

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Commercial papers



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Sec. 392. Consuls to pay Foreign Postage in certain Cases.—The Postmaster-General or the Secretary of State is hereby authorized to empower the consuls of the United States to pay the foreign postage on such letters destined for the United States as may be detained at the ports of foreign countries for the non-payment of postage, which postage shall be by the consul marked as paid by him, and the amount thereof shall be collected in the United States as other postage, on the delivery of the letters, and repaid to said consul, or credited on his account at the State Department. (R. S., 4014.)

MAILS WITH THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION COUNTRIES.

Sec. 393. Classification of Mail Matter.—Mail matter within the Universal Postal Union is classified as follows :

1. Letters.
2. Postal cards, and postal cards with paid reply.
3. Commercial papers.
4. Printed matter of every kind.
5. Samples of merchandise.

Sec. 394. Postal Cards cannot exceed $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length and $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in width. They must be mailed without cover. On the address side must be nothing but the address, except that the sender may place on that side his name and address by means of a stamp, a stamp facsimile of his signature, or by any other typographical process. Nothing must be joined or attached to the card.

Postal cards with paid reply are in two parts; one must bear the printed label "Postal card with paid reply," the other "Reply postal card," and be folded together, but not in any manner stuck or closed against inspection. On the address side of the reply part the sender may write his name and address; but return will be made only to an address in the country where it originated.

Postal cards issued by private persons are not admissible to international mails except when entirely in print and properly stamped at foreign rates of postage.

Domestic postal cards may be used by the addition of a one-cent stamp.

Sec. 395. Commercial Papers include all instruments or documents, written or drawn wholly or partly by hand, which have not the character of *an actual and personal correspondence*, such as papers of legal procedure, deeds of all kinds drawn up by public functionaries, way bills or bills of lading, invoices, the various documents of insurance companies, copies or extracts of deeds under private seal written on

stamped or unstamped paper, scores or sheets of manuscript music, manuscripts of works or of newspapers forwarded separately, &c.

They must be mailed under band, so as to be open to examination, or in an open envelope, and packets of such papers cannot exceed four pounds six ounces in weight, nor eighteen inches in length, breadth, or thickness.

Sec. 396. Printed Matter includes newspapers and periodical works, books stitched or bound, pamphlets, sheets of music, visiting cards, address cards, proofs of printing, with or without the manuscripts relating thereto, papers with raised points for the use of the blind, engravings, photographs, pictures, drawings, plans, geographical maps, catalogues, prospectuses, announcements, and notices of various kinds, whether printed, engraved, lithographed, or autographed, and, in general, all impressions or reproductions obtained upon paper, parchment, or cardboard by means of printing, engraving, lithographing, and autographing, or any other mechanical process easy to recognize, except the copying press.

Such matter, if made by the mechanical processes called chromography, polygraphy, hectography, papyrography, velocigraphy, &c., must, to be mailable, be presented for mailing at the post-office windows, and in the minimum number of twenty perfectly identical copies.

Packets of printed matter must not exceed four pounds six ounces in weight, nor eighteen inches in length, breadth, or thickness; except that *rolls* of printed matter are transmissible which may be placed within a cubic box of eighteen inches in dimensions, measuring in length and size respectively as follows:

- Of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length.
- Of 1 inch in diameter, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.
- Of 2 inches in diameter, 27 inches in length.
- Of 3 inches in diameter, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.
- Of 4 inches in diameter, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.
- Of 5 inches in diameter, 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.
- Of 6 inches in diameter, 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length.

They must either be placed under band, upon a roller, between boards, in a case open at one side or at both ends, or in an unclosed envelope, or simply folded in such a manner as not to conceal the nature of the packet, or, lastly, tied by a string easy to unfasten, so that they may be readily and thoroughly examined by postmasters.

Address cards, and all printed matter presenting the form and consistency of an unfolded card, may be mailed without band, envelope, fastening, or band. Cards bearing the title "Postal Card" are not admitted at the rate for printed matter.

Sec. 397. Permissible Additions.—No packet of commercial papers or