

mission in all public proceedings (such as developing rules, regulations, and procedures) who shall represent the interests of the general public.

(Added Pub. L. 109-435, title VI, §601(a)(4), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3239.)

CHAPTER 6—PRIVATE CARRIAGE OF LETTERS

Sec.	
601.	Letters carried out of the mail.
602.	Foreign letters out of the mails.
603.	Searches authorized.
604.	Seizing and detaining letters.
605.	Searching vessels for letters.
606.	Disposition of seized mail.

§ 601. Letters carried out of the mail

(a) A letter may be carried out of the mails when—

- (1) it is enclosed in an envelope;
- (2) the amount of postage which would have been charged on the letter if it had been sent by mail is paid by stamps, or postage meter stamps, on the envelope;
- (3) the envelope is properly addressed;
- (4) the envelope is so sealed that the letter cannot be taken from it without defacing the envelope;
- (5) any stamps on the envelope are canceled in ink by the sender; and
- (6) the date of the letter, of its transmission or receipt by the carrier is endorsed on the envelope in ink.

(b) A letter may also be carried out of the mails when—

- (1) the amount paid for the private carriage of the letter is at least the amount equal to 6 times the rate then currently charged for the 1st ounce of a single-piece first class letter;
- (2) the letter weighs at least 12½ ounces; or
- (3) such carriage is within the scope of services described by regulations of the United States Postal Service (including, in particular, sections 310.1 and 320.2-320.8 of title 39 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on July 1, 2005) that purport to permit private carriage by suspension of the operation of this section (as then in effect).

(c) Any regulations necessary to carry out this section shall be promulgated by the Postal Regulatory Commission.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 727; Pub. L. 109-435, title V, §503(a), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3234.)

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsecs. (b), (c). Pub. L. 109-435 added subsecs. (b) and (c) and struck out former subsec. (b) which read as follows: “The Postal Service may suspend the operation of any part of this section upon any mail route where the public interest requires the suspension.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109-435, title V, § 503(b), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3235, provided that: “This section [amending this section] shall take effect on the date as of which the regulations promulgated under section 3633 of title 39, United States Code (as amended by section 202) take effect [Dec. 10, 2007, 72 F.R. 63662, 64155].”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Chapter effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-9 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

STUDY OF PRIVATE CARRIAGE OF MAIL: REPORTS TO PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS

Section 7 of Pub. L. 91-375 required the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service to make a study of the restrictions on the private carriage of letters and packets and to submit a report and recommendations for modernization to the President and to the Congress within 2 years after the effective date of this section.

Provisions of section 7 of Pub. L. 91-375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by the Board of Governors and published by it in the Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of this title.

§ 602. Foreign letters out of the mails

(a) Except as provided in section 601 of this title, the master of a vessel departing from the United States for foreign ports may not receive on board or transport any letter which originated in the United States that—

- (1) has not been regularly received from a United States post office; or
- (2) does not relate to the cargo of the vessel.

(b) The officer of the port empowered to grant clearances shall require from the master of such a vessel, as a condition of clearance, an oath that he does not have under his care or control, and will not receive or transport, any letter contrary to the provisions of this section.

(c) Except as provided in section 1699 of title 18, the master of a vessel arriving at a port of the United States carrying letters not regularly in the mails shall deposit them in the post office at the port of arrival.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 727.)

§ 603. Searches authorized

The Postal Service may authorize any officer or employee of the Postal Service to make searches for mail matter transported in violation of law. When the authorized officer has reason to believe that mailable matter transported contrary to law may be found therein, he may open and search any—

- (1) vehicle passing, or having lately passed, from a place at which there is a post office of the United States;
- (2) article being, or having lately been, in the vehicle; or
- (3) store or office, other than a dwelling house, used or occupied by a common carrier or transportation company, in which an article may be contained.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 727.)

§ 604. Seizing and detaining letters

An officer or employee of the Postal Service performing duties related to the inspection of postal matters, a customs officer, or United States marshal or his deputy, may seize at any time, letters and bags, packets, or parcels containing letters which are being carried contrary