

Postal Operations Manual

August 1, 1996

POM7

124.722 Fines and Imprisonment

Anyone found guilty of violating the rules and regulations in this part while on property under the charge and control of the Postal Service is subject to a fine of not more than \$50, or imprisonment of not more than 30 days, or both. Nothing contained in these rules and regulations is to be construed to abrogate any other federal laws or regulations or any state or local laws or regulations applicable to any area in which the property is situated.

125 Lobby Management**125.1 Image****125.11 General**

The post office lobby is the principal business office of the Postal Service. For many customers, the lobby is their only close-up view of postal operations; therefore, its appearance, convenience, and efficiency directly affect the Postal Service's public image. Consequently, to enhance corporate identity and continue the standardization process, lobbies must be maintained according to established postal guidelines (e.g., painting, redecorating, etc.).

125.12 Responsibility

To effectively manage lobbies, postal managers must allocate and use available resources as necessary to ensure that postal retail services are available and accessible to customers in a timely, efficient manner and in an orderly, clean, and attractive environment.

Lobby and retail services must be scheduled during hours most appropriate to the needs of the majority of customers in the local area. Postal units located in a business area normally will be open during hours maintained by that business community. Stations and branches are not required to maintain the same hours as main offices when the needs of their respective local customers are different.

125.2 Service Levels**125.21 General**

It is not economically possible for the Postal Service to provide instantaneous service for each customer entering the lobby. Instead, the Postal Service goal is to provide a level of service that produces a waiting time of less than 5 minutes for those customers who cannot be served immediately. Postmasters achieve this goal through the following:

- a. Proper training and staff scheduling.
- b. Using procedures and equipment that expedite customer transactions, such as making maximum use of integrated retail terminals (IRTs), staff scheduling, the Lobby Director Program (see 125.4), vending equipment maintained in working order, and other line management techniques (see 125.43).

- c. Using the retail analysis staffing and scheduling model to determine how many employees should be on duty during all periods to maintain service levels within these guidelines.

125.22 **National Holidays**

Post offices are kept open on holidays for the time that is needed to meet reasonable customer requirements (see Exhibit 125.22). Mail is received, collected, and dispatched by holiday schedules. Incoming mail is distributed to post office boxes at the main office. Generally, this is also done at stations and branches. The USPS observes these holidays:

- a. New Year's Day.
- b. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday.
- c. George Washington's Birthday.
- d. Memorial Day.
- e. Independence Day.
- f. Labor Day.
- g. Columbus Day.
- h. Veterans Day.
- i. Thanksgiving Day.
- j. Christmas Day.

125.3 **Space Utilization**

125.31 **General**

The first priority for use of space in lobbies is to make postal services and products available to the public in an orderly, efficient, attractive, and convenient manner. It is also important to display postal services and products in a manner that effectively markets those services to customers, following standard established postal guidelines. Any space that is not needed for that purpose may be made available for purposes prescribed by law or for use by other government agencies under the conditions explained in this subchapter.

Exhibit 125.22

Holiday Service Levels**A. Holidays Widely Observed**

(New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day)

	Window	Post Office Box	Firm Call	Delivery Business	Delivery Residential	Delivery Special	Collection
Friday Holiday							
Friday	None	Holiday Schedule	None	None	None	Holiday Schedule	Time Decal
Saturday	Limited	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Sunday	None	Normal	None	None	None	Normal	None
Saturday Holiday							
Friday	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Saturday	None	Holiday Schedule	None	None	None	Holiday Schedule	Time Decal
Sunday	None	Normal	None	None	None	Normal	Time Decal
Sunday or Monday Holiday							
Saturday	Limited	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Sunday	None	Normal	None	None	None	Normal	None
Monday	None	Holiday Schedule	None	None	None	Holiday Schedule	Time Decal ¹
Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday Holiday							
Preceding Day	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Holiday	None	Holiday Schedule	None	None	None	Holiday Schedule	Time Decal

B. Holidays Not Widely Observed

(All Monday holidays: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday; George Washington's Birthday; Columbus Day, Veterans Day)

	Window	Post Office Box	Firm Call	Delivery Business	Delivery Residential	Delivery Special	Collection
Saturday	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Sunday	None	Normal	None	None	None	Normal	None
Monday ²	Limited	Sunday Schedule	Limited	None	None	Holiday Schedule	Time Decal ¹

Note: Exceptions to these service levels must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President.

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¹ When a holiday is observed on Monday and no residential collection is scheduled on Sunday, a full residential collection may be provided on the Monday holiday. Consecutive days without collections should be avoided.

² Veterans Day, November 11, is the only movable holiday in the group of holidays designated as widely observed; the other three holidays listed in section B are always observed on Mondays. When Veterans Day falls on any day except Sunday, the services provided on that holiday are the same as those shown for Monday. When Veterans Day falls on Sunday, the service levels are the same as those shown for Sunday, but the holiday is observed on Monday by the Postal Service and treated as a Monday holiday.

Definition of Terms

Normal - Service normally provided on that particular day of the week.

Time Decal - Collections from boxes with last pickup-time decals identifying the boxes.

Limited - Service adjusted to meet the limited needs of a community on that particular day.

125.32 Furnishings and Fixtures**125.321 General**

Lobby furniture and fixtures aid customers in the conduct of their business, expedite their movements while in the lobby, and provide them with materials and information. Postmasters should ensure that the selection, placement, and daily maintenance of lobby furnishings conform to the lobby standards and enhance the overall appearance of the lobby. All lobby furniture and equipment must be properly secured to the floor to prevent them from tipping over.

125.322 Writing Tables and Customer Forms

Tables, ledges, and shelves are provided for customers to use while addressing mail and completing forms related to postal transactions. Postmasters are responsible for obtaining the proper number and type of these items to serve customer needs at each unit. These items should be placed carefully within the lobby so that they do not impede the movement of customers to the queuing line, and they should be kept adequately lighted. Tables, ledges, shelves, etc., must be securely anchored to the wall and/or floor. Publication 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*, should be available for customer use in the lobby. Unit supervisors should ensure that pens are available and all required customer forms are available on the tables or in appropriate "Take One" racks. Such forms must be kept neatly arranged at all times and resupplied as necessary on a daily basis.

125.33 Queuing Systems Criteria

Wherever possible, queuing systems should be used to ensure that an orderly flow of lobby traffic is maintained and that customers are served on a first-come, first-served basis. Queuing systems should be installed when two full-time and one or more part-time (4 hours per day) retail service counters are in operation. There are many variations in equipment design and quality. District managers, Customer Service and Sales, should plan procurement of queuing systems to take advantage of price discounts for quantity purchases. A proper plan includes the following:

- a. A parcel slide, if space permits.
- b. An adequate number of stanchions and rope footage.
- c. The proper number of correctly worded signs.
- d. Sufficient queuing area for the number of peak-period customers.
- e. Installation of the system during nonbusiness hours.
- f. Placement of queuing systems to ensure free and unobstructed access to the principal entrance and exit doors used by the public. Also, ensure that all retail service counters have an unobstructed view of the head of the queue.

125.34 Lobby Displays and Promotions**125.341 General**

The amount of lobby space suitable for posters and signs varies, and the total amount of space needed for all postings approved at any one time may

exceed the amount of space available in some offices. Local managers should display postings according to the following priorities:

- a. Mandatory Postal Service postings are Poster 7, Poster 31-B, Poster 74, Poster 76, Poster SSS# 46, Poster 296, Poster 158, and in season Poster 3-124, and other forms on a space available basis.
- b. Postal Service mailing forms to facilitate conduct of retail operations, including rate charts.
- c. Specialized Postal Service displays, such as promotional material for revenue-generating products and services, packaging, and stamp collecting product displays.
- d. Postal Service announcements and consumer information.
- e. Notices by members of Congress.
- f. Postings for other government agencies.

125.342 Lobby Displays

Certain mandatory notices, posters, and signs must be posted clearly and continuously in the lobbies of all classified postal units. Some mandatory postings may be for temporary periods. Many optional posters and displays are also provided. A list of lobby displays is contained in Exhibit 125.342.

Offices must display the following decals, labels, notices, posters, publications, and signs. Except for those indicated with an asterisk, these items are available from the material distribution centers (MDCs).

Exhibit 125.342
List of Lobby Displays

Number	Title	Date
Mandatory Postings		
Label 6	Vending Equipment Out of Order (Always use in lieu of handwritten signs.)	6/87
Notice 123	Ratefold	7/96
Poster 7	Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property	5/95
Poster 31-B	Mail Problem? (Holds Consumer Service Cards.)	10/90
Poster 31-H	Consumer Service Card (Must be displayed when Poster 31-B is not used to hold Consumer Service Cards.)	9/89
Poster 74	Packaging Pointers	1/96
Poster 76	Some Things Were Never Meant to Be Mailed	5/95
Poster 158	Possession of Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons on Postal Property Is Prohibited by Law	05/95
Poster 296	Notice of Reward	5/95
Poster SSS 46	Selective Service Poster	6/88
PUB 65	National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory	1996
PUB 66 ¹	ZIP+4 State Directory	1996
PUB 201	A Consumer's Guide to Postal Services and Products. <i>Note:</i> It has been noted that many offices are not displaying this publication. It must be displayed in <i>all</i> post offices, stations, and branches. It is provided to offices at no charge.	1/95
Sign 145	Check Acceptance Policy (Counter easel — a professionally printed facsimile may be substituted.)	12/94
Signs ²	Signs indicating: Hours of service (retail service counter and post office box). Time when all First-Class post office box mail normally distributed. Letter drops and dispatch times. Services offered at retail service counter position (only if not full service). Emergency contacts when office is closed. Manager on duty.	

¹ Publication 66 is available through the National Customer Support Center, US Postal Service, 6060 Primacy Pky Ste 101, Memphis, TN 38188-0001.

² Signs indicating hours and other services must be procured locally.

125.35 Scheduled Use**125.351 General**

Retail Operations at Headquarters is responsible for policy guidance over the use of lobby floor and poster space for nonpostal purposes. Advertising and Promotion is responsible for scheduling and controls point of purchase advertising for the Postal Service as well as that of other agencies. All requests from government agencies for scheduled use of lobby space on a multiregional, statewide, or larger basis must be forwarded to the area manager, Sales and Account Management, for approval. Requests for scheduled use of space on a less-than-statewide basis must be forwarded to area Sales and Account Management for evaluation and final approval. Scheduled use of lobby space by government agencies is provided in the following order:

- a. Federal agencies.
- b. State agencies.
- c. County and municipal agencies.

125.352 Terms and Conditions

The scheduled use of available space in post office lobbies by other government agencies is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- a. Each user must pay a fee, to be established by the Postal Service based on the cost and value of the space involved, plus any direct costs incurred by the Postal Service. The amount of the fee to be charged at each type of facility is published periodically in the *Postal Bulletin*.
- b. The user agency must arrange for the distribution of any literature or display material to the facility with available space and must pay all costs involved.
- c. Floor space is allotted in increments of eight square feet and for predetermined periods, normally one calendar month. Use of floor space is restricted to kiosks or other semipermanent display stands of stable construction, located where they will not impede normal customer traffic or pose a security problem and must meet safety requirements.
- d. Examples of counter cards, posters, and other display material must be available for Headquarters, Advertising and Promotion review, as appropriate, at least 3 weeks before the distribution date. Headquarters, Advertising and Promotion or Sales and Account Management will determine the suitability of the material for display in postal lobbies and will provide the user with specific distribution instructions on the available sites.
- e. Counter cards must measure no more than 11 by 14 inches.
- f. Posters must be of standard dimension (24 by 36 inches, 14 by 21 inches, or 11 by 14 inches), must be approved by Advertising and Promotion prior to printing, and must bear a printed expiration date, usually one month from the date of posting, unless specific exceptions have been granted by the approving office.

- g. Displays or other dispensers for "Take One" brochures or forms must be accompanied by a life-cycle supply of those items. The facility manager ensures that the dispensers are replenished as needed from the supply of items.

125.36 **Unscheduled Use**

125.361 **Bulletin Boards**

The following guidelines apply to the use of bulletin boards:

- a. Postmasters may install bulletin boards in public areas of post offices or set apart a convenient place to display official government notices, notices of public assemblies, judicial sales, official election notices issued by state or local government, and similar announcements. These display privileges must be afforded without discrimination.
- b. Bulletin boards may not display private business advertisements; placards, cards, or notices; photographs or likenesses of any member of state legislature or Congress; or political pictures, cartoons, or other material designed to influence an election.
- c. Notices by members of Congress are limited to public announcements of pending competitive civil service examinations and pertinent information about application for appointment to the U.S. service academies. These notices are displayed only if current and within the district of the sponsoring representative or the state of the sponsoring senator. Such displays must conform to the specifications in this section. If a postmaster believes that a notice does not conform to these specifications, the postmaster may display the poster pending the decision of the area manager, Customer Service and Sales. Notices that include the member's picture must be returned to the member with an explanation of why they cannot be displayed. Such displays must:
 - (1) Be no larger than 9 by 12 inches.
 - (2) Contain no photograph, picture, or likeness of the member of Congress.
 - (3) Contain no signature and/or printed name of the member of Congress larger than ½-inch (48-point) type.
 - (4) Contain the closing date for submission of applications.
- d. If space is available, one recruiting notice (no larger than 8½ by 11 inches) of each branch of the armed services may be placed on bulletin boards.

125.362 **Voting Information**

The following guidelines apply to voting information:

- a. Any notices posted regarding voting may not contain any partisan political messages or symbols designed to influence the outcome of an election, including, but not limited to, photographs or other likenesses of incumbents or candidates for any public office. The notices must be no larger than 8½ by 11 inches. Names and addresses of federal legislators may not appear in larger than ¼-inch (18-point) type.

- b. Such notices must be displayed in lobbies that have public bulletin boards. Each notice must remain posted only as long as it contains current information applying to customers served by the displaying postal facility and must be removed not more than 2 years from the date of receipt for posting. At locations where there is no public bulletin board or there is not enough space on the board for individual display, the notices should be assembled for public inspection in a binder or on a clipboard. Nothing in this section precludes postmasters from displaying additional material on public bulletin boards as space permits, as provided in 125.361.

125.37 **Blind Vendor Facilities**

The Randolph-Sheppard Act (20 U.S.C. 107–107f) requires that preference be given to certified blind persons for installing and operating vending facilities on postal property. A state licensing agency designated by the Department of Health and Human Services must apply on behalf of a blind vendor to the officer in charge of the postal facility where the space is desired. The Postal Service determines if a permit for the vending facility should be granted. Handbook EL-602, *Food Service Operations*, provides guidance for Postal Service compliance with the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

125.4 **Lobby Director Program**

125.41 **Description**

The *lobby director* is a friendly, knowledgeable clerk in the lobby who greets customers, determines what they need, and assists them in selecting services and preparing paperwork before they reach the service counter. Lobby directors perform the same duties as the clerks behind the counter, except that they do not handle money.

125.42 **Purpose and Scope**

The program's objective is to reduce the average customer waiting time by assisting many customers *before* they reach the retail service counter. In addition, it aims to reduce customers' perceived waiting time by demonstrating that the Postal Service intends to provide prompt, efficient, and courteous service. The lobby director should be used during peak traffic periods during the day.

The lobby director program is appropriate for high-traffic offices that:

- a. Might otherwise have long lines at several periods of the day, month, or year.
- b. Receive customer complaints about long lines, waiting time, or employee discourtesy.
- c. Have two full-time and at least one part-time retail service counters in operation.

Note: To implement the lobby director program, there must be enough lobby space for an extra person to work the line.

125.43 Implementation**125.431 Notify Employees**

Managers should provide all clerks with a program overview that describes the program and its objectives as well as benefits for customers, retail clerks, and employees acting as the lobby director.

125.432 Encourage Volunteers

All employees with retail responsibilities in a unit may volunteer for the lobby director program. Each volunteer will be given the opportunity to serve as a lobby director.

125.433 Provide Training

Each lobby director receives 8 hours of training that focuses on communications and human relations skills, salesmanship, and knowledge of Postal Service products and services.

125.434 Uniforms

Lobby directors must wear a standard retail clerk uniform blouse, slacks, skirt, or jumper, and black or navy blue shoes.

125.435 Obtain Supplies and Equipment

Lobby directors may work from a mobile cart or a table. The following supplies should be available:

- a. Letter scale.
- b. Mailing forms and labels.
- c. Tape.
- d. Packaging products for sale to customers.
- e. Bad check list.
- f. Zone chart.
- g. Rate charts (giveaways).
- h. Publication 201, *A Consumer's Guide to Postal Services and Products*.
- i. Other brochures (giveaways).

125.5 Articles Found in Lobbies or Public Areas

When articles found in lobbies or in public areas around a post office are turned in to employees, the employees follow these procedures:

- a. Ask the finder to write down on a Postal Service routing slip (Item 0-13) name, address, telephone number, and a description of the article. Unless the article is Postal Service or government property or a money order, it can be returned to the finder if the loser does not claim it within 30 days.
- b. If the finder does not leave a name, want the article, or claim the article within 30 days after being notified that it is available, dispose of it in the same manner as unidentified material found loose in the mail. Do not return government property or money orders to the finder. Dispose of government property as prescribed by 691.54. Money orders should be mailed to the St. Louis Accounting Service Center.

- c. Note on the routing slip the date and disposition of the article. Also note the name of the employee handling the disposition. File the routing slip for 3 months, then destroy it. The postmaster should make sure that the article is not lost or damaged.

126 Retail Services Management

126.1 Purpose and Scope

In addition to operations involving direct contact with customers, retail clerks must report cash, sales of items, and stock on hand. They must also maintain records, complete data collection forms, and perform other related tasks as required. This section explains administrative responsibilities and applicable regulations.

126.2 Stamps and Accountable Stock Activities

126.21 General

The majority of all retail unit transactions involve the sale of stamps or postal stationery items. Therefore, all employees who provide or supervise retail service must have a thorough working knowledge of the accounting instructions for these materials. Further, it is essential for these employees to understand the requirements for ordering accountable stock (see Handbook F-1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures*).

126.22 Requisitioning Stamps and Accountable Stock

Retail units requisition stamp and accountable stock on schedules established by stamp distribution offices. Adjust requisitions whenever possible to permit ordering stamps in full sheets or packaged lots and postal cards or envelopes in full boxes or packaged lots. Detailed instructions are contained in Handbook F-1.

126.23 Counting Stamps and Accountable Stock

Retail employees count and verify stamp stock as it is received from the supply source and during audits. Recommended systematic methods for performing these tasks are described in Handbook F-1.

126.24 Protecting Stamps and Accountable Stock

Vaults, security containers of various types, and security cages are installed in postal facilities as needed for protective storage of accountable items. The Postal Inspection Service determines the amount and type of security equipment that is required. Details on the use and care of this equipment may be found in Handbook F-1.

Stamps, postal stationery, blank money orders, and other accountable items must be protected at all times. They may be stored in a locked cash drawer or cabinet for short periods during the duty day. At other times they must be stored in the main vault or security container that affords the best available protection. Detailed instructions for safeguarding accountable items are contained in Handbook F-1.