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March 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.

COVID-19 command - New group to lead USPS response



Kristin Seaver has stepped away from her regular duties as chief information officer to serve as the COVID-19 Response Command incident commander.

Postmaster General Megan J. Brennan has established COVID-19 Response Command, a group within the Postal Service that will help ensure the organization takes a comprehensive approach to its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The group is led by Kristin Seaver, who has stepped away from her regular duties as chief information officer to serve as incident commander.

COVID-19 Response Command covers four key areas, each led by a USPS officer:

- **Employee response:** Simon Storey, employee resource management vice president
- **Operational continuity:** Joshua Colin, acting processing and maintenance operations vice president
- **Business continuity:** Mark Guilfoil, supply management vice president
- **Customer continuity:** Steve Monteith, marketing vice president

Janice Walker, corporate communications vice president, coordinates all communications related to COVID-19 Response Command, while David Ellis, managing counsel, coordinates all legal concerns on behalf of the general counsel's office.

While COVID-19 Response Command is active, other executives and managers will handle the duties of the officers involved with the group.

Scott Bombaugh, engineering systems vice president, will serve as acting chief information officer; Jeffrey Becker, international operations executive director; will serve as acting processing and maintenance operations vice president; Linda DeCarlo, safety manager, will serve as acting employee resource management vice president; and Karen Pompanella, commercial products and services manager, will serve as acting supply management vice president.

COVID-19 CONTINUITY PLANNING - USPS Continuity of Operations Update

The Postal Service has developed localized continuity of operations plans that are employed in the case of emergencies to help ensure that the nation's postal system continues to function for the American people. With a longstanding history of quickly adapting its operational plans to changing conditions, the Postal Service maintains steady communications with mailers during natural disasters or other events that require emergency responses and advises residential customers, business mailers, and international mailers with regard to postal facility disruptions that may impact delivery in an affected area via its USPS Service Alerts webpage at: <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/>.

In the event they are required, the activation of localized continuity of operations plans depends on the specific effects of an emergency in an impacted area. Due to the variance in possibilities and factors, it would be impossible to predict what the effect of such emergencies would be on a specific customers' mailing prior to the event, but the planning enables us to continue or quickly reestablish mail operations in regions facing the impact of strong hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, etc., and they have been prepared to respond to pandemic-related circumstances as well. As a result, we recommend that customers refer to *USPS Service Alerts* for service-disruption updates. Another key component of our communications portion of USPS contingency plans remains the Industry Alert.

For those business mailers who utilize the Business Service Network (BSN), we encourage them to continue to maintain the line of communication with their representative on changes to the postal system. If a customer or mailing partner needs to shut down its operations due to the current situation, they should contact their BSN contact, Sales contact, or their local Business Mail Entry contact to discuss their plans. These local contacts will notify the Districts, Area, and Headquarters of any needed assistance or broader impacts.

The Postal Service continues to use its existing processes for many of the more common impacts customers are concerned about. Some questions that have been raised are:

- **How is USPS handling mail for closed businesses?**
Mail on the delivery route is returned to the Delivery unit and will be held for 10 days under current policies. Customers can request a temporary hold for their mail up to 30 days. Caller Box customers should contact their local office to discuss how they will be handling the pickup of this volume. Any high volume customer will be contacted to discuss pickup options as well.
- **How is USPS delivering mail under shelter in place declarations?**
The Postal Service is classified as an essential government service operation, which allows us to continue operations.
- **How safe is the mail and mail transport equipment?**
Current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) guidance continues to indicate there is no evidence the virus is spreading through the mail. According to WHO, the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, and the risk of catching the virus from a package that has been moved, traveled, and exposed to different conditions and temperatures is also low. This guidance remains true for mail transport equipment.
- **Is the USPS experiencing capacity issues due to reduced airline routes?**
There are no domestic air capacity issues at this time. The Postal Service continues to work with International air carriers and contract air carriers to keep mail moving.

Industry and commercial customers can email questions or concerns about COVID-19 and the mail to industryfeedback@usps.gov with COVID-19 in the subject line. Mailers can also sign up for Industry Alerts at industryalert@usps.gov.

For more information, see the USPS Coronavirus Statement at about.usps.com/newsroom.

Sign of the times - USPS modifies procedures for carriers

The Postal Service has modified procedures for letter carriers to help them practice social distancing while delivering mail and packages.

For example, carriers should avoid ringing a customer's doorbell when possible. When knocking on a customer's door, the carrier should avoid areas that may be frequently touched.

When a carrier delivers an item that requires a customer's signature, USPS is advising the carrier to maintain a safe, appropriate distance.

The carrier should then ask the customer for his or her first initial and last name and enter this information in the carrier's Mobile Delivery Device. When prompted, the carrier should print his or her initials, route number and the notation C19 instead of asking the customer to enter a signature.

Additionally, carriers should politely ask the customer to step back a safe distance or close the door so the carrier can leave the item in the mail receptacle or another appropriate location.

Also, if there are delivery points on a carrier's route where social distancing recommendations are difficult to follow, the carrier should alert his or her supervisor so alternative delivery methods can be explored.

USPS managers and supervisors began delivering a mandatory stand-up talk to explain the new procedures to carriers and other employees.

Getting the word out - Informed Delivery used for national alert

The Postal Service used Informed Delivery to provide subscribers with helpful information about the coronavirus pandemic.

Informed Delivery is a free notification feature that allows consumers to receive digital images of their incoming mail. Users can see the images in a digest emailed to them or through an online dashboard. On March 14, USPS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) distributed an emergency alert about the coronavirus to Informed Delivery's 23.5 million subscribers. The message, which was available in both subscribers' email digests and the online dashboard, provided recipients with a link to a CDC website where they could get the latest information about the pandemic.

This marked the first time USPS used Informed Delivery for a national alert with no associated mailpiece. "The Postal Service has the unique capability to provide this type of messaging during national emergencies like the pandemic we are experiencing. It's another example of how Informed Delivery provides subscribers with timely, relevant information," said Carrie Bornitz, Informed Delivery's program manager.

In addition to Informed Delivery, the Postal Service is providing information about the pandemic on other digital platforms, including articles on the Link news site, Blue and LiteBlue pages with employee resources, and service alerts on usps.com.

Staying vigilant - CDC's coronavirus guidance still being shared

The Postal Service is continuing to share the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance regarding the novel coronavirus outbreak. The virus, officially known as COVID-19, began late last year in Wuhan, China.

According to CDC, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus and to follow these recommendations to help prevent the spread of any respiratory viruses:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you're sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that's at least 60 percent alcohol. Always wash your hands with soap and water if the hands are visibly dirty.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using face masks. CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of face masks is also crucial for health workers and caregivers.

Additionally, CDC has reported there is very low risk that the coronavirus can be spread from products or packaging shipped from China, due to poor survivability of this type of virus on surfaces. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets, CDC reports.

Also, according to CDC, there is no evidence to support transmission of the novel coronavirus associated with imported goods, and there have been no reported cases of the virus in the United States associated with imported goods.

The Postal Service is continuing to provide this information to employees through stand-up talks, employee news articles, messages on bulletin boards, and updates on Informed Facility and Postal Vision monitors inside USPS workplaces. Please visit the CDC's website for additional information.

Hands off - Restrictions for shipping sanitizers, wipes

The Postal Service wants employees to know there are specific shipping restrictions for hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes that contain alcohol.

As result of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the organization is seeing an increase in the number of customers attempting to ship hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes, which are widely used to help prevent transmission of the virus and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

Hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes that don't contain alcohol are not regulated as hazardous materials and are allowed in the mailstream.

However, most hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes contain flammable ethanol or isopropanol (rubbing alcohol), which are hazardous materials subject to the following mailing restrictions:

- Flammable hand sanitizers and alcohol wipes are prohibited in international, Army Post Office, Fleet Post Office and Diplomatic Post Office mail.
- Small quantities of flammable hand sanitizers and alcohol wipes can be sent in domestic mail by surface transportation only by USPS Retail Ground, Parcel Select or Parcel Select Lightweight.
- Customers can only ship up to 1 pint of liquid per package using surface transportation. Cases of 12-ounce bottles or more exceed USPS allowable limits.

Customers who want to use domestic air transportation of these products must submit a request and obtain written authorization from the product classification manager at ProductClassification@usps.gov.

For additional information, refer to Publication 52 Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail, Appendix C, Packaging Instruction 3A.

Still the one - USPS honored with business diversity award

The Postal Service has again been named the top government agency for multicultural business opportunities.

For the ninth consecutive year, Omnikal, a social media and networking organization that promotes business inclusiveness, has given USPS its top Omni50 Award in recognition of the Postal Service's efforts to offer opportunities to multicultural small businesses and entrepreneurs.

USPS registers small businesses, hosts workshops, holds one-on-one business meetings and posts materials online to guide business owners in marketing their supplies and services.

"The Postal Service is honored to be named for the ninth consecutive year as the top government agency for providing multicultural business opportunities," said Supply Management Vice President Mark Guilfoil.

“Throughout our supply chain, we review and encourage the inclusion of diverse suppliers, both at the prime and subcontract level. A diverse supply base fuels our business and supports Postal Service objectives of growth and innovation.”

The Omni50 Award recipients were determined based on a survey of Omnikal’s 2.1 million members, who answered questions about the quality of business initiatives provided for companies led by women and minorities.

Kenton Clarke, Omnikal’s chief executive officer, said the Omni50 Awards help his organization “to equalize, broaden and level the playing field for both brands and an increasingly varied vendor-supplier marketplace.”

March Fun Facts

The name March comes from the Roman god of war, Mars. For many years, March, being the start of spring, was also the start of the New Year. Much of Europe used March as the start of the year. Britain used March 25th as the beginning of the New Year until 1752.

It is the first month of spring which begins between March 19-21.

March in Other Languages:

- Chinese (Mandarin) - sanyuè
- Danish - marts
- French - mars
- Italian - marzo
- Latin - Martius
- Spanish – marzo

Did you know they are planning a sequel to the movie “March of the Penguins?”

They are calling it “April of the Penguins!”

Just a little humor to lighten the mood. Please stay safe and try to enjoy time with family. We’re all in this together and together we can stay distant and beat it. Take care everyone.

Federal Register Notices:

Published in the Federal Register Mar 30, 2020

Sunshine Act Meeting; Board of Governors (Doc # 2020-06632)

TIME AND DATE: March 24, 2020 and daily until April 23, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Administrative Matters.

2. Strategic Matters.

General Counsel Certification: The General Counsel of the United States Postal Service has certified that such meetings 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.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 27, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-06533)

TIME AND DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.; Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 12:00 p.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC, at U.S. Postal Service Headquarters, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, in the Benjamin Franklin Room.

STATUS: Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.—Closed. Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 12:00 p.m.—Open.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. (Closed)

1. Strategic Issues.
2. Financial and Operational Matters.
3. Administrative Issues.

Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. (Open)

1. Remarks of the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
2. Remarks of the Postmaster General and CEO.
3. Borrowing Resolution.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

Published in the Federal Register Mar 26, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-06414)

TIME AND DATE: March 21, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Administrative Issues.
2. Strategic Issues.

On March 21, 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.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 23, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-06164)

TIME AND DATE: March 19, 2020, at 8:00 a.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Administrative Matters.
2. Strategic Matters.

On March 19, 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.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 16, 2020

Privacy Act; Notice of a Modified System of Records (Doc # 2020-05232)

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Notice of a modified system of records.

SUMMARY:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is proposing to revise a Customer Privacy Act Systems of Records (SOR). These changes are being made to support ongoing efforts to identify, mitigate and prevent fraudulent transactions.

DATES: These revisions will become effective without further notice on April 15, 2020, unless comments received on or before that date result in a contrary determination.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Janine Castorina, Chief Privacy and Records Management Officer, Privacy and Records Management Office, 202-268-3069 or privacy@usps.gov.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 13, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-05279)

TIME AND DATE: Monday, March 9, 2020, at 1:15 p.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Monday, March 9, 2020, at 1:15 p.m.

1. Strategic Issues.
2. Administrative Items.

On March 9, 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. 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.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 9, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-04895)

TIME AND DATE: Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 9:00 a.m.

1. Strategic Issues.
2. Administrative Items.

On March 5, 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. 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.

Published in the Federal Register Mar 5, 2020

Authorization To Manufacture and Distribute Postage Evidencing Systems (Doc # 2020-03562)

AGENCY: Postal Service

ACTION: Final Rule

SUMMARY:

The Postal Service is amending its Postage Evidencing Systems regulations. These changes put the financial responsibility for returned checks and returned Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) debit payments on the applicable resetting company (RC) and PC Postage provider. These responsibilities include providing reimbursement for any penalties or fines imposed on the Postal Service for returned checks or ACH debit payments, and remitting the amount of the returned check or ACH debit payment, as applicable, plus the reimbursement to the Postal Service within 10 federal banking days of the date the invoice is mailed. These changes also update the Statement on Standards for Attestation Engagements (SSAE) 18 requirements and add the requirement for System and Organization Control (SOC) 2 reporting.

DATES: Effective: March 5, 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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

Published in the Federal Register Mar 6, 2020

Board of Governors; Sunshine Act Meeting (Doc # 2020-04785)

TIME AND DATE: February 27, 2020, at 2:30 p.m.

PLACE: Washington, DC

STATUS: Closed.

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Administrative Issues.
2. Strategic Issues.

On February 27, 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. 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.

Negotiated Service Agreements:

International **Product Changes-Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International and First-Class Package International** Service Agreement: 3/9/2020 (Doc# 2020-04798)

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:*

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

Product Changes-**Priority Mail** *Negotiated Service Agreements:* 3/9/2020 (Doc# 2020-04886),
3/18/2020 (Doc# 2020-05548)

Product Changes-**Priority Mail and First-Class Package Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*
3/18/2020 (Doc# 2020-05549), 3/18/2020 (Doc# 2020-05550)

Product Changes-**First-Class Package Service** *Negotiated Service Agreements:*

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:* 3/24/2020 (Doc# 2020-06106)

Postal Bulletins:

Postal Bulletin 22542 dated 3/26/20

<https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2020/pb22542/pb22542.pdf>

Manuals

DMM Revision: Laminated Card-Type Letter and Postcard

DMM Revision: Philatelic Services

Publications

Publication 223 Revision: Directives and Forms Update

Forms

PS Form 337 Revision: Clearance Record for Separated Employee

Postal Bulletin 22541 dated 3/12/20

<https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2020/pb22541/pb22541.pdf>

DMM Revision: Priority Mail Express Postage Refunds for Guaranteed Service

DMM Revision: USPS Returns Service

IMM Revision: Individual Country Listing for Norway

IMM Revision: Individual Country Listing for Russia

IMM Revision: Termination of International Postal Money Order Service with Japan

Handbooks

Handbook F-101 Revision: Increased Cash Refund Limit

Publications

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

Forms

PS Form 2976-R Acceptance Policies (Including Military Mail)

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).

Please visit us on the USPS [Industry Outreach](#) website.

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