

POSTAL NEWS

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[November 26, 2010]

1. Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail Open and Distribute
Nov 26, 2010 (U.S. Postal Service Documents and Publications/ContentWorks via COMTEX) -- SUMMARY: The Postal Service is revising Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM(R)) 705.16 to require the use of a single-ply address label containing a service barcode with unique Service Type Code "723" or a "DB" prefix along with new Tag 257, Tag 267, or Label 257S, on all Express Mail(R) Open and Distribute containers. The Postal Service is also revising the service commitment for Express Mail Open and Distribute as a guaranteed end of day product; and adding a five-pound minimum weight requirement for Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail(R) Open and Distribute sacks.

Story continues below ↓

Effective Date: January 2, 2011.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 17, 2010, the Postal Service published a proposed rule in the Federal Register (75 FR 56920-56922) to change the standards for Express Mail Open and Distribute. After reviewing the comments, and upon further consideration of the proposed revisions, the Postal Service has decided to adopt the proposed regulations with a minor revision.

Comments The Postal Service received three comments and a request for clarification: 1. All three comments raised concerns about the five-pound minimum weight limit for Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail Open and Distribute sacks. As a result, the Postal Service is making a minor revision to allow an Open and Distribute sack to be less than 5 pounds if the sack contains mail in a qualifying tray.

2. One commenter also requested a clarification of the end of day service commitment for Express Mail Open and Distribute shipments. The end of day (11:59 p.m.) service commitment guarantees delivery of the Express Mail Open and Distribute container to the designated entry Postal facility. Upon entry, the enclosed mail is processed for delivery according to the service standards for the product.

Summary Express Mail The Postal Service is requiring mailers to place a single-ply address label with a service barcode on all Express Mail Open and Distribute containers and to submit an electronic file. The service barcode is required to be a USS 128 or Code 39 barcode with a "DB" prefix, or Intelligent Mail package barcode (eVS(R) approved mailers) symbology with a unique Service Type Code (STC) "723". The text, "USPS SCAN ON ARRIVAL," must appear above the barcode. This requirement is in accordance with instructions for barcode specifications, electronic file format and testing, and the certification process in Publication 91, Confirmation Services Technical Guide.

The Postal Service is also replacing Tag 157 with Tag 257 (DDU), Tag 267 (SCF, NDC), and Label 257S (DDU) for all Express Mail Open and Distribute containers.

In addition, the Postal Service revises the service commitment to end of day (11:59 p.m.) for Express Mail Open and Distribute shipments.

Express Mail and Priority Mail The Postal Service is establishing a five-pound minimum weight requirement for all Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail Open and Distribute sacks, except for sacks containing qualified trays (trays prepared under the standards for the applicable class of mail).

The Postal Service adopts the following changes to Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), which is incorporated by reference in the Code of Federal Regulations. See 39 CFR 111.1.

List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 111 Administrative practice and procedure, Postal Service.

Accordingly, 39 CFR part 111 is amended as follows: PART 111--[AMENDED] 1. The authority citation for 39 CFR Part 111 continues to read as follows: Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 13 U.S.C. 301-307; 18 U.S.C. 1692-1737; 39 U.S.C. 101, 401, 403, 404, 414, 416, 3001-3011, 3201-3219, 3403-3406, 3621, 3622, 3626, 3632, 3633, and 5001.

2. Revise the following sections of Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), as follows: * * * * * 700 Special Standards * * * * * 705 Advanced Preparation and Special Postage Payment Systems * * * * * 16.0 Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail Open and Distribute 16.1 Prices and Fees 16.1.1 Basis of Price [Revise 16.1.1 as follows:] Mailers must pay Express Mail and Priority Mail postage based on the weight of the contents of the Open and Distribute shipment. Do not include the tare weight of the external container. Do not apply Priority Mail dimensional weight pricing or Periodicals container prices to the external container. The minimum weight requirement for Open and Distribute sacks is five pounds, except for Open and Distribute sacks that contain

qualified trays (trays prepared under the standards for the applicable class of mail). The maximum weight for each container is 70 pounds.

16.1.2 Zone Prices [Revise 16.1.2 as follows:] Compute zone prices, for the applicable class of mail, from the accepting Post Office to the destination facility for the container (not the destination Post Office for the enclosed mail).

***** 16.1.5 Payment Method [Revise the text in 16.1.5 as follows:] Postage payment methods are as follows: a. Postage on the enclosed mail may be paid by any method permitted for that mail class, except for ordinary postage stamps requiring cancellation.

b. Express Mail postage may be paid under any of the options listed in 414.1.1, except Click-N-Ship. Express Mail postage must be affixed to blue Tag 257, to yellow Tag 267, to the Open and Distribute tray box, or be part of the address label.

c. Priority Mail postage may be paid under 424.1.1. Priority Mail postage must be affixed to or hand-stamped on green Tag 161, pink Tag 190, the Open and Distribute tray box, or be part of the address label.

***** 16.2 Basic Standards ***** 16.2.2 Content Standards [Revise the DMM reference numbers in the parentheses at the end of the first sentence of 16.2.2 as follows:] *** (See 410 for Express Mail standards and 420 for Priority Mail standards).*** [Revise the last sentence of 16.2.2 as follows:] *** Mailers are not required to place bundles of mail in sacks or trays when all of the mail enclosed in an Open and Distribute sack is destined to a 5-digit facility and the Open and Distribute sack weighs at least five pounds.

16.3 Additional Standards for Express Mail Open and Distribute 16.3.1 Service Objectives [Revise the first sentence in 16.3.1 as follows:] The Express Mail service guarantee for Express Mail Open and Distribute is receipt by end of day (11:59 p.m.) and ends upon receipt by scan of the Express Mail Open and Distribute container at the destination postal facility. ***** 16.5 Preparation 16.5.1 Containers for Expedited Transport Acceptable containers for expedited transportation are as follows: [Revise item 16.5.1a to reflect new tags as follows:] a. An Express Mail Open and Distribute shipment must be contained in a USPS-approved sack using Tag 257 or Tag 267 or in a USPS-provided Express Mail Open and Distribute tray box (Tag 257 and Tag 267 are not required for tray boxes; only the 4x6 address label should be applied), except as provided in 16.5.1c and 16.5.1d.

***** [Revise item 16.5.1c to reflect new labels as follows:] c. An Express Mail or Priority Mail Open and Distribute shipment destined to a DDU may be contained in a USPS-provided Express Mail Flat Rate Envelope using Label 257S or Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope and boxes using Label 190S.

***** [Revise the heading of 16.5.2 as follows:] 16.5.2 Express Mail and Priority Mail Sack Labels [Revise the text in 16.5.2 as follows:] Labels for Express Mail or Priority Mail sacks containing Open and Distribute shipments must be barcoded and meet the requirements in 708.6.0. All lines of information must be completely visible when inserted into the label holder. Label sacks as follows: a. Line 1 (destination line)

provides information on the destination entry office where the enclosed mail is to be distributed.

1. For destination delivery unit (DDU) distribution, use the facility name and ZIP Code found in the Drop Shipment Address File available at the USPS FAST Web site at <https://fast.usps.com> (click Resources in the left-hand navigation bar, then "Go" for "Drop Ship Product File Download").
 2. For SCF distribution, use the destination in L005, Column B.
 3. For ADC distribution, use the destination in L004, Column B (Priority Mail Open and Distribute Only).
 4. For NDC distribution, use the destination in L601, Column B.
 5. For ASF distribution, use L602, Column B (Priority Mail Open and Distribute Only).
- b. For Line 2 (content line), print "EXPRESS MAIL OPEN AND DIST" or "PRIORITY MAIL OPEN AND DIST," as applicable.
- c. For Line 3 (origin line), show the city and state of the entry Post Office or the mailer's name and the city and state of the mailer's location. It is recommended that the mailer's name also appear with the city and state of the entry Post Office. See 708.6.2.5 for additional standards.

[Revise the tag numbers in the heading of 16.5.3 as follows:] 16.5.3 Tags 257 and 267--Express Mail Open and Distribute [Revise the text in 16.5.3 as follows:] --This is a summary of a Federal Register article originally published on the page number listed below-- Final rule.

CFR Part: "39 CFR Part 111" Citation: "75 FR 72686" Federal Register Page Number: "72686" "Rules and Regulations"

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2. India Post sends out tech mails

Bibhu Ranjan Mishra / Bangalore November 28, 2010, 0:54 IST

IT majors in race for Rs 1,000-cr postal modernisation contract

With increasing competition across sectors for its different kinds of services, the over 150-year-old Indian postal system is set for a major technological advancement to improve its customer service, deliver new services and improve operational efficiencies. The Department of Posts (DoP) is understood to have given a go-ahead to its Information Technology (IT) modernisation project under the India Post 2012 plan, which has thrown opportunities of over Rs 1,000 crore for Indian and global IT vendors.

According to highly-placed industry sources, DoP has initiated the process to identify IT implementation partners for developing core applications covering key areas such as mail operations, financial services, postal insurance, finance and HR. The department has already invited expressions of interest for the project. It would shortlist the interested companies based on the project requirements. The contract is expected to be finalised early next year.

Sources said most of the leading Indian and global IT services companies, including TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL, IBM, HP and Capgemini have shown interest to participate in the contract, which will be for a duration of two-three years. "DoP is faced with twin challenges of increasing competition and continuing advances in communication technology, especially in mobile telephony and the internet. In order to provide the best-in-class customer service, deliver new services and improve operational efficiencies, DoP has undertaken an end-to-end IT modernisation project to equip itself with requisite modern tools and technologies," an official note said.

DoP currently has the largest postal network in the world with 155,015 post offices spread across the country. Out of that, only 12,604 head post offices and sub post offices have been computerised so far. By the end of 2012, the department wants to computerise all post offices that would help it offer its various services seamlessly. DoP currently uses about 56 standalone IT applications that run in silos and do not speak to each other.

The IT implementation partner will develop integration architecture model using service oriented architecture so that all the post offices will be able to provide affordable services in an efficient manner.

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3. Imagine A Saturday Without Mail

by Mandalit del Barco

November 27, 2010

Part of a series on the U.S. Postal Service

Delivering mail house to house, six days a week, is something letter carriers guarantee. But in these days of FedEx, e-mail and online bill-paying services, there's not as much mail to deliver.

A mail carrier delivers a letter to a customer in Milwaukee, Wis., circa 1908.

Timeline: The Postal Service And Its Competition

That's part of why the U.S. Postal Service wants to cut its losses and end Saturday deliveries.

Los Angeles resident Victor Granadino does not like the idea. For Granadino, whose father was a letter carrier a generation ago, the Postal Service is wrong to propose cutting service to just five days a week. In his dad's day, mail was delivered twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon.

"I think we need our mail on Saturdays, especially for people who receive checks," Granadino says. "Even if it's junk mail, it has to be delivered."

Across town, resident Bill Webb argues that people rely on Saturday deliveries for things like prescription drugs. He says many in his South L.A. neighborhood would miss their beloved letter carrier on the weekends.

"I think it would hurt the senior citizens more than the young people. They have essential needs — Social Security checks, things of that nature," says Webb.

But Postmaster General John Potter says that since 2007, the volume of mail nationwide is down by 20 percent — some of that due to the slow economy. There are fewer business fliers and pieces of corporate communication that need to be delivered, and as for bills, many people pay them online.

Famous Postal Workers

USPS Chief Financial Officer Joseph Corbett says that this year, the Postal Service had a larger-than-expected loss of \$8.5 billion.

"Delivery costs is what makes over half our entire costs, over \$30 billion a year," Corbett says. "We're doing what we can to be efficient there, but what we really need to do is simply reduce the number of trips."

Another big cost is prefunding postal retiree benefits, which total \$5.5 billion a year. "No other government agency and no other company, public or private in the world, has a requirement of that magnitude," Corbett says.

The Postal Service was once the country's largest employer but now has fewer than 600,000 workers. And the National Association of Letter Carriers argues that cutting Saturday delivery service would mean another 80,000 jobs lost.

"We think it's ridiculous to do anything to dismantle the delivery network that we have to 150 million addresses six days a week," says NALC President Fredric Rolando. "One of our competitive edges is Saturday delivery."

Any change in the Postal Service requires an act of Congress. Rolando worries that communities would lose more than just their mail if Saturday service ends.

"Carriers are so familiar with the neighborhood and who belongs there and who doesn't," he says, calling letter carriers local heroes. "We save lives, been the first on the scene of an accident, stop crime, deliver babies, watch out for children, check on the elderly."

Is Snail Mail Relevant?

In this digital age, some people question the need for so-called snail mail.

For example, in one old episode of Seinfeld, the whacky character Kramer asks to cancel his mail service all together.

"What about your bills?" asks mailman Newman.

"The bank can pay 'em," responds Kramer.

"What about your cards and letters?" Newman asks.

"E-mail, telephones, fax machines, FedEx, telex, telegrams, holograms," retorts Kramer.

"All right, it's true," an exasperated Newman huffs. "Of course no one needs mail. You think you're so clever for figuring that out?"

L.A. Postmaster Mark Anderson says Internet communication still doesn't bring the emotional moments that hard-copy mail does. "There's nothing like a good old Christmas card, a birthday card sent through the U.S. mail," he says.

And, he notes, someone has to hand-deliver all those online purchases.

"Most of my shipping and receiving is for my online sales," says Vic Bedrossian, who owns a small watch and jewelry shop called Anytime in Culver City, Calif. He relies on the Postal Service so he can sell domestically and internationally.

"If we have one day less to ship and receive, that makes a huge difference when trying to satisfy your customer," Bedrossian says.

If it absolutely, positively has to be there on Saturdays, there are other options. But even the big guys, FedEx and UPS, sometimes depend on mail carriers.

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4. Passport Fair to be held at ONU

Representatives of the U.S. Postal Service will be at Ohio Northern University to accept passport applications and take passport photos from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, December 2. The Passport Fair will take place in McIntosh Center.

Customers have the option of applying for a passport book, good for all international travel, or a passport card, which is less expensive but good only for land and sea travel between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean region and Bermuda.

To help the passport application process, the Postal Service recommends bringing the following: - Proof of American citizenship. This must be a certified birth certificate

(not a copy) issued by the city, county or state, a previous U.S. passport, a certificate of citizenship or a naturalization certificate. (Please note: a hospital-issued birth certificate alone is not acceptable.)

- Proof of identity. This must be a previous U.S. passport, a naturalization certificate, a certificate of citizenship or a current valid driver's license, government ID or military photo ID.

A passport application is normally processed by the State Department within five to six weeks. However, for an additional fee, the State Department will expedite the application and process it within three business days, and for those who need speedy delivery, the U.S. Postal Service offers Express Mail next day delivery both to and from the State Department.

Information on passports, fees, and how to apply can be found at www.usps.com/passport/ or travel.state.gov. U.S. citizens may also obtain passport information by phone, in English and Spanish, by calling the National Passport Information Center toll-free at 1-877-487-2778.

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