

US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Refused mail

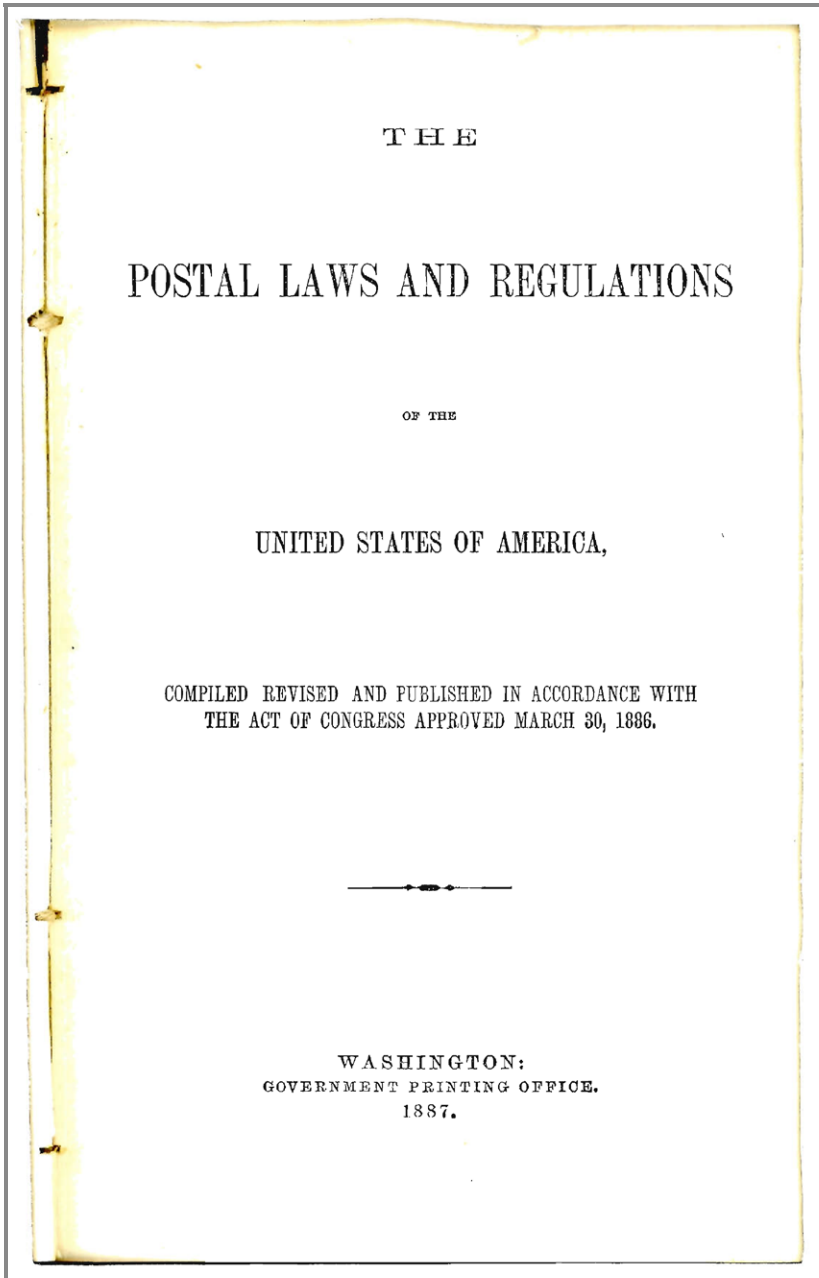


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All official matter sent under penalty envelopes or labels, or the frank of Senators or Members of Congress, will be treated as card matter, and, if unclaimed, returned to the office of mailing, if known.

A request upon a drop letter for its return to the writer at some other post-office, if unclaimed, cannot be respected unless it has been prepaid with one full rate (two cents) of postage.

Unclaimed letters bearing the card of a hotel, a school, college, or other public institution, which has evidently been printed upon the envelopes to serve as a mere advertisement, should not be returned to the place designated in the cards, unless there is also a request therefor, indicating the writer to whom they should be returned.

A letter which has been opened inadvertently, or upon a wrong delivery, may be returned to the writer without additional charge, when it contains a card or return request. The postmaster must not open letters to ascertain the writer.

Unclaimed card and request letters, prepaid one full rate, but not wholly prepaid, are to be returned to mailing office for delivery to the writer, who will be required to pay the amount originally due. If payment be refused the matter will be indorsed REFUSED, and treated as such. (See section 602.)

Sec. 595. Postal Cards.—When the message upon an unclaimed postal card is wholly or partly written, and the name and address of the writer is disclosed, the same shall be returned to writer after thirty days from date of its receipt, with the words "RETURNED TO WRITER," stamped thereon, and his name and address written underneath across the face of the card. If the message be wholly printed, it will be treated as printed matter. (See section 593.)

Sec. 596. Return of Other than First Class and Request Matter.—All matter, other than first class, may be returned, but is subject to an additional charge for postage for returning the same. When the sender of matter which would be subject to return postage shall, by indorsement upon the wrapper or otherwise, request its return, postmasters should comply with such request within the time fixed by the sender—if no time is fixed, then at the end of thirty days—first charging such matter, however, with the necessary return postage, and indorse the same "RETURN POSTAGE DUE — CENTS;" and the postmaster at the office to which such matter is returned must affix thereto postage-due stamps sufficient to cover the return postage, and collect the same from the sender before delivering such returned matter. If the sender should refuse to pay return postage, the matter must be disposed of as "REFUSED." If the matter be unclaimed, it will be treated as other unclaimed matter. If postage stamps or money sufficient to pay the return

days after its arrival at the office of destination, or within such time, not less than three days and not exceeding ninety days, as may be stated in a request upon its face, or in case its delivery is prohibited by the Postmaster-General in accordance with section one thousand one hundred and thirty, the postmaster must indorse on such matter the cause of non-delivery and return the same, without advertising it in any case, to the post-office whence it was mailed.

2. It must be marked "RETURNED TO WRITER," renumbered, and entered in registration book as if mailed at his post-office, placed in a registered-package envelope with a registry bill and the original registry return receipt, and a note of such return, with date thereof, made in receipt column of delivery book.

3. The address of letter or parcel must be changed only as to destination, and "R. W." marked on registry bill, indicating return to writer. On arrival at the original mailing post-office it must be treated as if it were an original registered letter or parcel received for delivery.

4. Registered matter prepaid at first-class rates, and matter the delivery of which has been prohibited by the Postmaster-General, shall be returned without additional charge for postage or registry fee. All other registered matter, except fraudulent matter, when returned, is subject to an additional charge of postage for returning the same, but should not be charged with an additional registry fee.

5. Postmasters before returning matter subject to return postage, must charge the same with the necessary postage and indorse thereon "RETURN POSTAGE DUE ——— CENTS," and the postmaster at the office to which such matter is returned shall affix thereto postage-due stamps sufficient to cover the return postage, and collect the amount on delivery. Should the sender in any case refuse to pay the return postage, the matter must be disposed of as refused.

6. If postage stamps or money sufficient to pay the return postage should be furnished by the sender, the postmaster at the returning office shall affix to the matter returned the necessary stamps and cancel them the same as if the matter had been originally mailed at his office.

7. After a registered letter or parcel has been returned to the mailing office in compliance with the law regulating the limit of time which it should be held for delivery before its return to the sender, the addressee of such letter is debarred thereby from any further claim upon it. Such letter or parcel cannot be remailed to the addressee without a new prepayment of postage and registry fee.

Sec. 1135. **Refused Letters or Parcels.**—In case of addressee simply refusing to receive a registered letter or parcel, it must be retained the

proper length of time before return, as prescribed in the preceding section.

Sec. 1136. Original Record to show Return of a Letter or Parcel.—Note must be made on the original record of every registered letter or parcel returned to a mailing post-office, stating its return and date.

Sec. 1137. When Sender of Returned Matter is not Found.—In case a domestic returned registered letter or parcel cannot be delivered to the sender, it must be retained thirty days and be then forwarded (properly registered) to the Dead-Letter Office.

Sec. 1138. Sending Letters or Parcels to the Dead-Letter Office.—When registered letters or parcels are sent to the Dead-Letter Office they must be postmarked with the date of sending, indorsed with reason for sending, be accompanied with duplicate lists showing the sending post-office and the number and address of each letter and parcel, and placed under cover of an official envelope addressed to the Superintendent of the Dead-Letter Office, Washington, D. C., indorsed "INCLOSING REGISTERED MATTER." The packet must be registered as a free registered letter, and placed with registry bill and registry-return receipt under cover of a registered-package envelope addressed to the postmaster, Washington, D. C.

Postmasters must remember that undelivered domestic registered letters are never to be sent to the Dead-Letter Office until after their return to the sending office, and their failure of restoration to the sender. (See sec. 1137.)

As to return of undelivered foreign registered letters, see sec. 1162.

Sec. 1139. No Postage on Registry Bills and Registry-Return Receipts.—The registered-package receipts, registry bills, and registry-return receipts, after signature, require no postage thereon; they are to be simply postmarked and mailed without delay.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

Sec. 1140. Response to Inquiries.—Inquiries or tracers regarding registered packages, letters, or parcels, and all inquiries as to registered business, must receive immediate attention from postmasters, and be answered without delay.

Sec. 1141. Tracers for Stamp, Envelope, or Postal-Card Packages.—When a registered package of stamps, envelopes, or postal cards has been dispatched and no acknowledgment therefor is received by due course of mail, or bill returns marked NOT RECEIVED or IN BAD ORDER, a coupon tracer will be sent to ascertain whether the package reached its destination in safety, or at what point and through whose fault it disappeared or was tampered with. If through this means it should be as-