

MAIL MANAGEMENT

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To update and revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy on Mail Management and implement the provisions found in the Federal Property Management Regulations.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This directive sets forth the policies and responsibilities for managing VA's Mail Management Program.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Information Technology, Quality Privacy and Risk, Enterprise Records System, Records Management Service is responsible for the contents of this directive.
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 6340, Mail Management Procedures.
5. **RESCISSIONS:** VA Directive 6340 dated October 11, 1996.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/

Dat P. Tran
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Office of Enterprise Integration

/s/

Rob C. Thomas, II
Acting Assistant Secretary for Information
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Distribution:

MAIL MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

a. This directive establishes policy for a Department-wide Mail Management Program and implements the provisions found in the Federal Property Management Regulations.

b. The Mail Management Program is designed to provide rapid handling and accurate delivery of mail throughout the Department at minimum cost consistent with mission requirements.

2. POLICY

a. Mail under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will be handled by the most economical and effective means, through use of sound workflow principles; the most cost-effective equipment, supplies and devices; by keeping operations as efficient as possible, and by choosing the most cost-effective carrier and product to accomplish the task.

b. Operation of postal contract stations by VA employees or organizations is not authorized. Appropriations of VA may not be used to support operation of postal stations on either a full-time basis or part-time basis regardless of whether reimbursement is made by the United States Postal Service (USPS). VA elements may participate in and/or be the lead agency in a Cooperative Administrative Support Unit (CASU). They will, however, limit their activities to those normally performed by large-volume customers of USPS and/or service bureaus such as preparing official mail for dispatch, sorting and delivering incoming mail, and metering mail.

c. Uniform mail routing symbols will be used for identifying, sorting, and delivering mail.

d. VA will reimburse the USPS for all official mailings via the current payment system.

e. VA mailing indicia, including meter impressions and permit imprint authorizations, will never be used by employees for personal mail (any mail which does not relate exclusively to the business of the Government). Such mail includes, but is not limited to, holiday greetings, retirement announcements, resumes or job applications. Individuals using any official mailing indicia item authorized by law to avoid the payment of postage or registry fee on private mail can be fined not more than \$300.

f. Every mail facility and mail manager/representative should have access to the USPS's Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) which will provide extensive information about mail services, classes, design, discounts, fees, etc. In addition, mail managers/representatives should know the name and telephone number of the USPS Account Representative at the local postal facility.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology**, Administers the Department-wide mail management program which includes:

- (1) Developing and recommending to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, plans, procedures, policies and directives concerning the Mail Management Program.
- (2) Serving as the Agency Mail Manager for coordinating this program.

b. **Office of Information and Technology**, Establishes and recommends to the-VA Central Office entities,-the Department-wide policies, plans, procedures, and directives pertaining to the Mail Management Program which includes:

- (1) Formulating and evaluating Department-wide plans, policies, and procedures pertaining to mail management to ensure maximum deliverability at minimum cost consistent with the mission requirements of the Department.
- (2) Maintaining liaison with USPS, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), General Services Administration (GSA), other Government agencies and vendors of mailing equipment, supplies, and transportation to ensure the maintenance of quality service and adherence to any applicable regulations on all mail management matters.
- (3) Notifying USPS September 1 of each year of the estimated amount of postage reimbursement VA will make for the following fiscal year, and making adjustment in VA's payment, when necessary.
- (4) Ensuring that quarterly meetings are held with facility mail managers to discuss problems and new programs.

c. **Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials and Deputy Assistant Secretaries**. Establish and administer Mail Management Programs in the offices and field facilities under their jurisdiction. This includes:

- (1) Implementing the Mail Management Program including establishment of a central control point over mail distribution to ensure efficient planning, operation of routes, and schedules and use of the most cost-effective methods of accounting for postage use.
- (2) Designating a Mail Manager for their respective administration or staff office; the Mail Manager is responsible for monitoring mail operations and conducting surveys and studies as necessary, to ensure that the operations are being executed in an efficient and economical manner.
- (3) Maintaining liaison with the local US Postal Service representative on mail matters to enhance service to the maximum extent possible including participation in the activities of the

local Postal Customer Council and consultation on a regular basis with the assigned USPS Account Representative.

(4) Maintaining a current list of mail routing symbols and notifying the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration of changes as they occur both in VA Central Office (VACO) and in the field.

(5) Obtaining the concurrence of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration before publishing new or changed mail routing symbols in VACO.

(6) Choosing the most cost-effective carrier and product consistent with the provisions of 39 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 310 "Enforcement of the Private Express Statutes" and Part 320, "Suspension of the Private Express Statutes" (a group of Federal statutes giving the Postal Service the exclusive right, with certain limited exceptions to carry letters for others).

(7) Forwarding to their respective administration and/or staff office mail representatives in VACO, copies of all postal service forms as required by agency policy.

(8) Using the respective five digit cost codes on all USPS forms when utilizing the various mail services.

(9) Auditing and certifying for payment USPS Official Mail Accounting System reports on Express Mail, Business Reply Mail, Permit Imprint mailings, and meter charges against facility records.

(10) Maintaining a copy of USPS Form 3600-PM, *Statement of Mailing With Penalty Permit Imprints* (using appropriate administration/staff office code) when printing contractors are allowed to use VA's permit imprint number.

d. **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget.** In addition to the responsibilities outlined in subparagraph 3.(d). will coordinate with the Agency and Facility Mail Manager when formulating budget projections for mail costs.

e. **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance.** In addition to the responsibilities outlined in subparagraph 3.d. will arrange for payments to USPS through the Department of the Treasury's On-Line Payment and Collection System.

f. **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration.** In addition to the responsibilities outlined in subparagraph 3.d. will:

(1) Assign and control mail routing symbols for VACO organizational elements and for non-VA organizations for which mail service is provided (such as Veterans Service Organizations and contractors).

(2) Maintain current and complete mail routing instructions to facilitate distribution of mail within VACO.

4. DEFINITION(S)

Mail. Is used in this directive to describe letters, memoranda, postal cards, reports, forms and form letters, documents, papers, packages, publications, and other material received, distributed internally, or dispatched by VA. Mailability requirements, restrictions, and exceptions are found in the USPS Domestic Mail Manual (other mail vendors provide similar written guidance for items sent via their delivery services).

Facility Mail Manager- is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective mail operation within their areas of responsibility.

Mail Manager- is responsible for overseeing the agency's mail management program and the agency's official mail costs through the cost-effective use of the United States Postal Service (USPS), available discounts, and the use of GSA authorized commercial carriers.