



DoD INSTRUCTION 4525.09

MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE (MPS)

Originating Component: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

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Cancels: DoD Instruction 4525.7, "Military Postal Service and Related Services," April 2, 1981
DoD Instruction 4525.08, "DoD Official Mail Management," August 11, 2006

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Purpose: In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5134.01, the January 5, 2018 Secretary of Defense Memorandum, and the January 31, 2018 Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, this issuance establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes guidance governing the use of the MPS by the DoD Components pursuant to DoDD 5101.11E.

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SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

1.1. APPLICABILITY. This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

1.2. POLICY. It is DoD policy that:

a. The MPS is an extension of the United States Postal Service (USPS) and operates military post offices (MPOs), military mail terminals (MMTs), and official mail centers (OMCs), to provide postal services to authorized users. The intra- and inter-theater delivery service (IDS) is a service established between MPOs outside the United States and is not under USPS control.

b. DoD Components promote cost-effective measures for the movement of postal items to include the use of consolidated mail facilities, as appropriate.

c. DoD Components comply with DoD, USPS, and General Services Administration (GSA) policies and procedures regarding the processing, distribution, and transportation of DoD postal items.

(1) USPS and DoD policies and procedures apply to personal mail, official mail, and correspondence.

(2) GSA policies and procedures apply to official mail only.

(3) Postage for personal and official mail is calculated using domestic pricing. International postal guidelines apply to mail and correspondence transported or distributed through the MPS overseas.

d. DoD Components comply with all pertinent laws to support the unimpeded and timely movement of military postal items.

1.3. SUMMARY OF CHANGE 1. This change reassigns the office of primary responsibility for this issuance to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment in accordance with the July 13, 2018 Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum.

1.4. INFORMATION COLLECTIONS. The Annual Mail Management Report, referred to in Paragraph 2.2.c. of this issuance, has been assigned report control symbol DD-AT&L(AR) 1833 in accordance with the procedures in Volume 1 of DoD Manual 8910.01. The expiration date of this information collection is listed in the DoD Information Collections System at <https://apps.sp.pentagon.mil/sites/dodiic/Pages/default.aspx>.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ACQUISITION AND SUSTAINMENT (USD(A&S)). The USD(A&S) will oversee the performance of the MPS through the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness and will:

- a. Establish policy and prescribe guidance governing the use of the MPS by the DoD Components.
- b. Approve requests for the first opening and the last closing of an MPO in a country, excluding contingency MPOs established on a temporary basis, to support military operations or exercises.
- c. Approve individual or organization appeals for limitations, suspensions, or revocations of authorizations to use MPS.
- d. Approve free mail extensions as authorized by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to Section 3401(a)(1)(A) of Title 39, United States Code (U.S.C.).

2.2. DOD COMPONENT HEADS. The DoD Component heads:

- a. Synchronize MPS resources across the DoD Components to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the MPS. Coordinate with the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) on MPS operations that cross Component areas of responsibility.
- b. Manage the MPS in accordance with this issuance, DoDD 5101.11E, DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, and USPS and GSA policies and procedures.
- c. Submit the Annual Mail Management Report for official mail costs through the Automated Military Postal System (AMPS). The report includes official mail costs of any mailable matter and any other mail related costs including those in non-postal contracts.
- d. Comply with private express statutes (PES) requirements for transporting official mail and correspondence in the United States.
- e. Use the United States Transportation Command small package delivery services contract only when the MPS is unable to provide necessary service level or is not cost-effective. Separate contracts with small package carriers are not authorized.
- f. Establish measures to actively monitor MPS costs and performance to ensure accountability and efficiency of operations in accordance with DoDD 5101.11E, DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, and USPS and GSA regulations.
- g. Identify all recurring or one-time large volume mailings sent from mailers to determine cost-effective mailing strategies in accordance with the USPS Domestic Mail Manual.

- h. Use the most cost-efficient transportation consistent with the class of mail and extra services purchased to the maximum extent practicable to meet operational requirements.
- i. Determine the requirements and resource postal security screening measures.
- j. Implement an auditable annual inspection program and provide results of those inspections to MPSA.
- k. Implement an annual training program and document the training of postal personnel. Provide qualified DoD postal personnel to perform inherently governmental functions (IGFs) and to support contingency operations in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M and DoD 4525.8-M.
- l. Establish and maintain mail facility security plans that are practiced quarterly, reviewed annually, and coordinated with local emergency responders.
- m. Coordinate with MPSA prior to negotiating with USPS representatives to change existing support in the United States.
- n. Designate a single manager for all postal operations.

2.3. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS. In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the Secretaries of the Military Departments:

- a. Determine and coordinate postal operations, transportation, and plans with Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) and MPSA.
- b. Fund postal costs and reimburse USPS for losses of funds resulting from the loss of financial instruments, such as money orders, in the mail or resulting from the loss of equipment on loan to DoD from USPS. The Army funds free mail for the DoD until the other Military Services receive funding to pay their individual free mail costs.
- c. Direct that postal contracts comply with USPS, GSA, and DoD policies and procedures.
- d. Verify readiness of postal equipment to adequately support deployed forces.
- e. Provide guidance on use of official mail.
- f. Provide instructors for the Interservice Postal Training Activity commensurate with Military Services use.
- g. Provide postal service to DoD agencies. Collect reimbursements for postal services provided to other DoD components and non-DoD entities.
- h. Comply with USPS Publication 38 requirements regarding the hiring of MPS personnel. The Military Services will coordinate to mitigate personnel suitability concerns for individuals that are applying for MPS positions that could affect hiring actions. The Military Services will also notify USPS and government agencies, through MPSA, regarding postal offenses that may impact a person's hiring at USPS and government agencies.

i. Determine mail routing requirements for deployed units and provide MPSA and USPS information to enable USPS routing system updates.

2.4. CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

a. Validates the approval of free mail in designated areas within the Combatant Commands and validates the retention of the authorization of free mail in those areas within the Combatant Commands for which free mail has already been approved.

b. Includes MPS operations in operational plans and coordinate plans with MPSA.

2.5. CCDRS. In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.2., the CCDRs:

a. Liaise with host-nation government postal administrators and customs officials, in coordination with the Secretaries of the Military Departments, as needed.

b. Obtain formal host nation approval to establish MPOs prior to establishing MPOs.

c. Establish contingency MPOs on a restricted and temporary basis to support military operations or exercises.

d. Send requests for the first opening and the last closing of an MPO in a country to the USD(A&S) through MPSA, for coordination. This excludes contingency MPOs established on a temporary basis to support military operations or exercises. Contingency MPOs will be coordinated by MPSA.

e. Perform MMT functions and operations at designated locations to ensure responsive and efficient processing, transportation, and distribution of defense postal items.

f. Manage free mail requests and terminations of free mail for sites that have not been validated for free mail approval through MPSA to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

g. Coordinate postal support for allied forces and ensure reimbursement for such support.

h. Establish policy to conduct postal recovery operations for undeliverable postal items in theater.

i. Establish procedures to limit, suspend, or revoke authorization for individuals to use MPS. Affected individuals or organizations will have an option to appeal to USD(A&S) through the MPSA.

j. In coordination with the Military Services, submit requests for free mail through the Joint Staff and MPSA to the USD(A&S) for Secretary of Defense action.

2.6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MPSA. Under the authority, direction, and control of the Army as the DoD Executive Agent for the MPS and official mail program in accordance with DoDD 5101.11E, the Executive Director, MPSA:

- a. In coordination with the DoD Components, implements USPS and GSA policies and procedures.
- b. Establishes measures to actively monitor MPS costs and performance and to maintain accountability and efficiency of operations in accordance with DoDD 5101.11E, DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, and USPS and GSA regulations.
- c. In coordination with the DoD Components, develops and maintains a military postal manual for the MPS to replace DoD 4525.6-M and 4525.8-M.
- d. Coordinates with DoD Components on the management of USPS contracted carriers to include providing USPS with performance information necessary for justifying carrier changes.
- e. Enables the establishment and termination of zone improvement plan (ZIP) codes for contingency operations.
- f. Maintains and publishes military ZIP codes, in coordination with the Military Services.
- g. Develops and maintains the Annual Mail Management Report for submission to GSA and the Office of Management and Budget.
- h. Manages the AMPS.
- i. Publishes the DoD Strategic Postal Voting Action Plan to ensure appropriate distribution and return of election ballots.
- j. Coordinates with Inter-service Postal Training Activity on training for postal personnel.
- k. Manages the DoD free mail program in compliance with the law and guidance in Section 3 of this issuance.

SECTION 3: MPS

3.1. GENERAL.

- a. DoD installations will have no more than one official mail metering site, excluding National Guard statewide operations wherein the state is considered as an “installation.” DoD Component outgoing mail must transit the installation’s metering site, if available.
- b. Postal personnel and patrons will not send or receive mail on behalf of unauthorized persons or organizations.
- c. The number of military retirees, family members, or DoD contractors will not be used as criteria for opening or closing an MPO.
- d. Personal mail is only accepted at OMCs within 90 days of an individual’s change in duty station.
- e. Appropriated funds will be used for official mail postage. Except for free mail, appropriated funds will not be used to pay for personal mail postage.
- f. Official mail will not be sent to home addresses of teleworking employees.
- g. DoD Component-devised forms will not duplicate USPS, DoD, or GSA forms unless coordinated with MPSA before use.
- h. Animals are not permitted in military postal facilities, except military working dogs and animals assisting persons with disabilities.
- i. Compliance with customs laws and requirements is the responsibility of the individual or organization.
- j. When converting from a combat operation to a sustainment operation, MPS service continuation must be approved by the host nation through a formal host nation agreement.
- k. Post or base locator service is not a function of the MPS.

3.2. PERSONNEL. The DoD Component headquarters is the waiver authority for grade requirements in this section.

- a. When planning for postal operations, a minimum of one qualified postal clerk will be sourced for every 500 supported personnel.
- b. MPS facilities manned by one person due to the size of the facility or personnel serviced must be in the grade of E-5 or GS-7 or above.

c. Personnel performing postal duties will be qualified and formally trained using a common set of basic criteria as coordinated and approved by MPSA and the Military Services and in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M and DoD 4525.8-M.

d. Postal personnel will:

- (1) Be licensed to operate a vehicle if transporting mail.
- (2) Meet USPS and DoD requirements for the handling of sensitive material.
- (3) Be physically able to stand for prolonged periods and lift up to 70 pounds.

e. Postal personnel will have, at a minimum, a favorable background check completed prior to appointment as part of the hiring process. Postal personnel opening U.S Postal Service registered official mail, certified mail, first class mail, or small parcel shipments in the United States, will have an interim or fully adjudicated SECRET clearance. Postal personnel opening registered official mail outside the United States, will have an interim or fully adjudicated SECRET clearance. Once the item is identified as SECRET, postal personnel will handle the item in accordance with Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.01. At no time are host nation staff authorized to accept, handle, or deliver official U.S. registered mail.

f. MPS facilities providing USPS retail services must have a custodian of postal effects and postal finance officer appointed. Personnel assigned as custodian of postal effects must be in the grade of E-5 or GS-7 or above, and personnel assigned as postal finance officer must be in the grade of E-6 or GS-9 or above.

g. Only personnel in the grade of E-6 or GS-9 or above will be appointed as official mail managers (OMMs). The OMM function is an IGF and cannot be contracted out. OMMs manage official mail operations including:

- (1) Compliance with the PES in the United States.
- (2) Inspections, acquisition, use, and disposition of supplies.
- (3) Budgeting and expenditure oversight of appropriated funds.
- (4) Property management.

3.3. MPS CONTRACTING.

a. Combatant Command or Military Department postal personnel must review contracts containing requirements for the provision of postal items in coordination with the contracting officer prior to contract award. Contracting for the performance of services in support of mail center operations is authorized in accordance with DoD 4525.8-M; Subpart 7.5 of Title 48, Code of Federal Regulations; Section 2461(a) of Title 10, U.S.C.; USPS Publication 542; and Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-76.

b. Mail transportation contracts will contain provisions for scanning barcodes, to the maximum extent practicable, on all segments and uploading of the data into AMPS and USPS systems.

c. IGFs must be performed by government personnel in accordance with DoD Instruction 3020.41 and DoD Instruction 1100.22, and include:

(1) Positions that establish policy and procedures for the MPS or the performance of contract administration in support of the MPS.

(2) Positions obligating the expenditure of government funds by signing dispatch forms or with meter remittances for official postage; acquiring or disposing of postal equipment; establishing and supervising the expenditure of appropriated funds for the payment of postage fees and mailing practices; and ensuring compliance with the PES.

(3) Positions that have responsibility for all facets of operations within the MPO that are responsible for verifying and approving the payment of claims.

d. An on-site government employee must oversee operations at MPS facilities at which the Component has contracted out for postal services.

e. Contracting out for official mail positions other than the OMM is authorized; however if the position requires access to postal items that could contain classified materials, the contractor employee must be a U.S. citizen and possess an interim or adjudicated SECRET clearance.

f. Contracted positions in the MPS which are responsible for finance, supplies, or equipment must be bonded with liability for loss or damage and subject to immediate restitution to the government.

g. Independent audit and inspection teams must inspect contracted operations at MPS facilities to prevent conflicts of interest with the contractor inspecting its own operations.

3.4. FACILITY PLANNING AND REQUIREMENTS.

a. MPS facility planning must meet minimum requirements contained in military standard-3007B, DoD 4525.6-M, and DoD 4525.8-M. A DoD postal subject matter expert must review the DoD Component's plans prior to finalizing facility layouts and obligating funds. Plans must meet postal requirements for efficient processing, security controls, and force protection directives.

b. The following MPS facility plans will be included with local installation plans and training conducted with all personnel and exercised on a regular basis to ensure facility plans are valid.

(1) Continuity of operations plan.

(2) Facility and equipment upgrade plan.

c. MPS postal activities must have the capability to process postal items within one workday of receipt.

d. In accordance with DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, and USPS regulations, minimum requirements for MPS facilities include:

(1) Protect mail and postal effects.

(2) Meet the global trade compliance requirements and perform product tracking, scanning, and reporting in AMPS.

(3) Provide directory or forwarding service for undeliverable mail. Dispose of undeliverable correspondence.

(4) Receive and dispatch postal items at least 5 days a week for MPOs and OMCs and 7 days a week for MMTs, unless prevented by the operational environment.

(5) Have internet capability and open architecture to optimize available technologies that increase service. Includes MPOs operating over 90 days and excludes MPOs on ships.

3.5. SECURITY.

a. Postal items, vehicles, and facilities will be secured in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, USPS Domestic Mail Manual, military standard-3007B, USPS Postal Operations Manual, Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.01, and Part 102-192, Chapter 102, Subchapter 3 of Federal Management Regulation.

b. In the event that postal items are opened (e.g., first-class mail, registered mail) and the interior markings identify the inner package as containing classified material, the item will subsequently be handled, stored, and transported in accordance with Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.01.

c. Registered official mail overseas will be secured and segregated from other mail. If stored in an open storage area overseas, a monitored intrusion detection system or 24-hour on-site guard must be used.

d. Postal personnel will protect postal items from loss, theft, tampering, damage, willful delay, and compromise. Postal security and accountability must be provided at all times to prevent theft, damage, and the introduction of contraband and prohibited materials.

e. Postal personnel will visually screen postal items for security issues and the appropriate packaging documentation for the respective location.

3.6. PATRONS, AUTHORIZATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS.

a. DoD 4525.6-M, Appendix 1 “Use of Military Postal Service” identifies the individuals and organizations that are authorized to use the MPS.

b. Patrons entering an MPS facility to obtain services, whether in uniform or not, must show a DoD ID card, Common Access Card, or a U.S. Government Agency ID Card. Contractors with MPS privileges, to include contractors authorized to accompany the force (CAAF), must present a copy of their contract or letter of authorization (LOA) to the servicing MPS facility.

c. The following are prohibited within the MPS:

(1) Operating a business or conducting activities associated with running a business (e.g., eBay store with MPO address; mail order businesses; shipping supplies, equipment, or merchandise for a physical or home-based store).

(2) Sending or receiving items for sale, resale, distribution, or re-distribution.

(3) Sending household goods associated with temporary or permanent duty relocation via IDS or official mail program. Shipments via the MPS must be coordinated with the Component's transportation office prior to MPS acceptance.

(4) Duplicating delivery service. When an MPO is located near a diplomatic post office, patrons assigned to an embassy or consulate may only use their assigned diplomatic post office.

d. Patrons assume all liability for lost or damaged correspondence.

e. Military exchanges and commissaries may send postal items from MPO to MPO for direct-to-individual customer merchandise shipments. When appropriate, military exchanges and commissaries may enter into agreements with the Military Services to identify roles, responsibilities, and cost mitigation procedures to support postal operations.

f. Non-disciplinary actions resulting in a total loss of MPS privileges to authorized patrons will be coordinated through the chain of command and MPSA to the USD(A&S).

(1) When practical, MPS patrons will be given 90-days advance notice for withdrawal of service except for abuse of privileges, when withdrawn by the host-nation government, or because of other conditions beyond the control of DoD.

(2) Limitations on service to authorized patrons may be made by the Combatant Command, the Services, or the installation commander after review of the impact of continued service on facilities and manpower. Coordination with the affected organizations and individuals, through the chain of command and MPSA, will occur prior to implementing limitations.

3.7. VIOLATIONS.

a. Misuse or violations of postal policy and procedures by Service members may be subject to Chapter 47 of Title 10, U.S.C., also known and referred to in this issuance as the "Uniform Code of Military Justice," and appropriate civil prosecution procedures for civilian employees.

b. In addition to any action that might be taken under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or the federal law, the following penalties may be proposed for misuse of the MPS or for misconduct by non-postal personnel:

(1) Authorized patrons will not have their ability to send or receive personal letter mail or correspondence revoked for any reason. However, conditional patrons will lose all privileges when revoked.

(2) Postal personnel must notify the concerning commander and the senior postal representative of any offenses committed, who in turn will notify the Military Services responsible for the MPO of the offense committed and actions taken.

c. Penalties for postal personnel will be imposed for misuse of, or misconduct associated with, the MPS. DoD civilians and contractors may be prosecuted and removed from the foreign country.

3.8. FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND EXPLOSIVES.

a. Government-owned weapons should be shipped through logistics channels. However, when mailed, the installation transportation officer must certify in writing that the logistics system is unable to transport the weapons. Mailing must be in accordance with the USPS Domestic Mail Manual (USPS Postal Operations Manual, Title 31, U.S.C.) and Defense Transportation Regulation 4500.9-R, and must not violate any host nation restrictions.

b. The shipment of government-owned firearms is prohibited through foreign postal systems.

c. Contractors may not ship company-owned weapons through the MPS.

d. Privately owned weapons are only mailable through the MPS in accordance with the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, USPS Postal Operations Manual, USPS Publication 52, and host-nation law (unless host-nation law does not apply due to an international agreement). The MPS will not be used when shipment of firearms is authorized as part of household goods movement.

e. Ammunition, explosives, any replica or inert explosive devices, and military training devices originally designed for combat use are prohibited in the MPS in accordance with the USPS Domestic Mail Manual and International Mail Manual.

3.9. PROCEDURES AND RESTRICTIONS.

a. Country-specific mail restrictions are documented in the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, USPS Postal Operations Manual, USPS International Mail Manual, USPS Publication 52, AMPS, and host country agreements.

b. Non-mailable items removed from the mail will be handled in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M and DoD 4525.8-M.

- c. Mail containing personally identifiable information must be sent through USPS mail to meet the Domestic Mail Manual requirements.
- d. Mail with contents classified SECRET can only be sent as registered, official mail in accordance with Volume 3 of DoD Manual 5200.01, outside the United States. Within the United States, classified materials up to and including SECRET may be sent registered official mail, first-class official mail with tracking service (for CONFIDENTIAL only), or through small package express carriers.
- e. Only doctors or pharmacies may send prescription medications or other controlled substances through the MPS in accordance with the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, USPS Postal Operations Manual, USPS International Mail Manual, and Publication 52. Synthetic drugs that stimulate the central nervous system are non-mailable.
- f. Medical specimens and forensic and urinalysis samples may be sent through the MPS using official postage in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M, DoD 4525.8-M, USPS Domestic Mail Manual, USPS Postal Operations Manual, and USPS Publication 52.
- g. Non-cremated human remains must be transported through mortuary affairs channels, not through MPS. Cremated remains of DoD civilians, employees, dependents, and retirees in an area outside the United States may be sent through the MPS, subject to host-nation laws, in a sealed container using Priority Mail Express Military Service. All remains, cremated or non-cremated, of Service members who were on active duty must be transported in accordance with DoDD 1300.22. Personal effects of deceased service members may be sent through the MPS by the member's military unit or mortuary affairs section.
- h. Mailers will consider the maximum insurance value of \$50,000 when sending high-value items via registered mail.
- i. An O-6 or civilian equivalent must approve requests for mail covers and notify MPSA.
- j. The international nature of the military postal service authorizes search and seizure procedures for the handling of illegal items that are prohibited by federal law to be sent through the MPS.
 - (1) Searches (without opening of a postal item) are permitted in accordance with visual exterior screening, x-raying, use of military working dogs, and chemical or biological sensors to comply with host nation requirements.
 - (2) Inspections (opening the postal item and looking at interior contents) require a search warrant issued by a federal court or a search authorization that is issued by an individual authorized by Military Rule of Evidence 315(d) where probable cause has been established. Search warrants issued and authorized for inspecting postal items within the MPS are outside the jurisdiction of the state courts.
 - (3) Seizures (confiscating postal items or contents) require written authorizations by either of the authorities in Paragraph 3.9.j.(2) for each item that is being seized.

(4) Mail covers require the written authorization by the commander in the grade of O-6 or above, in the chain of command at the installation where the investigation is taking place. Mail covers are issued as part of the investigative process and are in force for a limited duration.

3.10. ADDRESSING.

- a. DoD addresses will be in accordance with USPS Publication 28. Ship or unit names or designations are not required but may be used on mail addresses.
- b. Personal mail will be addressed to a specific individual, not a duty position.
- c. Official mail will be addressed to an organization or duty position. Only the addressee or designee authorized in writing may open incoming official mail. Outgoing official items delivered to an OMC may only be opened in the presence of the originating OMM.
- d. Mail addressed as “Any Service Member” or other similar addressees is prohibited and will not be delivered by MPOs.
- e. A change of address request takes precedence over a customs form for redirecting mail. Mail will not be redirected to another patron utilizing customs forms.

3.11. RETAIL.

- a. Retail operations, including selling stamps and money orders, will be in accordance with DoD 4525.6-M, USPS Domestic Mail Manual, USPS Postal Operations Manual, USPS F-101 Handbook, and USPS Postal Bulletin.
- b. DoD will not reimburse claims for mail insured by USPS since they collect insurance fees at time of mailing. Insurance claims will be adjudicated and paid by USPS.
- c. Personnel assigned the responsibility of managing finance or retail operations shall perform audits in accordance with USPS F101 Handbook and DoD procedures. Official mail will be audited using DoD audit procedures.

3.12. FREE MAIL.

- a. Free mail may be authorized, for no more than 12 months, for active duty members of the Military Services and DoD civilians at postal activities in areas where Service members do not have access to retail postal services. Free mail privileges are permitted to allow members of the Military Services and DoD civilians assigned overseas during periods of armed conflict a means to communicate with others for a temporary period during which postal services are not sufficient, or until an infrastructure can be established that supports access to traditional postal services.
- b. The Secretary of Defense may authorize free mail privileges where retail services are not available and the Military Services are:

- (1) Engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.
 - (2) Engaged in military operations involving armed conflict with a hostile foreign force.
 - (3) Engaged in temporary, forward-deployed, military operations under arduous circumstances in areas where access to postal facilities is limited; in general arduous circumstances refer to a lack of access to postal services (acceptance and delivery of mail) and specifically, a lack of access to financial services (stamps, postage meters), or the Service member's or DoD civilian's inability to purchase postal services for letter mail.
 - (4) Serving with a friendly foreign force in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent.
 - (5) Temporarily deployed overseas for an operational contingency in arduous circumstances.
 - (6) Hospitalized anywhere due to disease or injury incurred as a result of service in a designated area.
- c. Requests to establish free mail areas must include:
- (1) Recommended location for free mail designation and justification.
 - (2) Estimated number of personnel to be served, to include the number of members of the Military Services and DoD civilians, as well as hospitalized Service members as defined by Section 101 of Title 10, U.S.C.
 - (3) Estimated date when an MPO will be established.
 - (4) Estimated date of the availability of USPS stamps and envelopes in the free mail area.
- d. Areas designated for free mail will be terminated by the CCDR once an MPO is established or postage and envelopes in the free mail area become available.

3.13. TRANSPORTATION.

- a. USPS contracts with commercial carriers to transport DoD postal items. MPSA coordinates with military carriers when commercial carriers are unavailable.
- b. Correspondence will be dispatched separately as deferred air or surface transportation.
- c. Drop shipments are not authorized at postal facilities.
- d. Privately owned vehicles are not authorized to transport mail.

GLOSSARY

G.1. ACRONYMS.

AMPS	Automated Military Postal System
CAAF	contractors authorized to accompany the force
CCDR	Combatant Commander
DoDD	DoD directive
GSA	General Services Administration
IDS	intra and inter-theater delivery service
IGF	inherently governmental functions
LOA	letter of authorization
MMT	military mail terminal
MPO	military post office
MPS	Military Postal Service
MPSA	Military Postal Service Agency
OMC	official mail center
OMM	official mail manager
PES	private express statutes
U.S.C.	United States Code
USD(A&S)	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment
USPS	United States Postal Service
ZIP	zone improvement plan

G.2. DEFINITIONS. Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

AMPS. A web-enabled management system that integrates and optimizes business processes across the USPS and the DoD.

CAAF. Contractor personnel, including all tiers of subcontractor personnel, who are authorized to accompany the force in applicable contingency operations and have been afforded CAAF status through a LOA. CAAF generally include all U.S. citizen and third country national employees not normally residing within the operational area whose area of performance is in the direct vicinity of U.S. forces and who routinely are co-located with U.S. forces (especially in non-permissive environments). Personnel co-located with U.S. forces will be afforded CAAF status through an LOA. In some cases, CCDR subordinate commanders may designate mission-essential host nation or local national contractor employees (e.g., interpreters) as CAAF. CAAF status does not apply to contractor personnel in support of contingencies within the boundaries and territories of the United States.

container. A receptacle used to hold postal items while in transit.

contingency operation. Defined in Section 101(a)(13) of Title 10, U.S.C.

correspondence. Items that may be personal or official including interoffice correspondence, does not have postage or special services applied nor postage paid for by a patron. It would be mail if U.S. postage were applied and has the same protections as postage paid mail. Interoffice correspondence transportation must comply with PES requirements within the United States.

custodian of postal effects. Military Service members, DoD civilian employees, or contractors accountable for administration of the postal effects entrusted to them by USPS. (The USPS term is Unit Reserve Stock Custodians.)

dispatch. Postal items moved to the next location until final disposition.

drop shipments. Shipment of 20 or more items presented for acceptance by a mailer within 24 hours.

facility and equipment upgrade plan. The plan identifies and allocates resources for the improvements as part of the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution system.

facility continuity of operations plan. This plan assumes the facility is inoperable for a period of time due to a natural disaster or man-made event and designates alternate locations to ensure continued postal support.

first-class mail. Mail weighing up to 13 ounces.

franked mail. Official mail sent without postage prepayment by members and members-elect of Congress, the Vice President, and in support of United Nations official mail. Mail must relate to the mailer's official business, activities, and duties. The mailpiece bears a written signature, printed facsimile signature, or other required marking instead of a postage stamp.

free mail. A Secretary of Defense-approved privilege for first-class mail sent from a contingency operation that must enter USPS control in accordance with Section 3401 of Title 39, U.S.C. It is postage free to the authorized patron, and DoD pays for postage and transportation costs.

IDS. As a subset of the MPS, IDS is a postage free delivery service for DoD patron's correspondence that is established between MPOs outside of the U.S. and USPS control.

IGFs. Defined by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 11-01.

international mail. Mail that originates in one country and arrives in another country. Mail to and from MPOs is considered domestic mail, not international mail, unless the mailing or delivery address contains the name of a foreign city and country.

LOA. A letter completed and issued by the contracting officer or designee to CAAF and selected non-CAAF (e.g., local national private security contractors), as required under Subpart 225.74 of the Department of Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement Procedures, Guidance, and Information, that states the intended length of assignment in the theater of operations and identifies the planned use of government facilities and privileges in the theater of operations, as authorized by the contract. Authorizations may include such privileges as access to the exchange facilities, the commissary, and use of government messing and billeting. The LOA must include the name of the approving government official.

mail. Correspondence that has postage applied and paid for by a USPS mailer, authorized DoD patron, or by the Military Services for free mail.

mail cover. The process by which a non-consensual record of information is made of data appearing on the outside cover of sealed or unsealed class of mail matter, or by which a record is made of the contents of any unsealed class of mail matter as allowed by law, to obtain information to: protect national security; locate a fugitive; obtain evidence of commission of a crime; obtain evidence of a violation or attempted violation of a postal statute; or assist in the identification of property or proceeds or assets forfeitable under law.

mail room. A designated, secure location where postal items are received, sorted, and distributed. Mail rooms do not offer retail services.

MMT. A postal facility also known as mail control activity, fleet mail center, and aerial mail terminal. MMTs sort incoming and outgoing postal and distribute and resolve issues on commercial and military modes of transportation.

MPO. Postal facilities categorized as either Army or Air Force Post Offices or Fleet Post Offices. MPOs provide USPS retail services to authorized DoD patrons and process postal items.

MPS. The DoD postal organizations, personnel, and facilities used to process, transport, and distribute postal items for authorized patrons. The MPS provides service to mail room locations, operates MPOs and MMTs primarily overseas and OMCs worldwide.

MPSA. A jointly staffed agency providing strategic direction, technical and procedural guidance, coordination, and assistance for the MPS to promote compliance with U.S. law and USPS, GSA, and DoD issuances. MPSA is the single DoD point of contact with the USPS.

official correspondence. DoD business items without postage applied.

official mail. DoD business mail with postage and fees paid by appropriated funds.

OMC. MPS facility where DoD business mail and correspondence, and occasionally personal mail, is received, sorted, and distributed. OMCs process and apply postage to official correspondence and process personal and official mail.

OMM. A formally trained and appointed OMM who serves as the official mail program manager for either DoD, a DoD Component, an installation, or multiple installations with oversight and responsibility for postal support to a postage application site(s). This individual advises on all official mail matters.

official mail program. A program to manage the organizations, personnel, and facilities used to process and distribute official postal items for DoD authorized patrons. Official mail is transported through the USPS and MPS systems.

personal mail. Personal correspondence that has postage applied and paid for by the USPS mailer, authorized DoD patron, or DoD-paid postage for free mail.

PES. Civil and criminal federal laws that restrict carriage of letters over post roads (streets) to USPS. Exceptions allow government agencies to carry their mail with their employees or pay for the carriage by an outside entity by paying 6 times the normal USPS postage rate.

postal. Personal and official mail and correspondence.

postal facility. MPS location that handles personal and official mail and correspondence.

postal finance officer. Postal personnel, trained and designated in writing, responsible for managing postal finance and retail services at MPOs. A postal finance officer is permitted to oversee one or more postal activities.

postal items. Includes official mail, personal mail and correspondence.

postal offense. Report on acts that violate laws, agreements, USPS and DoD regulations, or jeopardize the security of mail and other USPS property.

postal personnel. Personnel assigned and trained to provide MPS support to authorized patrons.

postal support. Includes all functions performed by DoD personnel and organizations or on behalf of DoD from acceptance through delivery of personal and official mail and correspondence for DoD patrons. Postal support includes administrative, management, training, and quality assurance functions.

Priority Mail Express Military Service. A USPS trademarked mail class offered by military post offices that provides expedited delivery service for authorized items meeting size and weight restrictions.

registered mail. USPS' most secure service that provides a chain of receipts to monitor mail movement from the point of acceptance to delivery.

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