



January 30, 2026

ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: 2026 General Election Mail Preparedness Memorandum

In preparation for the upcoming Election Mail season, this is the first of three Election Mail preparedness memorandums that we will be sending to ensure the effectiveness of our Election Mail operations during this year's general election.

Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process, including ballots, voter registration forms, ballot applications, polling place notifications, and similar materials. These items qualify as Election Mail both when they are outbound, sent to voters from election officials at the state and local levels, and when they are inbound, returned from voters to those officials. Election Mail is distinct from "political mail," which is mail sent by political candidates, political action committees, and similar organizations to advocate for candidates or issues, and most Election Mail procedures and policies do not apply to political mail.

The robust practices and procedures that we employ every federal election cycle will help ensure that we meet our customers' expectations—that mail will be delivered in a timely manner when our customers use the mail to facilitate or participate in the electoral process.

We are working tirelessly to ensure our operational preparedness for this election season. We will rely on our longstanding policies and procedures, which have proven successful in facilitating the timely delivery of Election Mail, and we will reinforce key messages with our front-line employees leading up to Election Day. Some of our key practices for the proper handling of Election Mail, all of which you should be utilizing now unless otherwise indicated, are reiterated below:

- **All Clears and Daily Logs.** Daily "all clears" should be used to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and that mail scheduled or "committed" to go out is processed accordingly. Please also continue to use the Delivery Unit Election Mail / Political Mail Log and Delivery Unit Election and Political Mail Checklist in delivery units and the Plant Political and Election Mail Log to track Election Mail through processing and delivery. These resources are available on Blue at <https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/product-solutions/electionmail/field-playbook-checklists.htm>
- **Advancing Election Mail.** We should continue to prioritize Election Mail – identified by the official Election Mail logo or other Postal Service visibility tools – regardless of the paid class, pursuant to our long-standing practice. Specifically, Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously to the extent feasible so that it is generally delivered in line with the First-Class Mail delivery standards. To the extent necessary, please expand processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day. Further, to the extent possible, Election Mail received after the Critical Entry Time should be processed and advanced as if it arrived prior to the Critical Entry Time, unless doing so would disrupt on-time service for Election Mail received prior to the

Critical Entry Time. Please also continue to prioritize Election Mail, including ballots entered with Green Tag 191, when loading trucks.

- **Postmarking.** The Postal Service tries to ensure that every return ballot mailed by voters receives a postmark. A detailed memorandum on the Postal Service's postmarking policy for return ballots will be issued in the coming months.
- **Delivery/Collections.** Extra delivery and collection trips may be authorized and used if necessary to ensure that Election Mail stays current and moving through the Postal Service's network. This may include, but is not limited to, early collections the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely, and, to the best of our ability, delivery trips that would allow completed ballots entered on Election Day to reach the appropriate election official by the state's designated Election Day deadline (including in states with extended ballot-delivery deadlines).
- **Overtime.** As always, we will monitor volume and ensure we have the appropriate resources in place to facilitate timely delivery of Election Mail, including appropriate staffing, and expanding mail processing and transportation if necessary to accommodate the volume. Front-line supervisors and managers will continue to schedule employees' work hours and oversee employee overtime, including planning for any needed prescheduled overtime, directing unscheduled overtime, and approving employee requests for overtime based on the workload. Supervisors will continue to set schedules with the goal of matching the expected earned work hours with the appropriate staffing. Management will continue to monitor the use of work hours and overtime so that we can identify and address problems that may be the cause of work not being performed within expected work hour or managed inefficiently. The Postal Service's consistent practice in the past was to use justified and approved overtime hours where needed to deliver the mail on time, and that practice will continue. Overtime will continue to be utilized as necessary to support our Election Mail policies and procedures.
- **Transportation.** The Postal Service will continue to align our transportation and processing schedules to ensure timely, reliable mail delivery and we will take reasonably necessary steps to complete timely Election Mail delivery, which may include late or extra trips. Extra transportation resources may be used as necessary to connect Election Mail to its intended destination or the next stage in Postal Service processing. Managers are authorized to use their best business judgement to meet our service commitments.
- **Extraordinary Measures.** 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 operation leading up to (and in some cases after) Election Day. Extraordinary measures are to be used between October 27 and continuing through Election Day (Tuesday, November 3, 2026), and extending through the last day in each state that Boards of Elections (BOEs) will accept completed mail-in ballots as timely, to accelerate the delivery of ballots when the Postal Service is able to identify the mail piece as a ballot. These measures will be consistent with Postal Service measures in past federal election cycles. A detailed memorandum providing further information about the Postal Service's extraordinary measures will be issued prior to the General Election on November 3, 2026.

Providing consistent guidance across the organization is critical to our success. Please refer to the 2026-2027 Election Mail and Political Mail Guidebook available on Blue, to find up to date policies and procedures related to Election Mail and Political Mail.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, please take time to fully explain to your direct reports the policies and practices discussed above. A copy of this memorandum will be posted on the Postal Service Intranet at blue.usps.gov and usps.com/electionmail. Headquarters will distribute a Mandatory Stand-Up Talk to all employees discussing this memorandum.

Finally, as noted above, this is the first of three Election Mail guidance documents that we will be issuing. Look for additional memoranda on "Extraordinary Measures" and "Postmarking," in the coming months.

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

Sincerely,



Elvin Mercado
Chief Retail & Delivery Officer
and Executive V.P.



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



Peter Routsolias
Chief Logistics & Infrastructure
Officer and Executive V.P. (A)