



Retail Operations Handbook

Handbook PO-209

August 2023
Transmittal Letter

A. Introduction. One of the key components of the “Ready-Now → Future-Ready” Strategic Initiatives is to use cost management, new technology, and workforce planning to improve operational efficiency. Proper day-to-day management, training, and sales skills are essential for maintaining costs, improving operational efficiency, and providing a world-class customer experience. Handbook PO-209 serves as a tool for providing Postal Service employees information about retail operations.

B. Explanation. This handbook provides direction and guidance for postmasters, managers, and supervisors with retail responsibility. The handbook is the cornerstone to understanding the policies and procedures for day-to-day retail management.

For more detailed information on any Retail-related accounting procedures, refer to [Handbook F-101, Field Accounting Procedures](#), which is available on the Postal Service internal Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/hand/f101.pdf> — just use Handbook F-101’s search feature to locate your desired information.

C. Availability. This handbook is available online via the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site:

- Go to <http://blue.usps.gov>.
- In the left-hand column under “Essential Links,” click *PolicyNet*.
- On the PolicyNet page, click *HBKs*.

The direct URL for the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site is <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim>.

D. Rescissions. Any previously applicable directive that conflicts with this handbook is rescinded.

E. Comments. Submit questions and comments about the content of this directive in writing to:

RETAIL OPERATIONS
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 2306
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2306

F. Effective Date. This handbook is effective August 2023— it is a complete revision that reflects current information.

Elvin Mercado
Vice President
Retail and Post Office Operations

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1 Introduction

1-1 Overview of Duties and Responsibilities of Retail Personnel

Handbook PO-209, *Retail Operations Handbook*, covers the duties and responsibilities of Post Office personnel with retail responsibilities. The information encompasses the following positions:

- a. Full-time and part-time sales and services associates (SSAs).
- b. Sales, services/distribution associates (SSDAs).
- c. Postal support employee (PSE) SSDAs.
- d. Lead sales and services associates (LSSA/T-7).
- e. Any other employee who performs duties at the retail counter.

This handbook refers to all employees who perform duties at the retail counter as retail associates (RAs). The latest descriptions for the SSA and LSSA positions are described in subchapters [1-2](#) and [1-3](#) of this handbook.

1-2 Duties of a Sales and Services Associate

An SSA has the following duties:

- a. Perform a variety of sales and customer services at a retail window, such as the following:
 - (1) Sell stamps, stamped paper, and other retail products.
 - (2) Maintain a sufficient inventory of retail products.
 - (3) Provide passport acceptance (where applicable) and other retail services.

While performing these duties, the SSA may do the following:

- (1) Use a computerized system.
- (2) Accept and deliver packages and accountable mail.
- (3) Issue and cash foreign and domestic postal money orders.
- (4) Accept and respond to customer claims and inquiries.
- (5) Provide information to the public regarding postal regulations.

- b. Provide sales and customer service support, such as the following:
 - (1) Greet customers and explain store layout.
 - (2) Determine special interests and refer to sales and promotional programs.
 - (3) Offer assistance in product selection.
 - (4) Provide lobby assistance that includes monitoring the retail line, directing customers to the self-service kiosk (SSK) (where applicable), and using Mobile Point of Service (mPOS) to complete transactions (where applicable).
- c. Provide product and service information to customers, as follows:
 - (1) Inform customers about special offers and related merchandise.
 - (2) Promote products based on customer needs.
 - (3) Provide additional information regarding product features and services.
- d. Assist customers with transactions, and handle and process customer purchases and returns relating to products and services, including using a point-of-service (POS) system.
- e. Maintain the appearance of store as follows:
 - (1) Set up, arrange, and replenish displays and merchandise racks.
 - (2) Ensure that display and selling areas, workstations, and storage areas are presentable to customers.
 - (3) Perform routine maintenance on SSKs and mPOS, including trouble shooting.
- f. Conduct product inventories as follows:
 - (1) Count items on hand.
 - (2) Attach and remove security devices.
 - (3) Account for items on display.
 - (4) Verify and record sales floor inventory and shrinkage.
 - (5) Bring inventory discrepancies and shrinkage reports to the attention of the appropriate supervisory person.
- g. Verify presort and bulk mailings of all classifications by computing and maintaining a mailer's credit balance on a current basis.
- h. Check and set post office postage meters.
- i. Rent Post Office boxes, receive rental payments, conduct reference checks, and complete related forms.
- j. Perform passport duties as assigned, including the following:
 - (1) Verify the customer's identification and photograph.
 - (2) Administer the oath.
 - (3) Review the customer's application for completeness.
 - (4) Affix the stamp or seal on the application.
 - (5) Ensure that all documents are stored securely and mailed promptly.
- k. When required, assign and clear accountable items and distribute mail.

1-3 Duties of a Lead Sales and Services Associate

An LSSA has the following duties:

- a. Perform a variety of sales and customer services at a retail window, such as the following:
 - (1) Sell stamps, stamped paper, and other retail products.
 - (2) Maintain a sufficient inventory of retail products.
 - (3) Provide passport acceptance (where applicable) and other retail services.

While performing these duties, the LSSA may do the following:

- (1) Use a computerized system.
 - (2) Accept and deliver packages and accountable mail.
 - (3) Issue and cash foreign and domestic postal money orders.
 - (4) Accept and respond to customer claims and inquiries.
 - (5) Provide information to the public regarding postal regulations.
- b. Rent Post Office boxes, receive rental payments, conduct reference checks, and complete related forms.
- c. Provide lobby assistance that includes monitoring the retail line, directing customers to the self-service kiosk (SSK) (where applicable), and using mPOS to complete transactions (where applicable).
- d. Communicate and provide administrative and technical guidance to retail and Post Office operations employees assigned to the unit, as follows:
 - (1) Inform them of changes or clarifications in policies, procedures, operations, schedules, and regulations.
 - (2) Ensure that work is performed efficiently.
- e. Forecast and maintain a separate stamped inventory to fill requisitions submitted by other retail clerks assigned to the offices.
- f. Prepare a local bank deposit and a consolidated funds bank deposit, and prepare and maintain unit accounting records of retail activities.
- g. As required, conduct or witness transfers of fixed credits between employees assisting in the physical count of stock, as follows:
 - (1) Review fixed credits periodically and recommend adjustments if necessary.
 - (2) Examine and ensure the integrity of security containers assigned to employees for the storing of their fixed credit, and report any lack of conformity with security regulations.
- h. Conduct product inventories by counting items on hand, as follows:
 - (1) Account for items on display.
 - (2) Verify and record sales floor inventory and shrinkage.
 - (3) Bring inventory discrepancies and shrinkage reports to the attention of the appropriate supervisory person.

- (4) Maintain an adequate supply of materials required for the operation of a retail office.
- i. Accept, process, and verify applications for redeemed stamps and stamped paper, and prepare and submit stock for destruction when necessary.
- j. Instruct and advise individual employees in correct financial and retail sales procedures.
- k. Follow the supervisor's directives to meet unit goals by planning, directing, organizing, and monitoring retail-related programs and projects and also the work of employees, as follows:
 - (1) Coordinate and schedule work hours.
 - (2) Supply the leadership necessary to secure a customer-friendly environment, and encourage professional appearance and work habits to accomplish effective and pleasant customer relationships.
 - (3) Make supervisor-approved entries to correct time and attendance records and to retain required supporting documents.
- l. Provide product and service information to customers, as follows:
 - (1) Inform customers about special offers and also sales and promotional programs.
 - (2) Promote products based on customer needs.
 - (3) Answers customer inquiries.
 - (4) Explain the store layout.
- m. Maintain the appearance of store as follows:
 - (1) Set up, arrange, and replenish displays and merchandise racks.
 - (2) Ensure that display and selling areas, workstations, and storage areas are presentable to customers.
 - (3) Check and maintain the Post Office SSK.
- n. Train new employees to ensure quality service.
- o. Maintain records and files, and submits reports as assigned.
- p. Verify presort and bulk mailings of all classifications by computing and maintaining a mailer's credit balance on a current basis.
- q. Perform passport duties as assigned, including the following:
 - (1) Verify the customer's identification and photograph.
 - (2) Administer the oath.
 - (3) Review the customer's application for completeness.
 - (4) Affix the stamp or seal on the application.
 - (5) Ensure that all documents are stored securely and mailed promptly.
- r. When required, assign and clear accountable items and distribute mail.
- s. Perform other duties as assigned.

1-4 Basic Retail Responsibilities

1-4.1 Uniforms

Retail employees must maintain a neat, clean, and creditable professional appearance.

1-4.2 Name Tags

All employees are required to wear name tags, which must be visible to the customer at all times.

1-4.3 Promptness and Report as Scheduled

Employees are required to be regular in attendance and to report promptly as scheduled, with the tools needed to conduct retail duties, such as retail drawer keys.

1-4.4 Courtesy (Employees and Customers)

Employees are required to treat both employees and customers with respect, as follows:

- a. Be courteous and obliging in the performance of duties.
- b. Refrain from loud or excessive talking and the use of profane language.
- c. Refrain from engaging in controversies while on duty.

1-4.5 Safety and Accident Reporting

Employees are required to work in a safe manner and to not endanger themselves or others, as follows:

- a. Report or correct any unsafe hazards or working conditions.
- b. Immediately report all accidents to management.

1-4.6 Adherence to Postal Service Regulations

All employees are required to be knowledgeable and to follow all Postal Service regulations and procedures, as follows:

- a. Protect mail, postal funds, accountable paper, and Postal Service property.
- b. Comply with current Aviation Mail Security instructions at <http://blue.usps.gov/aviationsecurity>.

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2 Rules of Conduct

2-1 Postal Service Regulations

No employee shall engage in criminal, dishonest, notoriously disgraceful or immoral conduct, or other conduct prejudicial to the Postal Service.

2-2 Misuse of Postal Service Funds

Postal Service funds must be kept safe without loaning, using, depositing in an unauthorized bank, or exchanging for other funds (e.g., cashing personal checks). Postal Service funds must be kept separate from personal funds.

2-3 Political Activities

Postal Service employees are restricted in their participation in political activity. Employees excluded are those who are employed on an irregular or occasional basis. These employees are restricted only while in an active-duty status and only for the entire 24 hours of any day of actual employment.

Employees may not display a political picture or sticker on property owned or leased by the Postal Service.

Employees may not wear a political badge or button while in uniform or while on duty.

Employees may not display a political picture or sticker on a private vehicle while that vehicle is being used for official Postal Service purposes.

2-4 Gambling

No employee while on property owned or leased by the Postal Service, or while on duty, will participate in any gambling activity. These activities include operating a gambling device, conducting or acting as an agent for a lottery or a pool, conducting a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbered slip or ticket

2-5 Suspicious Activity

Employees must report any suspicious activity immediately to the following contact:

GENERAL COUNSEL
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW 6TH FL
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2100

Employees also must report suspicious activity made under this section to the local inspector-in-charge.

Suspicious activity is any instance in which a person either within or outside the Postal Service uses or attempts to use bribery, undue influence, or coercion to induce or attempt to induce the employee to act or neglect to act regarding official responsibilities.

Suspicious activity is also any information that causes the employee to believe that there has been a violation of the federal criminal statute or any law or regulation directly or indirectly related to the responsibilities of the Postal Service.

2-6 Standards of Ethical Conduct

Postal Service employees must adhere to the general provisions of the standards of ethical conduct under Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

For more information, an employee may contact the Ethics and Legal Compliance team at 202-268-6346 or at *Ethics.Help@usps.gov*.

2-7 Unofficial Use of Postal Service Property and Supplies

No employee will use, directly or indirectly, or allow the use of the Postal Service or government property or services, including property leased to the Postal Service or a government agency, for other than officially approved activity. Employees have a duty to protect and conserve Postal Service property, equipment, supplies, and other property entrusted or issued to them.

2-8 Public Perception

The Post Office lobby is the principal business office of the Postal Service. For many customers, the lobby is their close-up view of Postal Service operations; therefore, the lobby's appearance, convenience, and efficiency directly affect the Postal Service's public image.

The engaging-the-customer transaction includes one that is done in clean lobbies stocked with forms and supplies and by retail associates (RAs) who are professionally attired, friendly, knowledgeable about Postal Service products and services and who know how to match these products to a customer's needs. The retail professional must follow the "GIST" (greet, inquire, suggest, and thank) model in every retail transaction.

All employees are to refrain from the following activities while working at the retail window or in the lobby:

- a. Loud or excessive talking.
- b. Eating or drinking.
- c. Use of personal cell phones.
- d. Engaging in personal (non-postal related) conversations with co-workers while customers are being assisted.
- e. Use of profane language.
- f. Storage of personal property (e.g., photographs, lunch bags, backpacks, purses).

Only employees that are serving customers should be in the proximity of the retail counter.

Playing music in the Post Office can bring on a number of problems and therefore music is not allowed. Music can be distracting to customers. Playing a local radio station means commercials will air in the Post Office and that airing violates the policy against commercial advertising on Postal Service property. Not one particular genre of music is representative of all Postal Service customers. Exceptions are digital signage test locations and Postal Service-approved music from Headquarters (e.g., Dear Santa Holiday CD 2005).

How Postal Service employees answer the telephone and what the customers see and hear from Postal Service employees directly affects a customer's perception of the Postal Service.

Employees are to answer the phone by the third ring, identify the office and themselves, and then offer customer assistance.

Postal Service managers must ensure that retail services are available and accessible to customers in a timely, efficient manner and in an orderly, clean, and attractive environment.

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3 Uniforms

3-1 General Policy

Supervisors are responsible for observing the uniforms of employees and taking appropriate corrective action, when necessary, to ensure that employees are properly attired. Postal Service employees are responsible for being properly dressed for duty. They are expected to maintain high standards of appearance, presenting to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their duties.

Uniformed employees are responsible for conforming to all uniform regulations and wearing only authorized uniforms and combinations. When scheduled to work the retail counter, all employees who receive uniform allowances should wear complete and proper uniform attire, pants or skirt, skort, polo shirt, shirt and tie (men), and neckwear or button cover (ladies). All clothing must be clean, neat, and professional.

Proper footwear is mandatory. Work shoes should be fully enclosed at the heel, toe, and sides and made of leather or a substantial synthetic material (*note: canvas and nylon are not acceptable*).

For more information on uniforms, see the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* (ELM), Section 930, “Work Clothes and Uniforms.” For more information on shoes, see Handbook EL-814, *Postal Employees Guide to Safety*.

Additional Uniform Program information is available on the Human Resources Shared Service Center Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/hr/hrssc-info/benefits/uniform-program.htm>. The phone number for the Human Resources Shared Service Center is 877-477-3273.

3-2 Retail Associates Who Work at the Retail Counter

Retail associates who may be needed at the retail counter are expected to maintain high standards of appearance, representing to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their official duties. If employees are scheduled to work the window, they must wear their uniforms. Jeans, shorts, sleeveless tops, tee-shirts, sweats, and spandex are not appropriate attire for employees working at the retail counter; the aforementioned list is not meant to be exhaustive.

3-3 Uniform Allowance

If an employee qualifies, but does not already receive a uniform allowance, he or she should contact the district Human Resources office to request a uniform allowance. If retail employees do not qualify, district management may provide a uniform for employees to wear when working the window. Employees who have been provided uniforms are required to wear the uniforms as directed by management.

3-4 Name Tags

All employees are required to wear authorized Postal Service name tags. Name tags must be visible to the customer. Name tags of the RAs are to be worn over the right breast so that the tag is visible to the customer. Employees with ID badges must wear the badges at all times; but the badges may be worn out of sight of the customer, either on the waist or as prescribed by the installation head.

At installations in which Postal Service police officers are assigned access control functions, all employees are required to display their identification to the officer when entering the facility or grounds. Employees are not required to display their full name to the general public.

4 Duties

4-1 Revenue Protection and Assurance

All Postal Service employees are responsible for preventing the loss of revenue by identifying and collecting short or unpaid postage and fees, uncanceled stamps, and misclassified mail.

Examples of revenue loss include the following:

- a. Uncanceled stamps.
- b. Short-paid mail.
- c. Unbalanced scales.
- d. Improperly prepared bulk mailings.
- e. Unapplied surcharges.
- f. Uncollected Post Office box rent.
- g. Failure to block out Post Office boxes when fees are past due.
- h. Failure to close Post Office boxes in a timely manner.
- i. Assessment of wrong prices.
- j. Shortcuts.
- k. Failure to know classes of mail.
- l. Failure to offer value-added services.
- m. Failure to follow procedures.
- n. Permit imprint mail deposited in collection boxes.
- o. Failure to inquire about customers' mailing needs.
- p. Failure to have Postal Service products available.
- q. Use of outdated materials (e.g., charts and forms).
- r. Failure to identify misuse of postal packaging.
- s. Failure to reject items when scanning identifies invalid postage.
- t. Failure to escalate untimely collection or refusal of Return to Sender Postage Due to the authorizing finance official so that the manager can issue a Letter of Demand.

Retail associates must deposit all cash (excluding authorized cash reserve), checks, and cashed items into the official bank account on the same business date that transactions occur. Units should have one deposit per day, unless banking requirements require a separation of cash and checks. In some cases, offices making advance deposits and separating cash and checks may have a maximum of four deposits per day.

4-2 Sanctity and Security of the Mail

The Postal Service must preserve and protect the security of the mail in its custody from unauthorized opening, inspection, and reading of contents. The Postal Service must also prevent tampering, delay, or other unauthorized acts. This public trust is vested in each Postal Service employee.

Mail that is accepted by any employee must be protected. If an employee has a question about mail security procedures, is unable to consult a manager, and the procedures are not clearly and specifically answered by Postal Service regulations or by written direction of the Postal Inspection Service or General Counsel, then the employee must resolve the question by protecting the mail in all respects and moving the mail, or letting the mail move, without interruption to its destination.

Examples of unacceptable conduct relating to security and sanctity of the mail include theft, destruction, damage, or delay of mail.

4-2.1 **Theft**

Theft is taking something that does not belong to you, such as excess merchandise samples or undeliverable publications for personal use. Theft also includes removing merchandise, money, and coupons from undeliverable bulk business mail for personal use.

4-2.2 **Destruction or Damage of Mail**

The destruction or damage of mail includes deliberately damaging, losing, discarding, or defacing deliverable mail and allowing the mail to remain unprotected from theft or inclement weather.

4-2.3 **Delay of Mail**

Delaying mail includes improperly detaining mail by failing to deliver in accordance with service standards prescribed for each class of mail.

Failure to uphold the public trust vested in each Postal Service employee may cause removal from the Postal Service as well as criminal prosecution, resulting in fines or imprisonment.

4-3 Work Schedules

Employees' adherence to assigned work schedules is considered part of their duties.

Scheduling employees is an operational function based on workload projections, service commitments, and budgetary constraints.

Managers use the following tools to achieve maximum results for scheduling:

- a. Small Post Office reporting tool.
- b. Retail Systems Software (RSS) Window Operations Survey (WOS) reports.

c. Staffing and Scheduling Tool (SST).

If management initiates a temporary change of schedule to an employee by Wednesday of the preceding service week, even if this change is revised later, the employee's time can be limited to the hours of the revised schedule. An out-of-schedule premium is paid for those hours worked outside of, and instead of, an employee's regular schedule.

Eligible employees do not receive an out-of-schedule premium when attending a recognized training session that is a planned, prepared, and coordinated program or course.

4-3.1 **Adherence to Fair Labor Standards Act**

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) workweek for all employees is a fixed and regular recurring period of 168 hours: 7 consecutive 24-hour periods.

4-3.2 **Full-Time Employees**

For purposes of establishing the FLSA workweek, Saturday is considered a service day, even if it is not actually included as a service day in the full-time employee's regular schedule. The FLSA workweek begins 8 hours prior to the time that such employee's regular schedule would begin on Saturday.

4-3.3 **Part-Time Employees**

The FLSA workweek for part-time regular and flexible employees is defined and determined in the same manner as stated above for full-time employees except that the FLSA workweek for part-time employees may not begin prior to 20:00 (8:00 p.m.) on Friday.

4-4 Recording Time

Employees must follow guidelines established in Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*.

4-4.1 **Labor Distribution Code and Functional Operations Number**

The labor distribution code (LDC) is a 2-digit number used to identify the major activity of an employee. The LDC is used to compile work hour, labor utilization, and other financial reports for management use. The functional operations number code is a 4-digit number used for the same purposes as the LDC.

4-4.2 **Clock Rings**

Employees are required to input correct operational transaction codes. Management and employees assigned the supervisory role are responsible for reviewing the Time and Attendance Control System (TACS) Report and the Clock Ring Error Report and processing any necessary corrections. Management and employees assigned the supervisory role are responsible for the accuracy of the time cards and time clock entries, must provide

appropriate documents supporting time card entries to the timekeeper, and must ensure that the timekeeper complies with the procedures in Handbook F-21.

4-4.3 **Timecards**

All bargaining unit and casual employees are required to use time clocks (if available) to record clock rings on their time cards.

If time clocks are not available, employees must write in their clock rings each day, in blue or black ink, in the clock ring spaces on the back of the time card.

In certain situations, such as travel or assignment away from the time card location, the employee's supervisor may write in the daily clock rings for the employee. In such cases, the employee must submit a completed PS Form 1260, *Non-Electronic Badge Reader Card*, and the data must be verified to ensure compatibility with the previously submitted PS Form 1260 and/or PS Form 1261, *Non-EBR Report*. PS Form 1260 must be filed with the original.

4-4.4 **Disallowing Time**

In those cases where a full-time regular employee's clock rings exceed 8.08 hours and management knows or has reason to know that the employee was not engaged in work or work-related activities while in the time-over-8 status, management must disallow the time on the clock that was not worked. In such cases, management must insert a written entry on PS Form 1017-A, *Time Disallowance Record*.

4-4.5 **Unauthorized Work Time**

An employee who continues to work contrary to a direct order from his or her manager must be paid for all time worked but may be subject to disciplinary action. In such cases, the manager must insert a written entry on PS Form 1017-B, *Unauthorized Overtime Record*.

4-4.6 **Time Card Entry**

When clock time is disallowed, the employee's manager must enter in the disallowed (reason) column of the time card the amount of time to be disallowed and an appropriate reason code. In such cases, the manager must prepare a written entry to document the basis for his or her knowledge that the employee was not working during the time disallowed. See Handbook F-21 for information on PS Forms 1017-A and 1017-B.

4-5 Meeting Dispatch Deadlines

4-5.1 **Lobby Drop Schedules**

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch.

Retail associates must verify that customer notification decals (e.g., Decals DDD1 and DDD2) are applied to lobby drops and are maintained in a legible fashion. Managers must be advised immediately if decals are missing, damaged, or illegible.

4-5.2 **Collection Boxes**

Collection boxes are located in lobbies and outside the facility. If instructed or assigned, RAs are responsible for collecting mail from collection boxes in accordance with times posted. Make collections as near as possible to the posted pickup time but never before posted times. Managers and RAs must verify customer notification decals are applied to collection boxes and are maintained in a legible fashion. Managers must immediately have decals replaced that are missing, damaged, or illegible.

4-6 Proper Reporting of Funds and Receipts

Each RA in an RSS or electronic web-based 1412 or e1412 office is responsible for entering transactions and information as they occur and for providing every customer with a system-generated receipt every time a transaction is performed. Use PS Form 1096, *Customer Receipt*, only in cases where the retail equipment is temporarily nonfunctional.

Retail associates must remit all funds received for the sale of stamps and other Postal Service products and services by using PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report*, supported by required documentation, on a daily basis.

Every postal retail unit (PRU) must transmit a PS Form 1412 at the close of business on the same business day, regardless of the amount of financial activity. PRUs transmit their daily financial report using the reporting technology (e.g., RSS, e1412, SSK, mPOS) approved for their unit.

Follow the guidelines in [Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

4-7 Maintenance of Lobby Appearance

To effectively manage Postal Service lobbies, managers must ensure that retail services are available and accessible to customers in a timely, efficient manner and in an orderly, clean, and attractive environment. Ensure that the floors have been swept; the office has been dusted; the glass has been cleaned; and the trash has been emptied.

Display in-store messaging and products in accordance with instructions and planograms.

4-8 Maintenance of a Neat and Safe Work Area

Managers are expected to maintain their facilities in a clean, safe, and healthful condition consistent with the conditions set forth in Handbook MS-47, *Facility Cleaning*.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires that employers provide a safe and healthful workplace free of recognized hazards and follow OSHA standards.

Safety rules and regulations are found in Handbook EL-814, *Postal Employee's Guide to Safety*.

5 Schedules

5-1 Management of Clerk Schedules

5-1.1 **Non-RSS/e1412 Offices**

Managers use the results of the Function 4 Sales and Services Retail Diagnostic Tool (F4-SSRD) to help determine schedules for RAs.

5-1.2 **RSS Offices**

Use RDM WOS reports to determine RA schedules. The RDM WOS Earned Actual Staffing Graph (EASG) located in the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) and the SST are tools that can help align schedules by adjusting actual terminal usage to meet earned window hours.

While the tools do not replace the need for managing the day-to-day operation, each tool can assist with scheduling. Printing the RDM EASG on a regular basis can provide insight into peak and slow transaction periods to better schedule employees. Review each time segment and not only the periods when earned work minutes and proposed staff are higher and lower. Do the same for every day of the work week. Prepare your base window schedule using the SST scheduler accordingly.

As a greater comfort level in using these reports is achieved, consider reviewing scheduling on a cyclical basis. For example, days at the first of the month may require a significantly different number of associates than days in the middle of the month. Place emphasis on matching staffing to workload, increasing or decreasing as appropriate.

5-1.3 **RSS and Non-RSS (e1412) Offices**

Review and adjust scheduling of RA hours to provide optimum staffing during peak periods. Schedule breaks and lunches to coincide with slower periods.

To the greatest extent possible, limit lunches and breaks during peak times, as identified for non-RSS/e1412 offices by the Retail Analysis Program (RAP) survey, and as identified for RSS offices by the SST, the F4-SSRD Tool, and the WOS survey or RDM WOS reports.

Give special attention to Saturdays. Determine if long lines on Saturdays could be reduced by adjusting hours on Saturdays or during the week.

Review retail operations complement to maximize usage of flexibility with part-time flexible and part-time regular employees.

5-2 Adherence to Postal Service Schedules

5-2.1 **Work**

Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are working their assigned schedules. Management must take measures through employee orientation, service talks, schedule postings, etc., to ensure that employees are aware of their work schedules and are familiar with proper clocking procedures.

Employees' adherence to work schedules is considered part of their duties.

5-2.2 **Collection**

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch.

5-2.3 **Dispatch**

Retail associates are to collect lobby drops, inside collection boxes, and outside collection boxes according to the collection times posted. Collection boxes should be checked as close as possible to, but never before, the posted time.

5-3 Office Hours

Lobby and retail services should be scheduled during hours most appropriate to the needs of the majority of customers in the local area. Postal Service units located in a business area normally would be open during hours maintained by that business community.

If the postmaster/manager determines that additional service hours are necessary to meet community needs, he/she must obtain approval from the next higher management level for increasing workhour usage if additional costs are involved.

Except as provided below, permanent changes in the hours of operation must be approved by the district and area offices. Once approved, the area retail office must notify Headquarters Retail Operations of the change in hours of operation at a minimum of 30 days in advance of the change. The notification is to be done via email, using the "Notification of Proposed Reduction in Office Hours" located at <http://blue.usps.gov/wps/portal/officehours>. Retail units offering Saturday delivery must continue to do so unless otherwise approved by Headquarters Retail Operations.

Total daily hours of service for Remotely Managed Post Office (RMPOs) and Part-Time Post Office (PTPOs) on weekdays are determined by Headquarters Retail Operations. The actual hours of service each weekday and weekend are determined by the district officials. Offices offering Saturday delivery must continue to do so unless otherwise approved by Headquarters Retail Operations.

A replacement for the mandatory “Hours of Operation” decal must be ordered from the *Direct Vendor Signage Catalog* and applied to all entrance doors per retail standardization guidelines. “Replacement Hours of Operation” decals must be ordered with sufficient time to receive the new decal from the vendor and display it the day before the hours are changed. Thirty days prior to the change in hours of operation, temporary signs must be posted on entrance doors to inform customers of the upcoming change in hours and the nearest Post Office that can provide service during the changed hours. Offices must check with their district retail office for further information about appropriate temporary signage.

5-4 Lobby and PO Box

5-4.1 Standards for Box Service

Postmasters may keep the box lobby open to the public 24 hours a day if safety and security provisions allow for the extended hours and there is sufficient public demand.

5-4.2 Box Service Up-Time

Each unit must have a scheduled PO Box up-time for box mail to be finalized and available to customers. This up-time varies from unit to unit and is established based on variables such as mail arrival time, average mail volumes per trip, and staffing availability.

Schedule PO Box services during hours most appropriate to the needs of the majority of customers in the local area. The local postmaster, with District approval, establishes the local PO Box up-time. The PO Box up-time must be posted in the retail lobby as notification for customers and in the box distribution area as notification for employees working the mail.

If a unit consistently fails to meet the scheduled PO Box up-time, then analysis should be done to review possible actions to assist the unit in meeting the schedule. If corrective action is neither effective nor possible given local conditions, then consider changing the scheduled PO Box up-time. A change to the PO Box up-time should be implemented at the beginning of the fiscal quarter. Provide customer notification 30 days in advance of any change in the up-time schedule.

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6 Security and Safety

6-1 Aviation Mail Security Anonymous Mail

Management must ensure that all employees are trained in, and comply with, all current Postal Service Aviation Mail Security Anonymous Mail standard operating procedures (SOP), which can be found at <https://blue.usps.gov/inspection-service/anonymous-mail-program.htm>.

Every facility is required to have an Anonymous Mail Unit where a hard copy of the current SOP is available for employee use. The SOP contains duty-specific procedures for identifying and handling anonymous mail.

Compliance with the Anonymous Mail Program is mandatory, and management must perform required spot checks of their facility to ensure continued program compliance. Anonymous Mail Program instructions and training material are restricted information and may not be distributed outside the Postal Service. For more information, contact your district homeland security coordinator.

6-2 Hazardous Materials

A hazardous material (HAZMAT) is any article or substance designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as being capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property during transportation.

The Postal Service accepts limited amounts of potentially hazardous materials for mailing; however, most HAZMAT is nonmailable. To be eligible for shipping under the USDOT Limited Quantity provision, a HAZMAT must be listed as an exception in column 8A of the Hazardous Materials Table in 49 CFR 172.101. However, under Postal Service requirements, only certain hazard classes and divisions may be eligible to ship as a Limited Quantity. A material meeting the eligibility criteria for shipment as a Limited Quantity material is mailable via ground (surface) and in some instances air transportation only if it can be further classified as a Consumer Commodity material as defined in Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*.

HAZMAT is not acceptable for air transportation if it is not prepared in compliance with the specific applicable requirements. These requirements consider the degree of hazard, quantity of material, method of packaging, required shipping papers, and adequacy of labels and/or markings required for carriage aboard an aircraft.

Particular conditions applicable to mailings of hazardous materials to foreign addresses and to Army Post Offices (APOs), Fleet Post Offices (FPOs), and Diplomatic Post Offices (DPOs) are noted in *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM) and in chapter 6 of Publication 52.

All employees are required to be aware of the proper acceptance, handling, and transportation of HAZMAT. Standard operating procedures and training materials are available at <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/policy-procedures/service-talks/hazmat.htm>.

6-3 Counter Line

Only RAs on duty and other authorized personnel are permitted behind the counter line. Employee purchases of Postal Service products and services are never to be conducted behind the counter line.

6-4 Suspicious Money Order Activity

The U.S. Treasury Department has defined money laundering as the attempt to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of money derived from illegal activities. This definition covers a wide range of activities and includes any type of money, including Postal Service money orders.

6-4.1 **PS Form 8105-A, Funds Transaction Report**

To comply with the Bank Secrecy Act, customers must complete a PS Form 8105-A, *Funds Transaction Report (FTR)*, and present a valid ID in the following situations:

- a. For all sales of money orders and Sure Money transactions totaling \$3,000 or more to the same customer in the same day. Fees charged for transactions do not count toward the \$3,000 limit. Separate transactions to one customer over the course of 1-day count toward the \$3,000 filing threshold.
- b. When cashing money orders totaling more than \$10,000 per day, per customer.

6-4.2 **PS Form 8105-B, Suspicious Transaction Report**

The RA must complete a PS Form 8105-B, *Suspicious Transaction Report (STR)*, for each transaction that the RA deems to be suspicious. PS Form 8105-B contains a required section that provides possible reasons or suspicion.

6-5 Stock and Levels of Security

Ensure that your installation follows these descending levels of security:

- a. Level 1: Burglar-resistant chests in fireproof safes or security containers located in walk-in vaults.
- b. Level 2: USPS-standard vaults or security containers.
- c. Level 3: Security chests or burglar-resistant chest portion of fireproof safes.
- d. Level 4: Fireproof safes or vaults built to Postal Service standards.
- e. Level 5: Lockable metal cabinets and file drawers.

Stamp stock should not be left in the open unless shrink-wrapped in a Postal Store setting and stored in a secure location.

Certain items must be given priority of protection over others, and managers are responsible for assuring that protective equipment is on hand for providing maximum security. [Exhibit 6-5](#) lists the priorities of protection for accountable items.

Exhibit 6-5

Priorities of Protection

Priority	Accountable Item
1	Postal funds (e.g., cash, checks, and money orders), credit and debit card receipts, and blank money order forms.
2	Postage stamps, and migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps (e.g., bird stamps).
3	Stamped envelopes stamped postal cards, money order imprinters, and nonsalable stamp stock.
4	Postal-related merchandise, ReadyPost products, and Retail products.

6-6 Mail

6-6.1 Registered, Collect on Delivery, and Accountables

Retail associates are responsible for the following duties:

- a. Following accountability and security procedures and keeping accurate records.
- b. Keeping registered articles locked in a drawer or cabinet if there is not a separate registry cage until the Registered Mail articles are ready to be dispatched.
- c. Giving Collect On Delivery (COD) mail every reasonable safeguard. (Preventing access to the mail by unauthorized persons, keeping such mail in locked cabinets, if available).
- d. Keeping all accountable mail behind the retail counter and away from the public.

6-6.2 Mail Sealed Against Inspection

For information on sealed and unsealed mail, see *Administrative Support Manual (ASM)* 213 and 274.

No person may open mail sealed against inspection or search, inspect, read, or disclose information obtained from the mail or its contents; or surrender all or any part of such mail, whether or not such mail is believed to contain criminal or other nonmailable matter.

6-6.3 Acceptance and Delivery of Mail

Do not accept and stack mail to be metered later. Suitable identification can be required of the recipient (if not known to the Postal Service employee) before the delivery of a mailpiece.

Items that require a signature for delivery may not be opened or given to the recipient before the recipient signs and legibly prints his or her name on PS Form 3849, *We Redeliver for You!* (and on the return receipt, if applicable), and returns the receipt(s).

Scan all extra services and Priority Mail Express items according to existing procedures at acceptance and/or delivery.

6-7 Locked Pouches

Registry pouches are the proper container for transporting registered items. Rotary locks are the prescribed method of locking pouches. Rotary lock pouches should always be used in any office or unit in possession of a rotary key. The proper procedure for handling locked pouches can be found in Handbook DM-901, *Registered Mail*.

6-8 Funds

Postal Service funds must be kept safe without loaning, using, depositing in an unauthorized bank, or exchanging for other funds. Postal Service funds must always be kept separate from personal funds. Keep Postal Service funds inaccessible to the public and concealed from view.

For advance and final remittance, RAs should do the following:

- a. Make an advance deposit of any excess monies during the day.
- b. Remove and count funds in a secured area to be remitted from the cash drawer.
- c. Maintain a checklist in each office.
- d. Verify each check against the list and keep the list with PS Form 1412 documentation.
- e. Count the cash in a secure area away from the counter.
- f. Give the funds to the close-out employee.
- g. Record the funds in the retail system, or on PS Form 1412 for e1412 offices.

The designated closeout employee verifies and acknowledges receipt of the funds and initials account identifier code (AIC) 751/752 on the RA's copy of PS Form 1412.

6-9 Keys

Managers procure all replacement locks and lock assemblies needed at their facilities, including Postal Inspection Service locks. Personnel are issued only such keys as their duties require.

Managers must keep an accurate inventory of all keys and signed receipts using PS Form 1628, *Individual Key Record*.

Postal Service employees must immediately report any lost or stolen keys to the inspector-in-charge.

Managers must conduct a semiannual physical survey of all keys.

All employees must follow guidelines in accordance with chapter 2 of the ASM.

6-9.1 Registered

Retail associates must ensure that Registered Mail items are locked at all times in a security container. Employees must sign the key over from one tour or one employee to the next by using PS Form 1625, *Record of Entry into Registry Section*, so that individual responsibility can be assigned at all times.

6-9.2 Building

Only issue building keys to employees who are required to open or close the office. Record all keys at the time of issuance on PS Form 1628 at the time of issuance.

When an employee's duties no longer require the use of an assigned key or the employee leaves the service, the employee must return the key immediately. Enter the date the key(s) is returned on PS Form 1628 as the release of accountability. If keys used to operate exterior doors to the facility are not returned, the locks must be replaced or rekeyed.

Standard locks are not authorized on exterior doors or high-level security areas. All exterior doors must be equipped with a deadbolt lock. The deadbolt feature is operated by key from the outside and by turning the lever from the inside.

Only postmasters, installation heads, or their designees may carry a master key. Master keys are issued to maintenance employees only during their tours of duty and may not be carried from the building.

6-9.3 **Postal Inspection Service Keys**

6-9.3.1 **O Keys**

In buildings with lookout galleries, one O key is assigned to the postmaster or other official in charge, who must personally safeguard the key at all times. Only the postmaster or a designated supervisor may admit cleaners or other authorized persons to the galleries on the first Monday of the month or by obtaining approval in advance from the responsible inspector-in-charge.

All employees needing access to lookout galleries or Postal Inspection Service space must sign for keys in the key log. The log must show requestor's name, date, key-in time, and key-out time.

Overnight retention of keys is prohibited. Coordinate access for other-than-scheduled cleaning with the inspector-in-charge.

6-9.3.2 **J Keys**

A special J key, which operates postal inspectors' office locks, is provided for other authorized personnel.

6-9.4 **Cash Drawers**

Place cash and stamp credits in a locked container and store in a security container, safe, or vault following an employee's tour of duty. In RSS offices, use RSS cash drawers.

Whenever an employee relinquishes control of an assigned stamp credit for any reason, change the locks on the employee's stamp and cash drawers. Do not reuse the old locks.

To safeguard each associates stamp credit, a manager must make an annual examination of all locks and keys in the unit except for duplicate keys on file on PS Form 3977, *Duplicate Key, Combination and Password Envelope*. This ensures that individual associates' keys will not open locked drawers, safe compartments, or stamp cabinets of other employees. The manager keeps a record for financial examination purposes.

Hold duplicate keys to stamp credits in the main safe or vault of the station or branch in a compartment under the exclusive control of the manager or a designated subordinate. Place the combinations for the main safe or vault and the duplicate compartment keys in a sealed PS Form 3977 registered to the safe.

6-10 PS Form 3977

A PS Form 3977 envelope is used to secure employee keys, passwords, and combinations. At least once every 6 months, managers must physically examine each PS Form 3977.

After the employee's keys, passwords, and combinations are enclosed and the flap is sealed, the employee to whom the keys are assigned, and a witness must sign across both flaps on the reverse of the envelope. Round date as instructed on the front of the form.

Do not perforate or alter the PS Form 3977 in any way while it is sealed. If evidence of tampering with the envelope is noted or alleged, notify the local inspector-in-charge.

When locks, combinations, and passwords are changed, prepare a new PS Form 3977 and submit it to the custodian of the PS Forms 3977. The manager or designer must dispose of the replaced PS Form 3977.

When it is necessary to open a duplicate key envelope, cut it along one end, leaving the signature and postmarks intact. The employee opening the PS Form 3977 and a witness must sign and date it. Retain the opened envelope as instructed on PS Form 3977.

Keep PS Forms 3977 in a locked receptacle under the exclusive control of the postmaster or designee.

6-10.1 **Key and Combinations Envelopes**

Ensure that each responsible employee and a witness to the enclosure of the combination or keys sign the envelope. Round date as instructed on the form.

Each time a lock or combination is changed, prepare a new PS Form 3977 and submit it to the custodian of the PS Form 3977 it replaces. The custodian must dispose of the replaced envelope.

Hold duplicate keys to stamp credits in the main safe or vault of the station or branch in a compartment under the exclusive control of the manager or a designated subordinate.

Combinations for the main safe or vault and the duplicate compartment keys should be sealed in a PS Form 3977 envelope. Store these PS Forms 3977 in the most secure place under the exclusive control of the postmaster or designated subordinate.

6-10.2 **Password Envelopes**

For each employee, maintain a separate PS Form 3977 for the password for the employee's integrated retail terminal, RSS, and credit/debit card.

Each system's password must be placed in a separate PS Form 3977 envelope if the passwords are different. Refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

6-11 Building

6-11.1 **Lighting**

Public parking areas and entries must be sufficiently illuminated to be safe and discourage crime. Provide security lighting to assist in maintaining acceptable levels of facility protection. This includes lighting at these locations:

- a. All areas not open to the general public.
- b. Entrance gates.
- c. Employee entrances.

- d. Vestibule entrances.
- e. Customer entrances.
- f. Areas around the building perimeter and perimeter security fencing.

6-11.2 **Parking and Grounds**

Customer, employee, and Postal Service vehicle parking and maneuvering areas must be separate from one another. Locate parking areas close to their respective entrances into the building. Postal Service employee vehicles may not be parked with highway contract route vehicles, motor vehicle service, or other commercial vehicles. Facilities less than 9,000 square feet are exempt from this requirement.

Plants, trees, and shrubs must not provide points of concealment or unauthorized entry to the facility, secure grounds, or Postal Service assets.

6-11.3 **Securing Equipment**

6-11.3.1 **Safes**

Security containers (safes) are used to store all money, stamp stock, Registered Mail items, national security documents, evidence, and other accountable items identified by the Postal Inspection Service. Security containers are required when a vault is not needed to store the office accountable items.

Ensure that safes and vaults are fully locked at the end of the day. Give the dial at least two complete turns in each direction. During business hours, all safes must remain closed and day locked.

6-11.3.2 **Round Date Stamp**

The all-purpose date stamp is used for stamping the customer copy of receipts for services such as Certified Mail service. This stamp is also used for Registered Mail service and on the daily bank deposit slip.

This stamp must be safeguarded at all times. Do not leave the stamp on the counter where unauthorized individuals can handle it. Make sure the stamp is locked at night with the other accountable items. If the round date stamp becomes lost or missing, immediately notify the Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General.

6-11.3.3 **Postage Meters (Post Office)**

Meter heads must always be removed and put in a secure place when leaving the office. Ensure that protective equipment is used for maximum security at all locations.

6-11.3.4 **Money Order Imprinters**

When not in use, keep money order imprinters in a safe, a security container, or a vault. If space is not available, store under protection of a lock.

Whenever possible, store money order forms and money order imprinters overnight in different security containers if the containers furnish an equal degree of security.

Note: Paymaster money order imprinters need to be locked up, but NCR printers do not.

6-11.3.5 **Cameras and Tapes**

The inspector-in-charge of the division in which the facility is located determines the need for, quantity, type, and location of closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems and cameras.

Retail units use CCTV systems for security. CCTV systems help protect employees, mail, and Postal Service assets as well as deter crime. Closed circuit televisions are strategically placed throughout the retail lobby; they record activities, so that if theft is suspected, the tapes can be reviewed for evidence.

Management is responsible for overseeing maintenance and repair of CCTV systems and also for ensuring that information from the CCTV camera is monitored and tapes are being properly recorded 24 hours a day.

6-11.3.6 **Doors, Alarms, and Proper Identification**

6-11.3.6.1 **Securing Doors**

Employees must firmly adhere to the policy of locking doors. Management is responsible for ensuring compliance to afford maximum protection of Postal Service employees, funds, and property.

Keep all doors and windows of the office locked. In offices where the lobby remains open when no one is on duty, lock all doors, windows, and Dutch doors connecting the lobby with the working portion of the office.

All exterior doors and doors with access to the workroom floor must be equipped with deadbolt locks. Close lobbies when no one is on duty unless the screen line extends to a permanent ceiling and police protection is adequate.

6-11.3.6.2 **Alarms**

The Postal Inspection Service determines the need for an alarm system. The inspector-in-charge gives the facility head detailed instructions for the alarm system. These instructions are restricted information and are kept in a secure area.

Ensure that promotional devices do not block the view of the sensor.

6-11.3.6.3 **Photo Identification and Access Badges**

All Postal Service employees must have a photo identification badge. Display the badge at all times when in a Postal Service facility. Sales and services associates name tags are to be worn over the right breast so that the tags are visible to the customer. Employees with ID badges must wear them at all times, but these badges may be worn out of sight of the customer, either on

the waist or as prescribed by the installation head. In addition, at installations where Postal Service police officers are assigned access control functions, all employees are required to display their identification to the officer when entering the facility or grounds.

Employees are charged with the responsibility of preventing unauthorized individuals, including off-duty employees, from entering restricted areas.

Investigate all individuals on the workroom floor who are not properly identified or escorted.

7 Equipment and Supplies

7-1 RSS and e1412 Equipment

7-1.1 **Cleaning**

Clean RSS equipment with a damp, clean, lint-free cloth. Do not use any chemicals when cleaning the equipment.

To help improve the functioning of the equipment, ensure that there is no clutter surrounding the terminal and hard drive.

7-1.2 **Ordering Supplies**

Order RSS supplies directly through the Material Distribution Center (MDC) in Topeka, Kansas.

Order receipt paper through eBuyPlus at eBuyPlus@usps.gov.

7-1.3 **Help Desk Support**

The help desk is the source for answers to RSS software issues. To reach the help desk, call 800-877-7435.

7-2 Toshiba Printer

7-2.1 **Cleaning**

Before changing the labels in the Toshiba printer, clean the printer head with an alcohol-based cleaning pen and an approved scraper.

The silicone cleaning pen is available for purchase on eBuyPlus using Supplier SKU number 7520170006125. A plastic scraper is available for purchase on eBuyPlus using Supplier SKU number 7520180001834.

For best performance, clean the printer routinely, each time the label roll is replaced.

7-2.2 **Ordering Supplies**

Order Toshiba printer labels directly through the MDC. New Toshiba printers and problems with existing Toshiba printers are handled locally through the help desk.

7-3 Postage Meters

No person or entity other than an authorized provider, its authorized agent, the Postal Service, or a licensee may possess a postage meter. When a postage meter lease or rental agreement is terminated, the possessor of a meter must immediately surrender it to the provider, the provider's agent, or to the Postal Service.

Only authorized Post Offices use the Postage Meter Resetting System (PMRS).

The following companies are authorized meter manufacturers:

- a. Hasler, Inc.
- b. Neopost.
- c. Pitney Bowes.
- d. Francotyp-Postalia, Inc.

7-4 PC Postage Product Providers

PC Postage products and services are available from commercial providers in cooperation with the Postal Service.

The following companies are authorized PC Postage Providers:

- a. Endicia.com (PSI Systems, Inc.).
- b. Pitney Bowes, Inc.
- c. Stamps.com.
- d. EasyPost, Inc.

7-5 Scales (Systems and Lobbies)

7-5.1 Retail Lobby Scales

Retail scales are used to rate single piece mail. Follow current procedures for verifying and calibrating scales based on the scale model used.

7-5.2 Electronic Scales

Refer to the user operation manual for these units for verification and calibration procedures. The manufacturer or the existing maintenance contractor handles calibration for these units.

7-5.3 Mechanical Scales

Refer to current maintenance management orders or visit <http://www.mtsc.usps.gov> for information on verification and calibration.

7-5.4 **Retail Counter Scales**

Verify scale accuracy each day (zero balance). If the scale is not accurate, calibrate using certified test weights.

7-5.5 **RSS Scales**

For zeroing and calibrating scales, refer to the RSS Toolkit on the Accounting Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/accounting/rss/rsstoolkit.htm> or follow the instructions in the *RSS Procedures Guide*.

For technical and service issues, contact the help desk at 800-877-7435. Retail unit managers or their designees handle calibration for RSS units.

7-5.6 **Repaired Scales**

Use certified test weights to calibrate scales before placing the scales into service. Before submitting requisitions for new scales, ensure that locally established coordinating procedures have been followed.

A Requirements office may place an order through eBuyPlus.

Users may contact the help desk at 800-877-7435 RSS with any questions.

7-6 Scanning Equipment

7-6.1 **Intelligent Mail Device Scanner (IMD)**

Employees using the handheld scanner will use the procedures detailed in Handbook PO-610, *Signature Capture and Electronic Record Management: Manager's Guide to Standard Operating Procedures*.

For technical or service issues, contact the help desk at 800-877-7435.

7-6.2 **RSS Scanners**

For technical or service issues, contact the help desk at 800-877-7435.

7-7 Money Order Imprinter

Manual issuance of money orders is not permitted. Inoperable imprinters must be replaced or restored to service as quickly as possible. In the event the money order imprinter is deemed inoperable or in need of service, refer to the operator's manual. There is a manufacturer's warranty on the imprinter. While service is disrupted, customers must be advised of the anticipated time that service is to be restored and the location of nearby facilities where service is available.

Order replacement ribbon from the MDC. Refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

7-8 Wireless Credit Terminals (Ingenico)

The Postal Service sometimes uses an Ingenico wireless credit terminal in a Post Office, such as for special events. When an Ingenico terminal is installed in a Post Office, it is encoded with information unique to that Post Office (e.g., finance number and address). Do not transfer or loan the Ingenico terminal to another office.

Contact the Ingenico help desk at 800-877-7435 for technical support and supplies.

7-9 Cash Drawers

RSS offices must use the RSS cash drawers. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Cash drawers are used for storing operating stamps and funds. Do not store any personal items in the cash drawer. Order replacement cash drawers and locks through the MDC. Place stamp credits in a locked container and store in a security container, safe, or vault following an employee's tour of duty.

7-10 Safes

Vaults, security containers of various types, and security cages are installed in Postal Service 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 are available in [Handbook F-101](#) — use the file's search feature for your desired topic or issue.

Contact your local administrative services manager or material management specialist to determine the availability of any excess equipment (e.g., safes and inserts).

7-11 Round Date Stamp

The round date stamp (all-purpose date stamp) is used for stamping the customer copy of receipts for services such as Certified Mail service. This stamp is also used for Registered Mail and the daily bank deposit slips.

This stamp must always be safeguarded. Do not leave it out on the counter where unauthorized individuals can handle it. Make sure the round date stamp is locked at night with other accountable items. If this stamp becomes lost or missing, notify the Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General immediately.

The round date stamp can be ordered through the MDC.

7-12 Building Alarm System

The Postal Inspection Service evaluates the needs for any security-related equipment. Do not purchase alarms or security systems without Postal Inspection Service evaluation. Submit proposals to the Postal Inspection Service with a detailed justification for review and evaluation.

The inspector-in-charge will give the facility head detailed instructions for the alarm system. Keep the instructions in a secure area. If there are any problems with alarm systems, immediately alert the inspector-in-charge. The contractor provides and installs the burglar alarm system with direction from the Postal Inspection Service (which provides the panel for the system and programs it after installation).

Ensure that promotional devices do not block the view of the sensor.

7-13 Electronic Article Surveillance

The Postal Inspection Service evaluates the needs for any security-related equipment. Do not purchase alarms or security systems without Postal Inspection Service evaluation. Proposals should be submitted to the Postal Inspection Service with a detailed justification for review and evaluation.

An electronic article surveillance system is required in facilities with an open merchandise retail operation, or when \$30,000 worth of merchandise is displayed in a limited-open-merchandise situation. The panels should be placed so that the full self-service lobby and Postal Store are separated from the self-service area, letter drops, and Post Office box section.

7-14 Self-Service Kiosk

7-14.1 Servicing a Self-Service Kiosk

A self-service kiosk (SSK) enables customers to perform some basic transactions that otherwise would be conducted at the full-service retail counter. Transactions available from an SSK include shipping packages, buying stamps, and looking up ZIP Codes.

The RSS SSK Machine Service Manual (Large File) is available at the Retail and Customer Services Operations-RCSO Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/reporting-systems-applications/applications/retail-systems-software.htm> (click on the *Self Service Kiosk* tab) and provides service procedures and trouble-shooting procedures.

For a customer's interaction with an SSK to be satisfactory, the SSK must be operational and available for use at all times. To achieve this goal, the site manager must assure that SSK service employees keep the machine stocked with accountable and consumables, in good working order, and presentable so that walk-in customers are drawn to using the SSK.

The service employee provides Level 1 service on the SSK. The responsibilities of the service employee include, but are not limited to, the following tasks:

- a. Replenishing consumables in response to kiosk alerts.
- b. Providing preventative service (i.e., cleaning of the kiosk).
- c. Assisting IBM Level 2 maintenance personnel.
- d. Providing management with a ticket number generated from the help desk to track the service request.

If the service employee and the SSK help desk cannot resolve a Level 1 problem, or if the problem has been identified as Level 2, the IBM service support representative (SSR) is dispatched to the site. The service employee will greet and escort the IBM SSR and remain with them throughout the repair. The service employee will follow the log-in procedures and when prompted, indicate that the IBM SSR is present. When the IBM SSR completes the service activity, the service employee along with the IBM SSR will record the problem resolution through the use of the servicing screens.

7-14.2 **Ordering Supplies**

7-14.2.1 **SSK Consumables**

Service employees are responsible for ordering consumables and cleaning supplies from eBuyPlus using the touch tone order entry (TTOE) system. Postmaster, managers, supervisors, LSSAs, and designated personnel are to refer to the listing of consumables at https://blue.usps.gov/retail/_pdf/reporting-systems-applications/RSS-SSK/RSS-SSK-FLASH-1007-Consumables-and-Cleaning-Supplies.pdf.

7-14.2.2 **Cleaning Supplies**

The machine requires periodic cleaning. Keeping the exterior and interior parts clean will ensure optimal performance and improve customer appeal. Service employees should perform periodic cleaning in accordance with the 2019 RSS SSK Cleaning Log available at https://blue.usps.gov/retail/_pdf/reporting-systems-applications/RSS-SSK/RSS-SSK-FLASH-1007-Consumables-and-Cleaning-Supplies.pdf.

7-14.3 **Help-Desk Support**

The help desk identifies the problem, orders replacement parts, refers a problem to IBM technical support when a higher level of service is needed, or dispatches IBM (Level 2) maintenance to the site.

The process for requesting help-desk support is as follows (current as of this handbook's publication date):

- a. Contact the help desk at 800-877-7435.
- b. Indicate whether you are an employee, contractor, or business partner.
- c. Provide your 8-digit employee ID number.
- d. Indicate that you want “technical assistance” (either by voice or by pressing a number on the keypad).
- e. Say “Self Service Kiosk,” and then follow the prompts.

8 Retail Measurement

8-1 Supervision of Performance

Managers should monitor window operations daily to determine proper window staffing and the need for lobby sweeps.

8-1.1 **Productivity**

Proficiency is measured by total walk-in revenue (total revenue includes alternative access channels). An employee's productivity is measured in terms of transactions and revenue per workhour.

Transactions per workhour are a direct measure of the number of customer transactions the RA completes in a specific time period. Consider the following three things when looking at the measurement:

- a. The type of transaction: Mailing transactions including extra services equates to increased earned workhours.
- b. The amount of the sale: Increased transactions equates to increased revenue.
- c. Nonrevenue transactions: Transaction in which no revenue is exchanged, including but not limited to the following:
 - (1) Hold mail pick-up.
 - (2) PO Box overflow.
 - (3) Non-automated pick-up.
 - (4) Computerized Forwarding System (CFS) issues.
 - (5) Giving local directions.
 - (6) Product or service inquiries.
 - (7) Requesting a passport form.
 - (8) Voided transactions.

8-1.2 **Measurement of Proficiencies**

Employee proficiencies must also be measured to protect revenue. To determine employee proficiency, look at the following areas:

- a. Clerk accountability/cash credit examinations.
- b. Error corrects on PS Form 1412.
- c. Reports in the Retail Data Mart (RDM).
- d. Scanning errors.
- e. Customer complaints.

8-2 Retail Customer Experience

The purpose of the Retail Customer Experience (RCE) program (previously known as the Mystery Shopper Program) is to deliver measurable data with the intent to accurately identify and resolve any detrimental customer satisfaction conditions and to enable a frictionless, best-in-class customer experience. Further, the program serves as a diagnostic tool that drives improvement in key areas such as employee behavior, revenue growth, and lobby traffic flow.

The RCE program gives the Postal Service an objective view of Postal Service retail locations and can be used as a real-time snapshot of a customer interaction.

The results are not only about the score. The results are about driving behavior that will result in improved customer satisfaction and increased retail revenue. The attributes measured in the RCE program should become so commonplace to everyday performance that if the program were to end tomorrow, it would not change the customer's retail experience in any way.

Independently contracted “customers” visit Post Offices and document their experiences by answering a standardized questionnaire. Each “customer” conducts a mailing transaction to test the quality of his or her experience at a retail unit. Retail associates must ask the required sales skills questions in order for a “perfect” transaction to be conducted.

The RCE questionnaire is divided into the following six weighted categories:

1. **Wait Time in Line (WTIL):** Postal Service customers have repeatedly informed the Postal Service that WTIL is a key contributor in their entire experience at the Post Office and can determine whether a customer will continue to use Postal Service products and services or go to competitors.

A queue may be experienced during peak times. One of the strategies to circumvent or minimize the WTIL during these times is lobby assistance. Lobby assistants should actively facilitate customers in transaction preparation before reaching the counter. If applicable, offer customers service using a mobile device (mPOS) or drive customer traffic to the SSK. Lobby assistants and clerks at the counter should also acknowledge or apologize whenever customers are in line or reach the counter. This gesture goes a long way in assuring customers that we value their time.

Remember, customers have choices, and it is the Postal Service's job to ensure that customers have great service to keep them coming back. Great service means respecting a customer's time.

2. **Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT):** The primary purpose of asking the HAZMAT question is to promote the safety of Postal Service employees, the general public, and the Postal Service transportation network by preventing prohibited and dangerous material from entering the mailstream. A majority of common HAZMAT items are relatively safe when used at home or work. However, many HAZMAT items can exhibit potentially dangerous characteristics during shipping

due to improper packaging, exposure to extreme temperatures and pressure variations, excessive vibration during transport, improper handling, and storage in proximity to an incompatible material. Although it may seem repetitive to ask the HAZMAT question on every transaction, asking the question is vital to the safety of our employees, our customers, and the mail. In addition to asking the question, also have the customer provide the response on the Customer Display Unit (CDU), because the customer is responsible for indicating whether or not the item presented is potentially hazardous or dangerous.

3. **GIST (Greet, Inquire, Suggest, Thank):** Apply GIST to provide customers value-added service. Treat all customers as guests and acknowledge them and greet them pleasantly as they enter or browse the lobby, and as mentioned previously, apologize to them for any experienced wait, no matter how long.

Effective product offering and product explanations of Postal Service products and services are key to generating revenue and keeping our customers coming back. The Postal Service offers many products and services. Many customers do not know about the products and services that the Postal Service offers. Employees need to educate customers so that they can make an informed mailing decision. It is important to let your customers decide how they want to mail their article. Do not assume that the customer wants the cheapest price. Remember that customers want value, not necessarily the cheapest price. They want to know their options. By offering customers Postal Service premium services and explaining the service standards, the customers can make informed decisions. Proper use of product offerings and product explanations at your office can make the difference in whether your office achieves its revenue goals and customer satisfaction targets.

At the end of all transactions, thank the customers for their business in a sincere and friendly manner. Appropriately conclude the transaction before greeting the next customer.

4. **Circle POS Survey on Receipt:** Every day, the Postal Service has the opportunity to serve millions of customers in more than 32,000 Post Offices, stations, and branches. The experiences that our customers have when they enter our retail lobbies varies widely from one office to another. We must provide our customers with a consistent, reliable retail experience. In order to gauge and improve the retail customer experience, it is important to receive feedback directly from our customers. To encourage our customers, circle the URL/QR code on the receipt and invite them to go online and take the POS survey to share their exceptional experience.
5. **Image — Clerk, Interior, and Exterior:** Customer research indicates that the cleanliness of a Postal Service facility and the employee's attitude and behavior, determine whether a customer will return to conduct his or her business or go to a competitor. If a Post Office is dirty or an employee is not friendly, it impacts the customers'

perception of that office. The Postal Service unit must be neat, clean, and well maintained.

To project a professional image and keep customers coming back, the RA must be in complete uniform, greet the customer, and be attentive and pleasant throughout the transaction. Our personal appearance and demeanor represent the USPS brand especially when servicing our customers in the retail lobby. Employees must adhere to the full-uniform policy, and the uniforms are to be clean and neatly pressed. We must greet and thank our customers and must also treat each customer in a courteous and professional manner throughout the transaction. Consider tone, body language, and how things are said. , Always keep customers in the forefront, and assist each customer in an efficient manner. This includes actively listening to the customer's needs while performing the transaction, and also minimizing interruptions and avoiding side conversations with employees or customers.

The Postal Service unit must be neat, clean, and well maintained. Customers should experience a well-lit, clean lobby with supplies stocked and easily accessible. The counter line and workstations should be neat, clean, and organized, and should be stocked with appropriate forms. Cleanliness ensures that the area is free of lint, clutter, and tape adhesive remnants. All signs should be clean and not worn or missing any lettering. Overall lobby appearance should be neat and free of clutter, with floors swept and trash bins empty. The writing tables and parcel slides should be clean and free of debris and tape adhesive remnants, and decals should be not worn or missing any lettering. The menu boards should be up to date and displayed according to the planogram.

The exterior is the first impression customers experience when visiting our Post Office locations. The exterior should be inviting and well maintained. Landscaping should be maintained, with walkways clean and free of debris. Trash containers should be emptied regularly. The flagpole should be well maintained, and the American flag should not be tattered or torn and should be displayed properly (including being flown at full-staff or half-staff as appropriate).

6. **Shipping Capabilities:** Not all customers walk into a USPS facility fully prepared to ship an item. Some customer may not even fully understand what product or service best meets their needs. To assist customers in making decisions, all merchandise should be stocked and accessible. The Enterprise Payment System (EPS) displays should be continually stocked throughout the day, and should be neat in appearance and with sample boxes displayed with current pricing. Like the EPS displays, the ReadyPost displays should be neat and well stocked, especially with the top-selling items. These functions are significantly key in achieving revenue growth and customer satisfaction, and they prevent customers from possibly using a competitor for their shipping needs.

RCE evaluations do not — and must not — identify individuals and must not be used as the source of disciplinary action. Management must not review tapes, databases, or receipts to identify the retail associate or the shopper in an attempt to discredit the shopper evaluation.

RCE evaluations are conducted at offices that generate \$300,000 or more in annual walk-in revenue or are in the top 20 percent of the highest revenue-producing offices within a district. Using these criteria, the Postal Service evaluates close to 8,000 retail units, 8 times a year, for a total fiscal year count of about 65,000 evaluations. Although not all retail units participate in RCE evaluations, all retail units need to understand and follow the guidelines.

For information about RCE results, contact the local coordinator for a logon ID, and also visit the USPS RCE Reporting/Login at <https://usps-rce.com/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f> and the RDM Retail Customer Experience Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/resources/retail-customer-experience.htm>.

See [Exhibit 8-2a](#) and [Exhibit 8-2b](#) for samples of RCE letters addressed to Area managers and to Labor Relations managers.

Exhibit 8-2a
RCE Letter to Area Managers

Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations
Headquarters



November 18, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR AREA RETAIL AND DELIVERY OPERATIONS MANAGERS,
AREA MARKETING MANAGERS AND AREA MANAGERS OF DELIVERY PROGRAM
SUPPORT

SUBJECT: Retail Customer Experience-RCE Evaluations

The Retail Customer Experience (RCE) Program is a diagnostic tool meant to correct conditions that could potentially be detrimental to customer satisfaction and/or revenue generation. The program provides the Postal Service with a real-time snapshot of a retail interaction through the eyes of the customer, while capturing varying degrees of feedback on brand performance, uniform compliance, and the interior/exterior appearance.

The RCE is not just about a score. It's about driving optimum performance, world-class customer experience and employee behavior. Shifting the focus from discrediting information reported on the evaluations to one that uses results as a means for improving current processes allows managers and supervisors to benefit fully from the program.

The RCE evaluations are intended to be used as a diagnostic tool to improve retail performance and must not be used as the basis of disciplinary action. They should aid management by giving them a general view of the customer visit and how employees are performing their duties. The Retail Employee Observation (Form 4000 B) should be used as the primary tool to observe and record employee performance, as opposed to an RCE shop. As with all employee performance reviews, both positive and less than satisfactory observations should be addressed. At least one 4000-B observation should be completed every month per retail associate.


There are more than seven million retail transactions that occur on any given business day at the Postal Service. Each one provides us with an opportunity to establish the Postal Service as the premier provider for our customers mailing and shipping needs. I am counting on your continued support in creating a retail culture that reinforces the Postal Service brand and in making a commitment to fully engage and retain those customers. Embracing the RCE program is just one way to ensure our employees do the same!

475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260

Exhibit 8-2b

RCE Letter to Labor Relations Managers

LABOR RELATIONS

 **UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE**

December 8, 2020

MANAGERS, LABOR RELATIONS

SUBJECT: Retail Customer Experience – RCE Evaluations

The Retail Customer Experience Program was implemented to improve the level of customer service and generate revenue by ensuring customers are aware of the numerous postal services available. The Program consists of lobby evaluations and retail employee observations. As stated in previous correspondence from the Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations, dated November 18, 2020, the Retail Customer Experience evaluations are not to be used as a source for disciplinary action.

Several initiatives have arisen throughout the Postal Service that emulate the Retail Customer Experience Program. Once again, discipline should not be the focus of these programs and they should not be used as a method of intimidation. The focus of these local initiatives should concentrate on encouraging positive behaviors. Reviewing scores with employees and explaining why the questions are asked helps employees understand the purpose of the program and their role in improving retail operations. Coaching employees based on observations provides employees a chance to gain additional knowledge that can be applied in the future when performing their duties.

A standardized sales skills process was implemented in FY 2020. This process includes supervisory follow-up through ongoing lobby and employee observations, utilizing the PS Form 4000-A for retail lobby observations and the PS Form 4000-B for retail employee observations (both forms can be found in the Postal website blue page under forms). Supervisors should be making independent personal observations of retail associate interactions with customers to ensure they are performing all aspects of their duties. If deficiencies exist, coaching and discussions relating to the employee's responsibilities are needed. If these coaching sessions and discussions fail to provide the desired behavior change, then discipline may be appropriate. As with all employee performance observations, however, supervisors should ensure positive performance as well as less than satisfactory performance is recognized. Recognizing good performance can motivate employees and encourage others who are not performing as well.

Please share this information with Labor Relations personnel and Retail Operations personnel. Feel free to contact _____ if you have any questions or need additional information.

Manager
Labor Relations Policies and Programs

475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
WASHINGTON DC 20560-4101
www.USPS.COM

8-3 Enterprise Data Warehouse

The Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) provides a single repository for managing the Postal Service's corporate data assets. The EDW provides a common source of accurate corporate data across organizations to a wide variety of users. The data can be reported upon and manipulated in a variety of ways both within and across functions for deeper analysis, which can lead to additional revenue, reduced costs, and improved business practices.

EDW was originally created in support of Retail. EDW now supports additional groups, including Finance, Operations, Marketing, and others who are using EDW for reporting and analysis. For more information about EDW, visit <https://crpl.usps.gov>.

8-4 Retail Data Mart

The Retail Data Mart (RDM) is an essential part of the U.S. Postal Service, as it provides credible, actionable transactional data to all levels of the organization. The Postal Service use RDM to develop strategic and tactical planning with the confidence of having accurate, targeted data applicable to the business decisions being made. RDM gives valuable information for managing local offices, staffing efficiently, maintaining inventory, and maximizing revenue opportunities. Crucial to the ongoing success and credibility of the RDM, the RDM Program Management Office (PMO) is charged with maintaining the program, ensuring data is accurate and relevant, improving report performance, enhancing or changing reports, creating new production reports, and meeting the needs of a multitude of internal business drivers. Essentially, the PMO is the conduit between the business needs of the customer and the technical development team that builds and maintains the RDM. Without the PMO, projects would suffer from slow development due to the disconnecting perspective of users and developers. In addition, data integrity would suffer due to lack of oversight from a proactive team that can see trends and similar performance challenges.

RDM was developed to provide easy access to retail transaction data and critical business information used for operational planning, fraud detection, and strategy development as well as sales and market analysis. The RDM was established to harness the power of retail data to afford the opportunity to generate more revenue, improve customer service, manage inventory, staff to match customer demand, and improve store performance. RDM data is used for pricing change support, new product development, product sales, SSK and mPOS performance, fraud detection, WOS, and to determine marketing effort value and many more business opportunities.

Users access the RDM through the EDW using a Micro Strategy online analysis program in a relational Teradata database. Data is retained for the current fiscal year and two previous fiscal years. The RDM is one of the

business areas in the EDW. RDM answers business questions such as the following:

- a. How do RCE scores match the sales/productivity of a given retail unit?
- b. How many Post Office boxes are vacant and where are they?
- c. How does alternate access affect retail counter sales?
- d. How do contract stations, Click-N-Ship, and RDM WOS reports and graphs allow users to understand, analyze, and compare RSS retail transactions for productivity and staffing efficiency optimization?

The WOS Earned Actual Staffing Graph (EASG) provides a comparison among three staffing levels namely “Actual” (RAs on the window), “Earned” (RAs needed to perform transactions), and “Modeled” (a smoothed representation of earned hours). The F4-SSRD Tool allows supervisors to prepare a schedule for a period at a time by manually distributing their staffing hours to match optimal terminal usage indicated on the EASG.

The Retail Revenue Scorecard Report combines key retail performance indicators. One objective of this report is to bring together key performance indicators on one simple and concise report. Management can easily compare these key performance indicators against the same period last year to get a quick assessment of how the business in these areas is progressing. A quick-glance graphical alert indicator helps to identify areas of concern with minimal effort. This reduces management's time in getting information when compared to time needed when running multiple reports for multiple periods. The Retail Scorecard provides a hyperlink to the reports containing specific indicators.

8-5 Function 4 Window Operations Survey Tool

The Postal Service is continually evaluating its network of postal retail facilities to meet current and future customer needs. The Function 4 Window Operations Survey (WOS) Tool is an extensive review of RSS and e1412 offices, and an integral step in right-sizing the retail counter operation. Conducted onsite by knowledgeable retail personnel, the WOS is a data-driven tool used to determine an office's retail workload. The WOS results package contains staffing and procedure recommendations that, once implemented, lead to increases in retail productivity, revenue, and customer satisfaction.

A WOS study is performed in conjunction with every Function 4 review and as a standalone activity for additional purposes as stated in the National Standardized Function 4 Review Guidelines. Workload is determined by the number and types of transactions conducted at the retail counter. RSS transmits to the RDM data that details the number and type of transactions conducted by RAs. Reports in RDM WOS are critical for completing the WOS.

8-6 Function 4 Sales and Service Retail Diagnostics Tool

Like the Function 4 WOS, the F4-SSRD Tool helps to identify and determine the optimal staffing efficiency and performance opportunities at retail units. The F4-SSRD Tool is an operations research and marketing program that helps local managers make better decisions about staffing of postal retail outlets to meet customer needs.

A district team gathers, processes, analyzes, and presents the information to management. Based on the data collected, recommendations are made on scheduling and staffing. The F4-SSRD Tool may indicate the need for additional personnel or the need for a reduction in work hours in certain facilities. Local managers must take appropriate action to adhere to the recommendations presented.

8-7 Function 4

Customer service managers are responsible for ensuring accurate daily recording of mail volumes received in a mail distribution unit and are required to efficiently use the function 4 workforce to distribute that volume of mail. Customer service activities are nonsupervisory hours of employees at Post Offices, stations, and branches involved in automated, mechanized, manual, and Post Office box distribution of mail, retail window and vending equipment services, and miscellaneous administrative and Central Forwarding System operations.

[Management Instruction PO-610-2023-2, Function 4 Standardized Customer Service Workload Reporting System](#), contains the national policies and procedures for recording and reporting daily customer service workload information within Post Offices and station and branch operations.

To maintain the customer service workhour budget, monitor clock rings and ensure proper labor distribution code (LDC) usage. Listed in part 8-7.1 are acceptable duties for LDC 45. Listed in part 8-7.2 are acceptable duties for LDC 48. In CAGs H through L offices only, all nonsupervisory hours used in customer service activities are reported in LDC 47.

8-7.1 Labor Distribution Code 45: Window Services

All nonsupervisory hours of employees serving customers at windows and other activities in support of window services include the following:

- a. Advance deposits.
- b. Caller mail pickup at window.
- c. Change orders requested by RAs.
- d. CODs: acceptance and delivery, including COD clearance.
- e. Clerk setup: open and close.

- f. Credit examinations: Associate's cash retained and money orders, stamp stock, unit reserve, cash retained reserve, and fixed credits.
- g. Information/directions.
- h. Lobby assistant (SSK host).
- i. Non-revenue transactions
- j. Passport application, fees, and transmittal form.
- k. Passport photos.
- l. Sales of all Postal Service products and services.
- m. Service/safety talks to RAs.
- n. Stamps by Mail, Stamps by Phone, and Stamps by Internet.
- o. Stamp stock: request and verification (local PS Form 17, *Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return*).
- p. Stocking forms, lobby supplies, and point of purchase (POP) materials.
- q. Non-revenue transactions at the Dutch door (in operations with retail).
Note: The Postal Inspection Service views Dutch door operations as a security risk.
- r. C_B_P_M_A_N_ (CBPMAN) input on ACE computers.

8-7.2 **Labor Distribution Code 48: Administrative and Miscellaneous Duties**

LDC 48 includes nonsupervisory hours of customer service employees assigned to dispatch activities and miscellaneous retail activities at stations, branches, and associate offices, including steward's duty time, travel time, and meeting time. It also includes nonsupervisory hours used in support of delivery service, such as working insured mail, COD, customs, carrier cage operation, markup duties (other than CFS sites), and other miscellaneous customer service and clerical activities.

The following is a summary of LDC 48 administrative and miscellaneous duties:

- a. Accountable mail, second notices.
- b. Bank: to replenish change fund (accountability assigned on PS Form 3369, Consigned Credit Receipt).
- c. Carrier checkout/clearing.
- d. Claims and inquiry.
- e. Collections.
- f. Copy machine administration.
- g. Dispatch of mail.
- h. Dutch door operation (in operations without retail).
- i. Priority Mail Express street delivery by clerks.
- j. Markup, nixie, and return to sender mail.
- k. Opening/closing building.
- l. Phone duties.
- m. Registry duties.

- n. Requesting stock (retail stamp distribution office/stamp services center).
- o. Scanning duties in back office.
- p. Service/safety talks (provided to clerks other than RAs).
- q. Supply ordering.
- r. T-7 administrative duties.
- s. Timekeeping.
- t. Trust fund record keeping.
- u. Undeliverable bulk business mail processing.
- v. Unit closeout, preparation, and verification of deposit.
- w. Retail consolidation unit backup transmission.
- x. Unit consolidation: verifying supporting documents and filing of unit reports.

8-8 Retail Optimization Access Management

The Retail Optimization Access Management (ROAM) application is a mapping tool that allows users to visually display Postal Service and competitor locations. The application also provides demographic information on population and household growth. This tool enables the user to better determine retail needs based on a combination of visual and tactical information.

Area customer service analysts and district retail specialists use the application to help define local and regional retail needs. ROAM currently resides on the Postal Service intranet.

From the ROAM Web site, one can also access a retail optimization risk/opportunity matrix. This is a model that uses a combination of growth, competitor, and corporate revenue and cost data to determine areas of risk and opportunity within the retail arena. This tool enables better decision making for retail placement.

ROAM access is limited to employees working on Area- or District-level retail optimization issues and facility personnel. Exceptions for use are granted on an as-needed basis for other employees, such as Postal Inspectors. Access to the application must be requested through eAccess.

9 Retail Training

9-1 Retail Training Overview

Retail training is designed for a wide audience. Retail training encompasses all RA positions and customer service supervisors, station managers, and postmasters.

Note: An employee cannot access a training course until the employee's approving manager has assigned the course.

Employees are provided with both formal and informal learning experiences that contribute to individual growth and improve performance in current or future assignments. Both formal and informal training and development programs are organized to achieve employee learning objectives in knowledge, skills, and abilities. Structured classroom sessions and on-the-job training are considered formal training. Additionally, formal training may include Web-based delivery of online programs, computer-based interactive delivery, and satellite transmission.

Informal training methods are delivered through service/stand-up talks such as "Retail Digest" PowerPoint presentations, New Functionality Guides, *Postal Bulletins*, and other published materials.

Retail Operations requires that ongoing training be conducted by station/branch management to ensure that RAs receive pertinent retail information.

Training and educational programs using specified courses and materials and given by authorized personnel are critical to the overall performance, knowledge, skills, and productivity of employees.

Postal Service policy is to provide employees with training and development opportunities consistent with operational requirements, duty classification, and skills enhancement. The implementation of these training and educational programs as required helps assure that Postal Service personnel can provide effective and optimal service.

Failure to provide formal, informal, or ongoing training could result in poor employee productivity, higher operational costs, and loss of revenue by the Postal Service.

9-2 Course Materials

It is imperative with any training, whether formal or informal, that the proper course materials be presented in the delivery method intended.

For retail courses requiring the employee to pass a qualifying exam, course materials can be accessed through the blue Web site at <http://trainingmaterials.usps.gov>.

Facilitators must be Facilitator Skills Training (FST) certified. Facilitators must teach with the most current course materials and not deviate from those materials.

The SSA training course number 10026754 contains an American Postal Workers Union (APWU) module and requires that an APWU official teach or be present when the union module is taught.

All Postal Service employees newly assigned to SSA positions must complete the Sales and Service Associate Training Course 10026754, and subsequently pass the qualifying examination. This test is officially administered at the district LDDC.

Postal Service employees assigned as lead sales and services associates (LSSA) must complete the LSSA Training Course 10023330. The RSS deployment courses cannot be used in lieu of these courses.

These jointly developed programs are designed to provide newly assigned SSAs and LSSAs with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their duties. They are also designed for RAs in need of refresher training.

These programs include instructions in elements such as interpersonal skills, customer relations, selling techniques, postal products and services, and security of funds. These courses also help establish and reinforce desirable work habits and a commitment to quality service in the critical early stages of new duty assignments, including customer satisfaction, acquisition, retention, and revenue growth.

Prior to working at the retail counter with customers, handling Postal Service funds and securities, and handling financial closeout duties, the associate must complete the necessary training program and pass the qualifying examination. All employees must be thoroughly trained in aviation mail security procedures and instructions. Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) training is also required. Training materials for the BSA and also for the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) program are available on the Corporate Treasury Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/corptreasury/bsa>.

9-3 Retail Systems Software

Retail Systems Software (RSS) is a system that provides retail employees the tools and information needed to provide customers with prompt, accurate, and consistent service. RSS also plays a major role in reaching U.S. Postal Service goals by reducing costs, increasing revenue, improving customer loyalty, increasing operating efficiency, and improving employee satisfaction. RSS consists of POS hardware running RSS software.

RSS records detailed transaction data, provide employee communication, provide sales and services associates with product information, simplify inventory management, and assure pricing regularity.

Also, the following USPS directives are available on RSS:

- a. *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM).
- b. *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM).
- c. Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*.

The following personnel must take training during deployment and take the following courses (the employee's approving manager must assign a course to an employee before the employee can access the course):

- a. **All employees with an RSS ID:** RSS Front Office Course 10023328.
- b. **Managers, supervisors, stock Back Office Closeout custodians and closeout personnel:** RSS Back Office /Administration 10023329. (Prerequisite: RSS Front Office Course).
- c. **Managers, supervisors, and stock Back Office Administration custodians:** RSS Back Office Administrative Course 10023329. (Prerequisite: RSS Front Office and RSS Back Office Closeout Courses).

The RSS courses can be accessed through the USPS Hero Web site at https://usps.csod.com/LMS/catalog/Welcome.aspx?tab_page_id=-67.

Bargaining employees who are scheduled to participate in deployment training must have already passed the SSA qualifying exam.

Employees must not be allowed to work on an RSS system until they have successfully completed the above prescribed course(s). Employees requiring RSS training during nondeployment are to receive on-the-job training with a certified retail coach using the core lesson plans in either the SSA or LSSA course.

9-4 Other Retail Systems Training

Training for e1412 and IMD (handheld) scanners is available. For further information, contact your district coordinator or the manager of Employee and Leadership Development.

9-5 Retail and Customer Services Operations (RCSO) Web Site

The Retail and Post Office Operations (RPOO) Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/retail> provides a corporate overview, functional guidance, long-range strategic plans, and a strategic vision for local Post Offices.

The RPOO Web site has been developed to provide tools, support, guidelines, and policies and to keep the field equipped with current retail information.

The RPOO Web site has a list of several topics on the left side of the page — click on the various topics for more information, including links to the other information and resources:

- a. *Retail Digest* — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/retail-digest-about.htm>.
- b. Reporting systems and applications, including RSS — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/reporting-systems-applications/welcome.htm>.
- c. Policy and procedures, including Standard Work Instructions (SWIs), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and Service Talks — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/policy-procedures/welcome.htm>.
- d. Products and services — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/products-services/welcome.htm>.
- e. Signage, including catalogs, continuity signage for Point of Purchase (POP) items, and promotional signage — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/signage/welcome.htm>.
- f. Equipment, including RSS and SSK — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/equipment/welcome.htm>.
- g. Resources, including for the RCE program — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/resources/retail-customer-experience.htm>.
- h. Training, including for Function 4, passports, and RDM — its specific Web site is <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/training/welcome.htm>.

10 Product Offerings (Sales Skills)

10-1 Standard Retail Transaction

Retail associates must use the components of A+GIST — Acknowledge, Greet, Inquire, Suggest, Thank — to help customers make educated decisions. They should greet customers and ask about their mailing needs and the mailability of the contents [hazardous materials (HAZMAT)], offer and explain Postal Service premium services and/or explain the product requested, offer and explain any special services and additional products, and then thank the customers for their patronage.

Refer to the latest revenue-generation training for additional information on sales skills.

10-2 PS Forms 4000-A and 4000-B

10-2.1 **PS Form 4000-A, Retail Lobby Observation**

USPS management personnel must perform retail lobby observations at least once every month, using PS Form 4000-A, *Retail Lobby Observation*. If an office fails a retail lobby observation, USPS management personnel must perform a retail lobby observation weekly until the office successfully passes. The purpose of a lobby observation is to review the total retail environment, including the following:

- a. Exterior/Entrance zone.
- b. PO Box lobby zone.
- c. Self-service zone.
- d. Full-service zone.
- e. Lobby assistance.

Management or a designee completes the PS Form 4000-A, *Retail Lobby Observation*, files the form at the unit, and retains the form for 2 years.

10-2.2 **PS Form 4000-B, Employee Observation**

The purpose of an employee observation is to record the level of the employee's sales skills and product knowledge, using PS Form 4000-B, *Employee Observation*.

Management or a designee must observe each RA at least once each month. The observation must include interaction with five consecutive customers.

Note: Units not meeting targets should provide more frequent observations.

Management should do the following:

- a. Review results of the observation with the associate within 24 hours.
- b. Compare the employee's performance with previous observations. Congratulate the RA for a job well done if he/she achieves 100 percent or meets local sales skills goal. Local recognition programs are encouraged.
- c. If goals are not met, coach the employee on ways to improve knowledge and performance.
- d. Ensure that the associates follow the hazardous mail acceptance procedures.
- e. File and retain the observation at the unit for 2 years.

10-3 Value-Added Sales

Special services are enhancements that, for a fee in addition to postage, provide greater security and accountability for mail, convenience to the sender, or improved handling.

Not all special services are available for all classes of mail, and only certain services may be combined for the same mailpiece. Bundled services should be promoted to simplify customer transactions.

Examples of value-added sales services are the following:

- a. **Certificate of Mailing:** Provides evidence of mailing.
- b. **Certified Mail:** Provides a mailing receipt and recipient's signature at time of delivery.
- c. **Collect on Delivery (COD):** Used to collect the cost of merchandise, postage, and handling charges when an article is delivered to the recipient. Insurance is included in the fee for COD service.
- d. **Domestic Insurance (\$500 and under):** Provides indemnity coverage for items valued at \$500 and under. This service does not provide a recipient's signature at delivery.
- e. **Domestic Insurance (over \$500):** Provides indemnity coverage for items valued over \$500 up to \$5,000. This service requires a recipient's signature at delivery. Customers may also purchase domestic insurance at SSKs or online through Click- N-Ship or eBay for up to \$500 of indemnity coverage.

- f. **Priority Mail Express with Additional Insurance:** Additional insurance, up to a maximum coverage of \$5,000.00, may be purchased for merchandise valued at more than \$100 sent by Priority Mail Express.
- g. **Global Express Guaranteed insurance:** Limited amount of insurance is included. Additional insurance may be purchased (see *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual sections 212.5 and 321).
- h. **Money Orders:** Provides a secure, convenient and affordable alternative to sending cash through the mail. If you receive a suspicious money order, call the Postal Service Money Order Verification system at 866-459-7822. This automated system will tell you if a money order was issued by the Postal Service.
- i. **Registered Mail:** A secure service that incorporates a system of internal receipts, monitoring the movement of the mail from the point of acceptance to delivery. It provides the sender with a mailing receipt and recipient's signature upon delivery (upon request, electronic delivery verification is available).
- j. **Restricted Delivery:** Permits a mailer to direct delivery only to the addressee or addressee's authorized agent. Select Restricted Delivery on PS Form 3811, *Return Receipt*.
- k. **Return Receipt:** Provides hardcopy proof of delivery for domestic mail via green card (PS Form 3811).
- l. **Return Receipt (electronic):** Provides electronic proof of delivery for domestic mail. Not available when mailed from manual Post Offices.
- m. **Signature Confirmation:** Provides recipient's signature and information about the date and time an article was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt.
- n. **Special Handling:** Provides preferential handling to the extent practicable in dispatch and transportation. Not insured against loss or damage and is mandatory for material that requires extra care in handling, transportation, and delivery (such as bees or poultry).
- o. **Special (Extra) Service by Mail Class:** See [Exhibit 10-3](#).

Exhibit 10-3

Special (Extra) Service by Mail Class

Service	Priority Mail Express	Priority Mail	First-Class Mail	Standard Mail	Package Services
Certified Mail (PS Form 3800)		X	X		
Return Receipt (PS Form 3811)	X by mail only	X ¹	X ¹	X ² P	X ³
Return Receipt (Received Electronically)		X ¹	X ¹	X ² P	X ³
Certificate of Mailing (PS Form 3817 or PS Form 3877)		X	X		X
Certificate of Mailing for Bulk Quantities (with metered or precanceled stamp postage only) (PS Form 3606)		X	X	X	X
Collect on Delivery (COD) (PS Form 3816)	X ⁴	X	X		X
Insurance (PS Form 3813 or 3813-P)	X ⁵	X	X	X ² P	X
Registered Mail (PS Form 3806)		X	X		
Restricted Delivery (Endorsement)		X ⁶	X ⁶	X ² P	X ³
Signature Confirmation (PS Form 153)		X	XP		XP
Special Handling (Marking)		X	X		X

1. When Combined with an Extra Service

2. Bulk Insurance Only

3. COD or insured mail (for more than \$500)

4. Priority Mail Express Next Day/2nd Day Only

5. Priority Mail Express Insurance Only

6. Purchased with Certified Mail, COD, insured mail (for more than \$500), or Registered Mail service

Note: P = Parcels Only

10-4 Recipient Services

10-4.1 Post Office Boxes

Post Office boxes (PO Boxes) have substantial value both to customers and the Postal Service's bottom line. For customers, PO Boxes provide privacy, security, and convenience at an affordable price. For the Postal Service, they present a significant revenue opportunity.

When talking to customers about the value of a PO Box, explain the following benefits:

- It's fast.** Mail will usually be available earlier in the day than delivery at the customer's home or business.
- It's secure.** Customers enjoy the security of a PO Box. We hold parcels at the Post Office, which is a benefit for customers who are not at home during the day.
- It's affordable.** Our competitive prices fit any budget.
- It's convenient.** Choose a location close to work or home.

- e. **It's reliable.** Americans have trusted the Postal Service for more than 200 years.
- f. **It's permanent.** Customers might change street addresses, but their mail does not have to.

Employees can target potential PO Box customers by displaying banners and buttons and using Tag 26, *Post Office Box Availability*, to market vacant PO Boxes. Display PO Box banners to advertise available PO Boxes. Wear PO Box buttons to remind customers to ask about PO Boxes. Tag 26 is an excellent tool to use to boost PO Box rental revenue. Attach Tag 26 to vacant boxes to advertise their availability. Order Tag 26 directly from the MDC by using eBuyPlus at eBuyPlus@usps.gov. If you need help placing the order in eBuyPlus, call National Materials Customer Service (NMCS) at 800-332-0317 — select option 4 and then option 4 again.

Customers can go to www.usps.com/poboxes to search and rent a PO Box at a Post Office near their home or business. They can enter a physical address or ZIP Code, and the results returned will include the Post Office hours, business hours, lobby hours, box sizes available, and fees for a 6-month period. In addition, a customer can sign up for re-occurring payments.

Existing box customers can pay their fees with a credit card at www.usps.com/poboxes and make a one-time payment or sign up for automatic payment service. Customers can also pay with a PIN-enabled credit or debit card at any of our SSKs.

Provide guidance to customers who need a PO Box; the amount of mail the customer receives daily or weekly will determine what size box is ideal for the customer's needs. Ask customers how frequently they plan to pick up their mail. Customers who pick up their mail weekly or biweekly could need a larger box than customers who pick up their mail daily or every other day. It is important that customers establish an appropriate size box initially to avoid having to change their address later. Business customers that receive large volumes of mail may need Caller Service.

To ensure PO Box operations run smoothly and without error, employees must make daily entries into the Web Box Activity Tracking System (WebBATS). Enter or complete the customer box rental information and payment into WebBATS on a daily basis.

PO Box fees vary by location. Post Offices with WebBATS access can view fee group information by generating a WebBATS Facility Information Report as follows:

- a. Go to the “WebBATS main menu,” and select Reports. The Reports page opens.
- b. Under the “Clients/System” column, system category, click Facility Information.
- c. View the “Fee Group” field in the report.

Changes noted to PO Box operations are published in the *Postal Bulletin*.

Employees are encouraged to send their PO Box success stories to poboxsuccess@usps.gov so that their stories can be shared with other Post Offices to help grow revenue.

10-4.2 **Premium Forwarding Service**

Retail associates can generate revenue for the Postal Service and help residential customers at the same time by offering Premium Forwarding Service (PFS) as an option to temporary forwarding and hold mail services. Customers can apply for PFS service for a minimum of 2 weeks up to 1 full year.

With PFS, all mail is reshipped from a customer's home Post Office to his or her temporary address on a weekly basis via Priority Mail. There are some exceptions: (for example: mail requiring a scan, such as Express Mail and Registered Mail, is reshipped immediately). Unlike Temporary Forwarding, PFS enables customers to receive all of their mail while they are away from home. Mailing endorsements do not apply, and the temporary address is not provided to senders.

Feedback from customers is very positive, and PFS revenue continues to grow substantially year after year.

Customers wanting to participate should fill out PS Form 8176, *Premium Forwarding Service Residential (PFS- Residential) Application*, and return it to their primary address Post Office along with two forms of identification, including a valid government-issued photo identification. Customers pay the one-time enrollment fee and all weekly reshipment fees. Weekly reshipments go out on the same day every week providing a regular schedule that customers can depend on.

For more information on PFS, see Publication 621, *Premium Forwarding Service Residential: Guidebook for Employees*, which is available on the blue Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub621.pdf>.

Customers can access information about PFS on the Postal Service Web site at <https://www.usps.com/manage/forward-premium.htm>.

11 Financial Accountabilities

11-1 Field Managers

Field unit managers have the following responsibilities:

- a. Comply with the financial procedures defined in [Handbook F-101](#), which includes proper reporting of all financial transactions, monitoring inventory levels, remitting funds in excess of authorized reserves, and the overall monitoring of field unit operations. Refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.
- b. Track items and collect, when appropriate, any money owed to the Postal Service.
- c. Maintain adequate security for all accountable items.
- d. Ensure that all required counts are performed, including stamp stock credits, cash credits, unit reserve stock, lobby sales stock, and retail floor stock. Field unit managers must comply with count requirements which include completing them within the required time frames, documenting the results, and promptly reporting and resolving any noted discrepancies.

[Handbook F-101](#) describes field unit manager responsibilities by daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and semiannually periods. Refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-2 Security

11-2.1 Employee Responsibility

The field unit manager or supervisor must provide adequate security for all accountable items. Accountable items include postal funds, stamp stock, blank money order stock, philatelic products, accountable receipts, and imprinters.

The field unit manager or supervisor may delegate responsibility for accountable items to other field unit employees under the supervision of the field unit manager.

In addition, field unit managers have the following responsibilities:

- a. Determine how each field unit will best use its available security equipment for protecting accountable items.
- b. Advise the next level of management, in writing, of security equipment inadequacy or malfunction.
- c. Periodically examine equipment that is used to protect stock or funds to confirm proper working order.
- d. Ensure that equipment purchases are consistent with the criteria documented in Handbook AS-701, *Material Management*.

11-2.2 Priority Levels

Field unit managers must ensure that employees provide the appropriate level of security for accountable items. Priority one items require the highest level of security, while priority three items require the lowest level.

[Exhibit 11-2.2](#) lists accountable items by their priority level.

Exhibit 11-2.2

Accountable Items by Priority

Priority	Accountable Item
1	Postal funds (e.g., cash, checks, and money orders), credit and debit card receipts, and blank money order forms.
2	Postage stamps, international reply coupons, migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps (e.g., bird stamps), and philatelic products.
3	Stamped envelopes, stamped postal cards, money order imprinters, and nonsaleable stamp stock.
4	USPS-related merchandise, packaging products, and official licensed retail products.

11-2.3 Equipment

The following types of equipment must be used to secure accountable items (in order of priority use):

- a. Burglar-resistant chests in fireproof safes or security containers located in walk-in vaults.
- b. Postal Service standard vaults or security containers.
- c. Security chests or burglar-resistant chest portion of fireproof safes.
- d. Fireproof safes or vaults built to Postal Service standards.
- e. Lockable metal cabinets and file drawers.

Note: The equipment used to secure accountable items will vary among field units due to equipment availability.

11-3 PS Form 1412, Daily Financial Report

All postal retail units (PRUs), regardless of size or revenue, must report their financial activity to Accounting Services electronically at the close of each business day. PS Form 1412, *Daily Financial Report*, provides individual RAs and PRUs with a uniform method to report financial transactions.

PS Form 1412 is available in both manual and automated types as described in [Exhibit 11-3](#).

Exhibit 11-3

PS Form 1412

Type of Form	Description
Manual PS Form 1412	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Covers the scope of financial transactions for individual RAs and PRUs. ■ Provides a running record of receipt controls of all retail and philatelic sales, money order transactions, stamp accountability, and cash retained.
Automated PS Form 1412	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consists of paper tapes and reports provided by approved mechanical devices such as e1412 and RSS systems. ■ Records all financial transactions made by RAs.

RAs must prepare PS Form 1412 whenever financial transactions are performed at the PRU. RAs must be identified by name or clerk number on all PS Form 1412 supporting documents (e.g., tapes, lists, and receipts).

11-4 Self-Service Kiosks

11-4.1 Overview

A self-service kiosk (SSK) is a machine that allows the customer to perform some basic transactions that are conducted at the full-service retail counter. An SSK allows customers to do the following:

- Weigh and mail letters, flats, and parcels.
- Look up ZIP Codes.
- Purchase First-Class Mail stamps.
- Pay PO Box rental fees.
- Accept prepaid packages and provide receipts.

SSKs do not accept cash. Payment types are limited to credit and debit cards. The SSK prints out a receipt for the customer for each transaction.

The daily closeout process is automated and takes place at a scheduled time each evening, during off-peak hours. A PS Form 1412 is created daily and transmitted via the network to the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) and postal accounting systems. Each SSK is assigned a unique 10-digit unit finance number (UFN) for reporting purposes.

11-4.2 **Machine Service Manual**

The *SSK Machine Service Manual* is available on the Delivery and Retail Web site. Go to <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/equipment/welcome.htm> and click on the *Self-Service kiosk* (SSK) tab.

11-4.3 **Reports**

A hard copy of the SSK PS Form 1412 is not generated automatically. When needed, an SSK PS Form 1412 report is available in EDW through the following path: Accounting > Shared Reports > SAFR > Store Revenue Reports > 1412 by Site by Day.

11-5 Self-Service Only Post Office (SOPO)

A Self-Service Only Post Office (SOPO) represents a cost-effective access channel to meet the demand for USPS access in emerging communities, or to boost convenience in established locales. A SOPO is an unmanned location providing convenience for package induction, stamp purchases, PO Box service, and mailing and shipping needs. SOPO locations address the needs of customers seeking a better digital experience.

11-6 Postage Products

11-6.1 **Overview**

Postage products include a variety of postage stamps such as semipostal stamps, commercial precanceled stamps, migratory bird stamps, philatelic stamps, and regular postage stamps. These products are sold at PRUs, contract postal units (CPUs), stamp vending machines, and SSKs. Postage products are accountable items that must be protected at all times by providing adequate physical security.

11-6.2 **Revenue Account Identifier Codes**

RAs must record the sale of postage products in the corresponding revenue account identifier code (AIC) as indicated in [Exhibit 11-6.2](#).

Exhibit 11-6.2

Product Revenue Account Identifier Codes

Revenue AICs	Master Title	Controls
007	Forever Stamp Sales — Window Services at RSS, and e1412	Postage stamps are accountable items that must be controlled as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide security. ■ Record sales. ■ Maintain records of stamp stock activities.
011	Forever Stamp Sales — by Internet, Mail, and Phone	
014	Forever Stamp Sales — SSK	
015	Forever Stamp Sales — Global	
016	Forever Envelope Sales	
017	Forever Stamp Card Sales	
018	Forever Philatelic Postage	
083	Local Commemorative Envelopes	
084	Breast Cancer Stamp Sales	
086	Precanceled Stamps	
090	Postage Stock Sales	
091	Bird Stamp Sales	
092	Philatelic Product Sales	
094	Stamps by Mail, by Phone, and by Internet	
096	Vending Equipment Postage Sales	

11-7 Retail Products

Retail products include a variety of retail items such as ReadyPost mailing products and other retail products sold at PRUs.

11-7.1 Revenue Account Identifier Codes

[Exhibit 11-7.1](#) lists the AICs in which to record the sale of packaging products and describes how to control these products.

Exhibit 11-7.1

Product Revenue Account Identifier Codes

Revenue AICs	Master Title	Controls
093	Packaging Product Sales	Packaging products are accountable items that must be controlled as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide security. ■ Record sales. ■ Maintain records for packaging product activities. ■ Physically count packaging products (AIC 093) each quarter.
098	Postal-Related Merchandise Sales	
231	Official Licensed Retail Products	

11-8 Passports

Postal Service Headquarters, coordinating with the Department of State Headquarters, establishes the postal operational, accounting, and other procedures for passport application acceptance at designated Post Offices nationwide.

Postmasters and station managers select and designate employees to provide passport service.

PS Form 5659, *Daily Passport Application* (DS-11) Transmittal, is the log of individual passport application activity for both the Department of State and the U.S. Postal Service.

See ASM part 422 for detailed policy and procedures related to passports.

Refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-9 Financial Differences: AICs 247 and 647

PRUs must use the following two AICs to report adjustments related to banking and miscellaneous items:

- a. AIC 247, "Financial Differences Overage."
- b. AIC 647, "Financial Differences Shortage."
- c. Adjustments may also be credited or debited by Accounting Services for financial adjustments related to a unit's banking, transmitted PS Form 1412 transactions, money orders, and stock ledger discrepancies.

Accounting Services issues expenses to PRUs as a result of reconciling the following financial activities:

- a. Sales audit expenses.
- b. Reconciliation exceptions (e.g., banking, credit and debit cards, change funds, and Sure Money).
- c. Stamp stock shipment exceptions (stock ledger).
- d. Money order reconciliation exceptions.

A negative amount (appears in parentheses) in General Ledger (GL) 56203 on the Financial Performance Report (FPR) Line 44 Miscellaneous Expenses is a credit or reduction in expense. A positive amount is a debit or increase in expense.

To identify the source of individual AIC 247 and AIC 647 expenses, access the following: Accounting Data Mart (ADM) report: Accounting>Shared Reports>Postmaster Folder>FPR Net Financial Differences (AIC 247/647) — Line Detail.

To review, identify, or research AIC 247 and AIC 647 expenses, use the reports in the Postmaster folder in the ADM.

For detailed procedures for creating, documenting, monitoring, and offsetting AIC 247/647 expenses, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-10 Banking

The Postal Service conducts business in only U.S. currency (includes coins). Therefore, field unit employees must not accept any foreign currencies as payment. Postal Service employees must safely control U.S. currency, customer checks, and money orders as follows:

- a. Do not loan, withdraw, or deposit postal funds in an unauthorized bank account.
- b. Do not exchange U.S. currency with other types of funds.
- c. Do not use postal funds for personal purposes.
- d. Safeguard postal funds from the public and conceal them from view.
- e. When postal funds are not continuously observed, maintain funds in a locked receptacle.
- f. Deposit all Postal Service funds to a Postal Service relationship bank account established by Corporate Treasury. (See Handbook F-3, *Treasury Management*.)

For detailed banking procedures for PRUs, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-11 Credit and Debit Cards

11-11.1 Credit Cards

The Postal Service accepts the following credit cards for the purchase of most Postal Service products and services:

- a. American Express (AMEX).
- b. Carte Blanche.
- c. Diners Club.
- d. Discover.
- e. JCB.
- f. MasterCard.
- g. Visa.
- h. China Union Pay.
- i. PIN Debit
- j. Samsung Pay — accepted only at Full Window Service (FWS) locations.
- k. All contactless phone/wallets/wearables — accepted only at non-RSS locations).

Note: Credit and debit card terminals will not accept any unauthorized card.

The Postal Service does not accept credit cards for payment for the following:

- a. Trust fund deposits at the PRU, including but not limited to the following:
 - (1) *PostalOne!* accounts.
 - (2) Permit imprint accounts.
 - (3) Periodicals accounts.
 - (4) Business Reply Mail and Postage Due accounts.
- b. Precanceled stamps.
- c. Money orders (principal amount).
- d. Payment for periodicals or mailings.
- e. COD funds.
- f. Money by wire (principal amount).
- g. Payment for an employee debt.
- h. Passport application fees payable to the U.S. Department of State.
- i. Gift cards.

Note: Customers may order stamps and make purchases with American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa credit cards by calling 800-STAMP-24 (800-782-6724) or when purchasing products at www.usps.com.

11-11.2 Unacceptable Credit Cards

An SSA *may not* accept the following types of credit cards:

- a. An unsigned credit card — except as noted in [11-11.3b](#).
- b. A credit card (whether a personal card or a business card) with the words “See ID” or containing two signatures on the signature panel.

11-11.3 Acceptance Procedures for Credit Cards

The procedures for an SSA to accept a credit card are as follows:

- a. The customer inserts a chip card into the terminal or swipes a magstripe card through the magnetic card reader, and then follows the prompts. If a chip card inserted into a terminal cannot be read after three attempts, then the terminal prompts the customer to swipe the card through the magnetic card reader and follow the prompts. If the credit card is approved, a receipt is printed.
- b. The SSA may accept an unsigned credit card only for a magstripe transaction and only under the following conditions:
 - (1) The customer must sign the back of the credit card.
 - (2) The customer must provide two forms of identification, one of which must have a photo identification.
 - (3) The signature on the card must match the signature on the form of identification.

Note: The SSA may accept a business credit card if the card has an individual name embossed on the front along with a

business name, as long as the individual name matches the customer's two forms of identification.

- c. The SSA records credit card transactions in AIC 762, "Credit Cards Remitted," on PS Form 1412.

Note: Credit card receipts must be kept in a separate and secure location. They should be kept secure enough that only those with an official "need to know" have access to them.

11-11.4 **PIN-based Debit Cards**

An SSA may accept the following PIN-based debit cards for payment for all postal products and services:

- a. ACCEL.
- b. Armed Forces Financial Network.
- c. ATH.
- d. Culiance (CU24).
- e. China Union Pay.
- f. Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.
- g. Interlink/PAVD.
- h. Maestro.
- i. NYCE.
- j. Pulse.
- k. Shazam.
- l. STAR.

Any change to the list of accepted PIN-based debit cards will be announced in the *Postal Bulletin*.

If the customer presents a debit card that is not authorized, the terminal will not approve the transaction.

11-11.5 **Acceptance Procedures for PIN-based Debit Cards**

The procedures for an SSA to accept a PIN-based debit card are as follows:

- a. The procedures are slightly different for FWS units (large Post Offices) and for non-RSS units (small Post Offices), as follows:
 - (1) In an FWS unit, the SSA selects the payment options on the POS screen, and then the customer inserts, swipes, or taps the debit card on the Customer Display Unit (CDU).

Note: The option to tap the card is available with new FWS terminals.
 - (2) In a non-RSS unit, the customer inserts, swipes, or taps the debit card on the CDU.
- b. The customer is prompted to enter his or her personal identification number (PIN) on the CDU.
- c. When the system prompts "Cash back," the SSA asks the customer if he or she would like cash back, and the customer selects the amount

of cash back requested, if applicable. The CDU displays the cash back amounts available, and cash back is available only as follows:

- (1) Only if cash is available in the drawer.
- (2) Only for a customer who is making a purchase.
- (3) Only in increments of \$10.00 up to a maximum of \$50.00.

Note: The RSS system will not allow the SSA to exceed the SSA's cash retained limits. For more information on cash retained limits, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

- d. If approved, a customer receipt and a Post Office receipt will be printed. Receipts will show the amount purchased, the cash-back amount, and the grand total.

Note: In an FWS unit, the customer has an option to select a printed receipt, an email receipt, or both a printed and emailed receipt.

- e. The SSA gives the customer receipt to the customer.
- f. The SSA records PIN-based debit card transactions in AIC 772, "Debit Cards Remitted," on PS Form 1412.

Note: PIN-based debit card receipts must be kept in a separate and secure location. They should be kept secure enough that only those with an official "need to know" have access to them.

11-12 Checks

11-12.1 Check Acceptance

Employees may accept personal checks, bank checks, government agency checks, business checks, traveler's checks, and American Express (AMEX) gift checks for customer transactions when presented with a valid photo ID as follows:

- a. Checks are accepted for all postal products, except money order and Sure Money transactions.
Note: U.S. Treasury checks, traveler's checks, and AMEX gift checks are acceptable for the purchase of postal money orders.
- b. Customer checks must be made payable to "U.S. Postal Service" or "Postmaster."
- c. Traveler's checks and AMEX gift checks are accepted only when at least 50 percent of the face value is used to purchase Postal Service products or services.
- d. Checks may be accepted for payment of a Collect on Delivery (COD) item provided the check is made payable to the sender.
- e. Checks that have been mailed in for payments must be endorsed "by mail" on the face.

11-12.2 **Checks Prohibited for Cashing**

Do not cash the following types of checks:

- a. Checks that appear altered.
- b. Checks from a third party.
- c. Checks for anyone other than the payee(s) named on the face.
- d. Checks for which the signature on the ID does not match the signature on the check.
- e. Checks for more than the amount imprinted as a limit on the face of the document.
- f. Checks payable to a business, an organization, society, institution, government agency, corporation (LLC or others), or partnership. These items must be deposited or negotiated at their bank or financial institution.
- g. Checks issued by an employee.

For detailed procedures for accepting and cashing checks, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-12.3 **Returned Customer Checks and Bad Check List**

Returned checks are customer checks returned from Postal Service bank accounts. Returned checks are debited to a service-wide expense account and Accounting Services handles check collection and resolution.

Field unit employees must not accept payment from the customer for returned checks that have been placed for collection.

All funds received as a result of check collection attempts, for these checks, are credited to a service-wide expense account.

For the handling of returned checks, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

Accounting Services generates a national bad check list. The list is sorted by area and forwarded to each authorizing finance official or designee for distribution within the district. (For RSS PRUs, this information is uploaded into the RSS system.)

Accounting Services removes customers from the bad check list once their debt is paid. However, local management may continue to keep a customer on the bad check list, at their discretion, by manually adding it to the list received from Accounting Services.

11-13 Domestic and International Money Orders

Postal money orders can only be purchased using the following payment methods:

- a. U.S. currency and coins.
- b. U.S. Treasury checks.
- c. Traveler's checks payable in U.S. dollars.

- d. American Express gift checks payable in U.S. dollars.
- e. Pin-based debit cards.

Note: Traveler's checks and American Express gift checks are accepted only when at least 50 percent of the face value is used to purchase postal products and services.

The maximum amount of any single domestic money order is \$1,000. The maximum amount of any single international money order is \$700.

To comply with the Bank Secrecy Act, customers must complete a PS Form 8105-A and present valid government-issued photo identification as follows:

- a. For all sales of money orders, gift cards, and Sure Money transactions totaling \$3,000 or more to the same customer in the same day. Fees charged for transactions do not count toward the \$3,000 limit. Separate transactions to one customer over the course of one day count toward the \$3,000 filing threshold.
- b. When cashing money orders that total more than \$10,000 per day, per customer.

To report any potentially suspicious activity involving the purchase or cashing of a postal financial instrument, use PS Form 8105-B, *Suspicious Transaction Report* (STR), and complete the form as soon as possible after the suspicious transaction has ended.

Federal law prohibits notifying the customer that a suspicious report is being completed; therefore, RAs must complete the PS Form 8105-B after the customer leaves the counter line.

Submitting PS Forms 8105-A and PS Forms 8105-B

With the exception noted below, RSS and e1412 Post Offices using money order printers must submit PS Forms 8105-A and PS Forms 8105-B electronically. When the electronic form is submitted successfully, the Post Office does not mail a paper copy of the PS Form 8105-A or PS Form 8105-B to the BSA office.

Exception: There are two instances when a Post Office that has the ability to submit PS Forms 8105-A and PS Forms 8105-B electronically can mail a paper form:

- a. If the network is down and the form cannot be submitted electronically, or if the RA does not receive an electronic confirmation that the online form was successfully submitted. In these instances, a paper form must be mailed to address on the front of the form.
- b. When an RA wants to add comments to a PS Form 8105-B being submitted electronically, in order to provide additional information about a suspicious transaction. The additional information must be submitted on a paper form and mailed to the address on the front of the form.

Post Offices that do not have the ability to submit PS Forms 8105-A and PS Forms 8105-B electronically must mail the forms to the address on the front of the form the same day the transaction occurs.

Use the most current edition of PS Forms 8105-A and 8105-B. Forms may be ordered from the Material Distribution Center.

If submitting a paper form, PRUs must log the PS Form(s) 8105-A before submitting. Sample tracking logs are available on the Bank Secrecy Act Compliance Office's Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/corptreasury/bsa/welcome.htm>; click on *BSA Forms* to locate logs for automated and manual offices.

11-14 Cashing Domestic and International Money Orders

11-14.1 All Postal Money Orders

PRU employees must cash domestic and international money orders in accordance with the following procedures as well as in accordance with any additional specific instructions from the postmaster or district:

- a. Verify that the money order is not on the Missing, Lost, or Stolen list in the current *Postal Bulletin*.
- b. Cash the money order only in the exact amount imprinted at time of issue, up to the authorized maximum amount. Use of a title (e.g., Mr. and Ms.) is not required when endorsing a money order. A money order made payable to more than one person will be cashed for either person if the conjunction “or” is used. If no conjunction is used, all persons named on the face of the item must sign and provide ID as required.
- c. Verify that the money order is authentic (see Notice 299, *Security Features of U.S. Postal Service Money Orders*). Check money order security features for signs of alteration, counterfeit, or fraud before cashing.

If necessary, call the Money Order Verification System (866-459-7822) as an additional tool to validate issuance of a postal money order.

For more information on requirements and procedures for cashing postal money orders, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-14.2 Money Order Security Features

To determine if a money order is authentic, hold the money order up to the light and look for the following security features:

- a. Ben Franklin images (watermarks) repeated on the left side (top to bottom). Watermarks are in the paper and will appear when viewing from the front or back of the money order when held up to the light.
- b. A dark security thread running (top to bottom) to the right of the Ben Franklin watermark with tiny letters “USPS” facing backward and forward.

If either of these security features is not present when the money order is held up to the light, the postal money order is fraudulent. Also, be aware of the following potential areas for fraud:

- a. Denominations are indicated on two locations and must be identical. Look for alterations in one or both places.

- b. Discoloration of the denomination amounts indicates erasure (fraudulent).
- c. Maximum value for domestic postal money orders is \$1,000.

Note: RAs can call the Money Order Verification System as a tool to validate issuance of a postal money order. For more information, see Notice 299.

11-14.3 Money Order Verification System

The Money Order Verification System is an interactive voice response (IVR) system for deterring fraud. The IVR system can assist PRUs and financial institutions when validating postal money orders.

To inquire on the validity of a recently issued money order, do the following:

- a. Call the Money Order Verification System at 866-459-7822.
- b. Press 1 for Money Order Verification.
- c. Enter the following information when prompted:
 - (1) 11-digit money order serial number.
 - (2) Exact dollar amount of the money order.
 - (3) Issue ID number.

If the money order has been issued in the last 90 days and is at least 48 hours old, the IVR should reply that there has been a “match” if the money order is a valid issue.

There are instances where the issuing unit's PS Form 1412 data has not updated in the system in a timely manner. This will result in a nonmatch reply from the IVR system.

The IVR system is to serve only as an additional tool to help prevent fraud.

See the “Money Order Verification System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)” at http://blue.usps.gov/accounting/_pdf/MoneyOrderIVRFAQs.pdf.

For procedures for money order inquiries and replacements, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-15 Accountable Paper

11-15.1 Accountable Paper Definitions

Accountable paper is defined as:

- a. Postage stock.
- b. Stamped papers.
- c. Nonpostal stamps.
- d. Philatelic products.
- e. Money order stock.

Postage stock is defined as:

- a. Postage stamps.
- b. Semipostal stamps.

Stamped papers are stamped envelopes and postal cards, including regular, special, commemorative, and penalty mail issues).

Nonpostal stamps are migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps sold for the Department of the Interior.

Philatelic products are defined as:

- a. Mint sets.
- b. Stamp collecting kits.
- c. Gift packs.
- d. Other products in the items 8000-9999 series.

The Stamp Fulfillment Service Center (SFS), which is located in Kansas City, Missouri, typically has a supervisor and one or more bargaining unit employees assigned to work in or near a secure vault. The SFS is administered by Stamp Services at Headquarters and serves as a centralized stamp distribution operation with the following responsibilities:

- a. Receive and disburse stamps, stamped paper, and philatelic products.
- b. Provide accountable paper for all PRUs and non-RSS Business Partner (non-RSSBP) CPUs within its service area.

11-15.2 Unit Reserve

The unit reserve is the value of all items in the unit reserve stock. The stock custodian (either the postmaster, unit manager, or supervisor) is responsible for managing the stamp stock inventory and must report unit reserve stock activities.

The accountable paper in a unit reserve includes all stamps, stamped paper, and philatelic products in a PRU that has not been consigned to other accountabilities within the unit.

A unit reserve must have sufficient stock to meet customer demand. However, PRUs must maintain total unit accountability within established limits. For more information on unit reserve and stamp stock limits, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-15.3 Responsibilities

11-15.3.1 Postmaster or Unit Manager

The postmaster or unit manager is responsible for ensuring that controls are in place for maintaining an accurate inventory for all accountable paper within the PRU. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Providing adequate security for all accountable items.
- b. Monitoring inventory levels.
- c. Establishing and controlling segments within the PRU.

- d. Ensuring proper entry of all financial transactions.
- e. Ensuring that all required counts are performed.

11-15.3.2 **Employee**

All field unit employees are accountable for the following:

- a. All accountable paper issued to them as a stamp credit.
- b. All funds received from accountable paper sales until deposited as postal funds.
- c. Accurate and timely recording of all financial transactions.

All employees assigned responsibility for accountable paper are liable for losses in their accountability.

11-15.3.3 **Contractor**

A contractor is accountable for all accountable paper assigned to a non-RSSBP CPU.

11-16 Ordering Accountable Paper and Money Order Stock

11-16.1 **PRUs**

PRUs order accountable paper from the SFS, which provides a monthly schedule for ordering.

For detailed procedures for ordering from the SFS, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-16.2 **Money Order Sources**

The Supply Management Asset Planning organization requisitions money order stock from an appropriate money order supplier. Money orders are shipped from the printing vendor to the MDC. For more information, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

11-17 Receiving Stock Shipments From the SFS

11-17.1 **Examining and Verifying the Shipment**

Examine and verify stock shipments as follows:

- a. Examine each shipping carton to ascertain that the address is correct, the seal is unbroken, and the contents are not damaged.
- b. Report tampering to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and Office of Inspector General immediately.
- c. Count stock and verify to the computer-generated PS Form 17, Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return, with a witness.

- d. Sign and date the PS Form 17.
- e. Enter the total value of the PS Form 17 as stock received even if the physical quantity is not the same.

[Exhibit 11-17.1](#) provides specific verification procedures by item.

Exhibit 11-17.1

Verification Procedure by Item

For this item:	Verify the shipment as follows:
Panes in sealed packages	Before removing the sealed film wrapper on the individual packages, follow the instructions on the package for verifying the contents.
Stamp booklets	Before breaking the package seal, count the number of booklets by denomination and stamp type (i.e., Flag Stamps, Floral Stamps, etc.) described on the unit package.
Coils	Before breaking the seal, count the stamp coils to verify that the shipment contains the quantity of coils, stamp type, and denomination of stock ordered.
Stamped envelopes and postal cards	Count the number of boxes or packages and the denominations of the envelopes or cards against the carton labels and verify them against PS Form 17.
Philatelic products	Count the number of items in open cartons. The total must agree with the quantity printed on the outside of the carton.

11-18 Returning Stock to the SFS

11-18.1 Saleable Stock

Saleable stock that may be returned to the SFS includes stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and philatelic products currently on sale.

The stamp stock custodian must receive SFS authorization before returning saleable stock.

11-18.2 Nonsaleable Stock

Nonsaleable stamp stock items and products that may be returned to the SFS for destruction includes the following:

- a. Obsolete stock that is removed from sale at all locations. If recalled for destruction, consider using philatelic products for promotional purposes or as gifts to employees. Obsolete editions of the *Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps* can be provided for philatelic, promotional, or educational purposes. (Stamp Services publishes an annual announcement in the *Postal Bulletin* about the disposition of obsolete editions.)
- b. Defective stock including any partial packages of stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, and damaged stock accepted from customers as described in DMM 604.9.0.

Send stock to be destroyed to the SFS only if the minimum amount has accumulated since the last shipment. [Exhibit 11-18.2](#) lists the minimal amount of stock per CAG.

Exhibit 11-18.2

Minimal Amount of Stock to Be Destroyed per CAG

For CAGs...	The minimum amount is...
A–G	\$100
H	\$50
K and L	\$25

The stamp stock custodian must check the *Postal Bulletin* to know when to withdraw specific stamps and stamped paper items from sale. The schedule of returning nonsaleable stock is provided by the SFS.

Prepare stock to be returned as follows:

- a. Ensure that the value is clearly marked on each item.
- b. Sort loose stamps by denomination and paste them on a letter size paper.

Note: A list of off-sale items is available on the Enterprise Data Distribution Web site at <http://edd/pls/posweb/ProdItem.Intro>; under “Main Topics,” click on *On-/Off-Sale*, and then click on *Off-Sale Items*.

Refer to the SFS Toolkit at <https://blue.usps.gov/accounting>; under “Toolkits,” click on *SFS Toolkit*.

For detailed procedures on how to account for returning stock to the SFS, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12 Stamp Stock and Cash Accountability

12-1 Stamp Stock Assignment

Stamp stock credits and cash credits are assigned as follows:

- a. Retail floor stock.
- b. Employee cash credits.
- c. Unit reserve stock.
- d. Unit cash reserve.
- e. Retail floor stock.
- f. Rural carrier consignment.
- g. Non-RSSBP CPU credits.
- h. Mobile retail units.
- i. Stamps by Mail.

12-2 Stamp Stock Responsibility

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for management of all stamp stock credits and cash credits assigned and must ensure the timely performance of all credit counts.

All employees with consigned credits are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock, cash, and money orders.

Unit reserve stock custodians are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock and money orders.

Non-RSSBP CPUs are accountable for the value of their assigned stamp stock, cash, and money orders.

12-3 Stamp Credits

12-3.1 **Definition**

A stamp credit is the value of the stamp stock and money orders consigned to an RA from the unit reserve stock at a PRU.

Hold stamp credits to a reasonable multiple of the RA's weekly sales amount. A 2-week multiple is recommended. The postmaster, supervisor, or manager may adjust the value of stamp credits to be consistent with customer demand.

To maintain individual accountability, RAs must not trade or purchase stamp stock from one another employee.

In an emergency, a supervisor may authorize an RA to ship or receive stock from another RA as follows:

- a. The supervisor or RA completes a PS Form 17, Stamp Requisition/Stamp Return, in duplicate. Enter the names of both RAs and the amount of stamp stock on PS Form 17.
- b. The supervisor must witness and sign PS Form 17 as authorizing this transaction.
- c. The RA keeps a copy of the PS Form 17 until the next stamp credit count.

12-3.2 **Unit Reserve Stock**

The unit reserve stock custodian is accountable for the value of all items in the unit reserve stock, is responsible for managing the stamp stock inventory, and must report unit reserve stock activities.

Sales from the unit reserve stock are not allowed.

The unit reserve may be assigned to the postmaster, unit manager, or supervisor. At a finance station without a domiciled supervisor, a lead sales and services associate (LSSA) may be assigned the unit reserve. The LSSA may also be assigned a separate stock credit from which direct sales to the public are conducted. (A finance station is a postal retail unit that has three or fewer full-time RAs.)

For detailed procedures for conducting unit reserve stamp stock counts, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-3.3 **Total Postal Retail Unit Stamp Accountability**

Maintain the total PRU accountability on PS Form 1412. AIC 853, "Stamp Accountability Closing Balance," on the unit's PS Form 1412 is a combination of all stamp accountabilities within the same unit finance number (UFN) at the PRU. This combination includes the following:

- a. Unit reserve stock.
- b. Retail floor stock.
- c. Individual stamp credits (e.g., RAs, vending, Stamps by Mail, and philatelic).
- d. Lobby sales (mPOS).

12-3.4 Stamp Credit Record Files

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor is responsible for establishing and maintaining a stamp credit file for each employee. The file must contain the following items:

- a. PS Form 3294-P, *Cash and Stamp Stock Count and Summary*, or PS Form 3294-C, *Cash Credit Count and Summary*.
- b. PS Form 3368-P, *Accountability Examination Record*.
- c. PS Form 3369, *Consigned Credit Receipt*.
- d. PS Form 571, *Discrepancy of \$100 or More in Financial Responsibility*, if applicable.
- e. Letters of demand (LOD) for payment, if applicable.

Maintain a drawer or similar container of file folders, one for each credit, arranged in alphabetical or numerical order.

The retention period established for stamp credit file forms is not to exceed 2 years except for PS Form 3369 which is 3 years.

12-4 Individual Stamp Credit Counts

12-4.1 Counting Requirements

Supervisors must randomly count stamp credits maintained by bargaining unit employees at least once every 4 months.

Stamp credits maintained by nonbargaining employees must be counted by the nonbargaining employee and another employee at least once every 12 months.

For detailed procedures on conducting stamp credit counts, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-5 Contract Postal Unit Stamp Credit Count

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor of the host Administrative Post Office (APO) has the following responsibilities:

- a. Ensuring that CPU stamp credit counts are conducted randomly at least once every 12 months.
- b. Maintaining a separate file for CPU financial activities.

For detailed procedures on conducting a CPU count, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-6 Cash Credits

12-6.1 Unit Cash Reserves

PRUs may establish a unit cash reserve to supplement the needs of the unit. Use PS Form 3369 to assign the unit cash reserve to an individual who is directly accountable. When circumstances warrant, the unit cash reserve custodian may reassign all or part of the unit cash reserve using PS Form 3369. Any reassigned funds must be kept separate from other accountable credits assigned to the employee.

Report the unit cash reserve in AIC 753 on the unit's PS Form 1412. The unit cash reserve has no tolerance.

Note: CPUs may not have a cash reserve. For making changes to unit cash reserves, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-6.2 Cash Retained (RSS Units Only)

RAs who are only consigned a cash credit are authorized to keep a maximum cash retained amount of \$100.99 (\$100 as cash retained plus loose change up to 99 cents), for which they are individually accountable. The RA documents the maximum authorized cash retained on PS Form 3369.

Individual RA cash retained amounts must be equal to AIC 753 as reported on the individual's PS Form 1412 and cannot exceed the approved amount.

12-6.3 Contract Postal Units Cash Credit

Non-RSSBP CPUs may keep \$100 or 10 percent of their stamp credit, whichever is less.

12-7 Segmented Inventory Accountability

Each unit must maintain a unit reserve stock and may have a number of different segments.

RAs who work at window services do not have a stamp stock inventory assigned and instead work from a shared retail floor stock.

RAs who work from the retail floor stock are authorized to keep a maximum cash retained amount of \$100.99 (\$100 as cash retained plus loose change up to 99 cents), for which they are individually accountable.

Other segments may require stamp stock inventory assigned as individual accountability for which they are directly accountable.

12-7.1 Segment Definitions

The following segments enable the assignment of cash or stamp stock to various individuals or roles within a unit:

- a. **Mobile Unit Credits:** Stock for use by employees assigned to operate mobile retail units. This credit is directly accountable to an individual.

- b. **Retail Floor Stock:** A common inventory for use by retail employees who are not directly accountable for that inventory.
- c. **Stamps by Mail (SBM):** An inventory for use in filling stamp orders received from customers by mail that is assigned to an individual who is directly accountable for that inventory. SBM is used where volume prohibits filling requisitions from the retail floor stock.
- d. **Special Event Credits:** Temporary credits for special events can be assigned to one of the accountable segments with stock issued directly from the unit reserve. At the completion of the event a count is conducted, and the balance is either returned to the unit reserve, prepared for destruction, or moved to the retail floor stock.
- e. **Lobby Sales:** A common inventory for use by a lobby assistant to sell stamps on Lobby Sales segment on the mPOS.

12-7.2 Responsibilities

Postmasters, managers, and supervisors at PRUs must comply with the procedures defined in this section. In addition, postmasters, managers, and supervisors are responsible for the following:

- a. Establishing and controlling segments within the unit.
- b. Monitoring inventory levels.
- c. Ensuring proper entry of all financial transactions.
- d. Remitting all funds in excess of authorized reserves.
- e. Monitoring operations, including count procedures.

All PRU employees are responsible for the following:

- a. Ensuring financial integrity.
- b. Maintaining security of all postal stock, funds, equipment, and facilities.
- c. Reporting all retail transactions.
- d. Providing receipts to each customer.
- e. Using the RSS cash drawers for all daily transactions as they occur. Employees are accountable for cash, stamp stock, and money orders directly assigned to them.

12-8 Retail Floor Stock

Under the retail floor stock segmented inventory accountability (SIA) concept, two modifications are made to traditional controls:

- a. Cash is separated from stamp stock in retail credits.
- b. A shared retail floor stock replaces individual stamp credits for RAs.

The unit reserve stock custodian issues stock directly to the retail floor stock.

Although no individual RA is accountable for this stock, each RA making sales from this credit is responsible for ensuring accurate reporting of the sales from the retail floor stock. RAs are also responsible for adequate protection and security of retail floor stock.

For detailed procedures on conducting retail floor stock counts, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-9 Other SIA Segment Counts

Counts for stamp stock credits assigned to bargaining employees must occur at least once every 4 months.

Concurrent counts must be performed for employees assigned unit reserve stamp stock and other accountable credits. This begins a new cycle for the required "count frequencies" for all assigned credits.

Blank money order stock assigned to an accountable segment employee, must be verified each time the count for that segment is performed.

For detailed procedures on conducting individual stamp credit counts, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

12-10 Single Drawer Accountability (SDA)

Single Drawer Accountability (SDA) is a single accountability comprised of stamp stock, cash, and money orders consigned specifically to RSS or e1412 2-, 4-, and 6-hour offices, which are overseen by the host APO.

Stamp counts are randomly mandated by Accounting Services based on financial risk and monitoring indicators. The host APO is responsible for stamp stock management in accordance with this policy.

For more information on SDA, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

Also, refer to the e1412 Toolkit, which is available at <https://blue.usps.gov/accounting/e1412/e1412menu.htm>; select the link for Single Drawer Accountability (SDA), and then under the SDA Inventory tab, select *SDA Count*.

13 Lobby and Retail Counter

13-1 Image

Retail lobby standards are as important as retail maintenance standards. For the Postal Service to project a professional business image to Postal Service customers and employees, the Postal Service must focus on retail lobbies and other customer service areas. Every lobby must be safe, well-organized, well-maintained, neat, and clean. The Post Office lobby is one of the most visible images customers have of the Postal Service.

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 Service operations; therefore, its appearance, convenience, and efficiency directly affect the Postal Service's public image. To enhance corporate identity and continue the standardization process, lobbies must be maintained according to established Postal Service guidelines (e.g., paint colors, signage, and merchandise displays).

13-2 Safety and Cleanliness

13-2.1 **Personal and Environment**

All Postal Service employees are responsible to ensure that the Postal Service provide a clean and safe environment for customers and employees. Business and personal flyers are not permitted in the lobby or at the retail counter.

Secure all lobby furniture and equipment properly to the floor to prevent them from tipping over. Children must not climb onto or be placed on tables or the counter line at any time.

Maintain a professional work environment at each workstation. Personal belongings including electronic devices (i.e., tablets, cell phones, and radios), purses, backpacks, and topcoats do not belong at the retail counter. Keep cell phones on vibrate when working on the full-service window or in the lobby.

Playing music in Post Office lobbies brings problems; therefore, music is not allowed under retail standardization guidelines. Playing local radio stations creates two problems:

- a. Playing music could subject the Postal Service to paying royalty fees to music publishers because artists are entitled to compensation when their music is played in public places.
- b. Postal Service commercial advertising policy requires that all advertising on Postal Service property be reviewed and approved in advance.

Exceptions are Postal Service-approved audio and signage test sites.

13-2.2 **Food and Beverages**

Food and drinks do not belong at, below, or behind the retail counter.

13-2.3 **Professional Appearance and Hygiene**

Postal Service employees are responsible for being properly dressed for their duty. They are expected to maintain high standards of professional appearance, representing to the public the best tradition of service and efficiency while performing their official duties.

13-3 Service in 5 Minutes or Less

It is not economical to provide instantaneous service to each customer entering the lobby. Instead, our goal is to provide a level of service that produces a waiting time of less than 5 minutes. This goal is achieved by the following:

- a. Providing proper training and staff scheduling.
- b. Scheduling and utilizing lobby assistants.
- c. Directing customers to the SSK for simple transactions.
- d. Encouraging proper placement and maintenance of self-service equipment.
- e. Using available equipment (RSS, mPOS, and SSK) to expedite transactions.
- f. Using the RDM WOS EASG, the F4-SSRD Tool, and the SST to identify proper staffing.
- g. Advising customers of alternate access — e.g., CPUs, Village Post Offices (VPOs), Stamps by Mail, Click-N-Ship, and www.usps.com.

13-4 Lobby Sweeps

Lobby sweeps should be conducted when lines are long due to RAs conducting lengthy transactions. A supervisor, postmaster, or RA can conduct a lobby sweep for customers who are conducting nonrevenue transactions such as picking up mail.

13-5 Lobby Assistant Program

The objective of the Lobby Assistant Program is to reduce the average waiting time by helping customers before they reach the retail service counter. The program also aims to reduce the customer's perceived waiting time by demonstrating that the Postal Service provides prompt, efficient, and courteous service. Encourage customers to use the SSK when there are longlines at the window. Utilize the mPOS to expedite device-enabled transactions.

13-6 Signage

13-6.1 **Mandatory Postings**

The posters, signs, labels and decals that must be displayed in every Post Office are described below.

In the exterior/entrance zone, display the following items:

- a. Post Office name per current Facilities' standards.
- b. Hours of operation decal on main entrance door.
- c. Debit/credit card decal.
- d. Holiday closing sign.
- e. Label 117-A, *Warning: Armed Robbery*, posted on the rear employee entrances/loading dock doors and at the customer entrances as designated by the Postal Inspection Service as being high-risk areas.
- f. Label 120, *Facility Alarm*, posted at the customer entrances of offices not designated as high risk.

In the self-service zone or near the entrance to the Post Office, display the following items:

- a. Poster 7, *Rules and Regulations Governing Conduct on Postal Property*.
- b. Poster 158, *Possession of Firearms and Other Dangerous Weapons on Postal Property Is Prohibited by Law*.
- c. Poster 296, *Notice of Reward*.
- d. Poster 313, *Service Performance*.
- e. Sign 151, *Camera Warning*, displayed on or below the four mandatory posters in the self-service zone of offices that have closed circuit cameras that monitor transactions for operational or security purposes.
- f. Decal DEC DDD1, *Aviation Mail Security*, displayed on every collection box or mail drop slot and SSK drum.

In the full-service lobby zone, display the following items:

- a. Poster 37, *Is Your Package Safe to Mail?* (or the Spanish version, Poster 37-S) posted near the Retail counter.
- b. Label 159, *Returned Checks/Dollar Coin*, displayed at every window in every Post Office.

In the PO box lobby zone, display the following items:

- a. PO Box Mail Availability (Up-Time).
- b. PO Box Rates and Availability Signs.

Note: Retail and lobby signs are available through eBuyPlus.

Mandatory posters, notices, and signs must be available in Post Offices for customer access. These items may be placed in a binder or posted behind the counter. [Exhibit 13-6.1](#) contains a list of items that Post Offices must have available for customer access. Also see *Postal Operations Manual* (POM) 125.343.

Note: Display of Selective Service System (SSS) elements is mandatory *only if SSS supplies are available in inventory at the Topeka Material Distribution Center*. Review the MDC eBuyPlus catalog for SSS item availability.

Exhibit 13-6.1

Mandatory Public Information to Be Available

Type of Information	Title and Description
Notice 123	<i>Price List</i>
Notice 4314-C	<i>We Want to Know</i>
Sign 145	<i>Payments Acceptance Policy</i>
Signs ¹	Hours of operation. Time when all committed PO Box mail is normally distributed. Letter drops and collection point times.
AIS Viewer and/or ZIP+4 Product ²	Replaces Publication 65, <i>National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory</i> , and Publication 66, <i>ZIP+4 State Directory</i> .

1. Available through the direct vendor signage contract.
2. Customers may order these products on PostalPro or by contacting the National Customer Support Center by mail, phone, or email as follows: 225 N Humphreys Blvd Memphis TN 38188-1001; 800-238-3150; AISProducts.NCSC@usps.gov.

13-6.2 Point of Purchase Signage

Point of purchase (POP) signage is visual promotional material received periodically from the Postal Service Retail Merchandising Center. The promotional materials and signage communicate product and service information and promotional messages to customers.

Display POP signage according to the most current Signage Instruction Guide provided in the POP kit. Some guidelines are the following:

- a. Do not use visible tape to hang signage.
- b. Do not use handwritten or computer-generated signage.
- c. Use approved POP hardware to display menu boards and posters.
- d. Adhere to put-up and take-down dates printed on POP elements and listed in the Signage Instruction Guide.
- e. Remove outdated/seasonal POP displays.
- f. Order additional signage and hardware as needed. ReadyPost and the new POP Hotline are available through the MDC at 800-332-0317.

13-6.3 Planograms

A planogram is a schematic drawing that shows the proper placement of POP elements and retail merchandise in Postal Service retail lobbies. Planograms are included in the *Signage Instruction Guide in POP* kits and accompany retail product shipments. They should be used as guides when changing retail POP signage and organizing merchandise on slat walls or similar merchandisers.

13-6.4 Interior and Exterior Signage Zones

When signage is properly placed to deliver the right message in the right place at the right time, the signage has the most impact. To ensure that the Postal Service is communicating information in the most effective way, we have identified a system of zones within the PRU.

Each zone has a specific communication goal. The time spent in each area, as well as the amount of customer traffic, helps determine the placement of each communication for the fullest effect.

The focus for each zone can change depending on the time period. The different zones are as follows:

- a. **Exterior/Entrance Zone:** Promotional offers and general information for awareness of products and services.
- b. **Self-Service Zone:** How to or directional information for completing simple transactions using an APC or vending.
- c. **Full-Service Zone:** Detailed information on postal products and services.
- d. **Retail Counter Zone:** Price point, product, and service information.
- e. **Open Merchandise Zone:** Merchandise and packaging for immediate or future use.
- f. **PO Box Lobby Zone:** Nonrevenue-generating and public awareness signage.
- g. **Employee Zone:** Information intended only for employees.

13-6.5 Handwritten and Homemade Signs

Except for official Postal Service and other approved governmental notices and announcements, no handbills, flyers, pamphlets, signs, posters, placards, or other literature may be deposited on the grounds, walks, driveways, parking and maneuvering areas; exteriors of buildings and other structures; or on the floors, walks, stairs, racks, counters, desks, writing tables, window ledges, or furnishings in interior public areas on Postal Service premises.

To achieve a professional retail environment and comply with retail standardization guidelines, no unauthorized, handwritten, or homemade signs may be displayed in the lobby.

Avoid the following:

- a. Too many displays.
- b. Clutter on bulletin boards in PO Box lobby.

- c. Solicitation brochures.
- d. Outdated displays.
- e. Signage hung with visible tape.

13-7 Service Animals

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other federal and state laws protect the rights of people who have disabilities. The Act allows a person to be accompanied by his or her service animal in places of public accommodations (e.g., stores, doctors' offices, taxis and buses, restaurants, Post Offices, and other public places).

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform. Service animals assist blind individuals as well as people with other disabilities. Many disabilities are not visible, and service animals may vary in size or breed. Legally, service animals are not considered "pets." Some of these animals perform the following:

- a. Alert persons with hearing impairments to sounds.
- b. Pull wheelchairs or carry and pick up things for persons with mobility impairments.
- c. Assist persons with mobility impairments with balance.

If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, the RA may ask, "Is this a service animal necessary for a disability?" or "Is this your pet?" You may not ask for proof or certification of the animal's training, require special ID cards for the animal, or ask about the person's disability.

Retail associates may not ask a person to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it, or (2) the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In addition, an RA may not charge an extra fee for the service animal, keep the person with the service animal out of areas open to the general public, or separate the person from the service animal. Do not touch, feed, talk to, or otherwise distract any service animal without the owner's permission.

When a person with a service animal comes into the unit, RAs should do the following:

- a. Speak directly to the person and greet him or her as you would any other customer.
- b. Provide any assistance the person might need to conduct business or purchase Postal Service products and services.

Remember: The disabled person is responsible for the service animal's behavior.

13-8 Retail Products and Services

In an effort to increase revenue, Post Offices are now selling a variety of mailing products and stamp-related retail merchandise. Products are shipped from a central fulfillment center and charged to each office's FED strip number. Offices must follow the proper approval process prior to placing orders for merchandise.

13-8.1 **Forms and Labels**

Customers can fill out forms and address labels while they are waiting to be served. To facilitate this, ensure that the following forms and labels are always available for customers:

- a. Priority Mail Express envelopes.
- b. Priority Mail envelopes.
- c. Label 11-B, *Priority Mail Express Post Office to Addressee*.
- d. Notice 107, *Let's Keep the Mail Safe*.
- e. Notice 4314-C, *We Want to Know*.
- f. PS Form 2865, *Return Receipt for International Mail*.
- g. PS Forms 2976-E, *Customs Declaration Envelope — CP 91*.
- h. PS Forms 2976-R, *USPS Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note*.
- i. PS Form 3227-A, *Stamps Delivered to Your Mailbox*.
- j. PS Form 3227-R, *Rural or Highway Contract Route Carrier Stamp Purchase Order Form*.
- k. PS Form 3800, *Certified Mail Receipt*.
- l. PS Form 3806, *Receipt for Registered Mail*.
- m. PS Form 3811, *Domestic Return Receipt*.
- n. SSS1M (UPO), *Selective Service Form*.

Provide attractive adjustment form holders that clearly display the forms to customers. Form holders are designed to accommodate a variety of form sizes. Keep them well stocked, neatly maintained, clearly labeled, and in a good location for employees and customers.

13-8.2 **Professional Display**

For a professional display, do the following:

- a. Use any POP material provided; their purpose is to call attention to the product and the merchandiser.
- b. Stock displays according to planograms.
- c. Stock displays before opening or after closing hours. If items become empty during hours of operation, restock accordingly.
- d. Keep displays neat and clean.
- e. Fill “holes” by spreading product out until additional stock arrives.
- f. Prevent product overlap.
- g. Avoid overstocking a peg.

- h. Replace damaged and dog-eared items.

At the lobby and retail counter, do the following:

- a. Arrange similar items on a fixture with the lightest colors at the top and the darkest at the bottom.
- b. Keep the display physically balanced.

13-9 Retail Merchandise

13-9.1 Retail Products

The Postal Service licenses selected vendors to produce merchandise that displays Postal Service trademarks, stamps, and images. Such merchandise or its packaging carries a hangtag or label or otherwise states that the item is under license from the Postal Service.

When purchasing merchandise displaying a trademark, stamp design, or other pictorial or graphic image owned or used by the Postal Service, employees must ensure the merchandise is officially licensed by the Postal Service.

No locally produced items may be sold in Post Offices. Only merchandise that has been assigned an item number by HQ Retail may be sold in Postal Service lobbies.

13-9.2 Shipping Supplies

All shipping supplies are ordered from a single vendor. The result is a standardized selection of packaging and mailing supplies, all imprinted with the Postal Service and ReadyPost logos. These shipping supplies are available to view online at <http://blue.usps.gov/retail>.

13-9.3 Packaging

Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express packaging supplies (e.g., boxes, envelopes, and forms) are available at no cost for customers to order online at www.usps.com or by calling the toll-free number 800-222-1811.

13-10 Public Services

13-10.1 Passport Application Acceptance

The Postal Service, in agreement with the Department of State, Passport Services, assists field passport agency offices by accepting passport applications, where operationally feasible, given overall customer service and revenue generation considerations.

The Postal Service retains a fee for executing the application. Record execution fees in AIC 264, "USPS Passport Acceptance Fee." Fees collected for the Department of State are accepted in the form of personal checks or money orders made out to the Department of State and attached to the passport application.

Training for employees offering passport application acceptance service is through a computer-based training web-based tool. The training may be taken on any computer connected to the Postal Service network in 3 hours or less. Additional training and ongoing support is provided by customer service representatives located in regional offices of the Department of State. Passport photo services may be offered. Passport cameras and related equipment can be purchased through the MDC in Topeka, Kansas. Fees collected for passport photos are recorded in AIC 241, "Passport Photo Services."

13-10.2 **Selective Service**

In the interagency agreement with the Selective Service System (SSS), the Postal Service agrees to stock, provide, and display selective service registration forms and materials in classified Post Offices, stations, and branches. Contract postal units are not involved.

The following is a list of the required registration materials that can be obtained through the MDC and that should always be available in the PO Box lobby or behind the retail counter:

- a. SSS1M, *Registration Form*.
- b. SSS2, *Change of Information*.

Check stock several times a week to make sure adequate supplies of the SSS1M are on display. Guidelines are found in POM part 172.

Note: Display of Selective Service System (SSS) elements is mandatory *only if SSS supplies are available in inventory at the Topeka Material Distribution Center*. Review the MDC eBuyPlus catalog for SSS item availability.

13-10.3 **Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps**

Federal law requires persons ages 16 and older who hunt migratory birds (e.g., ducks and geese) to obtain Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps, commonly known as "duck stamps." These stamps may not be used for postage.

Post Offices act as agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by selling these stamps. Migratory Bird stamps are nonredeemable, and all sales are final.

For more information on Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps, refer to the ASM or to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

13-10.4 Burial Flags

Postmasters in CAG A-J offices and in CAG K offices at county seats must cooperate with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) when requested to act as depositories for burial flags. On the death of a veteran and in compliance with rules and regulations issued by the VA, a depository must issue a flag to drape the casket.

The VA supplies burial flags, application forms, and the rules and regulations governing flag issue. Postmasters must address all correspondence about the supply and issuance of the flags to the VA regional offices that use their office as a depository.

Regulations governing burial flags can be found in ASM 474.

13-11Flags

13-11.1 American Flag

The flag of the United States must be displayed on stationary flagstaffs at all Post Offices, branches, stations, terminals, garages, and Postal Service facilities, including leased and rented premises. If the Post Office unit is located in a facility operated by the General Services Administration, that agency's regulations on the display of the flag govern. If the Post Office unit is located on a military base, the display of the flag is governed by the military installation.

When employees are on duty in a Postal Service facility, the flag must be displayed except in severe weather. Raise the flag as soon after sunrise as practical and lower the flag at the time of closing or no later than sunset.

Other flags are flown below the U.S. flag if displayed on the same flagstaff and at the same level or lower if displayed on a separate flagstaff. When the U.S. flag is flown at half-staff, all other flags are to be at half-staff also.

When the flag is displayed, the flag must be flown at half-staff on the following dates:

- a. May 15, Peace Officers Memorial Day.
- b. Last Monday in May, Memorial Day Observed.
- c. December 7, National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Although it is customary to fly the flag from sunrise to sunset, the U.S. Code states that "when a patriotic effect is desired," one can display the flag around the clock; however, the flag should be illuminated.

Requisitions for new flags must be submitted by field officials to the General Services Administration.

13-11.2 Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW-MIA) Flag

Effective December 5, 2019, Postal Service facilities are required to fly the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flag year-round. The new federal law, which was passed on November 7, 2019, requires Post Offices to fly the flag every day that the United States flag is flown.

13-12Collection

The collection Label 55 has two parts:

- a. Label 55-A, *U.S. Mail Emblem*, used for outside collection boxes.
- b. Label 55-B, *Collection Times*.

The policy for collection and application of customer notification labels is as follows:

- a. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 10 ounces must be presented to the employee at a postal retail service counter by the customer.
- b. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 10 ounces deposited in a collection box or lobby drop will be returned to the customer with the current edition of Decal DDD2 applied.
- c. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 10 ounces that has been left in a customer's mailbox or at a business's point of pickup will not be picked up. Instead, the current edition of Decal DDD2 will be applied, and the piece will be returned to the customer's mailbox.

Note: Place Decal DDD2 decal over the destination address, city, state, and ZIP, leaving the addressee's name visible.

- d. Any mail bearing only postage stamps as postage and weighing over 10 ounces presented to the carrier by the customer will be refused. The carrier advises the customer that these pieces must be presented to an employee at a retail service counter and that the customer may use electronic postage if residential pick up is desired. The carrier provides the customer with the current edition of Decal DDD2.
- e. Customer service and mail processing facilities need to stock AVSEC units with the current edition of Decal DDD2.
- f. All collection boxes, lobby drops, and SSKs need to display Decal DDD1.
- g. AVSEC Clearance Stamps are issued to small offices that do not have the means of applying proof of proper postal acceptance (Toshiba printer or meter strip).
- h. There is no Known Customer mail flow.

Note: Rural carriers will continue to be allowed to accept packages without postage along with money for postage as is currently done. However, the rural carrier must take the piece to the retail window for finalization of the retail transaction and application of a Toshiba printer, meter strip or AVSEC Clearance Stamp to make the mail piece "identifiable."

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14 End-of-Day Requirement

14-1 Remit Funds

All funds must be removed from the cash drawer and remitted daily. Cash must be counted in a secure area away from the counter line. Each office must maintain a bad check list — refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue. Associates verify each check against the list printed from the retail equipment RSS. Submit remittances (AIC 751, “Cash Remitted Advance,” or AIC 752, “Cash Remitted Final”) to the designated closeout person.

The receipt of the funds must be verified and acknowledged by the designated closeout employee.

If the designated closeout employee leaves prior to the unit closeout, any funds accepted earlier from remittances must be transferred to the final closeout employee. The closeout employee verifies and initials AIC 751/752 on the RA's copy of PS Form 1412. This becomes documentation for the final unit PS Form 1412.

14-2 Retail Associate Closeout

Individual RAs must prepare PS Form 1412 whenever financial transactions are performed at the PRU. RAs must verify PS Form 1412 entries against supporting documentation prior to submission of the final PS Form 1412. (AICs associated with stamp and retail sales will not have supporting documentation.) RAs must be identified by name or clerk number on all PS Form 1412 supporting documentation (e.g., tapes, lists, and receipts).

For more information on RA closeout procedures for e1412 units and for RSS units, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

14-3 Unit Closeout

All PRUs, regardless of size or revenue, must report their financial activity on PS Form 1412 and electronically transmit to Accounting Services at the close of each business day.

For more information on unit closeout procedures for e1412 units and for RSS units, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

Complete instructions for processing RSS transactions and adjustments are available in the RSS Procedures Guide, which is on the Retail and Customer Services Operations-RCSO Web site at <https://blue.usps.gov/retail/reporting-systems-applications/applications/retail-systems-software.htm>.

14-4 Transmission

All offices are required to check daily for successful transmission. If not successful, Accounting Services will contact the office.

14-4.1 **e1412 Offices**

All e1412 offices are required to complete a PS Form 1412 to support daily transmission activity.

14-4.2 **RSS Offices**

RSS offices must ensure that the unit is closed and that the terminals are left powered on for transmission.

14-5 Deposit

PRUs make deposits when postal funds in excess of the authorized cash reserve and/or cash retained reach \$100. For more information on authorized cash reserves and cash retained, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

Note: PS Form 1412 must be submitted on a daily basis. PRUs with less than \$100 are not required to make a bank deposit; they must record amount into AIC 753 and submit PS Form 1412.

Units should have one deposit per day unless banking requirements require a separation of cash and checks. When funds exceed normal operating needs during the day, advance deposits must be made in addition to regular deposits. Offices making advance deposits and separating cash and checks may have a maximum of four bank deposits per day.

For bank deposit procedures, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

14-6 Security of Cash Drawer, Stock, and ReadyPost Products

14-6.1 **Cash Drawers**

Cash drawers must be locked for security during temporary RA absences from the retail service counter and must be removed from their cabinets for overnight storage in a vault or security container. Retail employees must never have access to one another's cash drawers.

14-6.2 **Stamp Stock and Money Orders**

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

For detailed instructions for safeguarding accountable items, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

14-6.3 **Unit Reserve Stamp Stock and Money Orders**

The unit reserve must never be accessible to more than one person at a time. The stock custodian is solely responsible for ensuring proper security of the unit reserve at all times.

14-7 Collection and Dispatch of Mail

Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and ready for dispatch. If instructed or assigned, RAs will collect all lobby drops and outside collection boxes according to the collection times posted. The mail must be collected as close as possible to, but no sooner than, the times posted.

All labels and tags must be removed from incoming mail trays and other equipment. Correct tags, placards, and identifiers must be inserted or attached before any outgoing mail is dispatched. Never commingle different classes of mail.

14-8 Storage of Flag

No later than sunset, lower the flag ceremoniously and do not allow the flag to touch the ground. The flag must be folded or rolled carefully and stored where it will not be soiled or otherwise damaged. If the flag is wet when taken down, carefully spread out the flag and allow it to dry thoroughly before storing the flag.

It is customary to fly the flag from sunrise to sunset. The U.S. Code states “when a patriotic effect is desired,” the flag can be displayed around the clock; however, the flag must be illuminated.

14-9 Dispatch of Mail

Prepare mail according to the local dispatch standard operating procedure. Conduct a final walk-through of the building to ensure that all mail has been collected and culled prior to final dispatch. Complete dispatch log if required. Retail associates are responsible for ensuring that all mail collected over the retail counter and all other areas is properly culled and separated to the correct collection receptacles and is ready for dispatch. If any mail is found in the building after the mail has been dispatched to the plant, notify a management official immediately.

14-10 Scanner

Handle all signed PS Forms 3849, *We Redeliver for You!* according to current policy. Ensure that Intelligent Mail Device scanners are properly placed in the cradle for download transmission.

14-11 Secure Building, Alarm, and Lights

Retail associates must perform the following:

- a. Ensure that the office has been swept for all outgoing mail, and all mail has been dispatched.
- b. Verify that all counter line drawers containing postal stationery are locked and bait money orders are in place.
- c. Verify that all cash drawers have been properly stored in the safe or vault.
- d. Secure money order imprinter.
- e. Ensure that all safes and vaults are locked.
- f. Verify that all doors and windows are closed and locked.
- g. Ensure that all appliances have been turned off in the break rooms.
- h. Turn off required lights.
- i. Set alarm.
- j. Exit building.
- k. Secure parking lot if necessary.

15 Alternative Access Channels

15-1 Self-Service Kiosks (SSKs)

Self-service kiosks (SSKs) are self-service mailing kiosks designed to process 80 percent of the transactions normally handled by a retail employee at the window. SSKs handle noncash transactions, accepting major credit and debit cards. SSKs perform the following services:

- a. Dispense First Class Package Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express postage in any denomination.
- b. Print First-Class Mail Forever stamps.
- c. Print First-Class Mail stamps (1- ounce through 4-ounce denominations) and First-Class Postcard stamps.
- d. Provide ZIP Code lookup.
- e. Offer domestic insurance.
- f. Weigh and rate envelopes, flats, and parcels up to 70 lbs.
- g. Print Priority Mail Express forms and Certified Mail return receipts.
- h. Make PO Box renewal payments.
- i. Provide a system-generated receipt for payment and offer an eReceipt option.
- j. Scan retail products and merchandise for purchase.
- k. Provide USPS tracking information for customers.
- l. Offer Signature Confirmation service.
- m. Offer Extended Mail Forwarding service.
- n. Schedule a passport application appointment.
- o. Offer prepaid acceptance scanning. (This service is available only at certain locations — it is not yet nationally deployed.)

SSKs are located in Postal Service lobbies; the majority are in areas open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

SSKs move simple transactions away from the retail operation. They allow retail professionals to use their skills to assist customers with more complicated mailing needs. Through the use of SSKs, the Postal Service expects to accomplish the following:

- a. Increase revenue.
- b. Reduce the cost of selling products and services.
- c. Improve operational performance.

- d. Reduce wait time in line.
- e. Improve employee and customer satisfaction.

15-2 Stamps by Mail

Stamps by Mail (SBM) service allows Postal Service customers on all carrier routes and PO Boxes to purchase postal products (e.g., booklets, sheets and coils of stamps, postal cards and stamped envelopes) by ordering the products through the mail.

The Postal Service order forms are incorporated in self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes. Customers may obtain order envelopes — PS Form 3227-A, *Stamps Delivered to Your Mailbox*, and PS Form 3227-R, *Rural or Highway Contract Route Carrier Stamp Purchase Order Form* — from city, rural, or contract delivery service carriers, in Post Office lobbies, or by telephoning the local delivery unit to request their delivery. PS Form 3227-A is for non-credit card SBM fulfillment sites.

After completing the PS Form 3227-A order form and enclosing a check or money order, the customer drops the sealed envelope in a collection box or his or her mailbox. Mail orders are filled and delivered to the customer within 2 business days after the customer mails the order.

Postmasters must requisition PS Form 3227-A from the printer and maintain a supply for use in filling customers' telephone requests for the form, for customer use in the Post Office lobby, and for all letter carriers and PO Box clerks to use as required.

Postmasters must requisition PS Form 3227-A through eBuyPlus at eBuyPlus@usps.gov.

15-3 Stamps by Rural and Highway Contract Route Carrier

Stamp purchase orders allow Postal Service customers on rural and contract delivery service routes to purchase all Postal Service products (e.g., booklets, sheets, coils of stamps, postal cards, and money orders) directly from the rural carrier or by using PS Form 3227-R, *Rural or Highway Contract Route Carrier Stamp Purchase Order Form*.

Customers obtain PS Form 3227-R from the rural or contract delivery service carrier or by telephoning the local delivery unit to request its delivery. After completing an order form and enclosing cash, check, or money order, the customer places the sealed envelope in his or her mailbox with the flag up.

Stamp orders are generally filled and returned to the customer either at the time of mail delivery by the rural carrier or within 1 business day. Postmasters must maintain a supply of PS Form 3227-R for use in filling customers' telephone requests for the form or for rural delivery carriers to use as required.

The MDC applies limits to order quantities, depending on the CAG level of the requisitioning office. Since actual need may not be determined by such limits, districts must order “buffer” supplies of forms in order to serve those units receiving too few.

15-4 Stamps to Go

The Stamps to Go program (previously the Stamps on Consignment program) is a practical, convenient, and low-cost alternative access channel that allows customers the opportunity to purchase postage stamps at postal prices through participating banks and credit unions, grocery stores, convenience stores, drug stores, and other retail stores that are located close to where customers live, work, and shop and that are open during hours convenient to customers' schedules.

Through the oversight of the Retail Access Channels, Stamps to Go program office, the Postal Service has contracted with a single supplier to oversee customer acquisition, program marketing, and product distribution for this program on a nationwide basis. The designated supplier enters solely into stamp consignment agreements with individual and corporate businesses under specific business conditions. The local Stamps on Consignment program no longer exists.

When individual and corporate businesses express an interest in participating in the Stamps to Go program, then postmasters, managers, supervisors, and RAs can direct them to call 800-667-5410 or visit <https://www.uspsstampstogo.com> for further information.

15-5 Stamps by Phone

By calling 800-STAMP-24 (800-782-6724), customers may order stamps and make purchases with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit card. This toll-free number is available 20 hours a day (closed from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. Central Time), 7 days a week. There is a service charge, and stamps are delivered by mail within 3 to 5 business days.

15-6 Contract Postal Units

Contract Postal Units (CPUs) and Community Post Offices (CPOs) offer the general public alternate access to Postal Services after normal business hours where they live, work, and shop. These locations are typically in retail establishments under contract to the Postal Service and are staffed by the retailer's employees. Most CPUs offer all the regular services available in a Post Office. This includes domestic and international mail, insurance, delivery and signature confirmation, and other extra services. CPUs sell Postal Service products and services exclusively at Post Office prices. Competing services, such as UPS and FedEx, are not allowed. In addition, CPUs cannot have private Post Office boxes.

CPUs have been a historic part of the provision of postal services in the United States. Publication 156, *Postal Service Employees Guide to Contract Postal Units*, is a reference guide for the CPU Program. Publication 156 is intended to assist each member of the team responsible for implementing and managing a CPU. Publication 156 explains the process of opening and managing a CPU, including justification, package request, solicitation, and contract award. Publication 156 is available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim> (click on *Pubs*).

Execution of a CPU contract requires a funding commitment from the district manager or other authorizing office. Updates are posted on the contract postal access channel (CPAC) Web page and also on Blueshare.

15-7 Mobile Retail Units

For special events, holidays, etc., the Postal Service provides service by taking the Post Office to customers. Most districts have equipment for a mobile retail unit. Contact your district retail office for availability of a mobile retail unit.

15-8 Postal Service Web Site

The Postal Service Web site at <https://www.usps.com> provides a full set of services for Postal Service customers.

Interactive pages include lookup functions for ZIP Codes, Post Offices, SSKs, PO Box availability and fees, Passport Offices, and Track and Confirm. Customers can purchase stamps through the Postal Store; print online postage with Click-N-Ship; reference Postal Service manuals, forms, and publications; use domestic and international rate calculators; submit online change-of-address forms; place mail on hold; request redelivery; order expedited packaging supplies; and more.

Other key pages include prices in a variety of formats, price information, national job postings, print-on-demand, portable document format forms, a wide range of Postal Service publications, and complete consumer information. The site also provides news releases, speeches, and special news features.

The site is indexed so that users can search for specific information. The functional areas participating are responsible for keeping their information accurate and up to date.

15-9 Post Office Express

Post Office Expresses (POEs) are small Post Offices operated by Postal Service employees and located within retail stores, typically a large, busy supermarket. POEs were created and designed to target consumers in their current shopping environment such as a busy grocery store. POEs offer the

same products and services available at traditional retail locations. These services include money orders, philatelic products, packaging products, and official licensed retail products. Most POE units are open 7 days a week with evening and weekend hours that reflect local shopping patterns.

A request for a POE is considered by Retail Access Channels at Headquarters when all other avenues for alternate access have been exhausted. A “Retail Facilities Start Up” questionnaire must be completed to request a new location. This questionnaire is submitted to Headquarters for approval with the requested documentation.

For more information, visit the Retail Operations Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/retail>.

15-10 Approved Shippers

The Approved Shipper Program was created for the following reasons:

- a. To protect the Postal Service brand.
- b. To introduce procedures to address aviation mail security at retail establishments that already hold letters and packages and tender them, on behalf of their customers, to the Postal Service.
- c. To improve the quality of information available to customers who use these stores.

Participating stores must currently sell postal services and must be approved by the local district. Stores must sign a license agreement that defines the use of signage and also the terms and conditions of participation.

Participating stores do not receive any compensation from the Postal Service for the sale of postal mailing services.

To apply for this program, a retailer contacts the postal service through email at HQ-USPSApprovedShipper@usps.gov.

For more information, visit the Retail Operations Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/retail>.

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16 Postage Alternatives

16-1 PC Postage

PC Postage service is a form of postage payment. It may be used with Click-N-Ship at www.usps.com or on other Web sites that are not operated by the Postal Service. PC Postage is also printed from vending machines in some cases. Customers can print postage stamps from a computer by setting up an account with an authorized provider. PC Postage software is authorized for use with all mailing services except periodicals. To learn more about PC Postage options or to see listing of vendors, go to <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm> (scroll down to “Approved PC Postage Providers”).

16-2 Online Label Printing

Click-N-Ship is an easy-to-use online shipping service available at www.usps.com. It provides customers a convenient way to print shipping labels from their home or office. All a customer needs is a computer, printer, and an Internet connection. Customers can now print labels with PC Postage indicia from the Postal Service Web site and use their credit card to pay for postage. Labels can be printed on regular printer paper or self-adhesive labels. Signature Confirmation can be purchased for a fee. Domestic insurance for up to \$500 can be purchased for Priority Mail Express and Priority Mail services. USPS tracking service is available at no charge on Priority Mail service.

Customers can print online shipping labels via www.usps.com with postage for the following domestic and international services:

- a. Priority Mail Express service.
- b. Priority Mail Express International service.
- c. Priority Mail service.
- d. Global Express Guaranteed service.

Click-N-Ship can also make mailing more convenient for customers. Customers can drop domestic Priority Mail Express and Priority Mail mailpieces with PC Postage service (weighing at least 10 ounces) in a collection box because these customers have registered online and have paid for postage with a credit card. Customers can also hand their Click-N-Ship packages to their carrier at the time of delivery. Each barcoded label printed is assigned a unique track and confirm number.

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17 Refunds, Exchanges, Claims, and Inquiries

17-1 Service Failure Refunds

17-1.1 **Priority Mail Express Refunds**

If a Priority Mail Express item was not delivered or made available for the customer as guaranteed under the applicable service purchased, a refund request must be made within 30 days after the date of mailing.

Refunds for Priority Mail Express postage may be made only to the mailer. The mailer may apply for a refund online at www.usps.com/help (the option that the Postal Service prefers) or must complete Part I of PS Form 3533, *Application and Voucher for Refund of Postage, Fees, and Services*, in duplicate and submit the form along with the original customer copy of Label 11-B to any Post Office.

17-1.2 **Signature Confirmation**

Fees can be refunded for Signature Confirmation, USPS Tracking (USPS Marketing Mail only), Certified Mail, and Return Receipt (hardcopy and electronic). The customer may submit a PS Form 3533 locally for a refund if service is not rendered. Adult and Restricted Delivery cannot be refunded online and must be refunded at the Retail Unit. Determine appropriate amount and follow normal accounting procedures as outlined in the [Handbook F-101](#) — use the file's search feature for your desired topic or issue.

17-2 Postage and Fee(s) Refunds

17-2.1 **Unused Dated Postage Meter Indicia**

Unused, dated postage meter indicia are considered for refund only if complete, legible, and valid. Authorized users must submit the request within 60 days of the date(s) shown in the indicia. The refund request must be submitted with a properly completed PS Form 3533.

Charges for processing a refund request for unused, dated meter indicia are as specified in the DMM.

17-2.2 Metered Postage Items Ineligible for Refund

The following metered postage items are ineligible for refunds:

- a. Loose indicia printed on labels or tape that have been stapled together or attached to paper or other medium in any manner.
- b. Reply envelopes or cards paid at the proper postage rate.
- c. Indicia printed on labels or tape removed from wrappers or envelopes.
- d. Indicia lacking clearly readable identification of the licensing Post Office, meter serial number, postage amount, or other required information.
- e. Indicia printed on mail dispatched and returned to sender as undeliverable as addressed, including mail marked “no such post office” and mail addressed for local delivery and returned after directory service was given or delivery was attempted.

17-2.3 Unused Dated PC Postage Indicia

Unused, dated PC Postage indicia are considered for refund only if complete, legible, and valid. Only authorized PC Postage users may request a refund. The request is processed by the provider, not the Postal Service. The refund request must be submitted within 30 days of the date(s) shown in the indicia. Disbursements of refunds for online postage are not permitted at local units.

17-2.4 Click-N-Ship PC Postage

Refer Click-N-Ship customers to the Click-N-Ship site. Log on to: www.usps.com/clicknship and click on the *MyAccount* link.

17-3 Exchanges

17-3.1 Stamp Exchanges**17-3.1.1 Postal Service Fault**

The Post Office may correct mistakes in selling damaged, defective, or otherwise unserviceable stamps by exchanging stamps at full postage value.

17-3.1.2 Damaged in Customer's Possession

Stamps that are damaged or otherwise unusable for postage (because of humidity, moisture, or other causes) while in a customer's possession may be exchanged only for an equal number of stamps of the same denomination.

Unusable stamps accepted from a customer under these conditions must be those on sale at Post Offices within 12 months before the transaction.

Quantities of the same denomination totaling over \$10 in value must be returned in the same configuration as when bought (e.g., sheets, coils, and booklets).

Each such transaction is limited to \$100 worth of postage from each customer.

17-3.2 **Exchange of Spoiled and Unused Postal Matter**

Unusable and spoiled stamped envelopes; stamped cards, if uncanceled; and unused, precanceled stamps, and stamped cards are exchanged for other postage-stamped paper.

Only the buyer may exchange stamped envelopes with a printed return address and stamped cards with any printed matter of the buyer. If there is no purchaser's printing, any responsible person may exchange them.

17-3.3 **Stamps Converted to Other Postage Forms**

A customer may submit postage stamps for conversion to an advance deposit for permit imprint mailings, subject to the conditions set forth in the DMM.

17-3.4 **Items Not Exchangeable**

The following postage items are not exchangeable:

- a. Adhesive stamps, unless mistakes were made in buying, stamps were defective, or stamps were affixed to commercial envelopes and postcards.
- b. Stamps cut from stamped cards or stamped envelopes.
- c. Parts and pieces of stamped cards.
- d. Stamped cards or stamped envelopes received for reply.
- e. Mutilated and defaced stamps.

PC Postage cannot be exchanged at Post Offices. Customers must go online to the vendor's Web site to request exchange/refund for this service.

17-4 Inquiries and Claims

For information on inquiries and claims, refer to [Handbook F-101](#) — use the file's search feature to locate your desired information.

17-5 Notice 4314-C, We Want to Know

Notice 4314-C, *We Want to Know*, promotes the following different immediate methods for customers to contact the Postal Service:

- a. Speaking to our postmaster/management staff.
- b. Calling 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777).
- c. Visiting www.usps.com.

Ensure that Notice 4314-C is stocked in the Post Office and make it available to customers upon request. Resolve all person-to-person and telephone contacts within 14 calendar days.

17-6 Call Center Program

The Postal Service's toll-free customer service telephone number is 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777).

Complaints, service issues, redelivery, and vacation hold mail requests are electronically referred to local Post Offices through the MyPostOffice (MyPO). This is an electronic transfer of information through the Internet to the Post Office from the call center agent. The local Post Office must download the MyPO information by 9 a.m. each morning and again in the afternoon so that customer requests for these services are handled in a timely manner.

17-7 Mail Fraud

If customers are having trouble with a mail order company or suspect that they have been the victim of fraud, instruct them to contact the Postal Inspection Service or complete PS Form 8165, *Mail Fraud Report*, available at all Post Offices. The customer should return the completed form to the local Post Office or send to the following address:

ATTN MAIL FRAUD
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS SERVICE CENTER
433 W HARRISON ST RM 3255
CHICAGO IL 60699-3255

17-8 Unwanted Mail

Certain unsolicited or undesirable mail is prohibited from the mailstream, including obscene materials, violence-inciting materials, and some types of mail relating to lotteries.

17-8.1 Sexually Oriented Mail

Section 3010 of Title 39 U.S.C. gives people a way to protect themselves and their minor children from receiving unsolicited sexually oriented advertisements through the mail. Customers may invoke the protection as follows:

- a. Completing PS Form 1500, *Application for Listing and/or Prohibitory Order*.
- b. Filing the form with any postmaster or designated Postal Service representative.

Customers may file for themselves or for their children under 19 who live with them or who are under their care, custody, or supervision. An authorized officer, agent, fiduciary, surviving spouse, or other representative may file on behalf of a corporation, firm, association, estate, or deceased or incompetent addressee.

After a customer is on the list for 30 days, any mailer who sends them unsolicited sexually oriented advertisements is subject to criminal sanctions under 39 U.S.C. 3011 and 18 U.S.C. 1735-371.

This prohibitory order remains in effect for 5 years unless the customer asks to have it removed. At the end of 5 years, customers must file again to have the names reinstated.

17-8.2 **Unsolicited Mail**

Federal law prohibits the shipment of unordered merchandise. Such a practice may constitute an unfair trade practice. Merchandise mailed in violation of the U.S. Code may be treated as a gift by the recipient without any obligation to the sender. The laws governing this practice are enforced by the Federal Trade Commission.

17-8.3 **Direct Marketing (Remove Name)**

Some consumers would like to receive less advertising mail at home. Mail Preference Service, a service of the Direct Marketing Association, helps decrease the amount of national nonprofit or commercial mail customers receive. To register with the name removal file, customers should write to the following:

MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE
DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 9008
FARMINGDALE NY 11735-9008

17-9 Mail Recovery Center

The Mail Recovery Center (MRC) is located in Atlanta, Georgia, and is responsible for the final disposition of undeliverable First-Class Mail items, packages, and accountable mail items, and for protecting the privacy of the mail.

For more information on the MRC, visit http://blue.usps.gov/supplymanagement/am_mrc_welcome.htm.

17-9.1 **First-Class Mail, USPS Marketing Mail, and Package Services Mail**

Send the following items to the MRC for disposition:

- a. All First-Class Mail items except postcards and postal cards.
- b. Single-piece-rate USPS Marketing Mail items.
- c. Package Services mail that cannot be forwarded or returned.

Send dead letters daily and dead parcels weekly.

17-9.2 Priority Mail Express

After all attempts to deliver, forward, or return a Priority Mail Express shipment during the specified holding period have been unsuccessful, send the shipment to the designated MRC in a Priority Mail Express pouch.

17-9.3 Postcards and Postal Cards

Dispose of postcards and postal cards without a return address if the Post Office can shred or destroy them completely. If not, forward them to the area MRC.

18 Philatelic

18-1 General Information

Employees should familiarize themselves with the national announcements governing the release, sale, and discontinuance of postage stamps and postal stationery. Commemorative stamps and postal stationery (stamped postal cards and embossed stamped envelopes) depict the cultural and historical heritage of the United States. These policies are established and governed by Stamp Services at Headquarters. Uniform application of these policies provide a high degree of integrity to the entire program. All employees and contractors must comply with these policies and procedures. Philatelic products are available at local Post Offices and at <https://store.usps.com/store/home> (click on *Collectors*).

18-2 Important Reference Tools

18-2.1 **Stamps and Postal Stationery Announcement**

This announcement includes a schedule of issuance dates for upcoming stamps and stationery items and includes the format that they will be issued. The Stamps and Postal Stationery Announcement is updated every 2 weeks in the *Postal Bulletin*.

18-2.2 **USA Philatelic Catalog**

The *USA Philatelic Catalog* features the stamps, stationery items, and philatelic products currently available for sale through mail order from the SFS in Kansas City, Missouri. One copy will be automatically sent to the local post office. The catalog is published quarterly.

Customers who are interested in receiving a free catalog should call 800-STAMP-24 or go to www.usps.com to order a free catalog.

18-2.3 **Postal Bulletin and Other Reference Materials**

For current and updated information on the stamps and stationery program, all Post Offices should refer to the Stamp Services Section in each issue of the *Postal Bulletin* (published biweekly). Retail associates and postmasters are responsible for providing customers with current and correct information on all aspects of stamps and the stamped stationery program. Also, information on the stamp program can be found in *The Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, which is published annually. [Handbook F-101](#), the POM, and the DMM are also good sources for obtaining additional information.

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19 Mobile Retail Vans

19-1 General Information

Mobile retail vans are critical to postal operations to help meet customer needs, especially in situations where regular operations have been curtailed (i.e., natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding). Mobile retail vans can also be used as replacements for facilities undergoing renovations that render them unable to operate, for special events, or for reaching locations where the Postal Service has been unable to establish alternate access channels. All efforts to establish alternate access should be thoroughly explored and exhausted prior to offering service via mobile retail vans.

Mobile retail vans are assets that must be managed and used for optimum revenue performance. Sites should be selected based on “best business use” planning. The focus of using mobile retail vans should be revenue generation, promoting the Postal Service, filling the gap in emergency situations, and meeting customer needs.

This will require setting revenue goals, applying work-hour management, and following proper financial procedures. Mobile retail vans will be considered as manual Post Offices for purposes of tracking transaction and revenue data. Mobile retail van clerks are permitted to offer limited postal products and are not authorized to offer money orders, passport services, or international package services. Mobile retail van clerks may only accept cash, money orders, and checks as payment for Postal Service products and/or services. In cases where regular retail service has been curtailed, a deviation to these policies must be approved by the manager, Retail Operations, Headquarters.

To efficiently manage mobile retail van transaction time, mobile retail van stock should be limited to a basic selection of First-Class postage stamps in one or two booklet choices, one or two sheet choices, one coil choice, Forever Stamps, Priority Stamps, Priority Mail Express stamps, ReadyPost, and Official Licensed Retail Products. Mobile retail van clerks should maintain a supply of PS Form 3227-A, *Stamps Delivered to Your Mailbox*, and PS Form 3227-R, *Rural or Highway Contract Route Carrier Stamp Purchase Order Form*, for customers who desire additional denominations or selections of stamps. Mobile retail van clerks should also provide customers any www.usps.com promotional or educational material available as well as a listing of local Stamps on Consignment and contract postal unit locations.

Mobile retail van clerks are issued stamp credits following procedures in [Handbook F-101](#). For requirements and procedures for conducting counts of stamp credits, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue.

19-2 Site Selection

The cost of providing mobile retail van service must be considered when selecting potential sites based on anticipated revenue at each individual site. Several factors should be taken into consideration when selecting sites for mobile retail vans:

- a. Emergency situations: Normal postal services have been suspended because of natural disasters (e.g., flooding, hurricanes, and tornadoes).
- b. Postal retail facilities undergoing renovations.
- c. Special events.
- d. High-crime area avoidance.
- e. Other routes and locations: Only when profitable and where efforts to establish on-site alternate access (e.g., Stamps by Mail, Stamps on Consignment, and Click-N-Ship) have been thoroughly pursued and have not been successful and no local merchants offer Postal Service products and services.

19-3 Revenue Goals

Mobile retail vans should be optimized to generate maximum revenue. Consider the cost of providing mobile retail van service when establishing goals. The following metrics must be established and monitored a minimum of once per week:

- a. Mobile retail van revenue actual, plan, and supply.
- b. Expedited sales actual, plan, and supply.
- c. Extra service sales actual, plan, and supply.
- d. Revenue per mobile retail van route.
- e. Revenue per mobile retail van site/stop.
- f. Revenue per hour.

Except for emergency situations, facility renovations, and special events usage, a monthly assessment of revenue generation versus cost of service must be made. If the cost of providing mobile retail van service to a particular site/route exceeds the amount of revenue that site/route generates, the site is not cost effective. Mobile retail van service may only be continued at cost-effective sites.

19-4 Mobile Retail Van Driver Training

All current and future operators of the 2006 mobile Post Office are required to satisfactorily complete this training program. All drivers of the mobile Post Office vehicle must have a current and valid state driver's license.

A driver safety instructor driver instructor examiner (DSI DIE) is required to administer this training. The DSI DIE must validate that a student driver has a current and valid state driver's license prior to commencement of this training program. The instructor will document the driver's performance and granting of driving privileges to operate the 2006 mobile Post Office through the USPS Hero Web site at https://usps.csod.com/LMS/catalog/Welcome.aspx?tab_page_id=-67. Each driver's folder (PS Form 4582, *Operator's Record*) and in the National Training Database using national course number 43501-02.

The estimated minimum time for each driver to complete the 2006 Mobile Post Office training program is 2 hours.

19-5 Revenue Reporting

The mobile retail van clerk must track transactions and tender type at each stop on a manual tracking sheet (tally sheet). Transactions and tender type at each stop must be segregated by stop on the tally sheet. The daily transactions must be consolidated on a PS Form 1412 at the end of each day.

Mobile retail vans are considered manual offices; however, in most cases their home office is an RSS site. If the host office is an RSS site, the host facility manager/supervisor is to establish a unique RSS segment number (i.e., default mobile segment) for each mobile retail van and assign the default mobile segment role to the RA. This is not the same role the RA uses while working the retail counter in the office. This is a clerk role unique to staffing the mobile van. For assigning the mobile segment and issuing stock, refer to [Handbook F-101](#), using the Handbook's search feature to locate your desired topic or issue. The mobile segment receives stock from the unit reserve. The RA assigned to the mobile van segment role (i.e., the "mobile RA") receives the stock. A different RA (i.e., an RA who does not have a "mobile" role) will provide working cash to make change by entering AIC 647 on the retail floor stock segment (or other segment) and will give the cash to the mobile RA, who enters AIC 247 to offset. The cash becomes part of the mobile segment.

The transactions from the manual PS Form 1412 must be entered into RSS at the host office at the end of each day. Transactions tendered by check must be entered individually and isolated according to stop. Revenue for each stop must be segregated and entered as separate transactions (i.e., if the mobile retail van route has four stops for the day, there will be at least four separate transactions entered into RSS at the end of the day).

Transactions tendered by cash can be entered one of two ways:

- a. Enter each individual product sold as shown on the tracking sheet.
- b. Review the tracking sheet, consolidate by product, and individually scan the products as one visit. Transaction time is given for each line item (scan).

For example, a mobile van has two stops for the day. At the first stop, the RA makes eight sales; three paid by check and five paid by cash. At the second stop, the RA makes 10 sales; six paid by check and four paid by cash. At the end of the day, the RA will enter three transactions tendered by check and the cash transactions for the first stop, and then enter six transactions tendered by check and the cash transactions for the second stop. The cash transactions can either be entered as individual cash transactions for that stop, or they can be consolidated and entered as one cash transaction.

Report mobile retail van revenue through the RSS segment number established for that van. Follow established RSS close-out procedures.

If the host office is a non-RSS site, follow established closeout procedures using the manual PS Form 1412 prepared by the mobile retail van clerk.

19-6 Travel and Fixed Time

It is important that travel and fixed time be established. Establish mobile retail van fixed and travel time.

Follow the current standard operating procedure to determine line of travel, travel time, load/unload times, park/set-up locations, and times, etc. These are collectively referred to as mobile van essential time.

A full inspection must be completed for each mobile van route not less than once per year, plus every time a mobile van route changes.

19-7 Work Hours Reporting

Properly report all work hours. Ensure that actual LDC 45 work hours are identified with the same unit finance number as the mobile retail unit through TACS transfer of hours. Total time earned for the mobile retail van is the total of transaction time plus daily Mobile Van Essential Time (MVET). All is to be charged to LDC 45.

19-8 Total Operating Costs

In fiscal year 2019, the average cost of ownership of a mobile retail unit was \$3,029 per vehicle. That includes fuel, oil, maintenance, and overhead (primarily vehicle depreciation). The fleet average annual miles traveled per mobile retail unit was 604 miles, and the average annual hours used was 141.15. This equates to an average cost per mile of \$5.32 and an average cost per hour of \$21.60. In addition to vehicle costs, the fully loaded hourly rate for RAs must be factored into the total cost of operating a mobile retail unit.

Based on these costs, it is important to ensure that mobile retail units are used to their maximum potential to optimize revenue growth and improve customer service. Managers should look at exhausting other less-expensive forms of alternate access to meet customer demand before using a mobile retail unit.

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