

Overview of Domestic Mail Manual Section 608.11.0 “Postmarks and Postal Possession”

The Postal Service has not changed and is not changing our postmarking practices. Postmarks are generally applied at our originating processing facilities and will continue to be applied at those facilities in the same manner and to the same extent as before. Postmarks applied at those facilities will continue to contain the name or location of the facility that applied the postmark and the date on which the first automated processing operation was performed on that mailpiece.

However, as the Postal Service continues to modernize our transportation network and optimize our transportation operations, it will become more common that some mailpieces will not arrive at our originating processing facilities on the same day that they were initially accepted by the Postal Service. This means that the date on the postmarks applied at our processing facilities will not necessarily match the date on which the customer’s mailpiece was collected by a letter carrier or dropped off at a retail location.

To improve public awareness of what the postmark is and the information it conveys, and in recognition of the fact that our regulations did not formally define the postmark or explain when and how it is applied, the Postal Service updated the Domestic Mail Manual, effective Dec. 24, 2025, to define what the postmark is, identify the types of Postal Service markings that qualify as postmarks, describe the circumstances under which those markings are applied, clarify the scope of the information that those markings do and do not convey, and advise customers of how to obtain evidence of the date on which the Postal Service accepted possession of their mailings. This advice recognizes that some laws and entities utilize the postmark for determining whether a mailpiece was timely mailed, and that customers may want guidance on how to ensure that their mailpiece receives a postmark with a date that matches the date of mailing.

The key points are:

- A postmark is a marking applied by the Postal Service to a mailpiece. If applied at a retail unit, the postmark displays the name or location of the retail unit and the date on which the mailpiece was accepted at the retail unit. If applied at a processing facility, the postmark displays the name or location of the processing facility and the date of the first automated processing operation performed on that mailpiece.
- The presence of a postmark confirms that the Postal Service accepted custody of a mailpiece, and that the mailpiece was in the possession of the Postal Service on the identified date. However, the postmark date does not necessarily indicate the first day that the Postal Service had possession of the mailpiece, and the absence of a postmark does not imply that the Postal Service did not accept custody of a mailpiece.
- **If a customer wants to ensure that their mailpiece receives a postmark, and that the date on the postmark aligns with the date of mailing, the customer may take the mailpiece to a Postal Service retail location and request a manual (local) postmark at the retail counter when tendering their mailpiece. The manual postmark will be applied free of charge.**

The new regulation, entitled “Postmarks and Postal Possession,” will be available at Section 608.11.0 of the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®), and can also be viewed at the following link: [Federal Register :: Postmarks and Postal Possession](#).