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How is Undeliverable and Misdelivered Mail Handled?

What to do when mail is undeliverable or misdelivered. Information and additional resources regarding endorsements that may prevent delivery, picking up mail early before it is delivered, postage due and mail sent to an individual at a business address.

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Undeliverable as Addressed Mail

In order to be delivered by the United States Postal Service®, mailpieces must be addressed correctly, the address must be readable, and proper postage must be affixed

- If we are not able to deliver the mail as addressed, we will use the return address on the mailpiece and try to return it to the sender.
 - Refer to **507 Mailer Services | Postal Explorer (usps.com)**: https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/507.htm#a_1_4 for a list of USPS endorsements for undeliverable as addressed (UAA) mailer such as "Electronic Service Requested" and "Address Service Requested".

- If the mailpiece is addressed incorrectly and has no return address, the mailpiece will either be handled by the local Post Office™ or sent to the Mail Recovery Center.
 - If your mailpiece has not arrived within 7 days from its date of mailing, you can:
 - Submit a search request in the [Missing Mail application](#), OR
 - Call your Consumer Affairs representative via **1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777)** and they can complete a search request on your behalf, OR
 - Visit your local USPS Post Office and have a search request submitted.

Please note that with the filing of a search request, the United States Postal Service has guidelines on items or merchandise that can be returned or recovered. If the item(s) is located and it meets guidelines for recovery, it will be returned to you.

Where can I find information on Endorsements?

Information on the use of **Undeliverable as Addressed** (UAA) endorsements can be found at [Ancillary Service Endorsements](#) on [USPS.com®](#). For information on the definitions of endorsements that are applied to an undeliverable mailpiece by the letter carrier, go to the [Domestic Mail Manual](#).

How is 'Postage Due' mail handled?

Throughout its journey, mail may be periodically checked to ensure it has proper postage. If a mailpiece does not have proper postage, it may be returned or delivered according to the following scenarios:

- If the item is without postage, or it appears postage fell off; it is endorsed "*Returned for Postage Mail*" and sent to the return address on the mailpiece.
- If the item is shortpaid, it will be delivered postage due and the letter carrier will endorse it to show the amount of the postage due.
 - The recipient must pay in cash for postage due mail before the mail is delivered
 - Depending on location, letter carriers may or may not be able to collect Postage Due directly from a customer or a customer's mailbox. For further information on how to pay for the Postage Due, please contact your local Post Office™ facility.
 - Rural carriers are not required to go to the door with a postage due letter. Policy stipulates that rural carriers go only as far as the mailbox and blow the horn. The recipient must come out to the mailbox to pay and receive the letter.
 - **Note:** If the shortpaid item cannot be delivered as addressed (including if the recipient refuses to pay for and accept it), it is endorsed "Returned for Additional Postage" and sent to the return address on the mailpiece.

A returned shortpaid mailpiece can have the necessary additional postage affixed (leaving the "postage due" message intact) to the original piece and does not have to be placed in a new envelope or wrapper.

Please Note: The USPS® makes a special effort when the mail piece has the appearance of a greeting card. Rather than being routed to the Mail Recovery Center because of no postage or below minimum size, greeting cards without a return address will generally be delivered with postage due during the month of December. (This is for domestic First-Class Mail® only. Foreign greeting cards without postage go back to the mailer for proper postage.)

Note: Automated Package Verification (APV) streamlines how we check postage on certain **packages with labels generated from Click-N-Ship® and PC Postage applications** ([PC Postage applications include Click-N-Ship, Endicia, Stamps.com, eBay, PayPal, EasyPost, and Pitney Bowes® & ePostage](#)). Please see "[Automated Package Verification Program](#)" for more information.

Can I pick up mail before it is delivered?

Unfortunately mail cannot be picked up before it's delivered. The United States Postal Service system is set up to deliver mail, it is not able to retain mail so that you can come in and pick it up.

There are services (which charge additional fees) that would allow you to pickup your mail on a regular basis at the Post Office. These are:

- **Purchase a Post Office Box** - Mail is considered delivered when it reaches the box.

[How do I apply for a Post Office Box?](#)

- **Caller services** - Businesses can have their employees pick up their mail.

[What are Caller and Reserve Box Services?](#)

Mail sent to an individual at a business

Mail is delivered to an organization (either governmental or nongovernmental) if it is addressed to:

- The organization itself (i.e. business, government agency, etc...).
- An individual (by name or title) at the address of the organization.
- A former official, employee, agent, etc... at the address of the organization.

Mail that is addressed to a company is delivered to the company, including mail endorsed "Personal and Confidential" for a specific individual. Postal Service™ responsibility for the mail ends at that point and disposition of such mail is in accordance with each company's policy. This also applies to mail addressed in this manner to former employees.

If there are disputes, mail is delivered in accordance with the wishes of the company's president, chief executive officer, or equivalent officer.

How is undeliverable USPS Marketing Mail® handled?

USPS Marketing Mail items are not automatically forwarded or returned if they cannot be delivered (including cases where an intended recipient has moved). USPS Marketing Mail items may include catalogs, flyers, circulars, and advertising mail.

Undeliverable USPS Marketing Mail items are handled according to the endorsements on the item (endorsements are placed on the mailpiece in advance by the sender). If the USPS Marketing Mail item does not have an endorsement, the mailpiece is disposed of by USPS.

For more information, visit the <https://www.usps.com/business/advertise-with-mail.htm>.

Reporting / returning misdelivered mail

Despite our best efforts, occasionally mail is misdelivered, or is delivered to an old location for an individual. If you are receiving mail for the previous resident and do not know their address, simply return the mail piece back to the mailstream (by leaving in a Collection Box or other mail receptacle) with the notation "**Not at this address**" marked on the envelope.

For *Priority Mail Express*® items only, you can obtain the number of the Priority Mail Express Reporting Unit by calling:
1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777)

For other misdelivered mail items (such as letters):

- If the mailpiece is delivered to the wrong location:
 - Don't erase or mark over the information, or write any type of endorsement on the mailpiece.