

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Donald Lagasse, 202–268–7269,
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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On February 25, 2004, pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 83623, the Postal Service filed with the Postal Rate Commission a request for a decision recommending a minor mail classification change. The proposed change will permit sample copies of authorized and pending Periodicals publications to be enclosed with merchandise mailed at Parcel Post or Bound Printed Matter rates. This change was recommended by the Postal Rate Commission on July 7, 2004, and approved by the Board of Governors on July 19, 2004. The Board of Governors established October 3, 2004, as the implementation date for the change.

The proposed change will not affect any existing classification regarding eligibility (such as the subscriber percentage) for Periodicals rates. The weight of the sample publication would be included in the postage calculation to cover any additional costs in transporting slightly heavier parcels. The proposed change will benefit both publishers and the Postal Service by providing another venue for promoting publications. The proposed change also benefits customers, printers, advertisers, and all affected parties by providing an opportunity to get additional subscriptions by creating more revenue and volume.

Because advertising is not permitted in items mailed at Library Mail and Media Mail rates, enclosures of Periodicals publications sample copies are limited to enclosures in Parcel Post and Bound Printed Matter and will be charged according to the weight of the parcel.

PART 111—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 111 continues to read as follows:

Authority: U.S.C. 552(a); 39 U.S.C. 101, 401, 403, 404, 414, 3001–3011, 3201–3219, 3403–3406, 3621, 3626, 5001.

2. Amend the following sections of the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) as set forth below:

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)

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E Eligibility

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E700 Package Services**E710 Basic Standards****1.0 Basic Information****1.1 Definition**

[Revise the first sentence in 1.1 to read as follows:]

Package Services mail consists of mailable matter that is neither mailed nor required to be mailed as First-Class Mail nor entered as Periodicals except as permitted under 1.7 unless permitted or required by standard or as Customized MarketMail under E660.

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[Add new section 1.7 to read as follows:]

1.7 Attachments or Enclosures of Periodicals Sample Copies

Sample copies of authorized Periodicals publications may be enclosed or attached with merchandise sent at Parcel Post or Bound Printed Matter rates. Postage at the Parcel Post or Bound Printed Matter rate is based on the combined weight of the host piece and the sample copies enclosure.

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An appropriate amendment to 39 CFR part 111 to reflect these changes will be published if the proposal is adopted.

Neva R. Watson,

Attorney, Legislative.

[FR Doc. 04–19991 Filed 9–1–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7710–12–P

POSTAL SERVICE**39 CFR Part 111****Signature Confirmation Service: Elimination of Signature Waiver Option**

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This proposed rule provides a change to the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM™) that would eliminate the signature waiver option for Signature Confirmation™ service under DMM S919.1.10. The Postal Service™ is proposing this change because the signature waiver option is no longer necessary. Additionally, this option has caused confusion for customers.

DATES: Submit comments on or before October 4, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Mail or deliver written comments to the Manager, Mailing Standards, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., Room 3436, Washington, DC 20260–3436. Written comments may also be submitted via fax

to (202) 268–4955. Copies of all written comments will be available for inspection and photocopying between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Postal Service Headquarters Library, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., 11th Floor North, Washington, DC 20260.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Donald Lagasse, (202) 268–7269,
Donald.T.Lagasse@usps.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Signature Confirmation service provides Postal Service customers with information about the date and time a mailpiece was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt. A delivery record, including the recipient's signature, is maintained by the Postal Service and is available to the customer via fax, e-mail, or mail, upon request. No acceptance record is kept at the office of mailing.

Signature Confirmation service currently includes a signature waiver option that allows the sender to waive the signature requirement and accept the Postal Service delivery employee's signature and date of delivery as proof of delivery. If a customer selects the signature waiver option, the customer is provided only with the date of delivery in the delivery record. The signature waiver option is not available when Signature Confirmation service is combined with other special services.

Signature waiver was requested initially by Delivery Confirmation™ service mailers that agreed to participate in testing the Signature Confirmation service but did not want to inconvenience their customers by requiring them to sign for their items. Now that Signature Confirmation service is fully implemented and widely recognized, the signature waiver feature is no longer necessary.

By definition, Signature Confirmation service is designed to provide a signature. Including an option for waiver of the signature for this service can be confusing for customers who wonder why the Postal Service would offer a signature service where the signature could be waived.

Therefore, the Postal Service proposes to eliminate the signature waiver option for Signature Confirmation service. Customers who do not need to obtain a signature but wish to know if their mailpiece was delivered would be able to do so using Delivery Confirmation service.

Although exempt from the notice and comment requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act [5 U.S.C. of 553(b), (c)] regarding proposed rulemaking by 39 U.S.C. 410(a), the

Postal Service invites public comment on the following proposed revisions to the *Domestic Mail Manual*, incorporated in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR). See 39 CFR 111.1.

List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 111

Postal Service.

PART 111—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 111 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 39 U.S.C. 101, 401, 403, 404, 414, 416, 3001–3011, 3201–3219, 3403–3406, 3621, 3626, 5001.

2. Amend the following sections of the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) as set forth below:

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)

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S SPECIAL SERVICES

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S900 Special Postal Services

S910 Security and Accountability

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S919 Signature Confirmation

1.10 BASIC INFORMATION

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[Delete 1.10 in its entirety.]

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We will publish an appropriate amendment to 39 CFR part 111 to reflect these changes if the proposal is adopted.

Neva Watson,

Attorney, Legislative.

[FR Doc. 04–19990 Filed 9–1–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7710–12–P

POSTAL SERVICE

39 CFR Part 111

Address Visibility on Bundles of Flat-Size and Irregular Parcel Mail

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service is seeking comments on a proposal that adds additional standards for the visibility of address elements and presort designation (*i.e.*, optional endorsement lines, barcoded pressure sensitive package labels, or facing slips) on bundles of flat-size and irregular parcel mailpieces. The proposed new standards apply only to bundles that are candidates for processing on automated bundle sorting equipment. The standards would require that all elements in the delivery address and the

presort designation on the top piece of carrier route and presort bundles containing flat-size or irregular parcel mailpieces, either prepared in sacks or placed directly on pallets, be completely visible and readable without the need to manipulate the banding or shrinkwrap.

DATES: Submit comments on or before October 18, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Mail or deliver comments to the Manager, Mailing Standards, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW. Rm 3436, Washington, DC 20260–3436. Copies of all written comments will be available for inspection and photocopying between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Postal Service Headquarters Library, 11th Floor North, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Barry Walsh, Operational Requirements and Integration, U.S. Postal Service, (202) 268–7595; or Vicki Bosch, Mailing Standards, U.S. Postal Service, (202) 268–7277.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To help control mail processing costs, the Postal Service uses automated equipment whenever available to process mail. Automation reduces manual processing costs and helps maintain stable postage rates. The Postal Service has experienced significant savings through the use of automated equipment to sort letter-size and flat-size mailpieces.

To further reduce processing costs, the Postal Service started deployment of new automated package processing system (APPS) equipment to process parcels and bundles. The new APPS equipment will replace many of the small parcel and bundle sorters (SPBSs) now used in major Postal Service processing facilities. The APPS equipment has optical character recognition (OCR) capability that can read the delivery information on bundles of mail and subsequently process mail more efficiently.

Bundle address visibility and the visibility of the presort designation are essential for automated processing of presort bundles with APPS equipment. Banding, shrinkwrap, labels, or facing slips that obscure all or part of the delivery address or presort designation on the top piece of bundles lower the processing efficiency of the APPS equipment. The APPS equipment reads the address on small parcels and presort bundles by scanning the address and presort designation on the top piece, and then directing the parcels or presort bundles to the appropriate sort bin.

During automated induction, there is no opportunity for a postal employee to move strapping, flatten shrinkwrap, or

otherwise manipulate bundles to assist the OCR. Bundles or parcels that cannot be read successfully on the first pass must be routed to a semiautomatic induction station, where a postal employee has a limited ability to move strapping away from the address block before re-inducting the bundle into the machine. If address recognition fails again, APPS will reject the bundle or parcel and it will have to be handled manually.

Address Visibility

Except as explained below, presort bundles prepared in sacks or on pallets must have the delivery address information visible and readable to the naked eye, including any barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle label or optional endorsement line (OEL). When plastic bands, string, or rubber bands are used to secure bundles, the mailpiece can typically be divided into four areas formed by the crossing of the banding. Placing the delivery address in one of these four areas will ensure that no part of the address is obscured by the banding material. If the address cannot be placed within an area of the mailpiece not covered by banding, then mailers may secure their bundles using clear plastic banding or clear shrinkwrap, or use an optional bundle label (OBL).

These standards do not apply to bundles of letter-size mail; bundles of First-Class flat-size mail; Customized Market Mail (CMM); bundles placed in 5-digit or 5-digit scheme (L001) sacks or pallets, carrier route or 5-digit carrier routes sacks; carrier route bundles entered at the Destination Delivery Unit (DDU); flats prepared in letter trays under DMM M033; or bundles containing an OBL.

Clear Strapping and Shrinkwrap

If plastic strapping intrudes on any element of the address or presort designation, the strapping must be clear to the degree that the address and presort designation remains visible and readable to the naked eye. The Postal Service recommends that the strapping be clear, meeting manufacturing standards of less than 70 percent haze in accordance with ASTM D1003, and not contain stripes, bands, seams, or texture marks that could obscure address characters despite a level of haze that is less than 70 percent overall. If a strap crossing intrudes on any portion of the address, the haze is measured through both straps.

The Postal Service recommends any shrinkwrap used to secure bundles show less than 70 percent haze, as defined in ASTM D1003, after