

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Expenditures

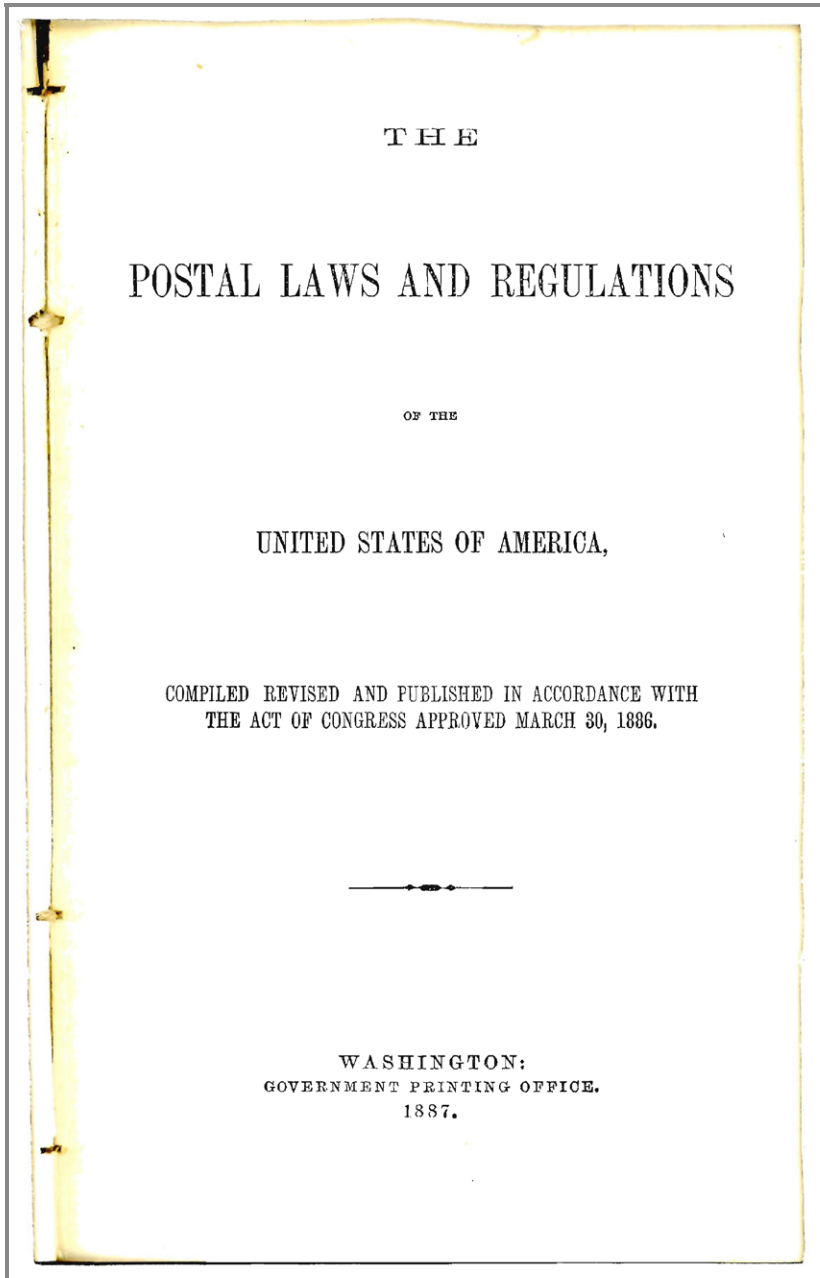


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REVENUES IN THE TREASURY.

Sec. 209. Postal Revenues to be Paid into Treasury.—The postal revenues and all debts due the Post-Office Department shall, when collected, be paid into the Treasury of the United States, under the direction of the Postmaster-General; and the Treasurer, assistant treasurer, or designated depository receiving such payment, shall give the depositor duplicate receipts therefor. (R. S., § 407.)

Sec. 210. Transfer of Postal Deposits.—The Postmaster-General may transfer money belonging to the postal service between the Treasurer, assistant treasurers, and designated depositories, at his discretion, and as the safety of the public money and the convenience of the service may require. (R. S., § 3641.)

NOTE.—TRANSFER FROM TREASURY TO MONEY-ORDER FUNDS.—Authority is conferred on the Postmaster-General to transfer, by warrant countersigned by the Auditor, out of the postal revenues to any money-order postmaster, such sum as may be necessary above his current revenues to pay money orders drawn on him, by section 1369.

CHAPTER FIVE.

OF EXPENDITURES.

Sec. 211. The System of Disbursements.—All expenditures for the maintenance of the postal service are made from the revenues derived as stated in section one hundred and forty-eight; but no disbursement or retention of any of these revenues is permissible until an appropriation thereof shall have been made by the Congress, nor in excess of the amounts appropriated for the respective purposes prescribed in the acts of appropriation. When appropriated, disbursement of the money is made by three methods:

1. By warrants of the Department drawn upon the Treasurer of the United States, countersigned by the Sixth Auditor.

2. By the retention by postmasters, out of their receipts, of their lawful salaries, and of allowances made to them by order of the Department for the maintenance and service of their offices.

3. By payments by certain postmasters, designated as disbursing officers, of such sums as they may be ordered by the Department to pay to its creditors and postal employés.

All disbursements are audited and the accounts thereof kept by the Sixth Auditor from the quarterly postal accounts of postmasters and from reports to him by the Department, and charged to the proper appropriation therefor.

Sec. 212. No Fees to Postal Employés.—No person employed in the postal service shall receive any fees or perquisites on account of the duties to be performed by virtue of his appointment. (R. S., § 3858.)

Sec. 213. Estimates for the Postal Service.—The Postmaster-General shall submit to Congress at each annual session an estimate of the amount that will be required for the ensuing fiscal year, under each of the following heads :

- First. Transportation of the mails.
- Second. Compensation of postmasters.
- Third. Compensation of clerks in post-offices.
- Fourth. Compensation of letter carriers.
- Fifth. Compensation of blank agents and assistants.
- Sixth. Mail depredations and special agents.
- Seventh. Postage stamps and envelopes.
- Eighth. Ship, steamboat, and way letters.
- Ninth. Dead letters.
- Tenth. Mail bags.
- Eleventh. Mail locks, keys, and stamps.
- Twelfth. Wrapping paper.
- Thirteenth. Office furniture.
- Fourteenth. Advertising.
- Fifteenth. Balances to foreign countries.
- Sixteenth. Rent, light, and fuel for post-offices.
- Seventeenth. Stationery.
- Eighteenth. Miscellaneous.

Such estimates shall show the sums paid under each head, and the names of the persons to whom payments are made out of the miscellaneous fund ; but the names of persons employed in detecting depredations on the mail, and of other confidential agents, need not be disclosed. (R. S., § 3668.)

Provided, That hereafter, in making his estimates for Railway Mail Service, the Postmaster-General shall separate the estimate for postal-car service from the general estimates ; and in case any increase or diminution of service by postal cars shall be made by him, the reasons therefor shall be given in his annual report next succeeding such increase or diminution. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 1, 20 Stats., 357.)

For the time and manner of submitting estimates and general rules governing them, see sections 105 to 110.

Sec. 214. Appropriations and Limitations.—The money required for the postal service in each year shall be appropriated by law out of the revenues of the service. (R. S., § 4054.)

All sums appropriated for the various branches of expenditure in

the public service shall be applied solely to the objects for which they are respectively made, and for no others. (R. S., § 3678.)

For limitation of expenditures to amount appropriated, see section 87.

Sec. 215. Limitation on Unexpended Balances.—All balances of appropriations contained in the annual appropriation bills and made specifically for the service of any fiscal year, and remaining unexpended at the expiration of such fiscal year, shall only be applied to the payment of expenses properly incurred during that year, or to the fulfillment of contracts properly made within that year; and balances not needed for such purposes shall be carried to the surplus fund. This section, however, shall not apply to appropriations known as permanent or indefinite appropriations. (R. S., § 3690.)

Sec. 216. Unexpended Balances Covered into the Treasury.—That from and after the first day of July, eighteen hundred and seventy-four, and of each year thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall cause all unexpended balances of appropriations which shall have remained upon the books of the Treasury for two fiscal years to be carried to the surplus fund and covered into the Treasury: [* * * exceptions not affecting this Department or the postal service;] and the Secretary of the Treasury shall, at the beginning of each session, report to Congress, with his annual estimates, any balances of appropriations for specific objects affected by this section that may need to be reappropriated. (Act of June 20, 1874, § 5, 18 Stats., 110.)

That so much of section five of the act approved June twentieth, eighteen hundred and seventy-four, as directs the Secretary of the Treasury at the beginning of each session to report to Congress with his annual estimates any balances of appropriations for specific objects affected by said section that may need to be reappropriated, be, and hereby is, repealed. And it shall be the duty of the several accounting officers of the Treasury to continue to receive, examine, and consider the justice and validity of all claims under appropriations the balances of which have been exhausted or carried to the surplus fund under the provisions of said section that may be brought before them within a period of five years. And the Secretary of the Treasury shall report the amount due each claimant, at the commencement of each session, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall lay the same before Congress for consideration: *Provided*, That nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize the re-examination and payment of any claim or account which has been once examined and rejected, unless reopened in accordance with existing law. (Act of June 14, 1878, § 4, 20 Stats., 130.)

PAYMENTS FROM THE TREASURY.

Sec. 217. Warrants, how Drawn.—Payments of money out of the Treasury on account of the postal service shall be in pursuance of appropriations made by law, by warrants of the Postmaster-General, registered and countersigned by the Auditor for the Post-Office Department, and expressing on their face the appropriation to which they should be charged. (R. S., § 3674.)

Sec. 218. Third Assistant Postmaster-General may sign Warrants.—That the Postmaster-General may, by appointment under his hand and official seal, delegate to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General authority to sign in his stead all warrants, registered and countersigned by the Auditor of the Treasury for the Post-Office Department, for the payment of money from the public Treasury on account of the postal service. (Act of February 25, 1882, 22 Stats., 4.) That warrants signed by the said Third Assistant Postmaster-General shall be in all cases of the same validity as if they had been signed by the Postmaster-General himself. (Id., 2.)

Sec. 219. Payments for Debts only; Advances.—All payments on account of the postal service shall be made to persons to whom the same shall be certified to be due by the Sixth Auditor; but advances of necessary sums to defray expenses may be made by the Postmaster-General to agents employed to investigate mail depredations, examine post routes and offices, and on other like services, to be charged to them by the Auditor, and to be accounted for in the settlement of their accounts. (R. S., § 4055.)

See section 72.

Sec. 220. Treasury Drafts, how Employed.—All moneys paid into the Treasury of the United States shall be subject to the draft of the Treasurer. And for the purpose of payments on the public account the Treasurer is authorized to draw upon any of the depositaries, as he may think most conducive to the public interest and to the convenience of the public creditors. Each depositary so drawn upon shall make returns to the Treasury and Post-Office Departments of all moneys received and paid by him, at such times and in such forms as shall be directed by the Secretary of the Treasury or the Postmaster-General. (R. S., § 3644.)

DEDUCTIONS BY POSTMASTERS.

Sec. 221. What Postmasters may Retain.—The salary of a postmaster, and such other expenses of the postal service authorized by law as may be incurred by him, and for which appropriations have been made, may be

deducted out of the receipts of his office, under the direction of the Postmaster-General. (R. S., § 3861.) No postmaster shall, under any pretense whatever, have, receive, or retain for himself, in the aggregate, more than the amount of his salary and his commission on the money-order business as hereinafter provided. (R. S., § 3857.)

No commission on money-order business being now allowed the postmaster for himself at a Presidential office, nothing can be retained beyond his fixed salary, except for allowances by the Department.

Sec. 222. Vouchers for Deduction to be sent to the Auditor.—Vouchers for all deductions made by a postmaster out of the receipts of his office, on account of the expenses of the postal service, shall be submitted for examination and settlement to the Sixth Auditor, and no such deduction shall be valid unless found to be in conformity with law. (R. S., § 3862.)

Receipts for every deduction in the exact amount paid should be taken from every clerk or other person to whom the postmaster makes payment of any sum out of the allowances made to him; but when a substitute is temporarily employed, to be paid out of the salary of an absent clerk, the receipt of the latter may embrace the sum paid his substitute as part of his salary, without particular specification.

For penalty for taking and presenting a receipt for a greater sum than actually paid, see R. S., § 5438.

Sec. 223. Deduction of Balance due Postmasters.—Postmasters to whom balances are found to be due at the end of a quarter may deduct the amount from their receipts in any subsequent quarter. Where quarterly balances are usually due the postmaster, he may arrange with the Auditor for their payment by means of transfer drafts on other postmasters.

Sec. 224. Transfer of Debts to Contractors.—The Postmaster-General may transfer debts due to the Department from postmasters and others to such contractors as have given bonds, with security, to refund any money that may come into their hands over and above the amount found due them on the settlement of their accounts; but such transfers shall only be in satisfaction of legal demands for which appropriations have been made. (R. S., § 4056.)

The practice authorized by this section is no longer pursued, contractors being directly paid by warrants.

DISBURSEMENTS BY POSTMASTERS.

Sec. 225. Postmasters as Disbursing Agents.—The Postmaster-General is authorized to designate postmasters at Presidential post-offices as disbursing officers for the payment of the salaries of the officers and

employés of the postal service concerned in the transportation of mails, or in their distribution in transit, and for such other payments as they are now authorized to make from postal revenues. (Act of May 4, 1882, 22 Stats., 54.) And the Postmaster-General is authorized to designate postmasters at money-order post-offices as disbursing officers for the payment of the salaries of officers and employés of the postal service, and for such other payments as postmasters are now authorized to make from postal revenues. (Act of July 5, 1884, 23 Stats., 156.)

Sec. 226. Postmasters Designated Accordingly.—Pursuant to the foregoing statute all Presidential and money-order postmasters are designated as disbursing officers for the payment of the salaries of such officers and employés of the Railway Mail Service, and such other sums to others, as they may be specifically directed by the Department to pay.

Sec. 227. No Allowance for Expenses of Payment, &c.—No allowance will be made to any postmaster for expenses incurred in paying over, depositing, or collecting moneys due the Department.

Sec. 228. When Disbursements to be Made.—To enable the Sixth Auditor to close the accounts of the Department quarterly, and transmit to the Postmaster-General and the Secretary of the Treasury quarterly statements of its receipts and expenditures, postmasters are required to make all authorized payments on account of the free-delivery service, railway mail service, mail-messenger, and special-delivery service, and all expenditures allowed to their respective post-offices, for a quarter just expired, before transmitting their quarterly postal accounts and vouchers to the Auditor as required in section two hundred and forty-seven. The expenditures for one quarter are not to be included in the postal account of a subsequent quarter.

TO LETTER CARRIERS.

Sec. 229. Payment of Letter Carriers.—Letter carriers are paid by the postmasters at the offices at which they serve, out of the postal funds. The names of the carriers should appear in the pay roll (Form No. 1501) in alphabetical order, surnames first, and should correspond with their signatures. Their pay commences from the date of entering upon duty after taking the oath required by section forty-three. The payments may be made monthly. In no case must a payment be made in advance, or for services not already rendered at time of payment, as such payment is expressly forbidden by law. (Section 72.)

The amount paid for each month should be entered in the appropriate column. When the service paid for is less than a month, the entry should show from and to what date the payment is made. When substitutes are employed in place of a carrier absent without pay, the

substitute should be paid the salary of the absent carrier, but the latter should sign the pay roll, and a separate receipt be taken from the substitute and accompany the pay-roll, showing the names of the carrier and substitute and the time served by the latter. Substitutes serving in the place of carriers absent with pay should sign the substitute pay roll (Form No. 1501 $\frac{1}{2}$) on which the time and the name of the carrier in whose place they serve should appear.

In making payment to the widow or heirs of a deceased carrier, where there is no administration of his estate, the postmaster should certify to the signature of the payees and to his or their relationship to the deceased carrier, and to the fact that there is no administration. If there is to be administration of the carrier's estate, payment should be withheld until the appointment of an executor or administrator, and made to him after due appointment and qualification, and he should sign the pay roll.

TO RAILWAY POSTAL CLERKS.

Sec. 230. Method of Payment.—Railway postal clerks will be paid their salaries upon authorization and instructions received from the Second Assistant Postmaster-General, as follows:

1. When a clerk is appointed for a probationary period and assigned to duty on a line, the most convenient disbursing postmaster is instructed to pay him at a designated rate per annum from the day he begins service, but no payment will be made until the postmaster has been advised that the oath of the clerk has been received by the General Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service. No payment is to be made after the expiration of six months from the date named in the order, unless the postmaster is further notified to continue the payments after such expiration.

2. Upon the permanent appointment of the clerk, authority is given the most convenient disbursing postmaster to pay him, specifying the rate.

3. Upon the transfer of a clerk from one line to another, the most convenient disbursing postmaster will be authorized to pay his salary from the date he begins service on such new line.

4. The old paying office will be notified to discontinue payment on such transfer.

5. Upon the promotion or reduction of a clerk the postmaster will be notified of the increase or reduction, and the date when such change takes effect.

6. Notice will be given of deductions from the pay, whenever imposed, to the paying postmaster and the Auditor. But see section 234.

7. When the clerk has been granted leave of absence, with or without pay for the whole or part of the time, notice is given to the postmaster accordingly.

8. The postmaster must be prepared to pay such salaries monthly within three days after the expiration of the month. If the postmaster has not sufficient funds he will give timely notice to the Sixth Auditor, by whom he will be supplied.

Sec. 231.—Record of Arrivals and Departures as Affecting Pay.—Postmasters are required to examine the record of arrivals and departures of railway postal clerks daily, when such records are kept in their offices, and report to the division superintendent at once all failures to sign the same and all cases of advance signature. When such record is kept elsewhere the division superintendent causes the record to be examined and reports made to him. When the clerk fails to sign the record the postmaster will write the words *No Signature* in the line where the name should have been signed; and the words *Advance Signature* will also be noted according to the fact. The postmaster has no discretion in reporting failures, but must promptly forward at the end of the month the record, kept in his office, with due entry therein of every failure, whatever the circumstances, duly certified, to the division superintendent for inspection. The Department, not the postmaster, decides upon the merits of the case.

Sec. 232. Absences, how Affect Pay.—When a railway postal clerk has been absent from duty more than thirty consecutive days, on account of sickness or other cause, the division superintendent will report the same to the Second Assistant Postmaster-General.

Sec. 233. Preliminary Notices to Paying Postmasters.—The division superintendent will send a preliminary notice to the paying postmaster—

1. In case of the death, resignation, removal, suspension, or change of paying office of a railway postal clerk; or

2. When a clerk has been absent from duty more than thirty consecutive days on account of sickness or other cause; and will send

3. A copy of his report of failures in all cases where the record of arrivals and departures is kept elsewhere than in the paying post-office.

Sec. 234. Partial Suspension of Pay.—When the paying postmaster has received a preliminary notice from the division superintendent, or a copy of his report of failures, or when he has forwarded the record kept in his office with failures reported for the month therein, he will withhold from the pay of the clerk a sufficient sum to cover all stoppages, fines, and forfeitures of which he has been notified. For each failure to sign the record of arrivals and departures he will withhold not to exceed one day's pay; for each failure to perform service he will

withhold an amount equal to the pay of the clerk during the time he was absent from duty, until specific instructions are received from the Second Assistant Postmaster-General.

Sec. 235. Payment of Acting Clerks and Substitutes.—An acting clerk is one employed temporarily to fill a vacancy; and no payment is to be made to an acting clerk without specific authority from the Second Assistant Postmaster-General. The receipt taken from such clerk must be signed by himself, be taken on a separate blank (Form No. 1563), and forwarded direct to the Second Assistant Postmaster-General, with the authority for making the payment noted thereon, for the necessary credit. The names of acting clerks should never be put on the regular pay roll.

A substitute is a person employed by a regular clerk to perform his duty during a temporary absence. All sums paid to a substitute must be received for by his principal.

Sec. 236. Deduction of Pay to be Noted.—The cause of every deduction of pay, and the authority for making the same must be noted on the pay roll.

Sec. 237. Keys and Records to be Turned in before Final Settlement.—On the resignation, transfer, suspension, or removal of a postal clerk, final settlement with him will be deferred until the paying postmaster has received from the proper division superintendent a certificate that all mail keys, records, and other property of the Department have been turned over to him.

CHAPTER SIX.

POSTMASTERS' ACCOUNTS AND RETURNS.

Sec. 238. The System of Accounts.—The statutes require the Auditor to close the account of the Department quarterly and transmit to the Secretary of the Treasury quarterly statements of its receipts and expenditures (section 261); and also to certify quarterly to the Postmaster-General an account of the money paid by postmasters out of the receipts of their offices, pursuant to appropriations, on account of the expenses of the postal service. (Section 267.)

All postmasters' accounts and returns of receipts and expenditures must be kept and made accordingly. They are also required to keep in their offices and deliver to their successors a record of all postage stamps, envelopes, books, blanks, and property received from their respective predecessors, or from the Department or its agents, and of all