

# Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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**Series:** Information Resources Management

**Part 382:** Records Operations

**Chapter 2:** Mail Management

**Originating Office:** Office of Management Analysis

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This chapter has been given a new release number.* No text changes were made.
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## 382 DM 2

**2.1 Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to establish basic policies, standards, and responsibilities for the effective, economical, and efficient handling of mail throughout the Department.

**2.2 Definitions.** For the purpose of this chapter:

A. Mail is defined as items of communication in human-readable form, usually in hard copy, often transmitted in and out of Department organizations by means of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), private carrier, or between bureaus/offices by internal mail service. This definition applies to incoming, outgoing, and internal mail, and generally covers letters, memorandums, postcards, documents, publications, packages, electronic transmissions (see 385 DM 7), and other communications received for distribution or dispatch.

B. Mail Management embodies the concepts and practices of management techniques applied to mail in order to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Mail management includes policies, standards and responsibilities encompassing mail preparation and handling, mail movement, mail operations staff and facilities, operational relations with the USPS and the monitoring and evaluation of mail operations for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and directives.

C. Penalty Mail is the official mail of agencies of the United States Government containing matters relating exclusively to the business of each agency. Additional information on the use of penalty mail can be found in the Domestic Mail Manual, Section 137.2.

D. Private Express Statutes are the laws by which Congress has generally conferred upon the Postal Service the exclusive right to carry letters for others over post routes. Private Express Statutes are set forth in 18 U.S.C. 1693-1699 and 39 U.S.C. 601-606. Regulations pertaining to the Private Express Statutes are in 39 CFR 310 and 320, and the Domestic Mail Manual, Section 112.

2.3 **Objectives.** The overall objectives of mail management are:

- A. Safe, rapid and accurate delivery of official mail at minimum cost.
- B. Provide internal controls for processing public funds and negotiable instruments transported by mail (see 340 DM 1).
- C. Compliance with USPS rules and regulations as prescribed in the USPS Domestic Mail Manual and mail management requirements established by the General Services Administration (GSA) (see Federal Information Resources Management Regulations, 41 CFR 201-45.107).

2.4 **Policy.** It is the policy of the Department to maintain an effective, efficient, and economical mail management program by:

- A. Prohibiting the use of Departmental mail services for personal use; including receipt of incoming, dispatch of outgoing, and internal distribution services.
- B. Maintaining reliable and effective internal mail handling, pickup and delivery service.
- C. Providing technical assistance to mail originators.
- D. Keeping abreast of USPS and GSA regulations, postal services and fees, and promulgating information to mail originators for information and application.
- E. Utilizing the best available mail service for reliable transmission at the lowest cost.

2.5 **Responsibilities.**

A. Office of Management Analysis is responsible for developing and coordinating Departmental mail management policies and standards, and evaluating mail management as part of the Departmental records management program.

B. Bureaus are responsible for:

- (1) Establishing and maintaining an effective mail management and operations program.
- (2) Compliance with and implementation of USPS and GSA regulations and Department policies and standards.
- (3) Issuing up-to-date guidance for the administration of mail management and operations.
- (4) Evaluating and improving mail operations and practices and reducing costs in

their respective organizations.

(5) Coordinating mail service activities and negotiating agreements with the USPS.

(6) Issuing information about payments, rates, fees, and postage cost differences to their subordinate offices.

C. Office of Administrative Services is responsible for operating the Departmental consolidated mailroom in the Main Interior Complex, Washington, D.C., in addition to the responsibilities contained in paragraph 2.5B above as they relate to the Office of the Secretary and Other Departmental Offices.

D. Mail Operations Supervisors are responsible for:

(1) Ensuring rapid and accurate movement of incoming, internal, and outgoing mail.

(2) Applying and monitoring the selection of class and service for outgoing mail.

(3) Providing advice and assistance to mail originators.

(4) Coordinating mail operations with local USPS facilities.

E. Mail Originators are responsible for:

(1) Adherence to official USPS and GSA regulations, and Department and bureau policies and procedures.

(2) Cooperation with mail operations personnel in the preparation and processing of mail.

## **2.6 Mail Operations Handbook.**

A. The Mail Operations Handbook (382 DM 2, a Departmental Manual Handbook) contains detailed instructions on establishing mail facilities and provides procedural guidelines for official mail use and handling. Copies are available through the normal source of supply used to obtain Departmental Manual releases.

B. The Departmental Mail Operations Handbook, including amendments and revisions thereto, is issued by the Director, Office of Management Analysis.

## **2.7 Standards and Practices.** The following standards and practices are required of the bureaus and the Office of Administrative Services.

A. Issue complete instructions and guidance on:

(1) mail operations, hours, services and procedures concerning receipt, delivery, preparation, collection and dispatch of mail;

(2) prohibiting the use of bureau/office mail services for personal mail (incoming, outgoing and internal);

(3) use of telegrams, mailgrams, facsimile, and prompt processing of electronically transmitted messages;

(4) use of USPS and private carrier special services;

(5) safeguarding mail which contains proprietary information, information protected from disclosure by the Privacy Act, security classified information (see 442 DM 9), or includes payments or negotiables (see 331 DM 1 and 2); and

(6) provide advice, assistance and consultation to mail originators, and provide adequate reference sources; i.e., National Zip Code Directory and other USPS and GSA manuals, handbooks, pamphlets and publications.

B. Develop and use statistical and cost information of mail operations through the following methods, when appropriate.

(1) Use test mailings periodically to measure mail transit time.

(2) Take periodic samples by class type and volume of incoming and outgoing mail.

(3) Develop information on trends, peak loads, costs or exceptions for use in making determinations on adequacy of service and staffing.

(4) Use the information obtained to evaluate the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of mail operations.

C. Provide adequate supervision and trained mail staff to ensure effective and efficient mail management and operations.

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