September 29, 2022

ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: 2022 General Election Extraordinary Measures Memorandum

Year after year, the Postal Service has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the proper handling and timely delivery of Election Mail, and this year is no exception. In addition to the procedures in place for Election Mail throughout the federal election cycle, we will again be implementing extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations during the two weeks before (and in some cases after) Election Day. This memorandum discusses the specific extraordinary measures that are authorized and expected to be used for Retail and Delivery Operations (CRDO), Processing and Distribution Operations (CPDO), and Logistics (CLO).

We know that, as in past elections, many ballots to and from voters will enter the mailstream close to or on Election Day and will require us to take the extra steps explained here to ensure timely delivery. To further support the timely delivery of Election Mail, and consistent with our practices in past election cycles, the use of extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations is authorized and expected to be executed by local management between October 24 and November 29, 2022, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot. These measures are the same as those taken for the November 2020 General Election and should be used freely and liberally. Further details are provided in the two attached appendices for Retail and Delivery Operations (Appendix 1) and Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics (Appendix 2). Please keep in mind that the instructions included in the attached appendices represent the procedures in place for the November 8, 2022 General Election only and may deviate from standard policies and practices.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, please take time to fully explain to your direct reports the extraordinary measures discussed in the attached appendices. Be sure to consider which measures are relevant to each direct report, taking into account their individual responsibilities. A copy of this memorandum will be posted on the Postal Service Intranet at blue.usps.gov and usps.com/electionrail. Headquarters will also distribute a Mandatory Stand-Up Talk to all employees discussing this memorandum.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in delivering America’s Election Mail.

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Colin, PhD
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer and Executive V.P.

Isaac Cronkhite
Chief Processing & Distribution Officer and Executive V.P.

Kelly Abney
Chief Logistics Officer and Executive V.P.
Appendix 1: Retail and Delivery Operations Extraordinary Measures for the 2022 General Election

This appendix includes specific guidance for administering and managing extraordinary measures related to Retail and Delivery Operations between October 24 and November 29, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot. These extraordinary measures include, but are not limited to, expedited handling, extra deliveries, and special pickups as used in past elections, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters, or completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination (e.g., Priority Mail Express, Sunday deliveries, special deliveries, running collected ballots to Boards of Elections on Election Day, etc.). These procedures may deviate from standard policies and procedures, including those found in the Postal Operations Manual and other Handbooks.

I. Retail:

Below is a list of examples of the types of extraordinary measures that are authorized to be used. If your office would like to employ an extraordinary measure not listed below or would like to implement an extraordinary measure prior to October 24, please contact your Retail & Delivery Operations Command Center (RDOCC) Analyst. Your RDOCC Analyst can be found on Blue at: https://blue.usps.gov/delret/delivery-ops/operations-command-center.htm

- Offices may establish a “Ballot postmark ONLY” line at retail counters, which should be staffed at all times, beginning October 24 and continuing through Election Day (November 8, 2022).
- Offices may employ a daily “soft opening” and “soft closing” concept, extending retail hours by 30 minutes on both ends in designated sites across each city/town/locality, beginning October 24 and running through November 8.
- If necessary to manage high volumes, offices may establish at least one drive-through ballot postmark/drop option, which is staffed during normal operating hours, beginning October 24 and continuing through November 8.
- Offices may use practices similar to “Tax Day”, with a Clerk outside the facility to both cancel (postmark) and accept drive-up ballots from customers; under these practices, ballots will be trayed up, riffled to verify Board of Election (BOE) and direct trays collected will be delivered to the appropriate BOE. This activity can begin October 24.
  - Ballots postmarked in retail and delivered directly to local BOE for turnaround ballots, or placed in collections if out-of-town, must have designated supervisor oversight.
  - For ballots turned around locally, make sure to properly account for any Business Reply Mail.

II. Delivery:

In addition to mandatory requirements provided later in this section, the following list has examples of other types of extraordinary measures that are authorized to be used. If your office would like to employ an extraordinary measure not listed below or would like to implement an extraordinary measure prior to October 24, please contact your RDOCC Analyst for approval.

- Local offices that serve or are in close proximity to a BOE are authorized to postmark (round date reflecting the date of acceptance) and deliver ballots, rather than the ballots being placed into the automation flow between October 24 and November 8.
• Beginning on Friday, November 4, you are authorized to use the Priority Mail Express network to connect completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination. Additionally, you are authorized to use the Priority Mail Express network after Election Day if necessary to support deliveries in the states that have extended ballot-delivery deadlines after Election Day. All ballots must be postmarked (round dated) at the origin facility prior to entry in the Priority Mail Express network.

Below is a list of extraordinary measures that are mandatory.

**Monday, October 24 through Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

During the entire period between October 24 and November 8, offices will conduct handoffs to move missent ballots timely. Offices should utilize the Priority Mail Express handoff to move missent ballots with tracking.

Delivery units should also coordinate with Mail Processing plants using the pitch-catch process by communicating and coordinating efforts, such as alternate transportation options if faster, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters between October 24 and November 8.

**Thursday-Friday, November 3-4, 2022**

Carriers will check every delivery point for outgoing mail, regardless of if they have incoming or destinating mail. These checks shall entail:

- On mounted routes, visually checking mail receptacle that has the flag up for outgoing mail;
- While serving CBUs, visually checking the outgoing slot; and
- On park and loops or dismounts, visually checking the mail receptacle box to determine if outgoing mail is displayed outside for pick up.

**Saturday, November 5, 2022**

Carriers will check all residential and open businesses delivery points for outgoing mail, regardless of if they have incoming or destinating mail, following the instructions above.

**Sunday, November 6, 2022**

All Level 21 and above offices will run regular collections (Monday-Friday schedule) and will coordinate cancellations with their local plant.

All Level 18-20 offices must retrieve front and lobby collections and hub mail to meet local transportation.
Monday-Tuesday, November 7-8, 2022

All offices will run early collections, with local postmark reflecting the date of entry and turnaround for local ballots to the BOE. All offices that service or are in close proximity to a local BOE shall establish a “hub-and-spoke” process for running ballots to the local BOE. Ballots are to be postmarked in the local retail unit, then hubbed to the BOE, prior to the state’s cut-off for the day and no later than the state’s Election Day return deadline (November 7, 2022 deadline in Louisiana). This will also apply to the LAST day that the BOE accepts ballots in each state.

Special Handling for Delivery by Tuesday, November 8, 2022 (November 7, 2022 in Louisiana)

For non-local BOE deliveries where it is reasonably possible to effectuate delivery by the BOE’s cutoff time for accepting ballots in that state, establish an Election Mail “hub-and-spoke” process specifically for transporting ballots on Election Day, November 8, using pre-identified drivers and vehicles staged to run trips. Coordinate the trips around cut-off times to avoid making the same hub/spoke run multiple times per day. This will also apply to the LAST day that the BOE accepts ballots in each state.

Carriers will pull ballots from their collection mail and hand them over to their supervisor. Supervisors will exchange ballots around the city, and after the exchange, a designated supervisor makes delivery to the BOE prior to the BOE’s cut-off for the day. This will also apply to the LAST day that the BOE accepts ballots in each state.

III. Local Management and Postmaster Actions:

Below is a list of extraordinary measures that are mandatory for Postmasters and/or Management.

- Postmasters must coordinate after-hours handoffs with any BOE they service, depending on their acceptance times. We will make deliveries as necessary to facilitate ballot flow.
- Postmasters should arrange for after-hours handoffs with BOEs (sweeping collection boxes, etc.).
- District leadership will coordinate with BOEs and election officials to accommodate concerns or requests to facilitate the timely delivery of ballots under any special circumstances.
- Postmasters, with the District Manager’s oversight, will continue to memorialize all issues on the Political/Election Mail log in real time.
- Local management, in coordination with District Managers of Customer Relations, will continue regular outreach and communication with local BOEs, including coordination on the timing and location of Ballot Mail entry and drop offs, plans for hand-to-hand exchanges, and other activities to support the timely and efficient delivery of Ballot Mail.
- Local management will coordinate with their counterparts within state boundaries (across district lines) to exchange ballots for all BOEs. They will rendezvous with other district partners within the same state multiple times per day to exchange ballots, on Election Day, November 8, and on the LAST day that the BOE accepts ballots in each state.
- Local management will intercept and deliver Election Mail with known mailer misprints in the barcode (wrong ZIP or address at wrong destination) and establish a pitch/catch to redirect ballots to the correct BOE.
Appendix 2: Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics
Extraordinary Measures for the 2022 General Election

This appendix includes specific guidance for administering and managing extraordinary measures related to Processing and Distribution Operations and Logistics. If you have any questions, please contact your manager or supervisor. These instructions represent procedures in place for Election Mail, including ballots, for the November 8, 2022, General Election. These procedures may deviate from standard policies and procedures, including those found in the Postal Operations Manual and other Handbooks.

Tuesday, November 1 through Tuesday, November 8

Plants will use the pitch-catch process to coordinate and connect blank and completed ballots. In addition to the directives below, early cancellations should be conducted if needed the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely.

In preparation for Sunday, November 6, the following steps must be taken to extract the Return Ballots.

Each originating plant must designate a DBCS/DIOSS/CIOSS machine that will process the Sunday, November 6, 891 FIM program. Sites that do not normally process 891 FIM will plan for the sort program and machine that is used Monday-Friday to sort FIM downflow from the AFCS. This program will ensure local downflow and that direct holdouts for return ballots are processed and extracted with minimal processing and made available for delivery on Monday, November 7, 2022.

Operating plans must include:

- Run plans must be updated to ensure the machine and employees are identified on Sunday to process 891 FIM/LONG/SHORT or MUL and, if necessary, AFSM100 programs.

- All originating plants that process letter and flats must update their sort programs to include their service area Board of Election (BOE) holdouts. Originating plants may choose one of the options below, based on volume and local operations capability:
  - Jackpot all BOE ZIP Codes into a single bin to downflow to locally created sort program that will finalize all direct BOE ZIP Codes.
  - Hold out individual direct ZIP Codes on 891M FIM or appropriate Long/Short/MUL sort programs to be dispatched directly to the BOE.

The following steps must be completed regarding sort programs:

- Must be updated no later than 17:00 PM EST Friday, November 4, 2022.

- Must include all holdouts on either primary or downflow sort programs. These sort programs must be downloaded to all machines by Sunday, November 6, 2022, prior to processing any collection mail.
• **Individual** BOE holdouts for letters must use CIN 167 for letters. Holdouts must be designated on FIM letter sort programs, LONG/SHORT and, if used locally, the MUL programs must ensure we capture all election returns for local delivery.

• **Jackpot** BOE holdouts for letters must use CIN 174. Holdouts must be designated on FIM letter sort programs, LONG/SHORT and, if used locally, the MUL programs to ensure we capture all election returns for local delivery.

• AFSM-100 Primary and/or downflow programs must be updated to add 9-digit holdouts for local service BOE's. CIN 173 will be used for direct 9-digit holdouts for flats.

• These sort programs will be used in processing operations through Tuesday, November 8, and later if necessary to support deliveries in the states that have extended ballot-delivery deadlines after Election Day (a chart identifying such states will be separately provided closer to Election Day). The mail flow changes must be communicated to all employees, supervisors, and management staff to include all consolidation and dispatch plans.

**Sunday, November 6, 2022**

Delivery units will run regular collections on Sunday (Monday-Friday schedule). Local plant operations will schedule employees and supervisory staff to ensure that we cancel and process collection letters and flats on Sunday to extract return ballots to the BOE. In the collection operation, the following steps must be taken:

• All stamped and metered flats trays and tubs must be riffled to extract Election Mail logo flats mail.

• Election Mail logo flats will be cancelled using the hand stamp and flow to a manual case to ensure each office receives their flats mail. If the volume warrants, AFSM-100 operations can be used to sort the mail.

  o If volume dictates, AFSM-100, IJC 1 should be used to place a date stamp on the flats. Sort programs with the appropriate holdouts will be used on Sunday if volume dictates to capture the flats ballots.

  o AFSM-100, IJC date stamps will reflect November 6, 2022.

• Riffle trays/tubs from the manual or machine process for the Election Mail logo to ensure legible date stamps are on all flats mail pieces.

• Hold out local service area return ballots and those of the originating partner sites in any manual or AFSM-100 sort program to ensure early clearance.

All AFCS 200 and AFCS OCR sites will cancel letter mail using the Dual Pass Rough Cull (DPRC) system. Upon completion of the letter cancellation operations on AFCS, follow the processing steps:

• Flow FIM stacker mail to the 891M sort program LONG/SHORT/MUL.
- FIM mail extracted from collections should be processed to ensure Election Mail is captured into DIRECT FIRM holdout bins wherever possible based on density and available discretionary bins.

- If there are not enough discretionary bins or low volume, use a “jackpot” MIXED FIRM bin with CIN 174.

- Flow jackpot trays to a locally created 893/4/6/7 sort program to consolidate Election Mail if needed. Use CIN 167 for all DIRECT BOE holdouts.

- Riffle each tray for the Election Mail logo to ensure a legible date stamp is visible on each letter mail piece.

- Local mail from AFCS operations will be staged, identified, and processed first on an Incoming Primary sort program Monday morning. Appropriate measures must be taken as necessary on Monday morning to ensure state requirements are met to deliver local ballots prior to the state’s cut-off for the day and no later than the state’s Election Day return deadline (November 7, 2022 deadline in Louisiana). This will also apply to the LAST day that the BOE accepts ballots in each state.

**Monday-Tuesday November 7-8, 2022**

Early Monday morning, originating plants must ensure that dispatch of local mail extracted from AFCS and FIM downflow are dispatched to the partner sites. Additionally, the receiving plants must ensure that ballot mail is identified and processed first in their local Incoming Primary operations.

Plant managers will be required to certify by 10:00 AM local time on Monday that the Ballot Mail is clear. All plants that process Incoming Primary letters and flats must put plans in place to clear their local letters and flats by Monday DOV to delivery offices and/or local pickup. Additionally, letters and flat mail processed after DOV on Tuesday, or return ballots identified in collections, will require extraordinary measures to ensure that ballots will be delivered by the designated time on Election Day, November 8.

Processing of collection mail will be accomplished as normal for Monday-Tuesday, November 7-8. We will follow the process outlined for Sunday for direct holdouts to expedite the handling of Election Mail for originating letters and flats operations for delivery or pick up.

We will continue to keep the direct holdouts in each plant on November 8, until the final date of acceptance for the states with extended ballot-delivery deadlines after Election Day serviced by the originating plant.

All outgoing plants will coordinate a “Last Date of Election” mail process with delivery on:

- November 8 for deliveries in all states (November 7 in Louisiana) based on the state’s Election Day deadline, AND

- The final date for ballot receipt for each state that allows mail-in ballots to be delivered on a date later than November 8.
Each plant must be knowledgeable of the deadlines in each state for which the plant is cancelling local mail. Detailed information about each state’s Election Day deadline and any extended ballot-delivery deadlines will be provided closer to Election Day. If there are any questions on a state’s deadlines or other requirements, contact the Election and Government Mail Services group for clarification.

Plants must NOT allow the return ballots to flow to DPS programs on November 8 (November 7 in Louisiana). All measures must be in place to identify Primary outgoing and incoming programs to ensure efficient and early delivery of ballot mail.

**Special Handling for Delivery by November 8, 2022**

Special procedures must be put in place to ensure we deliver every ballot possible by the cutoff time on Election Day (November 7 in Louisiana), even in “postmarking” states that allow for later delivery.

All processing plants, transportation, and retail and delivery units must coordinate to ensure the effective implementation of Election Mail policies and procedures, including those enumerated in this document.

All Plant operations must process all early arriving collection mail to extract all Election Mail for turnaround by the cutoff time. Sites may serve multiple states and time zones, so special attention must be made to the states your plants serve.

Each plant with an originating or destination sort program should familiarize themselves with the specific requirements and establish a process to deliver mail by the required time on November 8 (November 7 in Louisiana), AND on the final date that a state accepts mail-in (if later than November 8). We will continue to deliver the mail daily regardless of the deadlines for each state.

Specific deadline information will be provided closer to Election Day. It will include the Election Day deadline and the extended ballot-delivery deadline, if applicable.