



September 25, 2020

OFFICERS, PCES, AND PAY BAND MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Additional Resources for Election Mail Beginning October 1

The November 3, General Election is fast approaching. While normal First-Class and Marketing Mail volumes are down considerably, the volume of Election Mail will be at an all-time high this season. COVID-19 has changed the way millions of people will vote this year, and many are turning to the United States Postal Service to deliver their ballots. Recognizing our important role in the democratic process, the Postmaster General has reiterated that our number one priority is the proper handling and timely delivery of all Election Mail, especially ballots.

Effective October 1, additional resources are being made available for District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers to utilize, as they determine, to support the timely and expeditious handling of the increased volume of Election Mail, which is defined by the Postal Service as any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process, such as ballots, voter registration cards, ballot applications, and polling place notifications. District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers are authorized and instructed to use these additional resources to ensure that all Election Mail is prioritized and delivered on time. These resources are in addition to the existing processes and procedures for Election Mail.

These resources include, but are not limited to:

**1. Processing**

As previously provided in the Clarifying Operational Instructions distributed on September 21, 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 First-Class Mail delivery standards. Processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment should be expanded as necessary 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.

Other additional processing resources are also authorized and instructed to be used to ensure that Election Mail stays current and moving through the Postal Service's network. This includes, but is not limited to, early cancellations the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely.

## **2. Transportation**

Extra transportation resources are authorized and instructed to be used to ensure that Election Mail reaches its intended destination in a timely manner. This includes, but is not limited to, extra trips from all points of processing and delivery (e.g., retail units and plants), as necessary to connect Election Mail to its intended destination or the next stage in Postal Service processing.

## **3. Delivery/Collections**

Extra delivery and collection trips are authorized and instructed to be used to ensure, to the best of our ability, that completed ballots entered on Election Day reach the appropriate election official by the state's designated deadline on Election Day. This includes, but is not limited to, early collections the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely, and delivery of ballots found in collections on Election Day to election boards within states requiring ballots be returned by a designated time on Election Day.

## **4. Overtime**

Overtime is authorized and instructed to be used to support these additional resources and the completion of the additional work, as needed.

In addition, to further support the timely delivery of Election Mail, and consistent with our practices in past election cycles, the use of extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations is authorized and expected to be executed by local management between October 26 and November 24, to accelerate the delivery of ballots, when the Postal Service is able to identify the mailpiece as a ballot.


These extraordinary measures include, but are not limited to, expedited handling, extra deliveries, and special pickups as used in past elections, to connect blank ballots entered by election officials to voters or completed ballots returned by voters entered close to or on Election Day to their intended destination (e.g., Priority Mail Express, Sunday deliveries, special deliveries, running collected ballots to Boards of Elections on Election Day, etc.).

We will continue to communicate closely with election officials to encourage them to send ballots earlier. We have also educated voters across the nation to request their ballots early (if they are required to request a ballot) and to return their ballots early, if they plan on using the mail for one or both legs of the journey.

Despite our best efforts to educate and communicate, however, we know that there will be entries of ballots to and from voters that will require us to take the extra steps set forth herein to ensure timely delivery. The additional resources available beginning October 1, and our robust practices and procedures that we employ every election cycle as described above, will help ensure that we are able

to do everything in our power to 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.

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



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and Executive Vice President



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Chief Logistics & Processing Operations  
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