



## Changes in Service Standards – FAQs

Latest revisions to FAQs are shown in **green text**

Updated September 5, 2025

### **General Questions:**

**Q1)** What are service standards?

**Answer:** A service standard indicates the expected number of days for delivery after a mail piece or package is accepted by USPS. These standards account for processing times and transportation network logistics, thereby providing both senders and recipients with a reliable timeframe for when they can expect their mail and packages to arrive.

**Q2)** Why did the USPS change service standards?

**Answer:** The Postal Service changed service standards to improve operational efficiency and precision. The changes will enhance service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for First-Class Mail (FCM) and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services. The changes will maintain service at existing levels for most volume, while upgrading standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded.

A key goal of the “Delivering for America” plan is for USPS to achieve financial sustainability while maintaining its service obligations as required by law. Under the newly refined service standards, the Postal Service projects at least \$36 billion in savings over 10 years from transportation, mail and package processing, and facility cost reductions. Through the strategies in the plan to date, the Postal Service has significantly lowered annual transportation costs by eliminating redundant networks and rationalizing the use of air and surface transportation options. USPS has also achieved large reductions in workhours by improving plant productivity and eliminating unnecessary facilities. In addition, the Postal Service has increased revenue by transitioning and enhancing product offerings in the face of significant declines in mail volume.

For additional information about the service standard changes, please go to [Delivering for America: Our ten-year plan highlights - about.usps.com](https://about.usps.com/2025/09/05/delivering-for-america-our-ten-year-plan-highlights).

**Q3)** What products are affected by the change to service standards?

**Answer:** The service standard adjustments apply to FCM, Periodicals, Marketing Mail, Package Services (Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail), USPS Ground Advantage, Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express.



**Q4)** Does the change to service standards slow the mail down?

**Answer:** The changes maintain service at existing levels for most volume and upgrade standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded. These enhancements also improve service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for FCM and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services.

We have also changed a number of our Critical Entry Times (CETs). The CET is a reference point for measuring service performance relative to time of acceptance by the Postal Service of commercial mail and package entry. If the Postal Service accepts mail and package volume prior to the CET on a given day, the service performance measurement clock starts the same day, whereas acceptance after CET will start this clock the following day. While assessing the impact of CET changes to customers, the Postal Service prioritized the maintenance of customer access to USPS acceptance units, i.e., Local Processing Centers (LPCs), Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), Post Offices, and both co-located and detached Business Mail Entry Units (BMEUs). To maintain access points for mailers throughout the network, we revised the CETs for various product types to ensure that we could effectively transport commercial mail and packages through an integrated network and keep our processing schedules on time. In other words, rather than saying that certain types of mail could only be entered at certain locations closer to our RPDCs, adjusted CETs allow customers to continue to enter mail and packages at their preferred locations at the same rate categories.

Note that processing of mail and packages will continue at pace whether a mail piece or package is accepted before or after the CET. USPS remains focused on timely processing, distribution and delivery of all mail and packages. Also, mail and package acceptance procedures are not changing, and the date of acceptance will continue to be verified as is done currently.

As of April 1, 2025, the calculation of days from acceptance to delivery excludes Sundays and holidays for mail and packages entered on a Saturday or the day before a holiday. Customers who tender mail or packages to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered item. This does not alter the service standard itself.

One specific goal of the above changes is to ensure that all originating volume for an RPDC is received by 20:00 hours so that it can be processed and dispatched into the transportation network 4-6 hours earlier than was feasible under the prior standards.

**Q5)** In changing the service standards, how will the USPS *actually* be able to ensure that mail will arrive at its destination within the new service standard?

**Answer:** Moving service standards from a 3-digit to 3-digit ZIP Code pairing to a 5-digit to 5-digit ZIP Code model allows the Postal Service to keep evolving to be more precise, understandable, and accurate. The Postal Service will continue to track and report service standard performance and is developing changes to our measurement system so we can report service performance at the 5-digit ZIP Code level. These updates will provide enhanced visibility



into service performance, allowing the Postal Service and customers to track service more precisely. Additional information on the service standard change, including tools to determine service standards for specific 5-digit ZIP Code pairs, can be found at [Service Commitments](#).

**Q6)** Did you move or adjust the service standards because the USPS could not meet the prior standards?

**Answer:** No, the refinements to the service standards are not due to the USPS's inability to meet the prior standards. Rather, declines in the volume of single piece FCM and other mail entered at Post Offices necessitated operational changes to reduce costs and align service standards with the network that provides the most cost-effective mail services. These changes will maintain existing service levels for most mail and package volume while upgrading standards for a greater portion of market-dominant products than those that are downgraded.

**Q7)** When did the new service standards go into effect? What was the timeline?

**Answer:** Implementation was in two phases to facilitate effective operational execution: the first phase began on April 1, 2025. The second phase began on July 1, 2025.

#### Changes implemented on April 1, 2025

- Added one day to service standard for Ground Advantage and single piece FCM products originating in offices servicing ZIP Codes more than 50 miles from the origin RPDC. No change to service standard for Presort FCM.
- Collection mail and packages originating in offices within 50 miles of the nearest origin RPDC to reach said facility by 20:00 hours.
- Sundays and holidays no longer counted in service performance measurement for mail and packages accepted by USPS on a day prior to Sunday or a holiday.
- New CETs went into effect.

#### Changes implemented on July 1, 2025

- Service standard bands expanded by four hours due to earlier surface transportation dispatch times from each origin RPDC (increasing the reach of 2-, 3- and 4-day Service Standards).
- Expanded geographic scope of "turnaround" volume, i.e., mail and package volume originating and destinating within a processing facility's service area. "Turnaround" volume of single piece FCM will receive a 2- or 3-day service standard depending on the location of the office of entry and the distance to the nearest origin RPDC.

**Q8)** How does this change enable greater service performance or operational efficiencies?

**Answer:** The changes to service standards enhance service performance and operational efficiencies in several key ways. Transitioning from a 3-digit to a 5-digit ZIP Code model allows



for more precise measurement and higher-quality products. The Postal Service organizes the operational path of mail and packages into three distinct legs:

Leg 1: From collection to origin processing.

Leg 2: From origin processing to destination processing.

Leg 3: From destination processing to final delivery.

By establishing service expectations for each leg and adding one additional service day for volume entered far from origin processing facilities, the new standards provide a clearer picture of how mail and packages travel through our network.

Furthermore, these standards enable earlier dispatch from origin RPDCs and extend our Leg 2 reach, improving customer service for mail and shipping products. Turnaround service, which processes and delivers mail and packages within the same region, will also be available for larger geographical areas around origin RPDCs. These productivity gains allow us to offer single piece FCM cancellation and turnaround at a wider range of LPC sites than initially planned, ultimately improving service reliability and supporting revenue growth.

**Q9) What is turnaround service?**

**Answer:** Turnaround volume is mail or package volume originating and destinating within a facility's service area. The new rules and operational structure expand the geographic scope for turnaround volume. Previously, certain intra-Sectional Center Facility (SCF) volume received a 2-day service standard. Under the new rules, certain intra-LPC and all intra-RPDC FCM volume is subject to the new turnaround rule which provides for a 2- or 3-day standard depending on the 5-digit ZIP Code from which mail originates. Specifically, certain LPCs and all RPDCs have a 2-day standard for turnaround single piece FCM originating from 5-digit ZIP Codes 50 miles or less from the cancellation location. If the originating volume is from a 5-digit ZIP Code more than 50 miles from the cancellation location, the turnaround standard for single piece FCM is 3 days. USPS Ground Advantage also has 2- or 3-day intra-RPDC service. The standards for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals, and Package Services within a region are also based on these new turnaround standards.

The financial and efficiency gains from the operational changes allowed us to maintain cancellation operations for certain LPCs. This means that more locations are providing turnaround service than originally planned. For LPCs providing turnaround service, the 50-mile rule noted above is based on the distance from the LPC. When cancellation will take place at an RPDC, rather than an LPC, the 50-mile rule is based on the distance from the RPDC.



**Q10)** Does the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) have a role in approving this change? If so, please describe the role.

**Answer:** When USPS determines that there should be a change in postal services which will affect service on a nationwide or substantially nationwide basis, 39 U.S.C. § 3661 requires that the Postal Service seek an advisory opinion from the PRC. Consistent with this requirement, the Postal Service requested and received an advisory opinion from the PRC.

**Q11)** How does this change affect mailings by the general public? For example, when a customer sends a birthday card or a letter to a friend.

**Answer:** The impact of the changes depends on where the letter is mailed from and where it is going. Customers can look up [Service Commitments](#) on usps.com for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. This tool accounts for the Sunday/holiday change described in the following questions. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.

In addition, a new interactive map is available on usps.com which visually displays service standards by entering the ZIP Code customers are mailing from and the mail class they are using to view the expected delivery time. Since this tool simply displays the stated service standard, it does not reflect the Sunday/holiday change. This map is available at <https://www.usps.com/service-standards/>.

Finally, customers who tender mail or packages to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered item.

**Q12)** What changed with respect to Sundays and holidays?

**Answer:** Beginning April 1, 2025, the calculation of days from acceptance to delivery excludes Sundays and holidays for customers who tender mail or packages to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday. These customers should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail. For example, a mail piece tendered on Friday that has a 3-day service standard will not exclude Sunday from measurement and will still have an expected delivery date of Monday. Whereas, if a customer sends a letter on a Saturday that has a 3-day Service Standard, the letter should be delivered on Wednesday (not Tuesday, as was the case before excluding Sunday from the measurement change).

Customers can go to usps.com at [Service Commitments](#) to find the expected delivery day for specific products depending on the ZIP Codes from and to which one is mailing.



**Q13)** Why did USPS make the change with respect to Sundays and holidays?

**Answer:** This change aligns with the practice of other postal operators and competitors. It was made to enable USPS to achieve greater operational efficiencies and cost savings with minimal impact to service. For example, we are able to increase the fill density of containers and the surface transportation fleet, increase processing throughputs, and plan staffing with greater flexibility. These improvements will help USPS achieve financial sustainability while maintaining our service obligations required by law.

**Q14)** How is Priority Mail Express changing?

**Answer:** Priority Mail Express delivery service now has a 1-, 2- or 3-day service standard depending on various factors, including date of acceptance by the Postal Service and the origin and destination 5-digit ZIP Codes. This revision does not affect any other current product features. Priority Mail Express will continue to be a money-back guaranteed product with delivery available 7 days a week in certain areas. Prior to this change, Priority Mail Express had a 1- or 2-day service standard.

### **Regional Transportation Optimization (RTO) Questions:**

**Q1)** What is RTO?

**Answer:** Regional Transportation Optimization, or RTO, is the Postal Service's effort to align transportation schedules between processing facilities and Post Office locations to improve operational efficiencies.

Prior to RTO, the Postal Service would send trucks to each Post Office location twice per day. The first trip would arrive in the morning from processing facilities, dropping off mail and packages specific to that office for delivery by mail carrier or distribution to PO Boxes. A second trip would arrive later in the day to pick up mail and packages which were collected during the day and bring them to the appropriate facility to be processed and dispatched into the postal network.

RTO aims to improve the efficiency of our transportation network for Post Office locations that serve ZIP Codes that are more than 50 miles from RPDCs by eliminating multiple daily trips between processing facilities and Post Offices to drop off and collect mail and packages. Instead, there will typically be one trip per day.

RTO does not impact retail or Post Office hours, nor mail carrier delivery or pickups. Customers, regardless of where they live, will still receive delivery six and sometimes seven days per week. The collection of mail and package volume within local communities, including carrier pickup from homes and blue collection boxes, is also not changing. What we are changing is the timing of transportation from select Post Offices to USPS processing facilities. And we are processing and transporting mail and packages faster within our network. The volume of mail collected through our retail offices (including mail picked up on carrier routes and mail entered at Post Offices) is largely made up of single-piece FCM, and that volume has declined substantially. For



example, in FY 1997 there were 57 billion pieces of single-piece FCM. By FY 2023, there were only 12 billion pieces, representing an 80 percent decline. This means that the second trip of the day contained very little mail, particularly in areas that are farther from our processing facilities.

**Q2)** If my Post Office is an “RTO Post Office,” will all of my mail be slowed down?

**Answer:** No. In fact, some of the mail and packages you receive may now reach you more quickly than before RTO. The service standard — or expected number of days for delivery after acceptance by USPS — for any given package or piece of mail will depend on both its entry point and its delivery point.

The Postal Service calculates the service standard based on where the mail or package is entered and how far the mail or package is going. RTO impacts the first part of that calculation by adding a day to the expected standard, such that some mail or packages originating from an RTO Post Office may take an extra day for delivery. However, because the Postal Service is also expanding how far mail and packages can travel within each 2-, 3-, and 4-day service band, there are many scenarios where mail and packages entered at an RTO Post Office will be delivered with the same service standard that existed before RTO.

Most mail and packages, including bills and medications, originate in ZIP Codes that are within 50 miles of an RPDC and/or are pre-sorted. Such mail and packages will in some instances arrive more quickly than they did before RTO, regardless of where they are being delivered. In addition, the Postal Service has expanded the scope of turnaround service, so that mail and packages being delivered within the same RPDC region, and within certain LPC regions, will have a 2- or 3-day service standard. Finally, due to the improvements in our operational precision and efficiency enabled by these changes, all mail and packages will be delivered in a more reliable manner.

The best way to determine how long it will take for delivery of mail or packages that you drop off at your Post Office (or that is picked up on a route served by your Post Office) is to use the [Service Commitments](https://usps.com/service-commitments) tool on usps.com.

Please refer to the questions and answers in the rest of this document for more information about service standards, turnaround service, and our service standard look-up tools.

**Q3)** What are the benefits of RTO?

**Answer:** Implementation of this program will improve the utilization of our transportation network and reduce the overall number of trips, which will significantly reduce costs and carbon emissions and, in many instances, increase the efficiency with which customers receive their mail.

RTO is based upon a standard rule that applies equally to customers throughout all delivery areas — urban and rural. The majority of mail and package volume, including volume destined to rural communities, originates in ZIP Codes within 50 miles of an RPDC. Which means the



mail and package volume will be processed more quickly, since our operating schedules no longer need to wait for volume to arrive from outlying areas.

**Q4) How will RTO impact postmarking?**

**Answer:** The Postal Service is not changing our postmarking practices. Customers wanting to ensure that their mail piece is postmarked on the day it is provided to the Postal Service can bring the mail piece to the counter at a retail unit and request a manual cancellation. We will also continue to cancel single piece FCM on our automation equipment in our processing facilities in the same manner and to the same extent as before. What may change is the timing of the postmark applied in those processing facilities. Some mail and packages will not reach our processing machines until the day after they are collected by a carrier or dropped off at a Post Office.

If customers need to retain evidence of the date of mailing, they may purchase a Certificate of Mailing at the retail counter, which will provide a receipt showing that they tendered the mail piece that day.

**Q5) How will RTO impact the postmarking of ballot mail?**

**Answer:** While a ballot envelope traveling through the processing network may receive a postmark the day after it is collected by the Postal Service, RTO does not change our operational approach to postmarking or our ballot mail-specific practices regarding postmarking. At any time, just as with any other mail piece, voters may request that their ballot envelope be hand-cancelled when they bring their mail into any of our retail locations. Moreover, if voters follow our longstanding, general recommendation regarding timing – namely, that as a common-sense measure, they mail their completed ballot before Election Day, and at least one week before it must be received by their local election office – the timing of the postmark should not be an issue. Additionally, during even-numbered years (with regularly scheduled general elections for federal office in November), we will still hand-cancel postage on ballot mail being turned around locally as part of our extraordinary measures.

**Postmark and Cancellation Questions:**

**Q1) What is the difference between a cancellation and a postmark?**

**Answer:** The Postal Service uses the terms “cancellation” and “postmark” interchangeably. The marks can be applied manually or by automation on the Postal Service’s cancellation machines.



**Q2)** What is the difference between an automated machine-applied postmark and a manual postmark?

**Answer:** The Postal Service applies postmarks by *automation*, on cancellation machines at processing facilities, and *manually*, at the retail counter of a Post Office, station, or branch (this usually entails a postal employee placing an inked round stamp or date stamp on an otherwise unmarked postage stamp and is sometimes referred to as a round-date stamp or a local postmark). Postmarks display the location of the processing facility or retail unit that applied the marking. When applied at a processing facility, postmarks display the date of the first automated processing operation performed on that mailpiece; when applied at a retail unit, they display the date on which the mailpiece was accepted at that retail unit.

**Q3)** What is the difference between hand cancellation and manual cancellation?

**Answer:** Postage stamps can be cancelled either by a machine or by a USPS employee. “Hand cancellation” and “manual cancellation” are terms used to describe the same process, i.e., manually placing a cancellation mark on a postage stamp.

**Q4)** Why is my letter postmarked after I mailed it, even though it was mailed before the last postal collection time for the collection location?

**Answer:** Mail pieces are typically postmarked by machines at processing facilities. Certain mail pieces may not reach those processing machines, and thus will not receive a postmark, on the same day they are collected by the carrier or dropped off at a retail unit. This may occur either as part of the regular process or due to unexpected circumstances. For further information, please see Q4 in the Regional Transportation Optimization (RTO) section of this document. If a customer wants to ensure that a mail piece receives a postmark that aligns with the date on which the Postal Service first accepted possession, the customer may take the mail piece to a Post Office, station, or branch and request a manual (local) postmark at the retail counter when tendering their mail piece.

**Q5)** Many people assume that their mail will be postmarked on the same day they provide their mail to the Postal Service. What is the Postal Service doing to explain that this is not necessarily true?

**Answer:** The Postal Service has initiated a rulemaking in the Federal Register with proposed language to add to the Domestic Mail Manual to explain the Postal Service's operational use of the postmark and the information conveyed by postmarks. As part of the rulemaking, the Postal Service is requesting feedback on the content proposed for the DMM and recommendations on how best to educate the public about the added DMM provision once it is finalized. The notice is available here: [Federal Register :: Postmarks and Postal Possession](#). Comments can be submitted between now and September 11, 2025.



## **Business Mailer Questions:**

**Q1)** How does this change affect business mailers?

**Answer:** The refinements maintain service at existing levels for most volume and will upgrade standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded. The changes will enhance service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for FCM and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services.

Business mailers should note changes to CET for Presort FCM while estimating the number of days from acceptance to expected delivery. In addition, business mailers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail. See CET-related questions in this section and prior sections for more details on CET changes.

**Q2)** Will business mailers have to prepare their mail differently?

**Answer:** No.

**Q3)** Are CETs changing? If so, why?

**Answer:** We have changed a number of our CETs in order to maintain existing customer access to USPS mail and package acceptance units while implementing the service standard changes.

The CET is a reference point for measuring service performance relative to time of acceptance by the Postal Service at commercial mail and package entry. If the Postal Service accepts mail or package volume prior to the CET on a given day, the service performance measurement clock starts the same day, whereas acceptance after CET will start this clock the following day. While assessing the impact of CET changes to customers, the Postal Service prioritized the maintenance of customer access to USPS acceptance units, i.e., LPCs, RPDCs, Post Offices, and both co-located and detached BMEUs.

To maintain access points for mailers throughout the network, we revised the CETs for specific product types to ensure that we could effectively transport commercial mail and packages through an integrated network and keep our processing schedules on time. In other words, rather than saying that certain types of mail or packages could only be entered at certain locations closer to our RPDCs, adjusted CETs allow customers to continue to enter mail and packages at their preferred locations at the same rate categories.

Note that processing of mail and packages will continue at pace whether a mail piece or package is accepted before or after the CET. USPS operating plans and practices will remain focused on timely processing, distribution and delivery of all mail and packages. Also, mail and package acceptance procedures are not changing, and the date of acceptance will continue to be verified as is done currently.



**Q4)** Does the service standard change mean changes to business mailers projected mail in-home arrival dates?

**Answer:** Changes in the service standards will provide more reliable service for mailers to plan around in-home windows. The relative impact on service standards, i.e., leaving more than 80 percent of Market Dominant volume unchanged, demonstrates the Postal Service's commitment to maintaining high quality service and mitigating customer impacts to the extent possible while also implementing operational changes necessary to improve postal operations and achieve the critical — and significant — cost savings that are necessary for financial sustainability as required by law. For additional information about the service standard changes, please go to [Delivering for America: Our ten-year plan highlights - about.usps.com](https://about.usps.com). This information will be updated as needed to communicate any new developments.

While the Sunday and holiday change does not alter service standards, customers who tender mail or packages to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail.

**Q5)** Will business mailers be able to claim a refund if USPS mail fails to reach its destination in the new time periods?

**Answer:** No. Under the old service standards, business mailers could not claim refunds for postage on mail that did not reach its destination by the predicted date. This policy is not changing. However, with the implementation of these service standard refinements as well as operational improvements previously discussed, the Postal Service anticipates that a greater percentage of mail will reach its destination within the predicted time period.

**Q6)** What is the net effect on community newspapers delivered by mail which need same day or next day delivery?

**Answer:** As long as the community newspapers are mailed to the same area that they are sent from, the delivery date for these newspapers is expected to remain unchanged. However, if a subscriber to a community newspaper in Southern Florida moves to Washington State and wants to keep getting the same community newspaper delivered by mail, then the delivery date will be determined by the ZIP Codes from and to which the newspaper is being mailed. A six-day maximum service standard would apply to newspapers (Periodicals) for mail flow within the contiguous 48 states (end to end). The expected delivery date can be determined at this link: [Service Commitments](#). This tool accounts for the Sunday/holiday change.

**Q7)** Does this affect customer/supplier agreements? Do they need to be revised or rewritten? If so, how is this process initiated?

**Answer:** For Customer Service Agreements, business customers may contact their local Business Service Network (BSN) representative who will coordinate with the appropriate departments.



**Q8)** What is the process by which USPS is collecting feedback from business customers regarding this proposed change?

**Answer:** These changes were covered in the Postal Service's request for an advisory opinion from the PRC. That process included opportunity for public input, including a pre-filing conference and participation in the proceeding before the PRC, which included a public hearing. These changes were also covered in a notice and comment proceeding in the Federal Register. There was significant participation by members of the general public and by industry stakeholders in both proceedings. The Postal Service has solicited, and continues to solicit, feedback from webinar participants, industry and mail associations, and via BSN staff and National Sales Managers. In addition to this, Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) and other industry outreach forums provide regular opportunities for business mailers to provide feedback. The feedback from customers and other stakeholders has been used in developing and refining our implementation and communication efforts regarding the changes.

**Q9)** Some mailers may say that a change in service standards is a hidden price increase. What is your response to mailers who assert that they are receiving less service for the same price?

**Answer:** This effort is designed to improve service and cut costs to better serve our customers, and to provide more reliable and predictable delivery of USPS products. It should not be considered or understood to be a hidden price increase.

### **Consumer/Retail Customer Questions:**

**Q1)** What does this mean for consumers/retail customers?

**Answer:** Customers can look up [Service Commitments](#) on usps.com for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. This tool accounts for the Sunday/Holiday change. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.

In addition, a new interactive map is available on usps.com at <https://www.usps.com/service-standards/> that visually displays service standards. Since this tool simply displays the stated service standard, it does not reflect the Sunday/holiday change. Customers can simply enter the ZIP Code they are mailing from and the selected mail class to view the expected delivery time.

Finally, the Postal Service will share information at its retail locations. There are no impacts to service at those retail locations as retail access will not change. There are also no impacts to delivery services.

**Q2)** What does this mean for rural customers?

**Answer:** We do not anticipate that rural customers will experience significant negative impacts from these adjustments. We predict many of our rural customers will notice positive impacts. The delivery process in rural communities is not changing. Customers, regardless of where they live, will still receive delivery six and sometimes seven days per week. The collection of mail and



package volume within local communities is also not changing. This includes carrier pickup from homes and blue collection boxes. Post Office hours are also not changing. What we are changing is the timing of transportation from select Post Offices to USPS processing facilities. And we are processing and transporting mail and packages faster within our network.

These service standard refinements do not depend on whether an area is urban or rural, but rather a collection point's distance from an origin RPDC. The changes add one day to the delivery expectation for mail and packages *sent* from certain ZIP Codes, but they also include improvements to the processing and transportation of mail and packages within our network. For some mail and packages, the changes will shorten expected delivery times by a full day.

Also, because individual postal customers generally receive far more mail and packages than they send, the service standard refinements either maintain or speed up the vast majority of FCM (almost 90 percent). Almost 70 percent of FCM will have a service standard of three days or less. The Postal Service maintains the range for the FCM service standard at 1-5 days.

For reference, the majority of mail and package volume, including mail and packages destined to rural communities, originates in ZIP Codes that are within 50 miles of an RPDC and/or is pre-sorted. The enhanced service standards do not add a day to the delivery expectation for this volume, but they do account for it moving more quickly through the improved network to destination processing. Consequently, all customers, including those in rural areas, can expect more reliable and often faster delivery of important, time-sensitive mailings and packages like prescription medications and veterans or Social Security benefits.

Overall, the best way to ensure rural delivery remains a mainstay of the Postal Service universal service mandate is to maintain modern service standards and a network capable of handling both package and mail volume in a financially sustainable manner with reasonable service expectations. These refined service standards meet that goal and balance our dual mandates of financial self-sufficiency and service excellence for all our customers.

To determine the total impact of these service standard refinements, customers can go to [usps.com](https://usps.com) at [Service Commitments](#) to find the expected delivery times for their correspondence and packages based on ZIP Code.

### **Measurement Questions**

**Q1)** How will USPS monitor the volume of mail that reaches its destination within the allotted service standard timetable?

**Answer:** The Postal Service will continue to track and report service standard performance. We are also updating measurement systems so we can report service performance at the 5-digit ZIP Code level. These updates will provide enhanced visibility into service performance, allowing the Postal Service and customers to track service more precisely.



**Q2)** How will consumers and businesses know how the refined service standards will apply to their mail?

**Answer:** To help customers determine the expected delivery time for their mailings, the Postal Service is offering the following tools and technical specifications:

- Detailed file specifications for downloadable files with the new standards can be accessed on PostalPro ([Service Standards | PostalPro](#)).
- The service standards API has been updated to include a new presort indicator for FCM standards. API specs are available now on the USPS Developer Portal (<https://developers.usps.com/>).
- Customers are also able to look up service standards on [usps.com](https://usps.com) for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.
- Also, a new interactive map is available on [usps.com](https://usps.com) to visually display service standards simply by entering the ZIP Code they are mailing from and mail class to view the expected delivery time.