

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Boxes

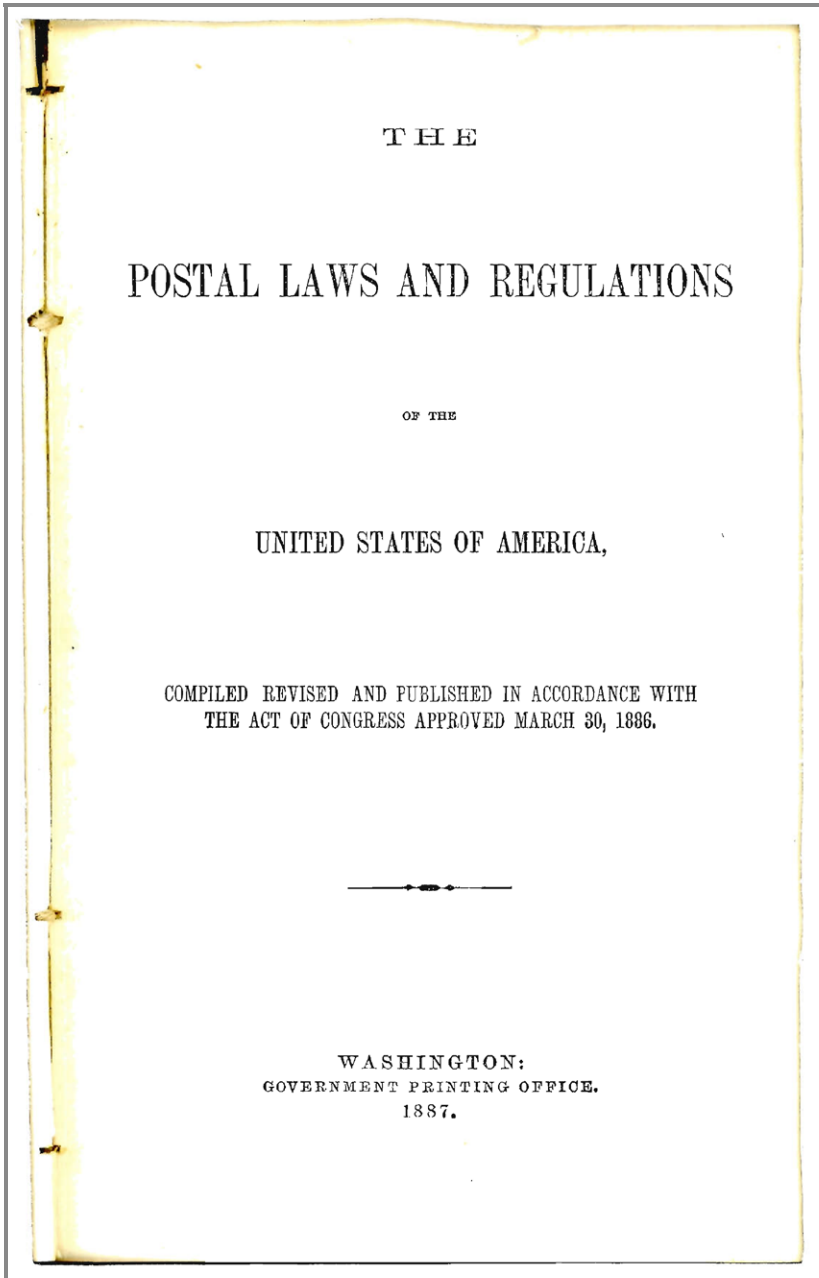


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moneys, which must at all times be kept separate from the postmaster's private funds.

As to the other supplies of an office, see sections 467-473.

LETTER BOXES.

Sec. 489. How Provided.—Boxes in post-offices are provided by the following methods:

1. In Government buildings by the Treasury Department.
2. At other first and second class post-offices, the lessor, by agreement in his lease, sometimes provides them.
3. Individuals may provide lock boxes or drawers for their own use, under the next section.
4. In all other cases the necessary boxes must be furnished and kept in repair by the postmaster.

Sec. 490. Lock Boxes, &c., for Box Holders at their Expense.—Postmasters may allow box holders who desire to do so to provide lock boxes or drawers for their own use, at their own expense, which lock boxes or drawers, upon their erection in any post-office, shall become the property of the United States, and be subject to the direction and control of the Post-Office Department, and shall pay a rental at least equal to that of other boxes in the same office, or, if there be no other boxes in such office, of boxes in other offices of the same class, which rental shall be accounted for as other box rents. (R. S., § 4052.) (See section 149.)

Sec. 491. Rent of Boxes to be Prepaid.—No box at any post-office shall be assigned to the use of any person until the rent thereof has been paid for at least one-quarter in advance, for which the postmaster shall give a receipt. (R. S., § 3901.)

The postmaster has no right to assign any person a box free of rent. He must not rent a box for a longer term than three months; and where the application is made during a quarter, he should rent the box for the remainder of that quarter, charging the pro rata amount for the time remaining. This rule is necessary to the quarterly settlement of his accounts required by law. When persons holding boxes refuse to pay their box rent, their mail should be put in the general delivery. Strict compliance with this regulation is required; and the postmaster's own interest will be subserved by adhering to it, as he is chargeable with all uncollected box rents (section 149); and the collecting of rents for a longer period in advance than herein authorized will work confusion in his accounts and delay their settlement.

Sec. 492. Use of Boxes.—A person renting a box may have the mail addressed to members of his family, including visitors, and that addressed to his care or to the number of his box for persons who wish

him temporarily to take charge of it, placed in such box. Boarders at a hotel or boarding house are not considered as members of the family. The employés of a firm or corporation may, by consent of their employers, have their mail put in the company's box; but if the box will not contain all the mail, the box holder must be notified that he may rent another box. Mail matter addressed to students in a college or seminary, or the inmates of any public institution, may, when such is the rule or usage of the institution, be put in the box rented by it and may be delivered to its messenger. It may be so deposited in the box and delivered at the request of the student or his parent or guardian, or of such inmate, in the absence of a rule or usage of the college or institution. With these exceptions the use of a box is restricted to one family, firm, or corporation. If a person rent boxes at two or more post-offices, his matter must be delivered by the office to which it is addressed.

A postmaster has no right to use the boxes nor the general delivery of his office for the distribution of bills or circulars relating to his own private business. But he may place official notices to the box-holders in their boxes without inclosing them in a penalty envelope. Postmasters are required to hand out mail to the renters of lock-boxes or other persons entitled to receive it when requested. There must be no discrimination in delivering mail matter only to box holders and not at the general delivery.

Sec. 493. Names of Box Holders not to be Disclosed.—Postmasters are strictly prohibited from disclosing to any person not of his office, except inspectors, the names of the persons owning or renting boxes in their post-offices.

Sec. 494. Record of Box Holders and Receipts.—Each postmaster must keep in his office, for examination of inspectors, and deliver to his successor, a list of box holders, with the number of the box assigned to each, the time during which he has used it, and for which rent is prepaid. The record of receipts which he is required to keep (see sections 240, 241, and 242,) must show the amount of moneys received for box rents, the number of the box, the period, and renter, as to each payment, respectively. If no such record be turned over to him, the incoming postmaster will require claimants of boxes to produce receipts or other satisfactory evidence of prepayment of rent, and allow the use of the boxes for the residue of the prepaid term.

Sec. 495. Key Deposits.—At post-offices in public buildings under the control of the Treasury Department and in buildings leased by the Government, postmasters are required to exact in advance a deposit of fifty cents for each key delivered to the renter of a lock-box or drawer, as se-