

# MAIL SERVICES GUIDE



Division of Mail and Courier Services  
Office of Research Services

Revised September 2004

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## INTRODUCTION

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This Mail Services Guide for National Institutes of Health (NIH) employees and contractors has been prepared by the Office of Research Services (ORS), Division of Mail and Courier Services (DMCS), Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB). It is a source of basic information which will enable NIH customers to obtain the most efficient and cost-effective mail and interoffice communications distribution services.

This guide discusses topics such as addressing, envelopes, interoffice communications, United States Postal Service (USPS) mail classifications, specialized delivery services and other information basic to your everyday needs and will be a useful desk companion for all NIH employees.

The more the DMCS knows about individual needs and concerns, the better we can provide responsive service, whether it is information on special mail services, how to prepare a large mailing, an office move, or sending or receiving something out of the ordinary.

The information provided in this guide is subject to periodic changes in regulation and services provided by the USPS and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). If changes do occur, then the DMCS will distribute updates to this guide.

For questions regarding any aspect of NIH mail service, contact the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) at (301) 496-3586 or e-mail us at **MCSB CUSTOMER SERVICE (OD/ORS)**. A Mail Technician will provide prompt assistance.

This guide is also available on our web site at **[http://: WWW.NIH.GOV/OD/ORS/DSS](http://WWW.NIH.GOV/OD/ORS/DSS)**.

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## MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

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### A. Locations and Hours of Operation

The Division of Mail and Courier Services (DMCS) operates the main mail hub processing facility located in Rockville on North Stonestreet Avenue and seven satellite mail rooms both on and off-campus. Following are the locations, hours of operation, and telephone numbers of each mail facility.

#### MAIN MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY

**Hours of Operation 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

301 North Stonestreet Ave., Rockville MD			
Director, Division of Mail and Courier Services	Room 105B		402-4171
Operations Manager	Room 105C		402-4172
Mail Customer Service Branch	Room 105E		496-3586
Main Mail Hub Operations	Room 109H		

#### SATELLITE FACILITIES

Supervisor, Satellite Mail Operations			
Building 45	Room P1AS.14B		594-6486

<u>Location</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
<b><u>On-Campus</u></b>			
Building 1	7:30 - 4:30	Room B2W36	496-6410
Building 10	7:00 - 4:30	Room B2N105	496-5518
Building 31	7:00 - 4:30	Room 1W-34	496-1950
Building 45	7:00 - 4:30	Room P1AS.14B	594-6486
<b><u>Off-Campus</u></b>			
Rockledge II	7:00 - 4:30	Room 1177	435-0461
EPN	7:00 - 4:30	Room 112	496-0865
NSC	7:00 - 4:30	Room 112	435-1471

### B. Customer Service

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

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The Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) assists the NIH community with mailing needs and promptly respond to questions and concerns.

The primary responsibilities of the MCSB are to:

- 1) Receive and process congressional, undeliverable, return to sender, and misdirected mail received via the USPS;
- 2) Review and forward improperly addressed mail and inter-office communications generated by the NIH community;
- 3) Initiate tracer actions for NIH specials, registered, certified, insured, and express mail via the USPS, upon request;
- 4) Assist NIH employees to establish mail pick-up and delivery points; assign mail stop codes (MSC); provide or order USPS mailing supplies (not carried in self-service stores);
- 5) Assist in resolving general mail and/or distribution problems;
- 6) Provide guidance on mail preparation and processing (e.g., permit mailings, business reply mail, proper addressing, mail transit times, etc.);
- 7) Provide written guidance (upon request) on USPS regulations and manuals, internal NIH regulations, standard operating procedures, and policy letters regarding mail services; and,
- 8) Participate in IC staff and building occupant meetings (upon request) to discuss mail related issues.

### C. Available Mail Services

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

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The DMCS is staffed to assist NIH employees with a number of mail related services. These services include:

- Assigning Mail Stop Codes.
- Daily pick-up and delivery of USPS and interoffice mail.
- Processing outgoing USPS domestic, international, and overnight express mail.
- Processing incoming USPS and inter-office communications.
- Providing technical assistance to commercial vendors contracted by NIH activities to process high volume mailings.
- Assisting with the design of business mail.
- Assisting with the selection of the most cost-effective method of processing the various types of mail based upon desired delivery time.
- Assisting with Business Reply and Permit Imprint mailings.

### D. Mail Collection and Delivery Schedule

Mail collection and delivery to various locations on-and-off campus is provided twice daily, morning and afternoon, generally within 24 hours of receipt. Set times cannot normally be posted, but it is DMCS policy that mail and inter-office communications will be delivered and collected no later than 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., dependent on locations and non-controllable factors.

NIH activities with “SPECIALS” and express mail which cannot be delayed should contact the MCSB Customer Service Team to arrange for special mail pick-up. SPECIALS and accountable mail (i.e., Registered, Certified, Express, Insured and airline tickets) will be delivered to the appropriate individual and office as expeditiously as possible, with an internal receipt for delivery. This allows for 100% accountability of mail and inter-office communications. Mail stops should acknowledge receipt of the accountable pieces and forward receipts back to their respective mail rooms for tracking purposes.

### E. Mail Stops

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## I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

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Mail stops (pick-up and delivery points) are established according to number of people supported, mail volumes, and floor space occupied. Although mail stops normally are not opened to support a small group of individuals with small amounts of mail, a single criteria cannot be applied to all situations, and the MCSB will assist NIH activities on an individual basis.

In order to streamline mail processing functions, and thereby expediting mail delivery while conserving resources, NIH activities should consolidate and centrally locate mail stops and should request a single mail stop to support multiple offices within the same building and located on the same floor. The MCSB Team is available to answer questions regarding mail stop codes.

### 1. Opening Mail Stops

NIH activities should submit requests for mail stop codes through their IC Mail Manager. Requests should be submitted to Chief, Mail Customer Services Branch, NSA, MSC 3333 or fax to 402-2147. The request should include names of personnel occupying the space, building, room, point of contact, phone number, start-up date, and the number of “Desk-to-Desk” copies of internal distribution required. A MCSB representative will contact the designated individual within 24 hours of receipt of the request. Requests for mail stops can also be requested electronically via the MCSB web page when the NIH Mail Stop Codes line is selected.

NIH activities should evaluate whether an existing IC activity with a mail stop code can support this new activity prior to submission of the request for a new mail stop.

### 2. Closing Mail Stops

NIH activities should notify the MCSB (through the IC Mail Manager) when a mail stop code is no longer needed. This notification must include building, room, mail stop code, point of contact, phone number, and when mail deliveries should be canceled. Upon receipt of this notification, a MCSB representative will make contact with the designated individual within 24 hours.

NIH activities closing mail stops should advise their personnel to immediately notify correspondents of their new forwarding address.

### 3. Relocation

To sustain accurate mail delivery services without delay or interruption, NIH activities

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## I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

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should notify the MCSB immediately (through their IC Mail Manager) of their pending relocation. If the move is to a different room within the same building, it may be possible to keep the same mail stop code. If the move is to a different building, the MCSB will work with the activity to establish a new mail stop code.

### F. Clustered Mail Service

Clustered mail service is the NIH's newest process of servicing a centrally located cluster of mailboxes where the customer controls the distribution of mail. This type of services is more economical and efficient than the door-to-door mail service.

This service will be implemented in all new buildings constructed on the NIH campus and in newly leased facilities off-campus where NIH activities are the sole occupants. The more common door-to-door mail service currently being provided to most NIH on- and off-campus buildings will be phased out and eventually replaced by the clustered mail service.

Since clustered mail service is a new concept to most NIH employees, the DMCS has information fact sheets available which details all of the aspects of the program. Contact the MCSB for more information.

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## II. INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

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Inter-office correspondence will be processed as priority for immediate delivery by the DMCS. A Standard Form 65, Government Messenger Envelope (also referred to as a “holey Joe” or “shotgun” envelope, see samples 1 and 2) or a preprinted Inter-Office Communication envelope (see samples 3, 4, and 5) which can be purchased from any self-service store should be used for inter-office communications. This will clearly identify inter-office correspondence from other types of mail received for processing.

### A. Addressing

When addressing envelopes for inter-office correspondence always use mail stop codes in lieu of building names/numbers and room numbers. Names and routing information should be legibly printed to ensure timely and proper delivery.

When using Government Messenger Envelopes (holey-joes), the address should be placed on the next unused line. Mark out all previous entries to prevent misrouting. Clearly enter the addressee’s name and mail stop code in the box marked “**STOP**” (see sample 1). Name, building and room number may be used but is not preferred (see sample 2).

**Sample 1: Sample SF-65  
Name and MSC**

<b>U.S. Government Messenger Envelope</b>	
NAME (OR TITLE) OF ADDRESSEE, AGENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT, ADDRESS AND ROOM	
JOHN E. DOE	STOP 0071

**Sample 2: Sample SF-65  
Name, Bldg,  
Rm, and MSC**

<b>U.S. Government Messenger Envelope</b>	
NAME (OR TITLE) OF ADDRESSEE, AGENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT, ADDRESS AND ROOM	
JOHN E. DOE BLDG 100 RM 3A45	STOP 0071

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## II. INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

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When using preprinted Inter-Office Communications envelopes, a two-line address format is preferred. Place a return address in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope (NAME/BLDG/RM/MSC). Clearly enter the addressee's name centered on the top line and mail stop code below the name (sample 3). Building and room number may be used by placing on the bottom line with the mail stop code (see samples 4 and 5).

**Sample 3:  
Two-line address  
format with MSC**

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION  
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE  
BLDG 13 Rm 23 MSC 0021

ROGER PAPER  
MSC 0003

**Sample 4:  
Two-line address  
format with BLDG  
and RM**

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION  
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE  
BLDG 13 RM 23 MSC 0021

ROGER PAPER  
BLDG 98 RM 1090 MSC 0003

**Sample 5:  
Two-line address  
format for  
SPECIALS**

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION  
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE  
BLDG 13 RM 23 MSC 0021

ROGER PAPER  
BLDG 98 RM 1090 MSC 0003

**SPECIAL**

### B. Prohibitions

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## II. INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

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The following items are prohibited from the NIH mail stream:

### **1. Solid Objects**

Metal or glass objects should not be mailed in Inter-Office Communication envelopes or placed into the inter-office communication mail stream. These objects require special packing for safe handling.

### **2. Hazardous Materials**

Hazardous materials should never be transmitted via the inter-office communication mail stream. Materials such as chemicals, research vials, blood samples, and tissue samples, should be transported by other means specifically designed for the safe transport of these materials. Contact the NIH Division of Safety for guidelines or assistance.

### **3. Chain Letters**

Chain letters via the inter-office or USPS mail are prohibited. Report the receipt of such materials immediately to the DMCS Customer Service Branch and the appropriate security officials can be notified.

### **4. Personal Mail**

Use of the inter-office mail system for personal mail is prohibited, and all DMCS mail rooms are for official Government mail only. DMCS employees will not accept or process any personal mail.

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## III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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### A. Types of Mail

- 1. Express Mail** - Fastest and most costly. Should be used only when absolutely necessary. This service is also available to many foreign countries. Contact the MCSB for delivery schedules and information.
- 2. First Class Mail** - Any mailable item weighing 13 ounces or less. Items such as letters, post cards, official notes, and checks should be mailed via First-Class Mail.
- 3. Priority Mail** - First-Class matter weighing over 13 ounces but less than 70 pounds. When the speed of Express Mail is not needed, but preferential handling is desired, use Priority Mail.
- 4. Bound Printed Matter** - Consists of advertising, promotional, directory, or editorial material (or any combination of such material). The material must be bound by permanent fastenings such as staples, spiral binding, glue, or stitching. Looseleaf binders and similar fastenings are not considered permanent. Contact the MCSB when planning these large mailings.
- 5. Parcel Post** - Mailable matter not required to be mailed as First Class/Priority weighing 16 ounces or more. Packages mailed within the U.S. can weigh up to 70 pounds.
- 6. Library Mail** - Mailable matter not required to be mailed as First-Class weighing more than 5 ounces. This class of service can only be used when it is addressed to schools, colleges, universities, public libraries, and nonprofit religious, educational, and scientific organizations/associations. This service should be used for items such as CDs, videos, books, scholarly bibliography, printed music, bound volumes of academic theses in typewritten or duplicated form, periodicals, and sound recordings.
- 7. Media Mail** - Mailable matter not required to be mailed as First-Class weighing more than 5 ounces. This service should be used for items such as CDs, videos, books, scholarly bibliography, printed music, bound volumes of academic theses in typewritten or duplicated form, periodicals, and sound recordings.

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## III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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### B. Special Mail Services

Additional mail services are available upon request from the DMCS for an additional cost to the IC.

- 1. Certificate of Mailing** - Provides proof that a piece was mailed from one of the DMCS metering locations, and provided upon request.
- 2. Certified Mail** - Provides a mailing receipt, and a record of delivery is maintained at the post office of address.
- 3. Registered Mail** - Provides the most secured USPS option offered. It is designed to provide added protection for valuable and important mail. Registered Mail can be insured for up to \$25,000.
- 4. Return Receipt (PS Form 3811 for Domestic Mail and PS Form 2856 for International Mail)** - Provides the sender with proof of delivery. It shows who signed for the piece and the date it was delivered.
- 5. Insurance** - Provides the sender with insurance coverage up to \$5,000. Insured Mail applies to Standard Mail and Standard Mail matter mailed at the First-Class or Priority Mail rate. *NOTE: Do not over-insure your packages. The amount of insurance coverage for loss will be the actual value, less depreciation, and no payments are made for sentimental losses or for any expenses incurred as a result of the loss.*
- 6. Delivery Confirmation** - Provides the mailer with information about the date and time an article was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt.

### C. Instructions for Sending Domestic Mail

#### 1. Preparing and Addressing Outgoing Domestic Mail

The USPS requires that all outgoing NIH official mail processed bearing a NIH Permit Imprint number (G-series), or which postage is paid by a Government postage meter, must have a return address and bear the required Penalty Statement, “Official Business Penalty

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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For Private Use, \$300". This includes mail of all types.

**(a) Return Address**

The return address tells the USPS where the sender wants the mail returned, if undeliverable. If a return address is not included on the mail piece, the mail is sent to the Dead Letter Section of the Post Office where it is held or destroyed.

A complete return address should be included on all correspondence. The following format for the return address is recommended:

**Return Address**

Mailer's Name (Optional)

Mailer's Organization (Division, Branch, etc.)

Mailer's Street Address (i.e., bldg, street name, rm, MSC)

Mailer's City, State, and Nine-digit Zip Code

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

**Sample Return Address**

DR. JOE DOE

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NIAAA

22 SUCCESS PL RM 9030 MSC 0080

BETHESDA MD 20892-0080

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

Capitalize everything in the address and eliminate all punctuation. Use the USPS list of common address and state abbreviations. Always place the address or post office box on the line above the city and state and always place your ZIP+4 code on the last line.

[In Section IV of this mail guide, you will find a sample of a properly completed envelope, a listing of USPS Directional and Secondary Address Indicators, a list of two-letter state abbreviations, and a list of the most commonly used street designator abbreviations.]

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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#### (b) NIH ZIP Codes

The following city, state, and ZIP Codes should be used when receiving mail through the NIH main mail hub:

**Domestic Mail:** Bethesda MD 20892-MSC

**Foreign Mail:** Bethesda MD USA 20892-MSC

**Business Reply Mail:** Bethesda MD 20814-9692

*NOTE: ZIP Code "20894" should only be used by National Library of Medicine. (See NIH ZIP Codes at "WWW.NIH.GOV/OD/ORS/DSS/MAIL/SERVICES.HTM")*

#### (c) Delivery Address

A complete delivery address is required on all NIH official mail dispatched via the USPS. It must have all the address elements necessary to allow an exact match with the USPS ZIP+4 file. The addressee name, firm, or other identifier; street number and name; secondary address (i.e., APT, ST, etc.); city and state; and a correct five-digit ZIP code or ZIP+4 code (if known). Capitalize everything in the address and eliminate all punctuation.

The following format is recommended for addressing outgoing official mail:

#### **Delivery Address**

Recipient's Name

Recipient's Organization/Company

Recipient's Street Address

Recipient's City, State, ZIP code or ZIP+4 (if known)

#### **Sample Delivery Address**

JANE DOE

SUNNY DAY INSTITUTE

6721 SMILEY AVE STE 400

BARKLEY ND 90000-3201

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*



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## III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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### (d) Domestic Express Mail

For USPS express mail service, ensure Label 11-B is correctly filled out and is firmly attached to the piece. *NOTE: Do not remove any copies of the Label 11-B,*

### 2. Forwarding Domestic First-Class Mail

In order to forward First-Class Mail to persons no longer assigned to NIH activities or employed by NIH, a forwarding address **MUST** be used to avoid mail from being returned to sender. Using a black or blue pen, draw a single diagonal line through the address and write the following statement and address directly above the address line and place the piece back into the mail stream:

**FORWARD TO: [Write the forwarding address]**

### 3. Returning Domestic First-Class Mail

In order to return First-Class Mail to the sender for persons no longer assigned to NIH activities or employed by NIH and no forwarding address is available, NIH activities should use a black or blue pen, draw a single diagonal line through the address and write the following statement directly above the address line and place the piece back into the mail stream:

**RETURN TO SENDER: No longer at NIH/address unknown**

### D. Helpful Mail Practices

- Have personal mail sent to your home not the office. The DMCS will not be responsible for personal mail sent through the NIH mail system.
- Whenever possible, consolidate outgoing mail going to the same address. The cost is always lower for a consolidated package versus multiple single-rate pieces.

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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- Whenever possible, place correspondence that is less than 6 pages in regular mailing envelopes instead of flat envelopes (9" x 12").
- Do not place odd shaped items in envelopes which are not padded.
- Prior to contracting out large mailings, contact the MCSB for assistance in receiving the service you want at the best cost.
- Before adding bar codes to mail pieces, contact the MCSB that the piece can be tested before it is dispatched via the USPS. This should be done during the design phase for the piece.
- Capitalize the entire address and avoid using punctuation (except ZIP+4).
- Type or apply computerized labels on envelopes. This will eliminate most problems with USPS optical scanning equipment.
- Separate inter-office correspondence, foreign, and domestic mail prior to placing it into the mail stream.
- Avoid using window envelopes with the plastic covering the opening. The glare from the plastic makes it difficult for the USPS Optical Character Readers to read addresses on envelopes.
- Use the NIH Form 2759, "Deletion from Mailing List" to cancel any unwanted mail and/or publications. This form is available at any NIH self-service store.

#### **E. Business Reply Mail**

Business Reply Mail should be used only for official business. It enables NIH activities to pay the return postage for official reply purposes. Only the "20814-9692" Nine-Digit ZIP code should be used on Business Reply Mail. Any other ZIP code may jeopardize the receipt and delivery of this mail to its intended NIH office.

#### **1. Addressing**

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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The USPS requires Business Reply Mail to bear a permit number and the required Penalty Statement, “Official Business Penalty For Private Use, \$300” in the top left corner of the envelope. Contact the MCSB for the correct permit number.

The following format is recommended for addressing Business Reply Mail:

**Business Reply Mail Address**

NIH Activity Organization (Division, Branch, etc.)

Recipient’s Name (Optional)

Recipient’s Street Address (i.e., BLDG, ST, RM, and MSC)

Recipient’s City, State, and Nine-Digit ZIP Code

**Sample Business Reply Mail Address**

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NIAAA

DR. JOE DOE

22 SUCCESS PL RM 9030 MSC 0080

BETHESDA MD 20814-9692

ICs should be aware that in addition to postage, a fee is paid for each reply received. In accordance with postal regulations, the address on Business Reply Mail must be the address of the permit holder, which in this case will be a NIH location. Contractors distributing Business Reply Mail on behalf of NIH must have NIH printed on the Business Reply Mail. A very important requirement of the USPS is that only the unique NIH Business Reply ZIP Code (20814-9692) should be used for NIH for Business Reply Mail.

#### **2. Prohibitions**

Business Reply Mail envelopes and cards may not be used for any other purpose even if postage is affixed. Use of Business Reply Mail for other than NIH official business is strictly prohibited and carries a penalty for private use. Special Services (e.g., insurance, registered, certified, and return receipts) are not permitted when using Business Reply Mail.

#### **F. International/Foreign Mail**

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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Special care should be taken when using any of the International/Foreign mail services identified below; use return addresses on each piece sent, attach appropriate custom forms securely, and use appropriate labels and packaging materials. Before sealing any large international parcels; (1) place a separate sheet of paper with the address and the return address inside the parcel, in case the label becomes detached; (2) ensure both the address and the return address are placed on the parcel directly in the center with large print; and (3) ensure the appropriate custom forms are attached securely to the parcel.

#### 1. Types of International/Foreign Mail

(a) **Global Express Mail (Formerly Express Mail Service International)** - an on-demand type service equivalent to Domestic Express Mail Service. Mailable matter such as letters, documents, and some merchandise may be sent to most foreign countries.

(b) **Global Express Guaranteed** - an expedited premium international document and non-document mail service. It provides reliable, high-speed, date-certain service to locations in most countries and territorial possessions. This service is a partnership between the U.S. Postal Service and DHL Worldwide Express, Inc..

(c) **Global Priority Mail** - an accelerated airmail service that provides a reliable and economical means of sending correspondence, documents, printed matter and some merchandise to certain foreign countries.

(d) **Postal Union Mail Service** - includes letters, letter packages, post cards, regular printed matter, books, periodicals, and small packets. This service is equivalent to the Domestic First-Class, Priority, and Package Services Mail.

(e) **Parcel Post Mail Service** - parcels such as boxes or those packages generally categorized as Parcel Post Mail may be sent as Parcel Post Mail. This type of service is equivalent to the Domestic Package Services Mail.

#### 2. Addressing International/Foreign Mail

When preparing mail to be sent to international/foreign countries, the following address format

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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is required to ensure delivery:

**Delivery Address**

Recipient's Name

Recipient's Street Address

Recipient's Postal Delivery Code, City, or Province

Recipient's Country Name in **CAPITAL** letters

**Sample Delivery Address**

Dr. K.B. Loo

45 Kane CT AP57

90032 Rome

GERMANY

### 3. Preparing Global Express Guaranteed, Global Express, and Global Priority Mail:

#### (a) Global Mail Service Labels

The USPS Global Mail Service labels may be obtained from any DMCS mail room or the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch. After the label has been prepared, attach it to the front of the Global Mail envelope in the area designated, enclose the document, seal, and place into the NIH mail stream. *NOTE: Do not remove any copies of the label prior to entering it into the mail stream.*

Although Global Mail envelopes are preferred, plain white envelopes may be used if they are larger than the label, and this label is centrally placed on the front of the envelope. *NOTE: Do not use AIR MAIL envelopes for Global Mail.*

Boxes mailed using this service must include a completed PS Form 2976-A, Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note, which should be placed in a PS Form 2976-E, centered and placed next to the label on the top of the box.

#### (b) Postal Union and Parcel Post Mail Services

**Packaging** should be sufficient to withstand the wear and tear of international handling.

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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Do not leave room in the parcel for contents to shift around and do not over pack the parcel. If the parcel is damaged in transit, the contents of your parcel could be returned, lost, or destroyed.

Letters of six (6) pages or less should be folded and placed in letter-sized envelopes. Letters and documents with more than six (6) pages and too large to place in letter envelopes but too small for boxes, should use the larger envelopes (9 x 12 flats) for mailings.

#### 4. Customs Forms

Depending on what is being shipped, a customs form may need to be completed and affixed to the package. Contact the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch for assistance.

#### 5. Forwarding and Returning International/Foreign Mail

International/Foreign mail for persons no longer assigned or employed by NIH should follow the procedures for forwarding and returning domestic mail in Section III., paragraphs C.2 and C.3.

#### G. Permit Imprint Mail

The use of NIH Permit Imprint numbers for any purpose other than official government mail is strictly prohibited. Permission to use Permit Imprint numbers must be given to contractors performing mail services for the NIH ICs. Each mail piece prepared for a Permit Imprint Mailing must bear in the return address portion, “National Institutes of Health” and the required Penalty Statement, “Official Business Penalty For Private Use, \$300”. *NOTE: NIH activities should obtain mailing documentation from contractors after the mailing is processed.*

Permit Imprint mailings must contain a minimum of 200 pieces or 50 pounds, except if it is the completion of a large mailing extending over 2 or more consecutive days, and the mailer includes an explanation on the accompanying postage statement. All pieces in a Permit Imprint mailing must be of identical weight unless otherwise specifically authorized by the USPS.

All Permit Imprint mailing must be faced (i.e., have the address facing in the same direction) and meet the preparation standards for the rate claimed. Mail must be deposited and accepted at the post office that issued the permit. *NOTE: ICs or their contractors should contact the DMCS*

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### III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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*Mail Customer Service Branch during the design stage and prior to depositing mail at the post office.*

#### **1. Most commonly used types of Permit Imprints by NIH:**

<b><u>Mail Type</u></b>	<b><u>Required Form</u></b>
First-Class	PS Fm 3600-R
Presorted First-Class	PS Fm 3600-R
Priority	PS Fm 3605-R
Presorted Standard	PS Fm 3602-R
Parcel Post	PS Fm 3608-R
Media	PS Fm 3608-R
Library	PS Fm 3608-R

#### **NOTES:**

- a. A completed PS Form 3615 should be presented to the Post Office (accompanied by the appropriate 3600 series form and mailing) when using the permit number for the first time at that location.
- b. If depositing multiple mailings of different classes and weights at the Post Office, it is recommended that a completed GPO Fm 712 and PS Fm 3602-G be presented in lieu of various PS Forms.

#### **2. Preparing Permit Imprint Mailings**

- (a) A return address must be placed on each piece bearing the Penalty Statement (Business for Private Use \$300) and the NIH Permit Imprint number prior to depositing mail at the Post Office.
- (b) Typed or computer-generated address labels should be used.
- (c) The Permit Imprint must be legible and of a color that contrasts sufficiently with the paper and the imprint's background for readability.
- (d) Whenever possible, put correspondence (6 pages or less) in regular mailing envelopes instead of (9" x 12") flat envelopes.
- (e) Avoid the use of rubber stamps whenever possible for Permit Imprint numbers. The ink used for these stamps tends to wash away if exposed to inclement weather, and the

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## III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

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mail piece could be lost. We highly recommend Permit Imprints be either printed directly on or overprinted on mail pieces or labels.

(f) Permit Imprints cannot be typewritten or hand-drawn.

(g) Permit Imprints on mail pieces and labels must be aligned parallel with the return address and placed in the upper right corner of the address side or of the address label.

(h) Presorted permit imprint mailings must be prepared in accordance with USPS regulations and be accompanied by standardized documentation produced by software certified under the Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) program or the Manifest Analysis and Certification (MAC) program, appropriate for the accompanying class of mail and rate claimed.

**NOTE: We highly recommend ICs contact the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch to receive information on designing Permit Imprint Mail and mail pre-sort requirements.**

### 3. Permit Imprint Content and Format

The formats on the next page are provided for the most commonly used Permit Imprints for NIH. It is extremely important that ICs and their contractors coordinate large Permit Imprint mailings with the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch during the design phase and prior to depositing at the post office.

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*



# Permit Imprint Formats for NIH Official Mail

## First-Class Official Mail

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NICHHD  
PERMIT NO. G-000

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NICHHD  
PERMIT NO. G-000

PRIORITY MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NICHHD  
PERMIT NO. G-000

## Standard Official Mail

PRESORTED STANDARD MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NHLBI  
PERMIT NO. G-000

## Package Services Official Mail

MEDIA MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NCI  
PERMIT NO. G-000

LIBRARY MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NCI  
PERMIT NO. G-000

PARCEL POST MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
NIH/NCI  
PERMIT NO. G-000

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## IV. PARCEL GROUND SERVICE

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**A. Definition.** A nationwide, economical, date-certain, guaranteed parcel ground delivery service available to any physical address within the 48 contiguous United States, except to Post

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Office Boxes, (excluding Alaska and Hawaii).

This “add-on” service guarantees door-to-door delivery to most U.S. cities in one to six days (depending on state) at significantly lower costs and improves transit time for parcels which could normally take up to 14 days for delivery. This service also allows customers to track parcels by telephone or using the Internet.

When parcels are received from clustered mail service locations, mail stops, and satellite mail rooms, meeting weight requirements (1 to 70 pounds), DMCS will perform a cost and transit time comparison between the USPS and other carriers to determine which carrier will be more cost effective and give NIH parcels better transit time. Customers can expect improved delivery time and reduction in mailing costs.

**B. Procedures for Using Parcel Ground Service.** No special requirements are needed, just prepare the parcel in accordance with addressing standards and place in the outgoing mail stream. Customers with parcels too large to fit into collection boxes should contact the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch to schedule a pick up. Customers located near DMCS satellite mail rooms can always take packages there or call for assistance if the parcel is too large to carry.

Customers with high-volume mailings meeting weight requirements should contact the DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch at the beginning of the planning stage.

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## V. Suspect Letters and Packages

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### 1. Screening Mail

Since September 11, 2001, and growing concerns about the safety of our mail. The DMCS has prepared new policies and procedures for screening all incoming USPS mail.

- a. All mail is screened by DMCS Mail Customer Service Branch personnel as it enters the NIH mail system. For this reason, mail should not be accepted from any sources other than DMCS.
- b. Even though mail is initially screened by DMCS, each IC should establish procedures to screen incoming mail and report anything suspicious to the proper authorities.
- c. If a suspicious letter or package is identified:
  - 1). Do Not Open or handle excessively by squeezing, shaking, smelling, etc.
  - 2). Isolate the item, if possible by placing it in a plastic bag and moving it to a location away from the immediate work area.
  - 3). Immediately notify the proper authorities.

### 2. Illustrations

The illustrations on the following two pages represent general checklists. These lists are certainly not all inclusive and additional items could also identify a mail piece as suspicious. Common sense must prevail at all times. The presence of one or even two of the items on these checklists does not automatically mean the mail is suspect.

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## V. Suspect Letters and Packages

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### Suspect Letter and Package Checklist

Every NIH staff member should be cautious and vigilant for suspicious mail. This checklist will help to identify suspicious mail, packages, or other items:

- ▶ Is the addressee familiar with the name and address of sender?
- ▶ Package/letter has no return address
- ▶ Is the addressee expecting the package/letter? If so, verify expected contents
- ▶ Improper or incorrect title, address, or spelling of addressee name
- ▶ Title but no names
- ▶ Wrong title with name
- ▶ Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- ▶ Misspelling of common words
- ▶ Return address and postmark are not from the same area
- ▶ Stamps (excessive postage, unusual stamps) versus metered mail
- ▶ Special handling instructions (special delivery, open by addressee only, etc.)
- ▶ Restrictive markings such as confidential, personal, etc
- ▶ Over wrapped, excessive securing material such as tape, string or wrappings
- ▶ Oddly shaped or unevenly weighted packages
- ▶ Lumpy or rigid envelopes (stiffer than normal, heavier than normal, etc.)
- ▶ Lopsided or uneven envelope
- ▶ Oily stains or discolorations
- ▶ Strange odors
- ▶ Protruding wires or tinfoil
- ▶ Visual distractions (drawings, unusual statements, hand drawn postage, etc.)

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## V. Suspect Letters and Packages

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### **Suspect Letter and Package Indicators WARNING!**

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

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### A. Proper Addressing of Mail

LARRY E ELM  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NINDS  
31 WEAVER DR RM 31C00 MSC 0071  
BETHESDA MD 20892-0071  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

JUSTIN ARTIST  
MIRROR GRAPHICS INC  
805 S ARLINGTON BLVD APT 1A  
ARLINGTON VA 93277-1123

- C CAPITALIZE everything in the address and center on the envelope.
- C Eliminate all punctuation.
- C Use the USPS list of common address and state abbreviations.
- C Always use a return address including office symbol and mail stop code.
- C Always place the street address or post office box on the line above the city and state.
- C Always place the ZIP+4 Code on the last line.

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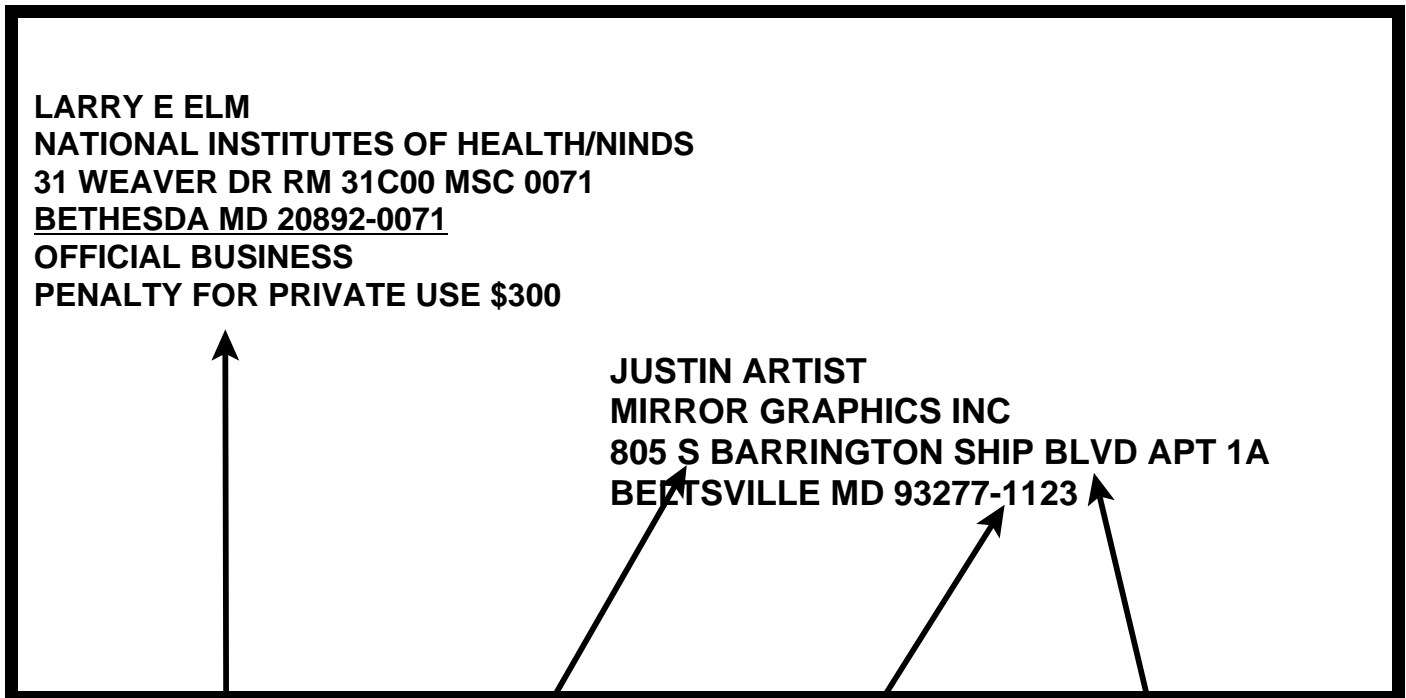
## VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

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### B. How to Address Envelopes Completely and Correctly (Sample)

Always use your

Use the ZIP Code.



return address and included IC, RM# and MSC. And add the Penalty Statement.

Indicate whether it's North (N), East (E), West (W) or South (S)

And if you know The ZIP+4 Code, please use it.

Is it Street or Avenue, Drive, Lane, Place, Street, Road, or Circle...?

### C. USPS Directional Abbreviations

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## VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

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NORTH - N  
SOUTH - S  
NORTHEAST - NE  
SOUTHEAST - SE  
EAST - E  
WEST - W  
NORTHWEST - NW  
SOUTHWEST - SW

### D. USPS Secondary Address Abbreviations

APARTMENT - APT  
BUILDING - BLDG  
FLOOR - FL  
SUITE - STE  
ROOM - RM

### E. USPS Street Designator Abbreviations

ALLEY - ALY  
ANNEX - ANX  
AVENUE - AVE  
BEACH - BCH  
BOULEVARD - BLVD  
BRANCH - BR  
CENTER - CTR  
CIRCLE - CIR  
COVE - CV  
CROSSING - ZING  
DRIVE - DR  
ESTATES - EST  
EXPRESSWAY - EXP  
FALLS - FLS  
HEIGHTS - HTS  
HIGHWAY - WY  
HILL - HI  
ISLAND - IS  
JUNCTION - JCT  
LAKE - LK  
LANE - LN  
LODGE - LDG  
LOOP - LOOP  
MANOR - MNR  
MEADOWS - MDWS  
MILL - ML  
MISSION - MSN  
ORCHARD - ORCH  
PARK - PARK  
PARKWAY - PKY  
PLAINS - PLNS  
PLACE - PL  
PLAZA - PLZ  
POINT - PT  
PORT - PRT  
RIVER - RIV  
ROAD - RD  
SPRING - SPG  
SQUARE - SQ  
STATION - STA  
STREET - ST  
TERRACE - TER  
TUNNEL - TNL  
TURNPIKE - TPKE  
UNION - UN  
VALLEY - VLY  
VIEW - VW  
VILLAGE - VLG  
WALK - WALK  
WAY - WAY

### F. USPS Two-letter State Abbreviations

ALABAMA - AL      KENTUCKY - KY      OHIO -OH

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ALASKA - AK  
ARIZONA - AZ  
ARKANSAS - AR  
CALIFORNIA -CA  
COLORADO - CO  
CONNECTICUT - CT  
DELAWARE - DE  
DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA - DC  
FLORIDA - FL  
GEORGIA -GA  
GUAM -GU  
HAWAII -HI  
IDAHO - ID  
ILLINOIS -IL  
INDIANA - IN  
IOWA - IA  
KANSAS - KS  
ISLANDS - MP

LOUISIANA - LA  
MAINE - ME  
MARSHALL ISLANDS - MH  
MARYLAND - MD  
MASSACHUSETTS - MA  
MINNESOTA - MN  
MISSOURI - MO  
  
MISSISSIPPI - MS  
MONTANA - MT  
NEBRASKA -NE  
NEVADA - NV  
NEW HAMPSHIRE - NH  
NEW JERSEY - NJ  
NEW MEXICO - NM  
NEW YORK - NY  
NORTH CAROLINA -NC  
NORTHERN MARIANA

OKLAHOMA - OK  
OREGON - OR  
PENNSYLVANIA - PA  
PUERTO RICO - PR  
RHODE ISLAND - RI  
SOUTH CAROLINA - SC  
SOUTH DAKOTA - SD  
  
TENNESSEE - TN  
TEXAS - TX  
UTAH - UT  
VERMONT - VT  
VIRGIN ISLANDS - VI  
VIRGINIA - VA  
WASHINGTON - WA  
WEST VIRGINIA -WV  
WISCONSIN - WI  
WYOMING - WY

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## VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Accountable Mail** - mail which requires special handling. This mail includes Registered, Certified, Insured, and Express Mail services and airline tickets.

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**Activities** - NIH Institutes, Centers, and Divisions and specifically, laboratories, offices, etc.

**Business Reply Mail (BRM)** - specially printed cards, envelopes, cartons, and labels that may be mailed without prepayment of postage. The postage and fees are collected when the mail is delivered back to the sender.

**Clustered Mail Service** - a group of mail boxes centrally located in a designated area of a building where mail is picked up and delivered to NIH activities on- and off-campus.

**Domestic Mail** - mail addressed to and destined for delivery to locations within the United States and its territories.

**EPN** - Executive Plaza North

**GPO** - Government Printing Office.

**IC** - Institutes and Centers.

**International/Foreign Mail** - mail addressed to and destined for delivery to locations not in the United States or its territories.

**Inter-office Correspondence** - generated by and intended for delivery to NIH activities on-and-off campus.

**Mail Stop Code (MSC)** - is the four-digit add-on used to locate, pick-up and deliver mail to NIH activities and clustered mail boxes on-and-off campus.

**NSC** - Neuroscience Center

**North Stonestreet Avenue (NSA)** - location of the Division of Mail Services Branch, Division of Employee Services and Printing and Reproduction Branch, components of the NIH Office of Research Services.

**Optical Character Reader (OCR)** - computer-controlled automation equipment that locates, reads, and interprets address information (contained on the face of a mail piece), applies a barcode, and sorts the mail piece into a stacker.

**Permit Imprints** - a simplified method to mail different classes of mail without having postage affixed if payment is made at the time of mailing from an advance deposit account. Each mail piece sent under this method must bear a permit imprint indicia showing that postage is paid.

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*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 496-3586 or through email at MCSB Customer Service (OD/ORS)*

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## VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Specials** - correspondence sent by NIH activities via inter-office mail which requires delivery within four (4) hours of receipt.

**Tracer Actions** - to track and confirm the delivery of NIH Interoffice Specials or Accountable mail (i.e., USPS Express, Registered, Certified, Insured, Delivery Confirmation and etc).

**USPS** - United States Postal Service.

**ZIP+4** - a nine digit numeric code incorporating the original five-digit ZIP Code, a hyphen, and four additional digits. The first five digits identify the delivery office. The four-digit add-on identifies a specific delivery segment such as a city block face, a floor of a building, a department with a firm, or a group of post office boxes.

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