

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS DIRECTIVE

2660.1
Revision 5

5/24/18

MAIL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides the Mail Management Program procedures and responsibilities for FSIS employees and describes the Agency's mailing and shipping standards. This directive is being reissued to add additional instructions regarding metered mail, post office box rentals, and updated contact information for the FSIS Mail Management Program.

II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 2660.1, Revision 4, Mail Management Program, 8/25/14

III. BACKGROUND

A. The USDA mail centers adhere to the General Services Administration objective of timely and cost-effective dispatch and delivery of mail to the appropriate office after its receipt from the United States Postal Service (USPS). USDA cooperates fully with the USPS to meet USDA's written communications requirements in [Departmental Regulation 3050-001](#) and to ensure accurate reimbursement of the USPS for services it performs for USDA.

B. FSIS uses the most economical classes and types of mail services available that are consistent with operational needs. The FSIS Mail Management Program is designed to reduce mailing and shipping costs through the use of the USPS and private carriers. The Mail Management Program also adheres to the mailing practices and standards outlined in the regulations cited in subparagraph IV. A. 1 below.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The FSIS Office of Management (OM), Office of Administrative Services (OAS), Information Management and Analysis Branch (IMAB) serves as a representative for FSIS at the national level and carries out the responsibilities of a Mail Manager by performing the following actions:

1. Ensures that FSIS's national Mail Management Program complies with all applicable mail policies, procedures, and regulations including [Departmental Regulation 3050-001](#) and [Federal Management Regulation Part 102-192](#);
2. Provides consistent representation for FSIS at Departmental Mail Managers' meetings and discussions, as well as participating in Mail Managers' orientations;
3. Maintains relationships with other USDA agencies' Mail Managers, external mail service providers, and mail technical experts;
4. Develops and monitors the postage budget and expenditures for FSIS at the national level;

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic; All Field Employees **OPI:** OPPD

5. Provides postage budget allocations and amendments to the USDA Mail Manager;
6. Complies with written policies and procedures to reduce personal mail or packages received or sent via incoming, outgoing, or internal mail;
7. Coordinates with program offices to minimize postage and associated printing expenses through improved mailpiece (i.e., items sent through the mail) design, electronic transmission of data in lieu of mail, and other appropriate measures;
8. Seeks opportunities to remain current on new technologies and practices that could reduce mailing costs or make use of mail services more effectively;
9. Ensures that a USPS mailpiece design analyst is consulted when creating a new mailpiece; and
10. Reports all activities to include all postage costs associated with mailing, printing, and materials to the USDA Mail Manager.

B. The USDA Office of Operations, Central Mail Unit, operates the mail services for FSIS's offices in Washington, DC, and nearby locations.

C. The Procurement Management Branch within OAS provides mandatory contract services for Express and Domestic Delivery Services.

D. The FSIS offices outside of headquarters receive, distribute, and dispatch official mail.

E. Headquarters offices do not need to lease or purchase postage meter equipment. All headquarters offices are to use the Department's meters for metered mail. Headquarters offices' meter reports are maintained by the Department.

V. TYPES OF MAIL

A. The office sending the mail is to determine the class and any required special services. To ensure timely receipt and economy, the office should select the class and special service on the basis of the priority of the material being mailed. Postal services and fees are located at the USPS' Web site at www.usps.com.

B. **International Mail** is charged international rates and fees.

C. **Registered or Certified Mail** is used only in cases where proof of delivery is required. This special service is available for First-Class or Priority Mail.

D. **Business Reply Mail (BRM)** is used to request information from FSIS field employees and the public. BRM is also used when the weight of the return mail is unknown. A BRM permit is available for distributing business reply envelopes, self-mailers, cartons, and labels for an annual permit and accounting fee. BRM allows the permit holder to receive a customer's First-Class Mail and return mail by paying for postage only on the mail returned. The BRM permit holder guarantees payment of First-Class Mail postage, plus a per piece charge for pieces returned by the USPS. The USPS designs the mailpiece or label, including a unique ZIP+4 code. Contact RecordsandMail@fsis.usda.gov for additional information.

E. **Metered Mail** can be used at offices outside of headquarters, but these offices are to procure their own non-commercial postage meters and maintain their meter spending and other mailing equipment. The FSIS Mail Manager in OM OAS is the technical evaluator on all meter requests. Field locations

can also use Internet-based mailing and shipping services such as [Stamps.com](https://www.stamps.com) in lieu of purchasing or leasing postage meters. Requests to use Stamps.com are to be approved by the FSIS Mail Manager. Headquarters offices do not need to lease or purchase postage meter equipment. All headquarters offices must use the Department's meters for metered mail.

F. **Meter Reply Mail** is used in place of BRM (if mail meters are in use) to request information from FSIS field employees and the public. Metered reply mail is also used when the weight of the return mail is unknown. No permit fee is required.

G. **Postage Due Mail** is paid postage using official mail meter strips, official mail stamps, or cash. Since there is no simple way to reimburse for cash, program offices should use meter strips or official stamps for postal reimbursement.

H. **Spoiled or Unused Postage Stamps** are to be returned to the FSIS Mail Manager. Contact RecordsandMail@fsis.usda.gov for additional information.

I. **Remailing by Field Offices:**

1. Do not contract with other agencies or commercial mailers to print and mail material received from Washington, DC. All headquarters organized bulk mailings are to be made from Washington, DC.; and
2. Field offices are to separate mailings by class (e.g., First Class or Third Class).

VI. **POSTAGE RATE INCREASES**

A. The USPS periodically increases postage rates and lists the changes on its Web site at <https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/Notice123.htm>. The USPS also provides a postage rate calculator at <http://postcalc.usps.gov/>.

B. If you are using a postage meter, work with your meter vendor to obtain software to update your meter with the correct rates. Some meter vendors may contact your office directly to communicate rate changes and assist with software updates.

VII. **ENVELOPES**

A. **Letter Envelope.** Use letter-size envelopes for one to five pages of correspondence that can be folded to 1/4-inch maximum thickness. Letter-size envelopes are rectangular in shape with minimum dimensions of 5 inches in length, 3.5 inches in height, .007 inches in thickness, and maximum dimensions of 6 1/8 inches in height, 11 1/2 inches in length and 1/4 inch in thickness. The standard letter-size envelopes used Agency wide are white, and approximately 9 1/4 by 4 1/4 inches with black printing.

B. **Flat Envelopes.** Flat envelopes are rectangular in shape and exceed one or more of the maximum dimensions for letter-size envelopes, but do not exceed 15 inches in length, 12 inches in height, or 3/4 inches in thickness. The minimum size for flat envelopes is 6 1/8 inches in height, 11 1/2 inches in length, and 1/4-inch thickness. Flat envelopes are used for communications that cannot be folded, or if folded, will exceed the 1/4-inch maximum width permitted for letter-size envelopes.) The Agency Mail Manager is to review all new envelopes for format and USPS requirements prior to printing. The standard flat envelopes used Agency wide are:

- a. White or Brown 12 by 9.5 inches (white preferred).
- b. White or Brown 15 by 10 inches (white preferred).

C. **Batch Mailing.** Consolidate several pieces of mail (at least six pieces) that are sent to the same address into a single flat envelope for mailing.

D. **Postcards.** To qualify for the postcard rate, postcards should be a minimum of 3 1/2 inches by 5 inches, a maximum of 4 1/4 inches by 6 inches, and imprinted with the same markings and indicia (preprinted USDA envelopes) required for envelopes. Postcards that exceed the above measurements are charged the full First-Class rate by the USPS.

E. **Addressing.** All outgoing mail should contain a clear typed address. The destination address information should be at least approximately 1/2 inch from the left and right edges, and at least 5/8 inch (but no more than 2 3/4 inches) from the bottom of the envelope. Following these instructions ensures the fastest, most efficient delivery services.

F. **Return Address Formats.** Place the name of the Agency, organization, and complete mailing address in the upper-left corner of the envelope. The statement "Official Business" should appear immediately below the return address of all official mail.

G. **Self-Mailers.** Use when material does not require a sealed envelope.

VIII. UNAUTHORIZED MAIL PRACTICES

A. Employees are not to use FSIS's mail system for personal incoming or outgoing mail. Employees should have personal mail sent to their home addresses.

B. Mail labeled "TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY" should not be opened by anyone but the addressee.

C. Employees are not to furnish Meter Reply or Business Reply envelopes, postcards, and labels to:

1. Bidders or contractors;
2. Private persons for sending reports or other information which is not required by law; or
3. Private persons for personal mailings.

D. Employees are not to furnish official postage stamps or metered envelopes to individuals seeking employment in FSIS (except when hiring in critical job areas and when requesting information such as fingerprints or medicals). The submission of job applications and rating appeals are considered personal matters, not official Government business. Such personal mail is, therefore, subject to payment of postage by the employee, and use of official envelopes or stamps for these purposes is prohibited.

IX. OFFICIAL MAIL

A. The USPS transmits official mail. This service includes handling, processing, and the delivery of FSIS mail at the options selected (e.g., First Class, Third Class, or Fourth Class).

B. **Metered Mail.** Each piece of mail is weighed, and the postage and mailing dates are imprinted by postage meters. Metered mail is used for any class of mail and for any amount of postage. Metered mail, when bundled, bypasses postal cancellation equipment and goes directly to the sorting unit. This results in faster processing of the mail.

C. **Official Stamps.** Each mailpiece is weighed and the correct amount of postage is affixed with official stamps. Forever stamps are available to field locations without postage meter access and are only to be used for official business.

X. MAIL SAFETY

A. Each FSIS mail center is to maintain a safe and secure environment regardless of the program office's mail volume. In the event that a suspicious letter or package is found, observe the following procedures:

1. Handle with care. Do not shake or bump;
2. Do not open, smell, touch, or taste;
3. Isolate the letter or package immediately;
4. Treat the letter or package as suspect;
5. Notify your supervisor; and
6. Call 911.

XI. RENTING POST OFFICE BOXES

A. FSIS employees can rent post office boxes if they are not assigned to an official duty station. If an FSIS employee does not have an official duty station, his or her supervisor can approve the use of a rental post office box. FSIS employees should not receive mail for Government business at his or her residence. An FSIS employee can request a post office box online or in person. Post office boxes are available for rent upon application to the local postmaster. For more information refer to USPS How to apply for a PO Box <https://about.usps.com/forms/ps1093.pdf>.

B. Each post office box is rented with the understanding that rent is to be paid in advance for a full fiscal year (October 1 - September 30) or quarterly fractions thereof when necessary. Rental charges for boxes rented on an annual basis are to be paid before the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year.

C. Rental charges on boxes rented after the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year are to be paid in advance for the remainder of the fiscal year, unless rented for a shorter period.

XII. PAYING POST OFFICE BOX RENTAL

A. Box holders will receive notification from their postmaster at least 10 days in advance of the due date for payment. The notice will be postmarked and will show the box number and the amount due. Payment may be made by one of the following methods:

1. The box holder may pay the post office box rentals in cash and submit a reimbursement claim. To obtain reimbursement, the box holder is to use the [PS Form 1093](#) located at www.usps.com or obtain other appropriate receipt from the postmaster. Employees are to follow [Directive 3410.3, Reimbursement Procedures for Inspection Expenditures](#); or
2. Box holders may pay the post office box rental with a Government credit card.

XIII. REFUND FOR UNUSED RENTALS

If the need for a post office box ceases before the expiration of the prepaid rental period, the box holder may be entitled to a refund. No portion of a rental payment will be refunded when payment is made on a quarterly basis. If a box holder pre-pays the rental box for more than one quarter, and then surrenders the

box before the end of the paid-up period, the box holder may apply for a refund of the unused portion. Contact the FSIS Mail Manager at RecordsandMail@fsis.usda.gov for additional information.

XIV. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this directive to the FSIS Mail Manager at: RecordsandMail@fsis.usda.gov.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabrina J. Wagner".

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development