

# MAIL SPOKEN HERE

*April 2020*

***The electronic newsletter from the USPS Headquarters - Industry Engagement & Outreach team - summarizing recent USPS news and developments***

**COVID-19 – Please be safe and considerate of those who are essential and risking exposure.**

## **Binding the Nation - Brennan Salutes Employees for Continued Service**

In a letter, Postmaster General Megan J. Brennan thanked USPS employees for their continued service to the nation during the coronavirus pandemic.

“During these challenging and unprecedented times, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you — the dedicated and unwavering employees of the United States Postal Service,” Brennan writes.

“While the impact the coronavirus has had upon our nation and our communities cannot be overstated, we will most assuredly overcome this disruption and thrive, again, as we have in the past. I am reminded, however, that it’s during troubled times such as these that the crucial role the Postal Service plays in the daily lives of the American people clearly shines through. Our mission to bind the nation together is more important than ever during times of crisis, and is achieved through the tireless efforts and sacrifices of our dedicated employees.”

The letter, which was mailed to every employee’s home address last week, explains that USPS is working closely with federal, state and local health authorities to ensure that the organization provides its essential service in a manner that protects the safety of its employees and the public.

The Postal Service has adjusted procedures to achieve this goal, Brennan writes, and the organization is keeping employees updated through stand-up talks, articles in USPS news publications, bulletin board messages, and other communications channels.

Additionally, the letter notes that several agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, as well as the surgeon general, have all said there is a very low risk that the virus is being spread through the mail.

Brennan concludes by saluting employees for helping the organization to maintain its normal operations during the pandemic.

“While all of us support the Postal Service in many different ways, those of you remaining physically present in the communities and serving our customers — whether in our retail offices or in transporting, processing and delivering goods and services to millions of people, providing mission-critical support

across our network during these unprecedented times — are truly binding this nation together,” she writes. “For this I am so proud and thankful, as is the nation.”

### **Safety First - No Evidence Virus Spread Through Mail, Packages**

The Postal Service is sharing guidance from public health organizations and other authorities that have stated there’s no evidence the coronavirus is spread through the mail.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is spread through respiratory droplets, and there is currently no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 with package shipments. “In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures,” CDC states on its website.

In a frequently asked questions section on its website, the World Health Organization (WHO) addresses concerns about the safety of receiving packages from areas where COVID-19 has been reported.

“The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low,” WHO states.

Surgeon General Jerome Adams has also weighed in. “There is no evidence right now that the coronavirus can be spread through mail,” he said recently. Additionally, during a television interview Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, spoke about the likelihood of the coronavirus being transmitted through things like mail and package delivery.

“I don’t think we need to get completely obsessed about packages that come in because those types of surfaces — the virus might live there for a very short time,” Fauci said. “But people say, ‘Should I get a package from a grocery store that says made in China?’ I wouldn’t worry about that. That’s not the issue.”

### **Drawn Together - Celebrating Employees and Customers**



The above coloring page captures a unique moment in the life of the Postal Service: Across the nation, customers are leaving thank-you notes at their mailboxes, creating driveway chalk drawings and posting yard signs to thank USPS employees for their steadfast service.

The organization, an essential public service, is continuing normal operations during the pandemic, including delivering medicine, supplies and other critically important products to self-isolating customers.

The coloring page was created by Earl Musick, a longtime illustrator and Postal Service employee in Eastern Area. Musick also draws postal-themed holiday coloring pages each year.

### **DMM Notice: Mail Delivery Return to Sender Timeframe Extension**

To assist Postal Service™ customers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, effective immediately the Postal Service is temporarily extending the timeframes when a mailpiece that cannot be delivered will be returned to the sender.

The Postal Service will temporarily extend the current timeframe provided under *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual, section 508.1.1.7f, of returning mailpieces to the sender after 15 days for accountable mail (5 days for Priority Mail Express® and 10 days for Cash on Delivery or COD), and 10 days generally for all other mail (or up to 30 days for all mailpieces) per Postal Service policy, unless the customer requested a return timeframe at the time of mailing. Perishable items will continue to be handled as indicated under current Postal Service policy.

All customer notifications for items with an attempted delivery date of March 28, 2020, or later will be updated to reflect the extended 30-day timeframe. The Postal Service is also working on implementing additional notices to remind customers about missed delivery items and the extended 30-day timeframe.

When an item cannot be delivered on the first attempt, customers have several options for redelivery or pickup:

1. Schedule a redelivery online at [redelivery.usps.com/redelivery](https://redelivery.usps.com/redelivery).
2. Complete and place PS Form 3849, *We ReDeliver For You!* in their mailbox.
3. Go to their local Post Office™ to pick up their items.
4. Manage redeliveries via Informed Delivery® at [informedelivery.com](https://informedelivery.com).
5. Send a representative to pick up mail at the local Post Office. The addressee must sign PS Form 3849 and include the name of the representative on the form.
6. Call 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777) to schedule a redelivery.

Extending the timeframe to 30 days for all mail classes will help customers navigate challenges associated with the current coronavirus pandemic.

Additionally, USPS® has modified the procedures for carriers obtaining signatures upon delivery. For more information about this and other changes to Postal Service mail services during the coronavirus pandemic, visit [faq.usps.com/s/article/USPS-Coronavirus-Updates-for-Residential-Customers](https://faq.usps.com/s/article/USPS-Coronavirus-Updates-for-Residential-Customers). This change will continue until further notice.

### **Expected-Delivery Changes - USPS Makes Adjustments for Some Products**

USPS has adjusted service commitments for some products due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Effective April 17, Priority Mail's two-day and three-day service commitments were extended to three days and four days, respectively. Customers will continue to receive improved product tracking and as much as \$50 in free insurance.

With the extra day extension, customers should expect delivery using the Priority Mail Open and Distribute service to range from two days to four days nationwide.

Priority Mail Express service, which guarantees overnight service, and one-day service commitments for Priority Mail will not change.

First-Class Package Service two-day and three-day service commitments will also be extended to three and four days, respectively.

Global Express Guaranteed services also have been altered.

The Postal Service said its goal is to continue to move packages as expeditiously as possible. The organization continually reviews its network capacity to provide the American public reliable, efficient and fast delivery service.

For a full list of international and domestic updates, refer visit [usps.com](https://usps.com).

### **In the Mail - USPS to Deliver Stimulus Checks, Notices**

The Postal Service will deliver the economic impact payments that the federal government is sending to eligible households as part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic. USPS, in its role as an essential service, will accept, process and deliver an estimated 60 million checks from the U.S. Treasury Department. About 5 million to 8 million pieces will enter the mail stream each week for about eight weeks.

The Postal Service will also accept, process and deliver an estimated 81 million eligibility notices from the Internal Revenue Service for households that will receive economic impact payments as direct deposits into their bank accounts.

Checks started entering the mail stream April 20, while the notices began April 22 and will continue through April 28.

Both the economic impact payments, also known as stimulus checks, and the eligibility notices will be letter-size First-Class Mail pieces. Depending on income, eligible taxpayers who filed tax returns for either 2018 or 2019 will automatically receive an economic impact payment of as much as \$1,200 for individuals or \$2,400 for married couples and as much as \$500 for each qualifying child, according to the IRS. Most seniors and retirees are also eligible to receive payments.

### **Say it in Writing - Cards, Letters Gain Currency among Older Adults**

Nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other places that care for older people are asking the public to send cards and letters to their residents so they don't feel forgotten in the new era of social distancing.

In a recent Facebook post, St. Anthony’s Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Rock Island, IL, issued a plea for more mail. “If your children’s schools are closed and [you’re] looking for something to keep them busy, please consider having them write letters or color pictures and send them to our residents,” the post read.

Nursing homes, retirement communities and similar places are restricting visits from non-residents to help combat the spread of the coronavirus, which poses a higher risk of serious complications for older adults. Cards and letters are seen as a safe method to stay in touch: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and Surgeon General Jerome Adams have indicated there is no evidence that the coronavirus is spread through the mail.

Although some facilities for older people have stopped allowing visitors inside, USPS is working with the facilities on alternate delivery arrangements, including having letter carriers place mail in outside receptacles or having carriers hand the mail to a staffer outside.

The effort to get people to write to older adults is driven in part by social media users, including Kathleen Berezny, a Riverhead, NY, retiree who recently asked people to send cards and notes to her friend Bertha Kulesa, 96, who lives at a local nursing and rehabilitation center.

“It just takes a card and stamp but it means so much,” Berezny said, adding that she often includes a book of stamps with her letters to make it easier for the recipients to write back. “It can encourage an exchange,” she said. “The art of letter writing is making a comeback.”

Likewise, “Saturday Night Live” cast member Heidi Gardner posted a request on Instagram for her fans to send letters to nursing homes. “Senior citizens need our love more than ever right now. They are isolated and not able to be visited by loved ones,” she wrote.

Gardner included the image of a note she mailed to a care center in Iowa: “Hi, I’m Heidi. I wanted to say hello to you. I realize with the current state of the world, you may not have many visitors stopping by. So this is me ‘stopping by’ to let you know that you are loved and thought of.”

### **On the Move - Fleet Helps USPS Deliver for Nation**

The Postal Service helps keep American commerce moving — literally.

The organization has more than 228,000 vehicles, one of the largest civilian fleets in the world.

On a typical day, these vehicles help USPS to deliver more than 470 million mailpieces to about 160 million addresses, including more packages to homes than any other business.



The postal vehicle fleet includes more than 44,000 alternative-fuel-capable vehicles, most of which are equipped to use ethanol. The fleet also includes compressed natural gas and liquid propane gas vehicles. Of course, the real power behind the postal fleet is people, including 85,100 vehicle maintenance employees.

And just as the nation keeps moving forward, so does USPS. The organization is conducting research and testing as part of its efforts to develop next-generation vehicles that will have improved ergonomics, safety features, fuel efficiency and design flexibility.

### Sustainability Excellence - USPS Names Eight Award Winners



*The Postal Service's new Earth Day stamp, like the organization's Postmaster General Sustainability Excellence Awards, reflects the organization's commitment to environmental stewardship.*

Eight facilities, teams and programs will receive Postmaster General Sustainability Excellence Awards for their efforts to help USPS achieve its sustainability goals.

The honorees, announced were:

- **The Facilities team at USPS headquarters in Washington, DC**, which installed waste receptacles in designated smoking areas to implement a process for free recycling of cigarette butts, which are used in the plastics industry, and composting of residual tobacco waste
- **The headquarters Supply Management Sustainable Purchasing Program initiative**, which upgraded the USPS Green Purchasing Program and the eBuy Plus online ordering system, resulting in a 5 percent increase in spending on environmentally preferable products
- **Sierra Coastal District**, which accepted an offer from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to install free LED lighting upgrades at 71 USPS facilities, a change that will save an estimated \$400,000 a year in electricity costs when completed
- **The Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center**, which installed LED lighting, sensors, controls and other items to improve efficiency and cut utility costs
- **The Power, MT, Post Office**, which replaced its old, unsafe facility with a new, modular version made from converted shipping containers, a change that saved money, cut construction time and promoted sustainability
- **The San Juan, PR, Processing and Distribution Center**, which developed a new protocol for handling waste and recycling effectively and efficiently
- **The USPS BlueEarth Secure Destruction mail service program**, which has eliminated more than 264 million pieces of First-Class Mail return-to-sender letters and flats, reduced operating costs by more than \$41 million, increased recycling of mail by 10,595 tons and avoided a potential 6,764 tons of greenhouse gases
- **The Facility Services Category Management Center**, which awarded electricity contracts to green power suppliers in 12 states, saving USPS an estimated \$15.3 million a year

The Postal Service announced this year's honorees April 21 to complement Earth Day's 50th anniversary. The organization also highlighted progress toward its sustainability goals and celebrated the release of the Earth Day stamp, among other activities.

## Golden Globe - 3 Facts about Earth Day

Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, was first celebrated in 1970 and is credited with starting the environmental movement in the United States. Here are three facts to mark its 50th anniversary.

**1. An oil spill led to the creation of Earth Day.** On Jan. 28, 1969, an oil well off the coast of Santa Barbara, CA, blew, releasing more than 3 million gallons of oil and killing more than 10,000 birds, dolphins, seals and other marine species. This environmental catastrophe led U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin to propose the creation of Earth Day a year later as a way to raise awareness of environmental issues.

**2. More than 20 million people took part in the first Earth Day celebration.** April 22 was chosen as the date because it was after most schools' spring breaks and did not conflict with Easter. Events took place at more than 2,000 colleges and universities, 10,000 elementary and high schools, and in hundreds of communities across the nation.

**3. Earth Day is now a global event.** Earth Day went worldwide in 1990 and is now observed in 192 countries and overseen by the nonprofit Earth Day Network. It is considered to be the largest secular holiday in the world and is celebrated by more than 1 billion people each year. To help mark the occasion in 2020, USPS will issue an Earth Day stamp that features a playful painting of the planet and hand-lettered text.

## April Fun Facts

No one is sure how the month ended up with its name, but we do know the Romans named it "Aprillis."

The etymology behind the word "April" comes from the verb "aperire" which means "to open." It's commonly believed that the word refers to the season of trees and flowers beginning to "open" or bloom.

Those who were born in April have a diamond as their birthstone, which represents innocence. Their birth flower is either a Daisy or a Sweet Pea.

There are quite a few notable historical people who were born in April, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, and Queen Elizabeth II.

On April 15th, 1912, the famous Titanic ship hit an iceberg and sunk on her very first voyage.

George Washington was inaugurated as the First President of the United States on April 30th, 1789.

On April 11th, 1970, Apollo 13 was launched and ran into difficulties about two days later. It was then that the famous line "Houston, we've had a problem here" was said, and is usually misquoted today.

And of course as we all know, "April showers bring May flowers," so if the rain of April ever gets you down, never forget the silver lining!

## Thank You Everyone

*Thank you all so much for taking the time to read our monthly Industry Engagement and Outreach Mail Spoken Here newsletter. We hope you are finding ways to occupy your time and that you are all staying safe and healthy. Please stay vigilant and we will get through this pandemic stronger than ever.*

## Federal Register Notices:

### Published in the Federal Register Apr 29, 2020

#### **New Mailing Standards for COVID-19 Related Category B Infectious Substances (Doc # 2020-08256)**

**AGENCY:** Postal Service.

**ACTION:** Temporary final rule.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Postal Service is revising its Hazardous, Restricted and Perishable Mail regulations by replacing Publication 52, Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail, Appendix C, Packaging Instructions 6C, currently incorporated by reference, to support the rapid deployment of coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnostic tests using the mail during this public health emergency. In addition to the updated packaging instructions, all shippers of COVID-19 related Infectious Substances Category B UN3373 must obtain authorization from the Postal Service prior to mailing. These measures are necessary to ensure that diagnostic kits potentially containing Category B Infectious Substances are packaged, marked and labelled properly to ensure safety and containment throughout transport.

#### **DATES:**

Effective: April 27, 2020 until the Federal public health emergency first declared on March 13, 2020 is terminated (following procedures prescribed in 50 U.S. Code § 1622). The Postal Service will publish a document announcing the termination date in the Federal Register.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Mary J. Collins at (202) 268-5551 or Dale Kennedy at (202) 268-6592 or by email at [pcfederalregister@usps.gov](mailto:pcfederalregister@usps.gov).

### Published in the Federal Register Apr 28, 2020

#### **Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-09085)**

**TIME AND DATE:** April 23, 2020, at 10:30 a.m.

**PLACE:** Washington, DC

**STATUS:** Closed.

#### **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

1. Administrative Issues.
2. Strategic Issues.

On April 23, 2020, a majority of the members of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service voted unanimously to hold and to close to public observation a special meeting in Washington, DC, via teleconference. The Board determined that no earlier public notice was practicable.



**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Michael J. Elston, Secretary of the Board, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260-1000. Telephone: (202) 268-4800.

**Published in the Federal Register Apr 23, 2020**

**International Product Change-Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International & First-Class Package International Service Agreement (Doc # 2020-08627)**

**DATE:** Date of notice: April 23, 2020.

**AGENCY:** Postal Service

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:**

The Postal Service gives notice of filing a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission to add a Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International & First-Class Package International Service contract to the list of Negotiated Service Agreements in the Competitive Product List in the Mail Classification Schedule.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Christopher C. Meyerson, (202) 268-7820.

**Published in the Federal Register Apr 20, 2020**

**Authorization to Manufacture and Distribute Postage Evidencing Systems (Doc # 2020-07573)**

**AGENCY:** Postal Service

**ACTION:** Final Rule

**SUMMARY:**

The Postal Service is amending its Postage Evidencing Systems regulations. These changes set forth the current procedure (which may be updated based upon changes to postal regulations) to become an authorized Postage Evidencing System (PES) provider. The changes also update or create new definitions, update all references of the Office of Payment Technology to the Office of Commercial Payment, and reorganize or reword certain provisions currently in the regulations for clarity.

**DATES:** Effective May 20, 2020.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Lisa H Arcari, Director, Commercial Payment, lisa.h.arcari@usps.gov, 202-268-4270.

**Published in the Federal Register Apr 13, 2020**

**Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-07782)**

**TIME AND DATE:** April 8, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.

**PLACE:** Washington, DC

**STATUS:** Closed.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

Administrative Items.

Strategic Issues.

On April 1, 2020, a majority of the members of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service voted unanimously to hold and to close to public observation a special meeting in Washington, DC, via teleconference. The Board determined that no earlier public notice was practicable.

General Counsel Certification: The General Counsel of the United States Postal Service has certified that the meeting may be closed under the Government in the Sunshine Act.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Michael J. Elston, Secretary of the Board, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, DC 20260-1000. Telephone: (202) 268-4800.

**Negotiated Service Agreements:**

International **Product Changes-Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International and First-Class Package International** Service Agreement:

Product Changes-**Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, First-Class Package Service and Parcel Select Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail and First-Class Package Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail and First-Class** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Priority Mail Express and Priority Mail** *Negotiated Service Agreements:* 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06862),

Product Changes-**Priority Mail Express** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Priority Mail** *Negotiated Service Agreements:* 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06861), 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06863), 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06864), 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06865), 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06866), 4/16/2020 (Doc# 2020-07988), 4/16/2020 (Doc# 2020-07989), 4/16/2020 (Doc# 2020-07991),

Product Changes-**Priority Mail and First-Class Package Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:* 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06859),

Product Changes-**First-Class Package Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:* 4/2/2020 (Doc# 2020-06860), 4/16/2020 (Doc# 2020-07990),

Product Changes-**Parcel Select** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

Product Changes-**Parcel Return Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

## Postal Bulletins:

### Postal Bulletin 22544 dated 4/23/2020

<https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2020/pb22544/pb22544.pdf>

#### Manuals

**DMM Notice:** Mail Delivery Return to Sender Timeframe Extension

**IMM Revision:** Individual Country Listing for Kazakhstan

#### Handbooks

**Handbook F-15 Revision:** Travel Per Diem Rates

#### Publications

**Publication 52 Revision:** Mailing Standards for COVID-19-Related Category B Infectious Substance

**Publication 431 Revision:** Changes to Post Office Box Service and Caller Service Fee Groups

### Postal Bulletin 22543 dated 4/9/2020

<https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2020/pb22543/pb22543.pdf>

**ASM Revision:** Audits and Investigations

**DMM Notice:** Extension of PO Box Renewal Fee Payment

**DMM Revision:** USPS-Produced Flat Rate Containers

**IMM Revision:** Individual Country Listing for Finland

**IMM Revision:** Individual Country Listing for Moldova

#### Handbooks

**Handbook EL-380 Revision:** Executive Recognition Awards

**Handbook F-101 Revision:** Cash Retained Count Tolerance

#### Publications

**Publication 431 Revision:** Changes to Post Office Box Service and Caller Service Fee Groups

## Additional Resources:

FRN: [Federal Register Notices](#)

PB: [Postal Bulletin](#)

PE: [Postal Explorer](#) is a mailer's resource for all information contained in the [Domestic Mail Manual](#) (DMM), [International Mail Manual](#) (IMM), [Publication 52](#), *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*.

PostalPro: [PostalPro](#) is a mailer's resource for other information (i.e., Mailing and Shipping, Operations, Industry Forum, Certifications, Resources).

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