

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Money orders

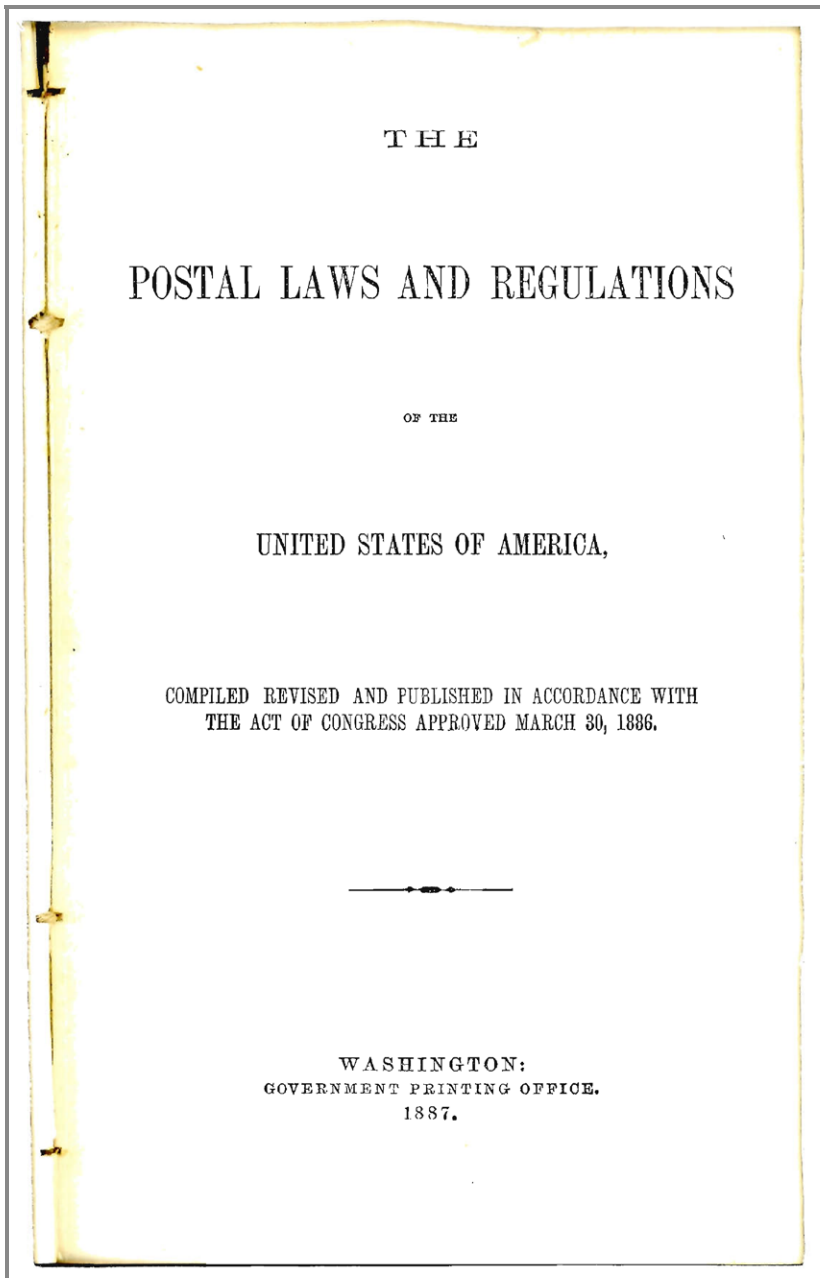


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March 17, 1882. It also attends to any other work that may be regularly assigned to it.

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

partment at Washington never receives or handles any portion of such revenues collected by postmasters. (See section 183.)

Sec. 149. Post-Office Receipts.—All postages, box rents, and other receipts at post-offices shall be accounted for as part of the postal revenues; and each postmaster shall be charged with and held accountable for any part of the same accruing at his office, which he has neglected to collect, the same as if he had collected it. (R. S., § 4051.)

Sec. 150. Money Order and Other Receipts.—Unclaimed money in dead letters, for which no owner can be found; all money taken from the mail by robbery, theft, or otherwise, which may come into the hands of any agent or employé of the United States, or any other person whatever; all fines and penalties imposed for any violation of the postal laws, except such part as may by law belong to the informer or party prosecuting for the same; and all money derived from the sale of waste paper or other public property of the Post-Office Department, shall be deposited in the Treasury, under the direction of the Postmaster-General, as part of the postal revenue. And the Postmaster-General shall cause to be placed to the credit of the Treasurer of the United States, for the service of the Post-Office Department, the net proceeds of the money-order business; and the receipts of the Post-Office Department derived from this source during each quarter shall be entered by the Sixth Auditor in the accounts of such Department, under the head of "revenue from money-order business." (R. S., § 4050.)

Receipts from transportation of the mails for foreign countries arise under the Postal Union Convention and other postal treaties, and the balances of account due the United States upon periodical adjustments are paid by remittances to the Department and deposited in the Treasury as "letter postages paid in money."

As to receipts from fines, penalties, and forfeitures, see section 303.

As to Department sales of waste paper, &c., see sections 63, 64.

Sec. 151. Return of Stolen Property to Owners.—Whenever the Postmaster-General is satisfied that money or property stolen from the mail, or the proceeds thereof, has been received at the Department, he may, upon satisfactory evidence as to the owner, deliver the same to him. (R. S., § 4053.)

PROVISION OF STAMPS AND STAMPED PAPER.

Sec. 152. Postage Stamps for Payment of Postage.—The Postmaster-General shall prepare postage stamps of suitable denominations, which, when attached to mail matter, shall be evidence of the payment of the postage thereon. (R. S., § 3914.)

As to contracts for their manufacture and the stamp agent, see sections 84 *et seq.*, 41.

Sec. 272. Oaths in Settlement with Auditor.—Any mayor of a city, justice of the peace, or judge of any court of record in the United States may administer oaths in relation to the examination and settlement of the accounts committed to the charge of the Sixth Auditor. (R. S., § 298.)

CHAPTER EIGHT.

OF CLAIMS OF POSTMASTERS FOR LOSSES OF STAMPED PAPER AND MONEY-ORDER FUNDS.

Sec. 273. Allowance Authorized.—That the Postmaster-General be, and he is hereby, authorized to investigate all claims of postmasters for the loss of money-order funds, postage stamps, stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, and postal cards belonging to the United States in the hands of such postmasters, resulting from burglary, fire, or other unavoidable casualty, and if he shall determine that such loss resulted from no fault or negligence on the part of such postmasters, to pay to such postmasters or credit them with the amount so ascertained to have been lost or destroyed, and also to credit postmasters with the amount of any remittance of money-order funds made by them, in compliance with the instructions of the Postmaster-General, which shall have been lost or stolen while in transit by mail from the office of the remitting postmaster to the office designated as his depository: *Provided*, That no claim exceeding the sum of two thousand dollars shall be paid or credited until after the facts shall have been ascertained by the Postmaster-General and reported to Congress, together with his recommendation thereon, and an appropriation made therefor: And provided further, That this act shall not embrace any claim for losses as aforesaid which accrued more than fifteen years prior to its passage; and all such claims must be presented to the Postmaster-General within six months after the taking effect of this act; and no claims for losses which may hereafter accrue shall be allowed unless presented within three months from the time the loss accrued. (Act of March 17, 1882, § 1, 22 Stats., 29.)

That it is hereby made the duty of the Postmaster-General to report his action herein to Congress annually, with his reasons therefor in each particular case. (*Id.*, § 2.)

Sec. 274. Claims and Proofs, how Presented.—A postmaster or late postmaster, in presenting claims for credit or reimbursement for losses resulting from burglary, fire, or other unavoidable casualty must make

an application to the Postmaster-General, plainly and legibly written, signed, and sworn to, and setting forth—

1. The name of the postmaster and of the post-office, county, and State at which the loss occurred, the cause and nature of the loss, the date thereof, and, if known, the hour.

2. When the loss is of stamped paper, the amount of ordinary postage stamps, postage-due stamps, special-delivery stamps, newspaper and periodical stamps, and postal cards, stated at their face value, and of stamped envelopes and newspaper wrappers, stated at the prices fixed therefor, which were in the postmaster's possession immediately before the casualty; the amount of such stamped paper lost or destroyed, stated at the same value and price; the amount of credit claimed therefor, and the amount of each of the kinds, separately stated, saved or actually in the postmaster's possession immediately after the occurrence of the loss.

3. If the loss include any money-order funds, a statement of the amount on hand immediately before the casualty, the amount actually lost or destroyed thereby, and the amount recovered or remaining in the possession of the postmaster thereafter.

4. A general statement of the fact and amount of loss, if any, of individual property by the same casualty.

5. If the loss resulted from fire, its origin or cause should be stated; also, whether the building belonged to the postmaster, whether it was insured and for what amount; whether it has been paid, and, if not, the reason.

6. If the loss resulted from burglary, state the manner of its perpetration, and whether any one has been arrested, prosecuted, or convicted of the offense.

7. If the loss occurred through other unavoidable casualty, such as storm, flood, explosion, a full statement of the facts and circumstances.

8. In all cases a statement of the manner in which the property lost or destroyed was kept, and the care or precaution taken to guard it from loss, and any other facts tending to show that the loss resulted from no fault or negligence of the claimant or those whom he had placed in charge of the office.

9. If the claim is for money-order funds lost in transit, a statement showing whether the remittance was made in due time as required by section one thousand three hundred and seventy-six; that in making the same all the requirements of section one thousand three hundred and ninety-four were fully complied with, as it is only when the remittance was made in strict compliance with such instructions that credit or reimbursement for its loss can be allowed. In support of this state-

ment the affidavit of the witness or witnesses to the inclosure and dispatch of the remittance must be furnished, fully detailing the transaction and showing that the remittance was made in full compliance with the requirements of such regulation.

10. If the loss or destruction for which claim is made consisted of or embraced money-order funds in the postmaster's hands, the statement should show that they were properly on hand, and were not surplus funds retained in violation of the requirements of section one thousand three hundred and seventy-six, and that they were kept separately from and not mixed with postal funds.

The sworn statement of the claimant should be accompanied by the affidavits of at least two disinterested witnesses having knowledge of the facts, who should fully state only such facts corroborating the claim as are within their personal knowledge.

The claim cannot be allowed unless presented within three months from the time the loss accrued. The loss must be reported and claim made so as to reach the Department within the time limited.

Sec. 275. No Credit or Reimbursement for Lost Postal Funds is allowable under the above-quoted act; and no claim therefor is to be made. The amount of such loss may, however, be stated in the application and shown in the proofs, care being taken to distinguish such loss from that of money-order funds or of stamped paper.

Sec. 276. Verification of Claim and Affidavits.—The oath or affirmation required to the claim may be taken before any officer authorized to administer oaths. If taken before a State officer having no official seal, the official character of such officer must be authenticated by the certificate of the clerk, ordinary, or prothonotary of a court of record, attested by the seal of the court.

Sec. 277. Blanks for Claims are furnished by the Assistant Attorney-General for the Post-Office Department upon report of the loss to the Department. Care should be taken in properly filling them out, as, if confused or unintelligible in statement of facts or amounts, a new statement under oath will be required. The affidavits of witnesses must be written out in each case according to the facts, no blanks being furnished for that purpose.

Sec. 278. Claim and Proofs, how Mailed.—The claim and accompanying proofs are to be inclosed in an envelope together and addressed to the Assistant Attorney-General for the Post-Office Department, with whom correspondence relating to the claim is conducted. Registration is unnecessary.