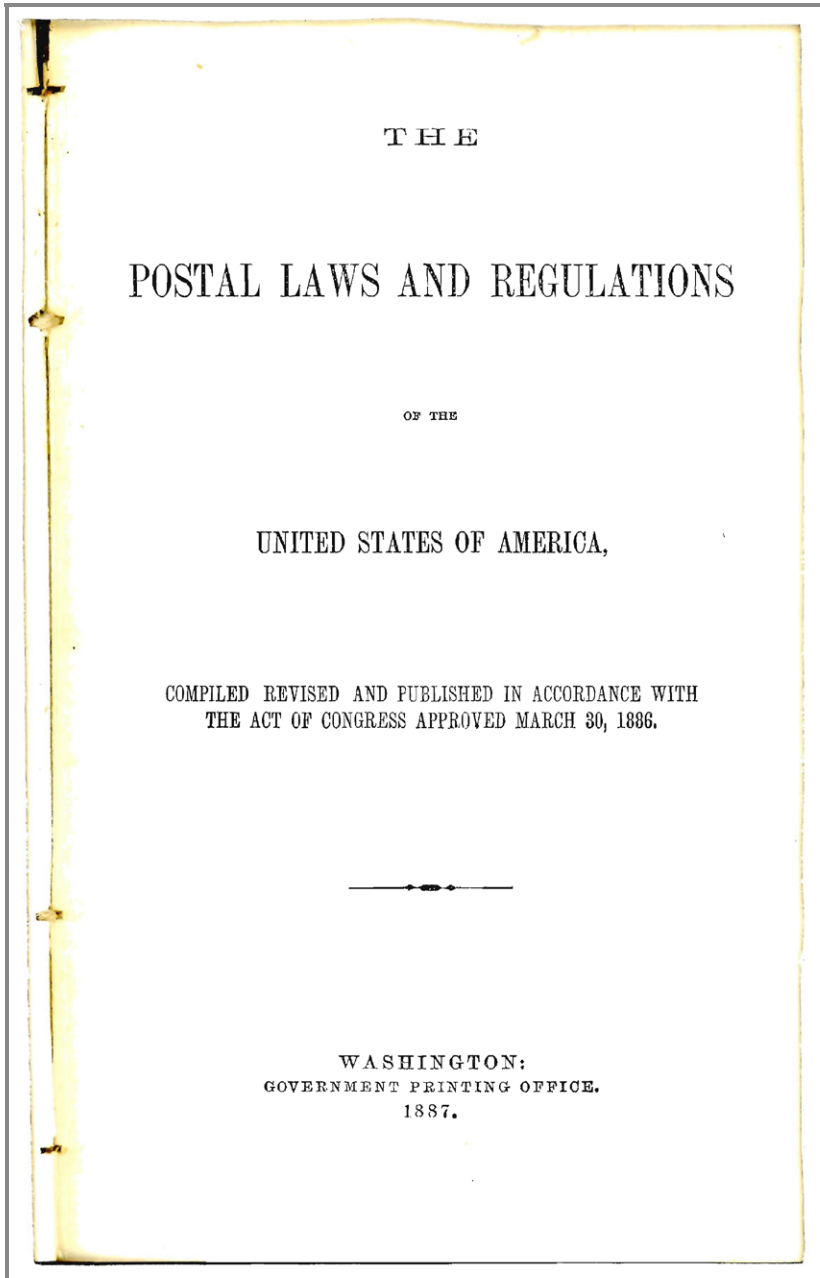


# US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Year: 1887

Mail in transit



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the Postmaster-General for the correction of false returns and the adjustment of compensation. Also supervision of the collections and returns of newspaper and periodical postage, of the admission to the mails of newspapers and periodicals, the consideration of questions relating to classification of mail matter, and the rates of postage, and the conduct of correspondence relating thereto, and of receiving and authorizing credits for redeemed, damaged, and unsalable supplies returned by postmasters. Also the care of the manufacture of adhesive stamps, postal cards, stamped envelopes, and newspaper wrappers; of official and penalty envelopes, registered-package envelopes, and other supplies of the kind for the postal service and its officers; providing postmasters with supplies of the same, and supervising their use and sale thereof; keeping accounts of such supplies, the settlement of the bills of contractors furnishing them, and the control of the Government agencies for their inspection and issue. Also the supervision and management of the registry system in all its parts, both foreign and domestic, the collection and recording of statistics relating thereto, the preparation of instructions to postmasters and other officers, and of all correspondence relating to the subject. Also the supervision and direction of the Special Delivery System, the preparation of instructions to postmasters, the direction of investigation of complaints, and the preparation of all correspondence, and the receiving and recording of statistics relating thereto.

The chief clerk, under the direction of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, has supervision of the performance of the work of the office by its clerks and employés, and especial care of the business of the Special Delivery System, and otherwise assists the Third Assistant Postmaster-General as directed by him.

The clerical force of this office is organized into four divisions, and its duties distributed to them as follows:

*The Division of Finance*, under the superintendence of a chief of division, receives and makes prompt deposit, or other proper disposition, of all moneys coming directly to the Department; attends to the collection of all checks, drafts, and bills of exchange covering amounts due to the Department, and sees to the immediate deposit of the amounts realized; prepares, upon proper reports from the Sixth Auditor, all drafts and warrants for the payment of such postal indebtedness as is not settled through the instrumentality of postmasters, after making all necessary calculations and a thorough examination of accounts, contracts, and other papers to see that the warrants and drafts thus drawn are in all respects correct; prepares all warrants for covering postal moneys into the Treasury; keeps proper records of all such

drafts and warrants, as well as accounts with the Treasury and the several sub-treasuries and designated depositories; keeps accounts of expenditures under the several heads of postal appropriations; attends to the prompt collection and deposit of the postal revenues, from whatever source derived, and prepares all necessary instructions and correspondence relating thereto; receives and records certificates of postal deposits; looks after the prompt rendition of returns relative to accounts; attends to the correction of irregularities and false returns of business by postmasters; makes up cases for special investigations concerning such false returns, and other delinquencies affecting the postal revenue; analyzes reports of post-office inspectors in all such matters, and prepares all papers that may be necessary in any of such cases for the special attention or action of the Postmaster-General. This division also attends to any other business that may be assigned to it by direction of either the Postmaster-General or the Third Assistant Postmaster-General.

*The Division of Postage-Stamps, Stamped Envelopes, and Postal Cards*, under the superintendence of a chief of division, receives all requisitions from postmasters for supplies of postage stamps, special delivery stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and registered package and other official envelopes; examines such requisitions and regulates the amount and kind of supplies to be sent; prepares orders on the contractors for furnishing the various articles of supply; keeps accounts of all such supplies sent; enforces prompt return of receipts for same; causes investigation to be made in all cases involving the loss, miscarriage, or detention of supplies; examines, adjusts, and verifies prior to their payment all bills of the contractors for furnishing stamped paper and official envelopes; looks after the management of the Government agencies at the several places of manufacture, including the operations of the manufactories; sees that work under the several contracts for stamped paper and official envelopes is properly performed, and that the obligations of the contractors are faithfully adhered to; prepares instructions to postmasters as to the manner of obtaining and disposing of supplies; sees to the proper collection of newspaper and periodical postage and keeps record of the same; examines and adjusts returns of such postage, including a count and destruction of newspaper and periodical stamps attached to returned receipt books; receives, destroys, and reports proper credits for redeemed, damaged, and unsalable stamped paper returned by postmasters to the Department; and makes estimates in cases of postmasters' claims for losses incurred by fire, burglary, or other unavoidable casualty, under the act of Congress of

March 17, 1882. It also attends to any other work that may be regularly assigned to it.

*The Division of Registration*, under the superintendence of a principal clerk, prepares correspondence relating to the registry system; instructs postmasters and gives information relative thereto; corrects irregularities, keeps records of statistics of the registry business of all post-offices; makes provision for the establishment and control of all through exchanges of registered mails, and has a general oversight of things affecting the interests of the registry system.

*The Division of Files, Records, and Mails*, under the superintendence of a principal clerk, receives and opens all mails coming into the office, distributes them among the several divisions, under the direction of the chief clerk; copies and mails all letters and packages sent from the office, and keeps systematic files and indexes of correspondence.

Besides the divisions above named, the three Government agencies mentioned in section forty-one established at the places where postage stamps, stamped envelopes, and postal cards are made, the business of which is to superintend the manufacture and issue of the several kinds of stamped paper and official envelopes, and to see that the contracts for furnishing these supplies are in all respects faithfully carried out, though governed by general instructions given by the Postmaster-General, come within the jurisdiction of the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, and are subject to its control and direction.

#### VI. THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE MONEY-ORDER SYSTEM.

To this office is assigned the general supervision and control of the Postal Money-Order System, including the domestic money-order business and the postal-note business, and the superintendence of the international money-order correspondence with foreign countries, as well as the preparation of postal conventions for the exchange of money orders therewith, and the conduct of correspondence relating to these subjects. The clerical force of the office is organized as follows:

*The Examining Division* receives in the first instance the money-order weekly statements of postmasters, and subjects the same to critical examination that it may be ascertained whether they are in proper form, and whether the postmaster has promptly deposited, in accordance with regulation, the surplus money-order funds received by him.

*The Blank Division* is charged with ordering from contractors supplies of blanks and blank books for the money-order business; of caring for the same, and of filling requisitions therefor from postmasters.

*The Duplicate Division* disposes of applications for the issue of dupli-



cate money orders and postal notes, and all such duplicates are prepared therein, and, after being signed by the Superintendent, are transmitted to postmasters.

*The Division of Domestic Correspondence* prepares replies to inquiries from postmasters and the public in cases involving construction of the postal laws and regulations relating to the money-order business, and relating also to disputes between postmasters and the public as to the payment of money orders on postal notes; and to it is assigned the preparation of the annual list of post-offices to be established as money-order and postal-notes offices.

*The Division of Drafts, Credits, and Transfers* prepares for transmittal to postmasters, upon their application, blank drafts to supply them with funds for the payment of money orders and letters of credit upon the postmaster at New York for the same purpose, and keeps a record thereof; it also records all transfers made for a similar purpose by the postmasters from their postal funds to their money-order funds.

*The International Division* conducts correspondence between postmasters and this office, and between this office and foreign post-office departments, relating to international money orders; it also issues duplicates of, and authorizes repayment of international money orders.

*The Postal Note Agency* acts as an intermediary between the Post-Office Department and the contractors for inspection and furnishing supplies of blank postal notes; has custody of the stock of distinctive postal note paper, receives from the contractors books of postal notes, and transmits the same to postmasters; and, in general, serves as the representative of the Postmaster-General at the place of business of the contractors.

*The Chief Clerk of the Money-Order System* reviews all correspondence and papers prepared in this office; distributes the duties of the clerks therein according to law; supervises, under the direction of his immediate superior, the duties of the other clerks therein, and performs such other duties as may be required by the Superintendent.

#### VII. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF FOREIGN MAILS.

This office has the supervision of all details connected with the exchange of mails with foreign countries, except correspondence and special directions for the treatment of registered mail, including arrangements for the ocean transportation of all mails from the United States, and the preparation of postal treaties and conventions, except those relating to international money orders; the preparation of special instructions to postmasters at the United States exchange post-offices in regard thereto; preliminary consideration and preparation of cases

arising on questions touching foreign mail matter and for the remission of erroneous or excessive postage charges on matter for or from foreign countries; and the adjustment of the rates to be paid by foreign countries for transportation through the United States of their mails for other countries. Also the general correspondence with foreign countries, except that relating to the money-order and registry systems; the translation of letters and documents in foreign languages received by the Department; consideration of inquiries relating to our international postal service; the charges for United States customs duties made on articles received in the mails, whether from foreign postal officials or from private citizens at home or abroad; and application for the return to senders, or change of address, of articles contained in the mails exchanged with foreign countries; preparation of the blank forms for use in exchange of mails and their issue to postmasters on their requisition; preparation of monthly schedule of the sailings of mail steamers; the examination of the accounts of each vessel or line carrying mails from the United States, and preparation of recognitions by the Postmaster-General for payment of sums due for such service, and performance of such other duties as are from time to time required by the Postmaster-General.

#### VIII. THE DEAD LETTER OFFICE.

This office, under direction of the Superintendent thereof, is charged with the treatment of all unmailable and undelivered mail matter which is sent to it for disposition; the enforcement of the prompt sending of such matter according to regulations; the duty of noting and correcting errors of postmasters connected with the delivery or withholding of mail matter; the investigation by correspondence of complaints made with reference thereto; the verification and allowance of claims for credit by postmasters for postage-due stamps affixed to undelivered matter; the examination and forwarding or return of all letters which have failed of delivery; inspection and return to country of origin of undelivered foreign matter; recording and restoration to owners of letters and parcels which contain valuable inclosures; care and disposition of all money, negotiable paper, and other valuable articles found in undelivered matter, and correspondence, both foreign and domestic, relating to these subjects.

Its clerical force is distributed into six divisions, with duties assigned as follows:

*The Opening Division*, in charge of a principal clerk, receives all returns of unclaimed matter, keeps count of the same, verifies the returns from and keeps account of unpaid postage with free-delivery post-offi-



ces; records date and character of returns from other offices; notes and reports errors of treatment on the part of postmasters; assorts and delivers to the proper divisions all foreign and third and fourth class matter and such as requires special disposition; opens all unclaimed letters and distributes them to the appropriate divisions for final treatment according to the character of their contents. It also receives, records, and distributes all registered matter reaching the office.

*The Unmailable and Property Division*, under the supervision of a principal clerk, receives and verifies all returns of unmailable, hotel, and fictitious letters and parcels of third and fourth class matter; corrects and forwards misdirected and illegibly addressed letters; opens all such letters which cannot be otherwise treated; records the address, contents, and disposition of parcels of the third and fourth class and first class matter containing articles of merchandise; restores to owner such matter, as far as practicable; keeps, classifies, and prepares for sale such articles as are eventually unclaimed.

*The Money Division*, under the direction of a principal clerk, deals with all letters and parcels found to contain money and negotiable paper, properly records and returns them to postmasters for delivery to owner, the receipt for the same being preserved; files, subject to reclamation, such letters as cannot be delivered, after separating the money contents, an account of which is kept and the money delivered to the proper officer of the Department for deposit in the Treasury; receives and accounts likewise for money realized from the auction sale of undelivered articles.

*The Minor Division*, in charge of a principal clerk, is employed in recording and treating all letters which contain inclosures of minor value, not of a negotiable character, including letters which contain photographs and postage stamps, and the return of unmailable, hotel, and fictitious letters without inclosures.

*The Returning Division*, under the supervision of a principal clerk, receives from the Opening Division all ordinary letters without inclosures of value, counts and examines them, and returns such as can be returned to the writers, taking note of the number received, returned, transferred to other divisions, or destroyed.

*The Foreign Division*, directed by a principal clerk, receives, examines, and returns unopened to the respective countries all registered and ordinary mail-matter of foreign origin; keeps a record of all registered articles and parcels of obvious value; corrects and forwards misdirected foreign letters; verifies and keeps account of mail-matter of domestic origin returned as undeliverable by foreign countries, and makes such translations as may be necessary.

## IX. THE SIXTH AUDITOR'S OFFICE.

To this office, which is a Bureau of the Treasury relating to and located in the Post-Office Department, is assigned the keeping and settlement of the accounts of the postal service. A more particular statement of its duties and of their distribution to different divisions is given in section two hundred and sixty-three.

**Sec. 8. Duties of Chief Clerks.**—Each chief clerk in the several Departments and Bureaus and other offices connected with the Departments shall supervise, under the direction of his immediate superior, the duties of the other clerks therein, and see that they are faithfully performed. (R. S., § 173.) Each chief clerk shall take care, from time to time, that the duties of the other clerks are distributed with equality and uniformity, according to the nature of the case. He shall revise such distribution from time to time, for the purpose of correcting any tendency to undue accumulation or reduction of duties, whether arising from individual negligence or incapacity, or from increase or diminution of particular kinds of business. And he shall report monthly to his superior officer any existing defect that he may be aware of in the arrangement or dispatch of business. (R. S., § 174.)

**Sec. 9. Consideration of their Reports.**—Each head of a Department, chief of a Bureau, or other superior officer, shall, upon receiving each monthly report of his chief clerk, rendered pursuant to the preceding section, examine the facts stated therein, and take such measures, in the exercise of the powers conferred upon him by law, as may be necessary and proper to amend any existing defects in the arrangement or dispatch of business disclosed by such report. (R. S., § 175.)

**Sec. 10. Employment Authorized.**—Each head of a Department is authorized to employ in his Department such number of clerks of the several classes recognized by law, and such messengers, assistant messengers, copyists, watchmen, laborers, and other employés, and at such rates of compensation, respectively, as may be appropriated for by Congress from year to year. (R. S., § 169.)

That the executive officers of the Government are hereby prohibited from employing any clerk, agent, engineer, draughtsman, messenger, watchman, laborer, or other employé in any of the Executive Departments in the city of Washington, or elsewhere, beyond provision made by law. (Act of August 19, 1879, § 5, 19 Stats., 169.)

**Sec. 11. Extra Clerks.**—No extra clerk shall be employed in any Department, Bureau, or office, at the seat of Government, except during the session of Congress, or when indispensably necessary in answering some call made by either House of Congress at one session to be

answered at another; nor then, except by order of the head of the Department in which, or in some Bureau or office of which, such extra clerk shall be employed. And no extra clerk employed in either of the Departments shall receive compensation except for time actually and necessarily employed, nor any greater compensation than three dollars a day for copying, or four dollars a day for any other service. (R. S., § 171.)

**Sec. 12. Restrictions on Employment.**—That no civil officer, clerk, draughtsman, copyist, messenger, assistant messenger, mechanic, watchman, laborer, or other employé shall, after the first day of October next, be employed in any of the Executive Departments, or subordinate Bureaus or offices thereof at the seat of Government, except only at such rates and in such numbers, respectively, as may be specifically appropriated for by Congress for such clerical and other personal services for each fiscal year; and no civil officer, clerk, draughtsman, copyist, messenger, assistant messenger, mechanic, watchman, laborer, or other employé shall hereafter be employed at the seat of Government in any Executive Department or subordinate Bureau or office thereof, or be paid from any appropriation made for contingent expenses, or for any specific or general purpose, unless such employment is authorized and payment therefor specifically provided in the law granting the appropriation, and then only for services actually rendered in connection with and for the purposes of the appropriation from which payment is made, and at the rate of compensation usual and proper for such services, and after the first day of October next, section one hundred and seventy-two of the Revised Statutes, and all other laws and parts of laws inconsistent with the provisions of this act, and all laws and parts of laws authorizing the employment of officers, clerks, draughtsmen, copyists, messengers, assistant messengers, mechanics, watchmen, laborers, or other employés at a different rate of pay, or in excess of the numbers authorized by appropriations made by Congress be, and they are hereby repealed; and thereafter all details of civil officers, clerks, or other subordinate employés from places outside of the District of Columbia, for duty within the District of Columbia, except temporary details for duty connected with their respective offices, be, and are hereby, prohibited; and thereafter all moneys accruing from lapsed salaries, or from unused appropriations for salaries, shall be covered into the Treasury: *Provided*, That the sums herein specifically appropriated for clerical or other force heretofore paid for out of general or specific appropriations, may be used by the several heads of Departments to pay such force until the said several heads of Departments shall have adjusted the said force in accordance with the

provisions of this act; and such adjustment shall be effected before October 1, 1882. And in making such adjustment the employés herein provided for shall, as far as may be consistent with the interests of the service, be apportioned among the several States and Territories according to population: *Provided further*, That any person performing duty in any capacity as officer, clerk, or otherwise, in any Department at the date of the passage of this act, who has heretofore been paid from any appropriation made for contingent expenses or for any contingent or general purpose, and whose office or place is specifically provided for herein, under the direction of the head of that Department may be continued in such office, clerkship, or employment without a new appointment thereto, but shall be charged to the quotas of the several States and Territories from which they are respectively appointed, and nothing herein shall be construed to repeal or modify section one hundred and sixty-six of the Revised Statutes of the United States. (22 Stats., § 4, 255.)

**Sec. 13. Voluntary Service Forbidden.**—Hereafter no Department or officer of the United States shall accept voluntary service for the Government or employ personal service in excess of that authorized by law, except in cases of sudden emergency involving the loss of human life or the destruction of property. (Act of May 1, 1884, 23 Stats., 17.)

**Sec. 14. Classification of Clerks.**—The clerks in the Department shall be arranged in four classes, distinguished as the first, second, third, and fourth classes. (R. S., § 163.) From time to time \* \* \* the Postmaster-General \* \* \* shall, on the direction of the President, and for facilitating the execution of this act, respectively revise any then existing classification or arrangement of those in their respective Departments and offices, and shall, for the purposes of the examination herein provided for, include in one or more of such classes, so far as practicable, subordinate places, clerks, and officers in the public service pertaining to their respective Departments not before classified for examination. (Act of January 16, 1883, 22 Stats., 406.)

Under the latter act the clerical departmental service of the Post-Office Department is classified as follows :

Class A : Those having an annual compensation exceeding \$2,000.

Class B : Those having an annual compensation of \$2,000.

Fourth class : Those having an annual compensation of \$1,800.

Third class : Those having an annual compensation of \$1,600.

Second class : Those having an annual compensation of \$1,400.

First class : Those having an annual compensation of \$1,200.

Class C : Those having an annual compensation of \$1,000.

Class D : Those having an annual compensation of \$900.