-duty status and only for the entire 24 hours of any day of actual employment.

Employees may not display a political picture or sticker on property owned or leased by the Postal Service. The employee is not forbidden, however, from displaying a picture, including a personally autographed picture of a political figure in an office or place of work if the picture has no language in the nature of political campaigning.

Employees may not wear a political badge or button while in uniform or while on duty if that duty requires the employee to deal with the public or be in view of the public.

Employees may not display a political picture or sticker on a private vehicle while that vehicle is being used for official Postal Service purposes.

2-4 Gambling

No employee while on property owned or leased by the Postal Service, or while on duty, will participate in any gambling activity. These activities include operating a gambling device, conducting or acting as an agent for a lottery or a pool, conducting a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbered slip or ticket.

2-5 Sexual Harassment (Internal and External)

The Postal Service is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. The Postal Service's workforce must be one in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect by managers, subordinates, and coworkers. There is no place in the Postal Service's workplace for sexually intimidating, embarrassing, or coercive behavior. Sexual harassment is against the law. Employees will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal, for engaging in sexually harassing behavior such as, but not limited to, the following:

a. Making or threatening to make employment decisions based on an employee's submission to or rejection of sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.

b. Deliberate or repeated unsolicited remarks with a sexual connotation or physical contact of a sexual nature that is unwelcome to the recipient.

c. Behavior that creates a sustained hostile or abusive work environment so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with or changes the conditions of one's employment.

Postal Service employees who believe they are the victims of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexually based conduct or who have witnessed inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature should bring the situation to the attention of a manager, supervisor, union official, an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor, or the manager of Human Resources.

2-6 Suspicious Activity

Employees must report any suspicious activity immediately to the following contact:

GENERAL COUNSEL
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW 6TH FL
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2100

Suspicious activity is any instance in which a person either within or outside the Postal Service uses or attempts to use bribery, undue influence, or coercion to induce or attempt to induce the employee to act or neglect to act in regard to official responsibilities.

Suspicious activity is also any information that causes the employee to believe that there has been a violation of the federal criminal statute or any law or regulation directly or indirectly related to the responsibilities of the Postal Service. The employee also must report suspicious activity made under this paragraph to the local inspector-in-charge.

2-7 Standards of Ethical Conduct

Postal Service employees must adhere to the general provisions for the standards of ethical conduct under Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (see Exhibit 2-7).

Exhibit 2-7
Standards of Ethical Conduct, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations

[Code of Federal Regulations]
[Title 5, Volume 3]
[Revised as of January 1, 2003]
From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access
[CITE: 5CFR2635.101]

TITLE 5—ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

CHAPTER XVI—OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

PART 2635—STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Subpart A—General Provisions

Sec. 2635.101 Basic obligation of public service.

a. Public service is a public trust. Each employee has a responsibility to the United States Government and its citizens to place loyalty to the Constitution, laws, and ethical principles above private gain. To ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the federal government, each employee shall respect and adhere to the principles of ethical conduct set forth in this section, as well as the implementing standards contained in this part and in supplemental agency regulations.

b. General principles. The following general principles apply to every employee and may form the basis for the standards contained in this part. Where a situation is not covered by the standards set forth in this part, employees shall apply the principles set forth in this section in determining whether their conduct is proper.

(1) Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.

(2) Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.

(3) Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.

(4) An employee shall not, except as permitted by subpart B of this part solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.

(5) Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.

(6) Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the government.

(7) Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

(8) Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.

(9) Employees shall protect and conserve federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.

(10) Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with official government duties and responsibilities.

(11) Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.

(12) Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those—such as federal, state, or local taxes—that are imposed by law.

(13) Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

(14) Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

2-8 Unofficial Use of Postal Service Property and Supplies

No employee will use, directly or indirectly, or allow the use of the Postal Service or government property or services, including property leased to the Postal Service or a government agency, for other than officially approved activity. Employees have a duty to protect and conserve Postal Service property, equipment, supplies, and other property entrusted or issued to them.

2-9 Public Perception

The Post Office lobby is the principal business office of the Postal Service. For many customers, the lobby is their close-up view of Postal Service operations; therefore, the lobby's appearance, convenience, and efficiency directly affect the Postal Service's public image.

The engaging-the-customer transaction includes one that is done in clean lobbies stocked with forms and supplies and by retail associates who are professionally attired, friendly, knowledgeable about Postal Service products and services and who know how to match these products to a customer's needs. The retail professional must follow the "GIST" (greet, inquire, suggest, and thank) model in every retail transaction.

All employees should refrain from loud, excessive talking while on Postal Service premises. Only employees that are serving customers should be in the proximity of the retail counter.

Playing music in the Post Office can bring on a number of problems and therefore music is not allowed. Music can be distracting to customers. Playing a local radio station means commercials will air in the Post Office and that airing violates the policy against commercial advertising on Postal Service property. Not one particular genre of music is representative of all Postal Service customers. Exceptions are digital signage test locations and Postal Service-approved music from Headquarters (e.g., Dear Santa Holiday CD 2005).

How Postal Service employees answer the telephone and what the customers see and hear from Postal Service employees directly affects a customer's perception of the Postal Service.

Employees answering the phone should identify the office and themselves and then offer customer assistance.

Postal Service managers must ensure that retail services are available and accessible to customers in a timely, efficient manner and in an orderly, clean, and attractive environment.

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3 Uniforms

3-1 General Policy

Supervisors are responsible for observing the uniforms of employees and taking appropriate corrective action, when necessary, to ensure that employees are properly attired. Postal Service employees are responsible for being properly dressed for duty. They are expected to maintain high standards of appearance, presenting to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their duties.

Uniformed employees are responsible for conforming to all uniform regulations and wearing only authorized uniforms and combinations. When scheduled to work the retail counter, all employees who receive uniform allowances should wear complete and proper uniform attire, pants or skirt, skort, polo shirt, shirt and tie (men), and neckwear or button cover (ladies). All clothing must be clean, neat, and professional.

Proper footwear is mandatory. Work shoes should be fully enclosed at the heel, toe, and sides and made of leather or a substantial synthetic material (*note:* canvas and nylon are not acceptable).

For more information on uniforms, see the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* (ELM), chapter 9. For more information on shoes, see Handbook EL-814, *Postal Employees Guide to Safety.*

3-2 Retail Associates Who Work at the Retail Counter

Retail associates who may be needed at the retail counter are expected to maintain high standards of appearance, representing to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their official duties. If employees are scheduled to work the window, they must wear their uniforms. Jeans, shorts, sleeveless tops, tee-shirts, sweats, and spandex are not appropriate attire for employees working at the retail counter; the aforementioned list is not meant to be exhaustive.

For more information on uniforms, see chapter 9 of the ELM.

3-3 Uniform Allowance

If an employee qualifies, but does not already receive a uniform allowance, he or she should contact the district Human Resources office to request a uniform allowance. If retail employees do not qualify, district management may provide a uniform for employees to wear when working the window. Employees who have been provided uniforms are required to wear the uniforms as directed by management.

3-4 Name Tags

All employees are required to wear authorized Postal Service name tags. Name tags must be visible to the customer. Name tags of the retail associates are to be worn over the right breast so that the tag is visible to the customer. Employees with ID badges must wear the badges at all times; but the badges may be worn out of sight of the customer, either on the waist or as prescribed by the installation head.

At installations in which Postal Service police officers are assigned access control functions, all employees are required to display their identification to the officer when entering the facility or grounds. Employees are not required to display their full name to the general public.

4 Duties

4-1 Revenue Protection and Assurance

All Postal Service employees are responsible for preventing the loss of revenue by identifying and collecting short or unpaid postage and fees, uncanceled stamps, and misclassified mail.

Examples of revenue loss include the following:

a. Uncanceled stamps.
b. Short-paid mail.
c. Unbalanced scales.
d. Improperly prepared bulk mailings.
e. Unapplied surcharges.
f. Uncollected Post Office box rent.
g. Failure to block out Post Office boxes when fees are past due.
h. Failure to close Post Office boxes in a timely manner.
i. Assessment of wrong prices.
j. Shortcuts.
k. Failure to know classes of mail.
l. Failure to offer value-added services.
m. Failure to follow procedures.
n. Permit imprint mail deposited in collection boxes.
o. Failure to inquire about customers' mailing needs.
p. Failure to have Postal Service products available.
q. Use of outdated materials (e.g., charts and forms).

Retail associates must deposit all cash (excluding authorized cash reserve), checks, and cashed items into the official bank account on the same business date that transactions occur. Units should have one deposit per day, unless banking requirements require a separation of cash and checks. In some cases, offices making advance deposits and separating cash and checks may have a maximum of four deposits per day.

4-2 Sanctity and Security of the Mail

The Postal Service must preserve and protect the security of the mail in its custody from unauthorized opening, inspection, and reading of contents. The Postal Service must also prevent tampering, delay, or other unauthorized acts. This public trust is vested in each Postal Service employee.

Mail that is accepted by any employee must be protected. If an employee has a question about mail security procedures, is unable to consult a manager, and the procedures are not clearly and specifically answered by Postal Service regulations or by written direction of the Postal Inspection Service or General Counsel, then the employee must resolve the question by protecting the mail in all respects and moving the mail, or letting the mail move, without interruption to its destination.

Examples of unacceptable conduct relating to security and sanctity of the mail include theft, destruction, damage, or delay of mail.

4-2.1 Theft

Theft is taking something that does not belong to you, such as excess merchandise samples or undeliverable publications for personal use. Theft also includes removing merchandise, money, and coupons from undeliverable bulk business mail for personal use.

4-2.2 Destruction or Damage of Mail

The destruction or damage of mail includes deliberately damaging, losing, discarding, or defacing deliverable mail and allowing the mail to remain unprotected from theft or inclement weather.

4-2.3 Delay of Mail

Delaying mail includes improperly detaining mail by failing to deliver in accordance with service standards prescribed for each class of mail.

Failure to uphold the public trust vested in each Postal Service employee may cause removal from the Postal Service as well as criminal prosecution, resulting in fines or imprisonment.

4-3 Work Schedules

Employees' adherence to assigned work schedules is considered part of their duties.

Scheduling employees is an operational function based on workload projections, service commitments, and budgetary constraints.

Managers use the following tools to achieve maximum results for scheduling:

a. Retail analysis profile study results in the Money Order Voucher Entry System.

b. Small Post Office reporting tool.

c. Point-of-service (POS) ONE Window Operations Survey (WOS) reports.

d. WOS Daily Scheduler.

If management initiates a temporary change of schedule to an employee by Wednesday of the preceding service week, even if this change is revised later, the employee's time can be limited to the hours of the revised schedule. An out-of-schedule premium is paid for those hours worked outside of, and instead of, an employee's regular schedule.

Eligible employees do not receive an out-of-schedule premium when attending a recognized training session that is a planned, prepared, and coordinated program or course.

4-3.1 Adherence to Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) workweek for all employees is a fixed and regular recurring period of 168 hours: 7 consecutive 24-hour periods.

4-3.2 Full-Time Employees

For purposes of establishing the FLSA workweek, Saturday is considered a service day, even if it is not actually included as a service day in the full-time employee's regular schedule. The FLSA workweek begins 8 hours prior to the time that such employee's regular schedule would begin on Saturday.

4-3.3 Part-Time Employees

The FLSA workweek for part-time regular and flexible employees is defined and determined in the same manner as stated above for full-time employees except that the FLSA workweek for part-time employees may not begin prior to 20:00 (8:00 p.m.) on Friday.

4-4 Recording Time

Employees must follow guidelines established in Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance.*

4-4.1 Labor Distribution Code and Functional Operations Number

The labor distribution code (LDC) is a 2-digit number used to identify the major activity of an employee. The LDC is used to compile work hour, labor utilization, and other financial reports for management use. The functional operations number code is a 4-digit number used for the same purposes as the LDC.

4-4.2 Clock Rings

Employees are required to input correct operational transaction codes.

Management is responsible for reviewing the Time and Attendance Control System Report and the Clock Ring Error Report and processing any necessary corrections. Management is responsible for the accuracy of the

entries on time cards, must provide appropriate documents supporting time card entries to the timekeeper, and must ensure that the timekeeper complies with the procedures in Handbook F-21.

4-4.3 Timecards

All bargaining unit and casual employees are required to use time clocks (if available) to record clock rings on their time cards.

If time clocks are not available, employees must write in their clock rings each day, in blue or black ink, in the clock ring spaces on the back of the time card.

In certain situations, such as travel or assignment away from the time card location, the employee's supervisor may write in the daily clock rings for the employee. In such cases, the employee must submit a completed PS Form 1234, *Utility Card,* and the data must be verified to ensure compatibility with the previously submitted PS Form 1230 and/or PS Form1230-C, *Time Card.* PS Form 1234 must be filed with the original.

4-4.4 Disallowing Time

In those cases where a full-time regular employee's clock rings exceed 8.08 hours and management knows or has reason to know that the employee was not engaged in work or work-related activities while in the time-over-8 status, management must disallow the time on the clock that was not worked. In such cases, management must insert a written entry on PS Form 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record.*

4-4.5 Unauthorized Work Time

An employee who continues to work contrary to a direct order from his or her manager must be paid for all time worked but may be subject to disciplinary action. In such cases, the manager must insert a written entry on PS Form 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record.*

4-4.6 Time Card Entry

When clock time is disallowed, the employee's manager must enter in the disallowed (reason) column of the time card the amount of time to be disallowed and an appropriate reason code. In such cases, the manager must prepare a written entry to document the basis for his or her knowledge that the employee was not working during the time disallowed. See Handbook F-21 for information on PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B.

4-5 Meeting Dispatch Deadlines

4-5.1 Lobby Drop Schedules

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch.

Retail associates must verify that customer notification decals (e.g., Decals DDD-1, *13-ounce Rule* or DDD-3) are applied to lobby drops and are maintained in a legible fashion. Managers must be advised immediately if decals are missing, damaged, or illegible.

4-5.2 Collection Boxes

Collection boxes are located in lobbies and outside the facility. If instructed or assigned, retail associates are responsible for collecting mail from collection boxes in accordance with times posted. Make collections as near as possible to the posted pickup time but never before posted times. Managers and retail associates must verify customer notification decals (Decal DDD-1) are applied to collection boxes and are maintained in a legible fashion. Managers must immediately have decals replaced that are missing, damaged, or illegible.

4-6 Proper Reporting of Funds and Receipts

Each retail associate in a POS or an integrated retail transaction (IRT) office is responsible for entering transactions and information as they occur and for providing every customer with a system-generated receipt every time a transaction is performed. Use PS Form 1096, *Receipt,* only in cases where the retail equipment is temporarily nonfunctional.

Retail associates must remit all funds received for the sale of stamps and other Postal Service products and services by using PS Form1412, *Daily Financial Report,* supported by required documentation, on a daily basis.

Every postal retail unit (PRU) must transmit a PS Form 1412 at the close of business on the same business day, regardless of the amount of financial activity. PRUs transmit their daily financial report using the reporting technology (e.g., POS, IRT, eMOVES, and automated postal center) approved for their unit.

Follow the guidelines in chapter 5 of Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures.*

4-7 Maintenance of Lobby Appearance

To effectively manage Postal Service lobbies, managers must ensure that retail services are available and accessible to customers in a timely, efficient manner and in an orderly, clean, and attractive environment. Ensure that the floors have been swept; the office has been dusted; the glass has been cleaned; and the trash has been emptied.

Display in-store messaging and products in accordance with instructions and planograms.

4-8 Maintenance of a Neat and Safe Work Area

Managers are expected to maintain their facilities in a clean, safe, and healthful condition consistent with the conditions set forth in Handbook MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities.*

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires that employers provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards and follow OSHA standards.

Safety rules and regulations are found in Handbook EL-814, *Postal Employees Guide to Safety*.

5 Schedules

5-1 Management of Clerk Schedules

5-1.1 Non–Point-of-Sale/eMOVES Offices

Managers should use the results of the retail analysis profile study to help determine schedules for retail associates.

5-1.2 Point-of-Sale Offices

Use Retail Data Mart (RDM) window operations survey (WOS) reports to determine retail associates' schedules. The RDM WOS earned actual staffing graph (EASG) and the RDM WOS 1994 scheduler, located in the enterprise data warehouse (EDW), are tools that can help align schedules by adjusting actual terminal usage to meet earned window hours.

While the tools do not replace the need for managing the day-to-day operation, each tool can assist with scheduling. Printing the RDM EASG on a regular basis can provide insight into peak and slow transaction periods to better schedule employees. Review each time segment and not only the periods when earned work minutes and proposed staff are higher and lower.

Do the same for every day of the work week. Prepare your base window schedule using the WOS 1994 scheduler accordingly.

As a greater comfort level in using these reports is achieved, consider reviewing scheduling on a cyclical basis. For example, days at the first of the month may require a significantly different number of associates than days in the middle of the month. Place emphasis on matching staffing to workload, increasing or decreasing as appropriate.

5-1.3 Point-of-Sale and Non–Point-of-Sale Offices

Review and adjust scheduling of retail associates' hours to provide optimum staffing during peak periods. Schedule breaks and lunches to coincide with slower periods.

To the greatest extent possible, limit lunches and breaks during peak times as identified by the Retail Analysis Program (RAP) survey, WOS survey, or RDM WOS reports.

Give special attention to Saturdays. Determine if long lines on Saturdays could be reduced by adjusting hours on Saturdays or during the week.

Review retail operations complement to maximize usage of flexibility with part-time flexible and part-time regular employees.

5-2 Adherence to Postal Service Schedules

5-2.1 Work

Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are working their assigned schedules. Management must take measures through employee orientation, service talks, schedule postings, etc., to ensure that employees are aware of their work schedules and are familiar with proper clocking procedures.

Employees' adherence to work schedules is considered part of their duties.

5-2.2 Collection

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch.

5-2.3 Dispatch

Retail associates are to collect lobby drops, inside collection boxes, and outside collection boxes according to the collection times posted. Collection boxes should be checked as close as possible to, but never before, the posted time.

5-3 Office Hours

Lobby and retail services should be scheduled during hours most appropriate to the needs of the majority of customers in the local area. Postal Service units located in a business area normally would be open during hours maintained by that business community.

If the postmaster/manager determines that additional service hours are necessary to meet community needs, he/she must obtain approval from the next higher management level for increasing workhour usage if additional costs are involved.

Except as provided below, permanent changes in the hours of operation must be approved by the district and area offices. Once approved, the area retail office must notify Headquarters Retail Operations of the change in hours of operation at a minimum of 30 days in advance of the change. The notification is to be done via email, using the "Notification of Proposed Reduction in Office Hours" located at *http://blue.usps.gov/wps/portal/officehours*. Retail units offering Saturday delivery must continue to do so unless otherwise approved by Headquarters Retail Operations.

Total daily hours of service for Remotely Managed Post Office (RMPOs) and Part-Time Post Office (PTPOs) on weekdays are determined by Headquarters Retail Operations. The actual hours of service each weekday and weekend are determined by the district officials. Offices offering Saturday delivery must continue to do so unless otherwise approved by Headquarters Retail Operations.

A replacement for the mandatory “Hours of Operation” decal must be ordered from the *Direct Vendor Signage Catalog* and applied to all entrance doors per retail standardization guidelines. “Replacement Hours of Operation” decals must be ordered with sufficient time to receive the new decal from the vendor and display it the day before the hours are changed. Thirty days prior to the change in hours of operation, temporary signs must be posted on entrance doors to inform customers of the upcoming change in hours and the nearest Post Office that can provide service during the changed hours. Offices must check with their district retail office for further information about appropriate temporary signage.

5-4 Lobby and PO Box

5-4.1 Standards for Box Service

Postmasters may keep the box lobby open to the public 24 hours a day if safety and security provisions allow for the extended hours and there is sufficient public demand.

5-4.2 Box Service Up-Time

Each unit must have a scheduled PO Box up-time for box mail to be finalized and available to customers. This up-time varies from unit to unit and is established based on variables such as mail arrival time, average mail volumes per trip, and staffing availability.

Schedule PO Box services during hours most appropriate to the needs of the majority of customers in the local area. The local postmaster, with District approval, establishes the local PO Box up-time. The PO Box up-time must be posted in the retail lobby as notification for customers and in the box distribution area as notification for employees working the mail.

If a unit consistently fails to meet the scheduled PO Box up-time, then analysis should be done to review possible actions to assist the unit in meeting the schedule. If corrective action is neither effective nor possible given local conditions, then consider changing the scheduled PO Box up-time. A change to the PO Box up-time should be implemented at the beginning of the fiscal quarter. Provide customer notification 30 days in advance of any change in the up-time schedule.

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6 Security and Safety

6-1 Aviation Mail Security Anonymous Mail

Management must ensure that all employees are trained in, and comply with, all current Postal Service Aviation Mail Security Anonymous Mail standard operating procedures (SOP), which can be found at: *http://blue.usps.gov/nationalpreparedness/avsec.htm*.

Every facility is required to have an Anonymous Mail Unit where a hard copy of the current SOP is available for employee use. The SOP contains duty-specific procedures for identifying and handling anonymous mail.

Compliance with the Anonymous Mail Program is mandatory, and management must perform required spot checks of their facility to ensure continued program compliance. Anonymous Mail Program instructions and training material are restricted information and may not be distributed outside the Postal Service. For more information, contact your district homeland security coordinator.

6-2 Hazardous Materials

A hazardous material (HAZMAT) is any article or substance designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as being capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property during transportation.

The Postal Service accepts limited amounts of potentially hazardous materials for mailing; however, most HAZMAT is nonmailable. The material allowed is generally other regulated material (ORM-D) consumer commodity that is in quantities small enough to present little hazard to life, health, or property.

HAZMAT is not acceptable for air transportation if it is not prepared in compliance with the specific applicable requirements. These requirements consider the degree of hazard, quantity of material, method of packaging, required shipping papers, and adequacy of labels and/or markings required for carriage aboard an aircraft.

Particular conditions applicable to mailings of hazardous materials to foreign and APO/FPO addresses are given in the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service,* International Mail Manual (IMM®).

All employees are required to be aware of the proper acceptance, handling, and transportation of HAZMAT. Standard operating procedures and training materials are available at: *http://blue.usps.gov/nationalpreparedness/HAZMAT.htm*.

6-3 Counterline

Only retail associates on duty and other authorized personnel are permitted behind the counterline. Employee purchases of Postal Service products and services are never to be conducted behind the counterline.

6-4 Suspicious Money Order Activity

The U.S. Treasury Department has defined money laundering as the attempt to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of money derived from illegal activities. This definition covers a wide range of activities and includes any type of money, including Postal Service money orders.

6-4.1 PS Form 8105-A, Funds Transaction Report

To comply with the Bank Secrecy Act, customers must complete a PS Form 8105-A, *Funds Transaction Report* (FTR), and present a valid ID in the following situations:

a. For all sales of money orders and Sure Money® transactions totaling $3,000 or more to the same customer in the same day. Fees charged for transactions do not count toward the $3,000 limit. Separate transactions to one customer over the course of 1 day count toward the $3,000 filing threshold.

b. When cashing money orders totaling more than $10,000 per day, per customer.

6-4.2 PS Form 8105-B, Suspicious Transaction Report

If a customer refuses to complete the PS Form 8105-A and acts in a suspicious manner, the retail associate must complete a PS Form 8105-B, *Suspicious Transaction Report.* The retail associate must also complete PS Form 8105-B if a customer is purchasing large quantities of small denominational money orders.

6-5 Stock and Levels of Security

Ensure that these descending levels of security in your installation are followed:

a. Level 1 — Burglar-resistant chests in fireproof, safes or security containers located in walk-in vaults.

b. Level 2 — Postal Service-standard vaults or security containers.

c. Level 3 — Security chests or burglar-resistant chest portion of fireproof safes.

d. Level 4 — Fireproof safes or vaults not built to Postal Service standards.

e. Level 5 — Lockable metal cabinets and file drawers.

Stamp stock should not be left in the open unless shrink-wrapped in a Postal Store setting and stored in a secure location.

Certain items must be given priority of protection over others, and managers are responsible for assuring that protective equipment is on hand for providing maximum security. Exhibit 6-5 lists the priorities of protection for accountable items.

Exhibit 6-5
Priorities of Protection

Priority	Accountable Item
1	Postal funds (e.g., cash, checks, and money orders), credit and debit card receipts, and blank money order forms.
2	Postage stamps, international reply coupons, migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps (e.g., bird stamps), and philatelic products.
3	Stamped envelopes, stamped postal cards, money order imprinters, and nonsaleable stamp stock.
4	Postal-related merchandise, packaging products, and official licensed retail products.

6-6 Mail

6-6.1 Registered, Collect on Delivery, and Accountables

Retail associates are responsible for the following duties:

a. Following accountability and security procedures and keeping accurate records.

b. Keeping registered articles locked in a drawer or cabinet if there is not a separate registry cage until the Registered Mail™ articles are ready to be dispatched.

c. Giving Collect On Delivery (COD) mail every reasonable safeguard. (Preventing access to the mail by unauthorized persons, keeping such mail in locked cabinets, if available).

d. Keeping all accountable mail behind the retail counter and away from the public.

6-6.2 Mail Sealed Against Inspection

Mail sealed against inspection includes First-Class Mail® items, Priority Mail® items, Express Mail® items (domestic and international), mailgram messages, and the international letter mail forming part of the letter class of Postal Union Mail.

No person may open mail sealed against inspection or search, inspect, read, or disclose information obtained from the mail or its contents; or surrender all or any part of such mail, whether or not such mail is believed to contain criminal or other nonmailable matter.

6-6.3 Acceptance and Delivery of Mail

Do not accept and stack mail to be metered later. Suitable identification can be required of the recipient (if not known to the Postal Service employee) before the delivery of a mailpiece.

Items that require a signature for delivery may not be opened or given to the recipient before the recipient signs and legibly prints his/her name on PS Form 3849, *Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt* (and return receipt, if applicable), and returns the receipt(s).

Scan all extra services and Express Mail items according to existing procedures at acceptance and/or delivery.

6-7 Locked Pouches

Registry pouches are the proper container for transporting registered items. Rotary locks are the prescribed method of locking pouches. Rotary lock pouches should always be used in any office or unit in possession of a rotary key. The proper procedure for handling locked pouches can be found in Handbook DM-901, *Registered Mail.*

6-8 Funds

Postal Service funds must be kept safe without loaning, using, depositing in an unauthorized bank, or exchanging for other funds. Postal Service funds must always be kept separate from personal funds. Keep Postal Service funds inaccessible to the public and concealed from view.

For advance and final remittance, retail associates should do the following:

a. Make an advance deposit of any excess monies during the day.

b. Remove and count funds in a secured area to be remitted from the cash drawer.

c. Maintain a checklist in each office.

d. Verify each check against the list and keep the list with PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report,* documentation.

e. Count the cash in a secure area away from the counter.

f. Give the funds to the close-out employee.

g. Record the funds in the retail system, or on PS Form 1412 for eMOVES offices.

The designated closeout employee verifies and acknowledges receipt of the funds and initials AIC 751/752 on the retail associate's copy of the PS Form 1412.

6-9 Keys

Managers procure all replacement locks and lock assemblies needed at their facilities, including Postal Inspection Service locks. Personnel are issued only such keys as their duties require.

Managers must keep an accurate inventory of all keys and signed receipts using PS Form 1628, *Individual Key Record.*

Postal Service employees must immediately report any lost or stolen keys to the inspector-in-charge.

Managers must conduct a semiannual physical survey of all keys.

All employees must follow guidelines in accordance with chapter 2 of the *Administrative Support Manual.*

6-9.1 Registered

Retail associates must ensure that Registered Mail items are locked at all times in a security container. Employees must sign the key over from one tour or one employee to the next by using PS Form 1625, *Record of Entry — Registry Section,* so that individual responsibility can be assigned at all times.

6-9.2 Building

Only issue building keys to employees who are required to open or close the office. Record all keys at the time of issuance on PS Form 1628 at the time of issuance.

When an employee's duties no longer require the use of an assigned key or the employee leaves the service, the employee must return the key immediately. Enter the date the key(s) is returned on PS Form 1628 as the release of accountability. If keys used to operate exterior doors to the facility are not returned, the locks must be replaced or rekeyed.

Standard locks are not authorized on exterior doors or high-level security areas. All exterior doors must be equipped with a deadbolt lock. The deadbolt feature is operated by key from the outside and by turning the lever from the inside.

Only postmasters, installation heads, or their designees may carry a master key. Master keys are issued to maintenance employees only during their tours of duty and may not be carried from the building.

6-9.3 Postal Inspection Service Keys

6-9.3.1 O Keys

In buildings with lookout galleries, one O key is assigned to the postmaster or other official in charge, who must personally safeguard the key at all times. Only the postmaster or a designated supervisor may admit cleaners or other authorized persons to the galleries on the first Monday of the month or by obtaining approval in advance from the responsible inspector-in-charge.

All employees needing access to lookout galleries or Postal Inspection Service space must sign for keys in the key log. The log must show requestor's name, date, key-in time, and key-out time.

Overnight retention of keys is prohibited. Coordinate access for other-than-scheduled cleaning with the inspector-in-charge.

6-9.3.2 J Keys

A special J key, which operates postal inspectors' office locks, is provided for other authorized personnel.

6-9.4 Cash Drawers

Place cash and stamp credits in a locked container and store in a security container, safe, or vault following an employee's tour of duty. In point-of-service (POS) offices, use POS cash drawers.

Whenever an employee relinquishes control of an assigned stamp credit for any reason, change the locks on the employee's stamp and cash drawers. Do not reuse the old locks.

To safeguard each associate's stamp credit, a manager must make an annual examination of all locks and keys in the unit except for duplicate keys on file on PS Form 3977, *Duplicate Key, Combination and Password Envelope.* This ensures that individual associates' keys will not open locked drawers, safe compartments, or stamp cabinets of other employees. The manager keeps a record for financial examination purposes.

Hold duplicate keys to stamp credits in the main safe or vault of the station or branch in a compartment under the exclusive control of the manager or a designated subordinate. Place the combinations for the main safe or vault and the duplicate compartment keys in a sealed PS Form 3977 registered to the safe.

6-10 PS Form 3977

A PS Form 3977 envelope is used to secure employee keys, passwords, and combinations. At least once every 6 months, managers must physically examine each PS Form 3977.

After the employee's keys, passwords, and combinations are enclosed and the flap is sealed, the employee to whom the keys are assigned and a witness must sign across both flaps on the reverse of the envelope. Round date as instructed on the front of the form.

Do not perforate or alter the PS Form 3977 in any way while it is sealed. If evidence of tampering with the envelope is noted or alleged, notify the local inspector-in-charge.

When locks, combinations, and passwords are changed, prepare a new PS Form 3977 and submit it to the custodian of the PS Forms 3977. The manager or designee must dispose of the replaced PS Form 3977.

When it is necessary to open a duplicate key envelope, cut it along one end, leaving the signature and postmarks intact. The employee opening the PS Form 3977 and a witness must sign and date it. Retain the opened envelope as instructed on PS Form 3977.

Keep PS Forms 3977 in a locked receptacle under the exclusive control of the postmaster or designee.

6-10.1 Key and Combinations Envelopes

Ensure that each responsible employee and a witness to the enclosure of the combination or keys sign the envelope. Round date as instructed on the form.

Each time a lock or combination is changed, prepare a new PS Form 3977 and submit it to the custodian of the PS Form 3977 it replaces. The custodian must dispose of the replaced envelope.

Hold duplicate keys to stamp credits in the main safe or vault of the station or branch in a compartment under the exclusive control of the manager or a designated subordinate.

Combinations for the main safe or vault and the duplicate compartment keys should be sealed in a PS Form 3977 envelope. Store these PS Forms 3977 in the most secure place under the exclusive control of the postmaster or designated subordinate.

6-10.2 Password Envelopes

Maintain a separate PS Form 3977 for integrated retail terminal, POS, and credit/debit card passwords for individual associates.

Each system's password must be placed in a separate PS Form 3977 envelope if the passwords are different. Refer to Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures,* subchapters 3-7 and 3-8.

6-11 Building

6-11.1 Lighting

Public parking areas and entries must be sufficiently illuminated to be safe and discourage crime. Provide security lighting to assist in maintaining acceptable levels of facility protection. This includes lighting at these locations:

a. All areas not open to the general public.
b. Entrance gates.
c. Employee entrances.
d. Vestibule entrances.
e. Customer entrances.
f. Areas around the building perimeter and perimeter security fencing.

6-11.2 Parking and Grounds

Customer, employee, and Postal Service vehicle parking and maneuvering areas must be separate from one another. Locate parking areas close to their respective entrances into the building. Postal Service employee vehicles may not be parked with highway contract route vehicles, motor vehicle service, or other commercial vehicles. Facilities less than 9,000 square feet are exempt from this requirement.

Plants, trees, and shrubs must not provide points of concealment or unauthorized entry to the facility, secure grounds, or Postal Service assets.

6-11.3 Securing Equipment

6-11.3.1 Safes

Security containers (safes) are used to store all money, stamp stock, Registered Mail items, national security documents, evidence, and other accountable items identified by the Postal Inspection Service. Security containers are required when a vault is not needed to store the office accountable items.

Ensure that safes and vaults are fully locked at the end of the day. Give the dial at least two complete turns in each direction. During business hours, all safes must remain closed and day-locked.

6-11.3.2 Round Date Stamp

The all-purpose date stamp is used for stamping the customer copy of receipts for services such as Certified Mail™ service or Delivery Confirmation™ service. This stamp is also used for Registered Mail service and on the daily bank deposit slip.

This stamp must be safeguarded at all times. Do not leave the stamp on the counter where unauthorized individuals can handle it. Make sure the stamp is locked at night with the other accountable items. If the round date stamp becomes lost or missing, immediately notify the Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General.

6-11.3.3 Postage Meters (Post Office)

Meter heads must always be removed and put in a secure place when leaving the office. Ensure that protective equipment is used for maximum security at all locations.

6-11.3.4 Money Order Imprinters

When not in use, keep money order imprinters in a safe, security container, or vault. If space is not available, store under protection of a lock.

Whenever possible, store money order forms and money order imprinters overnight in different security containers if the containers furnish an equal degree of security.

6-11.3.5 Cameras and Tapes

The inspector-in-charge of the division in which the facility is located determines the need for, quantity, type, and location of closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems and cameras.

Retail units use CCTV systems for security. CCTV systems help protect employees, mail, and Postal Service assets as well as deter crime. Closed circuit televisions are strategically placed throughout the retail lobby; they record activities, so that if theft is suspected, the tapes can be reviewed for evidence.

Management is responsible for overseeing maintenance and repair of CCTV systems and also for ensuring that information from the CCTV camera is monitored and tapes are being properly recorded 24 hours a day.

6-11.3.6 Doors, Alarms, and Proper Identification

6-11.3.6.1 Securing Doors

Employees must firmly adhere to the policy of locking doors. Management is responsible for ensuring compliance to afford maximum protection of Postal Service employees, funds, and property.

Keep all doors and windows of the office locked. In offices where the lobby remains open when no one is on duty, lock all doors, windows, and dutch doors connecting the lobby with the working portion of the office.

All exterior doors and doors with access to the workroom floor must be equipped with deadbolt locks. Close lobbies when no one is on duty unless the screen line extends to a permanent ceiling and police protection is adequate.

6-11.3.6.2 Alarms

The Postal Inspection Service determines the need for an alarm system. The inspector-in-charge gives the facility head detailed instructions for the alarm system. These instructions are restricted information and are kept in a secure area.

Ensure that promotional devices do not block the view of the sensor.

6-11.3.6.3 Photo Identification and Access Badges

All Postal Service employees must have a photo identification badge. Display the badge at all times when in a Postal Service facility. Sales and services associates name tags are to be worn over the right breast so that the tags are visible to the customer. Employees with ID badges must wear them at all times, but these badges may be worn out of sight of the customer, either on the waist or as prescribed by the installation head. In addition, at installations where Postal Service police officers are assigned access control functions, all employees are required to display their identification to the officer when entering the facility or grounds.

Employees are charged with the responsibility of preventing unauthorized individuals, including off-duty employees, from entering restricted areas.

Investigate all individuals on the workroom floor who are not properly identified or escorted.

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7 Equipment and Supplies

7-1 Point-of-Service and Integrated Retail Terminal Equipment

7-1.1 Cleaning

Clean point-of-service / integrated retail terminal (POS/IRT) equipment with a damp, clean, lint-free cloth. Do not use any chemicals when cleaning the equipment.

7-1.2 Ordering Supplies

Order POS/IRT supplies directly through the Material Distribution Center (MDC).

Order receipt paper through an eBuy at: *http://ebuy.usps.gov*.

7-1.3 Help Desk Support

The help desk is the source for answers to POS hardware and software issues. To reach the POS help desk, call 800-USPS-HELP (800-877-7435). To reach the IRT help desk, call 800-247-6478.

7-2 Postage Validation Imprinter

7-2.1 Cleaning

Before changing the labels in the postage validation imprinter (PVI), clean the PVI printer head with an alcohol-based cleaning pen.

7-2.2 Ordering Supplies

Order PVI labels directly through the MDC. New PVIs and problems with existing PVIs are handled locally through the field maintenance office.

7-3 Postage Meters

No person or entity other than an authorized provider, its authorized agent, the Postal Service, or a licensee may have a postage meter in his/her/its possession. A meter must be immediately surrendered to the provider, the

provider's agent, or to the Postal Service upon termination of a lease or rental agreement.

Only authorized Post Offices use the Postage Meter Resetting System (PMRS). To use remote-set meters under PMRS, Post Offices and classified units must obtain the following:

a. Written authorization from the manager of Post Office Operations who will determine if leasing of a remote-set postage meter is cost effective.
b. Funding approval by submitting an eBuy to cover the annual cost of leasing a postage meter from an authorized manufacturer.

The following companies are authorized meter manufacturers:

a. Hasler, Inc.
b. Neopost.
c. Pitney Bowes.
d. Francotyp-Postalia, Inc.

7-4 PC Postage Product Providers

PC Postage® products and services are available from commercial providers in cooperation with the Postal Service.

The following are authorized PC Postage Providers:

a. Endicia.com (PSI Systems, Inc.).
b. Pitney Bowes, Inc.
c. Stamps.com.

7-5 Scales (Systems and Lobbies)

7-5.1 Retail Lobby Scales

Retail scales are used to rate single piece mail. Follow current procedures for verifying and calibrating scales based on the scale model used.

7-5.2 Electronic Scales

Refer to the user operation manual for these units for verification and calibration procedures. The manufacturer or the existing maintenance contractor handles calibration for these units.

7-5.3 Mechanical Scales

Refer to current maintenance management orders or visit: *http://www.mtsc.usps.gov* for information on verification and calibration.

7-5.4 Retail Counter Scales

Verify scale accuracy each day (zero balance). If the scale is not accurate, calibrate using certified test weights.

7-5.5 Integrated Retail Terminal

Refer to current maintenance management orders or visit: http://www.mtsc.usps.gov for information on verification and calibration. Your local field maintenance office handles calibration for these units.

7-5.6 Point-of-Service Scales

For zeroing and calibrating scales, refer to the POS Web site at: http://eagnmnsxfb0/posone/ or follow the instructions in the POS *Online Procedures Guide.*

For technical and service issues, contact the help desk at 800-877-7435. Retail unit managers or their designees handle calibration for POS units.

7-5.7 Repaired Scales

Use certified test weights to calibrate scales before placing the scales into service. Before submitting requisitions for new scales, ensure that locally established coordinating procedures have been followed.

Requirements offices should prepare an eBuy form and forward it to the MDC in Topeka, Kansas.

Users should contact the help desk at 800-247-6478 (IRT) or 800-877-7435 (POS ONE) with any questions.

7-6 Scanning Equipment

7-6.1 Intelligent Mail Device Scanner

Employees using the handheld scanner will use the procedures detailed in Handbook PO-610, *Signature Capture and Electronic Record Management: Manager's Guide to Standard Operating Procedures.*

For technical or service issues, call the help desk at 800-877-7435.

7-6.2 POS Scanners

For technical or service issues call the help desk at 800-877-7435.

7-7 Money Order Imprinter

Manual issuance of money orders is not permitted. Inoperable imprinters must be replaced or restored to service as quickly as possible. In the event the money order imprinter is deemed inoperable or in need of service, refer to the operator's manual. There is a manufacturer's warranty on the imprinter. While service is disrupted, customers must be advised of the anticipated time that service is to be restored and the location of nearby facilities where service is available.

Order replacement ribbon from the MDC. Refer to Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures,* subchapter 3-5.

7-8 Tranz 380 (Credit and Debit)

When the Tranz 380 is installed in a Post Office, it is encoded with information unique to that Post Office (e.g., finance number and address). Do not transfer or loan the Tranz 380 to other offices.

Contact First Data Merchandise Services at 800-994-8777 for technical support and supplies.

7-9 Cash Drawers

Offices on POS must use the POS cash drawers. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Cash drawers are used for storing operating stamps and funds. Order replacement cash drawers and locks through the MDC using Publication 247, *Supply and Equipment Catalog.* Place stamp credits in a locked container and store in a security container, safe, or vault following an employee's tour of duty.

7-10 Safes

Vaults, security containers of various types, and security cages are installed in Postal Service facilities as needed for protective storage of accountable items. The Postal Inspection Service determines the amount and type of security equipment that is required. Details on the use and care of this equipment are found in Handbook F-101.

Contact your local administrative services manager or material management specialist to determine the availability of any excess equipment (e.g., safes and inserts).

If no excess equipment is available, follow the ordering guidelines established in Publication 247.

7-11 Round Date Stamp

The round date stamp (all-purpose date stamp) is used for stamping the customer copy of receipts for services such as Certified Mail service or Delivery Confirmation service. This stamp is also used for Registered Mail and the daily bank deposit slips.

This stamp must be safeguarded at all times. Do not leave it out on the counter where unauthorized individuals can handle it. Make sure the round date stamp is locked at night with other accountable items. If this stamp becomes lost or missing, notify the Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General immediately.

The round date stamp can be ordered through the MDC.

7-12 Vending Machines

Self-service vending equipment must be kept operational for customer use at all times. In the event of a malfunction, place Label 6, *Vending Equipment Out of Order,* on the equipment. Self-service vending equipment must be fully operational within 24 hours after the malfunction is reported.

For customer assistance in reporting equipment malfunctions, place a local telephone number on the front of each machine.

In the event of vandalism, theft, fire, or flood, notify local management, the local police department, the local Postal Inspection Service, the manager of Post Office Operations, and the district marketing office.

The servicing technician should contact the Postal Service vending help desk at 800-451-4196 for any problems with vending equipment. The help desk will make the necessary recommendation to Postal Service management to initiate a replacement machine if necessary.

For assistance with the Web Vending Activity Reporting System (WebVARS), contact the help desk at 800-877-7435.

For more information, see chapter 4 of Handbook PO-102, *Self-Service Vending Operational and Marketing Program*, available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim,* or visit self-service on the Retail Web site.

7-13 Copy Machines

The Postal Service permits coin-operated photocopying machines for customers to use in the lobby. The machines are owned and maintained by commercial firms, which are selected on a competitive basis.

If a coin-operated copier is not available at a nearby commercial establishment and the postmaster has determined through customer- and internal-requirements needs that it is feasible to maintain coin-operated copier service (at least 500 copies per month are generated), the office can enter an agreement with a vendor.

7-14 Building Alarm System

The Postal Inspection Service evaluates the needs for any security-related equipment. Do not purchase alarms or security systems without Postal Inspection Service evaluation. Submit proposals to the Postal Inspection Service with a detailed justification for review and evaluation.

The inspector-in-charge will give the facility head detailed instructions for the alarm system. Keep the instructions in a secure area. If there are any problems with alarm systems, immediately alert the inspector-in-charge.

The contractor provides and installs the burglar alarm system with direction from the Postal Inspection Service (which provides the panel for the system and programs it after installation).

Make sure promotional devices do not block the view of the sensor.

7-15 Electronic Article Surveillance

The Postal Inspection Service evaluates the needs for any security-related equipment. Do not purchase alarms or security systems without Postal Inspection Service evaluation. Proposals should be submitted to the Postal Inspection Service with a detailed justification for review and evaluation.

An electronic article surveillance system is required in facilities with an open merchandise retail operation, or when $30,000 worth of merchandise is displayed in a limited-open-merchandise situation. The panels should be placed so that the full self-service lobby and Postal Store are separated from the self-service vending area, letter drops, and Post Office box section.

7-16 Automated Postal Center

7-16.1 Servicing the Automated Postal Center

The *Machine Service Manual* (MSM) available at: *http://eagnmnsxfb0/apc/index.asp* provides serving and trouble-shooting procedures.

For a customer's interaction with an APC machine to be satisfactory, the APC machine must be operational and available for use at all times.

To achieve this goal, the site manager must assure that APC service employees keep the machine stocked with accountable and consumables, in good working order, and presentable so that walk-in customers are drawn to using the machine.

The APC accountability is assigned to the APC and not to an individual, but access to the storage repository inventory is limited to the servicing employee(s).

The servicing employee(s) are the designated individuals who have access to the APC and its stock. PS Form 3369, *Consigned Credit Receipt,* is signed by each servicing employee accepting responsibility (not liability) for the total value of the APC's inventory. Just like with Segmented Inventory Accountability, the individuals are required to provide the same level of security/protection/performance, just as if the stock was assigned to an individual.

The service employee provides Level 1 service on the APC kiosk. The responsibilities of the service employee are but not limited to:

a. Replenishing consumables and stamp booklets in response to kiosk alerts.

b. Providing preventative service (i.e., cleaning of the kiosk).

c. Escorting IBM Level-2 maintenance personnel.

d. Accessing the kiosk service screens and providing log-in for Level 2 personnel.

e. Managing stamp inventory at the kiosk.

If the service employee and the APC Help Desk cannot resolve a Level 1 problem or the problem has been identified as Level 2, the IBM service support representative (SSR) is dispatched to the site. The service employee will greet and escort the IBM SSR and remain with them throughout the repair. The service employee will follow the log-in procedures and when prompted, indicate that the IBM SSR is present. When the IBM SSR completes the service activity, the service employee along with the IBM SSR will record the problem resolution through the use of the servicing screens.

7-16.2 Ordering Supplies

7-16.2.1 Automated Postal Center Consumables

Service employees are responsible for ordering consumables, cleaning supplies, and ordering stamp stock APC consumables from the MDC using the touch tone order entry (TTOE) system. Managers should refer to the listing of consumables at: *http://eagnmnsxfb0/apc/index.asp* the postmaster/unit to order consumables used in the APC.

7-16.2.2 Cleaning Supplies

The machine requires periodic cleaning. Keeping the exterior and interior parts clean will ensure optimal performance and improve customer appeal. Service employees should perform periodic cleaning in accordance with the *APC Cleaning Manual,* available at: *http://eagnmnsxfb0/apc/index.asp*.

7-16.3 Help-Desk Support

The help desk identifies the problem, orders replacement parts, refers a problem to IBM technical support when a higher level of service is needed, or dispatches IBM (level 2) maintenance to the site. The help desk can be reached at 800-877-7435, Automated Postal Center Option.

Handbook PO-106, *Automated Postal Center Program*, available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim*, provides direction and guidance for day-to-day operations of APCs, including servicing, auditing, and reporting procedures.

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8 Retail Measurement

8-1 Supervision of Performance

Managers should monitor window operations daily to determine proper window staffing and the need for lobby sweeps.

8-1.1 Productivity

Proficiency is measured by total walk-in revenue (total revenue includes alternative access channels). An employee's productivity is measured in terms of transactions and revenue per workhour.

Transactions per workhour are a direct measure of the number of customer transactions the retail associate completes in a specific time period. Consider the following three things when looking at the measurement:

a. The type of transaction: mailing transactions including extra services equates to increased earned workhours.

b. The amount of the sale: increased transactions equates to increased revenue.

c. Nonrevenue transactions (e.g., mail pickup and Post Office box overflow).

8-1.2 Measurement of Proficiencies

Employee proficiencies must also be measured to protect revenue. To determine employee proficiency, look at the following areas:

a. Clerk accountability/cash credit examinations.

b. Error corrects on PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report.*

c. Reports in the Retail Data Mart (RDM).

d. Scanning errors.

e. Customer complaints.

8-2 Mystery Shopper

The Mystery Shopper program's purpose and intent are to use it as a diagnostic tool to correct conditions detrimental to customer satisfaction and that may inhibit revenue growth. Mystery shopping gives the Postal Service an objective view of Postal Service retail locations. Mystery Shopper can be used as a real-time snapshot of a customer interaction.

The results are not only about the score. The results are about driving behavior that will result in improved customer satisfaction and increased retail revenue. The attributes measured in the Mystery Shopper program should become so commonplace to everyday performance that if the program were to end tomorrow, it would not change the customer's retail experience in any way.

The program uses independently contracted "customers" who visit Post Offices and document their experiences by answering a standardized questionnaire. Each "customer" conducts a mailing transaction to test the quality of his or her experience at a retail unit. Retail associates must ask the required sales skills questions in order for a "perfect" transaction to be conducted. Based on the planned transaction type, the Mystery Shopper report lists the lost revenue when the retail associate does not ask the appropriate questions.

The Mystery Shopper questionnaire is divided into six weighted categories as follows.

1. **Waiting Time in Line (WTIL)** — Postal Service customers have repeatedly informed the Postal Service that WTIL helps to define their entire experience at the Post Office. WTIL also helps to determine whether a customer will continue to use Postal Service products and services or go to competitors. Remember, customers have choices, and it is the Postal Service's job to ensure that customers have great service to keep them coming back. Great service means respecting a customer's time.
2. **Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)** — The primary purpose of asking the HAZMAT question is to promote the safety of Postal Service employees, the general public, and the Postal Service transportation network. A majority of common HAZMAT items are relatively safe when used at home or work. However, many HAZMAT items can exhibit potentially dangerous characteristics during shipping due to improper packaging, exposure to extreme temperatures and pressure variations, excessive vibration during transport, improper handling, and storage in proximity to an incompatible material. Although it may seem repetitive to ask the HAZMAT question on every transaction, asking the question is vital to the safety of our employees, customers and the mail.
3. **Sales Skills and Product Offerings and Product Knowledge and Product Explanations** — Effective product offering and product explanations of Postal Service products and services are key to generating revenue and keeping our customers coming back. The Postal Service offers many products and services. Many customers do not know about the products and services that the Postal Service offers. Employees need to educate customers so that they can make an informed mailing decision. It is important to let your customers decide how they want to mail their article. Do not assume that the customer wants the cheapest price. Remember that customers want value, not necessarily the cheapest price. They want to know their options. By offering customers Postal Service premium services and explaining the service standards, the customers can make an informed

mailing decision based on information which is presented to them. Proper use of product offerings and product explanations at your office can make the difference in whether your office achieves its revenue goals and customer satisfaction targets.

4. **Promotion and Merchandising —** Every day, the Postal Service has the opportunity to serve 9 million customers in more than 32,000 Post Offices, stations and branches. The experiences that our customers have when they enter our retail lobbies varies widely from one office to another. We must provide our customers with a consistent, reliable retail experience. If the Post Office that a customer visits has outdated signage or offers a poor selection of retail merchandise, there is no reason for the customer to keep coming back. Studies have shown that the wall behind the retail service counter is the most important message area in the Post Office. While approaching the retail service counter, customers look to the full service lobby for information to help them complete their transactions or prepare packages. Research also shows that the full service lobby is the best place to introduce customers to new products and services.
5. **Image —** Customer research indicates that the cleanliness of a Postal Service facility and the employee's attitude and behavior, determine whether a customer will return to conduct his or her business or go to a competitor. If a Post Office is dirty or an employee is not friendly, it impacts the customers' perception of that office. The Postal Service unit must be neat, clean, and well maintained. To project a professional image and keep customers coming back, the retail associate must be in complete uniform, greet the customer, and be attentive and pleasant throughout the transaction.

Mystery Shopper evaluations do not, and must not, identify individuals and must not be used as the source of disciplinary action. Management must not review tapes and receipts to identify the retail associate or the shopper in an attempt to discredit the shopper evaluation.

The shops are conducted at offices that generate $500,000 or more in annual walk-in revenue or are in the top 20 percent of the highest revenue-producing offices within a district. Using these criteria, the Postal Service shops at close to 8,800 retail units, 8 times a year, for a total fiscal year count of about 70,000 shops. Although all retail units do not participate in the Mystery Shopper program, all need to understand and follow the guidelines.

For information about Mystery Shop results, contact the local coordinator for a logon ID and visit *www.usps-mysteryshop.com* or the Retail Data Mart, Mystery Shopper Folder.

See two examples of Mystery Shopper letters in .

Exhibit 8-2
Two Sample Mystery Shop Letters

VICE PRESIDENTS, AREA OPERATIONS MANAGER, CAPITAL METRO OPERATIONS
SUBJECT: Mystery Shopper Evaluations

This is a reminder concerning the proper use of the Mystery Shopper evaluations.

The program's purpose and intent is to be used as a diagnostic tool to correct conditions that are detrimental to customer satisfaction and may inhibit revenue growth. Mystery shopping gives the Postal Service an objective view of our retail locations–a real-time snapshot of a customer interaction.

As you may already know, the Mystery Shopper transaction involves the shopper mailing an item to test the quality of the customer experience at retail units. If the retail associate asks the proper sales skills questions and conducts a perfect transaction, we know the revenue that would be generated. In Quarter 2, our average revenue loss per transaction ranged from a high of $.32 per item to a low of $.16. The areas with the lowest revenue loss were also the top scoring areas in terms of sales skills. This shows the positive correlation between high sales skills and revenue generation.

The Mystery Shopper program is not just about the score. It's even more important that the results drive behavior that will result in improved customer satisfaction and increased retail revenue. The attributes measured in the Mystery Shopper program should become so commonplace to our everyday performance that if the program were to end tomorrow, it would not change the customer's retail experience in any way.

Mystery Shopper evaluations do not, and should not, identify individuals and must not be used as the source for disciplinary action. I continually hear of instances where post offices are spending great deals of time reviewing tapes and Point of Sale receipts in an effort to identify the retail associate or the shopper. In many instances, offices try to use this information to discredit the shopper evaluation. This time can be much better spent in trying to drive behavior and ultimately increase customer satisfaction and retail revenue.

While Mystery Shopper evaluations must not be used as the source for disciplinary action, supervisors should be making independent personal observations of retail associate interaction with customers to ensure they are performing all aspects of their duties as instructed. This would include observations that allow them to coach employees to ask questions that will determine customer needs. The Retail Employee Observation form, PS Form 4000-B, should be used for this purpose. At least one observation should be completed every accounting period per retail associate. As with all employee performance observations, however, make sure positive performance as well as less than satisfactory performance is recognized.

I ask all of you to fully support the Mystery Shopper program. We have over seven million opportunities every business day at retail locations to establish the Postal Service as the premier provider of our customers' mailing needs. This program can help us to reap the benefits of increased customer satisfaction and revenue generation, but only if the results are used properly to correct retail performance as appropriate.

Thank you for your continued support.

(original signed)
Patrick R. Donahoe

cc: Ms. Bizzotto
Mr. Rapp Mr.
Pankey Mr. Wargo

Exhibit 8-2 (continued)
Two Sample Mystery Shop Letters

LABOR RELATIONS

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

September 17, 2003

MANAGERS, LABOR RELATIONS (AREA)

SUBJECT: Mystery Shopper Evaluations

The Mystery Shopper Program was implemented to improve the level of customer service and generate revenue by ensuring customers are aware of the numerous postal services available. The Program consists of lobby evaluations and retail employee observations. As stated in previous correspondence from the Chief Operations Officer, dated April 30, 2003, the Mystery Shopper evaluations are not to be used as a source for disciplinary action.

Several initiatives have arisen throughout the Postal Service that emulate the "Mystery Shopper" program. Once again, discipline should not be the focus of these programs and they should not be used as a method of intimidation. The focus of these local initiatives should concentrate on encouraging positive behaviors. Reviewing scores with employees and explaining why the questions are asked helps employees understand the purpose of the program and their role in improving retail operations. Coaching employees based on observations provides employees a chance to gain additional knowledge that can be applied in the future when performing their duties.

A standardized sales skills process was implemented in FY 2000. This process includes supervisory follow-up through ongoing lobby and employee observations, utilizing the PS Form 4000-A for retail lobby observations and the PS Form 4000-B for retail employee observations (both forms can be found in the Postal website blue page under forms). Supervisors should be making independent personal observations of retail associate interaction with customers to ensure they are performing all aspects of their duties. If deficiencies exist, coaching and discussions relating to the employee's responsibilities are needed. If these coaching sessions and discussions fail to provide the desired behavior change, then discipline may be appropriate. As with all employee performance observations, however, supervisors should ensure positive performance as well as less than satisfactory performance is recognized. Recognizing good performance can motivate employees and encourage others who are not performing as well.

Please share this information with Labor Relations personnel and Retail Operations personnel. Feel free to contact Cindy M. Wheeler at (202) 268-4356 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Doug A. Tulino
Manager
Labor Relations Policies and Programs

475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260-4100
WWW.USPS.COM

8-3 Enterprise Data Warehouse

The Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) provides a single repository for managing the Postal Service's corporate data assets. The EDW provides a common source of accurate corporate data across organizations to a wide variety of users. The data can be reported upon and manipulated in a variety of ways both within and across functions for deeper analysis, which can lead to additional revenue, reduced costs, and improved business practices.

EDW was originally created in support of Retail. EDW now supports additional groups, including Finance, Operations, Marketing, and others who are using EDW for reporting and analysis. For more information about EDW, go to: *http://edw*.

8-4 Retail Data Mart

Retail Data Mart (RDM) was developed to provide easy access to retail transaction data and critical business information used for operational planning, fraud detection, and strategy development as well as sales and market analysis. The RDM was established to harness the power of retail data to afford the opportunity to generate more revenue, improve customer service, manage inventory, staff to match customer demand, and improve store performance. RDM data is used for pricing change support, new product development, product sales, automated postal center (APC) performance, fraud detection, window operations surveys (WOS), and to determine marketing effort value and many more business opportunities.

Users access the RDM through the EDW using a Micro Strategy online analysis program in a relational Teradata database. Data is retained for the current fiscal year and two previous fiscal years. The RDM is one of the business areas in the EDW. RDM answers business questions such as how do Mystery Shopper scores match the sales/productivity of a given retail unit; how many Post Office boxes are vacant and where are they; how does alternate access affect retail counter sales; and how do contract stations, vending, Click-N-Ship®, PC Postage, APC partners, or APC affect retail counter sales.

RDM WOS reports and graphs allow users to understand, analyze, and compare POS retail transactions for productivity and staffing efficiency optimization.

The WOS Earned Actual Staffing Graph (EASG) provides a comparison among three staffing levels namely "Actual" (retail associates on the window), "Earned" (retail associates needed to perform transactions), and "Modeled" (a smoothed representation of earned hours). The WOS 1994 Scheduler allows supervisors to prepare a schedule for a period at a time by manually distributing their staffing hours to match optimal terminal usage indicated on the EASG.

The Retail Performance Scorecard Report combines key retail performance indicators. One objective of this report is to bring together key performance

indicators on one simple and concise report. Management can easily compare these key performance indicators against the same period last year to get a quick assessment of how the business in these areas is progressing. A quick-glance graphical alert indicator helps to identify areas of concern with minimal effort. This reduces management's time in getting information when compared to time needed when running multiple reports for multiple periods. The Retail Scorecard provides a hyperlink to the reports containing specific indicators.

8-5 Window Operations Survey

The Postal Service is continually evaluating its network of postal retail facilities to meet current and future customer needs. The Function 4 Window Operations Survey (WOS) is an extensive review of POS ONE and IRT offices, and an integral step in right-sizing the retail counter operation. Conducted onsite by knowledgeable retail personnel, the WOS is a data-driven tool used to determine an office's retail workload. The WOS results package contains staffing and procedure recommendations that, once implemented, lead to increases in retail productivity, revenue, and customer satisfaction.

A WOS study is performed in conjunction with every Function 4 review and as a standalone activity for additional purposes as stated in the *National Standardized Function 4 Review Guidelines.* Workload is determined by the number and types of transactions conducted at the retail counter. The POS ONE system transmits data that details the number and type of transactions, conducted by retail associates, to the RDM. Reports in RDM WOS are critical for completing the WOS.

8-6 Retail Analysis Profile

The retail analysis profile (RAP), like WOS, is a tool for determining the optimal staffing of MOVES retail units. RAP is an operations research and marketing tool that helps local managers make better decisions about staffing of postal retail outlets to meet customer needs.

A district team gathers, processes, analyzes, and presents the information to management. Based on the data collected, recommendations are made on scheduling and staffing. RAP surveys may indicate the need for additional personnel or the need for a reduction in work hours in certain facilities. Local managers must take appropriate action to adhere to the recommendations presented.

8-7 Function 4

Customer service managers are responsible for ensuring accurate daily recording of mail volumes received in a mail distribution unit and are required to efficiently use the function 4 workforce to distribute that volume of mail. Customer service activities are nonsupervisory hours of employees at Post Offices, stations, and branches involved in automated, mechanized, manual, and Post Office box distribution of mail, retail window and vending equipment services, and miscellaneous administrative and Central Forwarding System operations.

Management Instruction PO-610-2009-1, *Function 4 Standardized Customer Service Workload Reporting System,* contains the national policies and procedures for recording and reporting daily customer service workload information within Post Offices and station and branch operations.

To maintain the customer service workhour budget, monitor clock rings and ensure proper labor distribution code (LDC) usage. Listed in part 8-7.1 are acceptable duties for LDC 45. Listed in part 8-7.2 are acceptable duties for LDC 48. In CAGs H through L offices only, all nonsupervisory hours used in customer service activities are reported in LDC 47.

8-7.1 Labor Distribution Code 45: Window Services

All nonsupervisory hours of employees serving customers at windows and other activities in support of window services include the following:

a. Advance deposits.
b. Caller mail pickup at window.
c. Change orders requested by retail associates.
d. CODs: acceptance and delivery, including COD clearance.
e. Clerk setup: open and close.
f. Credit examinations: Associate's cash retained and money orders, stamp stock, unit reserve, cash retained reserve, and fixed credits.
g. Information/directions.
h. Lobby director APC Host.
i. Non-revenue transactions at the window.
j. Passport application, fees, and transmittal form.
k. Passport photos.
l. Sales of all Postal Service products and services.
m. Service/safety talks to retail associates.
n. Stamps by mail/stamps by telephone.
o. Stamp stock: request and verification (local PS Form 17, *Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return).*
p. Stocking forms, lobby supplies, and point of purchase (POP) materials.
q. Non-revenue transactons at the Dutch door (in operations with retail). Although listed, the Postal Inspection Service views Dutch door operations as a security risk.

r. C_B_P_M_A_N_ (CBPMAN) input on ACE computers.

8-7.2 Labor Distribution Code 48: Administrative and Miscellaneous Duties

LDC 48 includes nonsupervisory hours of customer service employees assigned to dispatch activities and miscellaneous retail activities at stations, branches, and associate offices, including steward's duty time, travel time, and meeting time. It also includes nonsupervisory hours used in support of delivery service, such as working insured mail, COD, customs, carrier cage operation, markup duties (other than CFS sites), and other miscellaneous customer service and clerical activities.

The following is a summary of LDC 48 administrative and miscellaneous duties:

a. Accountable mail, second notices.
b. Bank: to replenish change fund (accountability assigned on PS Form 3369, *Consigned Credit Receipt).*
c. Carrier checkout/clearing.
d. Claims and inquiry.
e. Collections.
f. Copy machine administration.
g. Dispatch of mail.
h. Dutch door operation (in operations without retail).
i. Express Mail street delivery by clerks.
j. Markup, nixie, and return to sender mail.
k. Opening/closing building.
l. Phone duties.
m. Registry duties.
n. Requesting stock (retail stamp distribution office/stamp services center.
o. Scanning duties in back office.
p. Service/safety talks (provided to clerks other than RAs).
q. Supply ordering.
r. T-6 administrative duties.
s. Timekeeping.
t. Trust fund record keeping.
u. Undeliverable bulk business mail processing.
v. Unit closeout, preparation, and verification of deposit.
w. Retail consolidation unit backup transmission.
x. Unit consolidation: verifying supporting documents and filing of unit reports.

8-8 Retail Optimization Access Management

The Retail Optimization Access Management (ROAM) application is a mapping tool that allows users to visually display Postal Service and competitor locations. The application also provides demographic information on population and household growth. This tool enables the user to better determine retail needs based on a combination of visual and tactical information.

Area customer service analysts and district retail specialists use the application to help define local and regional retail needs. ROAM currently resides on the Postal Service intranet.

From the ROAM Web site, one can also access a retail optimization risk/opportunity matrix. This is a model that uses a combination of growth, competitor, and corporate revenue and cost data to determine areas of risk and opportunity within the retail arena. This tool enables better decision making for retail placement.

ROAM access is limited to employees working on Area- or District-level retail optimization issues and facility personnel. Exceptions for use are granted on an as-needed basis for other employees, such as Postal Inspectors. Access to the application must be requested through eAccess.

9 Retail Training

9-1 Retail Training Overview

Retail training is designed for a wide audience. Retail training encompasses all retail associate positions and customer service supervisors, station managers, and postmasters.

Individual courses within these classifications are prescribed by the Postal Employee Development Center (PEDC) and can be found on the Postal Service intranet at: *http://trainingmaterials.usps.gov*.

Employees are provided with both formal and informal learning experiences that contribute to individual growth and improve performance in current or future assignments. Both formal and informal training and development programs are organized to achieve employee learning objectives in knowledge, skills, and abilities. Structured classroom sessions and on-the-job training are considered formal training. Additionally, formal training may include Web-based delivery of online programs, computer-based interactive delivery, and satellite transmission.

Informal training methods are delivered through service/stand-up talks such as “Retail Digest” PowerPoint presentations, New Functionality Guides, *Postal Bulletins,* and other published materials.

Retail Operations requires that ongoing training be conducted by station/branch management to ensure that retail associates receive pertinent retail information.

Training and educational programs using specified courses and materials and given by authorized personnel are critical to the overall performance, knowledge, skills, and productivity of employees.

Postal Service policy is to provide employees with training and development opportunities consistent with operational requirements, duty classification, and skills enhancement. The implementation of these training and educational programs as required helps assure that Postal Service personnel can provide effective and optimal service.

Failure to provide formal, informal, or ongoing training could result in poor employee productivity, higher operational costs, and loss of revenue by the Postal Service.

9-2 Course Materials

It is imperative with any training, whether formal or informal, that the proper course materials be presented in the delivery method intended.

For retail courses requiring the employee to pass a qualifying exam, course materials can be accessed through the blue Web site at: *http://trainingmaterials.usps.gov*.

Facilitators must be Facilitative Instructor Workshop certified. Facilitators must teach with the most current course materials and not deviate from those materials.

The sales and service associate (SSA) training course number 23501-02 contains an American Postal Workers Union (APWU) module and requires that an APWU official teach or be present when the union module is taught.

All Postal Service employees newly assigned to SSA positions must complete the Sales and Service Associate Training Course 23501-02, and subsequently pass the qualifying examination. This test is officially administered at the district PEDCs.

Postal Service employees assigned as lead sales and services associates (LSSA) must complete the LSSA Training Course 23501-05. The POS deployment courses cannot be used in lieu of these courses.

These jointly developed programs are designed to provide newly assigned SSAs and LSSAs with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their duties. They are also designed for retail associates in need of refresher training.

These programs include instructions in elements such as interpersonal skills, customer relations, selling techniques, postal products and services, and security of funds. These courses also help establish and reinforce desirable work habits and a commitment to quality service in the critical early stages of new duty assignments.

Prior to working at the retail counter with customers, handling Postal Service funds and securities, and handling financial closeout duties, the associate must complete the necessary training program and pass the qualifying examination. All employees must be thoroughly trained in aviation mail security procedures and instructions.

9-3 Point of Service

Point-of-service (POS) is a system that provides retail employees the tools and information needed to provide customers with prompt, accurate, and consistent service. POS also plays a major role in reaching U.S. Postal Service® goals by reducing costs, increasing revenue, improving customer loyalty, increasing operating efficiency, and improving employee satisfaction. POS consists of NCR and IBM hardware running NCR software.

Both systems record detailed transaction data, provide employee communication, provide sales and services associates with product information, simplify inventory management, and assure pricing regularity.

The following personnel must take training during deployment and take the following courses:

a. All employees with a POS ID: POS Front Office Course 41201-66.

b. Managers, supervisors, stock Back Office Closeout custodians and closeout personnel*:* POS Back Office Closeout Course 41201-67. (Prerequisite: POS Front Office Course).

c. Managers, supervisors, and stock Back Office Administration custodians: POS Back Office Administrative Course 41201-65. (Prerequisite: POS Front Office and POS Back Office Closeout Courses).

The POS courses can be accessed through the following link: *https://aes.usps.gov/*.

Bargaining employees who are scheduled to participate in deployment training must have already passed the SSA qualifying exam.

Employees must not be allowed to work on a POS system until they have successfully completed the above prescribed course(s). Employees requiring POS training during nondeployment are to receive on-the-job training with a certified retail coach using the core lesson plans in either the SSA or LSSA course.

9-4 Other Retail Systems Training

IRT, eMOVES, and IMD (handheld) scanners training is available. For further information, contact your district coordinator.

9-5 Retail Web Site

The Retail Web site provides a corporate overview, functional guidance, long-range strategic plans, and a strategic vision for the field.

The Web site has been developed to provide tools, support, guidelines, and policies and to keep the field equipped with current retail information.

The Retail Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/retail/* includes, but is not limited to, the following items:

a. Telephone numbers.

b. Performance reports.

c. Information on national programs.

d. Service talks and “Retail Digest” articles.

e. Standard operating procedures.

f. Access to Function 4 and Window Operations Survey training.

g. Current policy information.

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10 Product Offerings (Sales Skills)

10-1 Standard Retail Transaction

Retail associates must use the components of GIST — Greet, Inquire, Suggest, Thank — to help customers make educated decisions. They should greet customers and ask about their mailing needs and the mailability of the contents [hazardous materials (HAZMAT)], offer and explain Postal Service premium services and/or explain the product requested, offer and explain any special services and additional products, and then thank the customers for their patronage.

Refer to the latest revenue-generation training for additional information on sales skills.

10-2 PS Forms 4000-A and 4000-B

10-2.1 PS Form 4000-A, Retail Lobby Observation

Retail lobby observations must be performed at least once every month. If an office fails a retail lobby observation, one should be performed weekly until the office successfully passes. The purpose of a lobby observation is to review the total retail environment to include the following:

a. Waiting time in line.

b. HAZMAT.

c. Sales skills/product offerings.

d. Product knowledge/product explanations.

e. Promotion and merchandising.

f. Image.

Management or a designee completes the PS Form 4000-A, *Retail Lobby Observation,* files the form at the unit, and retains the form for 2 years.

10-2.2 PS Form 4000-B, Retail Employee Observation

The purpose of an employee observation is to record the level of the employee's sales skills and product knowledge.

Management or a designee must observe each retail associate at least once each month. The observation must include interaction with five consecutive customers.

Note: Units not meeting targets should provide more frequent observations.

Management should do the following:

a. Review results of the observation with the associate within 24 hours.

b. Compare the employee's performance with previous observations. Congratulate the retail associate for a job well done if he/she achieves 100 percent or meets local sales skills goal. Local recognition programs are encouraged.

c. If goals are not met, coach the employee on ways to improve knowledge and performance.

d. Ensure that the associates follow the hazardous mail acceptance procedures.

e. File and retain the observation at the unit for 2 years.

10-3 Value-Added Sales

Special services are enhancements that, for a fee in addition to postage, provide greater security and accountability for mail, convenience to the sender, or improved handling.

Not all special services are available for all classes of mail, and only certain services may be combined for the same mailpiece. Bundled services should be promoted to simplify customer transactions.

Examples of value-added sales services are the following:

a. **Certificate of Mailing** — Provides evidence of mailing.

b. **Certified Mail** — Provides a mailing receipt and recipient's signature at time of delivery.

c. **Collect on Delivery (COD)** — Used to collect the cost of merchandise, postage, and handling charges when an article is delivered to the recipient. Insurance is included in the fee for COD service.

d. **Delivery Confirmation** — An economical service that provides information about the date and time an article (parcel) was delivered or delivery attempt was made.

e. **Domestic Insurance** ($200 and under) — Provides indemnity coverage for items valued at $200 and under. This service does not provide a recipient's signature at delivery.

f. **Domestic Insurance** (over $200) — Provides indemnity coverage for items valued over $200 up to $5,000. This service requires a recipient's signature at delivery. Customers may also purchase domestic insurance at Automated Postal Centers (APCs) or online through Click-N-Ship or eBay for up to $500 of indemnity coverage.

g. **Express Mail with Additional Insurance** — Additional insurance, up to a maximum coverage of $5,000.00, may be purchased for merchandise valued at more than $100 sent by Express Mail.

h. **Global Express Guaranteed® insurance** — Limited amount of insurance is included. Additional insurance may be purchased (see

Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, International Mail Manual, section 215.52).

i. **Money Orders** — Provides a secure, convenient and affordable alternative to sending cash through the mail. If you receive a suspicious money order, call the Postal Service Money Order Verification IVR at 866-459-7822. This automated system will tell you if a money order was issued by the Postal Service.

j. **Registered Mail** — A secure service that incorporates a system of internal receipts, monitoring the movement of the mail from the point of acceptance to delivery. It provides the sender with a mailing receipt and recipient's signature upon delivery (upon request, electronic delivery verification is available).

k. **Restricted Delivery** — Permits a mailer to direct delivery only to the addressee or addressee's authorized agent. Select Restricted Delivery on PS Form 3811, *Return Receipt.*

l. **Return Receipt** — Provides hardcopy proof of delivery for domestic mail via green card (PS Form 3811).

m. **Return Receipt (electronic)** — Provides electronic proof of delivery for domestic mail. Not available when mailed from manual Post Offices.

n. **Return Receipt for Merchandise** — Provides the sender with a mailing receipt and a return receipt. Supplies actual delivery address if different from the address used by the sender.

o. **Signature Confirmation** — Provides recipient's signature and information about the date and time an article was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt.

p. **Special Handling** — Provides preferential handling to the extent practicable in dispatch and transportation. Not insured against loss or damage and is mandatory for material that requires extra care in handling, transportation, and delivery (such as bees or poultry).

q. **Special (Extra) Service by Mail Class** — See Exhibit 10-3.

Exhibit 10-3
Special (Extra) Service by Mail Class

Service	Express Mail	Priority Mail	First-Class Mail	Standard Mail	Package Services
Certified Mail (PS Form 3800)		X	X		
Return Receipt (PS Form 3811)	X by mail only	X[1]	X[1]	X[2]P	X[3]
Return Receipt (Received Electronically)		X [1]	X [1]	X[2]P	X[3]
Certificate of Mailing (PS Form 3817 or PS Form 3877)		X	X		X
Certificate of Mailing for Bulk Quantities (with metered or precanceled stamp postage only) (PS Form 3606)		X	X	X	X
Collect on Delivery (COD) (PS Form 3816)	X[4]	X	X		X
Delivery Confirmation (PS Form 152)		X	XP	XP	XP
Insurance (PS Form 3813 or 3813-P)	X[5]	X	X	XP[2]	X
Registered Mail (PS Form 3806)		X	X		
Return Receipt for Merchandise (PS Form 3804)		X		XP	X
Restricted Delivery (Endorsement)		X[6]	X[6]	XP[2]	X[3]
Signature Confirmation (PS Form 153)		X	XP		XP
Special Handling (Marking)		X	X		X

1. *When Combined with an Extra Service*
2. *Bulk Insurance Only*
3. *COD or insured mail (for more than $200)*
4. *Express Mail Next Day/2nd Day Only*
5. *Express Mail Insurance Only*
6. *Purchased with Certified Mail, COD, insured mail (for more than $200), or Registered Mail service*

Note: P = Parcels Only

10-4 Recipient Services

10-4.1 Post Office Boxes

Post Office boxes (PO Boxes) have substantial value both to customers and the Postal Service's bottom line. For customers, PO Boxes provide privacy, security, and convenience at an affordable price. For the Postal Service, they present a significant revenue opportunity.

When talking to customers about the value of a PO Box, explain the following benefits:

a. **It's fast.** Mail will usually be available earlier in the day than delivery at the customer's home or business.

b. **It's secure.** Customers enjoy the security of a PO Box. We hold parcels at the Post Office, which is a benefit for customers who are not at home during the day.

c. **It's affordable.** Our competitive prices fit any budget.

d. **It's convenient.** Choose a location close to work or home.

e. **It's reliable.** Americans have trusted the Postal Service for more than 200 years.

f. **It's permanent.** Customers might change street addresses but their mail does not have to.

Employees can target potential PO Box customers by displaying banners and buttons and using Tag 26, *Post Office Box Availability,* to market vacant PO Boxes. Display PO Box banners to advertise available PO Boxes. Wear PO Box buttons to remind customers to ask about PO Boxes. Tag 26 is an excellent tool to use to boost PO Box rental revenue. Attach Tag 26 to vacant boxes to advertise their availability. Tag 26 can be ordered directly from the Topeka Material Distribution Center by calling 800-273-1509 and entering PSN 7690-10-000-6477.

Customers can go to: *www.usps.com/poboxes* to search and rent a PO Box at a Post Office near their home or business. They can enter a physical address or ZIP™ Code, and the results returned will include the Post Office hours, business hours, lobby hours, box sizes available, and fees for a 6-month period. In addition, a customer can sign up for re-occurring payments.

Existing box customers can pay their fees with a credit card at *www.usps.com/poboxes* and make a one-time payment or sign up for automatic payment service. Customers can also pay with a credit or debit card at any of our Automated Postal Centers (APCs).

Provide guidance to customers who need a PO Box; the amount of mail the customer receives daily or weekly will determine what size box is ideal for the customer's needs. Ask customers how frequently they plan to pick up their mail. Customers who pick up their mail weekly or biweekly could need a larger box than customers who pick up their mail daily or every other day. It is important that customers establish an appropriate size box initially to avoid having to change their address later. Business customers that receive large volumes of mail may need Caller Service.

To ensure PO Box operations run smoothly and without error, employees must make daily entries into WebBATS. Enter or complete the customer box rental information and payment into WebBATS on a daily basis.

PO Box fees vary by location. Post Offices with WebBATS access can view fee group information by generating a WebBATS Facility Information Report as follows:

a. Go to the "WebBATS main menu," and select *Reports*. The *Reports* page opens.

b. Under the "Clients/System" column, system category, click *Facility Information.*

c. View the "Fee Group" field in the report.

Fee groups are also provided in Publication 431, *Post Office Box Service and Caller Service Fee Groups*. The online version of Publication 431 is dated January 31, 2008. Changes made after January 31, 2008, will be published in

the *Postal Bulletin.* Publication 431 is currently available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site:

a. Go to *http://blue.usps.gov.*

b. In the left-hand column under "Essential Links," click *PolicyNet.*

c. On the PolicyNet page, click on *PUBS.*

The direct, URL for the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site is *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim.*

Employees are encouraged to send their PO Box success stories to *poboxsuccess@usps.gov* so that their stories can be shared with other Post Offices to help grow revenue.

10-4.2 Premium Forwarding Service

Retail associates can generate revenue for the Postal Service and help residential customers at the same time by offering Premium Forwarding Service™ (PFS) as an option to temporary forwarding and hold mail services. Customers can apply for PFS service for a minimum of 2 weeks up to 1 full year.

With PFS, all mail is reshipped from a customer's home Post Office to his or her temporary address on a weekly basis via Priority Mail. There are some exceptions: (for example: mail requiring a scan, such as Express Mail and Registered Mail, is reshipped immediately). Unlike Temporary Forwarding, PFS enables customers to receive all of their mail while they are away from home. Mailing endorsements do not apply, and the temporary address is not provided to senders.

Feedback from customers is very positive, and PFS revenue continues to grow substantially year after year.

Customers wanting to participate should fill out PS Form 8176, *Premium Forwarding Service (PFS) Application,* and return it to their primary address Post Office along with two forms of identification, including a valid government-issued photo ID. Customers pay the one-time enrollment fee and all weekly reshipment fees. Weekly reshipments go out on the same day every week providing a regular schedule that customers can depend on.

For more information on PFS, see Publication 621, *PFS Guidebook for Employees,* which is available on the blue Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub621/welcome.htm.*

Customers can access information about PFS on the Postal Service Web site at: *http://www.usps.com/receive/premiumforwarding/.*

11 Financial Accountabilities

11-1 Field Managers

Field unit managers have the following responsibilities:

a. Comply with the financial procedures defined in Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures* (FAP), which includes proper reporting of all financial transactions, monitoring inventory levels, remitting funds in excess of authorized reserves, and the overall monitoring of field unit operations.

b. Track items and collect, when appropriate, any money owed to the Postal Service.

c. Maintain adequate security for all accountable items.

d. Ensure that all required counts are performed, including stamp stock credits, cash credits, unit reserve stock, and retail floor stock. Field unit managers must comply with count requirements which include completing them within the required time frames, documenting the results, and promptly reporting and resolving any noted discrepancies.

Subchapter 2-4 of Handbook F-101 describes field unit manager responsibilities by daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and semiannually periods.

11-2 Security

11-2.1 Employee Responsibility

The field unit manager or supervisor must provide adequate security for all accountable items. Accountable items include postal funds, stamp stock, blank money order stock, philatelic products, accountable receipts, and imprinters.

The field unit manager or supervisor may delegate responsibility for accountable items to other field unit employees under the supervision of the field unit manager.

In addition, field unit managers have the following responsibilities:

a. Determine how each field unit will best use its available security equipment for protecting accountable items.

b. Advise the next level of management, in writing, of security equipment inadequacy or malfunction.

c. Periodically examine equipment that is used to protect stock or funds to confirm proper working order.

d. Ensure that equipment purchases are consistent with the criteria documented in Handbook AS-701, *Material Management.*

11-2.2 Priority Levels

Field unit managers must ensure that employees provide the appropriate level of security for accountable items. Priority one items require the highest level of security, while priority four items require the lowest level. Exhibit 11-2.2 lists accountable items by their priority level.

Exhibit 11-2.2
Accountable Items by Priority

Priority	Accountable Item
1	Postal funds (e.g., cash, checks, and money orders), credit and debit card receipts, and blank money order forms.
2	Postage stamps, international reply coupons, migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps (e.g., bird stamps), and philatelic products.
3	Stamped envelopes, stamped postal cards, money order imprinters, and nonsaleable stamp stock.
4	Stamped envelopes, stamped postal cards, money order imprinters, and nonsaleable stamp stock.

11-2.3 Equipment

The following types of equipment must be used to secure accountable items (in order of priority use):

a. Burglar-resistant chests in fireproof safes or security containers located in walk-in vaults.

b. Postal Service standard vaults or security containers.

c. Security chests or burglar-resistant chest portion of fireproof safes.

d. Fireproof safes or vaults not built to Postal Service standards.

e. Lockable metal cabinets and file drawers.

Note: The equipment used to secure accountable items will vary among field units due to equipment availability.

11-3 PS Form 1412, Daily Financial Report

All postal retail unit (PRUs), regardless of size or revenue, must report their financial activity to Accounting Services electronically at the close of each business day. PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report,* provides individual retail associates (RAs) and PRUs with a uniform method to report financial transactions.

PS Form 1412 is available in both automated and nonautomated types as described in Exhibit 11-3.

Exhibit 11-3
PS Form 1412

Type of Form	Description
Nonautomated PS Form 1412	■ Covers the scope of financial transactions for individual RAs and postal retail units (PRUs). ■ Provides a running record of receipt controls of all retail and philatelic sales, money order transactions, stamp accountability, and cash retained.
Automated PS Form 1412	■ Consists of paper tapes and reports provided by approved mechanical devices (e.g., IRTs and POS). ■ Records all financial transactions made by RAs.

RAs must prepare PS Form 1412 whenever financial transactions are performed at the PRU. RAs must be identified by name or clerk number on all PS Form 1412 supporting documents (e.g., tapes, lists, and receipts).

11-4 Automated Postal Center Kiosks

11-4.1 Overview

An automated postal center (APC) is a self-service kiosk that allows the customer to perform some basic transactions that are conducted at the full-service retail counter. An APC kiosk allows customers to do the following:

a. Weigh and mail packages.

b. Look up ZIP Codes.

c. Purchase First-Class Mail stamps.

APCs do not accept cash. Payment types are limited to credit and debit cards. The APC prints out a receipt for the customer for each transaction.

The daily closeout process is automated and takes place at a scheduled time each evening, during off-peak hours. A PS Form 1412 is created daily and transmitted via the network to the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) and postal accounting systems. Each APC is assigned a unique 10-digit unit finance number (UFN) for reporting purposes.

11-4.2 Machine Service Manual

The *APC Machine Service Manual* is available on the Delivery and Retail Web site. Go to: *http://blue.usps.gov/retail/*. Click on the *Retail Service Network and Access Management* link. Click on the *Retail Service Equipment* link. Click on the *Automated Postal Center* link. Under “Manuals and Handbooks,” click on the *Machine Service Manual* link. The direct URL for the manual is: *http://56.207.11.95/apc/files/training/APC_MSM.zip*.

11-4.3 Reports

A hard copy of the APC PS Form 1412 is not generated automatically. When needed, an APC PS Form 1412 report can be printed from the APC Web site. Go to: *http://eagnmnsxfb0/apc/*. Under “About APC,” click on the *APC*

Revenue link. Select the area, district, site, and the date for which you want to print a PS Form 1412. Click the print form button.

APC inventory information is available on the Current Contents Report, which is generated directly from the APC kiosk.

11-5 Self-Service Postal Centers and Vending Credits

Employees who are designated as self-service postal center (SSPC) technicians:

a. Are assigned a unique 10-digit unit finance number (UFN).

b. Report their financial activity via an approved electronic financial reporting system.

c. Receive and replenish SSPC stamp stock from the SDO or stamp services center (SSC) using the SSPC technician's assigned UFN.

Employees assigned stamp vending credits at a PRU and who are not SSPC technicians:

a. Are assigned a vending clerk role at their PRU. They are not assigned a unique 10-digit UFN.

b. Report and consolidate the vending financial activity with the unit's financial report.

c. Receive and replenish vending stamp stock from the unit reserve custodian at the PRU.

The servicing person must prepare a PS Form 1412 each day one of the following occurs:

a. Stamp stock is received.

b. Stamp stock is returned.

c. A bank deposit is made.

d. Change funds are received.

All funds, except the authorized cash portion of a vending credit, must be deposited into the prescribed bank account every time funds are retrieved from the vending equipment. For CAGs A through G, deposit funds at least twice per month. For CAGs H through L, deposit funds at least once per month.

See Handbook PO-102, *Self-Service Vending Operational and Marketing Program,* for SSPC technician or vending clerk financial procedures.

11-6 Postage Products

11-6.1 Overview

Postage products include a variety of postage stamps such as semipostal stamps, commercial precanceled stamps, migratory bird stamps, philatelic stamps, and regular postage stamps. These products are sold at PRUs, contract postal units (CPUs), stamp vending machines, and APCs.

Postage products are accountable items that must be protected at all times by providing adequate physical security.

11-6.2 Revenue Account Identifier Codes

RAs must record the sale of postage products in the corresponding revenue account identifier code (AIC) as indicated in the Exhibit 11-6.2.

Exhibit 11-6.2
Product Revenue Account Identifier Codes

Revenue AICs	Master Title	Controls
007	Forever Stamp Sales — Window Services at POS, IRT, and eMOVES	Postage stamps are accountable items, which must be controlled as follows: ■ Provide security. ■ Record sales. ■ Maintain records of stamp stock activities.
011	Forever Stamp Sales — by Internet, Mail and Phone	
012	Forever Stamp Sales — Vending Machines	
014	Forever Stamp Sales — APC	
083	Local Commemorative Envelopes	
084	Breast Cancer Stamp Sales	
086	Precanceled Stamps	
090	Postage Stock Sales	
091	Bird Stamp Sales	
092	Philatelic Product Sales	
094	Stamp By Mail, Internet, and Phone	
096	Vending Equipment Postage Sales	

11-7 Packaging Products

Packaging products include a variety of retail items such as ReadyPost® mailing products and other retail products sold at PRUs.

11-7.1 Revenue Account Identifier Codes

Exhibit 11-7.1 lists the AICs in which to record the sale of packaging products and describes how to control these products.

Exhibit 11-7.1
Product Revenue Account Identifier Codes

Revenue AICs	Master Title	Controls
093	Packaging Product Sales	Packaging products are accountable items, that must be controlled as follows: ■ Provide security. ■ Record sales. ■ Maintain records for packaging product activities. ■ Physically count packaging products (AIC 093) each quarter.
098	Postal-Related Merchandise Sales	
231	Official Licensed Retail Products	

11-7.2 Quarterly Count and Analysis

Each quarter, RAs should do the following:

a. Count all unsold packaging products and compute the inventory.

b. Take an inventory of all items.

c. Multiply the net decrease (inventory change minus items returned) at each selling price of the item.

d. Compare the result to the amount entered to AIC 093 for the postal quarter.

e. Analyze and document the differences to determine the cause (e.g., pilferage, inaccurate recording of stock received or shipped, or failure to identify revenue correctly at the point of sale).

Note: Packaging Products AIC 093–POSR (automatic replenishment) Offices Audit Procedure will include quarterly count and spot audits upon request.

11-8 Passports

Postal Service Headquarters, coordinating with the Department of State Headquarters, establishes the postal operational, accounting, and other procedures for passport application acceptance at designated Post Offices nationwide.

Postmasters and station managers select and designate employees to provide passport service.

PS Form 5659, *Daily Passport Application (DS-11) Transmittal,* is the log of individual passport application activity for both the Department of State and the U.S. Postal Service.

See the *Administrative Support Manual*, part 422, for detailed policy and procedures related to passports.

Refer to Handbook F-101, part 7-4.2, for accounting for passport fees.

11-9 Financial Differences: AICs 247 and 647

PRUs must use the following two AICs to report adjustments related to banking and miscellaneous items:

a. AIC 247, Financial Differences Overage.

b. AIC 647, Financial Differences Shortage.

Adjustments may also be credited or debited by Accounting Services for financial adjustments related to a unit's banking, transmitted PS Form 1412 transactions, money orders, and stock ledger discrepancies.

Accounting Services issues expenses to PRUs as a result of reconciling the following financial activities:

a. Sales audit expenses.

b. Reconciliation exceptions (e.g., banking, credit and debit cards, change funds, and Sure Money).

c. Stamp stock shipment exceptions (stock ledger).

d. Money order reconciliation exceptions.

A negative amount (appears in parentheses) in General Ledger (GL) 56203 on the Financial Performance Report (FPR) Line 44 Miscellaneous Expenses is a credit or reduction in expense. A positive amount is a debit or increase in expense.

To identify the source of individual AIC 247 and AIC 647 expenses, access the following: Accounting Data Mart (ADM) report: Accounting>Shared Reports>Postmaster Folder>FPR Net Financial Differences (AIC 247/647) — Line Detail.

To review, identify, or research AIC 247 and AIC 647 expenses, use the reports in the Postmaster folder in the ADM. For a complete list, description, and summary of when and how to use each report in the Postmaster folder, go to the Accounting Web page at: *http://blue.usps.gov/wps/portal/accounting*. Click the "ADM Help" link. Under "ADM Help," click the "Postmaster Folder" link. The direct URL is: *http://blue.usps.gov/wps/portal/accounting/admhelp/pmfolder*.

Refer to Handbook F-101, chapter 8, for detailed procedures for creating, documenting, monitoring, and offsetting AIC 247/647 expenses.

11-10 Banking

The Postal Service conducts business in only U.S. currency (includes coins). Therefore, field unit employees must not accept any foreign currencies as payment. Postal Service employees must safely control U.S. currency, customer checks, and money orders as follows:

a. Do not loan, withdraw, or deposit postal funds in an unauthorized bank account.

b. Do not exchange U.S. currency with other types of funds.

c. Do not use postal funds for personal purposes.

d. Safeguard postal funds from the public and conceal them from view.

e. When postal funds are not continuously observed, maintain funds in a locked receptacle.

f. Deposit all Postal Service funds to a Postal Service relationship bank account established by Corporate Treasury. (See Handbook F-3, *Treasury Management*.)

g. Refer to Handbook F-101, part 9-1.2, for detailed banking procedures for PRUs.

11-11 Credit and Debit Cards

11-11.1 Credit Cards

The Postal Service accepts the following credit cards for the purchase of most Postal Service products and services:

a. American Express.
b. Carte Blanche.
c. Diners Club.
d. Discover.
e. JCB.
f. MasterCard.
g. VISA.

Note: Credit and debit card terminals will not accept any unauthorized card. All of the above cards must be signed to be accepted.

Credit cards are accepted at all PRUs for postal products and services except for the following:

a. Trust fund deposits at the PRU including but not limited to:
b. Express Mail corporate accounts.
c. Permit Imprint accounts.
d. Periodicals accounts.
e. Business Reply Mail and Postage Due accounts.
f. Precanceled stamps.
g. Money orders (principal amount).
h. Collect on Delivery (COD) funds.
i. Money by wire (principal amount).
j. Payment for an employee debt.
k. Passport application fees payable to the U.S. Department of State.

Note: Customers may order stamps and make purchases with American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa credit cards by calling 800-STAMP-24 (800-782-6724) or when visiting *www.usps.com*.

11-11.2 PIN-based Debit Cards

RAs may accept the following PIN-based debit cards for payment for all postal products and services:

a. Armed Forces Financial Network.
b. NYCE.
c. Interlink.
d. Pulse PAY.
e. Cash Union 24.
f. Maestro.
g. Quest.

h. Alaska Option.

i. ATH.

j. Jeanie.

k. STAR SYSTEMS.

l. ACCEL.

m. Shazam.

n. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

Any changes to the list of accepted PIN-based debit cards are announced in the *Postal Bulletin.*

If the customer presents a debit card that is not authorized, the terminal will not approve the transaction.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 9-2, for credit/debit card acceptance procedures.

11-12 Checks

11-12.1 Check Acceptance

Employees may accept personal checks, bank checks, government agency checks, business checks, traveler's checks, and American Express (AMEX) gift checks for customer transactions when presented with a valid photo-bearing ID as follows:

a. Checks are accepted for all postal products, except money order and Sure Money transactions. *Note:* U.S. Treasury checks, traveler's checks, and AMEX gift checks are acceptable for the purchase of postal money orders.

b. Customer checks must be made payable to "U.S. Postal Service" or "Postmaster."

c. Traveler's checks and AMEX gift checks are accepted only when at least 50 percent of the face value is used to purchase Postal Service products or services.

d. Checks may be accepted for payment of a Collect on Delivery (COD) item provided the check is made payable to the sender.

e. Checks that have been mailed in for payments must be endorsed "by mail" on the face.

11-12.2 Checks Prohibited for Cashing

Do not cash the following types of checks:

a. Checks that appear altered.

b. Checks from a third party.

c. Checks for anyone other than the payee(s) named on the face.

d. Checks for which the signature on the ID does not match the signature on the check.

e. Checks for more than the amount imprinted as a limit on the face of the document.

f. Checks payable to a business, an organization, society, institution, government agency, corporation (LLC or others), or partnership. These items must be deposited or negotiated at their bank or financial institution.

g. Checks issued by an employee.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 9-3, for detailed procedures for accepting and cashing checks.

11-12.3 Returned Customer Checks and Bad Check List

Returned checks are customer checks returned from Postal Service bank accounts. Returned checks are debited to a servicewide expense account and Accounting Services handles check collection and resolution.

Field unit employees must not accept payment from the customer for returned checks that have been placed for collection.

All funds received as a result of check collection attempts, for these checks, are credited to a servicewide expense account.

Refer to Handbook F-101, part 9-3.5, for the handling of returned checks.

Accounting Services generates a national bad check list. The list is sorted by area and forwarded to each district finance manager (DFM) or designee for distribution within their district.

Accounting Services removes customers from the bad check list once their debt is paid. However, local management may continue to keep a customer on the bad check list, at their discretion, by manually adding it to the list received from Accounting Services.

11-13 Domestic and International Money Orders

Postal money orders can only be purchased using the following payment methods:

a. U.S. currency and coins.

b. U.S. Treasury checks.

c. Traveler's checks payable in U.S. dollars.*

d. American Express gift checks payable in U.S. dollars.*

e. Pin-based debit cards.

Note: Traveler's checks and American Express gift checks are accepted only when at least 50 percent of the face value is used to purchase postal products and services.

The maximum amount of any single domestic money order is $1,000.

Customers who wish to purchase postal money orders, Sure Money, or stored value cards that total $3,000 or more during the same business day must complete a PS Form 8105-A, *Funds Transaction Report* (FTR).

To comply with the Bank Secrecy Act, customers must complete a PS Form 8105-A and present valid identification as follows:

a. For all sales of money orders and Sure Money transactions totaling $3,000 or more to the same customer in the same day. Fees charged for transactions do not count toward the $3,000 limit. Separate transactions to one customer over the course of one day count toward the $3,000 filing threshold.

b. When cashing money orders that total more than $10,000 per day, per customer, use a PS Form 8105-B, *Suspicious Transaction Report* (STR) to report any potentially suspicious activity and complete the form as soon as possible after the suspicious transaction has ended.

Federal law prohibits notifying the customer that a suspicious report is being completed; therefore, RAs must complete the PS Form 8105-B after the customer leaves the counter line.

Submit PS Forms 8105-A and 8105-B to the address on the front of the form the same day that the form is completed. Use the most current edition of PS Forms 8105-A and 8105-B. Forms may be ordered from the Material Distribution Center.

PRUs must log PS Form(s) 8105-A before submitting. A sample tracking log is available on the Corporate Treasury's Web site. Go to: *http://blue.usps.gov/corptreasury/*. Click on *Bank Secrecy Act.* Under "BSA Compliance," click on *Sample Log.* The direct URL for the log is *http://blue.usps.gov/corptreasury/bsa.htm*.

11-14 Cashing Domestic and International Money Orders

11-14.1 All Postal Money Orders

PRU employees must cash domestic and international money orders in accordance with the following procedures as well as in accordance with any additional specific instructions from the postmaster or district:

a. Verify that the money order is not on the Missing, Lost, or Stolen list in the current *Postal Bulletin.*

b. Cash the money order only in the exact amount imprinted at time of issue, up to the authorized maximum amount. Use of a title (e.g., Mr. and Ms.) is not required when endorsing a money order. A money order made payable to more than one person will be cashed for either person if the conjunction "or" is used. If no conjunction is used, all persons named on the face of the item must sign and provide ID as required.

c. Verify that the money order is authentic (see Notice 299, *Security Features of U.S. Postal Service Money Orders).* Check money order security features for signs of alteration, counterfeit, or fraud before cashing.

If necessary, call the Money Order Verification System (866-459-7822) as an additional tool to validate issuance of a postal money order.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 10-2, for more information on requirements and procedures for cashing postal money orders.

11-14.2 Money Order Security Features

To determine if a money order is authentic, hold the money order up to the light and look for the following security features:

a. Ben Franklin images (watermarks) repeated on the left side (top to bottom).

b. Watermarks are in the paper and will appear when viewing from the front or back of the money order when held up to the light.

c. A dark security thread running (top to bottom) to the right of the Ben Franklin watermark with tiny letters “USPS” facing backward and forward.

If either of these security features is not present when the money order is held up to the light, the postal money order is fraudulent. Also, be aware of the following potential areas for fraud:

a. Denominations are indicated on two locations and must be identical. Look for alterations in one or both places.

b. Discoloration of the denomination amounts indicates erasure (fraudulent).

c. Maximum value for domestic postal money orders is $1,000.

Note: RAs can call the Money Order Verification System as a tool to validate issuance of a postal money order. For more information, see Notice 299.

11-14.3 Money Order Verification System

The Money Order Verification System is an interactive voice response (IVR) system for deterring fraud. The IVR system can assist PRUs and financial institutions when validating postal money orders.

To inquire on the validity of a recently issued money order, do the following:

1. Call the Money Order Verification System at 866-459-7822.
2. Press 1 for Money Order Verification.
3. Enter the following information when prompted:
   - 11-digit money order serial number.
   - Exact dollar amount of the money order.
   - Issue ID number.

If the money order has been issued in the last 90 days and is at least 48 hours old, the IVR should reply that there has been a “match” if the money order is a valid issue.

There are instances where the issuing unit’s PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report,* data has not updated in the system in a timely manner. This will result in a nonmatch reply from the IVR system.

The IVR system is to serve only as an additional tool to help prevent fraud.

See the "Money Order Verification System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" at: *http://blue.usps.gov/accounting/_pdf/MoneyOrderIVRFAQs.pdf*.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 10-3, for procedures for money order inquiries and replacements.

11-15 Accountable Paper

11-15.1 Accountable Paper Definitions

Accountable paper is defined as:

a. Postage stock.
b. Stamped papers.
c. Nonpostal stamps.
d. Philatelic products.
e. Money order stock.

Postage stock is defined as:

a. Postage stamps.
b. Semipostal stamps.

Stamped papers are defined as:

a. Stamped envelopes and postal cards (includes regular, special, commemorative, and penalty mail issues).
b. International reply coupons (IRCs).

Nonpostal stamps are migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps sold for the Department of the Interior.

Philatelic products are defined as:

a. Mint sets.
b. Stamp collecting kits.
c. Gift packs.
d. Other products in the items 8000–9999 series.

11-15.2 Accountable Paper Terms

The following accountable paper terms will help Postal Service employees understand the accountable paper procedures in this handbook.

Unit reserve:

a. Consists of all stamps, stamped paper, and philatelic products in a PRU that has not been consigned to other accountabilities within the unit.
b. Are in all PRUs.
c. Has sufficient stock to meet customer demand; however, PRUs must maintain total unit accountability within a 3-month stamp stock level based on sales reported in AIC 852.

Stamp distribution office (SDO):

a. Receives and disburses stamps, stamped paper, and philatelic products.

b. Provides accountable paper for all PRUs, SSPCs, APCs, and CPUs within its service area.

c. Typically consists of a supervisor and one or more bargaining-unit employees assigned to work in or near a secure vault.

Stamp services center (SSC):

a. Receives and disburses stamps, stamped paper, and philatelic products.

b. Provides accountable paper for all PRUs, APCs, and CPUs within its service area.

c. Is administered by Stamp Acquisition and Distribution at Headquarters and serves as a centralized stamp distribution operation.

Accountable paper depository (APDs):

a. Is an SDO that provides products to other SDOs and SSCs such as emergency orders. Reserve supplies of stamps that cannot be ordered through bulk requisitioning.

b. Has philatelic products produced by Postal Service contractors.

c. Is assigned to a specific APD.

d. Is located in Chicago, IL; Denver, CO; Memphis, TN; New York, NY; or San Francisco, CA.

National Stamp Depository (NSD):

a. Stores postage stock.

b. Supplies large quantities of postage stock to APDs.

c. Supplies full pallets of an item to a SDO, SSC, or APD.

d. Is located in Kansas City, MO.

Philatelic center:

a. Offers a variety of stamps, and postal and philatelic products, primarily to stamp collectors.

b. Is located in a retail area separate from the lobby window service and usually offer only philatelic products.

Stamp Fulfillment Services (SFS):

a. Provides stamped envelopes to cost ascertainment group (CAG) A–G Post Offices that order from an SDO.

b. Provides USA philatelic catalog items to stamp collectors and to PRUs for promotions or presentations.

c. Is located in Kansas City, MO.

Stamp Services System (SSS):

a. Has automated inventory system used by SDOs, SFS, SSCs, and APDs.

b. Processes stock orders.

c. Tracks inventory.

d. Produces daily financial reports.

11-15.3 Responsibilities

11-15.3.1 Postmaster or Unit Manager

The postmaster or unit manager is responsible for ensuring that controls are in place for maintaining an accurate inventory for all accountable paper within the PRU. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, the following:

a. Providing adequate security for all accountable items.

b. Monitoring inventory levels.

c. Establishing and controlling segments within the PRU.

d. Ensuring proper entry of all financial transactions.

e. Ensuring that all required counts are performed.

11-15.3.2 Employee

All field unit employees are accountable for the following:

a. All accountable paper issued to them as a stamp credit.

b. All funds received from accountable paper sales until deposited as postal funds.

c. Accurate and timely recording of all financial transactions.

All employees assigned responsibility for accountable paper are liable for losses in their accountability.

11-15.3.3 Contractor

A contractor is accountable for all accountable paper assigned to the CPU.

11-16 Ordering Stock From SDO or SSC

PRUs order accountable paper (including money order stock) from an SDO or an SSC. The SDO or SSC provides a monthly schedule for ordering.

The minimum quantity of each item of stamps and stamped paper to order is published annually in the *Postal Bulletin.*

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 11-4, for detailed procedures for ordering from the SDO or SCC.

11-17 Receiving Stock Shipments From SDO or SSC

11-17.1 Examining and Verifying the Shipment

Examine and verify stock shipments as follows:

a. Examine each shipping carton to ascertain that the address is correct, the seal is unbroken, and the contents are not damaged.

b. Report tampering to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General immediately.

c. Count stock and verify to the computer-generated PS Form 17, *Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return*, with a witness.

d. Sign and date the PS Form 17.

e. Enter the total value of the PS Form 17 as stock received even if the physical quantity is not the same.

Exhibit 11-7.1 provides specific verification procedures by item.

Exhibit 11-17.1
Verification Procedure by Item

For this item:	Verify the shipment as follows:
Panes in sealed packages	Follow the instructions on the package for verifying the contents before removing the sealed film wrapper on the individual packages.
Stamp booklets	Count the number of booklets in the denomination and type described on the unit package. Do this before breaking the package seal.
Coils	Count the stamp coils to verify the shipment contains the quantity of coils, type, and denomination of stock ordered. Do this before breaking the seal.
International reply coupons	Count the quantity contained in packages and cartons.
Stamped envelopes and postal cards	Count the number of boxes or packages and the denominations of the envelopes or cards against the carton labels, and verify against PS Form 17.
Philatelic products	Count the number of items in open cartons. The total must agree with the quantity printed on the outside of the carton.

11-17.2 Verification of Receipt of Money Order Form Sets

Blank money order stock is packaged as follows:

a. 100 per package.

b. 10 packages (1,000) per box.

c. 5 boxes (5,000) per carton.

Verify the continuity of serial numbers by doing the following:

a. Look at the outside labels when you receive more than one carton or box.

b. Verify the packages by the first serial number shown on the front.

Do not open cartons, boxes, or packages just to verify serial numbers. Verify the numbers when it is necessary to issue the forms.

If the number of boxes or packages received does not agree with the invoice, the PRU does the following:

a. Reports the facts in writing to the SDO or SSC.

b. Keeps a copy of the memorandum.

If there are fewer than 100 form sets, 10 packages to a box, or duplicate serial numbers, the PRU reports the facts to:

BLANK STOCK
MONEY ORDER BRANCH
PO BOX 82441
ST LOUIS MO 63182-2441

Submit a copy to the SDO or SSC and keep a copy of the memorandum. Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 11-5, for detailed procedures for accounting for received stock shipments.

11-18 Returning Stock to the SDO or SSC

11-18.1 Saleable Stock

Saleable stock that may be returned to the SDO or SSC includes stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and philatelic products currently on sale.

The SDO or SSC must authorize the return of saleable stock before the stamp stock custodian returns it.

11-18.2 Nonsaleable Stock

Nonsaleable stamp stock items and products that may be returned to the SDO or SSC for destruction includes the following:

a. Obsolete stock that is removed from sale at all locations. If recalled for destruction, consider using philatelic products for promotional purposes or as gifts to employees. Obsolete editions of the *Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps* can be provided for philatelic, promotional, or educational purposes. (Stamp Services publishes an annual announcement in the *Postal Bulletin* about the disposition of obsolete editions.)

b. Defective stock including any partial packages of stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and damaged stock accepted from customers as described in the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), 604.9.0.

Send stock to be destroyed to the SDO or SSC only if the minimum amount has accumulated since the last shipment; Exhibit 11-18.2 lists minimal amount of stock per CAG.

Exhibit 11-18.2
Minimal Amount of Stock to Be Destroyed per CAG

For CAGs…	The minimum amount is…
A–G	$100
H	$50
K and L	$25

The stamp stock custodian must check the *Postal Bulletin* to know when to withdraw specific stamps and stamped paper items from sale. The schedule of returning nonsaleable stock is provided by the SDO or SSC.

Prepare stock to be returned as follows:

a. Ensure that the value is clearly marked on each item.

b. Sort loose stamps by denomination and paste them on a letter size paper.

Note: A list of off-sale items is available on the Enterprise Data Distribution Web site. Go to: *http://edd/pls/posweb/ProdItem.Intro*.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 11-6, for detailed procedures on accounting for returning stock.

12 Stamp Stock and Cash Accountability

12-1 Stamp Stock Assignment

Stamp stock credits and cash credits are assigned as follows:

a. Employee stamp stock credits.
b. Employee cash credits.
c. Unit reserve stock.
d. Unit cash reserve.
e. Retail floor stock.
f. Rural carrier consignment.
g. Vending credits.
h. Contract postal unit (CPU) credits.
i. Automated postal centers (APCs).
j. Mobile units.
k. Philatelic credits.
l. Stamps by Mail.

12-2 Stamp Stock Responsibility

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for management of all stamp stock credits and cash credits assigned and must ensure the timely performance of all credit counts.

All employees with consigned credits are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock, cash, and money orders.

Unit reserve stock custodians are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock and money orders.

CPUs are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock, cash, and money orders.

12-3 Stamp Credits

12-3.1 Definition

A stamp credit is the value of the stamp stock and money orders consigned to a retail associate (RA) from the unit reserve stock at a postal retail unit (PRU).

Hold stamp credits to a reasonable multiple of the RA's weekly sales amount. A 2-week multiple is recommended. The postmaster, supervisor, or manager may adjust the value of stamp credits to be consistent with customer demand.

To maintain individual accountability, RAs must not trade or purchase stamp stock from one another employee.

In an emergency, a supervisor may authorize an RA to ship or receive stock from another RA as follows:

a. The supervisor or RA completes a PS Form 17, *Stamp Requisition/ Stamp Return,* in duplicate. Enter the names of both RAs and the amount of stamp stock on PS Form 17.

b. The supervisor must witness and sign PS Form 17 as authorizing this transaction.

c. The RA keeps a copy of the PS Form 17 until the next stamp credit count.

12-3.2 Unit Reserve Stock

The unit reserve stock custodian is accountable for the value of all items in the unit reserve stock, is responsible for managing the stamp stock inventory, and must report unit reserve stock activities.

Sales from the unit reserve stock are not allowed.

The unit reserve may be assigned to the postmaster, unit manager, or supervisor. At a finance station without a domiciled supervisor, a lead sales and services associate (LSSA) may be assigned the unit reserve. The LSSA may also be assigned a separate stock credit from which direct sales to the public are conducted. (A finance station is a postal retail unit that has three or fewer full-time RAs.)

Refer to Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*, subchapter 13-4, for detailed procedures for conducting unit reserve stamp stock counts.

12-3.3 Total Postal Retail Unit Stamp Accountability

Maintain the total PRU accountability on PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report.* AIC 853*,* Stamp Accountability Closing Balance, on the unit's PS Form 1412 is a combination of all stamp accountabilities within the same unit finance number (UFN) at the PRU. This combination includes the following:

a. Unit reserve stock.

b. Retail floor stock.

c. Individual stamp credits (e.g., retail associates, vending, Stamps by Mail®, and philatelic).

12-3.4 Stamp Credit Record Files

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for establishing and maintaining a stamp credit file for each employee. The file must contain the following items:

a. PS Form 3294-P, *Cash and Stamp Stock Count and Summary*, or PS Form 3294-C, *Cash Credit Count and Summary.*

b. PS Form 3293, *Retail Vending Credit Examination*, for vending credit.

c. PS Form 3368-P, *Accountability Examination Record.*

d. PS Form 3369, *Consigned Credit Receipt.*

e. PS Form 571, *Discrepancy of $100 or More in Financial Responsibility,* if applicable.

f. Letters of demand (LOD) for payment, if applicable.

Maintain a drawer or similar container of file folders, one for each credit, arranged in alphabetical or numerical order.

The retention period established for stamp credit file forms is not to exceed 2 years except for PS Form 3369 which is 3 years.

12-4 Individual Stamp Credit Counts

12-4.1 Counting Requirements

Supervisors must randomly count stamp credits maintained by bargaining unit employees at least once every 4 months.

Stamp credits maintained by nonbargaining employees must be counted by the nonbargaining employee and another employee at least once every 12 months.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 13-3, for detailed procedures on conducting stamp credit counts.

12-4.2 Stamp Vending Credit Count

Stamp vending credit is stamp stock credit assigned to an employee at a PRU servicing a stamp vending machine.

Stamp vending credits also apply to stamp stock credits assigned to self-service postal center (SSPC) technicians.

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the required stamp stock count is performed randomly at least once every 4 months.

Complete instructions for vending counts can be found in Handbook PO-102, *Self-Service Vending Operational and Marketing Program,* chapter 6.

12-5 Automated Postal Center Stamp Credit Count

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the required APC stamp stock count is performed randomly at least once every 3 months.

Complete instructions for conducting an APC count are available on the Postal Service intranet. Go to: *http://blue.usps.gov*. Click on the "Inside USPS" tab. Under "Headquarters, Finance," click on the *Accounting* link. Under "Related Links," click on the *Automated Postal Center* (APC) link. Under "Operational Procedures," click on *Finance Issues* link. Under "Finance Documents" click on *Credit Exam* link. The direct URL is *http://56.207.11.95/apc//files/procedures/CreditExam.doc*.

12-6 Contract Postal Unit Stamp Credit Count

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor of the host Post Office has the following responsibilities:

a. Ensuring that CPU stamp credit counts are conducted randomly at least once every 12 months.

b. Maintaining a separate file for CPU financial activities.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 13-7, for detailed procedures on conducting a CPU count.

12-7 Cash Credits

12-7.1 Unit Cash Reserves

PRUs may establish a unit cash reserve to supplement the needs of the unit. Use PS Form 3369 to assign the unit cash reserve to an individual who is directly accountable. When circumstances warrant, the unit cash reserve custodian may reassign all or part of the unit cash reserve using PS Form 3369. Any reassigned funds must be kept separate from other accountable credits assigned to the employee.

Report the unit cash reserve in AIC 753 on the unit's PS Form 1412. The unit cash reserve has no tolerance.

Note: CPUs may not have a cash reserve. Refer to Handbook F-101, section 13-8.1.2,for making changes to unit cash reserves.

12-7.2 Cash Retained (POS Units Only)

RAs that are only consigned a cash credit are authorized a cash retained amount of $100, for which they are individually accountable. The RA documents the maximum authorized cash retained on PS Form 3369.

Individual RA cash retained amounts must be equal to AIC 753 as reported on the individual's PS Form 1412 and cannot exceed the approved amount.

12-7.3 Contract Postal Units Cash Credit

CPUs may keep $100 or 10 percent of their stamp credit, whichever is less.

12-8 Segmented Inventory Accountability

Each unit must maintain a unit reserve stock and may have a number of different segments.

RAs who work at window services do not have a stamp stock inventory assigned and instead work from a shared retail floor stock.

RAs who work from the retail floor stock are assigned a $100.00 cash retained credit, for which they are individually accountable.

Other segments may require stamp stock inventory assigned as individual accountability for which they are directly accountable.

12-8.1 Segment Definitions

The following segments enable the assignment of cash or stamp stock to various individuals or roles within a unit:

a. **Vending —** Stock for sale through vending equipment is assigned to a vending clerk, or designated employee, who is directly accountable for that inventory.

b. **Mobile Unit Credits —** Stock for use by employees assigned to operate mobile units. This credit is directly accountable to an individual.

c. **Philatelic Units —** Where a dedicated philatelic credit is used, the credit is assigned to an individual who is directly accountable.

d. **Retail Floor Stock —** A common inventory for use by retail employees who are not directly accountable for that inventory.

e. **Stamps by Mail (SBM) —** An inventory for use in filling stamp orders received from customers by mail that is assigned to an individual who is directly accountable for that inventory. SBM is used where volume prohibits filling requisitions from the retail floor stock.

f. **Special Event Credits —** Temporary credits for special events can be assigned to one of the accountable segments with stock issued directly from the unit reserve. At the completion of the event a count is conducted and the balance is either returned to the unit reserve, prepared for destruction, or moved to the retail floor stock.

12-8.2 Responsibilities

Postmasters, managers, and supervisors at PRUs must comply with the procedures defined in this section. In addition, postmasters, managers, and supervisors are responsible for the following:

a. Establishing and controlling segments within the unit.

b. Monitoring inventory levels.

c. Ensuring proper entry of all financial transactions.

d. Remitting all funds in excess of authorized reserves.

e. Monitoring operations, including count procedures.

All PRU employees are responsible for the following:

a. Ensuring financial integrity.

b. Maintaining security of all postal stock, funds, equipment, and facilities.

c. Reporting all retail transactions.

d. Providing receipts to each customer.

e. Using the POS cash drawers for all daily transactions as they occur.

Employees are accountable for cash, stamp stock, and money orders directly assigned to them.

12-9 Retail Floor Stock

Under the retail floor stock segmented inventory accountability (SIA) concept, two modifications are made to traditional controls:

a. Cash is separated from stamp stock in retail credits.

b. A shared retail floor stock replaces individual stamp credits for RAs.

The unit reserve stock custodian issues stock directly to the retail floor stock. Although no individual RA is accountable for this stock, each RA making sales from this credit is responsible for ensuring accurate reporting of the sales from the retail floor stock. RAs are also responsible for adequate protection and security of retail floor stock.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 14-2, for detailed procedures on conducting retail floor stock counts.

12-10 Other SIA Segment Counts

Counts for stamp stock credits assigned to bargaining employees must occur at least once every 4 months.

Concurrent counts must be performed for employees assigned unit reserve stamp stock and other accountable credits. This begins a new cycle for the required “count frequencies” for all assigned credits.

Blank money order stock assigned to an accountable segment employee, must be verified each time the count for that segment is performed.

Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 13-3, for detailed procedures on conducting individual stamp credit counts.

13 Lobby and Retail Counter

13-1 Image

Retail lobby standards are as important as retail maintenance standards. For the Postal Service to project a professional business image to Postal Service customers and employees, the Postal Service must focus on retail lobbies and other customer service areas. Every lobby must be safe, well-organized, well-maintained, neat, and clean. The Post Office lobby is one of the most visible images customers have of the Postal Service.

The Post Office lobby is the principal business office of the Postal Service. For many customers, the lobby is their only close-up view of Postal Service operations; therefore, its appearance, convenience, and efficiency directly affect the Postal Service's public image. To enhance corporate identity and continue the standardization process, lobbies must be maintained according to established Postal Service guidelines (e.g., paint colors, signage, and merchandise displays).

13-2 Safety and Cleanliness

13-2.1 Personal and Environment

All Postal Service employees are responsible to ensure that the Postal Service provide a clean and safe environment for customers and employees. Business and personal flyers are not permitted in the lobby or at the retail counter.

Secure all lobby furniture and equipment properly to the floor to prevent them from tipping over. Children must not climb onto or be placed on tables or the counterline at any time.

Maintain a professional work environment at each workstation. Personal belongings including purses, backpacks, and top coats do not belong at the retail counter.

Playing music in Post Office lobbies brings problems; therefore, music is not allowed under retail standardization guidelines. Playing local radio stations creates two problems:

a. Playing music could subject the Postal Service to paying royalty fees to music publishers because artists are entitled to compensation when their music is played in public places.

b. Postal Service commercial advertising policy requires that all advertising on Postal Service property be reviewed and approved in advance.

Exceptions are Postal Service-approved audio and signage test sites.

13-2.2 Food and Beverages

Food and drinks do not belong at, below, or behind the retail counter.

13-2.3 Professional Appearance and Hygiene

Postal Service employees are responsible for being properly dressed for their duty. They are expected to maintain high standards of professional appearance, representing to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their official duties.

13-3 Service in Five Minutes or Less

It is not economical to provide instantaneous service to each customer entering the lobby. Instead, our goal is to provide a level of service that produces a waiting time of less than 5 minutes. This goal is achieved by the following:

a. Providing proper training and staff scheduling.

b. Using the Lobby Director Program.

c. Using an automated postal center (APC) host in offices with an APC.

d. Encouraging proper placement and maintenance of self-service vending equipment.

e. Using equipment [e.g., integrated retail terminal (IRT) and (point-of-service (POS) ONE] to expedite transactions.

f. Using the Retail Data Mart (RDM) window operation survey (WOS) earned actual staffing graph and retail analysis profile (RAP) to identify proper staffing.

g. Advising customers of alternate access [(e.g., contract postal units (CPUs), APCs, Stamps by Mail, and *www.usps.com]*.

13-4 Lobby Sweeps

Lobby sweeps should be conducted when lines are long due to retail associates conducting lengthy transactions. A supervisor, postmaster, or retail associate can conduct a lobby sweep for customers who are conducting nonrevenue transactions such as picking up mail.

13-5 Lobby Director Program

The objective of the Lobby Director Program is to reduce the average waiting time by helping customers before they reach the retail service counter. The program also aims to reduce the customer's perceived waiting time by demonstrating that the Postal Service provides prompt, efficient, and courteous service. Encourage customers to use the APC when there are long lines at the window.

13-6 Signage

13-6.1 Mandatory Postings

The posters, signs, labels and decals that must be displayed in every Post Office are described below.

In the exterior/entrance zone, display the following items:

a. Post Office name per current Facilities' standards.

b. Hours of operation decal on main entrance door.

c. Debit/credit card decal.

d. Holiday closing sign.

e. Label 120, *Facility Alarm* (replaces Labels 117-A and 112, *Alarms*) at the customer entrances of offices not designated as high risk.

f. Label 117-A, *Warning* (Armed Robbery), posted on the rear employee entrances/loading dock doors and at the customer entrances as designated by the Postal Inspection Service as being high-risk areas.

In the self-service zone or near the entrance to the Post Office, display the following items:

a. Poster 7, *Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property.*

b. Poster 158, *Possession of Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons on Postal Property Is Prohibited by Law.*

c. Poster 296, *Notice of Reward.*

d. Poster 313, *Service Performance.*

e. Sign 151, *Camera Warning,* displayed on or below the four mandatory posters in the self-service zone of offices that have closed circuit cameras that monitor transactions for operational or security purposes.

f. Decal DEC DDD1, *Aviation Mail Security,* displayed on every collection box or mail drop slot, APC drum.

In the full service lobby zone, display the following items:

a. Poster 37 or 37-S, *Is Your Package Safe to Mail?,* posted near the Retail counter.

b. Label 159, *Returned Checks/Dollar Coin,* displayed at every window in every Post Office.

In the PO box lobby zone, display the following items:

a. PO Box Mail Availability (Up-Time) and PO Box Rates and Availability Signs (***Note:*** The only approved versions are those from Transworld Signs and MessageMaker 3).

b. SSS46 – Selective Service Poster.

Mandatory posters, notices, and signs must be available in Post Offices for customer access. These items may be placed in a binder or posted behind the counter. A list of information that must be made available is contained in the *Postal Operations Manual* as Exhibit 125.343 and is provided here as Exhibit 13-6.1.

Exhibit 13-6.1
Mandatory Public Information to be Available

Type of Information	Title and Description
FBI Most Wanted Poster	Keep in binder behind counter
Notice 123	*Price List*
Notice 4314-C	*We Want to Know*
Poster SSS46	*Selective Service Lobby Poster*
Publication 201	*Consumer's Guide to Postal Services and Products*
Sign 145	*Payments Acceptance Policy*
Signs[1]	Hours of operation. Time when all committed PO Box mail is normally distributed. Letter drops and collection point times.
"ZIP+ Retrieval" DVD[2]	DVD replaces Pub 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory,* and Pub 66, *ZIP+4 State Directory.*

1. *Available through the direct vendor signage contract.*
2. *Customers may order the DVD by contacting the National Customer Support Center, 6060 Primacy Parkway, Suite 101, Memphis, TN 38188-9919, at 800-238-3150.*

13-6.2 Point of Purchase Signage

Point of purchase (POP) signage is visual promotional material received periodically from the Postal Service Retail Merchandising Center. The promotional materials and signage communicate product and service information and promotional messages to customers.

Display POP signage according to the most current Signage Instruction Guide provided in the POP kit.

Some guidelines are the following:

a. Do not use visible tape to hang signage.

b. Do not use handwritten or computer-generated signage.

c. Use approved POP hardware to display menu boards and posters.

d. Adhere to put-up and take-down dates printed on POP elements and listed in the *Signage Instruction Guide.*

e. Remove outdated/seasonal POP displays.

f. Order additional signage and hardware as needed. ReadyPost and the new POP Hotline can be reached through the Material Distribution Center (MDC), in Topeka, at 800-332-0317.

13-6.3 Planograms

A planogram is a schematic drawing that shows the proper placement of POP elements and retail merchandise in Postal Service retail lobbies. Planograms are included in the *Signage Instruction Guide* in POP kits and accompany retail product shipments. They should be used as guides when changing retail POP signage and organizing merchandise on slatwalls or similar merchandisers.

13-6.4 Interior and Exterior Signage Zones

When signage is properly placed to deliver the right message in the right place at the right time, the signage has the most impact. To ensure that the Postal Service is communicating information in the most effective way, we have identified a system of zones within the postal retail unit (PRU).

Each zone has a specific communication goal. The time spent in each area, as well as the amount of customer traffic, helps determine the placement of each communication for the fullest effect.

The focus for each zone can change depending on the time period. The different zones are as follows:

a. **Exterior/Entrance Zone:** Promotional offers and general information for awareness of products and services.

b. **Self-Service Zone:** How to or directional information for completing simple transactions using an APC or vending.

c. **Full-Service Zone:** Detailed information on postal products and services.

d. **Retail Counter Zone:** Price point, product, and service information.

e. **Open Merchandise Zone:** Merchandise and packaging for immediate or future use.

f. **PO Box Lobby Zone:** Nonrevenue-generating and public awareness signage.

g. **Employee Zone:** Information intended only for employees.

13-6.5 Handwritten and Homemade Signs

Except for official Postal Service and other approved governmental notices and announcements, no handbills, flyers, pamphlets, signs, posters, placards, or other literature may be deposited on the grounds, walks, driveways, parking and maneuvering areas; exteriors of buildings and other structures; or on the floors, walks, stairs, racks, counters, desks, writing tables, window ledges, or furnishings in interior public areas on Postal Service premises.

To achieve a professional retail environment and comply with retail standardization guidelines, no unauthorized, handwritten, or homemade signs may be displayed in the lobby.

Avoid the following:

a. Too many displays.

b. Clutter on bulletin boards in PO Box lobby.

c. Solicitation brochures.

d. Outdated displays.

e. Signage hung with visible tape.

13-7 Service Animals

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other federal and state laws protect the rights of people who have disabilities. The Act allows a person to be accompanied by his or her service animal in places of public accommodations (e.g., stores, doctors' offices, taxis and buses, restaurants, Post Offices, and other public places).

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform. Service animals assist blind individuals as well as people with other disabilities. Many disabilities are not visible, and service animals may vary in size or breed. Legally, service animals are not considered "pets." Some of these animals perform the following:

a. Alert persons with hearing impairments to sounds.

b. Pull wheelchairs or carry and pick up things for persons with mobility impairments.

c. Assist persons with mobility impairments with balance.

If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, the retail associate may ask, "Is this a service animal necessary for a disability?" or "Is this your pet?" You may not ask for proof or certification of the animal's training, require special ID cards for the animal, or ask about the person's disability.

Retail associates may not ask a person to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it, or (2) the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In addition, a retail associate may not charge an extra fee for the service animal, keep the person with the service animal out of areas open to the general public, or separate the person from the service animal. Do not touch, feed, talk to, or otherwise distract any service animal without the owner's permission.

When a person with a service animal comes into the unit, retail associates should do the following:

a. Speak directly to the person and greet him or her as you would any other customer.

b. Provide any assistance the person might need to conduct business or purchase Postal Service products and services.

Remember: the disabled person is responsible for the service animal's behavior.

13-8 Retail Products and Services

In an effort to increase revenue, Post Offices are now selling a variety of mailing products and stamp-related retail merchandise. Products are shipped from a central fulfillment center and charged to each office's FED strip number. Offices must follow the proper approval process prior to placing orders for merchandise.

13-8.1 Forms and Labels

Customers can fill out forms and address labels while they are waiting to be served. To facilitate this, ensure that the following forms and labels are always available for customers:

a. Express Mail envelopes.
b. Priority Mail envelopes.
c. Notice 4314-C, *We Want To Know.*
d. Notice 107, *Let's Keep the Mail Safe.*
e. PS Form 5445, *Stamp Vending Machine Refund Request.*
f. PS Form 2865, *Return Receipt for International Mail.*
g. PS Form 3813 ($200 and under) and PS Form 3813-P (over $200), *Domestic Insurance Receipts.*
h. PS Form 3804, *Return Receipt for Merchandise.*
i. Label 11-B, *Express Mail Mailing Label — Post Office to Addressee.*
j. PS Form 3800, *Certified Mail Receipt.*
k. PS Form 3811, *Domestic Return Receipt.*
l. PS Form 3806, *Receipt for Registered Mail.*
m. PS Forms 3227, 3227-S, 3227-G, 3227-O, *Stamps by Mail.*
n. SSS Form 1M (UPO), *Selective Service Form.*
o. PS Forms 2976, 2976-A, and 2976-E, *Customs Declarations and Dispatch,* forms and envelopes.
p. PS Form 152, *Delivery Confirmation Label.*
q. PS Form153, *Signature Confirmation Label.*

Provide attractive adjustment form holders that clearly display the forms to customers. Form holders are designed to accommodate a variety of form sizes. Keep them well stocked, neatly maintained, clearly labeled, and in a good location for employees and customers.

13-8.2 Professional Display

For a professional display, do the following:

a. Use any POP material provided; their purpose is to call attention to the product and the merchandiser.
b. Stock displays according to planograms.
c. Stock displays before opening or after closing hours. If items become empty during hours of operation, restock accordingly.

d. Keep displays neat and clean.
e. Fill “holes” by spreading product out until additional stock arrives.
f. Prevent product overlap.
g. Avoid overstocking a peg.
h. Replace damaged and dog-eared items.

At the lobby and retail counter, do the following:

a. Arrange similar items on a fixture with the lightest colors at the top and the darkest at the bottom.
b. Keep the display physically balanced.

13-9 Retail Merchandise

13-9.1 Retail Products

The Postal Service licenses selected vendors to produce merchandise that displays Postal Service trademarks, stamps, and images. Such merchandise or its packaging carries a hang-tag or label or otherwise states that the item is under license from the Postal Service.

When purchasing merchandise displaying a trademark, stamp design, or other pictorial or graphic image owned or used by the Postal Service, employees must ensure the merchandise is officially licensed by the Postal Service.

No locally produced items may be sold in Post Offices. Only merchandise that has been assigned an item number by HQ Retail may be sold in Postal Service lobbies.

13-9.2 Shipping Supplies

All shipping supplies are ordered from a single vendor. The result is a standardized selection of packaging and mailing supplies, all imprinted with the Postal Service and ReadyPost logos. These shipping supplies are available to view online at: *http://blue.usps.gov/retail*.

13-9.3 Packaging

Priority Mail and Express Mail packaging supplies (e.g., boxes, envelopes, and forms) are available at no cost for customers to order online at *www.usps.com* or by calling the toll-free number 800-222-1811.

13-10 Vending

Vending equipment is being removed from Postal Service facilities and nonpostal locations. The configurations range from a single small stamp vending machine to large self-service postal centers.

Self-service vending equipment, when installed in Postal Service facilities, must be kept operable and available to customers during all business and

box lobby hours until removed. Each manager in whose Postal Service facility a self-service unit is located is responsible for ensuring the operability of the equipment.

13-11 Public Services

13-11.1 Passport Application Acceptance

The Postal Service, in agreement with the Department of State, Passport Services, assists field passport agency offices by accepting passport applications, where operationally feasible, given overall customer service and revenue generation considerations.

The Postal Service retains a fee for executing the application. Record execution fees in AIC 264. Fees collected for the Department of State are accepted in the form of personal checks or money orders made out to the Department of State and attached to the passport application.

Training for employees offering passport application acceptance service is through a computer-based training web-based tool. The training may be taken on any computer connected to the Postal Service network in 3 hours or less. Additional training and ongoing support is provided by customer service representatives located in regional offices of the Department of State.

Passport photo services may be offered. Passport cameras and related equipment can be purchased through the MDC in Topeka, Kansas. Fees collected for passport photos are recorded in AIC 241.

13-11.2 Selective Service

In the interagency agreement with the Selective Service System (SSS), the Postal Service agrees to stock, provide, and display selective service registration forms and materials in classified Post Offices, stations, and branches. Contract postal units are not involved.

The following is a list of the required registration materials that can be obtained through the MDC and that should always be available in the PO Box lobby or behind the retail counter:

a. SSS 1M, *Registration Form.*

b. SSS Form 2, *Change Of Information.*

c. SSS Lobby Poster 46, *Read It. Fill It. Mail It.*

d. SSS Display Box 45, *Plastic Display Box*.

Check stock several times a week to make sure adequate supplies of the SSS 1M are on display. Guidelines are found in section 172 of the *Postal Operations Manual.*

13-11.3 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps

Federal law requires persons ages 16 and older who hunt migratory birds (e.g., ducks and geese) to obtain Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps, commonly known as “duck stamps.” These stamps may not be used for postage.

Post Offices act as agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by selling these stamps. Migratory Bird stamps are nonredeemable, and all sales are final.

More information on Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps can be found in the *Administrative Support Manual* and Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures,* part 11-6.7.

13-11.4 Burial Flags

Postmasters in CAG A-J offices and in CAG K offices at county seats must cooperate with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) when requested to act as depositories for burial flags. On the death of a veteran and in compliance with rules and regulations issued by the VA, a depository must issue a flag to drape the casket.

The VA supplies burial flags, application forms, and the rules and regulations governing flag issue. Postmasters must address all correspondence about the supply and issuance of the flags to the VA regional offices that use their office as a depository.

Regulations governing burial flags can be found in ASM 474.

13-12 Flags

13-12.1 American Flag

The flag of the United States must be displayed on stationary flagstaffs at all Post Offices, branches, stations, terminals, garages, and Postal Service facilities, including leased and rented premises. If the Post Office unit is located in a facility operated by the General Services Administration, that agency's regulations on the display of the flag govern. If the Post Office unit is located on a military base, the display of the flag is governed by the military installation.

When employees are on duty in a Postal Service facility, the flag must be displayed except in severe weather. Raise the flag as soon after sunrise as practical, and lower the flag at the time of closing or no later than sunset.

Other flags are flown below the U.S. flag if displayed on the same flagstaff and at the same level or lower if displayed on a separate flagstaff. When the U.S. flag is flown at half-staff, all other flags are to be at half-staff also.

When the flag is displayed, the flag must be flown at half-staff on the following dates:

a. May 15, Peace Officers Memorial Day.

b. Last Monday in May, Memorial Day Observed.

c. December 7, National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Although it is customary to fly the flag from sunrise to sunset, the U.S. Code states that "when a patriotic effect is desired," one can display the flag around the clock; however, the flag should be illuminated.

Requisitions for new flags must be submitted by field officials to the General Services Administration.

13-12.2 Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW-MIA) Flag

The Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 105-85, section 1082, requires that Postal Service facilities display the POW-MIA flag on 6 specified days each year as shown in Exhibit 13-12.2.

Exhibit 13-12.2
Days the POW-MIA Flag Is Displayed

Day	Date
Armed Forces Day	Third Saturday in May
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Flag Day	June 14
Independence Day	July 4
National POW–MIA Recognition Day	Third Friday in September
Veterans Day	November 11
Note: If any one of these days falls on a nonbusiness day, Postal Service facilities are required to display the POW-MIA flag on the last business day before the designated day.	

13-13 Collection

The collection Label 55 has two parts:

a. Label 55-A, *U.S. Mail Emblem*, used for outside collection boxes.

b. Label 55-B, *Collection Times.*

The policy for collection and application of customer notification labels is as follows:

a. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 13 ounces must be presented to the employee at a postal retail service counter by the customer.

b. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 13 ounces deposited in a collection box or lobby drop will be returned to the customer with Decal DDD-2 (July 2007 edition) applied.

c. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 13 ounces that has been left in a customer's mailbox or at a business's point of pickup will not be picked up. Instead, Decal DDD-2 (July 2007 edition) will be applied and the piece will be returned to the customer's mailbox. ***Note:*** Place Decal DDD-2 decal over the destination address, city, state, and ZIP, leaving the addressee's name visible.

d. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 13 ounces presented to the carrier by the customer will be refused. The carrier advises the customer that these pieces must be presented to an employee at a retail service counter and the customer may use electronic postage if residential pick up is desired and or provide a Decal DDD-2 (July 2007 edition).

e. Customer service and mail processing facilities need to stock AVSEC units with new Decal DDD-2 decals.

f. All collection boxes, lobby drops, and APCs need Decal DDD-1, *13-Ounce Rule* applied.

g. AVSEC Clearance Stamps are issued to small offices that do not have the means of applying proof of proper postal acceptance (PVI or meter strip).

h. There is no Known Customer mail flow.

Note: Rural carriers will continue to be allowed to accept packages without postage along with money for postage as is currently done. However, the rural carrier must take the piece to the retail window for finalization of the retail transaction and application of a PVI, meter strip or AVSEC Clearance Stamp to make the mail piece “identifiable.”

14 End-of-Day Requirements

14-1 Remit Funds

All funds must be removed from the cash drawer and remitted daily. Cash must be counted in a secure area away from the counter line. A checklist must be maintained in each office. Verify each check against the list. Associates verify checks against the list printed from the retail equipment [e.g., point-of-sale (POS), integrated retail transaction (IRT), and calculator]. Submit remittances to the designated closeout person.

The receipt of the funds must be verified and acknowledged by the designated closeout employee.

If the designated closeout employee leaves prior to the unit closeout, any funds accepted earlier from remittances must be transferred to the final closeout employee. The closeout employee verifies and initials AIC 751/752 on the retail associate's (RA's) copy of PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report.* This becomes documentation for the final unit PS Form 1412.

14-2 Retail Associate Closeout

Individual RAs must prepare PS Form 1412 whenever financial transactions are performed at the postal retail unit (PRU). RAs must verify PS Form 1412 entries against supporting documentation prior to submission of the final PS Form 1412. Account identifier codes (AICs) associated with stamp and retail sales will not have supporting documentation.) RAs must be identified by name or clerk number on all PS Form 1412 supporting documentation (e.g., tapes, lists, and receipts).

RA closeout procedures are detailed in the following parts of Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures:*

a. eMOVES Units: part 5-2.1.

b. IRT Units: part 5-3.1.

c. POS Units: part 5-4.1.

14-3 Unit Closeout

All PRUs, regardless of size or revenue, must report their financial activity on PS Form 1412 and electronically transmit to Accounting Services at the close of each business day.

Unit closeout procedures are detailed in the following parts of Handbook F-101:

a. eMOVES Units: part 5-2.2.

b. IRT Units: part 5-3.2. (If an IRT disk crashes, see Handbook F-101, part 5-3.3.)

c. POS Units: 5-4.2. (Complete instructions for processing POS transactions and adjustments are found in the *POS ONE Procedures Guide*, available on the POS ONE Web site.)

14-4 Transmission

All offices are required to check daily for successful transmission. If not successful, Accounting Services will contact the office.

14-4.1 eMOVES Offices

All eMOVES offices are required to complete a PS Form 1412 to support daily transmission activity.

14-4.2 IRT Offices

IRT offices must ensure that data has been transferred to the retail consolidation unit (RCU) disk and that the system is left powered on for transmission.

14-4.3 POS Offices

POS offices must ensure that the unit is closed and that the terminals are left powered on for transmission.

14-5 Deposit

PRUs make deposits when postal funds in excess of the authorized cash reserve and/or cash retained reach $100. Refer to Handbook F-101, parts 13.8.1 and 13.8.2, for authorized cash reserves and cash retained.

Note: PS Form 1412 must be submitted on a daily basis. PRUs with less than $100 are not required to make a bank deposit; they must record amount into AIC 753 and submit PS Form 1412.

Units should have one deposit per day unless banking requirements require a separation of cash and checks. When funds exceed normal operating needs during the day, advance deposits must be made in addition to regular

deposits. Offices making advance deposits and separating cash and checks may have a maximum of four bank deposits per day.

Refer to Handbook F-101, part 9-1.2, for bank deposit procedures.

14-6 Security of Cash Drawer, Stock, and ReadyPost Products

14-6.1 Cash Drawers

Cash drawers must be locked for security during temporary retail associate absences from the retail service counter and must be removed from their cabinets for overnight storage in a vault or security container. Retail employees must never have access to one another's cash drawers.

14-6.2 Stamp Stock and Money Orders

Stamps, postal stationery, blank money orders, and other accountable items must be protected at all times. They may be stored in a locked drawer or cabinet for short periods during the duty day. At all other times, they must be stored in the main vault or security container that affords the best available security.

Detailed instructions for safeguarding accountable items are contained in Handbook F-101, chapter 3, Security.

14-6.3 Unit Reserve Stamp Stock and Money Orders

The unit reserve must never be accessible to more than one person at a time. The stock custodian is solely responsible for ensuring proper security of the unit reserve at all times.

14-7 Collection and Dispatch of Mail

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch. If instructed or assigned, retail associates will collect all lobby drops and outside collection boxes according to the collection times posted. The mail must be collected as close as possible to, but no sooner than, the times posted.

All labels and tags must be removed from incoming mail trays and other equipment. Correct tags, placards, and identifiers must be inserted or attached before any outgoing mail is dispatched. Never commingle different classes of mail.

14-8 Storage of Flag

No later than sunset, lower the flag ceremoniously and do not allow the flag to touch the ground. The flag must be folded or rolled carefully and stored where it will not be soiled or otherwise damaged. If the flag is wet when taken down, carefully spread out the flag and allow it to dry thoroughly before storing the flag.

It is customary to fly the flag from sunrise to sunset. The U.S. Code states "when a patriotic effect is desired," the flag can be displayed around the clock; however, the flag must be illuminated.

14-9 Dispatch of Mail

Prepare mail according to the local dispatch standard operating procedure. Conduct a final walk-through of the building to ensure that all mail has been collected and culled prior to final dispatch. Complete dispatch log if required.

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and is ready for dispatch.

14-10 Scanner

All signed PS Forms 3849, *Sorry We Missed You,* must be dispatched according to current policy. Ensure that Intelligent Mail Device scanners are properly placed in the cradle for download transmission.

14-11 Secure Building, Alarm, and Lights

Retail associates must perform the following:

a. Ensure that the office has been swept for all outgoing mail, and all mail has been dispatched.
b. Verify that all counterline drawers containing postal stationery are locked and bait money orders are in place.
c. Verify that all cash drawers have been properly stored in the safe or vault.
d. Secure money order imprinter.
e. Ensure that all safes and vaults are locked.
f. Verify that all doors and windows are closed and locked.
g. Ensure that all appliances have been turned off in the break rooms.
h. Turn off required lights.
i. Set alarm.
j. Exit building.
k. Secure parking lot if necessary.

15 Alternative Access Channels

15-1 Vending

The self-service vending program provides alternative service to existing facilities and extends most postal services for the convenience of the public. The major benefits for Postal Service customers include the availability of postal services outside of regular window hours, reduction of congestion at Post Office windows, and the capability of completing postal transactions without assistance.

The major ways to support the use of vending equipment include the following:

a. Educate customers and employees.

b. Locally advertise the use of the self-service equipment.

c. Place equipment in non-Postal Service locations.

d. Maintain sales threshold through the use of the equipment.

15-2 Automated Postal Centers

Automated Postal Centers (APCs) are self-service mailing kiosks designed to process 80 percent of the transactions normally handled by a retail employee at the window. APCs handle noncash transactions, accepting major credit and debit cards. The APC performs the following services:

a. Dispense First Class Mail, Priority Mail, Parcel Post, Express Mail, and APC postage in any denomination.

b. Dispense First-Class Mail stamp booklets.

c. Provide Postal Service and mailing information, including ZIP Code lookup.

d. Offer domestic insurance up to $500.

e. Weigh and rate envelopes, flats, and parcels up to 70 pounds.

f. Prepare Express Mail forms and Certified Mail return receipts.

g. Offer Delivery Confirmation and Insurance Services.

h. Provide a system-generated receipt for payment.

APCs are located in Postal Service lobbies; the majority are in areas open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

APCs move simple transactions away from the retail operation. They allow retail professionals to use their skills to assist customers with more complicated mailing needs.

Through the use of APCs, the Postal Service expects to accomplish the following:

a. Increase revenue.

b. Reduce the cost of selling products and services.

c. Improve operational performance.

d. Reduce wait time in line.

e. Improve employee and customer satisfaction.

15-3 Automated Teller Machines

Customers may use bank automated teller machines (ATMs) to purchase stamps. The bank may receive stamps through a stamps-on-consignment contract or purchase them from a Post Office. Stamps are sold at face value, but the banks are allowed to charge a transaction fee. The district retail office is responsible for this program.

15-4 Stamps by Mail

Stamps by Mail (SBM) service allows Postal Service customers on all carrier routes and PO Boxes to purchase postal products (e.g., booklets, sheets and coils of stamps, postal cards and stamped envelopes) by ordering the products through the mail.

The Postal Service order forms are incorporated in self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes. Customers may obtain order envelopes (PS Forms 3227-A and 3227-B, *Stamps Delivered to Your Door)* from city, rural, or contract delivery service carriers, in Post Office lobbies, or by telephoning the local delivery unit to request their delivery. PS Form 3227-A is for non-credit card SBM fulfillment sites. PS Form 3227-B is for credit card only SBM fulfillment sites.

After completing the PS Form 3227-A order form and enclosing a check or money order, the customer drops the sealed envelope in a collection box or his or her mailbox. Mail orders are filled and delivered to the customer within 2 business days after the customer mails the order.

Postmasters must requisition PS Forms 3227-A and 3227-B from the printer and maintain a supply for use in filling customers' telephone requests for the form, for customer use in the Post Office lobby, and for all letter carriers and PO Box clerks to use as required.

Postmasters must requisition PS Form 3227-A or 3227-B, *Stamps by Mail* brochure, as appropriate from the printer. To order forms, submit the PS Form 3227-O, *Stamps by Mail* brochure supply order to the printer. PS Form 3227-O is available at: *http://blue.usps.gov*; click on *Forms,* then select the form by number.

15-5 Stamps by Rural and Highway Contract Route Carrier

Stamp purchase orders allow Postal Service customers on rural and contract delivery service routes to purchase all Postal Service products (e.g., booklets, sheets, coils of stamps, postal cards, and money orders) directly from the rural carrier or by using PS Form 3227-R, *Stamp Purchase Order.*

Customers obtain PS Form 3227-R from the rural or contract delivery service carrier or by telephoning the local delivery unit to request its delivery. After completing an order form and enclosing cash, check, or money order, the customer places the sealed envelope in his or her mailbox with the flag up.

Stamp orders are generally filled and returned to the customer either at the time of mail delivery by the rural carrier or within 1 business day. Postmasters must maintain a supply of PS Form 3227-R for use in filling customers' telephone requests for the form or for rural delivery carriers to use as required.

Postmasters must requisition PS Form 3227, *Stamp Purchase Order,* from the Material Distribution Center (MDC). The MDC applies limits to order quantities, depending on the CAG level of the requisitioning office. Since actual need may not be determined by such limits, districts must order "buffer" supplies of forms in order to serve those units receiving too few.

15-6 Stamps on Consignment

The Stamps on Consignment Program is a practical, convenient, and low-cost alternative access channel that allows customers the opportunity to purchase postage stamps at postal prices through participating grocery, convenience, drug, and other retail stores that are located close to where customers live, work, and shop and are open during hours convenient to customers' schedules. Financial institutions such as banks and credit unions may also work through the Stamps on Consignment program to stock their ATMs.

Through the oversight of the Retail Access Channels, Stamps on Consignment Program office, the Postal Service has contracted with a single supplier to oversee customer acquisition, program marketing, and product distribution for this program on a nationwide basis. The designated supplier enters solely into stamp consignment agreements with individual and corporate businesses under specific business conditions. The local Stamps on Consignment program no longer exists.

Postmasters, managers, supervisors, and retail associates who are contacted by individual and corporate businesses interested in participating in the Stamps on Consignment program should direct potential customers to the District retail manager or to *www.uspsstampstogo.com* for further information.

15-7 Stamps by Phone

By calling 800-STAMP-24 (800-782-6724), customers may order stamps and make purchases with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit card. This toll-free number is available 20 hours a day (closed 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. Central Time), 7 days a week. There is a service charge, and stamps are delivered by mail within 3 to 5 business days.

15-8 Contract Postal Units

Contract Postal Units (CPUs) and Community Post Offices (CPOs) offer the general public alternate access to Postal Services after normal business hours where they live, work, and shop. These locations are typically in retail establishments under contract to the Postal Service and are staffed by the retailer's employees. Most CPUs offer all the regular services available in a Post Office. This includes domestic and international mail, insurance, delivery and signature confirmation, and other extra services. CPUs sell Postal Service products and services exclusively at Post Office prices. Competing services, such as UPS and FedEx, are not allowed. In addition, CPUs can not have private Post Office boxes.

CPUs have been a historic part of the provision of postal services in the United States. Publication 156, *Postal Service Employees Guide to Contract Postal Units,* is a reference guide for the CPU Program. Publication 156 is intended to assist each member of the team responsible for implementing and managing a CPU. Publication 156 explains the process of opening and managing a CPU, including justification, package request, solicitation, and contract award.

Execution of a CPU contract requires a funding commitment from the district manager or other authorizing office. Updates are posted on the contract postal access channel (CPAC) Web page and also on Blueshare. Publication 156 is available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/cpim;* click *Pubs.*

15-9 Mobile Retail Units

For special events, holidays, etc., the Postal Service provides service by taking the Post Office to customers. Most districts have equipment for a mobile retail unit. Contact your district retail office for availability of a mobile retail unit.

15-10 Postal Service Web Site

The Postal Service Web site (*http://www.usps.com*) provides a full set of services for Postal Service customers.

Interactive pages include lookup functions for ZIP Codes, Post Offices, APCs, PO Box availability and fees, Passport Offices, and Track and Confirm. Customers can purchase stamps through the Postal Store; print online postage with Click-N-Ship; reference Postal Service manuals, forms, and publications; use domestic and international rate calculators; submit online change-of-address forms; place mail on hold; request redelivery; order expedited packaging supplies; and more.

Other key pages include prices in a variety of formats, price information, national job postings, print-on-demand, portable document format forms, a wide range of Postal Service publications, and complete consumer information. The site also provides news releases, speeches, and special news features.

The site is indexed so that users can search for specific information. The functional areas participating are responsible for keeping their information accurate and up-to-date.

15-11Post Office Express

Post Office Expresses (POEs) are small Post Offices operated by Postal Service employees and located within retail stores, typically a large, busy supermarket. POEs were created and designed to target consumers in their current shopping environment such as a busy grocery store. POEs offer the same products and services available at traditional retail locations. These services include money orders, philatelic products, packaging products, and official licensed retail products. Most POE units are open 7 days a week with evening and weekend hours that reflect local shopping patterns.

A request for a POE is considered by Retail Access Channels at Headquarters when all other avenues for alternate access have been exhausted. A “Retail Facilities Start Up” questionnaire must be completed to request a new location. This questionnaire is submitted to Headquarters for approval with the requested documentation.

Visit the Retail Operations Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/retail/* for more information.

15-12 Approved Shippers

The Approved Shipper Program was created to protect the Postal Service brand; introduce procedures to address aviation mail security at retail establishments that already hold letters and packages and tender them, on behalf of their customers, to the Postal Service; and improve the quality of information available to customers who use these stores. Participating stores

must currently sell postal services and must be approved by the local district. Stores must sign a license agreement that defines the use of signage, and the terms and conditions of participation. It is intended that a delegation of authority will be provided to district managers so they can sign the license agreements on behalf of the Postal Service. Participating stores will not receive any compensation from the Postal Service for the sale of postal mailing services.

A retailer contacts the postal service through e-mail at *HQ-USPSApprovedShipper@usps.gov* to apply for this program.

Visit the Retail Operations Web site at: *http://blue.usps.gov/retail* for more information.

16 Postage Alternatives

16-1 PC Postage

PC Postage service is a form of postage payment. It may be used with Click-N-Ship at: *www.usps.com* or on other Web sites that are not operated by the Postal Service. PC Postage is also printed from vending machines in some cases. Customers can print postage stamps from a computer by setting up an account with an authorized provider. PC Postage software is authorized for use with all mailing services except periodicals. To learn more about PC Postage options or to see listing of vendors, go to: *http://www.usps.com/postagesolutions/pc_post.htm*.

16-2 Online Label Printing

Click-N-Ship is an easy-to-use online shipping service available at *www.usps.com*. It provides customers a convenient way to print shipping labels from their home or office. All a customer needs is a computer, printer, and an Internet connection. Customers can now print labels with PC Postage indicia from the Postal Service Web site and use their credit card to pay for postage. Labels can be printed on regular printer paper or self-adhesive labels. Signature Confirmation™ can be purchased for a fee. Domestic insurance for up to $500 can be purchased for Express Mail and Priority Mail services. An electronic Delivery Confirmation service is available at no charge on Priority Mail service.

Customers can print online shipping labels via *www.usps.com* with postage for the following domestic and international services:

a. Priority Mail service.

b. Express Mail service.

c. Express Mail International service.

d. Global Express Guaranteed service.

Click-N-Ship can also make mailing more convenient for customers. Customers can drop domestic Express Mail and Priority Mail mailpieces with PC Postage service, 13-ounces and over, in a collection box because these customers have registered online and have paid for postage with a credit card. Customers can also hand their Click-N-Ship packages to their carrier at the time of delivery. Each barcoded label printed is assigned a unique track and confirm number.

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17 Refunds, Exchanges, Claims, and Inquiries

17-1 Service Failure Refunds

17-1.1 Express Mail Refunds

If an Express Mail item was not delivered or made available for the customer as guaranteed under the applicable service purchased, a refund request must be made within 90 days after the date of mailing as shown in the "Date In" box on Label 11-B, *Express Mail Mailing Label — Post Office to Addressee.*

Refunds for Express Mail postage may be made only to the mailer or the holder of the Express Mail corporate account used to pay for postage. The mailer must complete Part I of PS Form 3533, *Application and Voucher for Refund of Postage, Fees, and Services,* in duplicate and submit the form along with the original customer copy of Label 11-B to any Post Office.

17-1.2 Signature Confirmation and Delivery Confirmation

Service failures for Signature Confirmation and Delivery Confirmation (fee only) are refundable locally if service is not rendered. Determine appropriate amount and follow normal accounting procedures as outlined in the Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*, chapter 21, Refunds and Exchanges.

17-2 Postage and Fee(s) Refunds

17-2.1 Unused Dated Postage Meter Indicia

Unused, dated postage meter indicia are considered for refund only if complete, legible, and valid. The licensee must submit the request within 60 days of the date(s) shown in the indicia. The refund request must be submitted with a properly completed PS Form 3533.

Charges for processing a refund request for unused, dated meter indicia are as specified in the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM).

17-2.2 Metered Postage Items Ineligible for Refund

The following metered postage items are ineligible for refunds:

a. Loose indicia printed on labels or tape that have been stapled together or attached to paper or other medium in any manner.

b. Reply envelopes or cards paid at the proper postage rate.

c. Indicia printed on labels or tape removed from wrappers or envelopes.

d. Indicia lacking clearly readable identification of the licensing Post Office, meter serial number, postage amount, or other required information.

e. Indicia printed on mail dispatched and returned to sender as undeliverable as addressed, including mail marked “no such post office” and mail addressed for local delivery and returned after directory service was given or delivery was attempted.

17-2.3 Unused Dated PC Postage Indicia

Unused, dated PC Postage indicia are considered for refund only if complete, legible, and valid. The request is processed by the provider, not the Postal Service. The licensee must submit the refund request within 30 days of the date(s) shown in the indicia. Disbursements of refunds for online postage are not permitted at local units.

17-2.4 Click-N-Ship PC Postage

Refer Click-N-Ship customers to the Click-N-Ship site. Log on to: *www.usps.com/clicknship* and click on the *MyAccount* link.

17-3 Exchanges

17-3.1 Stamp Exchanges

17-3.1.1 Postal Service Fault

The Post Office may correct mistakes in selling damaged, defective, or otherwise unserviceable stamps by exchanging stamps at full postage value.

17-3.1.2 Damaged in Customer’s Possession

Stamps that are damaged or otherwise unusable for postage (because of humidity, moisture, or other causes) while in a customer’s possession may be exchanged only for an equal number of stamps of the same denomination.

Unusable stamps accepted from a customer under these conditions must be those on sale at Post Offices within 12 months before the transaction.

Quantities of the same denomination totaling over $10 in value must be returned in the same configuration as when bought (e.g., sheets, coils, and booklets).

Each such transaction is limited to $100 worth of postage from each customer.

17-3.2 Exchange of Spoiled and Unused Postal Matter

Unusable and spoiled stamped envelopes; stamped cards, if uncanceled; and unused, precanceled stamps, and stamped cards are exchanged for other postage-stamped paper.

Only the buyer may exchange stamped envelopes or aerogrammes (air letter sheets) with a printed return address and stamped cards with any printed matter of the buyer. If there is no purchaser's printing, any responsible person may exchange them.

17-3.3 Stamps Converted to Other Postage Forms

A customer may submit postage stamps for conversion to an advance deposit for permit imprint mailings, subject to the conditions set forth in the DMM.

17-3.4 Items Not Exchangeable

The following postage items are not exchangeable:

a. Adhesive stamps, unless mistakes were made in buying, stamps were defective, or stamps were affixed to commercial envelopes and postcards.

b. Stamps cut from stamped cards, stamped envelopes, or aerogrammes (air letter sheets).

c. Parts and pieces of stamped cards.

d. Stamped cards, stamped envelopes, and aerogrammes received for reply. Mutilated and defaced stamps.

e. PC Postage cannot be exchanged at Post Offices. Customers must go online to the vendor's Web site to request exchange/refund for this service.

17-4 Vending Reimbursements

Customers may submit vending complaints, such as equipment malfunction, loss of money or stamps, or empty equipment, in person, by telephone, by mail, or by e-mail.

Employees record complaints concerning vending reimbursements on PS Form 5445, *Stamp Vending Machine Reimbursement Request*. PS Form 5445 is used to process and document the reimbursement process, provide a receipt to the customer, and provide written proof of the reimbursement itself for use by vending servicing employees in periodic credit examinations.

Vending reimbursements are made in cash. The supervisor must approve reimbursement if it is more than $20.00. If a vending reimbursement is to be mailed, a no-fee postal money order must be used.

Follow procedures outlined in Handbook PO-102, *Self-Service Vending Operational and Marketing Program,* chapter 8.

17-5 Inquiries and Claims

17-5.1 Domestic Claims

Accounting Service adjudicates all claims regardless of the amount of the claim.

Customers may file domestic insurance claims for loss or damage as follows:

a. Online (except claims for Registered Mail or COD).

b. By mail (customers may mail the claim to Accounting Services).

c. At any Post Office (customers may submit a completed claim form to any Post Office).

Customers will be requested to retain any damaged items and the mailing container (including any wrapping, packaging, and any other contents). In some situations, a customer may receive a request to present damaged item(s) to a Post Office for inspection, retention, and disposition in accordance with the claims decision.

If a customer presents a damaged item at your office, follow the instructions on the PS Form 2856, *Damage Report of Insured Parcel and Contents.*

For damaged item(s) left at a Post Office, once the claim is resolved, customers may pick up their damaged item(s).

Customer information on timelines for filing domestic claims is listed on PS Form 1000, *Domestic or International Claim.*

17-5.1.1 Customer Claims Filed Online

To file a claim online, customers should go to: *http://www.usps.com/insuranceclaims/online.htm.* A PS Form 1000 is not required for online claims because the form is built into the online system. Customers may upload JPG or PDF files to provide evidence of insurance, evidence of value, and, if applicable, proof of damage or missing contents. Customers may also print the completed online claim form, attach the required evidence, and mail to the address on the form.

Note: Claims for Registered Mail and COD articles may not currently be filed online.

17-5.1.2 Customer Claims Filed by Mail

To file a claim by mail, customers must send a completed PS Form 1000 and all required supporting documentation to the address on the claim form. Customers may obtain a PS Form 1000 at any Post Office or print the form from *www.usps.com.*

A direct link to the form is available to customers at: *http://www.usps.com/forms/_pdf/ps1000.pdf.*

To locate PS Form 1000 on *www.usps.com:*

a. Go to *http://www.usps.com/.*

b. Click *All Products & Services*.

c. Select *Forms* from the alphabetical list of products and services.

d. Click *Find a Form*.

e. Select *All Online PDF Forms in Numeric Order* and scroll down to the PS Form 1000 (pdf).

The information on the claim form is self-explanatory. With the completed claim form include all information that applies to their claim, including evidence of insurance, evidence of value, and, if applicable, proof of damage or missing contents. Customers may send the completed claim form and attachments to the following address, which is published on PS Form 1000:

USPS DOMESTIC CLAIMS
PO BOX 80143
ST LOUIS MO 63180-0143

17-5.1.3 Customer Claims Submitted at a Post Office

If a customer brings the completed PS Form 1000 and required documentation to the Post Office, send the form and documentation immediately to the address on the claim form.

17-5.1.4 Appeals Process for Denied Claims

For domestic insurance claims that were denied, the procedure for customers is described here.

For a denied claim, customers may appeal a decision by filing a written appeal focusing on the basis of the claim denial within 60 days of the date of the original decision to the following address:

DOMESTIC CLAIM APPEALS
ACCOUNTING SERVICES
PO BOX 80141
ST LOUIS MO 63180-0141

If the original claim was filed online, the customer may file an appeal online by signing into his or her account at: *www.usps.com/insuranceclaims/online.htm*. The appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of the original decision.

If a customer receives a check for less than the claimed amount, the customer may file a check protest appeal by submitting a written letter within 60 days of the date of the check to the following address:

CHECK PROTEST
ACCOUNTING SERVICES
PO BOX 80140
ST LOUIS MO 63180-0140

17-5.2 International Claims

Customers must contact the International Inquiry Center (IIC) at 800-222-1811 to report the loss, damage, or rifling (missing contents) of articles mailed from the United States to another country via Global Express Guaranteed® (GXG®), Express Mail International® (EMI), Priority Mail International™ (PMI) insured or ordinary parcels, and Registered Mail.

Inquiries are not accepted for ordinary letters, Priority Mail international flat-rate envelopes, Priority Mail International small flat-rate boxes, or M bags. Customers will be asked to provide the following information:

a. Mailing receipt number or item barcode number of the article.

b. Names and address of the mailer and the addressee.

c. Date of mailing.

d. The telephone number where the customer filing the inquiry can be contacted.

If a U.S. customer has possession of the article (in cases of return to sender), the claim may be initiated at any Post Office by completing a PS Form 1000.

Before initiating an inquiry about an article mailed to a foreign country, customers must allow sufficient time for delivery to the foreign country. For filing time limits, refer to PS Form 1000.

For additional information, see *the Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM®), section 920 or go to *www.usps.com/insuranceclaims/intlclaims.htm*.

Use Notice 122-A, *Instructions to Initiate an Inquiry for International Mail,* to assist customers with the inquiry process. This notice is in the form of a tear-off pad. A retail associate can tear one off one page and hand the page to the customer.

To obtain the status or information about a filed claim, Postal Service employees and customers may contact the Accounting Help Desk (AHD) at 866-974-2733.

For Global Express Guaranteed claims, customers may call the IIC (800-222-1811). The call will be transferred to the Postal Service's alliance partner, Federal Express. For more information on Global Express Guaranteed service, go to: *www.usps.com/international/globalexpressguaranteed.htm*.

17-5.2.1 International Inquiries Initiated by Customers

The IIC handles all customer inquiries about international articles. After an inquiry is received, the IIC corresponds with the post in the foreign country. If the IIC determines that a claim for the item should be initiated, a claim packet is sent to the customer with instructions for completing the claim and mailing the claim to the International Accounting Branch (IAB) of Accounting Services.

All claims for international articles are adjudicated by Accounting Services regardless of the amount of the claim.

17-5.2.2 Customer Claims for Damaged, Rifled, or Missing International Articles

If a damaged article is in a foreign country, the customer must initiate an inquiry by calling the IIC at 800-222-1811. However, if the damaged article is in the United States, an inquiry is not required.

Customers who receive a damaged article or one that has missing contents from a foreign country, except an item from Canada, must take the item to any Post Office immediately for inspection. Customers who receive a damaged article or one that has missing contents from Canada must contact the Canadian sender and instruct them to file a claim with Canada Post.

In some European countries, damaged claims are payable to the sender only (a waiver of rights is not allowed) and Express Mail claims do not require a

PS Form 2861, *Express Mail International Service Inquiry*. All other damaged claims are payable to the addressee (unless they waive rights to payment).

For more information, go to: *http://www.usps.com/insuranceclaims/intlclaims.htm*.

For detailed instructions on assisting customers who are filing an international claim for damage, rifling, or missing international articles, refer to Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*, section 20-2.3.

17-5.2.3 International Claims Adjudication Process

If the IIC determines that an inquiry qualifies as a claim, the customer receives a packet that includes a PS Form 1000. The customer must complete the claim form and attach evidence of mailing, evidence of value, and any other documentation requested to support the claim and send to the following address:

USPS INTERNATIONAL CLAIMS
ACCOUNTING SERVICES
PO BOX 80146
ST LOUIS MO 63180-0146

Supporting documentation for an international claim includes, but is not limited to, the following:

a. **Evidence of mailing.** If the article was mailed from the United States, the original mailing receipt is evidence of mailing. If the article was mailed in another country, the original mailing receipt, customs label, wrapper (if appropriate), or any other markings on the mailing container that indicate how it was sent is also evidence of mailing.

b. **Evidence of value.** The dated sales receipt, dated invoice, or statement of value from a reputable dealer is evidence of value. (A statement of value from the customer is also accepted but indemnity is limited to $100.) Paid repair bills (if the claim is for partial damage), estimates of repair costs, or appraisals from a reputable dealer are also evidence of value. Repair costs may not exceed the original purchase price.

c. **Return to Sender articles that do not include a reason for return or were returned in error.** The original wrapper, if reasonable, may be required. (An envelope, a cardboard box top, or piece of cloth is reasonable.) However, if a customer mails the article in a wooden box, it is not reasonable to return the box as the wrapper. In this situation, the customer should submit a copy of the wrapper and retain the wooden box until the claim has been resolved.

If an inquiry does not qualify to become a claim, the IIC sends a letter to the customer with the results of the inquiry investigation.

If the article was mailed using Express Mail International, the documentation may include a completed PS Form 2861 (received with the claim form from the IIC).

17-6 Notice 4314-C, We Want to Know

Notice 4314-C, *We Want To Know,* replaces PS Form 4314-C, *Consumer Service Card,* and promotes the following different immediate methods for customers to contact the Postal Service:

a. Speaking to our postmaster/management staff.

b. Calling 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777).

c. Visiting *www.usps.com*.

Ensure that Notice 4314-C is stocked in all Post Offices and make the notice available to customers upon request. Resolve all person-to-person and telephone contacts within 14 calendar days.

17-7 Call Center Program

The Postal Service's toll-free customer service telephone number is 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777).

Complaints, service issues, redelivery, and vacation hold mail requests are electronically referred to local Post Offices through the MyPostOffice (MyPO). This is an electronic transfer of information through the Internet to the Post Office from the call center agent. The local Post Office must download the MyPO information by 9 a.m. each morning and again in the afternoon so that customer requests for these services are handled in a timely manner.

17-8 Mail Fraud

If customers are having trouble with a mail order company or suspect that they have been the victim of fraud, instruct them to contact the Postal Inspection Service or complete PS Form 8165, *Mail Fraud Report,* available at all Post Offices. The customer should return the completed form to the local Post Office or send to the following address:

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS SERVICE CENTER
US POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE
222 S RIVERSIDE PLZ STE 1250
CHICAGO IL 60606-6100

17-9 Unwanted Mail

Certain unsolicited or undesirable mail is prohibited from the mailstream, including obscene materials, violence-inciting materials, and some types of mail relating to lotteries.

17-9.1 Sexually Oriented Mail

Section 3010 of Title 39 U.S.C. gives people a way to protect themselves and their minor children from receiving unsolicited sexually oriented advertisements through the mail. Customers may invoke the protection as follows:

a. Completing PS Form 1500, *Application for Listing and/or Prohibitory Order.*

b. Filing the form with any postmaster or designated Postal Service representative.

Customers may file for themselves or for their children under 19 who live with them or who are under their care, custody, or supervision. An authorized officer, agent, fiduciary, surviving spouse, or other representative may file on behalf of a corporation, firm, association, estate, or deceased or incompetent addressee.

After a customer is on the list for 30 days, any mailer who sends them unsolicited sexually oriented advertisements is subject to criminal sanctions under 39 U.S.C. 3011 and 18 U.S.C. 1735-371.

This prohibitory order remains in effect for 5 years unless the customer asks to have it removed. At the end of 5 years, customers must file again to have the names reinstated.

17-9.2 Unsolicited Mail

Federal law prohibits the shipment of unordered merchandise. Such a practice may constitute an unfair trade practice. Merchandise mailed in violation of the U.S. Code may be treated as a gift by the recipient without any obligation to the sender. The laws governing this practice are enforced by the Federal Trade Commission.

17-9.3 Direct Marketing (Remove Name)

Some consumers would like to receive less advertising mail at home. Mail Preference Service, a service of the Direct Marketing Association, helps decrease the amount of national nonprofit or commercial mail customers receive. To register with the name removal file, customers should write to the following:

MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE
DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 9008
FARMINGDALE NY 11735-9008

17-10 Mail Recovery Centers

Mail recovery centers (MRCs) are now located in Atlanta, Georgia, and St. Paul, Minnesota. MRCs are responsible for the final disposition of undeliverable First-Class Mail items, packages, and accountable mail items; and for protecting the privacy of the mail.

For more information on MRCs, visit Consumer Affairs Operations at: *http://blue.usps.gov/caweb/html/fr_ops.htm*.

17-10.1 First-Class Mail

Send all First-Class Mail items (except postcards and postal cards), single-piece-rate Standard Mail items, and Package Services mail that cannot be forwarded or returned, to an MRC for disposition. Send dead letters daily and dead parcels weekly.

17-10.2 Express Mail

Send Express Mail articles that cannot be forwarded or returned during the specified holding period to the area MRC in an Express Mail pouch.

17-10.3 Postcards and Postal Cards

Dispose of postcards and postal cards without a return address if the Post Office can shred or destroy them completely. If not, forward them to the area MRC.

18 Philatelic

18-1 General Information

Employees should familiarize themselves with the national announcements governing the release, sale, and discontinuance of postage stamps and postal stationery. Commemorative stamps and postal stationery (stamped postal cards and embossed stamped envelopes) depict the cultural and historical heritage of the United States. These polices are established and governed by Stamp Services at Headquarters. Uniform application of these polices provide a high degree of integrity to the entire program. All employees and contractors must comply with these policies and procedures.

To accommodate stamp collectors and their purchasing needs, philatelic centers provide collectors with a retail location where they can personally review and select stamps and stamp products for their collections.

18-2 Definitions

The term “philatelic center” is most frequently used to describe the centers in the philatelic network. A philatelic center may be referred to as a “Postal Shoppe,” “Stamp Shoppe,” or “Postique.” Additionally, philatelic centers may be called “philatelic windows.”

18-3 Philatelic Centers

Philatelic centers generally have a retail selling area in a self-contained facility. Philatelic centers are normally separate from lobby window positions, have special display units, and sell current stamps, postal stationery, and philatelic products.

18-4 Philatelic Window

A philatelic window is a designated retail window that sells stamps and philatelic products to stamp collectors. The window is identified clearly so that customers will not go to it for other postal services. Dedicated philatelic windows are maintained in Post Offices having high philatelic revenue potential, but lack sufficient display space as required in a philatelic center.

All current stamps, postal stationery items, and philatelic products are sold at philatelic windows.

18-5 Important Reference Tools

18-5.1 Stamps and Postal Stationery Announcement

This announcement includes a schedule of issuance dates for upcoming stamps and stationery items and includes the format that they will be issued. The Stamps and Postal Stationery Announcement is updated every 2 to 3 months (or as needed) in the *Postal Bulletin.*

18-5.2 USA Philatelic Catalog

The *USA Philatelic Catalog* features the stamps, stationery items, and philatelic products currently available for sale through mail order from the Stamp Fulfillment Service Center, Kansas City, Missouri. One copy of the catalog should be posted prominently in the philatelic center service area and marked to indicate only those products available at that center. The catalog is published quarterly.

Customers who are interested in receiving a free catalog should call 800-STAMP-24 or go to *www.usps.com* to order a free catalog.

18-5.3 Postal Bulletin and Other Reference Materials

While a majority of Post Offices nationwide have computers and use e-mail, Postal Link, Direct Line, and other electronic messaging as their main source of news and information, some Post Offices still rely on hard copies of the *Postal Bulletin* and other printed materials as their main source of news and information.

For current and updated information on the stamps and stationery program, all Post Offices and philatelic centers should refer to the *Postal Bulletin*, "Philately Section" on a biweekly basis. Retail associates and postmasters are responsible for providing customers with current and correct information on all aspects of stamps and the stamped stationery program. Also, information on the stamp program can be found in The *Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, which is published annually. Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures;* the *Postal Operations Manual* (POM), and the *Mailing Standards of the U.S. Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) are also good sources for obtaining additional information.

18-6 Service to Customers

Stamp collectors purchase a wide variety of stamps and stamp-related products. Since stamp collectors save the stamps, stationery items, and stamp products they purchase, and generally never use the stamps and stamp products for mailing purposes, a majority of the revenue from these sales is retained as profit. To serve the unique needs and requirements of

stamp collectors, the Postal Service established philatelic centers. See below for guidelines for operating philatelic centers.

18-7 Hours of Operation

Philatelic centers should be open for business during the hours which are most convenient for their customers. The hours of operation for the philatelic center should be posted for public information.

18-8 Community Role

Retail associates should familiarize themselves with the stamp collectors and the stamp clubs within their communities. Whenever possible, dates and locations of stamp club meetings should be posted and members should be encouraged to display selected collections in Post Offices in accordance with space and security requirements.

18-9 Requirements for Philatelic Centers

18-9.1 Establishment Criteria

To increase the effectiveness of the philatelic center network, proposed centers must meet one of the following two standards:

a. Be located in a city having at least 50,000 residents.

b. Be the single designated philatelic center within a district which does not have a city with a population of at least 50,000.

Cities with populations greater than 100,000 may be considered for more than one center. The number of centers approved for such cities will depend on total population and revenue potential.

Exceptions: Because some sparsely populated areas have large and active philatelic communities, exceptions to these criteria may be warranted. Requests should be submitted to the district retail manager with a written statement justifying the need. Such a statement, describing feasibility and revenue potential of proposed site, must be approved by the area retail manager who is responsible for notifying the Manager, Customer Services Operations in Washington, DC, and the local Stamp Distribution Office or Stamp Service Center (SDO/SSC) that supplies the stamp stock.

18-9.2 Request to Establish a Philatelic Center

Requests to establish a philatelic center should be forwarded directly from the area retail manager to the manager of Customer Services Operations at Headquarters in Washington, DC. The request should include the following:

a. Complete name, address, and finance number of the Post Office where the philatelic center will be located. Indicate whether the center is at the main Post Office or in a station or branch.

b. The establishment criterion the center meets (i.e., whether it has a population of at least 50,000, it is the only designated center in the district, or it is an exception which deserves consideration).

c. A statement forecasting revenue potential.

18-9.3 Approval Process

If approval is granted, the manager of Customer Services Operations at Headquarters in Washington, DC, notifies the area retail manager who must send written notification to the local SDO or SSC.

After approval, the newly approved center is placed on the SDO or SSC list of philatelic centers authorized to receive automatic distributions of philatelic stamp stock and special-edition philatelic products.

18-9.4 Physical Location Criteria

The physical location of a philatelic center is important both for customer convenience and for efficient and profitable operation.

All proposed philatelic centers must be easily accessible via main and traffic arteries and have ample customer parking within walking distance (accessibility for handicapped persons is important).

Philatelic centers must have sufficient space to display available stamps and philatelic products. Locate dedicated philatelic windows in heavy traffic areas of the lobby, convenient to customers.

18-9.5 Hours of Operation and Schedule

The postmaster determines the schedule of operation (i.e., days and hours a philatelic center will operate) based on the following factors:

a. Customer traffic.

b. Staffing requirements.

c. Regular office hours at the proposed site.

Any days or hours changes must be reported to the district finance number control master (FNCM) coordinator at least 7 days prior to the change.

18-9.6 Uniform Days and Hours

Although the schedule of operation is determined at the local Post Office level, uniform days and hours must be selected. A uniform schedule of operation allows customers to schedule their visits. Erratic, early, or unscheduled closings of philatelic outlets must be avoided since many collectors travel long distances to obtain the products and services provided

exclusively at these centers. Whenever possible, these hours should conform to those of the office. Additionally, they must be stated clearly on signs in high traffic areas in the lobby, and periodically published in local newspapers, employee publications, and in brochures sent to customers about local postal services.

18-9.7 Customer Convenience

Major emphasis must be placed on having the outlet in operation during hours that is most convenient for our customers.

All offices with philatelic windows should ensure that other windows have access to philatelic items in the event the philatelic window is closed.

18-9.8 Posting Assignments

Assignments are to be posted in accordance with the terms of the national agreement. Employees who work in this position must hold a retail associate's position or qualify by successfully completing the Sales Service Associate's course.

It is desirable to have employees who have knowledge and are enthusiastic about stamp collecting assigned to philatelic centers.

Duty assignments posted for such positions should include a statement identifying the assignment as one primarily "dedicated" to philatelic sales. It should also include a statement that "Stamp collectors and others who have a working knowledge or have an enthusiastic attitude toward a stamp collecting hobby are encouraged, if otherwise eligible, to bid for this position."

Retail associates assigned to philatelic centers report to the designated manager.

18-9.9 Closing Philatelic Centers

When the manager of Customer Services Operations approves closing of a philatelic center, the area retail manager is responsible for notifying the district and the local SDO/SSC. The SDO/SSC will send written notification to the manager of Stamp Acquisition and Distribution. Written notification must be provided so that automatic distribution of the philatelic stamp stock may be discontinued.

18-9.10 Philatelic Center Database

When new philatelic centers are opened or philatelic centers are closed, address information must be updated on the nationwide philatelic center database. This database provides information to the National Call Center and *www.usps.com*.

18-10 Products and Services

18-10.1 Products

Authorized philatelic centers are supplied an automatic distribution of commemorative stamps and philatelic products.

18-10.1.1 Stamp Stock

Stamp quantities have been established to meet an average 60-day supply demand. Adjustments of minimum quantities can be made by sending a memorandum to your local SDO/SSC. The SDO/SSC notifies the manager of Stamp Acquisition and Distribution Office if any quantity adjustments are needed in their automatic distribution quantities.

Order quantities of definitive stamps from the local SDO/SSC.

18-10.1.2 Position Stamp Stock

For collectors interested in position stamp stock, it is only available through the *USA Philatelic Catalog* or Stamp Fulfillment Services located at:

STAMP FULFILLMENT SERVICES
PO BOX 7247
PHILADELPHIA PA 19107-7097

Customers may also call 800-STAMP24 to order position stock. Philatelic stamp stock features matched plate numbers in each of the appropriate positions of the sheet whenever possible.

18-10.1.3 Required Inventory

Philatelic centers are required to carry the line of stamps, postal stationery items, and philatelic products that are available from their SDO/SSC. These items are listed in the *USA Philatelic Catalog* along with other products that are only available for sale through the catalog.

Philatelic centers do not sell all items listed in the philatelic catalog; (e.g., American commemorative panels, American commemorative collection, American commemorative cancellations, and collector binders).

All philatelic centers must have these current stamps and stationery items available for sale (all items not officially called off sale in the *Postal Bulletin):*

a. Stamps in sheet, coil, and booklet formats (e.g., commemoratives, definitives, and precancels) in all denominations, varieties, and formats in which they are produced.

b. Position stamp stock.

c. Souvenir sheets.

d. Stationery items (stamped cards, embossed stamped envelopes in all sizes with and without windows) in all denominations, sizes, and formats.

e. Migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps (three most recent issues).

f. Commemorative Year Book (three most recent issues).

g. *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps.*

h. Special philatelic products (available in limited quantities).

i. Local precancels may be made available at philatelic centers that have them on hand or have a hand stamp for precanceling purposes. Philatelic centers may not acquire a precancel hand stamp solely to meet philatelic demand. More information can be found in the POM.

18-10.1.4 Available Stamps, Stationery, and Philatelic Products

A complete list of available stamps, stationery items, and philatelic products may be requested from your SDO/SSC.

Announcement and instructions on items being withdrawn from sale are published in the *Postal Bulletin* quarterly.

18-10.1.5 Other Products

Only Postal Service-issued products can be sold in philatelic centers. To sell other products, written authorization must be granted from Retail Marketing at Headquarters, and the District and Area retail managers. When additional products have been authorized, full product details, including sales price, merchandising, etc., should be announced in the *Postal Bulletin.*

18-10.1.6 Sales Policies/Definitions

All philatelic centers should have available for sale any and all newly released stamps, stationery items, and philatelic products. The *Postal Bulletin* contains all updated information about the issuance and sale dates of all new stamps.

18-10.1.7 Commemorative Stamps

Commemorative stamps honor anniversaries, important people, special events, or aspects of national culture and are printed in limited quantities. Philatelic centers may keep commemorative stamps on sale until notice is published in the *Postal Bulletin* to remove the stamps from sale. To allow for effective inventory management, this notice will appear in the *Postal Bulletin* one month prior to the official removal date. At that time, excess stock should be returned to the vault on PS Form 17, *Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return,* and reallocated to regular windows to be sold as postage.

18-10.1.8 Plate Blocks

Plate blocks are usually the four corner stamps (one design or block of four designs) with the printing plate number in the margin (selvage) of the pane. If the stamp issue consists of more than four stamps, such as the Space Achievement issue of 1981, which consisted of eight different designs for a plate block of eight, the plate block would contain one of each of the eight designs.

18-10.1.9 Floating Plate Blocks

A floating plate number is one that floats or appears at different intervals along the margin. Most issues using floating plate numbers only have selvage on the right and left sides of the pane.

The plate numbers and other marginal markings move progressively up and down the selvage on a pane-to-pane basis as a result of each full rotation of the press cylinders. If a single number floats, collectors may save it in the centers of the collectible, which is a block of six.

18-10.1.10 Plate Blocks and Marginal Markings

Plate number blocks and other marginal markings (i.e., copyright) that may be accumulated from previous sales are sheets that are broken in the normal course of business.

Sheets of stamps should not be broken specifically to provide plate blocks or marginal markings to customers. A new sheet may be broken to sell a plate block only if there are no stamps remaining from previously broken sheets. It is more advantageous to sell marginal inscriptions as strips, two stamps wide, rather than as blocks.

Blocks will be sold on a first-come basis only. Each customer may buy one matched set of four marginal strips for any stamp in stock. There are no limitations on the sale of plate blocks of stamps having denominations from $1.00 to $10.00. See the *USA Philatelic Catalog.*

18-10.1.11 Coiled Stamps

Philatelic centers may open coils of stamps as requested and sell any number to a customer, with the exception of coils having fractional denominations, such as the 10.1 and the 12.5. These must be sold only in multiples of 10 stamps.

To guarantee receipt of “line pairs” or “line markings” on coils, the following minimum purchases are required:

a. Any fractional denomination = minimum of 30 stamps.

b. $1.00 = minimum of 6 stamps.

c. All other denominations = minimum of 25 stamps.

Note: A “line marking” is a vertical line of color appearing at intervals of 25 stamps made by the joint seam where the printing plates meet on the rotary press. The “line pair” consists of one coil stamp on each side of the line marking. There are no line markings on multicolored coil stamps.

Plate numbers began to appear on all coils that were produced after 1981. Some single-color coil stamps do not have line markings. For those that do, the plate number appears adjacent to the line marking at intervals of 24 stamps.

Plate numbers also appear at intervals of 48 and 52 stamps depending on the press. As the older rotary presses are replaced over the next several years, line markings will cease to appear on coil stamps; only the plate number will appear.

18-10.1.12 Precanceled Stamps

The sales policy described in the POM, part 222, applies with the exception that coils of precanceled stamps may be opened for the sale of individual stamps to collectors.

18-10.1.13 Precanceled Stamped Envelopes

Philatelic centers cannot sell full box lots of precanceled stamped envelopes to collectors.

Precanceled stamped envelopes should be sold in amounts less than 500, and the selling price of a single precanceled stamped envelope will be the price listed for each appropriate size and type in the current issue of the *USA Philatelic Catalog.*

More information regarding the sale of stamped envelopes can be found in Handbook F-1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures,* and in the DMM.

18-10.2 Services

18-10.2.1 New Issue Reservation Service

The New Issue Reservation Service is designed to improve service to stamp collectors who shop regularly at particular philatelic centers.

In the past, unnecessary trips have been a persistent cause of complaints. This service enables customers to reserve new stamp and stationery issues for 20 days to ensure their availability at a convenient time.

Even though full-pane purchases are not required, the stock should be reserved in full panes only, so that the stock can be returned to regular stock if unclaimed after 20 days. The customer should provide one addressed postal card for each reservation made.

There is a minimum order of 20 stamps. A strip of 20 stamps must be purchased for each plate number block for denominations up to $1.00. Requests for plate number blocks by position will be filled only if the desired positions are available in stock.

Reserved items must be picked up at the Post Office, station, or branch no later than 20 days after the customer has been notified.

Items not stocked must be ordered from:

STAMP FULFILLMENT SERVICES
PO BOX 7247
PHILADELPHIA PA 19101-7097

Mail orders can be placed using the *USA Philatelic Catalog.*

18-10.2.2 Philatelic Postmark Services

Postmarking services (except for first day of issue or other national philatelic programs) may be provided by philatelic centers on a continuous basis when authorized by:

STAMP SERVICES
1735 N LYNN ST RM 5016
ARLINGTON VA 22209-6432

One standard or pictorial hand-stamped postmarks may be used. Proposed designs must be submitted to the office of Stamp Services at least 45 days in advance for approval and appropriate publicity.

Handbook PO-230, *Pictorial Postmarks,* contains further information on postmark requirements and postmarking policies.

18-10.2.3 Service Limitations

For any single individual or group, hand-stamping as a free service is limited to 50 covers. There is a service charge of $.05 for each postmark above 50, to a maximum of 1,000 postmarks. Requests for more than 1,000 postmarks must be approved by the District manager. The District manager may contact the manager of Stamp Fulfillment Services in Kansas City, Missouri, to assist in postmarking requests of 1,000 or more covers.

18-10.2.4 Holding Philatelic Items

Philatelic centers may hold philatelic items to comply with customers requests that they be postmarked on a specific date.

Philatelic centers however, may not hold philatelic items for postmarking on a date that is uncertain, subject to change, or a day when the office will be closed (exceptions may be authorized by Stamp Services). In such circumstances, the philatelic items should be returned un-serviced in an outer envelope to the customer with a short note explaining why the requested service could not be performed.

18-10.2.5 Multiple Postmarks

Additional postmarks may be applied to items bearing previously canceled postage (on a hand back basis only), if unused postage, equal to the domestic First-Class Mail letter rate is affixed.

Items bearing multiple postmarks may not be mailed. Additional information regarding philatelic postmarks can be found in the DMM or Handbook PO-230, *Pictorial Postmarks.*

18-11 Required Merchandising Displays

Philatelic centers must have displays to feature the stamps currently available for sale.

All centers should also display all available stationery items and philatelic products. The products should be attractively, but securely, arranged in displayed cases, counters, and shelves with packaged products being prominently featured. Ensure that all displays are current. Outdated displays create confusion and draw complaints.

18-12 Operational and Financial Procedures

18-12.1 Accountability

Philatelic centers should maintain an adequate level of stamp stock, stationery, and philatelic products to encourage philatelic interest to meet the needs of collectors.

For each philatelic center authorized at their office, postmasters may maintain a postage stock of up to $125,000 in excess of normal authorized stock limits.

18-12.2 Retail Associate Accountability

All retail associates working in philatelic centers, other than Postal Stores, are fully accountable for their stamp credits. The postmaster must provide adequate security equipment for secure storage of these credits at all times.

18-13 Distribution of Philatelic Stamp Stock

18-13.1 Position Stamp Stock

Philatelic centers may not receive all positions of a particular commemorative stamp from their SDO/SSC. When all positions of a stamp issue are not available, philatelic centers should direct their customers to the *USA Philatelic Catalog.*

18-13.2 Philatelic Products

Philatelic products (e.g., *Commemorative Stamp Yearbook*, *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, cancellation keepsakes, premium stamped postal cards, and matted prints) are distributed automatically to SDOs/SSCs by the suppliers.

SDOs/SSCs establish a procedure for the distribution of new philatelic products and replenishment of existing philatelic products for philatelic centers.

SDOs/SSCs requiring additional philatelic products should check with their paper depository or Stamp Fulfillment Services.

18-13.3 Requisitioning Philatelic Stamp Stock

Stamp stock for philatelic centers may be obtained from the main office accountable paper unit using PS Form 17. If stamp stock is depleted, the accountable paper unit must reorder from the SDO/SSC.

When reordering position stock, for both definitive and commemorative stamps, PS Form 17 must identify the stamp stock position being requested.

18-13.4 Redistribution of Philatelic Stamp Stock

Full panes of stamps that are being withdrawn from sale at philatelic centers/ philatelic windows should not be destroyed. Redistribute this stamp stock immediately to regular stamp windows for sale.

With approval, excess supplies of philatelic products are to be returned to the SDO/SSC for redistribution to other stations and branches. Post Offices return stock to the SDO/SSC only when directed by their SDO/SSC or through a *Postal Bulletin* announcement.

Note: Neither commemorative and definitive stamps nor philatelic products should be destroyed unless specifically directed by a *Postal Bulletin* announcement.

18-13.5 Withdrawal of Philatelic Stamp Stock from Sale

The actual date that stamp stock must be removed from sale at philatelic centers will appear in a *Postal Bulletin* announcement. To allow for effective inventory management, this announcement will appear approximately 1 month in advance of the removal date.

19 Mobile Retail Vans

19-1 General Information

Mobile retail vans are critical to postal operations to help meet customer needs, especially in situations where regular operations have been curtailed (i.e., natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding). Mobile retail vans can also be used as replacements for facilities undergoing renovations that render them unable to operate, for special events, or for reaching locations where the Postal Service has been unable to establish alternate access channels. All efforts to establish alternate access should be thoroughly explored and exhausted prior to offering service via mobile retail vans.

Mobile retail vans are assets that must be managed and used for optimum revenue performance. Sites should be selected based on “best business use” planning. The focus of using mobile retail vans should be revenue generation, promoting the Postal Service, filling the gap in emergency situations, and meeting customer needs.

This will require setting revenue goals, applying work-hour management, and following proper financial procedures. Mobile retail vans will be considered as manual Post Offices for purposes of tracking transaction and revenue data. Mobile retail van clerks are permitted to offer limited postal products and are not authorized to offer money orders, passport services, or international package services. Mobile retail van clerks may only accept cash, money orders, and checks as payment for Postal Service products and/or services. In cases where regular retail service has been curtailed, a deviation to these policies must be approved by the manager, Retail Operations, Headquarters.

To efficiently manage mobile retail van transaction time, mobile retail van stock should be limited to a basic selection of First-Class postage stamps in one or two booklet choices, one or two sheet choices, one coil choice, Forever Stamps, Priority Stamps, Express Mail Stamps, ReadyPost, and Official Licensed Retail Products. Mobile retail van clerks should maintain a supply of Stamps by Mail envelopes for customers who desire additional denominations or selections of stamps. Mobile retail van clerks should also provide customers any *www.usps.com* promotional or educational material available as well as a listing of local Stamps on Consignment and contract postal unit locations.

Mobile retail van clerks are issued stamp credits following procedures in Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures,* subchapter 13-2. Refer to Handbook F-101, subchapter 13-3, for requirements and procedures for conducting counts of stamp credits.

19-2 Site Selection

The cost of providing mobile retail van service must be considered when selecting potential sites based on anticipated revenue at each individual site. Several factors should be taken into consideration when selecting sites for mobile retail vans:

a. Emergency situations: Normal postal services have been suspended because of natural disasters (e.g., flooding, hurricanes, and tornadoes).

b. Postal retail facilities undergoing renovations.

c. Special events.

d. High-crime area avoidance.

e. Other routes and locations: Only when profitable and where efforts to establish on-site alternate access (e.g., Stamps by Mail, Stamps on Consignment, and Click-N-Ship) have been thoroughly pursued and have not been successful and no local merchants offer Postal Service products and services.

19-3 Revenue Goals

Mobile retail vans should be optimized to generate maximum revenue. Consider the cost of providing mobile retail van service when establishing goals. The following metrics must be established and monitored a minimum of once per week:

a. Mobile retail van revenue actual, plan, and supply.

b. Expedited sales actual, plan, and supply.

c. Extra service sales actual, plan, and supply.

d. Revenue per mobile retail van route.

e. Revenue per mobile retail van site/stop.

f. Revenue per hour.

Except for emergency situations, facility renovations, and special events usage, a monthly assessment of revenue generation versus cost of service must be made. If the cost of providing mobile retail van service to a particular site/route exceeds the amount of revenue that site/route generates, the site is not cost effective. Mobile retail van service may only be continued at cost-effective sites.

19-4 Mobile Retail Van Driver Training

All current and future operators of the 2006 mobile Post Office are required to satisfactorily complete this training program. All drivers of the mobile Post Office vehicle must have a current and valid state driver's license.

A driver instructor examiner (DIE) is required to administer this training. The DIE must validate that a student driver has a current and valid state driver's license prior to commencement of this training program. The instructor will document the driver's performance and granting of driving privileges to operate the 2006 mobile Post Office in each driver's folder (PS Form 4582, *Operator's Record)* and in the National Training Database using national course number 43501-02.

Estimated minimum time for each driver to complete the 2006 Mobile Post Office training program is 2 hours.

19-5 Revenue Reporting

The mobile retail van clerk must track transactions and tender type at each stop on a manual tracking sheet (tally sheet). Transactions and tender type at each stop must be segregated by stop on the tally sheet. The daily transactions must be consolidated on a PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report,* at the end of each day.

Mobile retail vans are considered manual offices; however, in most cases their home office is a point-of-sale (POS) site. If the host office is a POS site, the host facility manager/supervisor is to establish a unique POS segment number (i.e., default mobile segment) for each mobile retail van and assign the default mobile segment role to the retail associate (RA). This is not the same role the RA uses while working the retail counter in the office. This is a clerk role unique to staffing the mobile van. Follow Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures* (FAP), part 14-1.1, for assigning the mobile segment and issuing stock. The mobile segment receives stock from the unit reserve. The RA assigned to the mobile role receives the stock. A different (non-mobile) RA will provide working cash to make change by entering AIC 647 on the retail floor stock segment (or other segment) and give the cash to the mobile RA (the RA with the mobile van segment). The mobile RA enters AIC 247 to offset. The cash becomes part of the mobile segment.

The transactions from the manual PS Form 1412 must be entered into POS at the host office at the end of each day. Transactions tendered by check must be entered individually and isolated according to stop. Revenue for each stop must be segregated and entered as separate transactions (i.e., if the mobile retail van route has four stops for the day, there will be at least four separate transactions entered into POS at the end of the day). Transactions tendered by cash can be entered one of two ways:

a. Enter each individual product sold as shown on the tracking sheet.

b. Review the tracking sheet, consolidate by product, and individually scan the products as one visit. Transaction time is given for each line item (scan).

For example, a mobile van has two stops for the day. At the first stop, the RA makes eight sales; three paid by check and five paid by cash. At the second stop, the RA makes 10 sales; six paid by check and four paid by cash. At the end of the day, the RA will enter three transactions tendered by check and the cash transactions for the first stop, and then enter six transactions tendered by check and the cash transactions for the second stop. The cash transactions can either be entered as individual cash transactions for that stop, or they can be consolidated and entered as one cash transaction.

Mobile retail van revenue should be reported through the POS segment number established for that van. Follow established POS close-out procedures.

If the host office is a non-POS site, follow established closeout procedures using the manual PS Form 1412 prepared by the mobile retail van clerk.

19-6 Travel and Fixed Time

It is important that travel and fixed time be established. Establish retail mobile van fixed and travel time.

Follow the current standard operating procedure to determine line of travel, travel time, load/unload times, park/set-up locations, and times, etc. These are collectively referred to as mobile van essential time.

A full inspection must be completed for each mobile van route not less than once per year, plus every time a mobile van route changes.

19-7 Work Hours Reporting

Properly report all work hours. Ensure that actual LDC 45 work hours are identified with the same unit finance number as the retail mobile unit through TACS transfer of hours. Total time earned for the mobile retail van is the total of transaction time plus daily Mobile Van Essential Time (MVET). All is to be charged to LDC 45.

19-8 Total Operating Costs

In fiscal year 2007, the average cost of ownership of a mobile retail unit was $5,531 per vehicle. That includes fuel, oil, maintenance, and overhead (primarily vehicle depreciation). The fleet average annual miles traveled per mobile retail unit was 1,300 miles, and the average annual hours used was 537.51. This equates to an average cost per mile of $4.25 and an average cost per hour of $10.29. In addition to vehicle costs, the fully loaded hourly rate for retail associates must be factored into the total cost of operating a retail mobile unit.

Based on these costs, it is important to ensure that retail mobile units are used to their maximum potential to optimize revenue growth and improve customer service. Managers should look at exhausting other less-expensive forms of alternate access to meet customer demand before using a mobile retail unit.

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