

USAFE-AFAFRICA AIRPS/PO POSTAL GUIDE



12 January 2024

This postal guide provides information on the use of the Military Postal Service (MPS). The information in this guide is not all inclusive; however, it answers the most common questions patrons have so they might better use their postal privileges. This publication applies to all US Air Forces in Europe and US Air Force in Africa (USAFE-AFAFRICA) units.

“The use of the name or mark of any specific manufacturer, commercial product, commodity, or service in this publication does not imply endorsement by the Air Force.”

FOREWORD

The United States Military Postal Service stems from Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution which provides that the Congress of the United States shall have the authority to establish post offices. Acting under this authority, congress established the Unites States Post Office Department and granted it an absolute monopoly in providing postal service. Within the military, the Naval Postal System was brought into being by an Act of the 60th Congress on May 27, 1908. This act was amended to include provisions for the Marine Corps on August 24, 1912, and for the Army Postal Service on August 21, 1941. Public Law 57, June 6, 1953, codified all previous acts and included there under the authority for the Air Force Postal System as we know it today.

The military discovered long ago that mail boosts the morale of troops serving in other parts of the world, so it has made military mail a high priority. Military mail provides members of the armed forces with a vital link to their communities. In addition, one of our closest and strongest ties to home is the mail. Whether it is letter to loved ones, birthday cards from Grandma, holiday presents, bills, online orders, hometown newspapers, or cookies from Mom; the mail touches each of us almost every day. Fortunately, mail service is relatively quick and efficient despite being overseas.

The purpose of this guide is to help make postal service quicker and more efficient--sending and receiving mail. Knowing the rules and taking full advantage of the most appropriate postal services can save you both time and money.

This guide is not all-inclusive. It contains abridged information on many mail topics. The MPS operates under the Department of Defense (DoD) and United States Postal Service (USPS) directives. The guidance here is subject to change based on those directives. If you have questions, please seek guidance and assistance from the people at your servicing Military Post Office (MPO). Our job is to provide you the most responsive, efficient, quality postal service possible. We will do everything in our control to best serve you--our customer.

HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA
DIRECTORATE OF MANPOWER, PERSONNEL & SERVICES
USAFE AIRPS/PO

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Changes instructions on how to file indemnity claims; website links, cost figures, organizational changes, timelines when to file a claim and contact phone numbers.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE

The Military Postal Service (MPS) is an extension of the United States Postal Service (USPS) and operates under an agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the USPS. The Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) manages the MPS, which includes Army and Air Force post offices (APO) and Navy and Marine Corps fleet post offices (FPO).

USAFE-AFAFRICA AIRPS/PO oversees all DoD postal management responsibility for the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and United States Air Force in Africa (AFAFRICA). We provide postal policy and guidance to MPOs located at various installations throughout the theater, and to 3 aerial mail terminals (AMT) and to 3 mail control activities (MCA) in 3 countries. The AMTs and MCA process over 28 million pounds of mail annually at the cost of \$30 million in transportation, and USAFE MPOs overall net sales for calendar year 2022 was \$7.5 million. AIRPS/PO is the single manager for all postal matters for USAFE-AFAFRICA (U-A).

As an extension of the USPS overseas, MPOs in Europe function as a branch of the New York Postmaster. The DoD, through MPSA, pays for mail transportation costs between the overseas location and the US entry point. In 2023, Air Force cost exceeded \$34 million and DoD cost exceeded \$200 million. This cost is the reason why we try to make postal operations as efficient as possible, and why use of the MPS is restricted to DoD authorized patrons which USAFE has management oversight. Finally, all mail to and from an MPO is subject to local customs inspection. Mail destined to the US is subject to US Customs duty and inspection upon initial entry into the US.

NOTE: In this guide we refer to **APO as an address** and **MPO as a facility**.

USAFE-AFAFRICA MILITARY POST OFFICES PROVIDE:

◆ General delivery service.
◆ Initial customer complaint and inquiry contact point.
◆ In and out processing of patrons.
◆ Mail receipt and mailing services.
◆ Sale of USPS money orders.
◆ Stamp sales.
◆ Pickup point for accountable and nonaccountable mail, and oversized mail.
◆ Mail directory services.
◆ USPS claims and inquiry services.

SERVICES AVAILABLE AND PAYMENTS:

(Availability may vary locally, check with your servicing MPO)

- ◆ **You may purchase:** Stamps in books, sheets, or loose; stamped envelopes; postal cards; commemorative stamps; international mail service; extra services; and USPS Domestic money orders.
- ◆ **Payments:** The majority of U-A Post Offices are cashless operating locations only debit/credit cards. Personal check or travelers' checks are not accepted at cashless U-A Post Offices. The following credit cards are acceptable: MasterCard, American Express, Visa, Discover, Carte Blanche, Diners Club International, Union Pay and Samsung Pay. The post office accepts most debit cards and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. Debit cards are acceptable for purchases to include money orders purchases. Credit cards only for purchases; credit cards are not accepted for money order purchased.

WHO'S AUTHORIZED TO USE THE MPS?

The DoD determines who is authorized to use overseas military postal facilities. Refer eligibility questions to your local postal personnel. Authorized MPS patrons include the following:

- ◆ Members of the US Armed Forces (on active duty) and their command sponsored family members.
- ◆ US citizen employees of DoD and their family members.
- ◆ Authorized DoD-related organizations that support a DoD mission, their US citizen employees, and family members.
- ◆ Retired personnel of the US Armed Forces and their family members (on a limited basis and not in all countries).
- ◆ Authorized US citizen contractors, other US Government agencies, and other organizations or individuals.
- ◆ Authorized patrons receive their mail either through an assigned mail receptacle (lock box) at their assigned location or through a unit mailroom. All MPO patrons must present a proper identification before being served to verify their eligibility.

NOTE: Under the "in care of sponsor" program, visiting immediate family members may receipt and send up to 16 ounces of mail daily for 90 days. Check with your APO for details. See address format below:

NAME (Visitor)
IN CARE OF (Sponsor's Rank/Name)
PSC _ BOX ____
APO AE 09XXX (add +4)

AS AN AUTHORIZED MPS PATRON, YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE:

- ◆ Inform all correspondents of your correct mailing and forwarding address, using appropriate change of address cards, labels, etc.
- ◆ Notify the MPO when you go on leave or TDY by completing DD Form 2258, **Temporary Mail Disposition Instructions**, or informing your unit mail clerk.
- ◆ Report instances of inadequate mail service or other mail related problems to the MPO supervisor.
- ◆ Check your mail receptacle frequently.

- ◆ Have the **proper identification** when using the MPS. Patrons must present a federal government issued identification card (Common Access Card (CAC)), dependent or military retired issued identification card, or passport to verify their eligibility to receive mail. Use of a passport should be for a short-term duration while patrons are waiting to be issued their federal government issued identification card. Badges, stateside driver's license, and other forms of identification are not acceptable.
- ◆ Have postal pickup notices, receipts or electronic pickup notification available for mail pickup, i.e., parcels and accountable mail.

MPS IS A PRIVILEGE

NOTE: "...Receptacles cannot be used to conduct private business."

(In accordance with the authorities granted in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive (DoDD) 5101.11e, the Secretary of the Army was designated the DoD Executive Agent for the Military Postal Service (MPS) and Official Mail Program (OMP). Military Postal Service Procedures Manual (MPM) Section 1: Military Postal Service (MPS) Principles

The MPS will not be used to:

- (1) Send or receive items to advertise home businesses, to sell merchandise, conduct business, or for commercial purposes where DoD funds mail transportation costs.
- (2) Receipt and distribution of humanitarian aid. MPOs will not accept/deliver postal items knowing the contents are for humanitarian aid purposes.
- (3) Receipt of "Any Service Member" (ASM) mail, care packages, or donated items for distribution from an individual, charitable group, or organization.

In accordance with DoDI 4525.09, July 10, 2018, Change 2, May 24, 2022. The following are prohibited within the MPS: Operating a business or conducting activities associated with running a business (e.g., eBay store with MPO address; mail order businesses; shipping supplies, equipment, or merchandise for a physical or home-based store).

- ◆ ***Sending or receiving items for sale, resale, distribution, or re-distribution.***
- ◆ ***Sending household goods associated with temporary or permanent duty relocation via IDS or official mail program. Shipments via the MPS must be coordinated with the Component's transportation office prior to MPS acceptance.***

Do not use your MPS receptacle or your MPS privilege for business or commercial purposes, or act as an agent for unauthorized users—for example, Pampered Chef, or local Mary Kay cosmetics distributor. You may not use the MPS to mail or receive items you plan to sell.

***"DON'T MISUSE YOUR MPS PRIVILEGE,
YOU MAY LOSE IT!"***

HOW DO I MAIL A PARCEL?

*This section provides helpful information
for each of the following steps:*

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***Hours of Operation?
Call your local post office!***

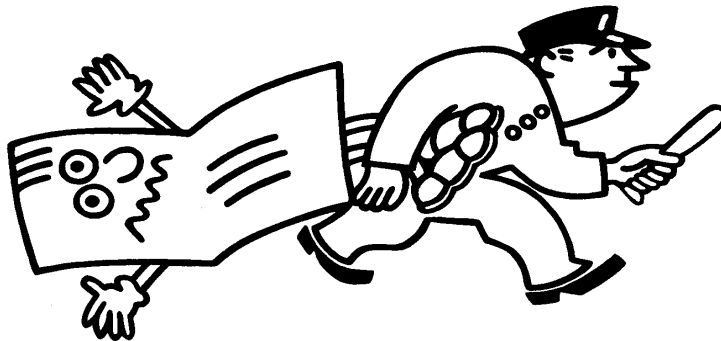
STEP 1: CAN I MAIL IT? *Determine If Items Are Mailable*

USPS imposes very specific mailing restrictions. If in doubt, always ask your local MPO.

NONMAILABLE MATTER:

Nonmailable matter is any item which is prohibited from the mails by treaty, regulation, or law. The USPS Domestic and International Mail Manuals, and USPS Pub 52, *Acceptance of Hazardous, Restricted, or Perishable Matter*, (available at your MPO) provides outline restrictions. A basic rule to remember:

- ◆ It is illegal to send through the US Mail any article, material, or composition that may kill or injure another person, obstruct mail service, or damage mail and property.



HAZARDOUS MATTER: A hazardous material is any article or substance designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as being capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property during transportation. In international commerce, hazardous materials are known as “dangerous goods.”

- ◆ Poison or matter containing poison
- ◆ Poisonous animals (poisonous insects, reptiles, snakes, and spiders)
- ◆ Disease germs or scabs
- ◆ Explosives; flammable material; dangerous machines; and mechanical, chemical, or other devices or compositions that may catch fire or explode
- ◆ Aerosols
- ◆ Automobile Air Bags
- ◆ Ammunition
- ◆ Gasoline
- ◆ Perfumes (containing alcohol)
- ◆ Hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes contain flammable ethanol or isopropanol (rubbing alcohol), which are hazardous materials.
- ◆ Flammable hand sanitizers and alcohol wipes are prohibited in international, Air Force/Army Post Office, Fleet Post Office and Diplomatic Post Office mail
- ◆ Nail Polish
- ◆ Radioactive material
- ◆ Matches

RESTRICTED MATTER: Restricted matter includes articles on which mailing restrictions have been imposed for reasons other than risk of harm to persons or property involved in moving the mail. Motor vehicle master keys and intoxicating liquors are examples of restricted items. The list below is not inclusive; when in doubt, call your MPO for advice)

- ◆ Cigarettes - Cigarettes, meaning any of the following:
 - Rolls of tobacco wrapped in paper or in any substance not containing tobacco.
 - Rolls of tobacco wrapped in a tobacco-containing substance but likely to be offered to, or purchased by, consumers as a cigarette.
 - Roll-your-own tobacco (tobacco or wrappers offered to, or purchased by, consumers for making cigarettes or cigars).
- ◆ Smokeless tobacco, meaning any of the following:
 - Tobacco intended to be placed in the oral or nasal cavity.
 - Tobacco otherwise consumed without being combusted.
- ◆ Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), meaning any of the following:
 - Electronic devices that, through an aerosolized solution, deliver nicotine, flavor, or any other substance to the user inhaling from the device.
 - Any component, liquid, part, or accessory of an ENDS device, regardless of whether it is sold or provided separately from the device.

Examples of ENDS devices include e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, e-cigars, e-pipes, vape pens, or advanced refillable personal vaporizers. Despite the name, ENDS are nonmailable regardless of whether they contain nicotine or are used with nicotine

- ◆ Alcoholic Beverages
- ◆ Marijuana (medical or otherwise)
- ◆ Rationed items (such as alcohol), non-rationed alcohol, agricultural and meat products
- ◆ Obscene or indecent publications or films
- ◆ Firearms, knives, and sharp instruments
 - Sharp instruments include all sharp-pointed or sharp-edged implements such as knives, tools, ice picks, razor blades, stilettos, or similar devices. When uncertain about the mailability of a sharp instrument or a switchblade knife, a ruling may be requested from the local postmaster.
 - All sharp-pointed or sharp-edged instruments such as knives, tools, ice picks, razor blades, etc., that are otherwise mailable, must be securely packaged in a strong container. An inner and outer packaging container is recommended. Sufficient cushioning material must be used to protect the sharp points and edges from cutting through the outer packaging during normal Postal Service handling.
 - Switchblades – See USPS Pub 52, Section 442 for additional information
- ◆ Spent ammunitions, shells or similar war trophies are prohibited from being shipped from any APO/FPO Military Post Office ZIP Code
- ◆ Illegal drugs (To include synthetic drugs)
 - Controlled substances defined by federal law and related federal directives
 - Kinder “Surprise” Eggs (restricted to stateside locations only)
 - Motor Vehicle Master Keys and Locksmithing Devices

Note: The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) authorized import of Kinder "Joy" Eggs into the United States. Kinder "Joy" Eggs and **ONLY Kinder "Joy" eggs** can be accepted for mailing from overseas patrons to locations stateside. **Kinder "Surprise" Eggs** are still prohibited for import into the United States and **CAN NOT** be accepted for mailing to stateside locations.

Perishable Matter: Perishable matter is anything that can deteriorate in the mail and thereby lose value, create a health hazard, or cause an obnoxious odor, nuisance, or disturbance, under ordinary mailing conditions. Mailable perishable matter may be sent at the mailer's own risk when it is packaged as required and when it can be delivered within appropriate and reasonable time limits to prevent deterioration.

- ◆ Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are non-mailable
- ◆ Live animals, food items, and plants – Restriction apply (Only mailable within the US domestic mail)
- ◆ Eggs (Only mailable within the US domestic mail)
- ◆ Meat and Meat Products (Only mailable within the US domestic mail)
- ◆ Nonmailable Plant Pests, Injurious Animals, and Illegally Taken Fish or Wildlife are non-mailable

Lithium Metal and Lithium-ion Cells and Batteries — International and APO/FPO/DPO: Lithium metal (non-rechargeable) cells and batteries and lithium-ion (rechargeable) cells and batteries are mailable in limited quantities internationally or to and from APO, FPO, or DPO locations only when they are properly installed in the equipment they operate. Lithium batteries must also be accepted by the destination country as designated by the Individual Country Listing in the IMM. APO/FPO/DPO destinations are also subject to the conditions prescribed by the Department of Defense (DOD) as listed in Overseas Military/Diplomatic Mail in the Postal Bulletin.

NOTE: Mailing of Pre-Owned Electronic Devices with Lithium Batteries Parcels from the USAFE-AFAFRICA Post Offices to Diplomatic Post Office (DPOs), Armed Forces Americas (AA) and Armed Forces Pacific (AP) Zip-Codes is not authorized.

Mailability - ONLY USPS GROUND ADVANTAGE mail services (Surface Transportation Only) can be used for mailing packages or parcels containing lithium batteries. NOTE: This service is not available at all USAFE-AFAFRICA postal operating locations. Check with your local post office personnel for additional information.

- ◆ Lithium metal and lithium-ion cells and batteries installed in the equipment they are intended to operate (UN3091 and UN3481) are mailable.
- ◆ Lithium metal and lithium-ion cells and batteries not packed in equipment (i.e., batteries packed with equipment or batteries sent separately from equipment) are prohibited.
- ◆ Damaged, and defective electronic devices (excluding devices that are new in original packaging, and manufacturer-certified new or refurbished devices) containing lithium batteries are prohibited.

General information about packages or parcels containing lithium batteries.

- ◆ IAW USPS Pub 52, only lithium batteries that are properly installed in the equipment they operate can be shipped.
- ◆ Small consumer-type lithium-ion cells and batteries like those used to power cell phones and laptop computers can be mailed.
- ◆ Equipment must be cushioned to prevent movement or damage and must be contained in rigid outer packaging, sealed and strong enough to prevent crushing of the package or exposure of the contents during normal handling in the mail.
- ◆ Each shipment may contain a maximum of four lithium-ion cells or two lithium-ion batteries.
- ◆ Lithium batteries packed with equipment, but not installed in the equipment or without the equipment they operate (individual batteries in originally sealed packaging) are prohibited and cannot be mailed.
- ◆ The total watt-hour rating for each cell must not exceed 20 Wh.
- ◆ The total watt-hour rating for each battery must not exceed 100 Wh.

STEP 2: PACK ARTICLES. *How Do I Pack and Wrap It?*

Most mail accepted at military post offices in Europe is flown to the United States on commercial aircraft. Once mail arrives stateside, it's transported based on the service selected and paid for. Customers should keep in mind, packages transiting through the mail stream are handled numerous times, and therefore proper packaging is very important. The following USPS mailing tips are provided to help ensure packages arrive safely and undamaged:

The Domestic Mail Manual, International Mail Manual, and USPS POS 74, Packing Pointers, (available at your MPO), outline wrapping and packaging requirements. Postal clerks will be happy to help you and explain these requirements. The following guidelines are basic.

The Box

- ◆ Choose a box with enough room for cushioning material around the contents. Sturdy paperboard or corrugated fiberboard boxes are best for weights up to 10 pounds. If reusing a box, cover up or mark-out any old labels and markings. Adequate containers include corrugated or solid fiberboard, chipboard (for small items), tubes or boxes, fiber-mailing tubes with metal ends, and envelopes.

USPS Provided Boxes

- ◆ Priority Mail Express and Priority Mail cardboard boxes are available at no cost to the customer for items sent using either of these USPS services.
NOTE: USPS Priority Mail cardboard boxes and other supplies cannot be used on MPS/IDS correspondence or parcels unless the customer is paying postage at the priority mail service fee.

Cushioning

- ◆ Place cushioning around your items. Close and gently shake the box to see whether there is enough padding. Place an extra address label with the delivery and return addresses inside the package to ensure it can be delivered in case the outside label becomes damaged or falls off.
- ◆ When several items are placed inside a package, protect them from each other as well as from external forces. Avoid packing heavy items with fragile items unless you exercise extreme care to separate them from each other. Heavy items must be adequately stabilized.



Sealing

- ◆ Tape the box shut and reinforce the seams with 2-inch-wide tape. Use clear or brown packaging tape, reinforced packing tape, or paper tape.
- ◆ Do not use scotch tape or masking tape (postal directives prohibit their use). Do not use twine and cord since they tend to catch and bind in mechanized mail processing equipment.

Liquids (Some host country restrictions apply, check with your post office personnel)

- ◆ Nonflammable, nonhazardous liquids are acceptable to mail, if sealed inside a waterproof container. The outer container with the address label should also be strong and securely sealed. Mailers must mark the outer container of a mail piece containing liquid to indicate the nature of the contents and annotate “this side up” on the package. Packages containing liquids need to be carefully packed to withstand the demanding transportation journey.

Size

- ◆ The weight of each package cannot exceed 70 pounds. Packages heavier than 70 pounds cannot be mailed. For customers planning to use Priority Mail Express Military Service or Priority Mail services for faster delivery, length plus girth (distance around the thickest part of the package) cannot exceed 108 inches. The total cannot exceed 130 inches when using USPS Ground Advantage (formally Retail Ground/SAM).

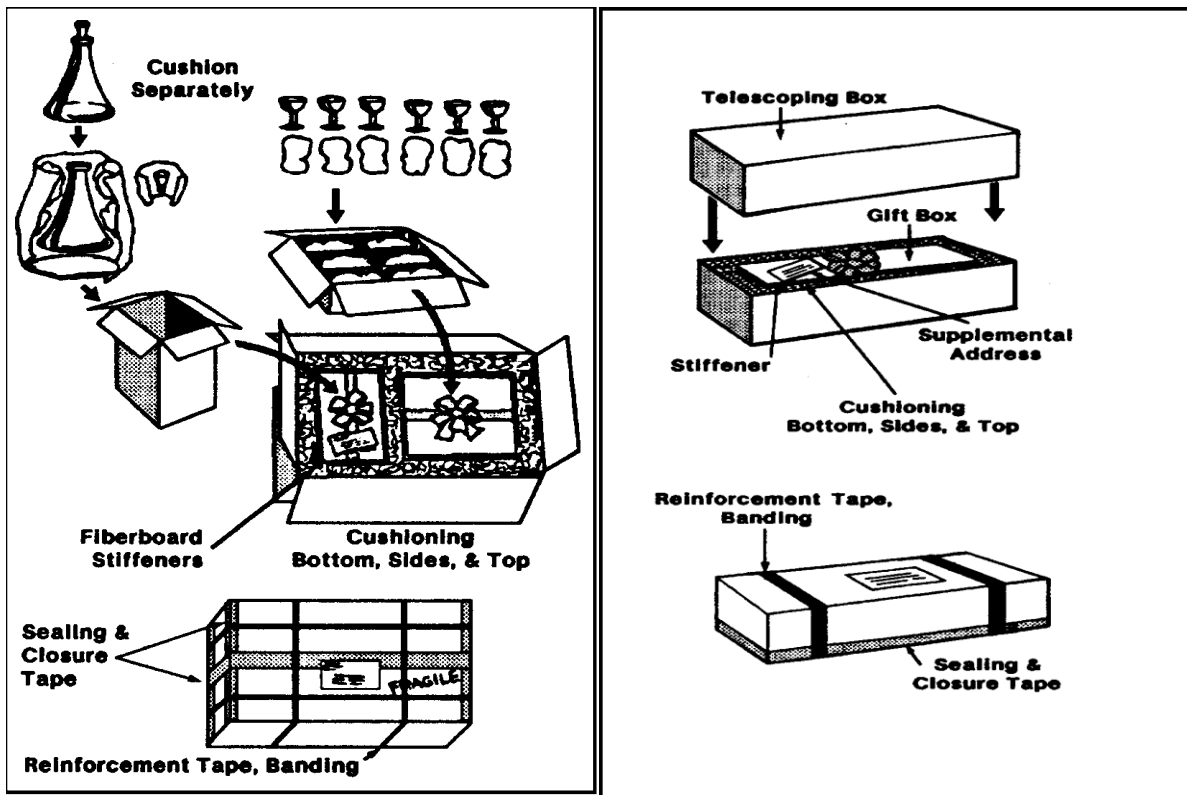
Correct Address

- ◆ Using a complete and correct address is critical for timely delivery. To find the correct spelling of a city name and state abbreviation or to find a ZIP Code, visit the USPS Look Up a ZIP Code at <https://tools.usps.com/zip-code-lookup.htm>
- ◆ Print or type the delivery address parallel to the longest side of the package. Type or print clearly with a pen or permanent marker so that the address is legible from an arm's length away.
- ◆ Omit wrapping paper if the box is an adequate shipping container. However, the address side of the box cannot have any other writing (i.e., labeling, advertisement, etc.). When using wrapping paper, it should be equivalent to the strength of the average large grocery bag.

Return Address

- ◆ Print or type the address in the upper left corner on the same side of the package as the delivery address.

HOW TO CUSHION FRAGILE ITEMS



NOTE: Items presented for registered mail must be sealed with a PAPER TAPE that ABSORBS INK POSTMARKS.

STEP 3: ADDRESS ARTICLES. *How Do I Address It?*

A correct address must contain:

APO Address:

- 1. NAME**
- 2. PSC # BOX #**
- 3. APO AE # +4**

Civilian Address:

- 1. NAME**
- 2. STREET & NUMBER**
- 3. CITY STATE ZIP+4**

NOTE: Always include the + four number.

For typed addresses, the USPS Optical Character Reader (OCR) is designed to read a wide variety of fonts. USPS recommend the use 10- to 12-point font size and avoid narrow type and script fonts.

NOTE: *A typed address speeds the automated mail sorting process. The two most crucial elements in the address are the last two lines (2 & 3 above). This applies to incoming and outgoing mail. Any mixing or improper placement of components of these two crucial elements may create an incorrect address format and subsequently result in misaddressed, missent, or delayed mail.*

CONUS INCOMING MAIL ADDRESSED TO YOUR APO:

Inform your correspondents **NOT** to include “City” and/or “Country” before or after the PSC, UNIT OR APO number.

- ◆ **APO serves as the city and AE serves as the state code for postal processing.**
- ◆ International agreements call for mail addressed with city and country names anywhere on the address element to be sent to the HOST COUNTRY’ S POSTAL SYSTEM.

NOTE: *Do not use the country or any part of your civilian address with an APO address.*

The “FROM” and “TO” address **must be clear, legible**, and entered on **one side only** of each article accepted for mailing. We recommend you use non-soluble ink.

Return address is mandatory on all mail to ensure undeliverable mail can be returned to sender

If you’re addressing mail to an international address in the foreign country’s writing (language), make sure you include a translation. If mailed through the MPS, you must include your APO address element. If you want to receive mail at your APO address from an international address, see samples below.

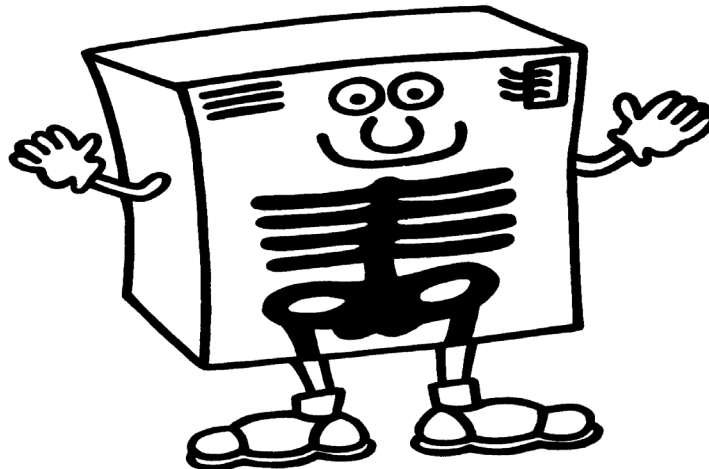
HOW TO ADDRESS MAIL FROM AN INTERNATIONAL ADDRESS TO THE MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE (MPS/APO) ADDRESS:

Mail addressed to APO customers from international senders may enter the military postal service (MPS/APO address). Check with your local postmaster how your correspondents should address your mail.

Example for personal address: MR. JOHN DOE PSC 2 BOX 923 66877 Ramstein Flugplatz DE	Example for official address: 786 FSS UNIT 3274 66877 Ramstein Flugplatz DE
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Example for visitor’s mail under the “care of the sponsor” program: NAME (Visitor) IN CARE OF (Sponsor’s Rank/Name) PSC _ BOX ____ APO AE 09XXX (add +4)

STEP 4: CUSTOMS DECLARATION. *Customs - The Inside Story*



Always place inside the parcel the addressee or mailer’s address.

1. US Customs Rules:

The US Customs Service is responsible for protecting US commerce from the import of dangerous and illegal products and for obtaining import duty on certain merchandise which is manufactured outside the US. All mail originating outside the US (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico) is subject to customs.

Large envelopes and letter mail and packages containing merchandise (anything other than letters and developed personal photos) you mail at an MPO must have a customs declaration form.

Mailers are responsible for legibly and accurately completing USPS customs forms when mailing parcels or packages containing merchandise to the United States.

The sender's failure to complete the form properly could delay delivery of the item. Moreover, a false, misleading, or incomplete declaration may result in the seizure or return of the item and/or imposed UCMJ action for military members. Civilian personnel could face possible administrative action or revocation of privileges (e.g., personal use of the military postal system). Civil fines could also be levied against customers for violating statutes of Federal Law.

All foreign-made merchandise, regardless of where purchased, that enters the US, whether new or used, is subject to duty.

CUSTOMS FORM SECURITY STATEMENT

The customs forms contain a security statement. The customs form requires mailers to certify parcels do not contain any prohibited articles. It also requires you to write the name and address of the mailer and addressee on the customs forms.

The customs forms tell US Customs What's inside your package?

The USPS phased out and will not accept handwritten customs declaration forms. This means that pre-printed, hard copy PS Form 2976, PS Form 2976-A, and PS Form 2976-B customs declaration forms are no longer accepted. This USPS policy change derives from the Global Trade Compliance (GTC) requirements instituted back in 2015 due to increasing international security risks facing the United States. Aggressive and mandatory steps are being taken to provide additional safeguards against these risks. One-step is the entry of Electronic Customs Declaration Information for military outgoing mail items and transmission of the electronic customs data to the Customs Border Protection Manifest (CBPMAN) system. For the United States, changes will give USPS, the Department of Homeland Security and US Customs and Border Patrol more visibility to what is arriving in the United States and from where.

For US mailings, customers may choose and use any of the following:

- ◆ Customers can choose the USPS Click-N-Ship feature to establish a free USPS.com account, complete their customs declaration and pay for their mailing using one of several USPS approved credit cards. Customers can visit the following website to create the free account at https://reg.usps.com/entreg/LoginAction_input?app=GSS&appURL=https://cns.usps.com/labelInformation.shtml
- ◆ Patrons can also print a customs declaration on the USPS website without establishing an account and then pay at the postal finance window when presenting their parcels and packages for mailing at <https://www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm>.

- ◆ PS Form 2976-R, **USPS Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note declaration form**. Postal patrons who do not present articles for mailing with an online declaration can still mail their packages using the hard copy PS Form 2976-R. However, the accepting finance mail clerk will enter the information from the PS Form 2976-R into the CBPMAN via the USPS Point of Sale retail terminal with the customer present, as clarifying questions may be required to ensure that PS Form 2976-R contains accurate and complete data to complete the mailing transaction. This will result in longer customer waiting times and longer lines at the post office finance windows. Patrons can avoid waiting in line at post office finance windows if they complete an online customs declaration using the USPS website when presenting parcels and packages for mailing at the Air Force Post Offices (APOs).
- ◆ Several APOs are offering customers the option of using a customer workstation at the APO to go online and complete a customs declaration before presenting mail pieces at the postal finance window.

For APO to APO or International mailings, customers may choose and use any of the following:

- ◆ Patrons can print the custom declaration form on the USPS website at <https://www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm>.
- ◆ PS Form 2976-R, **USPS Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note declaration form**.

2. APO and International Customs Rules:

When mailing from an APO to another APO or to an international address, you need to consult your local postal activity for the country's applicable restrictions and prohibitions. ***NOTE:*** **You must clearly describe all articles on the customs forms. Don't use general terms such as candy, gifts, presents or merchandise.**

EXEMPTIONS

1. BONAFIDE GIFTS - \$100 PER DAY, PER PERSON:

A person in the CONUS may receive bonafide, unsolicited gifts with a retail value up to \$100 per day, tax and duty-free. Gifts worth up to \$100 may be sent - free of duty and tax to U.S. friends and relatives if one person does not receive more than \$100 worth of gifts in one day. For additional information, visit the US Customs and Border Protection website at <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/shopping-abroad-duty-free-gifts-household-items>.

PAYMENT OF CUSTOMS DUTY

Mailers may not pay customs duty in advance. If customs duty is assessed, postal officials in the CONUS will collect it from the recipient.

2. PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION (PCS) AND TEMPORARY DUTY (TDY) MAILINGS: Any US Government employee's personal and household effects are eligible for duty-free entry if that employee (military or civilian) is returning to the US upon completion of an assignment of extended duty abroad (140 days or more).

ENDORSEMENT OF PARCELS:

Endorse the address side of parcels containing such items as follows: **"Free Entry Claimed Under Public Law 89-436, Movement Orders Enclosed."** Enclose a copy of your PCS orders in an envelope marked **"Orders Enclosed,"** and attach it to the article or place it inside.

3. RETURNED US MERCHANDISE: Mailers may also return articles duty-free which are produced or manufactured in the US and which, after export, have not increased in value or improved in condition. Endorse these packages:

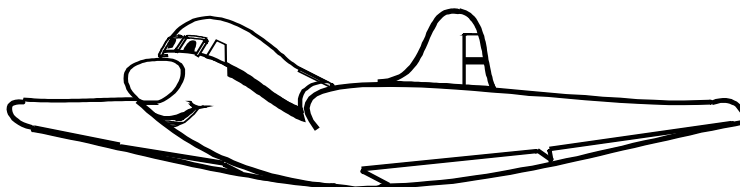
"RETURNED US MERCHANDISE"

NOTE: *Articles purchased through AAFES are not always considered US merchandise.*

STEP 5: DECIDE WHAT CLASS OF MAIL TO USE.

STATESIDE DESTINED MAIL

All classes of mail move by air from the European theater to a CONUS gateway



CLASSES OF MAIL -- THEIR WEIGHT AND SIZE RESTRICTIONS:

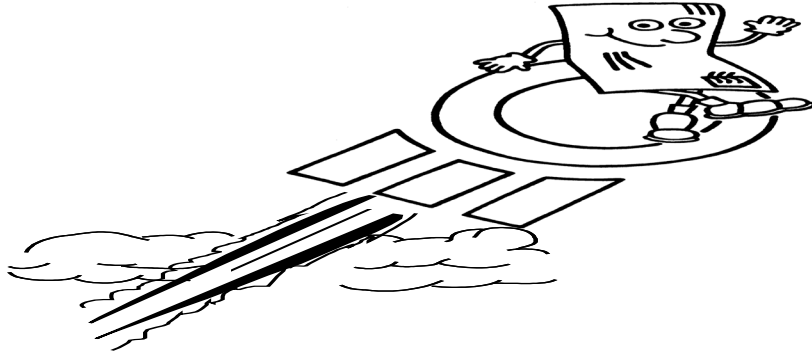
The contents of the mail determine the class of service.

1. Priority Mail Express Military Mail Service (PMEMS): *PMEMS is not available from APO to APO or to an international address.*

- ◆ PMEMS is available only at locations (APOs and stateside cities) that have a transportation network to meet the 3 – 5 days guarantee delivery service. Check with your local post office.
- ◆ If PMEMS is available at your location, you may use it for all mail matter.
- ◆ PMEMS provides the **fastest** delivery service. Check locally for 3 - 5 days service available to designated ZIP code areas. The 3 – 5 days delivery service guarantee from the CONUS to MPOs does not include days MPOs are closed, i.e., delivery date is on a Sunday or holiday.
- ◆ For example: 3 – 5 days guarantee delivery service means items you mailed before the established cutoff time on Friday should be delivered not later than by 3 p.m. local on Wednesday.
- ◆ Matter sent PMEMS automatically receives no-fee postal insurance coverage of \$100. Additional coverage fee is available for up to \$5,000.

NOTE: Only the sender can apply for postage refund if the delivery day guaranteed service is not met. “Delay due to customs inspection does not afford a postage refund”

Up to 70 pounds and 108 inches in length and girth combined.



2. FIRST-CLASS MAIL:

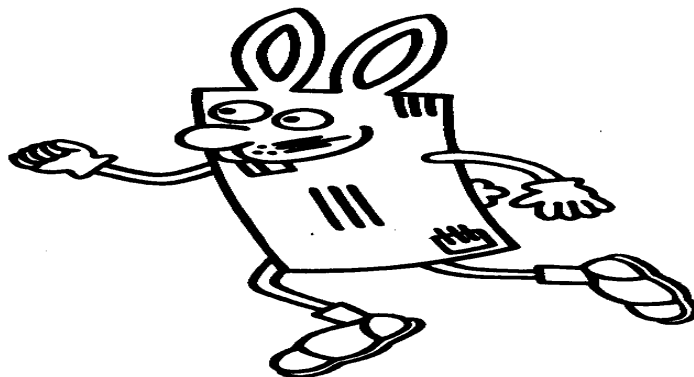
- ◆ Letters
- ◆ Postcards
- ◆ Bills and statements of accounts
- ◆ Blank printed forms, filled out in writing, such as notices, certificates and checks, either canceled or uncanceled

13 ounces or less
Transit time--normally 7-10 days

3. PRIORITY MAIL:

- ◆ First-class mail weighing more than 13 ounces.
- ◆ Priority Mail matter automatically receives no-fee postal insurance coverage of \$100. Additional coverage fee is available for up to \$5,000.
- ◆ Any matter for which the mailer wants quick handling.

More than 13 ounces and up to 70 pounds and 108 inches in length and girth combined

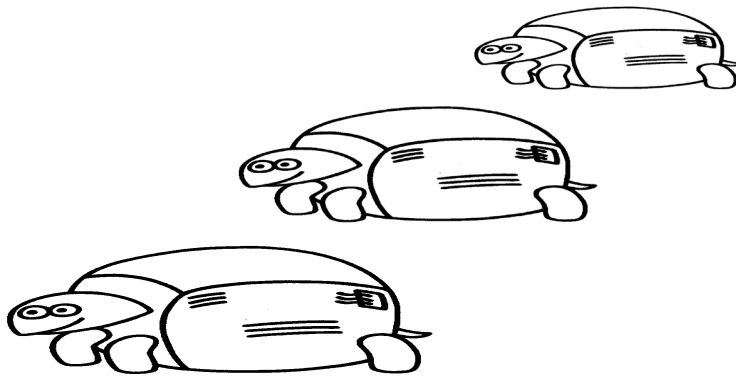


Transit time--normally 7-10 days

4. USPS Ground Advantage: Formally USPS Retail Ground or SPACE AVAILABLE MAIL (SAM). 9 July 2023, the USPS launched **USPS Ground Advantage** service that combines USPS Retail Ground, First-Class Package, and Parcel Select Ground services (as well as returns options such as First-Class Package Return service and Ground Returns) into a single, streamlined ground shipping service.

- ◆ Cheapest way to send heavy matter.

Up to 70 pounds and 130 inches in length and girth combined (over 108 inches subject to overcharge).



Transit time - 10-20 days

*** From APO to APO, mailings are moved by air or surface (trucks) according to locations.**

5. INTER-INTRA THEATER DELIVERY SERVICE (IDS): This is a DoD parcel and correspondence service and is not considered mail.

The DoD authorizes MPS patrons to send articles between authorized APOs/FPOs free of postage.

NOTE: Ask your MPO clerk for a listing of authorized APOs, and FPOs addresses.

- ◆ Called “*parcels*” or “*correspondence*” not mail.
- ◆ **There are three categories of IDS:**
 - **MPS** -- Personal correspondence from an individual to another individual or organization.

Limit for MPS: 70 pounds and 130 inches in length and girth combined

- **COM** -- Correspondence from authorized commercial (COM) activities; i.e., bank, credit union, etc.

Limit for COM: 13 ounces or less

- **PO** -- Correspondence from morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) sanctioned private organizations (PO).

Limit for PO: 13 ounces or less

- ◆ Place “**MPS, COM, or PO**” as applicable in the *upper right-hand corner* of the article, instead of stamps.
- ◆ **IDS is correspondence and not mail.** It is not eligible for any USPS extra services, i.e., insurance, registry, certified, etc. However, if you want any of these services, you can pay the **domestic zone rate of postage** and extra services charges—**then it’s mail.**
- ◆ **COM and PO IDS** correspondence must be addressed correctly, *separated, and banded by APO number, and sorted in numerical order by box number* before it’s handed or sent to an APO.
 - *MPOs provide directory services for COM and PO IDS correspondence addressed to 09XXX within theater. Check with your local post office. “MPOs return the undeliverable or postage required articles to sender.”*

6. POSTAGE TO A GERMAN ADDRESS WITHIN GERMANY:

- ◆ You may mail articles such as letters and flats, from an MPO in Germany, at US local zone rate of postage to a Germany civilian address only (Limit is 1 Kilo). Use of domestic US stamps is authorized.
- ◆ You must use a complete **APO return address** and not an economy address.

“International rates apply for mail sent outside Germany”

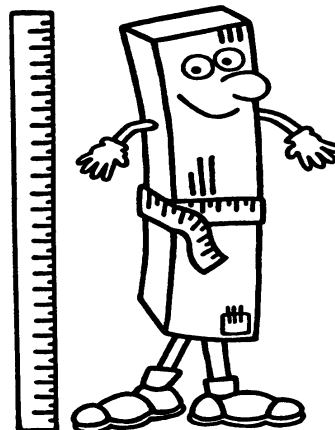
***PLEASE CHECK FIGURE BELOW
SIZE AND WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS***

EXPRESS
108-INCH
MAX 70 lbs

FIRST-CLASS
3X5-INCH
MAX 13 oz

PRIORITY
108-INCH
MAX 70 lbs

**Ground
Advantage**
130-INCH
MAX 70 lbs



7. INTERNATIONAL MAILINGS:

- ◆ Consult with your local MPO before you prepare a package for mailing to a foreign (international) country.
 - ◆ MPO clerks can assist by checking the International Mail Manual (IMM).

“The same information does not apply to all countries.”

- ◆ Sending parcels through international mail channels can be very expensive.
- ◆ Priority Mail International Flat Rate Envelopes and Small Flat Rate Priced Boxes provide customers with an economical means of sending correspondence, documents, printed matter, and lightweight merchandise items to foreign destinations. The maximum weight limit is 4 pounds.
 - Check with your local MPO first, as weights and availability vary with each country.
 - Customs form requirements vary also, and mailers should check with the MPO first for the particulars on mailing to different countries.

STEP 6: DECIDE WHAT EXTRA SERVICES TO USE

1. REGISTERED MAIL: Registered mail is the **most secure service** the USPS/MPS offers. It incorporates a system of receipts to monitor the mail's movement from the point of acceptance to delivery. In other words, it's secured and signed for everywhere it stops.

- ◆ Requires you pay the **first class/priority/airmail rate** and registry fees dependent on amount of insurance requested.
- ◆ Provides indemnity coverage for loss or damage.
- ◆ It is slower because of the special handling, but more secure.
- ◆ Confirmation at delivery.

“Registered mail maximum indemnity is \$50,000”

2. CERTIFIED MAIL:

- ◆ Provides the sender with a mailing receipt and a record of delivery at the post office of address.
- ◆ No record is kept at the post office from which certified mail is mailed.
- ◆ It's dispatched and handled in transit as ordinary first class mail and no insurance coverage is provided.
- ◆ Only available to the US and MPOs.
- ◆ Confirmation at delivery.

3. INSURED MAIL: “Insured mail maximum indemnity is \$5,000.”

- ◆ Provides indemnity coverage for loss, rifling, or damage.
- ◆ No record of insured mail is kept at the office of mailing. Dispatched and handled in transits as ordinary mail.
- ◆ Fees depend on the amount of insurance desired.
- ◆ Priority Mail includes USPS Tracking and up to \$100 of insurance.
- ◆ Priority Mail Express includes USPS Tracking and up to \$100 insurance.

NOTE: The USPS (MPS) keeps *no mailing records* for insured parcels. It's the **mailer's responsibility** to write the addressee's name and address on the insurance **receipt and keep it**. **Mailers must show the "Receipt for Insured Mail" when making a claim for loss or filing an inquiry.**

4. CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

- ◆ Provides only evidence of mailing.
- ◆ No receipt is obtained on delivery of the mail to the addressee.
- ◆ Insurance is not provided against loss or damage.

5. RETURN RECEIPT:

- ◆ Provides evidence of delivery.
- ◆ In conjunction with another Extra Service: Insured mail, registered or certified.
- ◆ After delivery, the USPS/MPS mails the return receipt to the sender.
- ◆ Requested at time of mailing (PS Form 3811 receive by mail). Requested at time of mailing (receive electronically).

6. SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION:

- ◆ Provides the date and time of delivery or attempted delivery and the name of the person who signed for the item.
- ◆ Mailers may retrieve Signature Confirmation information with **USPS Tracking** https://tools.usps.com/go/TrackConfirmAction_input.
- ◆ Mailers may purchase at the time of mailing an acceptance record.

7. USPS TRACKING #:

- ◆ Provides the date and time of delivery or attempted delivery.
- ◆ Mailers may retrieve Tracking information with **USPS Tracking** https://tools.usps.com/go/TrackConfirmAction_input.
- ◆ **Free of charge when mailing First-Class Mail (Parcels only) and Priority Mail.**

8. ADULT SIGNATURE:

- ◆ Requires the signature of someone 21 years of age or older at the recipient's address.

9. RESTRICTED DELIVERY:

- ◆ Confirms that only a specified person, or authorized agent, will receive a piece of mail. This service is available only when purchasing Certified Mail, Insured Mail (over \$500), Adult Signature, Signature Confirmation, or Registered Mail.

CLAIMS AND INQUIRIES

USPS AND MPS PHILOSOPHY:

The USPS and MPS encourage customers to report all instances of loss, rifling, and other mistreatment of mail, even when there may be no provisions for the payment of indemnity.

You may only request a tracer for registered, insured, and certified mail. “Ordinary mail is not traceable--because no record of delivery is kept.”

There are also special claim procedures for PMEMS mail that is not delivered within the guaranteed time limit.

Who May File. A claim may be filed by:

- ◆ Either the mailer or addressee, for damaged articles or articles with some or all of the contents missing.
- ◆ Either the mailer or addressee who is in possession of the original retail mailing receipt, or in possession of the online label record or computer printout of the Web-based application.

HOW TO FILE A CLAIM?

Customers who purchased insurance at the time of mailing may file indemnity claims for insured, registered with postal insurance, or express mail. Customers have 2 options to file claims.

- ◆ Option 1: Online at <https://www.usps.com/help/claims.htm>. A customer may appeal an on-line claim decision within 30 days from the date of the original decision at www.usps.com/domestic-claims.
- ◆ Option 2: If a patron is unable to file a claim online, have them request a PS Form 1000, Domestic Claims be mailed to them by contacting USPS at: 1-800-332-0317, Option 9. For

pieces with multiple extra services, the customer must provide original receipts for all services purchased. Upon request by the USPS, the customer must submit proof of damage as per DMM Section 609, para 2.0 for damaged items or missing contents. Customers who did not file their claim online must send written appeals to Accounting Services at:

DOMESTIC CLAIMS APPEALS
ACCOUNTING SERVICES
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 80141
ST LOUIS MO 63180-0141

How to check status of a claim? All required claim documents must be completed and submitted. A decision regarding a claim is usually communicated within 5-10 days.

- ◆ If a claim was filed online, you may check the status by signing in to your usps.com account. The following is needed when checking the status of a claim online; USPS.com and log-in credentials.
- ◆ Claims nickname provided when placing the claim or tracking number.

- ◆ To check the status of a mailed claim, a payment, or for questions about a received payment, you may contact Accounting Services at 1-866-974-2733. Hours of operation are Monday - Friday from 8:00am - 8:00pm Eastern Time. The following information is required:
 - The name.
 - Tracking number (For more information, see What is Evidence of Insurance?).
 - Original mail date.

FOR WHAT SERVICE CAN I FILE A CLAIM?

1. Priority Mail Express Refund:

- ◆ The USPS provides a money-back guarantee on express mail items that do not meet delivery time standards, unless the delay is caused by Customs, strike, work stoppage or delay, or flight cancellation.
- ◆ The **mailer** may file the claim for postage refunds not **earlier than 7 days and not later than 30 days after the mailing date**. You must submit the mailer's receipt (original copy of the mailing label) and complete PS Form 3533, **Application and Voucher for Refund of Postage and Fees**.

2. EXPRESS, REGISTERED, OR INSURED MAIL: WHERE DO I BEGIN?

- ◆ **You must prove that insurance, registered mail, or express mail service was purchased.**

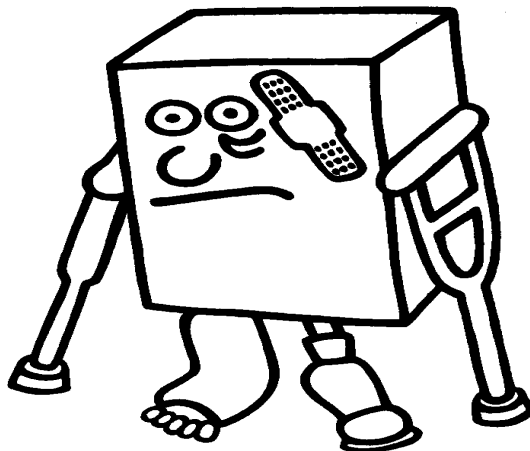
WHAT IS PROOF OF SERVICE PURCHASED?

- ◆ The original mailing receipt given to you at the time of mailing.
- ◆ The wrapper, which must have names and addresses of both the mailer and the addressee, along with the endorsement, tag, or label showing that the article was sent insured, registered, or by express mail.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE PROOF OF VALUE?

- ◆ A sales receipt.
- ◆ An invoice.
- ◆ A picture from a catalog showing the value of a similar article.
- ◆ A statement of value from a reputable dealer.
- ◆ Your own statement describing the lost or damaged article, including the date and place where it was purchased, how much it cost, and whether the article was new or used.
- ◆ If the article was handmade, state the price of materials and labor used.
- ◆ The items must be described in enough detail so the USPS Postal Data Center can determine the accuracy of the claim.

NOTE: If the claim is for partial damage, a paid repair bill, estimate of repair costs, or appraisal may be used instead of the above estimates of value.



WHAT IS PROOF OF DAMAGE OR LOSS?

- ◆ **Damage:** If the mailed article was damaged or if some or all the contents are missing, keep the item, box, wrapper, and all the packing material.
- ◆ **Loss:** If the article was lost, you must submit proof of the loss (not required for express mail). The following is acceptable proof of loss:
 - A letter or statement **from the addressee**, dated at least **45 days** (7 days for PMEMS and 15 for registered mail) after the date the article was mailed, stating that the addressee did not receive the article. Indication by the addressee on the claim form that the article was not received. The addressee must sign the claim form and return it to the sender.
 - A statement from the receiving post office stating that a delivery record is not on file.

WHEN DO I FILE?

- ◆ File claims immediately after you notice the contents of your package are damaged or missing. For lost articles, you must wait the prescribed time depending on the class of mail used. A claim can be filed for APO/FPO Insured First-Class Parcels, Priority Mail, Ground Advantage (Formally Retail Ground/SAM) at a minimum of 45 days after the date the article was mailed with a maximum of one year.

WHO PAYS?

- ◆ **Only the USPS Claims Section** can make payments on claims. Postal clerks will assist in completing the required forms and how to submit to USPS.

WHEN TO EXPECT PAYMENT?

- ◆ A properly completed and supported claim is usually paid within 30 days.

How to file International Claims?

- ◆ **To initiate an International Inquiry Online.** To initiate an International Inquiry online, the customer must visit the usps.com/help/claims.htm, and the customer must be the U.S. sender and a registered usps.com account holder. U.S. senders without a registered usps.com account must create an account at the beginning of the online inquiry process. Also, the customer must do the following:

- Create an International Inquiry Online within the time limits.
- Provide information regarding the mailing, including but not limited to the following:
 - The USPS Tracking number that appears on the receipt.
 - The sender's name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number.
 - The addressee's name and mailing address.
 - The addressee's email address and telephone number, if available.
 - The date of the mailing, weight, postage paid, and additional fees (if applicable).
 - A description of the contents.
 - Evidence of mailing.
 - Evidence of value.
- ◆ **To initiate an International Telephone Inquiry.** To start the inquiry process by telephone, the customer must be the U.S. sender. Also, the customer must do the following:
 - Call 1-800-222-1811 within the time limits.
 - Provide information regarding the mailing, including but not limited to the following:
 - The USPS Tracking number that appears on the receipt.
 - The sender's name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number.
 - The addressee's name and mailing address.
 - The addressee's email address and telephone number, if available.
 - The date of the mailing, weight, postage paid, and additional fees (if applicable).
 - A description of the contents and its value.

When to expect payment?

- ◆ A properly completed and supported claim is usually paid within 30 days.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PACKAGING, INSURANCE RECEIPTS, AND MAILING CONTAINERS

The only thing that will protect your articles from damage is the packaging. Remember that mailed parcels may weigh up to 70 pounds, and your package may be stacked under several of these items during normal transportation.

For additional information, please visit the USPS Postal Explorer website at <https://pe.usps.com/> and review the USPS DMM, **A Customer's Guide to Mailing** pamphlet or check the visual aids in your MPO lobby.

“DO NOT THROW AWAY MAILING CONTAINERS”

To file a claim for damage, you must submit the article, mailing container, and packaging to the postal service for inspection. You should file damage claims immediately.

“SAVE YOUR INSURANCE RECEIPTS”

You will need them in case the items you send are damaged. It's a good idea to list the articles which are in each parcel on the reverse of your insurance receipt. If you mail more than one article to the same address, you'll know which insurance number belongs to the damaged article. You may file for loss claims **45 days** after the mailing date for **First Class/Priority, Ground Advantage (Formally Retail Ground/SAM)**. (**75 days** for articles mailed from **CONUS to Europe** by ship.)

Filing a Claim for Lost Mail or Packages

Mail Type or Service	File After	File Before
APO/FPO Priority Mail Express Military Service	21 days	180 days
APO/FPO Insured Mail, Registered Mail (Priority Mail, First-Class Mail, First-Class Package Service - Retail, SAM, or PAL)	45 days	1 year
APO/FPO Insured Mail (Surface only)	75 days	1 year

NONMAIL SERVICES

US Domestic Money Orders. Postal money orders up to \$1,000 may be purchased at the current fee posted at your APO. The sale of money orders IS UNLIMITED; however, you must complete a PS Form 8105-A, **Funds Transaction/Transfer Report**, for a daily purchase of \$3,000 and over.

INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS

International money orders are not available at military post offices. Personnel should visit their host country post office or local bank facility.

USAFE-AFAFRICA SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM – ADVANCE ISSUE OF A PO BOX

Under the USAFE-AFAFRICA Sponsorship Program, you can get an incoming person's box assigned 90 days prior to member's report date. All you need is a copy of the incoming member's orders or sponsorship RIP showing the member's reporting date.

HOLIDAY MAILING

Mail Early! You can save time (shorter mailing lines at the post office) and money (by sending packages Ground Advantage (formally Retail Ground/SAM)). The best time to start mailing holiday items is early November.

Mailing Deadlines: Check local bulletins or newspapers, the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, the Stars & Stripes newspaper, and your local MPO.

Mail by Appointment: Check with your local MPO for the local appointment system. Some MPOs provide this service all year.

MISADDRESSED MAIL

You must notify your correspondents when you notice your mail is misaddressed or undeliverable as addressed, i.e., sent to another PSC and/or ZIP code other than the one you provided to your correspondents, particularly, large mailers, such as: businesses, financial institutions, publishers, mail order companies, and bulk mailers.

Large mailers buy mailing lists from software vendor companies. Incorrect address format, a glitch in the software or automated sortation can result in your mail being misaddressed or missent to another post office (ZIP code). Make sure your mail has the proper address format.

**MAJ JOHN DOE
PSC 2 BOX 1234
APO AE 09012-0016**

FORWARD YOUR MAIL – QUICK, EASY, CONVENIENT! Stateside destinations.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS – PCS MOVE - FIND AVAILABLE PO BOXES
Need a post office box? Follow the instructions below.
How can I get a post office box at my new location?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call using DSN the operator at the new location and ask her or him to connect you to the installation post office. The post office staff at your new location will assist you in getting a PO Box. You may also go online at: https://www.usps.com/manage/po-boxes.htm • If you have the ZIP code of your new location, check out a post office with the same ZIP code or near it.
How do I make a change of address so my mail is directly delivered to my PO Box, then to my new residence address?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you rent a PO Box, on the same site you can make a change of address from your APO address to the PO Box address you rent. Your mail will directly go there rather than coming to your current APO address and then forwarded to your new address. It’s quick, easy, and convenient! • Overseas postal patrons with individual delivery points (Box Numbers) can complete an online change of address via the USPS website: https://moversguide.usps.com. When the COA request is made online there is a \$1.10 identity validation fee. When you enter your credit card or debit card number and billing address, we can electronically verify your card’s information with the issuing bank. • An email address is required for online COA submission. Military addresses are eligible; if you are moving from a military address, your email address must end in .gov, .mil, or .edu. • Sure, you must pay for the iCOA service, but in addition to the COA service, the USPS provides “A Change of Address Welcome Kit”. The Welcome Kit arrives approximately 5 Postal business days after the effective date of the COA to verify the forwarding information is correct. The Welcome Kit contains: Helpful information for new residents. In addition, it provides a community guide filled with facts, special offers, and coupons related to the customer’s new address.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

You can use the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system to address any mail concerns you may have. Your local postal authorities check this site on a regular basis and respond to patrons’ inquiries. You can access this site at: <http://ice.disa.mil>.

PLEASE CHECK AND PICK UP YOUR MAIL DAILY!

//SIGNED//
 WILLIAM A. HOSSACK, CIV, DAF
 Chief, Postal Operations Flight