

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 3050-001
SUBJECT: Mail Management	DATE: May 28, 1996	
	OPI: Office of Operations	

1 PURPOSE

This regulation prescribes policies, responsibilities and procedures for mail management within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

2 CANCELLATIONS

This regulation revises DR 3050-1, and cancels DR 3050-1 dated March 5, 1991.

3 POLICY

It is the policy of this Department to use the most economical classes and types of mail services available, consistent with operational needs. Mail processing operations will be prompt, efficient and as economical as possible. USDA mailrooms must adhere to the GSA objective of 4-6 hour delivery of mail to the action office after its receipt from the postal service. USDA will cooperate fully with the USPS in order to meet USDA's written communications requirements and to assure accurate reimbursement for services performed by the USPS.

4 ABBREVIATIONS

CASU Cooperative Administrative Support Unit
CFR Code of Federal Regulations
CMU Central Mail Unit
DMM Domestic Mail Manual, U.S. Postal Service
FIRMR Federal Information Resources Management Regulations
GSA General Services Administration
IMM International Mail Manual, U.S. Postal Service
MRMD Mail and Reproduction Management Division, OO

OMAS Official Mail Accounting System
OO Office of Operations
USC United States Code
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USPS United States Postal Service

5 DEFINITIONS

a Mail. For purposes of this regulation, mail includes letters, memoranda, post cards, documents, publications, directives, forms, packages, or any other written communications required by law to be carried by the U.S. Postal Service and received for distribution or dispatch.

b Mail Management. Mail Management is an attempt to provide rapid handling of mail at a minimum cost. It includes:

- (1) Keeping USDA personnel informed of the objectives, policies, standards and procedures for prompt, accurate and economical mail operations.
- (2) Ensuring that incoming USPS and intradepartmental mail is promptly moved, with a minimum of backtracking and control, from the point of receipt to the action office.
- (3) Ensuring that outgoing mail is economically and expeditiously dispatched.
- (4) Providing for continuous monitoring of mail operations to effect improvements.
- (5) Providing liaison with the USPS and GSA, adherence to their rules, regulations and ensuring correct, speedy and economical movement of USDA mail within the postal system.
- (6) Providing adequate liaison with the USPS on reimbursement for postal services.

c Official Mail. All mail used to conduct the business of USDA is considered official mail. As such, USDA mail is considered Government property and is subject to rules governing the use of Government property.

- (1) Examples of mail matter that would generally not be considered to be official mail are: Christmas cards, chain letters, job resumes, complaints (except those submitted to the Inspector

General under section 7 of the Inspector General Act of 1978), grievances, and similar personal matters.

(2) An agency head may request a ruling from the Director of Operations, as to whether a particular mail matter is official business. Any such request should include the reason why the agency head believes the matter to be official USDA business.

d Personal Mail. Mailroom personnel are not required to deliver personal mail received through their facility, unless authorized to do so by their supervisor or the head of the office under special temporary circumstances. Employees in transit as a result of a change in duty station, or on temporary detail, or temporarily assigned to a remote field location, may request the use of an office address until their situations are stabilized. Employees should be discouraged from using their office address for delivery of savings bonds, salary checks, and per diem checks.

e Unsolicited Commercial Mail. Unsolicited commercial mail, whether or not program related, i.e., advertisements, requests for contributions, soliciting sales or subscriptions, training material and flyers, adequately addressed for each delivery, may be forwarded to the appropriate program office. Inadequately addressed unsolicited commercial mail will be returned to the USPS as undeliverable.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

a Mail and Reproduction Management Division, Office of Operations, will:

- (1) Provide direction, leadership and policy for Departmental Mail Services.
- (2) Promulgate Departmental policies, standards, techniques and procedures and represent the Department in the area of mail management.
- (3) Provide liaison with USPS and GSA to assure adherence to their rules and reimbursement for postal services.
- (4) Review USDA mail practices and procedures to assure that the most economical and efficient mail services are used.
- (5) Provide training assistance in mail management and mail services operations.

b Department Agencies and Staff Offices will:

- (1) Establish a mail management program and assure that their employees are aware of and comply with the provisions of this regulation.
- (2) Appoint a person (Mail Manager) to manage, control and coordinate matters regarding mail management and services within their organization. The name, complete mailing address and telephone number of the appointed person (or any replacement) will be sent to the Chief, MRMD.
- (3) Establish a relationship between mail management and other administrative programs that impact on mail.
- (4) Maintain rules and guidelines for the use of penalty mail privileges, assuring that the most economical classes of mail are used and the most efficient and economical means of handling mail are used.
- (5) Seek opportunities to centralize or consolidate mail services when USDA agencies are collocated in Federal Buildings or in nearby locations, in order to insure efficiency and economy to the government. These services may be currently available through a Cooperative Administrative Support Unit (CASU).
- (6) Evaluate the use of Post Office Box rentals to assure that economical and efficient systems are utilized for the receipt of incoming mail.
- (7) Review and reconcile reports of postal accountability (Official Mail Accounting System) to assure accurate billing.

c Mail Manager is responsible for:

- (1) Providing MRMD, as required, with pertinent information and reports concerning mailing practices, volumes and costs.
- (2) Coordinating with MRMD on matters regarding USPS services and reimbursements.
- (3) Keeping members of their organization informed of changes in regulations and mailing requirements as provided by MRMD.
- (4) Continually review and evaluate the use of mail products and services, within their organization,

to assure that economies are derived that benefit the organization.

(5) Assuring that their organization utilizes postal products and services that are efficient and economical.

d USDA Mailrooms will:

(1) Review outgoing mail to assure that it is properly prepared and conforms to standards specified in the IMM and Eligibility Module in the DMM, and other appropriate sections.

(2) Inform mailers of preparation discrepancies and of alternatives that can reduce the postage cost of mailings.

(3) Obtain and refer to current postal publications appropriate to their mailing operations.

(4) Deliver all mail which is adequately addressed to the appropriate mail stop within 4-6 hours of delivery. All mail which is inadequately addressed will be returned to the USPS as undeliverable.

7 REFERENCES

Basic laws and regulations applicable to official mail are:

a Title 39, USC, Chapter 32, which provides for the use of Penalty mail by executive agencies.

b Title 18, USC, Section 1719, "Franking Privilege," which provides penalties for the misuse of Government mail.

c FIRMR 201-45-107, establishes and defines the mail management function in Government agencies.

d Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), USPS, which provides regulations for domestic mail matter entering the USPS system.

e International Mail Manual (IMM), USPS, which provides guidance for preparation and postage costs for international mail.

8 MAIL OPTIONS AND USER RESPONSIBILITIES

a GSA is authorized to negotiate a Governmentwide contract that will provide transportation services. This includes Domestic Express Next Business Day Small Package Delivery, Domestic Express Second Business Day and Domestic Third Business Day Small Package Delivery services. Participation, within the limitations of these

contracts, is mandatory Departmentwide. Since USDA is a mandatory user of these contracts, your agency may not enter into independent contracts or other transportation agreements for these service(s). Use of these services requires establishing an account through agency procurement procedures.

b To ensure timely receipt and economy, select the class of mail and special service on the basis of the priority of the material being mailed. The agency Mail Manager will consult MRMD, when there are questions as to the appropriate class or service to be used. FOR EACH MAILING, IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ORIGINATOR TO IDENTIFY THE CLASS AND SPECIAL SERVICE DESIRED.

c All official outbound postal mail must be typed, using USPS standardized address format (Appendices A&B). Outbound mail generated by headquarter offices that is not typed, will not be accepted for processing by the Central Mail Unit (CMU). The USPS offers incentives for quality addresses. Typed mail is readable by optical character readers. Therefore, typed mail will receive expeditious handling and the potential for discounted postage rates.

d Official mail must be separated according to the class of mail and special service requested before it is presented to the post office.

9 INTERNAL MAIL SERVICE

a Authorized Use of Internal Mail Services. Internal mail services are limited to official mail. Personal mail, intended for internal or external delivery, will not be picked up or delivered by Government or contractor employees since it would impede Government efficiency and economy (see Title 43 CFR 20.735-6(b) (iii)).

b Establishing Route Stops. Routes and stops are to be established and maintained by agencies. Action offices will notify the mail unit regarding changes in personnel receiving mail at respective mail drops.

c Scheduling Runs. Internal mail service runs should be scheduled to coincide with USPS delivery and pick up and with as much frequency needed to prevent a buildup of mail at any one location.

d Published Schedules. Internal service schedules are to be published and circulated to mail originators. Schedules will include times of USPS deliveries, interoffice pickup and delivery, and a cutoff time to receive mail to be processed for the last daily USPS mailing.

e Enroute Sorting. Forward sorting during an internal mail run will expedite delivery to offices on the same run if the volume of mail is not too great. Large volumes of mail to be forward sorted should be returned to the mail unit to eliminate delays to the balance of the route and disrupt the published schedule.

f Interoffice Mail. Mail between agencies/staff offices within the Department must clearly identify the intended recipient by name, agency and mail stop to ensure delivery without delay.

10 INCOMING MAIL

a Official Mail. Mail directed to officials or employees of the Department at their office address will be delivered to that office when such mail is claimed both by the official or employee and by the office. This also applies to mail addressed in this manner to former officials or employees of the Department. Such mail will be delivered to the appropriate program office for action.

b Routing. In order to speed the processing of incoming mail, the guidelines below should be followed.

(1) Route adequately addressed mail directly to the action office without opening the envelope unless instructions have been issued to open specific categories.

(2) Write routing directions on envelopes that have been opened rather than on a routing form and attach the envelope to the correspondence.

(3) Use office organizational and/or mail stop codes rather than the complete office title. Room numbers are to be used where they are required to make delivery.

(4) Limit date/time stamping to classes of mail for which date/time stamping protects the interest of the Government, its employees and/or the public.

(5) Maintain an up-to-date routing guide to assist in accurate routing, and keep it current on organizational, functional, and personnel changes.

c Sorting. Incoming mail will be sorted to provide for minimum essential handling between the time it is received until the time it reaches the action office. A maximum of three sorts to achieve final delivery should be adequate.

d Special Handling. Special instructions should be provided to each mail station processing mail requiring special handling. The following items of mail require special handling: Registered mail, certified mail with return receipt, or insured parcel post requires an authorized signature to prove receipt.

e Postage Due Mail. The USPS will offer to deliver mail with insufficient postage.

(1) Official Mail. Payment of postage due for official mail will be made by currently dated meter strips or penalty mail stamps, in the exact amount of the postage due, or in cash from an imprest fund.

(2) Public Mail. Each agency is to establish a policy to accept or refuse postage due mail received from the public.

11 OUTGOING MAIL

a Outgoing mail standards include the selection of the most cost-effective mail service by the originator, to facilitate transmission of official mail, use of appropriate envelope specifications, and direct accountability methods.

b Electronic Mail Service. Electronic Mail will be used for official business when it can be demonstrated that its use is cost-effective and will increase efficiency.

c Authorized Use of Official Mail. Official mail may only be used for mailing articles, documents and packages which are required to conduct Government business.

d Unauthorized Use of Official Mail. Mail such as personal letters, chain letters, Christmas cards, job resumes and applications, Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests and appeals, complaints, grievances, and all similar materials which do not relate exclusively to the business of the Government may not be sent as penalty or postage and fees paid mail. Federal employees and individuals outside the Government are prohibited by law and regulations from using penalty mail for private use. Anyone found using penalty mail for unofficial purposes may be fined up to \$300. Federal employees are also subject to disciplinary action.

e Quasi-Official Mail. Any agency or office head may authorize the use of official mail services (not official postage) for community or government employee-related activities to be conducted under their auspices. The examples that follow are some activities that may be included.

- Government employee retirement functions.
- Agency/office sponsored sporting or recreation events.
- Agency/office sponsored special events.
- Red Cross blood bank appeals.
- State or local government sponsored activities.

f Return Address and Penalty Clause

- (1) A complete return address must be indicated on outgoing official mail. The upper left corner of official mail shall contain the Departmental return address and identify the agency or staff office (stop code) of origin identified as the ZIP+4.
- (2) The statement "Official Business," shall appear immediately below the return address of all official mail.
- (3) Official mail of designated State Extension Directors must bear in the upper left corner the name of the agriculture college and the name of the post office where the mail is to be accepted, followed by the name and title of the designated officer and the words "Cooperative Agriculture Extension Work-Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914". The preprinted words "Official Business, Penalty for Private Use \$300" must appear below this statement. The penalty statement must not be handwritten or typewritten.
- (4) Mailings by cooperative extension agents must be prepared in accordance with the provisions of DMM.

12 ENVELOPE STANDARDS/SPECIFICATIONS

Envelope standardization is essential to meet the requirements established by the USPS, GSA and the Government Printing Office. All envelopes will be prepared for mailing in a manner that will accommodate the high speed technology currently in use by the USPS.

a Standards

- (1) Except for USPS required items and appropriate slogans that can be included on ad plates for metered mail, no other printed, stamped, or affixed markings or design shall be placed on official envelopes or on the front of official postcards without the approval of the Departmental Senior Information Resource Management official. Requests for markings or design additions will be submitted to the Departmental Mail Manager, OO-MRMD, and will include a determination, in each instance, that use of a given marking or design will either:
 - (a) reduce costs;
 - (b) expedite mail delivery or handling;

(c) aid in the delivery of services to the public; or

(d) promote a program or activity having major national impact.

(2) Except for self-mailers, no printing is permitted on the inside of envelopes.

(3) Envelopes dispatched will use the most economical service consistent with delivery needs and must meet USPS requirements.

(4) The smallest standard size envelope available, that will accommodate the material to be sent, will be used. The USPS levies extra charges on larger size envelopes.

(5) Addresses will include, at a minimum, the five digit Zip Code and, when available, Zip+4 Code.

(6) Addresses will be typed, clear, correct, and properly placed on all envelopes.

(7) Addresses will be completely visible through window envelopes.

(8) Letter size window envelopes will be used to the maximum extend possible, except for mailing material that:

(a) contains national security information;

(b) is highly confidential to the Department or the addressee;

(c) contains material that is to be registered; or

(d) is sent to high level officials in Government or the private sector.

b Specifications.

(1) Letter envelope - Letter size envelopes are rectangle in shape with minimum dimensions of 5 inches in length, 3.5 inches in height and .007 inches in thickness and maximum dimensions of 11.5 inches in length, 5.5 inches in height and .010 inches in thickness. The standard letter size envelopes used Departmentwide is white, approximately 9.25 by 4.25

inches with black printing. Letter envelopes are used for one to five pages of correspondence that can be folded to .25 inch maximum thickness.

(2) Flat envelopes - Flat envelopes are rectangular in shape and exceed one or more of the maximum dimensions for letter size envelopes but do not exceed 15 inches in length, 12 inches in height, or .75 inches in thickness. Flat envelopes will be used for communications that cannot be folded or, if folded, will exceed the .25 inch maximum width permitted for letter size envelopes. All new envelopes should be reviewed by the Departmental Mail Manager for format and USPS requirements prior to printing. The standard flat envelopes used Departmentwide are:

(a) Brown 12 by 9.5 inches

(b) Brown 15 by 10 inches

(3) Batch mailing - When several pieces of mail (at least six pieces) are sent to the same address, the mail should be consolidated into a single flat envelope for mailing.

(4) Mail pouches - When there is a recurring high volume of mail between two offices and the volume is too great for batch mailing, mail pouches should be considered as a cost effective alternate to individual mailings.

(5) Labels - Imprinted labels are to be used on imprinted flat envelopes and parcels too large to be mailed in flat envelopes.

(6) Postcards - In order to qualify for the postcard rate, cards will be no smaller than 3.5 by 5.5 inches and, with the exception to direct accountability, will be imprinted with the same markings and indicia required for envelopes. Postcards that exceed the above measurements will be charged the full First-Class rate by the USPS.

Signed By:

IRA HOBBS

APPENDIX A

STANDARD ADDRESS ABBREVIATIONS

TWO-LETTER STATE AND POSSESSION ABBREVIATIONS

Alabama	AL
Alaska	AK
Arizona	AZ
Arkansas	AR
American Samoa	AS
California	CA
Colorado	CO
Connecticut	CT
Delaware	DE
District of	
Columbia	DC
Federal State --	
of Micronesia	FM
Florida	FL
Georgia	GA
Guam	GU
Hawaii	HI
Idaho	ID
Illinois	IL
Indiana	IN
Iowa	IA
Kansas	KS

Kentucky	KY
Louisiana	LA
Maine	ME
Marshall --	
Islands	MH
Maryland	MD
Massachusetts	MA
Michigan	MI
Minnesota	MN
Mississippi	MS
Missouri	MO
Montana	MT
Nebraska	NE
Nevada	NV
New Hampshire	NH
New Jersey	NJ
New Mexico	NM
New York	NY
North Carolina	NC
North Dakota	ND
Northern --	
Mariana Island	MP
Ohio	OH
Oklahoma	OK
Oregon	OR

Palau		PW
Pennsylvania	PA	
Puerto Rico		PR
Rhode Island	RI	
South Carolina	SC	
South Dakota	SD	
Tennessee		TN
Texas		TX
Utah		UT
Vermont	VT	
Virginia	VA	
Virgin Island	VI	
Washington		WA
West Virginia	WV	
Wisconsin		WI
Wyoming		WY

DIRECTIONAL

ABBREVIATION

North		N
East		E
South		S
Northeast		NE
Southeast		SE
Northwest		NW
Southwest		SW

SECONDARY ADDRESS UNIT INDICATORS

Apartment APT

Building BLDG

Floor FL

Suite STE

Room RM

Department DEPT

ABBREVIATIONS FOR STREET DESIGNATORS (STREET SUFFIXES)

Alley	ALY	Estates	EST	Lakes	LKS	Ridge	RDG
Annex	ANX	Expressway	EXPY	Landing	LNDG	River	RIV
Arcade	ARC	Extension	EXT	Lane	LN	Road	RD
Avenue	AVE	Fall	FALL	Light	LGT	Row	ROW
Bayou	YU	Falls	FLS	Loaf	LF	Run	RUN
Beach	BCH	Ferry	FRY	Locks	LCKS	Shoal	SHL
Bend	BND	Field	FLD	Lodge	LDG	Shoals	SHLS
Bluff	BLF	Fields	FLDS	Loop	LOOP	Shore	SHR
Bottom	BTM	Flats	FLT	Mall	MALL	Shores	SHRS
Boulevard	BLVD	Ford	FOR	Manor	MNR	Spring	SPG
Branch	BR	Forest	FRST	Meadows	MDWS	Springs	SPGS
Bridge	BRG	Forge	FGR	Mill	ML	Spur	SPUR
Brook	BRK	Fork	FRK	Mills	MLS	Square	SQ
Burg	BG	Forks	FRKS	Mission	MSN	Station	STA
Bypass	BYP	Fort	FT	Mount	MT	Stravenue	STRA

Camp	CP	Freeway	FWY	Mountain	MTN	Stream	STRM		
Canyon	CYN	Gardens	GDNS	Neck	NCK	Street	ST		
Cape	CPE	Gateway	GTWY	Orchard	ORCH	Summitt	SMT		
Causeway	CSWY	Glen		GLN	Oval	OVVAL	Terrace	TER	
Center	CTR	Green	GN	Park	PARK	Trace		TRCE	
Circle	CIR	Grove	GRV	Parkway	PKY	Track		TRAK	
Cliffs	CLFS	Harbor	HBR	Pass	PASS	Trail		TRL	
Club	CLB	Haven		HVN	Path	PATH	Trailer	TRLR	
Corner	COR	Heights	HTS	Pike	PIKE	Tunnel	TUNL		
Corners	CORS	Highway	HWY	Pines	PNES	Turnpike		TPKE	
Course	CRSE	Hill	HL	Place	PL	Union		UN	
Court	CT	Hills		HLS	Plain	PLN	Valley	VLY	
Courts	CTS	Hollow	HOLW	Plains	PLNS	Viaduct	VIA		
Cove	CV	Inlet		INLT	Plaza	PLZ	View	VW	
Creek	CRK	Island	IS	Point	PT	Village	VLG		
Crescent	CRES	Islands	ISS	Port	PRT	Ville	VL		
Crossing	XING	Isle	ISLE	Prairie	PR	Vista	VIS		
Dale	DL	Junction	JCT	Radial	RADL	Walk	WALK		
Dam	1	DM	Key	CY	Ranch	RNCH	Way	WAY	
Divide	DV	Knolls	KNLS	Rapids	RPDS	Wells	WLS		
Drive	DR	Lake		LK	Rest	RST			

END