

US Postal Laws & Regulations

Brought to you by the US Postal Bulletins Consortium

Year: 1887

Underpaid mail



Table Of Contents

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

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

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

distributed or made up by railway postal clerks, should be promptly reported, and the slips covering or received with the same should be sent with the report.

Sec. 552. Disposition of Slips Received.—All slips received upon packages of letter or circular mail, or in sacks of newspaper mail, upon which errors have been noted, must be preserved and sent to the division superintendent daily from first and second class offices, weekly from all others. All other slips may be treated as waste paper. A supply of facing slips can be obtained from the division superintendent at any time, or from the Department. (See sections 469 and 472.)

Sec. 553. Back Stamping.—Every postmaster, upon receipt of the mail, will immediately place the postmark of his office upon the back of every letter therein received, showing the date and hour of the day when the letter was received. The value and importance of this practice are so great that failure to observe this rule, if continuous or repeated after notice, will be ground for removal from office.

AT RECEIVING OFFICES—DEFICIENT POSTAGE.

Sec. 554. Postmasters to Search for and Rate up.—Postmasters at the office of delivery may remove the wrappers and envelopes from mail matter not charged with letter postage, when it can be done without destroying them, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is upon or connected with any such matter anything which would authorize or require the charge of a higher rate of postage thereon. (R. S., § 3882.)

On opening the mail the postmaster will look over the letters and packages to ascertain whether the postage thereon has been sufficiently prepaid, and will rate up the amount found to be due on all matter, not free, dispatched inadvertently without any prepayment, at double its proper rate (sections 320, 558); and on all first-class matter prepaid at one full rate, but not fully prepaid, and on all other partially but insufficiently prepaid matter, at full rates, according to its class and weight, and note in writing or stamp the amount due on each letter or parcel.

Sec. 555. Official Matter Deliverable at Washington.—Any part-paid letter or packet addressed to either of said Departments or Bureaus [the Executive Departments or Bureaus thereof, the Agricultural Department and Public Printer] 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 packet shall be returned to the sender. (Act of July 5, 1884, § 3, 23 Stats., 158; fully quoted in section 415.)

NOTE.—This exemption from the payment of deficient postage on matter addressed to the Executive Departments or Bureaus thereof before delivery applies only at the Washington City post-office.

Sec. 556. Mail to the Postmaster Himself.—When insufficiently prepaid matter addressed to a postmaster reaches its destination, he may refuse to pay the additional necessary postage and take the matter out of the office, which must then be treated as “refused” matter; but if he takes the matter he must pay the deficient postage.

Sec. 557. Postage Due must be Collected and Stamps Affixed.—No mail matter shall be delivered until the postage due thereon has been paid. (R. S., § 3900). That all mail matter of the first class upon which one full rate of postage has been prepaid shall be forwarded to its destination, charged with the unpaid rate, to be collected on delivery; but postmasters, before delivering the same, or any article of mail matter upon which prepayment in full has not been made, shall affix, or cause to be affixed, and canceled, as ordinary stamps are canceled, one or more stamps equivalent in value to the amount of postage due on such article of mail matter, which stamp shall be of such special design and denomination as the Postmaster-General may prescribe, and which shall in no case be sold by any postmaster nor received by him in prepayment of postage. That, in lieu of the commission now allowed to postmasters at offices of the fourth class upon the amount of unpaid letter postage collected, such postmaster shall receive a commission upon the amount of such special stamps so canceled, the same as now allowed upon postage stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and newspaper and periodical stamps canceled as postages on matter actually mailed at their offices: *Provided*, That the Postmaster-General may, in his discretion, prescribe instead such regulation therefor at the offices where free delivery is established as, in his judgment, the good of the service may require. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 26, 20 Stats., 361.)

That any postmaster or other person engaged in the postal service who shall collect, and fail to account for, the postage due upon any article of mail matter which he may deliver, without having previously affixed and canceled such special stamps, as hereinbefore provided, or who shall fail to affix such stamp, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of fifty dollars. (Act of March 3, 1879, § 27, 20 Stats., 362.)

NOTE.—The requirement of the statute is that postage-due stamps shall be affixed on all matter of whatever character on which postage is due, including ship letters, foreign letters, advertised letters, all over-weight matter, and all matter rated below its proper class, notwithstanding the mailing postmaster has failed to charge it.

Sec. 558. Collection of Double Postage.—Double rate should, under the statute (section 320), be charged only on matter reaching its destination with no evidence of any prepayment whatever. A drop letter deposited in an office without prepayment of postage is not subject to

double rates. When it is apparent from the envelope or wrapper that a stamp has been on it and has been wholly or partially lost off, the postmaster may assume the matter to have been prepaid. But the evidence that the stamp has been affixed must be from the blank in the impression of the canceling stamp. In such case, first-class matter will be presumed to have been prepaid one full rate only, as that would entitle it to be forwarded. Letters on which postage-due stamps, but no other, are affixed, arriving at the office of destination, must be charged double rate on delivery, as the postage upon mailing cannot be paid in postage-due stamps. The mailing postmaster should in such cases be reported to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, who will charge his account with such stamps.

Sec. 559. Time of Affixing Postage-due Stamps.—At all other than free-delivery post-offices postmasters will affix the postage-due stamps when, and not until, the delivery of the matter has been requested; and hence not to matter forwarded by request of the addressees, returned to writer, or sent to the Dead-Letter Office. But at free-delivery post-offices they will be affixed on all deficient matter as soon as received; unless an order is on file for the letter to be forwarded, in which case, if practicable, it will be forwarded without affixing such stamps.

When matter arrives at a post-office with postage due thereon, and the postmaster has no postage-due stamps on hand, he will collect the amount due, and so soon as he shall obtain postage-due stamps affix the amount in such stamps to a sheet of paper, cancel, and forward the same to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General with statement of the facts.

If the postage stamps upon a registered letter or parcel do not cover the proper postage and registration fee, the receiving postmaster must proceed according to section one thousand one hundred and fourteen.

Sec. 560. Credit for Postage Stamps Affixed to Undelivered Matter.—When at free-delivery offices postage-due stamps have been affixed to refused, unclaimed, or other undelivered matter, credit must be claimed therefor, when sent to the Dead-Letter Office, on the dead-letter bill for "postage-due stamps canceled on undelivered mail matter." When returned to writer, or forwarded to another post-office within the United States, a numbered postage-due bill, stating amount due and name of person from whom it is to be collected, must be attached to and sent with the letter. The postmaster receiving the same must detach the bill and return it by next mail with amount of uncanceled postage-due stamps inclosed to the postmaster issuing the bill, who, in case of failure to get a return of bill and stamps within a reasonable time, may obtain proper credit and expose the delinquent postmaster by making a

duplicate bill, from the stub of the original, attaching it to and incorporating it with his regular dead-letter bill, indorsing in the blank space at the end, "DUPLICATE, ORIGINAL NOT RETURNED," or "ORIGINAL RETURNED WITHOUT STAMPS."

When a postmaster at an office other than a free-delivery office, receives matter from a free-delivery office to which postage-due stamps have been affixed, and which proves undeliverable, he should send the same to the Dead-Letter Office with special claim for credit for postage-due stamps refunded by him, attached thereto.

In forwarding to foreign countries mail matter on which postage-due stamps have been canceled, the original bill, indorsed "FOREIGN LETTER FORWARDED," should be attached to and sent with the dead-letter bill. (See section 607.)

Sec. 561. *First-class Rate on Matter Closed Against Inspection Cannot be Remitted*, as the statute forbids its delivery at less rate than for matter of the first class. (See section 376.) If the addressee feels aggrieved at such charge, he may deposit the deficient postage and require the package to be sent unopened to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General for his decision whether it be so wrapped as to require it to be rated as first-class matter; and the postmaster shall promptly transmit it accordingly, under penalty envelope, with proper letter of advice. The postmaster must give the claimant a receipt for his deposit; the receipt to be returned to him on delivery of the article, if his decision be confirmed.

FORWARDING MAIL MATTER.

Sec. 562. *Prepaid Matter to be Forwarded*.—Prepaid letters shall be forwarded from one post-office to another, at the request of the party addressed, without additional charge for postage. (R. S., § 3940.)

1. The matter to be forwarded at request of addressee without additional charge for postage, includes letters prepaid at one full rate (two cents), parcels prepaid at first-class rates, postal cards, official matter, and free county publications (within the county of publication).

2. Other mail matter, whenever forwarded, must be charged with additional postage at the same rate as if originally mailed at the forwarding office, with the rate noted thereon thus: "POSTAGE DUE FOR FORWARDING, ——— CENTS," unless the addressee or some one for him prepay the postage required for forwarding; in which case the necessary stamps will be affixed and canceled. At the office of destination, the matter will be treated as deficient matter unless the postage for forwarding has been prepaid.

3. Requests to forward given by any other person than the addressee, or his lawful agent, or the person in whose care the matter is addressed,

warding or returning must be filed as a voucher. No order for forwarding should be recognized unless signed by the addressee of the matter, or by some person specially authorized in writing by the addressee to control such matter. In cases of emergency, however, telegraphic orders may be recognized, where the postmaster is satisfied that no fraud is intended.

If postage stamps or money sufficient to pay the postage for forwarding should be furnished by the party addressed, the postmaster at the forwarding office must affix to the matter forwarded the necessary stamps, and cancel them, the same as if the letter or parcel had been originally mailed at his office.

All registered first-class matter and matter in penalty envelopes may be reforwarded as often as the addressee may order.

Sec. 1114. Registry Fee not Prepaid is not to be Collected at Office of Delivery.—If any registered matter on which a fee is chargeable shall, by inadvertence or neglect of the mailing postmaster, or from any cause, be dispatched without full prepayment of postage and registry fee, the postmaster at the office of destination shall collect from the party addressed, when the matter is delivered, the amount of postage that may be due. The amount due as deficiency in the registry fee will be collected by the Department from the delinquent postmaster as a penalty for his neglect, upon receipt of report from the postmaster at the office of destination. Such reports should be made weekly to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, and should state the number of the letter or parcel, the date of mailing, the post-office of origin, and the amount of the deficiency in each case.

The following rules will render the postmaster's duty plain in such cases :

1. If the letter or parcel should arrive at destination bearing no stamps whatever, the postmaster will rate up the postage at double rates, and collect the same from the party addressed before delivering the matter. The case will be reported by the postmaster in his weekly report to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, who will require payment of the registry fee by the sending postmaster.

2. If the letter or parcel should arrive at destination partially prepaid, the postmaster will rate up the deficiency in postage (not at double rates, however) and collect the same from the party addressed. The deficiency in fee will be collected by the Third Assistant Postmaster General, as in the preceding case, upon report of the facts by the postmaster in his weekly report.

3. In ascertaining the amount of deficiency on a registered letter or parcel arriving at destination partially prepaid, the postmaster must