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The United States Postal Service also offers rewards as stated above for information and services leading to the arrest and conviction of any person: (1) For being an accessory to any of the above crimes; (2) for receiving or having unlawful possession of any mail, money or property secured through the above crimes; and (3) for conspiracy to commit any of the above crimes.

General Provisions

1. The Postal Inspection Service investigates the above described crimes. Information concerning the violations, requests for applications for rewards, and written claims for rewards should be furnished to the nearest Postal Inspector. The written claim for reward payment must be submitted within six months from the date of conviction of the offender, or the date of formally deferred prosecution or the date of the offender's death, if killed in committing a crime or resisting lawful arrest for one of the above offenses.

2. The amount of any reward will be based on the significance of services rendered, character of the offender, risks and hazards involved, time spent, and expenses incurred. Amounts of rewards shown above are the maximum amounts which will be paid.

3. The term "custodian" as used herein includes any person having lawful charge, control, or custody of any mail matter, or any money or other property of the United States under the control and jurisdiction of the United States Postal Service.

4. The Postal Service reserves the right to reject a claim for reward where there has been collusion, criminal involvement, or improper methods have been used to effect an arrest or to secure a conviction. It has the right to allow only one reward when several persons were convicted of the same offense, or one person was convicted of several of the above offenses. Postal employees are not eligible to receive a reward for the offenses listed above, other than Workers' Compensation fraud. Employees assigned to the Postal Inspection Service, the General Counsel's office, and those who manage or administer the Injury Compensation Program are not eligible to receive rewards.

5. Other rewards not specifically referred to in this notice may be offered upon the approval of the Chief Postal Inspector (39 U.S.C. 404(a)(8)).

(c) The Chief Postal Inspector or his delegate is authorized to pay a reward to any person who provides information leading to the detection of persons or firms who obtain, or seek to obtain, funds, property, or services from the Postal Service based upon false or fraudulent activities, statements or claims. The decision as to whether a reward shall be paid and the amount

thereof shall be solely within the discretion of the Chief Postal Inspector or his delegate and the submission of information or a claim for a reward shall not establish a contractual right to receive any reward. The reward shall not exceed one-half of the amount collected by the Postal Service as a result of civil or criminal proceedings to recover losses or penalties as a result of false or fraudulent claims or statements submitted to the Postal Service. Postal employees assigned to the Postal Inspection Service or the Law Department are not eligible to receive a reward under this section for information obtained while so employed. The Chief Inspector may establish such procedures and forms as may be desirable to give effect to this section including procedures to protect the identity of persons claiming rewards under this section.

[36 FR 4673, Mar. 12, 1971, as amended at 42 FR 43836, Aug. 31, 1977. Redesignated at 46 FR 34330, July 1, 1981, and amended at 47 FR 26832, June 22, 1982; 47 FR 46498, Oct. 19, 1982; 49 FR 15191, Apr. 18, 1984; 54 FR 37795, Sept. 13, 1989; 55 FR 32251, Aug. 8, 1990; 59 FR 5326, Feb. 4, 1994; 60 FR 54305, Oct. 23, 1995; 63 FR 52160, Sept. 30, 1998; 69 FR 16166, Mar. 29, 2004]

§ 233.3 Mail covers.

(a) *Policy.* The U.S. Postal Service maintains rigid control and supervision with respect to the use of mail covers as an investigative technique for law enforcement or the protection of national security.

(b) *Scope.* These regulations constitute the sole authority and procedure for initiating a mail cover, and for processing, using and disclosing information obtained from mail covers.

(c) *Definitions.* For purpose of these regulations, the following terms are hereby defined.

(1) *Mail cover* is the process by which a nonconsensual record is made of any data appearing on the outside cover of any sealed or unsealed class of mail matter, or by which a record is made of the contents of any unsealed class of mail matter as allowed by law, to obtain information in order to:

- (i) Protect national security,
- (ii) Locate a fugitive,
- (iii) Obtain evidence of commission or attempted commission of a crime,

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(iv) Obtain evidence of a violation or attempted violation of a postal statute, or

(v) Assist in the identification of property, proceeds or assets forfeitable under law.

(2) For the purposes of § 233.3 *record* is a transcription, photograph, photocopy or any other facsimile of the image of the outside cover, envelope, wrapper, or contents of any class of mail.

(3) *Sealed mail* is mail which under postal laws and regulations is included within a class of mail maintained by the Postal Service for the transmission of letters sealed against inspection. Sealed mail includes: First-Class Mail; Priority Mail; Express Mail; Express Mail International; Global Express Guaranteed items containing only documents; Priority Mail International flat-rate envelopes and small flat-rate boxes; International Priority Airmail, except M-bags; International Surface Air Lift, except M-bags; First-Class Mail International; Global Bulk Economy, except M-bags; certain Global Direct mail as specified by customer contract; and International Transit Mail.

(4) *Unsealed mail* is mail which under postal laws or regulations is not included within a class of mail maintained by the Postal Service for the transmission of letters sealed against inspection. Unsealed mail includes: Periodicals; Standard Mail; Package Services; incidental First-Class Mail attachments and enclosures; Global Express Guaranteed items containing non-documents; Priority Mail International, except flat-rate envelopes and small flat-rate boxes; International Direct Sacks—M-bags; certain Global Direct mail as specified by customer contract; and all items sent via “Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped” under 39 U.S.C. 3403-06 and International Mail Manual 270.

(5) *Fugitive* is any person who has fled from the United States or any State, the District of Columbia, territory or possession of the United States, to avoid prosecution for a crime, to avoid punishment for a crime, or to avoid giving testimony in a criminal proceeding.

(6) *Crime*, for the purposes of this section, is any commission of an act or the attempted commission of an act

that is punishable by law by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

(7) *Postal statute* refers to a statute describing criminal activity, regardless of the term of imprisonment, for which the Postal Service has investigative authority, or which is directed against the Postal Service, its operations, programs, or revenues.

(8) *Law enforcement agency* is any authority of the Federal Government or any authority of a State or local government, one of whose functions is to:

(i) Investigate the commission or attempted commission of acts constituting a crime, or

(ii) Protect the national security.

(9) *Protection of the national security* means to protect the United States from any of the following actual or potential threats to its security by a foreign power or its agents:

(i) An attack or other grave, hostile act;

(ii) Sabotage, or international terrorism; or

(iii) Clandestine intelligence activities, including commercial espionage.

(10) *Emergency situation* refers to circumstances which require the immediate release of information to prevent the loss of evidence or in which there is a potential for immediate physical harm to persons or property.

(d) *Authorizations—Chief Postal Inspector.* (1) The Chief Postal Inspector is the principal officer of the Postal Service in the administration of all matters governing mail covers. The Chief Postal Inspector may delegate any or all authority in this regard to not more than two designees at Inspection Service Headquarters.

(2) Except for national security mail covers, the Chief Postal Inspector may also delegate any or all authority to the Manager, Inspector Service Operations Support Group, and, for emergency situations, to Inspectors in Charge. The Manager, Inspection Service Operations Support Group, may delegate this authority to no more than two designees at each Operations Support Group.

(3) All such delegations of authority shall be issued through official, written directives. Except for delegations at Inspection Service Headquarters, such

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delegations shall only apply to the geographic areas served by the Manager, Inspection Service Operation Support Group, or designee.

(e) The Chief Postal Inspector, or his designee, may order mail covers under the following circumstances:

(1) When a written request is received from a postal inspector that states reason to believe a mail cover will produce evidence relating to the violation of a postal statute.

(2) When a written request is received from any law enforcement agency in which the requesting authority specifies the reasonable grounds to demonstrate the mail cover is necessary to:

- (i) Protect the national security,
- (ii) Locate a fugitive,
- (iii) Obtain information regarding the commission or attempted commission of a crime, or
- (iv) Assist in the identification of property, proceeds or assets forfeitable because of a violation of criminal law.

(3) When time is of the essence, the Chief Postal Inspector, or designee, may act upon an oral request to be confirmed by the requesting authority in writing within three calendar days. Information may be released by the Chief Postal Inspector or designee, prior to receipt of the written request, only when the releasing official is satisfied that an emergency situation exists.

(f)(1) *Exceptions.* A postal inspector, or a postal employee acting at the direction of a postal inspector, may record the information appearing on the envelope or outer wrapping, of mail without obtaining a mail cover order, only under the circumstances in paragraph (f)(2) of this section.

(2) The mail must be:

- (i) Undelivered mail found abandoned or in the possession of a person reasonably believed to have stolen or embezzled such mail,
- (ii) Damaged or rifled, undelivered mail, or
- (iii) An immediate threat to persons or property.

(g) *Limitations.* (1) No person in the Postal Service except those employed for that purpose in dead-mail offices, may open, or inspect the contents of, or permit the opening or inspection of sealed mail without a federal search

warrant, even though it may contain criminal or otherwise nonmailable matter, or furnish evidence of the commission of a crime, or the violation of a postal statute.

(2) No employee of the Postal Service shall open or inspect the contents of any unsealed mail, except for the purpose of determining:

- (i) Payment of proper postage, or
- (ii) Mailability.

(3) No mail cover shall include matter mailed between the mail cover subject and the subject's known attorney.

(4) No officer or employee of the Postal Service other than the Chief Postal Inspector, Manager, Inspection Service Operations Support Group, and their designees, are authorized to order mail covers. Under no circumstances may a postmaster or postal employee furnish information as defined in § 233.3(c)(1) to any person, except as authorized by a mail cover order issued by the Chief Postal Inspector or designee, or as directed by a postal inspector under the circumstances described in § 233.3(f).

(5) Except for mail covers ordered upon fugitives or subjects engaged, or suspected to be engaged, in any activity against the national security, no mail cover order shall remain in effect for more than 30 days, unless adequate justification is provided by the requesting authority. At the expiration of the mail cover order period, or prior thereto, the requesting authority may be granted additional 30-day periods under the same conditions and procedures applicable to the original request. The requesting authority must provide a statement of the investigative benefit of the mail cover and anticipated benefits to be derived from its extension.

(6) No mail cover shall remain in force longer than 120 continuous days unless personally approved for further extension by the Chief Postal Inspector or designees at National Headquarters.

(7) Except for fugitive cases, no mail cover shall remain in force when an information has been filed or the subject has been indicted for the matter for which the mail cover is requested. If the subject is under investigation for further criminal violations, or a mail cover is required to assist in the identification of property, proceeds or assets

forfeitable because of a violation of criminal law, a new mail cover order must be requested consistent with these regulations.

(8) Any national security mail cover request must be approved personally by the head of the law enforcement agency requesting the cover or one designee at the agency's headquarters level. The head of the agency shall notify the Chief Postal Inspector in writing of such designation.

(h) *Records.* (1) All requests for mail covers, with records of action ordered thereon, and all reports issued pursuant thereto, shall be deemed within the custody of the Chief Postal Inspector. However, the physical storage of this data shall be at the discretion of the Chief Postal Inspector.

(2) If the Chief Postal Inspector, or his designee, determines a mail cover was improperly ordered, all data acquired while the cover was in force shall be destroyed, and the requesting authority notified of the discontinuance of the mail cover and the reasons therefor.

(3) Any data concerning mail covers shall be made available to any mail cover subject in any legal proceeding through appropriate discovery procedures.

(4) The retention period for files and records pertaining to mail covers shall be 8 years.

(i) *Reporting to requesting authority.* Once a mail cover has been duly ordered, authorization may be delegated to any employee in the Postal Inspection Service to transmit mail cover reports directly to the requesting authority.

(j) *Review.* (1) The Chief Postal Inspector, or his designee at Inspection Service Headquarters shall periodically review mail cover orders issued by the Manager, Inspection Service Operations Support Group or their designees to ensure compliance with these regulations and procedures.

(2) The Chief Postal Inspector shall select and appoint a designee to conduct a periodic review of national security mail cover orders.

(3) The Chief Postal Inspector's determination in all matters concerning mail covers shall be final and conclu-

sive and not subject to further administrative review.

(k) *Military postal system.* Section 233.3 does not apply to the military postal system overseas or to persons performing military postal duties overseas. Information about regulations prescribed by the Department of Defense for the military postal system overseas may be obtained from the Department of Defense.

[58 FR 36599, July 8, 1993, as amended at 61 FR 42557, Aug. 16, 1996; 74 FR 18297, Apr. 22, 2009]

§ 233.4 Withdrawal of mail privileges.

(a) *False representation and lottery orders—*(1) *Issuance.* Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 3005, the Judicial Officer of the Postal Service, acting upon a satisfactory evidentiary basis, may issue a mail-stop order against anyone seeking mailed remittance of money or property by means of a false-representation or lottery scheme. Such orders provide for return of mail and refund of postal money orders to remitters.

(2) *Enforcement.* Notice of these orders, including any necessary instructions on enforcement responsibilities and procedures, is published in the Postal Bulletin. Generally, an order against a domestic enterprise is enforced only by the post office designated in the order. All personnel processing mail for dispatch abroad assist in enforcing orders against foreign enterprises by forwarding mail addressed to such enterprises to designated post offices.

(b) *Fictitious name or address and not residents of the place of address orders—*

(1) *Issuance.* Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 3003, 3004, when there is satisfactory evidence that mail is addressed to a fictitious name, title, or address used for any unlawful business, and no one has established a right to have the mail delivered to him, or that mail is addressed to places not the residence or regular business address of the person for whom they are intended to enable the person to escape identification, the Judicial Officer may, pursuant to Part 964, order that the mail be returned to the sender.

(2) *Notice.* (i) The Chief Postal Inspector or his delegate must give notice to