

INDUSTRYALERT

Mail Spoken Here

September 14, 2015

Keeping up with all the news affecting the mailing industry can be a bit challenging at times, but we're here to help with that.

Weather and Operational Communications (What to Expect)

Recently, some mailing industry customers have asked us to reiterate how we communicate weather and other service disruptions with them and the recommended ways for customers to share information with the USPS. As we approach fall and the peak mailing season and a variety of possible weather situations (Hurricane season and winter storms), we would like to review how we manage communications around critical weather events and our internal contingency planning.

As a government business entity, the USPS follows the same Incident Command System process used by FEMA, other federal agencies, state, and local government. Our processes and contingency plans must follow these guidelines. Variations of this structure are used for contingency planning for manmade disasters (wildfires, terrorist actions, and other disasters) and for events designated as National Security type events like the Super Bowl, the NATO Summit, and the upcoming Papal visit.

So, how does this work its way to our customers as information they can use? First, there are two types of communications streams: Pre-event and Post-event. Prior to a hurricane, our District and Area contingency plans call for the Marketing, Business Service Network, and Mail Acceptance teams to contact customers (48 to 72 hours out) to:

- Determine what the customer's emergency plans & needs would be in a severe weather situation.
- Identify remittance customers, have a copy of the all sort plans, and know where remittance mail should be forwarded in case of a long-term evacuation on the customer's part.
- Ensure listing of Remittance/PO Box customers is current, complete with contact information, and available.
- Verify communication plans are current to contact all commercial customers in Districts in case Marketing is forced to cease operations for an evacuation. This plan includes how to contact the customers and how/who the customers can contact someone for assistance.
- Ensure customers have information where mail can be dropped for acceptance, dropships can be accepted, and verification if the BME has to move.
- Ensure SOPs for alternate commercial mail acceptance and processing of Business Reply Mail (BRM) are in place and ready for use if necessary.

Post-event communication plans are built around first assessing safety of our employees, facilities condition, and mail on-hand. Once these assessments are known, all information is

funneled upward through specific channels and shared with our customers via USPS Service Alerts accessed thru usps.com or ribbs.usps.gov. On [USPS Service Alerts](#), you will find information for residential customers (Will I receive mail delivery? Or Is my Post Office Open?) and information for business mailers (Severe Weather Updates, Mail Disruption File, and Delivery Units not accepting Drop Shipments). These links were the direct result of MTAC Workgroup 155 incorporating lessons learned following Hurricane Sandy. The original version of this page was itself created based on learnings from Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

This centralized and upward communications planning allows the teams at the local levels to concentrate on the employees, their facility, and restoring service. Communications are restored with customers using hard copy lists, the BSN *Panorama* contact information, or contact information from *PostalOne!* to find out their condition and any needs the customers may have. At various times, we have employed other methods like centralized 1-800 numbers, text messaging, satellite phones, social media, and traditional media alert customers to impacts and augment our USPS Service Alerts impact listing.

We are constantly adding new communication processes based on new technology or on customer feedback following an event. For example, we are adding weather events to scan information for packages being looked up using USPS Tracking. We have dedicated teams whose job it is to monitor potential weather approaching, weather impacts, determine the need for messaging, and implement contingency plans as needed. When we identify a gap in our process through customer feedback/lesson learned, we build new or modify existing processes to make sure we can alert customers to similar events going forward.

The USPS has very detailed contingency plans to provide for continuity of our operations. These plans exist at the local Post Office level, District, Area, and Headquarters levels. They describe processes to be undertaken by in function in the USPS. Postal management conducts exercises throughout the year to ensure these plans stay effective and up-to-date with new lessons learned.

We take communication with our customers and service restoration very seriously. We will continue to build and improve on the processes in place as well as maximizing new technology as it emerges.

Meet 'The Inspectors'

The United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)—one of our nation's oldest federal law enforcement agencies—is the topic of a new dramatic television series, *The Inspectors*.

CBS will air the half-hour series Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. beginning October 3, 2015.

The Inspectors is a story that explains to the American public what an Inspector does day in and day out. The half-hour scripted drama is geared toward a general audience and focuses on consumer fraud and other postal crimes.

Privately Printed Customs Forms – National Re-certification

National re-certification is required for all mailers and vendors who have previously been approved to privately print customs declaration forms for international and/or domestic mail that requires a customs form.

Mailers currently authorized to privately print the customs declaration, but have not yet completed the Mailer Profile Update Form, can find the form and instructions on RIBBS at: <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intcustomsforms>.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the National Customer Support Center, Customs Forms at 877-264-9693 or by email at customsformcert@usps.gov.

Parcel Return Service

Beginning this month Parcel Return Service (PRS) expands its service to include 932 new Return Delivery Unit (RDU) locations; bringing the total number of available RDUs to 9,063 across the country. PRS is a work share solution designed for high-volume shippers. It offers convenience, visibility and reduced transit time — which add up to a better returns experience for e-commerce shoppers and shippers alike.

PRS allows consumers to take their return packages to any Post Office, schedule free Package Pickup or (if the item meets aviation mail security guidelines), or they can drop the item in a collection box if it meets aviation security guidelines.

For additional information send an email to returns@usps.gov.

First-Class Mail Parcels

On August 26, 2015, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) denied the U.S. Postal Service request to transfer First-Class Mail parcels from the market dominant product list to the competitive product list. See [Order No. 2686](#) on the PRC website.

Congratulations PCC Leadership Award Winners

During a one-day celebration at USPS Headquarters, Postmaster General Megan Brennan presented the highest honors with which a Postal Customer Council (PCC) or member can be recognized.

All finalists participated in round-table discussions, sharing best practices and sharing ideas that can be implemented nationally.

The PCCs are a great way to promote local cooperation and support for a close working relationship between the USPS and businesses that use the mail. If you'd like more information about a PCC in your area, please respond to this email and we'll put you in touch with your closest Postal Customer Council.

Congratulations!

PCC of the Year Large Market	PCC of the Year Small Market	Innovation of the Year
Greater Dallas - Gold	Central Missouri - Gold	Fairfield County, CT - Gold
Greater Portland, OR - Silver	Capitol City, MO - Silver	Greater Dallas - Silver
Sacramento - Bronze	Lehigh Valley, PA - Bronze	Harrisburg Capital, PA - Bronze

Communications Excellence	Education Excellence	Industry Member of the Year
Greater Dallas - Gold	Fairfield County, CT - Gold	Cathy Rupard - Gold
Greater Portland, OR - Silver	Greater Dallas - Silver	Judith Antisdell - Silver
Greater New York - Bronze	Greater Portland, OR - Bronze	John Millet - Bronze
Postal Member of the Year	District Manager of the Year	
Lisa Landone - Gold	David Mastroianni - Gold	
Cheryl Hudson - Silver	Julie Gosdin - Silver	
Dr. Joshua D. Colin - Bronze	David Martin - Bronze	

Did You Know?

National Consumer Protection Week — The Postal Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service dedicate one week in March every year to educate consumers about identity theft and other fraud schemes and provide tools and information to combat these crimes.

United States Postal Inspectors seized and destroyed 1.3 million fraudulent foreign lottery mailings at U.S. borders, preventing thousands of American customers from becoming victims of fraud.

Published Mailing Standards Documents

August 2015:

DMM: Periodicals Marked Copy (PB, 8/20)

DMM: Business Reply Mail (PB, 8/20)

DMM: Premium Forward Service Commercial (PB, 8/20)

DMM: Clarification of Scans as Evidence of Mailing and the Placement of Collect on Delivery Forms (PB, 8/6)

IMM: Priority Mail International Insurance to Bahamas (PB, 8/6)

July 2015:

DMM: Postage Evidencing Systems – Revised Procedures for Collection of Postage Discrepancies (PB, 7/23)

June 2015:

DMM: Mandatory Use of Customs Declaration PS Form 2976-B on APO/FPO/DPO Priority Mail Express (PB, 6/25)

IMM: Preparation Requirements for Priority Mail Express International Shipments (PB, 6/25)

General: National Recertification for Mailers Privately Printing Customs Declaration Forms (PB, 6/11)

General: Free Mail Program for U.S. Armed Forces (PB, 6/11)

***Red means new additions since the last *Mail Spoken Here* was issued on August 14, 2015.**

For your reference:

FRN: [Federal Register Notice](#)

PB: [Postal Bulletin](#)

[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*, mailing standards [Federal Register](#) notices, and the [Postal Bulletin](#).

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Mail Spoken Here is brought to you by the Office of Industry Engagement and Outreach, Consumer and Industry Affairs; bringing you the latest news on mail coming from the Postal Service.

It is our intent to provide an ongoing news recap of all mailing requirements, Federal Register notices, Postal Bulletin articles, and webinars. We'll keep you posted on any comment-period requirements, and let you in on upcoming events or changes to standards when the information is available.

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