



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Federal Bureau of Prisons**

**PROGRAM STATEMENT**

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# **Mail Management Manual**

/s/

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## **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

To implement procedures for processing all official and inmate mail as expeditiously and economically as possible.

a. **Program Objectives.** The expected result of this program is:

Official and inmate mail will be processed expeditiously and efficiently.

b. **Summary of Changes.** This edition of the Program Statement incorporates changes that have occurred since the last publication of this policy and initiatives as a result of the Reduction and Elimination of Duties Management Assessment Project (REDMAP) initiatives.

*Policy Rescinded*

P5800.10

Mail Management Manual (11/3/95)

- Procedures contained in Operations Memorandum 004-2008 (5800), Inmate Certified Mail Procedures, were included in this Program Statement in Section 4.9. These procedures require mail room staff, and unit staff if applicable, at each institution to maintain an incoming inmate certified mail log documenting all incoming inmate certified mail. It also establishes the minimum required information that will be documented in the log.
- Section 5.6 gives information on filing claims with United Parcel Service (UPS).
- Inmate funds received through the mail will be rejected. The sender is required to mail funds intended for an inmate commissary account directly to the National Lockbox.

- Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports and Statement of Reason received through the mail will be rejected.
- Eliminated outgoing special/legal mail drop-boxes.
- Eliminated the requirement to forward copies of correspondence related to local mail handling issues to Regional and Central Office Correctional Programs Administrators.
- Eliminated the requirement to maintain a log for postal meter resets documenting the date, amount of reset, and signature of staff member requesting the reset.
- Eliminated use of the national lockbox instruction form letter for the rejection of negotiable instruments by consolidating the instruction form and the BP-A0328, Stamps, Negotiable Instruments & Other Returned to Sender form.

c. **Pretrial, Holdover, and Detainee Procedures.** The procedures in this Program Statement apply to pretrial and detainee inmates.

d. **Institution Supplement.** Many requirements of this Manual are security level-related and are affected by local requirements. Each institution will establish an Institution Supplement which will be submitted to the Correctional Programs Administrator for review. It must address, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Delivery and collection of mail (including special mail) for inmates who do not have ready access to these services.
- Distribution of official mail.
- Delivery of inmate mail to housing units.
- Allowance for receipt of publications.
- Procedures for processing legal and special mail, to include packages.
- Processing mail into and out of special units (e.g., protective custody units).
- Procedures to notify the mail room of inmates who are enrolled in approved education programs.

**The Institution Supplement must be submitted for approval to the appropriate Regional Correctional Programs Administrator.**

## 2.8. DISTRIBUTION

Each institution may also provide a courtesy copy of this Program Statement and the Institution Supplement to its local servicing post office.

## REFERENCES

### *Program Statements*

- P1240.05 Records and Information Management Programs (9/21/00)
- P1320.06 Federal Tort Claims Act (8/1/03)
- P4500.07 Trust Fund/Deposit Fund Manual (4/19/10)

P5265.14	Correspondence (4/5/11)
P5265.13	Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System (TRULINCS) – Electronic Messaging (2/19/09)
P5266.10	Publications, Incoming (1/10/03)
P5580.07	Inmate Personal Property (12/28/05)
P5800.12	Receiving and Discharge Manual (8/17/98)
P5800.15	Correctional Systems Manual (1/1/09)

#### United States Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual

#### *ACA Standards*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Standards for Administration of Correctional Agencies: 2-CO-5D-01.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions: 4-4266, 4-4285, 4-4429, 4-4446, 4-4487, 4-4488, 4-4489, 4-4490, 4-4491, 4-4492, 4-4493, 4-4494, 4-4495, and 4-4496.
- 4th Edition Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities: 4-ALDF-2A-60, 4-ALDF-5B-05, 4-ALDF-5B-06, 4-ALDF-5B-07, 4-ALDF-5B-08, 4-ALDF-5B-09, 4-ALDF-5B-10, 4-ALDF-5B-18, and 4-ALDF-6B-05.

#### *Records Retention Requirements*

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on Sallyport.

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## **Chapter 1. General**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Mail is the primary means of communication between inmates and the community. It is important that mail be well-managed and that services be provided professionally and efficiently.

Management of mail in a correctional environment is an especially demanding proposition. Staff must be familiar not only with the processing of personal and official mail, but also must be primarily aware of situations that can lead to breaches of security and order in the institution.

Mail room staff normally have daily contact with personnel of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and the local Postmaster, and personnel with contracted carriers such as United Parcel Service (UPS), Roadway Packaging System (RPS), Airborne Express, and Federal Express (FEDEX). Good relationships will be fostered so that mail issues can be resolved if they arise.

### **1.2 SUPERVISORY STAFF**

The Case Management Coordinator (CMC) is accountable for all department functions, including the processing of inmate and official mail. The Supervisory Correctional Systems Specialist (SCSS) will assist with monitoring mail room operations.

The SCSS will monitor mail procedures to ensure the timely processing, accountability and processing of funds, and proper handling of special mail. Special care must be given to detect contraband and other prohibited acts.

### **1.3 MAIL ROOM SECURITY**

The mail room will be secure from unauthorized entrance. A window or half-door is recommended in order to conduct business while excluding access. The mail room should generally be situated in a single room, without outside windows. Where outside windows exist, they must be secured (with security screens) or bars to prevent easy access.

The entrance to the mail room will be secure at all times. Unauthorized personnel may not have access to money, forms, or equipment used to process money.

Staff will open all incoming inmate mail, newspapers, magazines, books, and packages and inspect the material for contraband prior to distribution.

Only one inmate at a time is allowed to work in the mail room and will be under constant and direct supervision.

**Note:** If the mail room operates in a shared service capacity, the number of inmates that are allowed to work in the shared service mail room may be increased by one inmate for each facility that share mail room services. Satellite Prison Camps are not considered a standalone facility. A one to one, staff to inmate, ratio will be maintained.

The inmate **will not have access to mail** (including newspapers and magazines), certified or special mail, packages, receipts, log books, or forms. Inmates will not be permitted, **under any circumstances**, to process or deliver any inmate mail. Inmate work will be limited to janitorial and loading/unloading services only.

Addresses will be protected when inmates are loading/unloading bags and boxes. When inmates help load/unload packages, mail room staff will ensure the packages are sealed prior to the inmate's access to the package. Inmates are not allowed access to the mail room while first class or package mail is being processed.

All mailing labels, envelopes, and other official preprinted Bureau mailing supplies will be secured and may not be made available or accessible to inmates.

## **1.4 SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS**

The Bureau ordinarily provides mail service (processing and delivering of mail), to inmates on a five-day schedule, Monday through Friday. Institution emergencies may preclude mail service. However, mail service will resume upon the conclusion of the emergency. Usually, weekend and holiday mail services are not provided. Mail room staff will hold "open-house" for the general population at least twice a week. The CMC, SCSS, or staff in an acting capacity, will make regular visits to administrative and special housing units.

To ensure inmates have the opportunity to address mail concerns, local procedures will be developed in institutions where the general inmate population does not have access to the mail room.

Each Warden will determine if local procedures are needed to handle holiday/weekend mail. For example, weekend mail service may be provided during the Christmas season and at other times when a holiday occurs during the Monday through Friday period. These procedures will be addressed in the Institution Supplement.

## **1.5 PUBLICATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR GUIDANCE**

Each CMC will ensure staff possess the skill to access and use the Sallyport Policy/Forms Intranet web site effectively, or ensure copies of the following are current and in the mail room:

- **Mail Management Manual.**



- **Correctional Systems Manual** and the Program Statements **Correspondence, Inmate Personal Property**, and **Incoming Publications** (with related Institution Supplements).
- USPS International Mail Manual, if warranted by local need, and USPS Domestic Mail Manual (DMM). Additionally, the DMM is available on the USPS website at [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com).

The mail room staff will notify the CMC when mail handling problems arise which are not clearly defined. The CMC will then forward a written request for guidance to the local servicing postmaster. Copies of the correspondence and replies will be retained in the mail room for review.

Mail room staff will obtain postage rate charts through the local servicing post office. These charts must be current and placed in areas where inmates have access (e.g., commissary, mail room, units, law library, etc.). If staff are unable to obtain updated postage rate charts, the CMC will be notified. The CMC will then contact the local service postmaster to obtain the charts.

Reference documents, USPS guidance, and approved variances must be retained and filed for future review. The CMC will ensure this file and these documents are maintained and current.

## **1.6 EQUIPMENT**

The CMC is encouraged to consult with the local servicing post office to determine the type of equipment to be used in the mail room.

Institutions are required to use a postage meter or stamps to pay for official mail being processed through the USPS. Equipment for use in metering official mail will consist of an electronic scale interfaced with a postage meter capable of being “reset” by telephone. This equipment will be obtained under contract with a maintenance agreement.

When new meters are to be ordered, the Central Office Correctional Programs Branch must be contacted for guidance and to obtain the agency code used on the application for a meter license. The application for a meter license is obtained from the local servicing post office.

UNICOR locations that have significant mail volume warranting a meter separate from the institution, will request approval via memorandum from the Federal Prison Industries (FPI) Business Administrator.

If used, letter openers, box openers with razor blades, etc., will be carefully accounted for and kept secured when not in use. Inmates will not have unsupervised access to this equipment under any circumstances.

Appropriate ink-pad type rubber stamps containing endorsements required in either the (DMM) or this Manual will be obtained and used.

Funds (monies and negotiable instruments) received through the mail will be retained in the mail room until processed for rejection, normally within 24 hours of receiving. The Warden will identify the secure receptacle in the mail room to store unprocessed funds. Funds placed in the secure receptacle will be processed the next business day.

## **1.7 TYPES OF MAIL**

a. **Official Mail.** Official mail is mail whose cost is borne by the U.S. Government and relates exclusively to the business. Official mail services relate to staff official mail and to inmate packages officially forwarded as a result of institution administration.

b. **Inmate Correspondence.** “General correspondence” is incoming or outgoing correspondence other than special mail, including magazines and newspapers. Whether sealed, unsealed, stamped, or un-stamped, inmate correspondence is forwarded according to the procedures in this Manual and the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

c. **Packages.** A package is a bundle, usually of small or medium size, that is packed, padded, wrapped, or boxed. Additionally, an article weighing 16 ounces or more containing other than paper material or excessive paper material is to be considered a package and will require approval in accordance with this Manual. While packages are encompassed within the broad term, “general correspondence,” they receive distinct processing and ordinarily require approval prior to receipt.

All inmate personal property packages will be authorized via the Authorization to Receive Package form (BP-A0331). The package will:

- Have prior approval.
- Be verified by the initiating department.
- Be signed by the department head concerned.

Each package received from another institution will contain an Inmate Personal Property Record (BP-A0383), or Authorization to Mail Package (BP-329). When a package is received from another institution with a BP-329 form, the box must also bear a Bureau security stamp in accordance with the Program Statement **Receiving and Discharge Manual**.

Packages received, which fall under the authorization of the Program Statement **Incoming Publications**, will be opened for inspection, but do not require prior approval. Regular publication mailings for example, a monthly “Book of the Month Club,” do not require prior approval each month (see Chapter 3 for further details).

## **1.8 STAFF PERSONAL MAIL**

Staff may not receive personal mail at the institution through the institution mail room (this does not apply to mail USPS delivers to staff quarters). Staff may not use the institution mail room for processing or forwarding personal mail. Staff personal mail will not be processed from institutions.

## **1.9 OCCUPANT OR CURRENT ADDRESSEE MAIL**

Mail addressed to “Occupant” or “Current Addressee” will be considered delivered when received at the institution; it becomes the Warden’s property; and will be disposed of as the Warden stipulates. (**Note:** Mail addressed to “a personal name or occupant,” for example: “Tom Williams or current occupant,” is considered addressed to the person named and processed as mail to that person. If the named person is not at the institution, the mail will be considered as belonging to the “current occupant” and will be disposed of as the Warden stipulates).

## **1.10 AUTHORITY FOR DISPOSAL OF MAIL**

Authority to dispose of or destroy mail addressed to a specific person rests **solely** with the USPS. Bureau staff **do not have this authority** and will return undelivered mail to the local USPS.

## **1.11 PRIVATE CARRIERS**

Private carriers, such as UPS, Airborne Express, FedEx, etc., may ship and carry weapons and ammunition or other potentially dangerous materials. Therefore, they will not be permitted inside an institution’s secure perimeter without going through the proper security checks. Material these carriers deliver will be received outside the institution and thoroughly inspected prior to delivery into the institution. This provision covers package delivery and is not to be construed to prevent access to the institution by shipping companies requiring access with full loads. When there is doubt, the Captain will be contacted immediately.

Private carriers must not be confused with the USPS. When using private carriers for forwarding, post office boxes will not be used as any portion of the address. Private carriers do not have access to, nor can they use, USPS post office boxes. When addressing correspondence or packages to be sent via a private carrier, be sure to use a street and number, route or road designation, in addition to the city, state, and ZIP code.

## **1.12 MANDATORY OPENING AND INSPECTING OF MAIL AND PACKAGES**

Staff are **required to open and inspect** all inmate mail and packages prior to distribution (including mail being returned to an inmate). Local procedures, contained in the Institution Supplement, must be developed to ensure inspection procedures are performed.

Inspection and searches of inmate mail and packages will be consistent with applicable search policies.

To increase security and preclude attempts to introduce contraband, packaging material (whether for inmate or staff) will be removed, treated as “hot trash,” and properly disposed of as required by local policy. It may not be used to forward packages within the institution.

Staff will open special mail (see the Program Statement **Correspondence**) in the inmate’s presence.

Packages addressed to inmates will be opened and inspected before inmates are given access to the package or its contents. Once a package is opened, it comes under the authority of the institution. If a package is to be forwarded or returned, it will be resealed and mailed at government expense.

To preclude having to open a package and then forward it because it was not authorized, mail room staff will take approved BP-A0331 forms to the local servicing post office. A package for which there is no approved BP-A0331 can be **refused** immediately as unauthorized and returned to the sender. A notation to this effect will be made on the package at that time. (See Chapter 3, section 3.14, for further details.)

Packages addressed to staff will be x-rayed prior to being brought into the secure perimeter of the institution. While packages for staff do not require pre-approval, staff receiving packages containing items for inmates will be returned. (See Chapter 3 for further details.)

**Note:** At administrative institutions, mail for minimum security level inmates may be treated as minimum security level mail if the Warden determines that this mail may be processed as such.

Controlled narcotics, x-ray film, and other sensitive and controlled substances may be delivered in packages addressed to the Health Services Department. Therefore, extra caution must be exercised when inspecting them because using a fluoroscope machine or exposing x-ray film to light may ruin them. Packages are to be held in a secure area such as the rear gate, etc., depending on the institution security level.

## **Chapter 2. Official Mail**

### **2.1 PAYMENT FOR MAILINGS**

Official mail will not be forwarded via the Official Mailing Indicia. All official mail forwarded through the USPS by the Bureau will be forwarded using some method of pre-payment (metering or postage stamps).

### **2.2 USE OF POSTAGE METERS**

The postage meter will be placed in an area with a telephone line in the immediate vicinity and in an area not accessible to inmates. The postage meter will be reset by telephone (funds placed on the meter). The amount allowed for reset will depend upon the type of facility where the meter is located. Meters will be reset with enough funds to allow approximately one month of mail to be processed. The reset statement subsequently sent from the contractor will be maintained in the mail room.

### **2.3 PROHIBITED METERING**

Metering of envelopes for use at a later date or for use as a “reply envelope” is prohibited. Once a piece of mail has been metered, the metering mark serves as the postmark.

### **2.4 UNICOR POSTAGE**

Where UNICOR uses the institution’s postage meter to mail its official mail, the following procedures will be followed:

- A separate account code will be established on the meter for UNICOR.
- The UNICOR account will be read from the meter on the 25th of each month, and reported via memorandum to the institution Business Administrator. UNICOR will be billed for usage through the institution billing process.
- If the 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, the meter will be read on the previous workday.

### **2.5 PAYMENT OF POSTAGE BY GOVERNMENT**

If a question arises concerning payment of postage at the government’s expense, a request for clarification will be made to the Regional Correctional Programs Administrator.

### **2.6 BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

Staff will provide a Business Reply Mail (BRM) envelope to respondents when a reply to official business is necessary. Business reply license number 14045 has been issued to the Bureau of Prisons (which includes Community Corrections Offices) and license number 99035 for

UNICOR. Inmates may not have access to official business reply envelopes unless received from another Bureau institution or office soliciting an immediate response. Outgoing mail placed in a BRM will be treated as general correspondence and left opened by the inmate.

The USPS requires that agencies determine the method of payment for BRM. The Central Office has elected to fund a "site" fee for each institution and Regional Office. Site fees for Community Corrections Offices will be established on an as-needed basis.

The site fee permits the USPS to process all BRM to a given site, regardless of the quantity of BRM processed. The CMC, Correctional Programs Administrator, or Community Corrections Manager (CCM) at newly established institutions, Regional Offices, or Community Corrections Management Offices (or any other newly established Bureau mailing site) must go to their local servicing USPS facility and apply for a site BRM permit. The application must show the appropriate license number, #14045 for the Bureau including Community Corrections offices and #99035 for UNICOR.

The application will indicate that the initial and annual billing for the site fee is charged to the Central Office.

## **2.7 OBTAINING OFFICIAL MAIL SUPPLIES**

Envelopes, labels, and other items for use with official Bureau mail will only be obtained from UNICOR. Requests for stock will be forwarded to:

UNICOR, Customer Service Center  
PO Box 11670  
Lexington KY 40577-1670,

or orders may be sent by fax to (606) 254-9048.

When ordering this material from UNICOR, the official return address for the institution will be provided either by sample or photocopy accompanying the order. The Business Office will be responsible for funding, issue, and control of stock on behalf of all offices. The Business Office will consult with the CMC when ordering to assure that orders are correct in design, return address, etc.

A Bureau site **may not** obtain pre-printed envelopes which include a department, office, section, or other identification in the return address. Official envelopes will contain only the site's general return address. Department or office identification will be stamped, typewritten, or handwritten immediately below the site return address.

## 2.8 OFFICIAL MAIL STATIONS

Official mail will be dispatched only from official Bureau mail rooms. Official mail **may not** be placed in street boxes or delivered by unauthorized staff directly to Post Offices. Authorized mail room staff must process all official mail through the official mail room to the USPS.

## 2.9 FORWARDING OFFICIAL MAIL

Official mail, received at Bureau locations, which has been opened will only be forwarded by re-covering the mail in another envelope and preparing the piece for re-sending as a new mailing. Official mail received which has not been opened does not need re-covering, but will be returned to the Post Office with endorsement for forwarding or other appropriate disposal.

To economize, "batch" mail should be used for forwarding all official mail whenever possible.

## 2.10 INMATE PACKAGES AS OFFICIAL MAIL

Except when otherwise specified in policy (for example, Program Statements **Inmate Recreation Programs** and **Inmate Personal Property**), inmate packages will be considered "official mail" when required to be mailed from the Bureau or required by the government to be mailed as a result of its administration.

## 2.11 OFFICIAL MAIL PROCESSING

a. **Incoming Mail.** Staff pickup of departmental mail at the mail room is expected, provided the layout of the mail room allows security and staff access to mail. Official mail will be separated from inmate mail and handled separately. Envelope mail will be sorted by department for pickup.

b. **Negotiable.** Negotiable instruments received through the mail room will be processed for rejection, within 24 hours of receipt. The sender is required to mail funds intended for an inmate commissary account directly to the National Lockbox. Negotiable instruments scheduled for rejection may be retained in the mail room.

c. **Official Mail Packages.** A log will be maintained for all incoming registered, certified, or insured letters and packages addressed to staff. A separate log may be used for each type of mail and appropriate receipts are to be obtained.

d. **Outgoing Mail.** To every extent practicable, staff will address outgoing official mail to an office or official title, as well as, to an individual by name.

All outgoing official mail will be sealed in the office of origin. The initials and office of the sender will be entered in the upper left corner of each piece. Other locations, such as

Community Corrections Offices, Regional Offices, and staff offices in the Central Office may wish to place the mailer's name and office identification in the same manner to assist in controlling mail forwarded to or returned from institutions.

Staff will deposit outgoing official mail in depositories located in the Warden's office and/or mail room. Durable envelopes will be used for mailing inmate files. Envelopes especially provided for handling files in the movement of inmates via bus/airlift are not to be used for mailing purposes.

Institution metered mail strips are only to be used for official mail. Inmates will not be provided or sold metered mail strips.



## Chapter 3. Inmate Mail

### 3.1 GENERAL

All mail room staff will be thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the Program Statements **Correspondence**, which contains criteria for sending and receiving inmate correspondence; **Inmate Personal Property**, which provides guidance as to what constitutes inmate contraband and the processing of this material; and **Incoming Publications**, which provides guidance related to the processing of incoming newspapers, magazines, books, etc.

An institution's size and complexity, the degree of the inmate's sophistication, and many other variables require flexibility in correspondence procedures. The Warden will establish controls to protect inmates and maintain the institution's security, discipline, and good order. For example, if an inmate attempts to solicit funds or items (e.g., samples) or subscribes to a publication without paying for the subscription, staff may consider limiting the inmate's correspondence as specified in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

It is important that mail room staff communicate with other staff, particularly unit staff and correctional services, so that potential inmate management problems can be identified and resolved. Also, CMCs and mail room staff must ensure that all inmates have access to mail services.

If a piece of incoming controlled mail (registered, certified, etc.) is lost or misplaced, the sender (not the inmate) must initiate the traces and follow-up action with the USPS or private carrier. The sender is in the best position to initiate tracing activities because it was the sender who paid the fees, completed the forms, and knew the mailing circumstances.

In the case of outgoing controlled mail, staff will assist the inmate to file tracer documents with the servicing post office.

### 3.2 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INMATE (BP-A0407)

Upon admission to the institution, inmates complete an Acknowledgment of Inmate (BP-A0407) form. Staff will forward a copy of the BP-A0407 form to the mail room for inmates who elect (by executing Part 1-I of the BP-A0407) not to receive their general correspondence. A current listing of inmates who have elected **not** to receive their general correspondence will remain on file in the mail room. General correspondence for these inmates will be returned to the sender, unopened, with the endorsement "refused."

An inmate who refuses to sign the BP-A0407 will receive general correspondence under the same conditions as if Part 1-II had been completed and signed. That is, staff will complete the bottom portion of Part 1-II and inmates will receive their general correspondence after it is opened and all inspections are completed.

All special mail will continue to be processed to the inmate as provided in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

**Note:** The Bureau has the authority to open, read, and inspect general correspondence prior to inmate access. The procedures prescribed here specifically allow an inmate to elect **not** to have mail opened and read. If this option is elected, mail (other than special mail) will be returned. If the inmate elects to receive general correspondence and signs the appropriate portion of the form, correspondence is inspected and delivered. If the inmate does not make a choice, by refusing to sign the form, the inmate will receive general correspondence after staff open and inspect it.

### **3.3 INMATE MAIL SERVICES**

The Warden will establish one or more depositories, which will be centrally located, to ensure accessibility to the inmate population. Staff will pick up and deliver the contents to the mail room in accordance with the schedule of operations (Refer to section 1.4). Inmates will be provided mail service for correspondence as outlined in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

Stamp collecting and USPS box services are not available for inmates. Outgoing express mail, UPS (and other private carriers) are not provided. Express mail, UPS, telegram, etc., when received as material coming into the institution, will be routinely processed. When received on weekends, these items are usually signed for by non-mail room staff and secured until normal mail room hours resume.

Staff will develop and implement local procedures for delivering and collecting mail for inmates who do not have ready access to these services (e.g., segregation, hospital). Such procedures will ensure the receipt and delivery of correspondence and mail are comparable with the rest of the inmate population.

It is important that these procedures must ensure the receipt and delivery of special mail. For example, local procedures must ensure receipt and marking of special outgoing mail in a manner that will accomplish this as if the inmate had ready access to normal procedures.

### **3.4 PROCESSING INCOMING INMATE MAIL**

After receipt, separate "Special Mail" from general inmate mail. **Do not open inmate mail at this time.**

Determine those inmates currently at the institution, using a SENTRY roster. Bureau authorized computer programs (MailFast) may also be used. This list/program must be kept current by:

- Adding the names of all new admissions.
- Deleting the names of those inmates who have been released.
- Noting all correspondence restrictions in effect.

Remove mail for inmates no longer at the institution and forward appropriately, normally within 24 hours.

It is important that each piece of mail be matched against various directories prior to opening to assure that **only mail for inmates presently at the institution is opened**. Mail for inmates not presently at the institution will be returned, unopened, to the local servicing post office with endorsement for forwarding or other appropriate disposal. This does not include inmates temporarily released for the day.

Care must be taken when opening correspondence to avoid cutting or damaging the contents.

**Random Reading.** Consistent with the provisions of Bureau regulations codified at 28 CFR 540.14, as contained in the Program Statement **Correspondence**, all incoming general correspondence, and all outgoing mail (except "special mail") is subject to random reading by staff. The objectives to be accomplished in reading incoming or outgoing mail differ from the objectives of inspection.

In the case of **inspection** (to which all incoming general correspondence is subjected), the primary objective is to detect contraband. The random **reading** of mail is intended to reveal plans to commit criminal acts or to monitor a particular problem confronting an inmate.

While reading correspondence, a staff member may incidentally learn of information concerning the private lives of inmates or their correspondents. Bureau staff must be sensitive to the fact that most information in correspondence is of a private nature and must be handled discreetly. Unless there is a legitimate correctional concern relating to the institution's security, safety, or orderly running, the contents of reviewed correspondence are not to be revealed to any other person.

Inmate correspondence that is opened and rejected or that is to be returned or forwarded for other reasons will be re-covered, sealed, and forwarded at government expense.

### **3.5 MAIL RETURNED TO INMATE**

Mail being returned to an inmate will be processed as general or special correspondence, as appropriate. Returned mail will not be provided to inmates until appropriate examinations are completed. Returned special mail will be logged and processed as special mail (open in inmate's presence, check for contraband only, etc.).

### 3.6 EXAMINATION

Examine each letter carefully for contraband, unauthorized material, negotiable instruments, money, etc. An item received that cannot be searched or examined without destruction or alteration (e.g., electronic greeting cards, padded cards, double-faced photograph) will be returned to sender.

The material to be returned, along with the correspondent's copy of the Stamps, Negotiable Instruments & Other Returned to Sender (BP-A0328) form, must be re-covered and sent to the correspondent. An appropriately completed BP-A0328 will also be provided to the inmate.

Return addresses will be closely reviewed. Correspondence between confined inmates must be approved in accordance with the Program Statement **Correspondence**. Correspondence not properly approved will be rejected, using a Returned Correspondence form (BP-A0327).

### 3.7 DELIVERY

After all inspections are completed, re-close each letter (staple, tape, etc.), finish sorting, and prepare for delivery as directed by local procedures. Caution will be taken when re-closing letters with a stapler to ensure contents are not stapled. Incoming correspondence will be delivered daily Monday through Friday. Delivery of letters may not be delayed and ordinarily will be made within 24 hours of receipt, excluding weekends and holidays.

### 3.8 SPECIAL MAIL

The Bureau policy on inmate correspondence identifies certain types of incoming correspondence as "special mail," **to be opened only in the inmate's presence**. For this special handling to occur, Bureau policy requires that the sender be adequately identified on the envelope and that the envelope be marked "Special Mail — Open Only in the Presence of the Inmate" or with similar language. Refer to the Program Statement **Correspondence** for those offices which are not required to use the "Special Mail" statement.

Staff will use professional judgement to determine whether correspondence is from either the Chambers of a Judge or a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate, or Executive Office. **This type of mail will be afforded special mail handling even without the special mail marking.** Other Congressional and judicial correspondence will be afforded special mail handling provided the sender is adequately identified on the envelope and the envelope has the special mail marking in accordance with the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

The Bureau has prepared an instruction sheet, Special Mail Notice (BP-A0493), for an inmate to include with correspondence the inmate sends to the attorney representing that inmate. This instruction sheet advises the attorney of the required procedures for incoming attorney-client correspondence to be afforded special mail privileges.

CMCs will ensure that copies of the instruction sheet for special mail handling of incoming attorney-client correspondence are provided as admission and orientation handouts and are placed in inmate housing areas, attorney visiting rooms, and other locations accessible to inmates.

Specifically, the attorney must be adequately identified on the envelope as an attorney and the envelope must be marked "Special Mail — Open Only in the Presence of the Inmate," or with similar language clearly indicating the particular item of correspondence qualifies as special mail and the attorney is requesting the correspondence be opened only in the inmate's presence.

The use of the title "Esquire" without additional indication of the sender's occupation does not establish the bearer as an attorney or legal aid supervisor. Mail from individuals using the title "Esquire" as the exclusive identification of their status shall not be handled as special mail, even if the envelope contains some special mail markings. However, use of the title "Esquire" after the sender's name, in addition to the same name being included in the return address of the law office, does sufficiently identify the sender as an attorney. Alternatively, the use of the term "Esquire" after the sender's name, in addition to some notation on the envelope that the sender is an attorney (i.e., Attorney-At-Law) is also sufficient identification.

**Other Mail.** The Warden may treat incoming mail that does not meet all of the requirements for special mail handling in the same fashion as special mail, including opening it in the inmate's presence and inspecting it only for contraband. It is recommended the Institution Supplement outline local criteria used to identify incoming special mail.

### **3.9 IN/OUT PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL AND LEGAL MAIL**

Ordinarily, inmate correspondence will be processed and delivered with 24 hours. Special and legal mail is afforded priority. Reasonable efforts by staff to deliver legal/special mail will be documented in the log book if the mail is unable to be delivered as provided by this policy. Staff must further document the attempts to deliver legal/special mail every 24 hours after the time initially logged until delivered.

Staff will open incoming inmate special mail in the inmate's presence. Staff are to check for contraband and funds at this time. Funds enclosed in the inmate correspondence are to be rejected. Additionally, inmates are not permitted to receive or maintain in their property Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports or Statement of Reason.

Mail room staff will maintain a log detailing receipt and delivery of special mail. Additionally, special/legal mail will be time-stamped, or a handwritten note will be made on the envelope, to show date and time received in the mail room. Although inmates may be asked to sign for this mail, they are not required to do so.

Inmates will deliver their own outgoing special or legal mail directly to a staff member, normally a member of the unit team or correctional systems staff. Staff receiving the mail will immediately confirm the inmate delivering it is the same inmate reflected in the return address. After this confirmation, the mail will be hand carried to the mail room. If mail is received by staff beyond the established hours of the mail room, local procedures will be established in the institution supplement. Special and legal mail will be received and processed in accordance with section 1.4 of this Manual. Outgoing special or legal mail submitted without an accurate return address will not be processed and will be returned immediately to the inmate for correct preparation (institutions with TRULINCS will also include a TRULINCS generated mailing label).

Outgoing special mail weighing 16 ounces or greater will be processed as a package. This requires using Form BP-329, Request Authorization to Mail Inmate Package. Inmates may still seal their outgoing special mail before submitting directly to staff for further processing and it will not be opened unless contraband is apparent as a result of electronic scanning.

All outgoing special mail is subject to scanning by electronic means including, but not limited to x-ray, metal detector, and ion spectrometry devices. Inspection of sealed outgoing special mail by these methods may occur outside the inmate's presence. Electronic scanning is for the sole purpose of identifying harmful materials, and cannot be used to read or review the content of outgoing special mail communication.

Correspondence that meets the conditions of outgoing special mail that USPS subsequently returns, will be processed as incoming special mail (open only in presence, etc.). Returned special mail will be entered into all log books in the same fashion as other incoming special mail.

Periodically, CMCs will review the special/legal mail delivery process to ensure that policy requirements are met. CMCs will consult specifically with staff and review requisite record keeping to ensure that delivery time frames are being met.

When an inmate is not at the institution, the special mail remains sealed and is forwarded to the inmate regardless of the 30-day forwarding period for general mail. Staff will use all means practicable to locate inmates to forward special mail (e.g., SENTRY, card files, telephone calls). If the inmate:

- Has been transferred, the mail will be forwarded to the inmate at the final transfer destination.
- Is out on writ, staff will use all means practicable to forward special mail.
- Has been released to the community, Special and Legal mail will be forwarded to the address the inmate provided. If a forwarding address is not available, forward the mail to the U.S. Probation Office in the release district, provided the inmate is, or was, under supervision.

- Was released by expiration of sentence and a forwarding address is not available, return the correspondence to the sender with a notation of the date and type of release and a statement that no forwarding address is available.

When forwarding special mail, mail room staff will note forwarding details in the log.

### **3.10 INCOMING DEPOSITORY AT FDC/MCC/MDCS**

FDC/MCC/MDCs will provide a depository for attorney/client correspondence in an area readily accessible to attorneys. Other facilities, which house pretrial inmates, may also provide this service. This depository will provide the means for an attorney to “hand deliver” legal material to a client for delivery.

A notice will be placed on the depository, “A return address will be provided for each item deposited in this box.” A return address is needed when the inmate has left the institution and cannot be located. Since postage presumably will not have been placed on this material, the material requiring return will be covered for mailing at government expense.

The procedure established for handling of incoming “Special Mail” will be followed for processing this correspondence (must contain the special mail markings). Correspondence placed in this depository not qualifying as “Special Mail” will be treated as incoming “General Correspondence.”

### **3.11 INCOMING PUBLICATIONS**

All incoming newspapers, magazines, and books will be handled in accordance with the Program Statement **Incoming Publications**. For inmates not at the institution, this type of material, provided it was received through the mail, will be endorsed with a forwarding address (or other appropriate endorsement) and returned to the USPS for forwarding or disposal, as appropriate. **Under no circumstances** will this material be retained at the institution for general use, for example, in the library or another department.

### **3.12 NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS**

Negotiable instruments received through the mail enclosed in inmate correspondence will be rejected, ordinarily within 24 hours of receipt. Funds received from a self-surrender, inmates returning from furlough, the U.S. Marshals Service and other law enforcement agencies for escorted inmates, may be processed locally. A receipt will be prepared for all monies received in this manner.

Negotiable instruments along with the receipt will be placed in an envelope. The envelope must be sealed, signed across the seal, taped shut, and a notation identifying the contents will be

placed on the front of the envelope. **Note:** The envelope will then be secured in a night depository pending processing by the cashier.

The cashier will collect all money and receipts daily, except Saturday, Sunday, and holidays. If, for some reason they are not picked up on the day they are received, all money and receipts will remain in the night depository

When funds are collected from the night depository the next business day, Business Office (Financial Management) staff are not responsible for counting un-receipted funds. **No other funds will be placed in the night depository.**

**Note:** Insurance, Trust, and all other similar settlement checks are generally considered as acceptance of settlement when processed or cashed. Accordingly, whenever such negotiable instruments are received, they will be held in the mail room and the Unit/Case Manager notified. These checks will **not be** processed routinely or posted to the inmate's account. If thereafter, the inmate desires to accept settlement, the check must be endorsed by the inmate (instead of the Deposit Fund [Accounting] Technician/Cashier) and then be processed in the usual manner. Further information can be found in the Program Statement **Trust Fund/Deposit Fund Manual**.

**All U.S. Treasury Checks will be forwarded to the local Business Administrator/Trust Fund Supervisor for processing.**

"Unsolicited Funds" such as funds received in a mail survey, contest, book or record clubs, etc., will be considered unsolicited and must be rejected.

### **3.13 INMATE PACKAGE MAIL – INCOMING**

All incoming inmate property packages must be authorized in advance **unless otherwise approved under another Bureau policy.** An Authorization to Receive Package or Property (BP-A0331) will be used for this purpose. A BP-A0331 is valid for no more than 60 calendar days from the date of approval.

**Note:** Some packages are authorized under other Bureau policies (for example, educational or legal materials). Inmates must be enrolled in an education program approved by the Supervisor of Education (SOE) or other authorized staff in order to receive educational materials. Local procedures must be established to notify the mail room of inmates who are enrolled in approved education programs. Inmates should be advised that they are not required to have these packages pre-approved.

These packages must be marked with words such as "Authorized by Bureau Policy." Some publications are mailed to the institution as a package. If this type of package is identifiable as coming from a commercial source such as a publisher, bookstore, or a book club, it will not require a BP-A0331, or the marking "Authorized by Bureau Policy." They are intended to alert



mail room staff that enclosed materials contain matter which does not require prior approval. These markings assist mail room staff to identify and process the materials and avoid erroneous returns. The Case Management Coordinator will assure this subject is covered during A&O.

Use of a BP-A0331 or Inmate Personal Property Record (BP-A0383) form is not needed for items approved under other Bureau policies. A package received without an appropriately completed BP-A0331, or without markings indicating authorized materials enclosed, **is considered unauthorized and will be returned to the sender.** A package containing an expired BP-A0331 will also be returned to the sender. If necessary, a return address will be obtained from the inmate.

If, upon inspection, a package marked with the special mail markings, or marked as material otherwise approved under Bureau policy, contains property or other than approved material, the **entire** contents will be resealed and returned at government expense. An appropriately completed BP-A0328 will be executed and distributed.

If a package contains materials approved under Bureau policy, the material must still be inspected to assure it meets the specific requirements of policy. For example, the package may be marked as educational materials and contain only educational materials, but each item must be reviewed to assure it meets the criteria of the Program Statement **Incoming Publications**. If one or more items were questionable, the procedures of the Program Statement **Incoming Publications** will be followed while the remaining items will be accepted.

To facilitate package processing, the BP-A0331 will be taken to the local servicing post office. If there is a package for an inmate with no corresponding BP-A0331, and the package does not contain markings as stated above, the package will be annotated "Refused Return to Sender – Authorization for Receipt Not Obtained." If a package is at the post office addressed to an inmate in care of a staff member, there is no BP-A0331 on file, and/or the package is not marked as stated above, the package will be refused and returned.

Local procedures will be developed to receive and process appropriately marked legal materials or special mail received as a package. This material will be opened in the inmate's presence.

Incoming inmate package mail will be refused and returned to the sender if it is received without an appropriately completed BP-A0331, and where no markings indicate authorized materials are enclosed or if it is not identifiable as coming from a commercial source. When refusing and returning incoming inmate package mail, staff will:

- Fill out a BP-A0328 indicating the reason the incoming inmate package mail was refused and returned (staff may complete the BP-A0328 form while at the post office or may record the information and complete the form upon return to the institution).
- Send the record copy of the BP-A0328 to the sender.
- Return the inmate package mail to the sender.

- Deliver a copy of the BP-A0328 to the inmate.
- Forward a copy to the inmate central file.

All packages received from the post office will be x-rayed prior to being brought into the secure perimeter of the institution. In the event the x-ray machine is unavailable, management will determine an alternative method to inspect the package (e.g., open and inspect).

Once brought into the secure perimeter of the institution, special or legal mail packages will be separated from other received packages. This material will be opened in the inmate's presence. All packages received by mail room staff are under the control of the institution and will be opened and inspected in accordance with section 1.13 of this Manual.

If there is an authorization to receive personal property on file, the inmate may receive the package, which may be reopened and inspected in the inmate's presence. Local procedures will delegate the responsibility for issuance. All authorized packages which enter the institution must be inventoried on a BP-A0383 or BP-A0331 in the inmate's presence within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. This provision excludes packages containing release clothing (these packages will be stored in R&D until the inmate is released).

If the package is cleared for issuance, the inmate will acknowledge receipt on the original Package Authorization BP-A0331, or the Inmate Personal Property Record (BP-A0383), as appropriate.

If the package is to be issued from another department, that department will be called to arrange pickup of the package. The employee to whom the package is issued will acknowledge receipt on the package authorization form's original copy, which will then be forwarded to and filed in the Inmate Central File. The inmate will sign the package authorization form shipping copy when he/she receives it. The issuing department will retain this copy for its own record.

Package authorization form originals (or the appropriate BP-A0383 copy), fully executed to signify delivery, will be filed in the Inmate Central File.

### **3.14 UNAUTHORIZED MATERIAL AND CONTRABAND**

Mail room staff must be thoroughly familiar with and have readily available, the Program Statement **Inmate Personal Property**. Mail room staff must be familiar with the definition(s) and processing requirements related to contraband as outlined in this directive.

**Contraband** is any unauthorized material in an inmate's possession. Any physical things sent to an inmate that constitute contraband are considered unauthorized material. Mail room staff will ensure that inmates do not receive contraband. Serious contraband (such as illegal drugs, firearms, weapons, etc.), will not be returned to the sender but must be retained **with** any correspondence and referred to the Special Investigative Supervisor (SIS) as evidence for

investigation and appropriate disposition. Pre-sentence Investigation Reports and Statement of Reason received through the mail will be considered contraband and will be rejected.

A correspondence rejection form **will not be** prepared; however mail room staff will prepare a memorandum detailing the circumstances and general description of the physical item(s). This memorandum, along with the correspondence, will be given to the CMC for signature.

The item(s) will be given to the SIS, who will document receipt of the items on the memorandum. The memorandum will be placed in the Inmate Central File's FOIA exempt section. Minor or nuisance physical things (such as hair, plant shavings, small artifacts and items, and sexually explicit personal photographs, etc.) are not authorized and will be returned to the sender. A Stamp, Negotiable Instrument or Other Items Returned to Sender form (BP-A0328) will be completed. The correspondence and a copy of the BP-A0328 will be provided to the inmate. The material to be returned and a copy of the BP-A0328 will be covered and returned to the sender. A copy of the BP-A0328 will be filed in the Inmate Central File. The Program Statement **Correspondence** provides circumstances for rejecting correspondence.

Ordinarily, mail will not be delayed because of investigatory processes. During an investigation of incoming mail, the investigating office will perform reviews in a manner that will not delay delivery. The CMC will establish a procedure that mutually meets the needs of the investigators and the requirement to generally deliver mail within 24 hours and packages within 48 hours.

An inmate may not receive through the mail, stamps or stamped items, such as envelopes embossed with stamps or postal cards with postage affixed. If such items are received, they will be returned, at Government expense, with a BP-A0328 form explaining that such items may not be sent to an inmate. A copy of the form will be placed with the inmate correspondence for delivery to the inmate.

If private sector business reply envelopes or cards are contained in otherwise authorized mail, there is no prohibition from leaving it with the authorized mail. If an inmate uses business reply mailers to order

subscriptions or other materials with no intention of paying for material ordered, mail room staff are to confer with the appropriate Unit Manager and refer to the procedures specified in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

An inmate may receive mail from Bureau institutions and offices and from other Government agencies (Veterans Administration, Selective Service, Social Security, Bureau, etc.). This mail may include an enclosed Business Reply Mail (BRM) indicia for the inmate's use in replying to that agency without charge. This would also apply to indicia provided for absentee balloting (eligibility to vote is determined by each voting locality).

### 3.15 REJECTED CORRESPONDENCE

When correspondence is to be rejected, mail room staff will refer to the potential reasons for rejection and related procedures contained in the Program Statement **Correspondence**. A Returned Correspondence form (BP-A0327) will be completed. The correspondence will be copied and the entire packet presented to the Associate Warden. See the Program Statement **Correspondence** for further details.

### 3.16 OUTGOING INMATE LETTER MAIL

Staff assigned to work in the mail room must be thoroughly familiar with the Program Statement **Correspondence**. Of special concern are the instructions related to:

- Sealing outgoing letters.
- Restricted correspondence.
- Special mail.
- Correspondence between confined inmates.
- Payment of postage.

Ordinarily, all outgoing letter mail will be processed within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. In any event, inmate correspondence and mail are under the purview of institution authorities. Staff will assure when special mail is received from the inmate, it is sealed, stamped or labeled on reverse, dated, and the institution return address noted. This mail will be dispatched within 24 hours as provided in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

Special mail will not be processed on weekends. Therefore, any special mail received over the weekend will be processed on Monday and will be marked as having been received on the immediate preceding Saturday. If a holiday is in conjunction with a weekend, the special mail will be marked as having been received on the day after the last workday preceding the holiday weekend.

All outgoing inmate mail will be handled in accordance with the Program Statement **Correspondence**. Inmates are informed during A&O that the Bureau retains the right to open an inmate's outgoing mail (except special mail) under the conditions specified in the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

Inmate correspondence may be mailed using envelopes the institution supplies or purchased from the Commissary. Institution-supplied envelopes will be standard business size, ordered only from UNICOR, and contain the institution's **printed** return address (specified at the time of ordering) in accordance with the Program Statement **Correspondence**.

All outgoing mail, for institutions with a TRULINCS generated mailing label system, must utilize these mailing labels on all outgoing correspondence, in accordance with the Program

Statement **Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System (TRULINCS) – Electronic Messaging.** In addition, inmates will place correct identification (full committed name, register number, and complete institution return address) on the envelope. Failure to include any of the above information will require the material to be returned to the inmate for correct preparation. See the Program Statement **Correspondence.** If the sender cannot be identified the letter will:

- Be annotated as to circumstances, to include the date received on the envelope.
- Filed for a period of two years.
- Then destroyed.

The Bureau has received a request from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that inmates in Bureau institutions send any IRS correspondence directly to the attention of the Chief, Criminal Investigation Branch, at the service center to which the letter is addressed. Staff may place the notation directly on the envelope the inmate prepared. Staff are only adding the attention line to assure the envelope is directed to the Criminal Investigation Branch of the IRS Center.

Special attention will be given to all inmate correspondence addressed to state tax centers and will include the following notation below the inmate's return address:

**“This correspondence is from an inmate in custody of the Bureau of Prisons.”**

Locally produced SENTRY labels are suggested for this purpose.

Stamps will not be used as negotiable instruments or legal tender to pay for materials ordered from private vendors. If stamps are enclosed as payment, the stamps, envelope, and contents will be returned to the inmate. The inmate will be directed to use the authorized method of payment through Trust Fund withdrawals.

### **3.17 INMATE PACKAGES – OUTGOING**

a. **Outgoing Personal Packages.** Packages mailed as a matter not resulting from institution administration are personal and will be forwarded at the inmate's expense. Ordinarily, these packages will be forwarded within 48 hours. Such packages will be forwarded using stamps the inmate supplied. The inmate may obtain additional services (insurance, return receipt, etc.). The inmate will provide stamps for basic postage and the cost of each additional service. The stamps will be placed on the package at the time of mailing. A BP-329 is to be completed noting all details related to the mailing.

The USPS Firm Mailing Log, if used, will clearly show the package is “Personal,” including the inmate's name and a notation as to the amount of postage (in stamps) the inmate provided. In the event of loss or damage, either the inmate (with staff assistance) or the recipient may make any claim relative to these mailings to the USPS.

b. **Contraband.** Nuisance contraband that is to be mailed out, or personal property that must be sent out as a result of excessive accumulation, will be forwarded at the inmate's expense in accordance with the Program Statement **Inmate Personal Property**.

c. **International Mailing of Packages at Inmate's Expense.** Inmates who desire to mail packages internationally must comply with both the USPS and the recipient country's rules. Mail room staff will help determine these rules. If the material cannot meet the receiving country's specifications, mail room staff should consult with the Unit Manager and the inmate to obtain a domestic mailing address. If unable to obtain the address and the inmate is not permitted to retain the property, it will be considered contraband and disposed of in accordance with the procedures in the Program Statement **Inmate Personal Property**. These procedures **do not** apply to property temporarily stored for pretrial inmates.

d. **Outgoing Official Packages.** Inmate packages forwarded as a matter of institution administration will be forwarded at government expense. If the package is to be forwarded to another institution, a BP-A0383 will also be completed.

Packages forwarded between institutions will not be insured and will be forwarded via the current contract carrier. Inmate personal property mailed home at government expense will also be sent via the current contract carrier. Packages for transferred inmates will be shipped within 72 hours. The logbook, or certified labels when used, will clearly reflect the package is "Official."

e. **International Mailing of Property Packages.** Every attempt will be made to have the inmate provide a domestic mailing address for forwarding property packages. When a package must be forwarded as international mail, mail room staff will consult with the local servicing post office to determine the rules required of the country to which the package is to be forwarded.

If the package cannot meet the requisite rules because it is official mail, the inmate will be given the opportunity to mail the material at his or her own expense (see Section entitled International Mailing of Packages at Inmate's Expense).

### **3.18 FORWARDING INMATE GENERAL MAIL**

As stated previously, letter mail may not be opened until staff verify that an inmate is at the institution. Unopened mail may be returned to the USPS in the original cover. Regardless of the class of mail, if an inmate is not at the institution, an endorsement will be made on the envelope which provides a forwarding address or a notation of "Addressee Unknown – Return to Sender," and the mail returned to the post office.

Only the post office can determine whether a piece of mail will be forwarded. Therefore, under its authority, the post office will forward or dispose of mail. If it is required to forward a package, it will be resealed and forwarded at government expense. If it is being returned to the

sender because a forwarding address is not available, this will be noted on the package, and it will be sealed and returned via the current contract carrier. Receipts or other identifications attached to the original package will be retained with the documentation used to return the package.

USPS "Change of Address" kits will be available to each inmate at the designated institution to which they are transferred so they may notify correspondents of a change in address. The kits will be obtained from the local servicing post office. **Note:** The "kit" is a USPS form notice to publishers, businesses, correspondents, etc., **not** to the Postmaster (of old address).

The USPS provides the kit for free. The inmate will place postage on each notice used. Although it is the Bureau's responsibility to have the kits available, it is the inmate's responsibility to use these kits. Inmates will be informed that the Bureau will forward mail for only 30 days and using the kits assures that mail is directed to the correct location after the 30-day forwarding period expires.

Inmate general mail (as opposed to special mail) will be forwarded to the new address in the SENTRY database for a period of 30 days. General mail is not forwarded for holdover inmates when removed, nor is general mail forwarded to a holdover institution. After the 30-day period, general mail received will be returned to the sender with the notation "Not at this Address — Return to Sender." After 30 days, the SENTRY address will be used to forward special mail.

General mail for inmates released on writ will be processed as directed by the inmate on the Disposition of General Correspondence While Inmate is Released Temporarily on Writ form (BP-A0398).

## **Chapter 4. Special Postal Services**

### **4.1 CASH ON DELIVERY (COD) SERVICES.**

COD services are not available for staff or inmate mail. The mail room staff will refuse call slips or mail provided by USPS for COD materials in writing, or as required by the servicing local post office.

### **4.2 POSTAGE DUE MAIL**

Postage due mail service is not available for staff or inmates. It is the mailer's responsibility to provide correct postage. The mail officer will refuse postage due mail. However, if postage due mail is tendered to the mail room staff without collection of postage due, the mail will be processed without further collection action.

### **4.3 EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE – STAFF OFFICIAL MAIL**

Staff at institutions and Regional Offices may use USPS Express Mail Service, if available, for official matters. Contact your local USPS facility about availability. The least expensive service that meets our needs will be used. When used, the account number "137" - Bureau of Prisons or "132" - UNICOR, will be inserted in the "Customer Account" box.

The Mail and Reproduction Supervisor in the Central Office will place account numbers on receipts for the Central Office. The receipt will have:

- The name of the mailer.
- The mailer's initials.
- The initials of the department head authorizing the service.

After delivery of the material to the post office, the mail room staff will forward the original receipt to the Central Office Mail and Reproduction Supervisor. The receipts will be collected and forwarded quarterly.

The USPS Express Mail Service will only be processed through the official institution mail room to the local servicing post office. For example, staff may not take USPS express mail to a post office near their home for convenience.

The Central Office funds system-wide Express Mail, and the receipts are used at the Central Office to verify the USPS billing. A photocopy of the receipt may be retained locally, as desired. Copies will be used if the Express Mail bill is challenged or further information is sought, particularly when Express Mail charges result from locations other than the local servicing post office.



Use of private overnight carriers, such as Airborne Express, DHL, Federal Express, etc., is each institution's responsibility and will be controlled and funded locally. Private overnight carriers may be used when they are less expensive than the USPS.

#### **4.4 REGISTERED MAIL – STAFF OFFICIAL MAIL**

Any mail item forwarded at government expense will not be forwarded as registered mail. Receipts, when needed, will be obtained by certifying the item.

Mail room staff will sign for incoming registered mail addressed to staff at the post office. Prior to delivery, mail room staff will enter the registry information in a log and obtain a signature from the recipient.

#### **4.5 REGISTERED MAIL – INMATE USE**

Inmates may use registered mail services only at their expense and only if sufficient postage stamps are placed on the registered piece to cover the expense of all registered mail services. All incoming and outgoing registered mail will be logged in a log book separate from staff mail.

#### **4.6 INSURED MAIL – INCOMING**

Insured mail will be considered as accountable mail and will be logged. It will be received and processed as previously stated for package items, or as special or general inmate mail. Inmates will sign for it and note the condition of the insured material at the time of receipt. The inmate will be advised that the sender will be responsible for claims if necessary.

#### **4.7 INSURED MAIL – OUTGOING**

Staff mail is not forwarded as insured mail, since the government is self-indemnifying. If receipts are necessary, use certified mail. An inmate may insure personal packages (e.g., hobby craft) provided the inmate completes an appropriate BP-329 form and provides correct postage. Payment is made by applying stamps.

When completing the Request - Authorization to Mail Inmate Package Form (BP-329), the inmate will make a declaration of item value and may request postal insurance, which will be made in increments stated in the DMM. The BP-329 advises the inmate that the USPS will indemnify a package only for an item's **actual** value, regardless of declared value.

When the inmate is making a personal insured mailing, paying with stamps, and a "Return Receipt" is requested, the return receipt will show the inmate's name and number clearly. When received, the receipt will be provided to the inmate.

Inmate personal packages must be prepared securely to preclude, inasmuch as possible, breakage or damage to the item(s) being mailed.

#### **4.8 CERTIFIED MAIL – STAFF OFFICIAL**

a. **Incoming Mail.** Official certified staff mail will not be intermingled with inmate certified mail. The mail room staff will maintain a log to record delivery to staff, obtaining the signature of staff at the time of delivery. If a “Return Receipt” (green card) has been attached, the mail room staff will sign the card as recipient.

b. **Outgoing Mail.** Usually, certified mail will be restricted to those items requiring evidence of mailing (such as inmate case files, etc.). Stub type receipts are used to certify mail. Stub receipts will be returned to the originating office for filing and retention, and the originating office will produce the receipt if tracing action is necessary. Staff must show the sending department clearly on the receipt so that delivery of the receipt back to that department can be made when it arrives (see Chapter 3, Inmate Packages).

#### **4.9 CERTIFIED MAIL – INMATE USE**

a. **Incoming Mail.** Inmate certified mail will be rated either as general correspondence (opened and inspected) or special mail (opened in the inmate’s presence), as previously stated. If a “Return Receipt” has been attached, mail room staff will sign the receipt, which will be dispatched in the next regular mail.

Because judicial and legal notices are often sent to inmates by certified mail, actual delivery to the inmate must be documented, preserved, and readily accessible for future verification in court proceedings. Consequently, the following specific procedures apply to delivery and forwarding of inmate certified mail.

b. **Incoming Certified Mail Log.** Institution mail room staff must maintain an Incoming Certified Mail Log documenting all incoming inmate certified mail. At a minimum, each log is to include the following information:

- Date/Time received by mail room.
- Certified Mail Number (the entire number must be recorded).
- Inmate Name and Register Number.
- Inmate location (e.g., housing unit).
- Sender’s name and return address.
- Date delivered to unit staff or inmate.
- Inmate signature (or “Refused to Sign”). **Note:** If a unit log book is used, this section is not required in the mail room log book. If an inmate signs this log, then the unit log is not needed.
- Unit staff signature, if applicable.

Mail room staff's retention of the Incoming Certified Mail Log is governed by Chapter 5 of this Manual.

**c. Unit Certified Mail Log.** At institutions where unit team staff sign for all certified mail, a certified mail log to document receipt of certified mail will be maintained. At a minimum the following information must be included:

- Date/time received by unit staff.
- Certified Mail Number (the entire number must be recorded).
- Inmate Name and Register Number.
- Inmate location (e.g., housing unit).
- Sender's name and return address.
- Date delivered to inmate.
- Inmate signature (or "Refused to Sign").
- Housing unit staff signature.

The Unit Certified Mail Log may be combined with the Legal Mail delivery log. Unit staff will retire the log books to the mail room annually (calendar year). The Unit Certified Mail/Legal Mail Log books will be transferred to the Federal Records Center (FRC) and retained for 11 years.

#### **4.10 FORWARDING OR RETURNING INMATE CERTIFIED MAIL**

Certified mail addressed to an inmate who is not at the institution is to be forwarded or returned to the sender if a forwarding address is not available. When returning certified mail to the sender, an appropriate notation will be made on the original envelope to inform the sender why the mail was not delivered.

The certified mail will be placed in an institution envelope and re-certified. An entry will be made in the mail room's incoming inmate certified mail log book indicating:

- The inmate's name.
- New certified number.
- The address to which the mail was forwarded.

When the certified mail is received at the new institution, the procedures outlined in Section 4.9.c will be followed.

Mail room staff will retire certified mail log books annually (calendar year). The Inmate Certified Mail Log books will be transferred to the FRC and retained for 11 years.

**Outgoing Mail.** Certified mail will be sent first class at inmate expense. Inmates may request certified mail service provided they bear:

- The full expense of basic postage.
- The cost of certification.
- The cost of return receipts, if requested.

All costs are paid with postage stamps. Inmates may determine the costs by reviewing the postal chart(s).

The piece of correspondence to be certified will be brought to the mail room staff fully prepared for mailing, with the appropriate postage stamps affixed. Return receipts, if requested, may be obtained at this time from the mail room staff and will be completed, clearly showing the inmate's name and number. (When the receipt is returned, it will be given to the inmate, not maintained in the mail room.)

#### **4.11 BOX SERVICES**

Establishment of additional boxes at the local servicing post office with specific intra-institution addresses (e.g., satellite camps, etc.) can greatly facilitate the sorting process and are encouraged. CMCs will consider overall volume and additional costs at the local servicing post office when establishing extra box services.

#### **4.12 MAIL IMPRINTS**

An imprint, when used, requires the payment of postage when material is entered into the USPS. The mail imprint authority for the Bureau is G-231 and for UNICOR G-175. Only the Central Office will obtain and use the imprint.

#### **4.13 UNITED PARCEL SERVICE (UPS)**

The Tender Agreement requires the UPS to ensure all Bureau sites have access to UPS service, and that they establish mutually convenient pickup and delivery schedules (ordinarily Monday through Friday, excluding weekends and holidays). Each Bureau location will initiate contact with its local UPS office to establish daily service.

Each Bureau location will use UPS ground service to transport all official packages. The maximum package weight and size limitations are specified in the "Guide to UPS Services," available from the local UPS representative.

UPS will provide training to Bureau staff at each location regarding UPS procedures and package tracking capabilities. Each institution will contact their local UPS office to establish a date for training.

Under normal circumstances, delivery of packages within the contiguous United States will occur within approximately 5 days or less. The Bureau reserves the right to decline acceptance of a package without cost to the government when the package is not authorized in accordance with Bureau policy.

**Tracking and Logging.** The Bureau may use a UPS computerized logging/tracking system for shipping packages. Institutions should contact their local UPS representative for information on the available systems. UPS will assist the Bureau to process any claims for packages UPS transported and provide tracking and/or delivery information.

Additionally, UPS has internet tracking. Should it be necessary to trace a package, telephonic contact may be made by Receiving and Discharge staff with the UPS Tracking Hotline at **800-742-5877**. When confirmation of delivery documentation is necessary, a hard copy receipt will be requested, via phone or printed copy from the Internet.

For inmate packages shipped at government expense to locations other than Bureau institutions, the sending institution must annotate the UPS Shipping Record to request a Delivery Confirmation Response and Signature Required. The Request-Specific Reply Address service (the sending institution address) will also be used for these mailings.

When these services are used, the UPS Delivery TRAC label will be placed on the package. The local UPS representative must be advised during the account's initial activation that the Request-Specific Reply Address service will only be used when inmate packages are mailed at government expense to locations other than Bureau institutions.

All confirmation response documentation listed in this paragraph will be filed and retained. A UPS daily shipping record will be maintained to track all incoming and outgoing inmate personal property and other official outgoing packages. Correctional Systems staff must request from the local UPS office the "UPS Daily Pickup Shipping Record" for all outgoing packages and inmate personal property. Inmate property will be logged into this record noting the following:

- Inmate Name and Register Number.
- Addressee.
- ZIP Code.
- Weight.

This record will be maintained on file for two years. An optional UPS computer program is available to perform the above functions and is authorized for use.

#### **4.14 UPS USE LIMITATIONS**

UPS will not be used for overnight delivery. Overnight services for staff official business small packages must be restricted to urgent and exceptional circumstances, as governed by a separate contract.

Pitney Bowes meter strips will not be used when using UPS.

The Bureau reserves the right to use other carriers when more cost-effective.

Inmate files will not be sent via UPS.

#### **4.15 INTERNATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL SHIPMENT.**

The Bureau will not use UPS to ship small packages and inmate personal property internationally or to U.S. territories. All international and territorial shipments of small packages and inmate personal property should be shipped via the USPS.

#### **4.16 CONTRACTOR**

The following information is provided for procurement purposes. A Tender Agreement has been negotiated between the Bureau and UPS for shipping small packages and inmate personal property.

United Parcel Service (UPS)  
316 Pennsylvania Ave. SE #500  
Washington DC 20003  
(202) 675-4225

#### **4.17 ORDERING**

Recognizing that individual institutions may have different local operating requirements, no specific ordering instructions are provided. Each institution will develop local procedures for ordering that meet all applicable policy, procedures, terms, and conditions of the agreement.

#### **4.18 REPORTING**

Orders placed against this agreement will not be reported in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) reports, regardless of dollar value. The Central Office will collect and report expenditures against this contract.

#### **4.19 PAYMENT**

UPS will bill each ordering site directly on a weekly basis. Billing will consist of a weekly service charge UPS assesses for pickup and delivery at each site each business day, plus charges for actual packages shipped. Payments will be made within 30 days in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act.

Payments are to be made via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) (UPS banking information to accomplish for EFT payment will be distributed separately). Financial Management should ensure each payment is identified with the site's UPS "Shipper" account code, the invoice number, and UPS "Period Ending" date supplied on each invoice.

All packages mailed via UPS will be annotated in a "UPS Pickup Record." The CMC will maintain this log or print the reports from the UPS package system and provide it to Financial Management each week for verifying the weekly billings. Institutions must use the proper cost center code when recording billing information.

## **Chapter 5. Miscellaneous Administration**

### **5.1 SPECIAL UNITS**

Local procedures will be developed to handle mail for special units (e.g., protective custody units). The general principles for processing mail into and out of the USPS will be followed; however, within the institution, mail for these units will be handled in a manner that will not disclose names, register numbers, or locations related to these inmates. These procedures may be entirely independent of the procedures outlined herein.

### **5.2 RECORDS**

Postal related records will be retained in accordance with the General Records Schedules, Schedule 12. The disposal periods provided are mandatory, except as indicated herein. Postal related records may not be retained beyond the period specified, except for the Incoming Certified Mail Log and the Unit Certified Mail Log, all of which must be maintained for 11 years in accordance with Retention Authority N1-129-00-30, listed in the Records and Information Disposal Schedule (RIDS) on Sallyport.

Collateral records and forms filed in Inmate Central Files are not considered postal records, but are records to be retained until the Inmate Central File is destroyed.

### **5.3 FORMS**

All forms prescribed in this Manual are available through regular forms ordering procedures. All forms except BP-329 are also available in the Forms Directory on Sallyport.

BP-A0327	Returned Correspondence
BP-A0328	Stamps, Negotiable Instrument and Other Returned to Sender
BP-329	Authorization to Mail Package
BP-A0331	Authorization to Receive Package or Property
BP-A0383	Inmate Personal Property Record
BP-A0398	Disposition of General Correspondence While Inmate is Released Temporarily on Writ
BP-A0407	Acknowledgment of Inmate, Part 1 & 2
BP-A0408	Acknowledgment of Inmate, Part 3 & 4
BP-A0493	Special Mail Notice

### **5.4 TORT CLAIMS BY INMATES FOR MAIL MATTERS**

The Bureau does not insure inmate property when forwarded as matters of institution administration because these articles are forwarded as official mail (see Chapter 3). If property



is damaged while in Bureau control, the inmate will be instructed to file a tort claim. (See the Program Statement **Federal Tort Claims Act.**)

If documentation clearly indicates that a package left Bureau control and the item was thereafter lost or damaged by the USPS in the mail process, the inmate will be instructed to file a claim with the USPS.

It is permissible for an inmate to insure an official mailing, provided the inmate pays for all costs associated with the mailing (postage and insurance fees). This will be an entirely voluntary option and the inmate would have to be informed that the nature of the mailing changes from one of government responsibility to one of personal responsibility, including follow-up and filing of claims against the USPS.

## **5.5 INMATE CLAIMS TO THE USPS**

Section 5.4 does not apply when inmates forward mail using postage stamps and pay for special services, such as insurance or certification. Then, the inmate or the recipient files the claim with the USPS.

If an inmate elects to file a claim with the USPS, the mail room staff will contact the local servicing post office to obtain the appropriate USPS claim forms for the inmate.

## **5.6 INMATE CLAIMS TO UNITED PARCEL SERVICE (UPS)**

When filing a claim with UPS, the shipping institution must:

- Contact UPS Customer Service at **1-800-742-5877**.
- Obtain appropriate claim number.