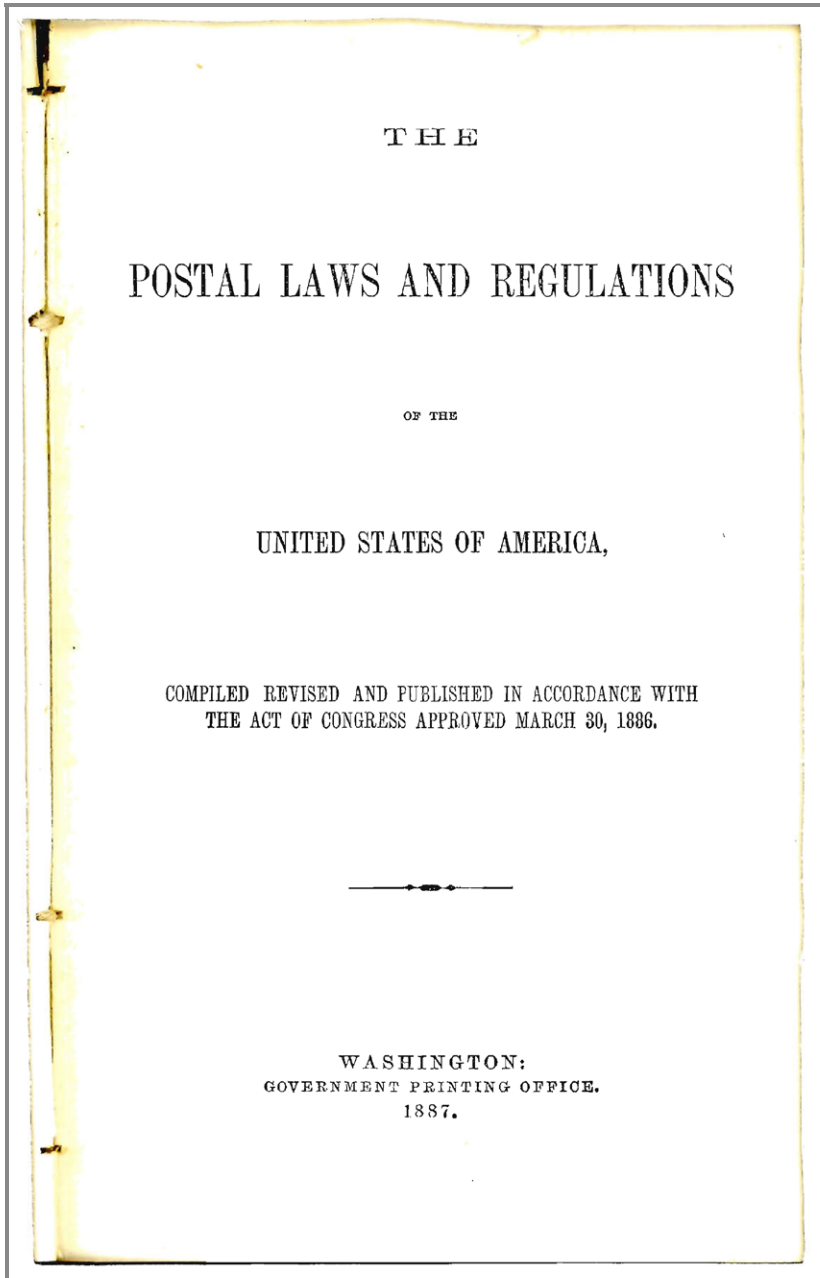


# US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Year: 1887

Penalty envelopes



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to one addressee, who, on receiving and opening the package, may place addresses on the franked articles and remail them for carriage and delivery to the respective addresses.

**Sec. 414. Census Matter.**—That the Superintendent [of Census], his chief clerk, supervisors, and enumerators are hereby authorized to transmit through the post-office any paper or document relating to the census, by writing thereon “Official Business, Census,” and subscribing the same, with the addition to his name of his official title. But this privilege shall extend to nothing but documents and papers relating to the census, which shall pass free. And any Superintendent, supervisor, enumerator, or clerk, who shall use or exercise this privilege for any other purpose other than the legitimate discharge of the duties of his office, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, shall forfeit for each offense a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 16; 20 Stats., 477.)

That all mail matter of whatever class relative to the census and addressed to the Census Office, to the Superintendent, his chief clerk, supervisors, or enumerators, and indorsed, “Official Business, Department of the Interior, Census Office,” shall be transported free of postage; and if any person shall make use of any such indorsement to avoid the payment of postage on his private letter, package, or other matter in the mail, the person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and subject to a fine of three hundred dollars, to be prosecuted in any court of competent jurisdiction. (Act of April 20, 1880, § 1; 21 Stats., 75.)

#### OFFICIAL MATTER.

**Sec. 415. Official or Penalty Envelopes.**—That it shall be lawful to transmit through the mail, free of postage, any letters, packages, or other matters relating exclusively to the business of the Government of the United States: *Provided*, That every such letter or package to entitle it to pass free shall bear over the words “Official Business,” an indorsement showing also the name of the Department, and if from a Bureau or office, the names of the Department and Bureau or office, as the case may be, whence transmitted. And if any person shall make use of any such official envelope to avoid the payment of postage on his private letter, package, or other matter in the mail, the person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of three hundred dollars, to be prosecuted in any court of competent jurisdiction. (Act of March 3, 1877, § 5; 19 Stats., 335.)

That for the purpose of carrying this act into effect, it shall be the duty of each of the Executive Departments of the United States to

provide for itself and its subordinate offices the necessary envelopes, and in addition to the indorsement designating the Department in which they are to be used, the penalty for the unlawful use of these envelopes shall be stated thereon. (Act of March 3, 1877, § 6; 19 Stats., 336.)

The provisions of the fifth and sixth sections of the act entitled "An act establishing post-routes, and for other purposes," approved March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven, for the transmission of official mail matter, be, and they are hereby extended to all officers of the United States Government, not including members of Congress, the envelopes of such matter in all cases to bear appropriate indorsements containing the proper designation of the office from which or officer from whom the same is transmitted, with a statement of the penalty for their misuse. And the provisions of said fifth and sixth sections are hereby likewise extended and made applicable to all official mail matter of the Smithsonian Institution: *Provided*, That any Department or officer authorized to use the penalty envelopes may inclose them with return address to any person or persons from or through whom official information is desired, the same to be used only to cover such official information and indorsements relating thereto: *Provided further*, That any letter or packet to be registered by either of the Executive Departments, or Bureaus thereof, or by the Agricultural Department, or by the Public Printer, may be registered without the payment of any registry fee; and any part-paid letter or packet addressed to either of said Departments or Bureaus may be delivered free; but where there is good reason to believe the omission to prepay the full postage thereon was intentional, such letter or package shall be returned to the sender: *Provided further*, That this act shall not extend or apply to pension agents or other officers who receive a fixed allowance as compensation for their services, including expenses of postages. And section thirty-nine hundred and fifteen of the Revised Statutes of the United States, so far as the same relates to stamps and stamped envelopes for official purposes, is hereby repealed. (Act of July 5, 1884, § 3; 23 Stats., 158.)

And it shall be the duty of the respective Departments to inclose to Senators, Representatives, and Delegates in Congress, in all official communications requiring answers, or to be forwarded to others, penalty envelopes addressed as far as practicable, for forwarding or answering such official correspondence. (Act of March 3, 1883, part of § 2, 22 Stats., 563.)

**Sec. 416. Regulations as to Use of Penalty Envelopes.**—1. The name of the Department, and Bureau, office, or proper designation of the office or officer, from whence transmitted, and thereunder the words "Official Business" should be printed on the upper left-hand corner of the ad-

dress face of the envelope, and the penalty clause in the upper right-hand corner in the following or equivalent words :

This envelope is for use only by authorized persons on business of the Government. Its use to avoid payment of postage on private matter of any kind is punishable as a misdemeanor by a fine of \$300.

2. Persons, not officers, writing to the Departments or to officers of the United States concerning the business of the writers with the Government cannot use the penalty envelope to transmit their correspondence; hence officers authorized to use such envelopes should not furnish them for use to contractors with the Government. Collectors of internal revenue and their deputies have no authority to furnish them to taxpayers to be used in sending their reports or in applying for stamps.

3. Officers desiring official information from or through persons not officers can furnish the penalty envelopes to cover the same only with return address printed or written thereon. Where the information is to be forwarded periodically or on more than one occasion, the envelopes bearing printed return address may be furnished in quantities for the transmission of such information.

4. The right of an officer of the United States to use the penalty envelope ceases immediately upon his going out of office; and he is not authorized to use such envelopes in transmitting papers connected with the settlement of his accounts or other business pertaining to the office he has vacated, except as he may receive them with requests for official information, with return address thereon, from a Department or office of the Government.

(Opinion of the Attorney-General, May 2, 1885.)

5. Postmasters have no right to stop census matter or any mail matter in an official-penalty envelope upon the mere suspicion that the penalty envelope or census indorsement is being used to cover private matter; but if they have good reason to believe that any person is using official envelopes in violation of law, he should promptly report the case to the Department for investigation.

#### MAIL MATTER OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES, ETC.

Sec. 417. Reports of Agricultural Colleges, &c.—The act of Congress approved July 2, 1862, entitled "An act donating public lands to the several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts," requires that "An annual report shall be made regarding the progress of each college, recording any improvements and experiments made, with their cost and results, and such other matters, including State, industrial, and economical statistics, as may be supposed useful; one copy of which shall be transmitted