

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Fourth-class mail

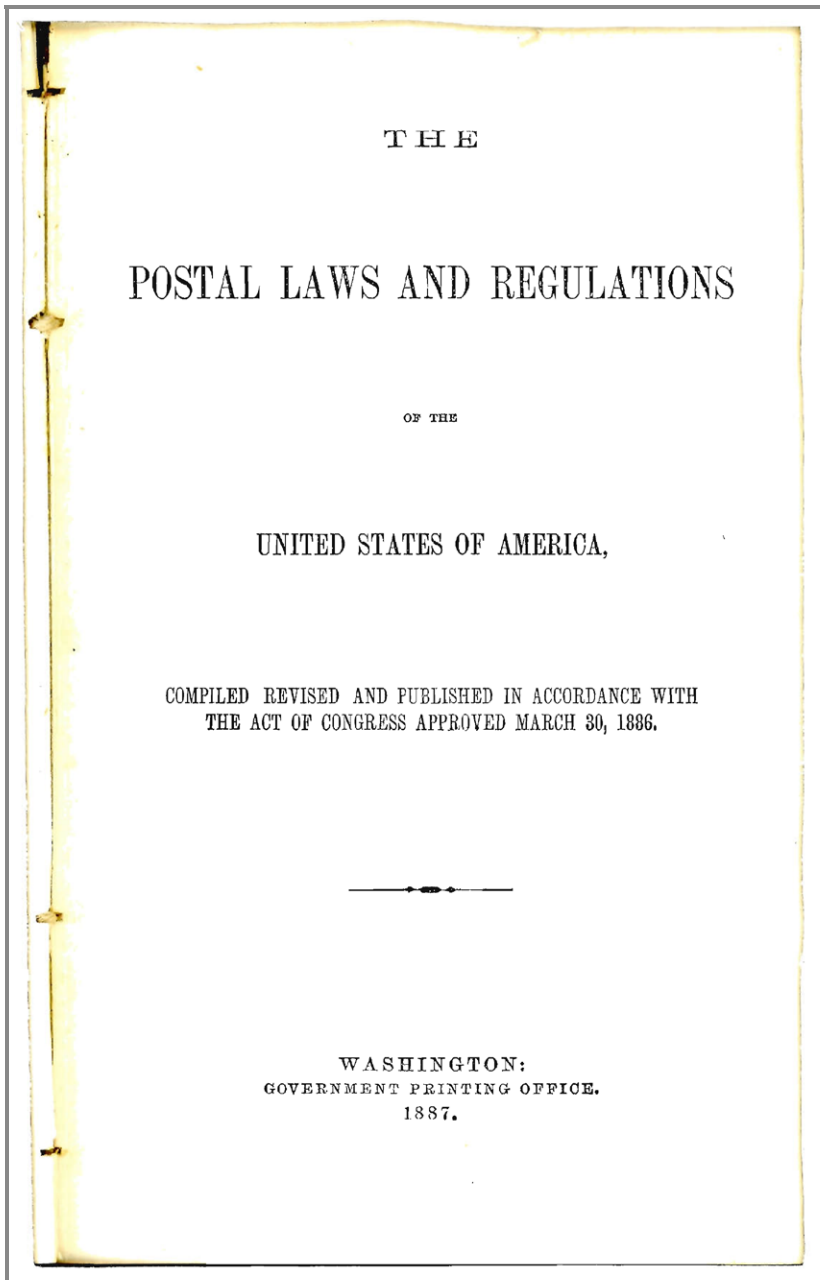


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nected with printed pocket or memorandum books; and any covering necessary for safe transmission; but the binding, rollers, pens, pencils, &c., cannot be sent separately from the printed matter to which they pertain at third-class rates.

Sec. 367. Permissible Additions.—Upon matter of the third class, or upon the wrapper inclosing the same, the sender may write his own name or address thereon, with the word “from” above and preceding the same, and in either case may make simple marks intended to designate a word or passage of the text to which it is desired to call attention. There may be placed upon the cover or blank leaves of any book or of any printed matter of the third class a simple manuscript dedication or inscription that does not partake of the nature of a personal correspondence. (Act of March 3, 1879, part of § 22, 20 Stats., 360. See sections 356 and 371.)

The words “please send out,” or “post up,” or other similar directions or requests not part of the address nor necessary to delivery, cannot be written or printed upon the wrapper of a package of third-class matter without subjecting it to first-class rates, as prescribed in section three hundred and seventy-five. The words “personal,” or “to be called for,” and return requests and other directions as to delivery, forwarding, or return, are deemed part of the address, and permissible.

FOURTH-CLASS MATTER.

Sec. 368. Defined.—That mailable matter of the fourth class shall embrace all matter not embraced in the first, second, or third class, which is not in its form or nature liable to destroy, deface, or otherwise damage the contents of the mail bag, or harm the person of any one engaged in the postal service, and is not above the weight provided by law, which is hereby declared to be not exceeding four pounds for each package thereof, except in case of single books weighing in excess of that amount, and except for books and documents published or circulated by order of Congress, or official matter emanating from any of the Departments of the Government or from the Smithsonian Institution, or which is not declared non-mailable under the provision of section thirty-eight hundred and ninety-three of the Revised Statutes as amended by the act of July twelfth, eighteen hundred and seventy-six, or matter appertaining to lotteries, gift concerts, or fraudulent schemes or devices. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 20, 20 Stats., 360.)

Section 3393 R. S. is section 380. As to lottery matter, &c., see section 379.

Sec. 369. Liquids, &c.; when Admissible.—Liquids, except as hereinafter provided, poisons, explosive or inflammable articles, live or dead

(and not stuffed) animals, insects, or reptiles (except as prescribed in the next section), fruits or vegetable matter liable to decomposition, comb honey, guano, or any article exhaling a bad odor, must not under any circumstances be admitted to the mails; but liquids, not ardent, vinous, spirituous, or malt, and not liable to explosion or spontaneous combustion or ignition by shock or jar, and not inflammable (such as kerosene oil, naphtha, benzine, turpentine, and of like character), soft soap, pastes, or confections, ointments, salves, and articles of similar consistency, may be admitted to the mail for transmission within the United States and Territories, when inclosed in packages in conformity with the conditions prescribed in the next section. The provisions of these regulations do not apply to packages or parcels addressed to foreign countries, now prohibited from transmission by the acts of the Universal Postal Union, or any postal convention or arrangement with any foreign postal administration.

Sec. 370. Preparation for Mailing.—Articles of the fourth class not absolutely excluded from the mails, but which, from their form or nature, might, unless properly secured, destroy, deface, or otherwise damage the contents of the mail bag, or harm the person of any one engaged in the postal service, may be transmitted in the mails when they conform to the following conditions:

1. When not liquid or liquefiable, they must be placed in a bag, box, or removable envelope or wrapping, made of paper, cloth, or parchment.

2. Such bag, box, envelope, or wrapping must again be placed in a box or tube made of metal or some hard wood, with sliding clasp or screw-lid.

3. In cases of articles liable to break, the inside box, bag, envelope, or wrapping must be surrounded by sawdust, cotton, or other elastic substance.

4. Admissible liquids and oils (not exceeding 4 ounces liquid measure), pastes, salves, or articles easily liquefiable, must conform to the following conditions: When in glass bottles or vials, such bottles or vials must be strong enough to stand the shock of handling in the mails, and must be inclosed in a wooden or papier-maché block or tube not less than three-sixteenths of an inch thick in the thinnest part, strong enough to support the weight of mails piled in bags and resist rough handling; and there must be provided, between the bottle and its wooden case, a cushion of cork-crumbs, cotton, felt, asbestos, or some other absorbent, sufficient to protect the glass from shock in handling; the block or tube to be closed by a tightly fitting screw-lid of wood or metal, with a rubber or other pad so adjusted as to make the block or tube water-tight and to prevent the leakage of the contents in case of

breaking of the glass. When inclosed in a tin cylinder, metal case or tube, such cylinder, case, or tube should have a screw-lid with a rubber or cork cushion inside in order to make the same water-tight, and should be securely fastened in a wooden or papier-maché block (open only at one end) and not less in thickness and strength than above described. Manufacturers or dealers, intending to transmit articles or samples in considerable quantities, should submit a sample package, showing their mode of packing, to the postmaster at the mailing office, who will see that the conditions of this section are carefully observed.

5. In case of sharp-pointed instruments, the points must be capped or encased so that they may not by any means be liable to cut through their inclosure, and where they have blades, such blades must be bound with wire so that they shall remain firmly attached to each other, and within their handles or sockets. Needles must be inclosed in metal or wooden cases so that they cannot by any means prick through or pass out of their inclosures.

6. Seeds, or other articles not prohibited, which are liable, from their form or nature, to loss or damage, unless specially protected, may be put up in sealed envelopes, if such envelopes are made of material sufficiently transparent to show the contents clearly without opening.

7. Ink powders, pepper, snuff, or other powders not explosive, or any pulverized dry substances not poisonous, may be sent in the mails when inclosed in the manner prescribed herein for liquids, or when inclosed in metal, wooden, or papier-maché cases in such secure manner as to render the escape of any particles of dust from the package by ordinary handling impossible, and of such strength as to bear the weight and handling of the mails without breaking; the method of packing to be subject to the approval of the General Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service.

8. Queen bees and their attendant bees, and dried insects or reptiles, may be sent in the mails when properly put up so as not to injure the persons of those handling the mails, nor soil the mail bags or their contents.

9. Hard candies or confectionery, yeast cakes, soap in hard cakes when wrapped in strong paper boxes or heavy paper wrappers adequate to prevent all injury to other mail matter in the same mail bag, are admissible in the domestic mails.

10. Pistols or revolvers, in detached parts, may be sent in the mails; but the mailing postmaster will carefully examine such packages, and will receive them only when sure they are harmless.

11. No specific mode of packing is prescribed for samples of flour;

but they should be put up in such manner as to certainly avoid risk of the package breaking or cracking, or the flour being scattered in the mails, and if this be not done the sample should be excluded.

12. Articles of fourth-class matter must be so wrapped that their contents may be easily and thoroughly examined by postmasters, both with reference to the safety of the mails and postal employes, and to the exclusion of matter chargeable as of the first class.

Sec. 371. Permissible Additions.—Upon any package of matter of the fourth class the sender may write or print his own name and address, preceded by the word “from,” and there may also be written or printed the number and names of the articles inclosed; and the sender thereof may write or print upon or attach to any such articles by tag or label a mark, number, name, or letter, for purpose of identification. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 22, 20 Stats., 360.)

Sec. 372. Regulations for Examination, &c.—Postmasters will carefully examine packages before mailing, to ascertain that no matter chargeable as of the first class is included, and that the requirements of the foregoing statute are complied with. It is permissible to send articles of merchandise in the mails, which contain printed matter giving descriptions, directions for use, or other information respecting the articles, as part of the original packages or labels done up for sale; but upon the face or surface of the package for mailing no other writing, printing, or marks than those authorized by the statute can be placed without subjecting the matter to first-class rates, as provided in section three hundred and seventy-five.

Postmasters at the offices of address are required to examine such packages and collect first-class rates whenever the statute has been violated, and will report to the Sixth Auditor all cases in which the penalty has been incurred, under section three hundred and seventy-five, giving the name of the sender, if known, addressee, office, and date of mailing, and a description of the package and of the matter inclosed or concealed therein, and a statement of the disposition made thereof. When not delivered to addressee on payment of first-class rates the package will be retained by the postmaster to be used as evidence, and he should be able to establish its identity. If the penalty is voluntarily paid, it will be disposed of as prescribed by section three hundred and six.

Sec. 373. Fourth-Class Postage.—That all matter of the fourth class shall be subject to examination and to a postage charge at the rate of one cent an ounce or fraction thereof, to be prepaid by stamps affixed. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 21, 20 Stats., 360.)