



Election Mail Postal Updates

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U.S. Postal Service

- Committed to working with Election Officials to ensure smooth processing
 - Continue partnership with state and local Election Officials
- Ensure the needs of military and overseas voters are met

State and local Election Officials

- Support State and Local Vote-by-Mail programs

- 2016 Election Mail Preparation
- Key Issues
- Postal Service Recommendations

2016 Election Mail Preparation

- Postmaster General and Deputy PMG have made an organization wide commitment to election officials that Election Mail is a top priority
 - Cross Functional Election Mail Task Force
 - State and local level Election and Political Mail Coordinators
- National webinars for each functional area
- Collaborating with National Association of Secretaries of State, National Association of State Election Directors, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Military Postal Service Agency, Election Center, Election Assistance Commission and the Joint Election Officials Liaison Committee

2016 Election Mail Preparation *(cont'd)*

- Established Area and District Election Mail Coordinators
 - Outreach – Develop and foster relationships with State and Local Election Officials
 - Resolve issues locally
 - ▶ Resource alignment – Sales, Mailpiece Design Analysts, Mailing Prep and Entry, Coordinate Delivery and Pickup activities
 - ▶ Education
 - Manage escalations
 - ▶ Identify Issue/Scope
 - ▶ Manage Communications – Report all incidents to the Election Mail Task Force
ElectionMailProgramManager@usps.gov

2016 Election Mail Preparation (cont'd)

- 2016 Official Election Mail™ Program Kit
(Mailed to Election Officials April 19th 2016)
- Soft copy available <http://about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm>
 - Tag 191 Fact Sheet and Sample Tag
 - IMb Tracing® Fact Sheet
 - Steps to Creating Your Intelligent Mail® Barcode Fact Sheet
 - Special Procedures APO/FPO Absentee Ballots Fact Sheet
 - Official Election Mail Program: an Overview for Election Officials Fact Sheet
 - Publication 631, *Official Election Mail—Graphic Guidelines and Logos*
 - Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail—User's Guide*

Key Issues:

Delivery Standards

- Most First-Class Mail is delivered within 2-5 days
- Standard Mail 3-10 days (Contiguous 48 States)
- Impacts from plant consolidations
 - Election Mail is sometimes processed in plants across state lines
 - ▶ Our commitment – Election Mail will be processed within our Delivery Standards

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

State deadlines for requesting an absentee ballot

- Some states have a statutory deadline for requesting balloting materials that does not allow sufficient time for mail to be sent to and returned by the voter. This problem has also occurred in proposed legislation.
- The Postal Service has been working with state and local officials to educate them on mail transit timing.
- The Postal Service recommends that voters mail ballots one week before the due date to account for any unforeseen events or weather issues and to allow for timely receipt and processing by election officials.

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

Postmark acceptance

- Some states use postmarks to determine whether a ballot is timely.
 - “Postmark” refers to the imprint on a mailpiece that is used for postage cancellation and shows the name of the Post Office that accepts custody of the mail, along with the two-letter state abbreviation and ZIP Code of the Post Office, and for some types of mail the date of mailing, and the time abbreviation a.m. or p.m.
 - Not all mailpieces will receive a postmark.

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

- The Postal Service provides alternate methods of validating Postal Service processing and handling of the returning marked ballot which could be considered acceptable under state law
 - ▶ Fluorescent ID barcoding on the back of the return envelope (Requires a capable barcode reader to determine the date the mailpiece was initially processed)
 - ▶ IMb® Scan Events
- Many jurisdictions include an affidavit with a signature and date box. Some states allow the date to be used as evidence of timely ballot return.

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- *Address Maintenance Guidance*

- *UOCAVA In partnership with the United States Postal Service and the Military Postal Service Agency, the Federal Voting Assistance Program recommends the following address maintenance efforts:*
 - *Review your address file for voters covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).*
 - *Taking these steps will often improve the efficiency and speed of ballot processing so materials do not require personal handling to overcome address exceptions*
 - *All of the mail will be delivered, but taking these steps increase opportunities for success.*

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance

- *Review your APO/FPO/DPO addresses for conformation to Military Postal System specifications:*
 - *Military Postal Addresses will typically follow a 3-line address format:*
 - ▶ *Line 1: Full name and/or job title.*
 - ▶ *Line 2: The delivery line (the second line from the bottom in the address) must show the word "UNIT", "CMR" or "PSC" and number; and box number assigned, when applicable. The Military Postal System does not use PO Boxes.*

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance

- ▶ *Line 3: The bottom line must contain the APO or FPO ("city") designation and the appropriate two-letter AA, AE, or AP ("state") abbreviation followed by the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 Code.*
- *Note: Any address format is acceptable within the 093XX zipcode. This is a general exception based units assigned to this zipcode.*

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance

- *Request military service personnel update their voter registration records based on the address provided by the servicing Military Post Office.*
- AMS compliant addresses will resolve on usps.com ZIP Code lookup
https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction_input
 - *Not all APO/FPO/DPO addresses will be AMS compatible*
 - *Exception addresses are deliverable*
- The Postal Service and MPSA recommends that Election Officials align new military addressing formats with state data form fields

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance –

- Street Name Identifiers:
 - PSC (Postal Service Center)
 - CMR (Community or Consolidated Mail Room)
 - UNIT (Ships, mobile units, DPO assignments, Unit Mail Room)
- City Name Identifiers
 - APO (Army or Air Force Post Office)
 - FPO (Fleet Post Office {Navy or USMC})
 - DPO (Diplomatic Post Office)
- State Codes
 - AA (Armed Forces Americas)
 - AE (Armed Forces Europe/Atlantic)
 - AP (Armed Forces Pacific)

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance –

- Format Examples:(includes ships and mobile units using AMS street identifier)

VOTER NAME
PSC 1 BOX 1
APO AE 09XXX

VOTER NAME
UNIT 100101 BOX 100
FPO AP 96XXX

VOTER NAME
CMR 1 BOX 1
APO AA 34XXX

VOTER NAME
UNIT 5190 BOX 1
DPO AE 09XXX-0001

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance –

- AMS Convention Exceptions:
 - ZIP range 093XX will not always use AMS address convention
 - Any address format is acceptable within 093XX ZIP Code range
 - Delivery (street identifier) line is unit's name (unit name such as Weapons Company or contractor name)

- ▶ Format:

VOTER NAME
123 WATER PURIFICATION CO
APO AE 093XX

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance –

- AMS Convention Exceptions:
 - Ships and mobile units not using AMS UNIT street identifier
 - ▶ Delivery (street identifier) line is unit's name (USS SHIPNAME)
 - ▶ Format:
VOTER NAME
USS SHIPNAME
FPO AE 095XX

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

APO/FPO/DPO -- AMS Address Maintenance –

Notes:

- Do not use the name of a foreign country with APO-FPO-DPO addresses
- Do not use a civil city name with APO-FPO-DPO addresses
- Do not use PO BOX but rather just BOX with APO-FPO-DPO addresses
- # is extraneous in addresses. BOX Nbr 5051 or BOX # 5051 should be BOX 5051
- Rank and titles are permissive on name line

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

Return Ballot Envelope

- Automation compatibility is a challenge with some jurisdictions design choices.
 - The back of the envelopes have become congested with legitimate information.
 - ▶ The placement of that information can be changed to ensure that ballots are oriented correctly in initial automation processing, e.g. place information containing barcodes, names, addresses and text boxes with lines in the upper left hand corner of the mailpiece.

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

IMb Tracking services work best with unique serial numbers

- Please ensure that you use unique serialization of barcodes when creating your outbound and return mailpieces

Key Issues *(cont'd)*

- Postmark Issues
 - Election officials have indicated illegible or missing postmarks are an issue
 - ▶ Working with Election Officials to identify scope of problem
 - ▶ Officials provide physical samples
 - ▶ Samples are reviewed and analyzed by Postal Operations to determine root cause
 - ▶ Remedial processes are developed and implemented
 - Mailpieces having two postmarks
 - ▶ Round stamp and automated processing postmarks – use earliest date

Postal Service Recommendations

- Customers who opt to vote through the U.S. Mail need to familiarize themselves with their local jurisdiction's requirements regarding absentee and Vote-by-Mail ballots, including postmarking requirements
- Voters should contact their local election officials about deadlines
- Voter communication is an essential component of preventing late ballots
 - Election Officials should consider including a voter notification in the ballot material packet to ensure the timely delivery of ballots

Postal Service Recommendations *(cont'd)*

- Return by Mail Date Guidance –
 - Domestic non-military voters
 - ▶ *The Postal Service recommends that voters mail their ballots at least one week early to account for any unforeseen events or weather issues*
 - APO/FPO
 - ▶ *The Military Postal Service Agency recommends that military personnel serving overseas follow the return by mail date for their location published here <https://www.usps.com/election-mail/2016-americans-overseas-ballot-mailing-deadlines.pdf>*

Postal Service Recommendations *(cont'd)*

- Helpful information about postmarks:
 - ▶ Home or Business Mailboxes – Your ballot will be postmarked the day the Postal Service mail carrier collects it
 - ▶ Local Post Office – Take your ballot to a Local Post Office and confirm with the counter representative that the ballot will be postmarked that day
 - ▶ USPS Blue Collection Boxes -- If you deposit your ballot after the printed collection time on the collection box, the ballot will not be postmarked until the next day

Postal Service Recommendations *(cont'd)*

- Use letter-size reply envelopes
- Board of Elections should use First-Class Mail postage on outbound absentee or Vote-by-Mail ballots
- Design reply envelopes to contain:
 - Official Election Mail logo
- Recommend IMb Tracing® a service which provides near real-time tracking information for your automation-compatible letters and flats
- Tag 191 Domestic and International Ballots
- Official Ballot Mailings - Provide a sample mailpiece with all contents, exceptions (see [DMM 703.8](#))



Key Issues contd.

- Mail Collection Time
 - Voters need to check pick-up and collection times before depositing ballots in the mail
- Delivery and Pickup Coordination
 - States have varying needs
 - ▶ Know state level regulations regarding Ballot in Hand and/or Postmark acceptance

Postal Service Recommendations contd.

- Election Mail Coordinators – Support preparation, entry delivery and pickup planning
usps.com/electionmail
- Mailpiece Design Analysts – Support design and compliance review MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 (hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. CT) or by sending your request by email to mda@usps.gov. For more information:
pe.usps.com/mpdesign/mpdftr_intro_all.asp
- Find a Business Mail Entry Unit: Learn where to drop off government and Election Mail.
ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm
- Election Mail Task Force/ Program Manager:
ElectionMailProgramManager@usps.gov

U.S. Postal Service

- Committed to working with Election Officials to ensure smooth processing
 - Continue partnership with Election Officials
- Let's grow Election Mail together

Thank you!



Questions?

Election Mail Support

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