



September 26, 2022

ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: 2022 General Election Mail Preparedness Memorandum

Year after year, the Postal Service has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the proper handling and timely delivery of Election Mail, and this year is no exception. In that regard, this is the first of three Election Mail preparedness memorandums that we will be sending over the next several weeks to again ensure the effectiveness of our Election Mail operations during this year's general election.

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process, including ballots, voter registration forms, ballot applications, polling place notifications, and similar materials. This specific mail qualifies as Election Mail both when it is sent to voters from election officials at the state and local levels and when it is returned by voters to those officials. Election Mail is distinct from "political mail," which is mail sent by political candidates, political action committees, and similar organizations in order to advocate for candidates or issues, and most Election Mail procedures and policies do not apply to political mail.

The additional resources available, and the robust practices and procedures that we employ every federal election cycle, will help ensure that we are able to do everything in our power to meet our customers' expectations that mail will be delivered in a timely manner when our customers use the mail to facilitate or participate in the electoral process.

We are working tirelessly to ensure our operational preparedness for the November General Election. We will rely on our longstanding policies and procedures, which have proven successful in facilitating the timely delivery of Election Mail and will reinforce key messages with our front-line employees leading up to Election Day. Some of our key practices for the proper handling of Election Mail, all of which you should be utilizing now unless otherwise indicated, are reiterated below:

- **All Clears and Daily Logs**. Daily "all clears" should be used to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and that mail scheduled or "committed" to go out is processed accordingly. Please also continue to use the Delivery Unit Political Mail Receipt & Delivery Log and Delivery Unit Election and Political Mail Checklist in delivery units and the Plant Political and Election Mail Log to track Election Mail through processing and delivery. These resources are available on Blue at <https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/product-solutions/electionmail/field-playbook-checklists.htm>
- **Advancing Election Mail**. We should continue to prioritize Election Mail—identified by the official Election Mail logo or other Postal Service visibility tools—regardless of the paid class, pursuant to our long-standing practice. Specifically, Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed

expeditiously to the extent feasible so that it is generally delivered in line with the First-Class Mail delivery standards. In that regard, please continue to use standardized log sheets and to conduct daily "all clears" as previously instructed. To the extent necessary, please expand processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day. Further, to the extent possible, Election Mail received after the Critical Entry Time should be processed and advanced as if it arrived prior to the Critical Entry Time, unless doing so would disrupt on-time service for Election Mail received prior to the Critical Entry Time. Please also continue to prioritize Election Mail, including ballots entered with Green Tag 191, when loading trucks.

Consistent with our long-standing practice, we recognize that it is sometimes not operationally feasible to deliver Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail in line with First-Class Mail delivery standards. This is particularly true with respect to Election Mail Marketing Mail volume that would require air transportation to meet First-Class Mail delivery standards, as this volume typically travels through our ground transportation network, and our systems do not permit Marketing Mail to travel by air.

- **Postmarking.** The Postal Service tries to ensure that every return ballot mailed by voters receives a postmark, in recognition of the importance that the election laws in some states place on postmarks for mail-in ballots. *A detailed memorandum on the Postal Service's postmarking policy for return ballots will be issued shortly.*
- **Delivery/Collections.** Extra delivery and collection trips are authorized and instructed to be used if necessary to ensure that Election Mail stays current and moving through the Postal Service's network. This includes, but is not limited to, early collections the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely, and, to the best of our ability, delivery trips that would allow completed ballots entered on Election Day to reach the appropriate election official by the state's designated Election Day deadline (including in states with extended ballot-delivery deadlines).
- **Overtime.** As always, we will monitor volume and ensure we have the appropriate resources in place to facilitate the timely delivery of Election Mail, including appropriate staffing, and expanding mail processing and transportation if necessary to accommodate the volume. Front-line supervisors and managers will continue to schedule employees' work hours and oversee employee overtime, including planning for any needed prescheduled overtime, directing unscheduled overtime, and approving employee requests for overtime work based on the workload. Supervisors will continue to set schedules with the goal of matching the expected earned work hours with appropriate staffing. Management will continue to monitor the use of work hours and overtime so that we can identify and address problems that may be the cause of work not being performed within expected work hours or managed inefficiently. The Postal Service's consistent practice in the past is to use justified and approved overtime hours where needed to deliver the mail on time, and that practice will continue. Overtime will continue to be utilized as necessary to support our Election Mail policies and procedures.
- **Transportation.** The Postal Service will continue to align our transportation and processing schedules to ensure timely, reliable mail delivery and we will take reasonably necessary steps to complete timely Election Mail delivery, including late or extra

trips. Extra transportation resources will be used as necessary to connect Election Mail to its intended destination or the next stage in Postal Service processing. Managers are authorized to use their best business judgment to meet our service commitments.

- ***Extraordinary Measures.*** In addition to the procedures in place for Election Mail throughout the federal election cycle, we will again be implementing extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations leading up to (and in some cases after) Election Day. Extraordinary measures are to be used between October 24 and November 29, 2022, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot. These measures will be the same as those taken for the November 2020 general election. *A detailed memorandum providing further information about the Postal Service's extraordinary measures will be issued shortly.*

Providing consistent guidance across the organization is critical to our success. Please refer to the 2022 Election Mail and Political Mail Guidebook available on Blue, to find up to date policies and procedures related to Election Mail and Political Mail.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, please take time to fully explain to your direct reports the policies and practices discussed above. A copy of this memorandum will be posted on the Postal Service Intranet at [blue.usps.gov](http://blue.usps.gov) and [usps.com/electionmail](http://usps.com/electionmail). Headquarters will distribute a Mandatory Stand-Up Talk to all employees discussing this memorandum.

Finally, as noted above, this is the first of three Election Mail guidance documents that we will be issuing. Look for additional memoranda on "Extraordinary Measures" and on "Postmarking" in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in delivering America's Election Mail.


Sincerely,



Dr. Joshua D. Colin  
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer  
and Executive V.P.



Isaac Cronkhite  
Chief Processing &  
Distribution Officer and  
Executive V.P.



Kelly Abney  
Chief Logistics Officer  
and Executive V.P.