This Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) provides the updated policies and procedures to be used for the 2022 Election and Political Mail season.

The content of this POMO is intended to provide guidance to the field on the specific processing parameters associated with Election Mail and Political Mail. This POMO also provides instruction relative to processing, distribution, and delivery accountability and tools to monitor processing efficiency.

All Plant Managers must certify (certification link below) that they understand the requirements of this POMO and acknowledge that this document has been shared with all employees in their facility and all parts of this POMO are fully executed.

POMO 001-22 and POMO 002-22 Certification Link

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Senior Director, Processing Operations Implementation

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Senior Director, Strategic Planning and Implementation

Attachment: Political and Election Mail Policies and Procedures
# Processing Operations Management Order

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USPS will play a very critical role in the 2022 national elections in November 2022.

The purpose of this Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) is to define and establish a nationally standardized procedure to receive, process, and deliver Election Mail, Political Campaign Mail, and Political Message Mail.

Identification of Political and Ballot Mail via the Tag 57 (Political Campaign and Message Mail) and Tag 191 (Domestic and International Ballots), respectively, are important components of our process. Both will require thorough and precise documentation of arrival and processing into our political mail logs.

Tag 57 – Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate’s campaign committee or political party committee as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization. Both types of Political Mail may use Tag 57.

Tag 191 – Domestic and International Ballots. This tag is used only for Ballot Mail.

As a larger grouping, Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized elections officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Election Mail includes ballots, sample ballots, polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Military balloting materials for federal elections may be sent without prepayment of postage to and from: members of the Uniformed Services on active duty (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); members of the U.S. Merchant Marine; eligible spouses and dependents of members of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine; and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

The number of “vote by mail” states and mail-in voting volumes have increased. Ballot processing, both outgoing and incoming, will be very important and critical to a successful election season. ALL return ballots must be cancelled on our AFCS’s and AFSM100’s or hand-cancelled. The cancellation mark with date on the ballots provides the official date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot.

IV-Internal Mail Tracking will be used to track Political and Election mail flow and service performance. Each Division should have an IV-Internal Mail Tracking SME who can monitor daily Political and Election mail performance, as well as diagnose specific mail processing issues and implement countermeasures to fix mail flow problems. Based on industry feedback, the Postal Service has updated the Service Type Identifier (STID) table for Political Mail and Ballot Mail in 2022. The Postal Service provides customized
STIDs specifically for Political Mail and ballots to allow for Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) to identify mailpieces, with all expected service combinations, during mail processing. As part of a serialized IMb, STIDs offer mailers near-real-time tracking visibility on both outbound and return mailpieces. STIDs also provide the Postal Service with enhanced tracking capabilities that allow us to quickly identify and process Political Mail and on-hand ballots throughout the mail network.

MCV Option lines will be activated to monitor Political and Election mail conditions daily in our facilities. These conditions will be reported out through a daily push. Sites with reported high inventories and delays will be required to send in their action plans.

The Postal Service recently established the Election and Government Mail Services team. This team is responsible for leading the nationwide effort to facilitate the efficient processing and delivery of Election Mail during the 2022 election cycle and beyond. A HQ Election Mail Strike Team and District Strike Team will be assembled restructuring the roles and responsibilities that have been previously followed. This new team will allow for clear paths of communication and accountability from delivery units, plants, districts and divisions to the HQ levels for a successful Election Mail season.

Compliance with our Political and Election Mail processes and procedures will be ensured through a combination of daily audits and clearance checklists. This will help ensure a successful 2022 Election season.

**General**

The American electorate votes on numerous political offices and issues. Eligible citizens cast ballots every four years for president, every two years for one-third of the U.S. senators and all members of the House of Representatives, and at varying frequencies for governorships and other state, county, and local offices and referenda measures. During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers large volumes of ballots and other election related materials, as well as many political campaign and message mailings.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Processing Operations Management Order (POMO) is to define and establish a nationally standardized procedure to receive, process, and deliver Election Mail and Political Campaign and Message Mail.

**Identifying Official Election Mail**

Official Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized elections officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process. Official Election Mail includes:

- Mail-In Ballots
- Ballot Materials
• Voter Registration Cards
• Absentee Applications
• Polling Place Notifications
• Military Ballots

**Ballot Design**

Some of the considerations given to Election Mail by the mailer are whether they would like the ballots to be returned as a letter or flat. The USPS recommends an automation-compatible 1-2 ounce letter.

Each state sets its own requirements for the method and timing of returning ballots. Some use a "ballot in hand" deadline where ballots must be received by election officials by a certain time on Election Day to be counted. Others use a "ballot by postmark date" system where ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and received within an allowable time period after that date in order to be counted. The quality of cancellation on the ballots is very important, especially in "ballot by postmark" states. Election officials have indicated illegible or missing postmarks can be an issue.

Election commissions and jurisdictions may rely on the postmark as their official date the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot, so it is essential that we ensure every mailpiece gets a postmark with a date. This includes metered letters, all flats, and all manual mail to be hand-cancelled. Working with election officials to develop best-practice mailpiece design and preparation guidance will improve ballot envelope hygiene and processing success.

Election officials are required to indicate in a prominent location the proper amount of First-Class Mail postage that must be applied to balloting materials for any election, whether sent in hard copy or electronic formats. An exception may apply in certain circumstances for balloting materials for military and overseas voters or where postage is prepaid.

In response to requests from election officials and municipal mailers, the Postal Service began applying a cancellation mark to all letter pieces processed on USPS Letter Automation Compatible Postage Cancellation Systems in March 2014. In addition, for flat-shape ballots, the flat machines were modified to provide cancellation marks as well. This change has had a variety of uses for voter communications with election officials by including the date on which ballot materials, voter registration cards, and absentee applications were accepted by the Postal Service.

**Use of Tag 191**

The use of the green Tag 191 provides immediate visibility to ballot mail it enters into our processing facilities. Tag 191 is used for Domestic and International Ballots only and is available at local Post Office or Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU). The green Tag 191 may be used only to identify ballots addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag may not be used to identify containers of other types of Official Election Mail, such as polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Tag 191 may not be used by other organizations or individuals who are not election officials. Tag 191 may not be used by organizations or individuals for Political Campaign Mail that promotes political candidates, referendums, or political campaigns.
Identifying Political Campaign Mail

- Any material accepted for mailing at First Class Mail or Marketing Mail postage rates that is mailed for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or committee of a political party is classified as a political campaign mailing. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate’s campaign committee or the committee of a political party as the return address. Do not confuse political campaign mailings with official mailings by members of Congress under congressional franking privileges.

- An individual or organization recognized as such by the appropriate governmental election control authority is considered to be a registered political candidate or party.

- A qualified political committee for the purpose of eligibility for Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates is as follows:

  a. The term “qualified political committee” means:
     - A national committee of a political party.
     - A state committee of a political party.
     - The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.
     - The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.
     - The National Republican Congressional Committee.
     - The National Republican Senatorial Committee.

  b. The term “national committee” means the organization that, by virtue of the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of that political party at the national level.

  c. The term “state committee means” the organization that, by virtue of the bylaws of a political party, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of that political party at the state level.
Postage for political campaign mail can be paid by permit, postage indicia, postage meter, or stamps affixed to each mail piece. Mailings by a qualified political committee often bear endorsements such as “Paid for by (committee) and authorized by (candidate)”.

A qualified political committee can be eligible for Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates. The name and return address of the qualifying organization must appear either on the outside of the mailpiece or in a prominent location on the material being mailed at the Nonprofit Marketing Mail rates.

**Identifying Political Message Mail**

Tag 57 may also be used to identify *political message mailings* from Political Action Committees (PACs), Super-PACs, or other organizations engaged in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Political Mail comes in two classes of mail, for the most part, with characteristics as follows:

**First-Class Mail:** DMM 230

- Any mailable matter may be sent as First-Class Mail, but materials containing personal information, handwritten or typed materials; bills and statements; and matter marked “postcard” or “double postcard” must be sent by First-Class Mail, Priority Mail®, or Priority Mail Express®. There are exceptions for advertisements and solicitations.
  - Free forwarding and return
  - Sealed against inspection

**Marketing Mail:** DMM 240

- Mailable matter that is less than 16 ounces, is not required to be mailed as First-Class Mail, and is not authorized to be mailed as a Periodical may be mailed as Marketing Mail.
  - Forwarding/return require endorsement and a fee
  - May be opened for postal inspection

**Use of Tag 57**

Tag 57 can be used for any political campaign mailing by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, and committee of a political party, or a political message mailing by a Political Action Committee (PAC), Super-PAC, or other organizations engaged in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Mail from organizations such as labor unions, religious groups, retiree associations, and others that endorse specific candidates or political issues is not political campaign mail. However, this mail is considered “political message mail” and can be identified with Tag 57 for processing.

The use of Tag 57 is optional, but the Postal Service does encourage mailers to use the tag to identify trays and sacks of political campaign mail and political message mail while it is in the mail stream.
Identifying Franked Mail

Franked Mail, also referenced as Congressional Mail, is defined as official mail sent without postage prepayment, which can be utilized by Members and Members-elect of Congress, the Vice-President, and other authorized individuals. Franked Mail is identified by the facsimile signature of the Member of Congress in the upper right corner of the envelope or franked label, followed by “M.C.” standing for Member of Congress, or “U.S.S.” for U.S. Senate.

Franked mail can be sent as single-piece or mass congressional mailings. Most mass congressional mailings are sent from Washington, DC. Members of Congress may, however, dispatch these mailings from Post Offices other than Washington, DC. Members of Congress occasionally enter mass mailings at local Post Offices outside Washington, DC. Members or their vendors must submit a PS Form 3615, Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile, to the entry Post Office when the first franked mass mailing is made there.

Franked Mail Envelopes — It is permissible for congressional offices to secure their franked envelope to various other envelopes or packaging when placing items in the mailstream. If such an item is identified, do not return it to the congressional office and do not detain it unless there is a question of mail security.

Congressional mass mailings do not receive a PS Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing, which is used to identify Political Campaign Mail. PS Tag 11, Congressional Mail, “Postmaster — Open and Distribute” is used on all sacks or trays of congressional mail. This tag helps identify the franked congressional mailing as it moves through the mailstream.
Franking Blackout Period – With the exception of individual-piece mailings and those in response to a request, Members of Congress who are seeking re-election are prohibited from sending franked mass mailings during the designated "Franking Blackout" period before Election Day, whether for a primary, special, or general election.

For Members of the House of Representatives who are seeking re-election, the Franking Blackout period is 90 days before an election. For example, for the General Election on November 8, 2022 the Franking Blackout period begins August 10, 2022 and extends through Election Day. For Members of the Senate who are seeking re-election, the Franking Blackout period is 60 days before an election.

As noted above, this blackout period does not include individual-piece franked mailings. If you receive a mass franked mailing with PS Tag 57 in your unit, please contact your supervisor or BME Manager. If there are indications of abuse, local management may escalate the issue by making a copy of the mailing and submitting a completed Issue Report to the District Election and Political Mail Coordinator.

Detention of Franked Mail – Employees should be aware that Franked Mail is not to be detained. The Postal Operations Manual (POM) provides specific guidelines concerning how to handle this mail in response to an incident where a franked mailing was improperly detained. It is important that these guidelines are adhered to in order to ensure there are no delays when dealing with Franked (Congressional) Mail. With the exception of mail security, Franked Mail must be dispatched and delivered as addressed. If there are indications of abuse of the franking privilege, this must be reported to the Pricing and Classification Service Center (PCSC), who will in turn refer the case to the Postal Inspection Service and Government Relations, Headquarters.

Postal Service Responsibility – Election Mail

The U.S. Postal Service is responsible for processing, transporting, and delivering the nation’s election mail. The Postal Service is not responsible for determining the extent to which the mail is used for
participating in elections, the design of ballots or return envelopes, counting ballots, or setting state election deadlines including dates to request (if required by the state) or return a ballot. Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and expeditiously. Be alert for the green Tag 191, for ballots, and the Official Election Mail logo.

Postal Service Responsibility – Political Mail

The Postal Service is responsible for providing information to assist in the knowledgeable preparation and deposit of political campaign and message mailings, as well as for the proper acceptance, processing, delivery, and recording of these mailings. Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and with equal care and attention. Be alert for the red Tag 57.

Handling of Undeliverable as Addressed Mail

During the 2022 Election season, political and election mail volume will increase. Some of these mailpieces will be undeliverable as addressed, and it is critical that they are handled correctly to protect the sanctity of the election and maintain the public’s trust in the Postal Service. This policy is consistent with existing Election Mail operational procedures.

Political Mail can be Political Campaign Mail or Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate’s campaign committee or the committee of a political party as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Election Mail is distinct from Political Mail. Official Election Mail is any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process, such as mail-in ballots, voter registration cards, absentee ballot applications, and polling place notifications.

Undeliverable Bulk Business Mail (UBBM) is Marketing Mail that is undeliverable as addressed and does not contain an ancillary service endorsement. Ancillary service endorsements are used by mailers to give direction on whether they want electronic or manual notification of the customer’s updated information as well as the reason the piece is undeliverable. They also provide the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle undeliverable mailpieces. The endorsements consist of one of the following keywords: “address”, “forwarding”, “return”, or “change,” followed by the two words “service requested.” UBBM includes mail which has no human-readable ancillary service endorsement as well as mail which is endorsed Electronic Service Requested (ESR) but has no mailer-applied Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb). It also includes ESR where the IMb is completely obliterated.

Normally, UBBM is sent to the local plant for recycling. UBBM that is political or election mail should be handled as follows:

- **Political Mail UBBM:** The carrier should validate that the piece is undeliverable Marketing Mail and contains no ancillary service endorsements. The Delivery unit will then hold in office while contacting the District Strike Team for further instruction. If UBBM status is confirmed
by the District Strike Team, the delivery unit will then send to the plant with correlating placards.

- **Election Mail UBBM**: The delivery unit will, in coordination with the District Strike Team, contact the relevant Board of Elections for guidance. If they do not want the pieces back, dispose of the pieces as UBBM with correlating placards.

**Political Mail Log/Tracking Arrival/Clearance (All Clear declaration)**

### Mail Processing Operations (Plant) Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Mail or Election Mail (PM / EM)</th>
<th>Permit No.</th>
<th>Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailing (try to be descriptive)</th>
<th>Date/Time Mail Received at Office</th>
<th>No. of Pieces</th>
<th>Class of Mail (Std., 1C, etc.)</th>
<th>Processing Category</th>
<th>Processing Date/Time</th>
<th>Election Date if shown</th>
<th>Staged Location of Mailing</th>
<th>Next Operation Location of Mailing</th>
<th>Name of Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mailing</th>
<th>Initials of employee that answered</th>
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### Plant Located BMEU Log

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Mail or Election Mail (PM / EM)</th>
<th>Permit No.</th>
<th>Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailing (try to be descriptive)</th>
<th>Date/Time Mail Received at Office</th>
<th>No. of Pieces</th>
<th>Class of Mail (Std., 1C, etc.)</th>
<th>Processing Category</th>
<th>Processing Date/Time</th>
<th>BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BMEU Supvr.</th>
<th>PDU Job</th>
<th>Signature of Plant Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mailing</th>
<th>Date/Time of Dispatch to Workfloor</th>
<th>Location in Plant Where Plant Supvr. Directed Mail be Brought to</th>
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### Post Office Located BMEU Log

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<th>Permit No.</th>
<th>Name of Candidate, Committee, or Mailing (try to be descriptive)</th>
<th>Date/Time Mail Received at Office</th>
<th>No. of Pieces</th>
<th>Class of Mail (Std., 1C, etc.)</th>
<th>Processing Category</th>
<th>Processing Date/Time</th>
<th>BMEU Empl. Who Ensured Mail was Tagged and Notified BMEU Supvr.</th>
<th>PDU Job</th>
<th>Signature of Customer Service Supervisor Taking Responsibility for the Mailing</th>
<th>Date/Time of Dispatch to Workfloor</th>
<th>Location in the unit where Customer Service Supvr. Directed Mail be Brought to</th>
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**Delivery Unit Log**
All Political Mail and Election Mail must be logged through entire mailstream.

Compare logs between functions to ensure all entered mail is processed and delivered. The Operations Supervisor, or their designee, must sign the BMEU Political/Election Mail Log when responsibility for mail is transferred.

Clearance must be communicated with Customer Relations Managers and Teams.

Forward completed logs to plant management and the Election and Political Mail Team.

The Processing & Distribution Election and Political Mailing Log and other required Election and Political Mail materials are available at the Election Mail Website

https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/electionmail/

Any delay in processing Election Mail or Political campaign or message mailings must be documented:

- Any delay in processing Election Mail must be documented using the form below and immediate attention needs to be given by communicating with the District Strike Team or Customer Relations Marketing Manager.

- Political Mail:

  - Late Deposit - Inform mailers of the potential for late delivery if they attempt to deposit political campaign and message mailings too late for delivery by the election date. Document and maintain this advice.
  - Report of Delays - Give prompt attention to any reported delay in processing or delivering political campaign and message mailings and fully document inquiries made and subsequent actions taken.

- Utilize form below to document late deposit or late arriving.
PROCESSING OPERATIONS
HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Processing Operations Management Order

LATE ARRIVING POLITICAL/OFFICIAL ELECTION MAILING REPORT

Mail Information

Type of Mail: (Check One)

_____ Political Mail _____ Official Election Mail

Date and Time of Receipt:

Approximate Number of Pieces:

Processing Category (Letters or Flats):

Candidate or Board of Elections Name:

Person Reporting Late Mail Arrival Phone:

Office Name and ZIP Code:

Mailpiece Details:

Permit Number: Office Where Permit Held:

Name of Permit Holder:

Phone, Address Information on Mailpiece:

Contact Name (If Known):

PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE DISTRICT STRIKE TEAM

Processing and Delivery Records

Managers, Business Mail Entry, and postmasters must keep documented records of all Election Mail and political campaign and message mailings that are deposited or received at their offices, with particular attention to those deposited or received too late for timely delivery.

At a minimum, these documented records must include the following:

- The name of the mailer.
- A sample, photocopy, or description of the mailing.
The date and time the mailing was received for dispatch or delivery.
The Election Day deadline and, if applicable, the date of requested delivery.
If applicable, the approximate number of pieces not delivered before the Election Day
deadline and/or the date of requested delivery and the reasons why delivery was not
timely.
The approximate volume of any Marketing Mail consigned to waste upon instruction by
the mailer.

In most cases, this type of documentation is necessary if inquiries are made regarding a specific
mailing and if investigation of a mailing is required resulting from a service-related issue.

Postmark of Election Ballots

From now through the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process
a high volume of ballot mail. Some election officials rely on the postmark as proof that a return
ballot was timely mailed, so it is essential that every returning ballot gets a legible postmark with
the correct date – meaning the date that the Postal Service accepted custody of the ballot. This
is especially important in states where mail-in ballots must be postmarked by a certain date and
received by a certain later date in order to be counted.

The following are areas to monitor and processes that must be in place and followed for each
ballot mail type:

Ballots - Flats
- Direct: to AFSM100 console with canceller capability.
- Manual Case: Postmark uncancelled volumes, including metered and BRM.

Ballots - Letters
- All Ballots must be processed and cancelled on AFCS/AFCS200.
- AFCS Bin 12 from Operation 004 must be rerun once, then properly handled as a
  manual reject. All ballots, including metered and BRM, must be hand-cancelled.
- Ballots from AFCS flat extractor must be hand-cancelled or flow to AFSM100 canceller.
- Trayed ballots must be processed on AFCS/AFCS200. **Do not take directly to DISSS.**
- Manual Case: Rejects from the fine cull, flat extractor, and AFCS rejects must receive a
  postmark, to include metered and BRM.

Ballots – Priority Express/Priority
- All ballots must have postmark validated.
- Postmark uncancelled volumes, including metered and BRM.

Ballots - Irregulars
- Watch for ballots mailed in irregular envelopes.
- Postmark uncancelled volumes, including metered and BRM.
Each facility must also certify that their manual operations have a Round-Date Hand Canceller and ensure that the date is updated correctly and verified each day.

Important: If a ballot already has a postmark, do not apply a second postmark. Every effort should be made to postmark any uncancelled ballots in the outgoing operation, including by hand-cancellation. If any unpostmarked ballots are found in the destination operation after such ballots have gone through the outgoing operation, a postmark should not be applied to those ballots.

Military and Overseas Absentee Ballots

This election season, the Military Postal Service, Department of Defense, and USPS, are combining efforts to expedite the delivery of absentee ballots to and from military personnel and citizens residing in foreign countries. The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE Act) and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) provide a general standard for how the USPS handles military and overseas ballots. The following is a quick summary of the USPS policy on military and overseas absentee ballots based on the DMM, UOCAVA, and the MOVE Act:

- Balloting materials for elections for federal office may be sent through the mail without prepayment of postage to enable individuals to participate in the electoral process where they are otherwise eligible to vote and are (1) in active service in the Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and commissioned corps of the Public Health Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); (2) in the Merchant Marines; (3) a spouse or dependent of a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marines; or (4) a United States citizen residing outside the United States.

- Qualifying mailpieces may be mailed without prepayment of postage by depositing them in the domestic mailstream or mailing them from an overseas U.S. military Post Office (APO/FPO), a Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or an American Embassy or American Consulate.

- Policy applies to the following elections: general, primary, and special elections for Federal office.

- States are generally required to mail absentee ballots to military and overseas voters no later than 45 days before a federal election (September 24 is 45 days before the November 8 election).

- Priority Mail Express service Label 11-DoD may be utilized by absent overseas uniformed services voters when mailed from a Military Post Office, a Diplomatic Post Office, or Department of State locations.

- Ballots sent to eligible voters with the “39 U.S.C. 3406” indicia do not require postage and are not short paid (DMM 703.8.0).

- Ballots must not be detained or held for postage payment (POM 171.3).

- Acceptance clerks and retail associates must accept this mail.

- This mail does not have to be submitted to a BMEU.

- Ballots not covered by this policy require postage prior to mailing, but do not detain due to short-paid postage.
The following identifying mark may also be present on all absentee ballots.

**Election Mail Tracking**

The visibility of Election Mail will be vital for the election period. This is not only true for the USPS but for the customer as well. The ability to track and trace each election ballot will be of great benefit. Internally, the two tools to ensure visibility are Informed Visibility (IV) and Mail History Tracking System (MHTS). If IMb or STID information is available for the returning ballots, MHTS will be used to determine where the ballots are in the mailstream and to diagnose problems that may arise during the ballot mail flow process. Each division should have an MHTS SME who can drill into the tool for appropriate mail flow diagnosis.

Each division should also have an IV SME who can drill into IV to solve specific Political/Election mail issues. IV has several reports with Political Mail filters that produce valuable data and performance diagnostics specifically for political and election mail, as shown:

**IV with Political Mail Options**

**Mail Processing Service Performance**

- Service Scores
- Tracking and Diagnostic Tools – Drill Down

![IV Informed Visibility](image)

**Mail Processing Service Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing Score</th>
<th>Failed Pieces</th>
<th>Total Pieces</th>
<th>Origin Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days to Deliver</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score 4 - 69%</td>
<td>Score 0 - 5%</td>
<td>Score 60 - 85%</td>
<td>Score 10 - 25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](image)
Mail Condition Visualization

HQ Option lines will be turned on to monitor daily Political/Election Mail conditions at all facilities. The following rules apply (subject to change). There will be a separate instruction distributed prior to implementation for the following condition reporting:

- Election Mail and Political Mail on hand and delayed volume reporting
- Ballot notification and count reporting
- Late entry Election Mail and Political Mail

Each reporting option will have a specific criterion for counting associated with it. ALL FACILITIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO REPORT. A negative report will be required. Below is a preliminary description of the option lines.

MCV – Line Items for Political/Election Mail, Ballots, and Late Entry
Election Mail and Political Mail Organization

Within Operations, each Division and Plant has an Operations Coordinator who will be responsible for their Division and Plant Election Mail and Political Mail processing operational issues that may arise during the Election Mail and Political Mail season. The coordinators will be responsible for implementing, monitoring, communicating, and acting as the liaison for operations with other HQ, and District Election Mail and Political Mail teams. The Operations Coordinators will partner with Customer Relations Managers to resolve mail processing issues raised by mailers and state or local election officials. Other responsibilities include:

1. Serving as Processing Operations Point of Contact for each Election Mail Strike Team
   - Division Processing Operations Coordinators are primary points of contact for Customer Relations Managers
   - Plant Processing Operations Coordinators are local contacts for District Strike Teams
   - Advising District Strike Team of Election Mail and Political Mail issues

2. Communicating to all processing operations employees (consistent messaging)
   - Issuing standardized employee talks
   - Performance measurement results
   - Maintain/monitor problems/issues log and resolution

3. Implementing standard operation procedures (POMO/SOP/Service talks)
   - Utilizing past best practices
   - Refining processes where needed

4. Ongoing monitoring of inventories
   - Tracking entered volumes to ensure on-time delivery
   - Ensuring volumes can meet required delivery dates
   - Monitoring Election Mail and Political Mail tracking and performance via MHTS and IV

District Strike Team information and the Districts that they serve can also be found at the following link on the interactive map:

http://origin-catpx-about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/political-mail-map.htm

Compliance Audit – Election Mail and Political Mail

The compliance audit below is a self-audit that must be completed daily by the BMEU and Mail Processing. Though this is a self-audit, HQ and Division may ask for copies of the last day’s audit to review. The audit below is a sample of what is available on the file and will be amended as new questions are posed.
Political and Election Mail Audit Checklist

Facility NAME/Auditor's NAME:

Enter responses in spaces provided. Any Y/N question answered as "No" requires an entry in section 31 below.

| General Information / Communication: (TO BE COMPLETED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE PROCESSING WINDOW) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1  MGMT - Has the site certified that ALL Service Talks and POMOs were shared with ALL employees? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |
| 2  OPS - Was the daily all clear check completed and certified after each tour and end of day on the website? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |
| 3  OPS - Is there a designated Political and Election Mail Staging area? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |
| 4  OPS - Is the staging space clearly identified with proper lines and signs? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |
| 5  OPS - Does the plant have Political and Election mail properly staged in the designated staging area as applicable? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |
| 6  OPS - Was the Political and Election mail correctly reported on the appropriate MCV Manual Line item? | Yes   |   No   | N/A |

Mail Search Checklist

Political / Election Mail AM/PM All Clear Certification

During the period preceding local, state, and national primaries, special elections, and general elections, the Postal Service accepts and delivers many political campaign mailings, frequently in large quantities. These mailings are sent by or on behalf of individual candidates and their campaign organizations, as well as by local, state, and national committees of political parties. There are also large numbers of ballots and other Election Mail mailed out to local and military voters, as well as ballot applications and completed ballots mailed by voters to their election officials. The Postal Service is responsible for properly handling this volume.

To ensure that we are delivering these mailings to and from the American voters in an efficient and timely manner, the Postal Service will be requiring all delivery units and processing facilities to certify, on a daily basis, that their unit is clear of all Political & Election mail committed for delivery that day. This means the carrier cases, clerk distribution cases, staging areas, the dock(s), the window area, all delivery vehicles, all processing areas and trailers need to be checked. This reporting will begin nationally for all state and federal offices on April 15th and continue until November 30, 2022

When required, ALL CLEAR certifications are to be completed as follows:

Processing Operations AM Certification is due by 10:00 am local time.

Retail and Delivery AM Certification is due by 10:00 am local time.

Retail and Delivery PM Certification is due by Close of Business,

The Political / Election Mail All Clear Certification link for Retail and Delivery Units has been separated into two certifications, AM and PM.
Go to the Election Mail Facility Certification Blue Share page at this link:

https://facilitycerts.usps.gov/FacCert_HOME.cfm

Operational Clean Sweep Search Checklist: Political and Election Mail

**Purpose:** To provide an operational checklist to be used in performing a mail search. When completed – return to the District Strike Team and District BSN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Phone #:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check box when checked</th>
<th>Section/Operation:</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defines the work area to be searched.</td>
<td>Specifics: include copies of PMOD label and /or container placard. Names of individuals contacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Incoming dock</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BMEU &amp; BMEU Plant Staging</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Opening Units</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>AO / Station dispatch area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Outbound dock</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Outgoing Dispatch Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trailers in the yard (Yard Check)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MTE Plant Staging Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MTE Trailers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Site MTESC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PARS Staging and Operations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certification of Communication

The following documents must be shared and communicated to ALL employees. Upon completion, each plant manager must certify that the POMOs and Service talks have been communicated:

1. POMO – 001-22 Election Mail and Political Mail Policies and Procedures (this document)

2. Political Mail Service Talks (see appendix)
   a. Processing Political Campaign Mail
   b. Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57/191 Handling

This is a fluid list that will increase during the season. As new POMOs and talks are developed, this POMO will be updated and will be communicated to all of our Customer Relations Managers and Operations Political Coordinators. Talks can be found on the Election Mail website:

https://blue.usps.gov/marketing/electionmail/
Stand-Up Talk: Processing Political Mail

From now until the general election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, we can expect to process a high volume of Political Mail as the campaign season intensifies. Today, I am sharing information from the Postal Operations Manual (POM) section 492, and mailers’ use of PS Tag 57, Political Campaign Mailing, that identifies Political Mail for processing and distribution.

First, let’s define a political mailing, which is distinct from Election Mail. Political Mail can be Political Campaign Mail or Political Message Mail. Political Campaign Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail postage rates for political campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, a campaign committee, or a committee of a political party. This type of mailing normally uses the address of a candidate’s campaign committee or political party committee as the return address. Political Message Mail is any material mailed at First-Class Mail or USPS Marketing Mail prices by a PAC, super-PAC, or other organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization.

Now, let’s familiarize ourselves with PS Tag 57. “Political Campaign Mailing” is printed on the red tag. Six black stars are above and below those words. Use of Tag 57 with eligible political mailings is optional. Tag 57 may be used for all Political Mail, including Political Message Mail. Please remove Tag 57 from trays after the campaign mail has been processed.

The Postal Service is responsible for providing information to assist in the preparation and deposit of political mailings, as well as for the proper acceptance, processing, delivery, and recording of these mailings. Our job is to ensure that each mailing is handled properly and with equal care and attention. Any delay in processing political mailings must be documented. Be alert for the red Tag 57. We must properly handle and timely deliver any political mailing.

In summary, the key points from today’s service talk are:

- We will handle all political mailings properly and timely.
- Be alert to the red Tag 57, even though its use is optional for eligible mailers.
- Tag 57 must be removed once the political mail has been processed.
- Any delays in processing of political mail must be reported.

One of the most important public functions for the Postal Service is serving as a trusted partner in our nation’s electoral process. Thank you for keeping our country strong by ensuring messages from registered political candidates, committees, parties and other issue advocacy groups are processed in a timely manner so they can be delivered to America’s voters.
Empty Equipment Search and Tag 57/191 Handling

As the 2022 Election season gets underway, it is crucial that all political and election mail pieces are delivered timely. Some pieces may be overlooked due to being stuck in equipment that appears to be empty. We must avoid this at all costs by performing a thorough empty equipment search.

Once a piece of equipment has been emptied, it should be inspected visually and physically for any residual mailpieces. Sacks should be turned inside-out, trays and tubs should be turned upside-down, hampers should be swept out, etc.

Some pieces of equipment have a false bottom (i.e. trays or tubs are placed in the bottom of a container to make it easier to reach the contents of the container). These types of containers are especially prone to hidden mailpieces. Check for any mailpieces that may be lying underneath the false bottom.

In addition, empty equipment must not be returned to a Mail Transport Equipment Service Center (MTESC) with a red Political Mail Tag 57 or green Ballot Mail Tag 191 attached. These tags must be removed from the tray/tub/sack as soon as the mail in the container is processed. Do not dispose of the tags; return them to the local Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) for reuse.