

# US Postal Laws & Regulations

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Sailers' letters



# Table Of Contents

[Click here to view the entire PDF Document](#)

	<u>Pages</u>
<a href="#">Accounting forms</a> (9 pages)	504-512
<a href="#">Accounts, postmaster</a> (10 pages)	107-116
<a href="#">Advertised</a> (3 pages)	244-245, 250
<a href="#">Annual reports</a> (4 pages)	62-65
<a href="#">Audits</a> (7 pages)	116-122
<a href="#">Backstamping</a> (1 page)	232
<a href="#">Bad order</a> (1 page)	223
<a href="#">Blanks</a> (3 pages)	204-206
<a href="#">Boxes</a> (2 pages)	213-214
<a href="#">Canada</a> (1 page)	171
<a href="#">Cards</a> (7 pages)	29, 86-88, 246-248
<a href="#">Carriers</a> (15 pages)	104-105, 259-271
<a href="#">Clerks</a> (4 pages)	216-219
<a href="#">Commercial papers</a> (2 pages)	167-168
<a href="#">Contracts</a> (3 pages)	58-60
<a href="#">Corner cards</a> (7 pages)	29, 86-88, 246-248
<a href="#">Crimes, postal</a> (16 pages)	487-502
<a href="#">Dead letter office</a> (15 pages)	27-28, 81, 182-186, 226, 242-243, 248-251
<a href="#">Delivery of mail</a> (16 pages)	236-241, 387-396
<a href="#">Difficiency in address supplied</a> (1 page)	251
<a href="#">Domestic mail matter</a> (27 pages)	135-161
<a href="#">Drop letters</a> (3 pages)	136-138
<a href="#">Exchange offices</a> (-8 pages)	254-245
<a href="#">Expenditures</a> (9 pages)	99-107
<a href="#">Fictitious</a> (2 pages)	241, 250
<a href="#">Finances</a> (32 pages)	44-75
<a href="#">First-class mail matter</a> (5 pages)	135-138, 219
<a href="#">Foreign mails</a> (34 pages)	26-27, 161-182, 254-259, 324-327
<a href="#">Forms</a> (3 pages)	204-206
<a href="#">Forwarding</a> (5 pages)	235-236, 281, 390, 405
<a href="#">Fourth-class mail</a> (4 pages)	153-156
<a href="#">Franking privilege</a> (2 pages)	175-176
<a href="#">Fraudulent</a> (3 pages)	159, 396-397
<a href="#">Free matter</a> (9 pages)	174-182
<a href="#">Held for postage</a> (3 pages)	158, 230, 251
<a href="#">Hotel matter</a> (1 page)	250
<a href="#">Incoming mail</a> (22 pages)	231-252
<a href="#">Index</a> (71 pages)	527-597
<a href="#">Inquiries</a> (2 pages)	399-400
<a href="#">Irrelative duties</a> (5 pages)	76-80
<a href="#">Lotteries</a> (3 pages)	158-159, 230
<a href="#">Mail delivery</a> (6 pages)	236-241
<a href="#">Mail in transit</a> (9 pages)	23-31
<a href="#">Mail matter</a> (67 pages)	219-285
<a href="#">Mail messenger service</a> (2 pages)	303-304
<a href="#">Mexico</a> (2 pages)	172-173
<a href="#">Misdirected</a> (3 pages)	158, 224, 230
<a href="#">Missent mail</a> (1 page)	230
<a href="#">Money orders</a> (6 pages)	25-26, 82, 122-124
<a href="#">Money orders, domestic</a> (45 pages)	423-448, 467-485
<a href="#">Money orders, international/foreign</a> (20 pages)	448-467
<a href="#">Newspaper stamps</a> (2 pages)	86, 90
<a href="#">Obscene</a> (4 pages)	158-160, 230

<a href="#">Official matter</a> (-167 pages)	176-8
<a href="#">Organization</a> (36 pages)	9-44
<a href="#">Out of mails</a> (5 pages)	288-292
<a href="#">Outgoing mail</a> (8 pages)	228-230, 376-380
<a href="#">Penalties</a> (9 pages)	125-133
<a href="#">Penalty envelopes</a> (3 pages)	176-178
<a href="#">Periodical stamps</a> (1 page)	90
<a href="#">Post offices</a> (10 pages)	187-188, 210-216, 220
<a href="#">Post roads</a> (3 pages)	293-295
<a href="#">Postage due stamps</a> (2 pages)	91, 234
<a href="#">Postal cards</a> (5 pages)	83-84, 137, 167, 247
<a href="#">Postal notes</a> (9 pages)	477-485
<a href="#">Poste restante</a> (1 page)	404
<a href="#">Postmarking</a> (1 page)	223-223
<a href="#">Postmasters</a> (25 pages)	188-212
<a href="#">Printed matter</a> (2 pages)	167-168
<a href="#">Printing</a> (3 pages)	67-69
<a href="#">Railway mail service</a> (46 pages)	21-22, 105-107, 295-303, 343-371, 419-421
<a href="#">Rates, fees</a> (10 pages)	136-137, 150-151, 156, 170-173, 374
<a href="#">Receiving offices</a> (22 pages)	231-252
<a href="#">Refused mail</a> (3 pages)	247, 398-399
<a href="#">Registration, domestic mail</a> (44 pages)	29, 373-401, 408-421
<a href="#">Registration, foreign mail</a> (8 pages)	401-408
<a href="#">Request matter</a> (3 pages)	246-248
<a href="#">Return receipt</a> (3 pages)	377-378, 403
<a href="#">Returned for better direction</a> (1 page)	230
<a href="#">Returned mail</a> (2 pages)	397-398
<a href="#">Revenues POD</a> (19 pages)	81-99
<a href="#">Safety of the mails</a> (10 pages)	333-342
<a href="#">Sailers' letters</a> (2 pages)	136-137
<a href="#">Samples of merchandise</a> (2 pages)	167, 169
<a href="#">Second-class mail</a> (16 pages)	138-150, 242, 247-248
<a href="#">Ship letters</a> (3 pages)	327-329
<a href="#">Soldiers' letters</a> (2 pages)	136-137
<a href="#">Special delivery service</a> (12 pages)	271-282
<a href="#">Special delivery stamps</a> (2 pages)	29, 91
<a href="#">Special request envelopes</a> (3 pages)	86-88
<a href="#">Stamped envelopes</a> (7 pages)	83-89
<a href="#">Stamps</a> (14 pages)	82-92, 122-124
<a href="#">Star routes</a> (4 pages)	220-221, 305-306
<a href="#">Statutes, index to</a> (-489 pages)	515-25
<a href="#">Steamboat</a> (-923 pages)	305-6, 317-8, 327-9
<a href="#">Table of contents</a> (2 pages)	7, 8
<a href="#">Third-class mail</a> (4 pages)	150-153
<a href="#">Transit mail</a> (2 pages)	230-231
<a href="#">Transportation of the mails</a> (56 pages)	287-342
<a href="#">Unclaimed mail</a> (4 pages)	246-247, 249-250
<a href="#">Underpaid mail</a> (5 pages)	232-235, 391
<a href="#">Universal Postal Union</a> (4 pages)	162-165
<a href="#">Unmailable matter</a> (12 pages)	158-161, 170-172, 224-226, 243-244
<a href="#">Unpaid mail</a> (4 pages)	224, 233-234, 391
<a href="#">Weather reports</a> (1 page)	221
<a href="#">Withdrawal of mail</a> (4 pages)	226-228, 297
<a href="#">Women</a> (1 page)	33

**Sec. 322. First-Class Postage.**—That on mailable matter of the first class, except postal cards and drop letters, postage shall be prepaid at the rate of three cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof; postal cards shall be transmitted through the mails at a postage charge of one cent each, including the cost of manufacture; and drop letters shall be mailed at the rate of two cents per half ounce or fraction thereof, including delivery at letter-carrier offices, and one cent for each half ounce or fraction thereof where free delivery by carrier is not established. The Postmaster-General may, however, provide, by regulation, for transmitting unpaid and duly certified letters of soldiers, sailors, and marines in the service of the United States to their destination, to be paid on delivery. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 9, 20 Stats., 358.)

And upon all matter of the first class, as defined by chapter one hundred and eighty of the laws of Congress approved March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, entitled "An act making appropriations for the service of the Post-Office Department for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and eighty, and for other purposes," and by that act declared subject to postage at the rate of three cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof, postage shall be charged, on and after the first day of October, A. D. eighteen hundred and eighty-three, at the rate of two cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof; and all acts, so far as they fix a different rate of postage than herein provided upon such first-class matter, are, to that extent, hereby repealed. (Act of March 3, 1883, 22 Stats., 455.)

That upon all matter of the first class, as defined by chapter one hundred and eighty of the laws of Congress approved March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-nine, entitled, "An act making appropriations for the service of the Post-Office Department for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and eighty, and for other purposes," and by that act declared subject to postage at the rate of three cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof and reduced by the act of March third, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, to two cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof, postage shall be charged, on and after the first day of July, eighteen hundred and eighty-five, at the rate of two cents for each ounce or fraction thereof; and drop letters shall be mailed at the rate of two cents per ounce or fraction thereof, including delivery at letter-carrier offices, and one cent for each ounce or fraction thereof where free delivery by carrier is not established. (Act of March 3, 1885, 23 Stats., 386.)

**Sec. 323. Soldiers', Sailors', and Marines' Letters.**—Letters written by officers, commissioned or non-commissioned, and privates in the military, naval, or marine service of the United States, to be transmitted unpaid

must be plainly marked "Soldier's Letter," "Sailor's Letter," or Marine's Letter," as the case may be, and signed thereunder with his name and official designation by a field or staff officer, post or detachment commander to whose command the soldier belongs, or by a surgeon or chaplain at a hospital where he may be; and in the navy and marine service, by the officer in command of the vessel, or surgeon on board, or officer commanding a naval hospital or detachment on shore. Letters so certified will be forwarded charged with postage due at single rates only, to be collected on delivery.

**Sec. 324. Postal Cards** cannot be issued by private parties. Cards, other than those issued by the Department, containing any writing, are subject to letter postage; but if they contain only printed matter, so as to constitute a circular, but one cent is required on each.

No printing or writing other than the address is allowable upon the address side, nor may anything except an address label be pasted or attached to any postal card. The words "to be called for," or any proper description of the person or place addressed, may be written thereon as part of the address. Any other writing, mark, or seal placed on the address side, or the splitting of the card and writing on the inside, renders it unmailable, except at letter rates. A postal card once delivered cannot be remailed as such.

Postal cards are first-class matter, and may be forwarded on request, and they should be returned to the writer from the office of address when unclaimed; but no request for such return should be placed on the address side.

Postmasters must treat postal cards as sealed letters, and refrain from reading the messages written thereon, except in order to return the cards to the writer when unclaimed, and except that their contents may be read if they appear to be unmailable because they contain obscene matter or relate to lotteries. (See sections 379 and 380.)

**Sec. 325. Addresses, how made.**—And addresses upon postal cards and unsealed circulars may be either written, printed, or affixed thereto at the option of the sender. (Act of July 12, 1876, from § 15, 19 Stats., 82.)

**Sec. 326. Drop Letters.**— \* \* \* But in large cities and adjacent districts of dense population, having two or more post-offices within a distance of three miles of each other, any letter mailed at one of such offices and addressed to a locality within the delivery of another of such offices, which shall have been inadvertently prepaid at the drop or local-letter rate of postage only, may be forwarded to its destination through the proper office, charged with the amount of the deficient postage, to be collected on delivery. (R. S., § 3937, second sentence.)

A "drop letter" is one addressed for delivery to a person within the