

# US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Request matter



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Office direct to the sender, and valuable matter of the third and fourth class, in hand at the time of advertising, should be included in the advertisement, except registered matter, refused matter, fictitious matter, card and request matter, matter addressed to persons who call regularly at the post-office or which the postmaster has special reason to believe will be called for, matter indorsed "To be held until called for," "*Poste restante*," or similar directions, and matter which the addressee has requested to be retained. Such matter held on request should be marked, "Specially held for delivery."

**Sec. 590. Charge on Advertised Letters.**—All letters published as non-delivered shall be charged with one cent in addition to the regular postage, to be accounted for as part of the postal revenue. (R. S., §3935.)

**Sec. 591. Advertised Matter to be so Marked.**—Every letter or parcel advertised must have plainly written or stamped upon the address side the word "ADVERTISED," together with the date of advertising.

#### RETURN OF UNCLAIMED MATTER.

**Sec. 592. Request Matter.**—When the writer of any letter on which the postage is prepaid shall indorse upon the outside thereof his name and address, such letter shall not be advertised, but after remaining uncalled for at the office to which it is directed thirty days, or the time the writer may direct, shall be returned to him without additional charge for postage, and if not then delivered shall be treated as a dead letter. (R. S., § 3939.)

**Sec. 593. The Time for Return of Request Matter.**—The sender has the right by a subsequent written direction to the postmaster at the office of destination to lengthen or shorten the time originally named on the envelope, after which the letter, if not delivered, shall be returned to him, but it must remain for delivery at least three days; and postmasters must obey such written authority, and return as directed, without additional charge for postage. When the addressee has given general direction to hold his letters until called for, and they are not called for within the time limited in the return request, they should be returned to the sender in accordance with the request.

**Sec. 594. Card and Official Matter.**—Whenever any unclaimed matter of the first class bears the name and address of the sender, as post-office box, number and street, &c., without a request that the same be returned if not delivered, such matter is called "Card matter," and must not be advertised, but must be returned to sender at the expiration of thirty days from the date of its arrival at the post-office of destination. All such matter originating in Canada or Mexico will be treated as herein directed.

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

postage be furnished by the sender, the postmaster at the returning office must affix to the matter returned the necessary stamps and cancel them, the same as if the matter had been originally mailed at his office.

UNCLAIMED SECOND-CLASS AND PRINTED MATTER.

**Sec. 597. Disposal of, Authorized.**—The Postmaster-General may provide, by regulations for disposing of printed and mailable matter which may remain in any post-office, or in the Department, not called for by the party addressed; but if the publisher of any refused or uncalled-for newspaper or other periodical shall pay the postage due thereon, such newspaper or other periodical shall be excepted from the operation of such regulations. (R. S., § 4061.)

**Sec. 598. Regulation as to Disposal.**—Domestic printed matter obviously without value, including printed postal cards, must not be sent to the Dead-Letter Office when unclaimed, except that upon which postage is due, but must be disposed of as waste paper, and the proceeds taken up and accounted for as other postal revenue. (See section 484.)

REFUSED SECOND-CLASS MATTER.

**Sec. 599. Publisher to be Notified.**—Postmasters shall notify the publisher of any newspaper, or other periodical, when any subscriber shall refuse to take the same from the office, or neglect to call for it for the period of one month. (R. S., § 3885.)

**Sec. 600. Notice; when and how Given.**—Notice will be given when a newspaper or periodical is uncalled for, or refused, or when the subscriber changes his address without notifying the publisher or ordering his matter forwarded, upon the blank form furnished for that purpose, which can be procured by application to the First Assistant Postmaster-General, Division of Post-Office Supplies. If the first notification be disregarded, a second may be sent, calling attention also to the fact of previous notice. The notice is to be given to publishers in Canada and Mexico as well as this country.

**Sec. 601. Disposal of Refused Second-Class Matter.**—After notification has been given, as required in the previous section, the postmaster will hold the refused matter for thirty days, after which the same and all copies subsequently arriving should be placed with the waste paper.

AT RECEIVING OFFICES—MATTER TO BE SENT TO THE DEAD-LETTER OFFICE.

**Sec. 602. Dead Matter.**—Dead matter, or such as is to be sent to the Dead-Letter Office from the office of address, may, for convenience, be classified as follows:

1. *Unclaimed.*—That which is not called for and cannot be delivered nor returned as provided in sections five hundred and ninety-two and