

BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2006

Docket No. R2006-1

RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
TO INTERROGATORY OF OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE
[OCA/USPS-96]
(October 4, 2006)

The United States Postal Service hereby provides its response to the above-listed interrogatory of the Office of the Consumer Advocate, filed on July 14, 2006. The interrogatory is stated verbatim and is followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

Daniel J. Foucheaux, Jr.
Chief Counsel, Ratemaking

Sheela A. Portonovo

475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260-1137
(202) 268-3012, Fax -6187

OCA/USPS-96. Please refer to the response to interrogatory OCA/USPS-16. The question framed by OCA in part c. of the interrogatory sought a percentage breakdown of all consumer complaint categories. The answer provided broke down the complaint data into very broad categories. One category in particular, “delivery and/or mail pickup,” comprises 89 – 90 percent of all complaints submitted. It appears possible from the further breakdowns provided in response to parts e., f., g., i., and j., that the broad category “delivery and/or mail pickup” can be further subdivided. OCA seeks such a further breakdown by means of this follow-up interrogatory.

- a. Please break down the “delivery and/or mail pickup” complaints into the 15 most numerous types of subcategories, in order of frequency.
- b. Please provide the number of complaints for each of the 15 subcategories.
- c. For the 15 subcategories, state each subcategory’s share of the “delivery and/or mail pickup” broad category.
- d. How does the Postal Service construct its complaint categories – by means of a coding system? A word “search” or “find”? Please explain. If a coding system is used, please provide a general description of the coding rules and procedures. Also provide the actual coding “rules.”

RESPONSE:

(a)-(c)

There are 12 subcategories within the Delivery/Mail Pick-up complaint category. Please note that some complaints may fall under multiple subcategories, and thus each subcategory’s share of the Delivery/Mail Pick-up category is an approximation. In addition, the ranking of the subcategories by frequency varies by the fiscal year and/or quarter. The subcategories, and the corresponding data, are as follows:

The Change of Address subcategory covers complaints related to mail forwarding and change of address orders. In FY 2005, 570,636 complaints fell into this subcategory (24.08% of total). In FY 2006, 117,417 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (20.01% of total), 99,900 during the 2nd Quarter (17.28% of total), and 88,141 during the 3rd Quarter (18.10% of total).

The Damaged Mail subcategory covers complaints related to uninsured, damaged mailpieces and packages. In FY 2005, 99,712 complaints fell into this subcategory (4.21% of total). In FY 2006, 27,057 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (4.61% of total), 29,944 during the 2nd Quarter (5.18% of total), and 24,811 during the 3rd Quarter (5.10% of total).

The Delay subcategory covers complaints that arise when a customer receives an item after the service standard. In FY 2005, 116,979 complaints fell into this subcategory (4.94% of total). In FY 2006, 30,655 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (5.22% of total), 33,747 during the 2nd Quarter (5.84% of total), and 26,117 during the 3rd Quarter (5.36% of total).

The Did Not Receive Mail subcategory covers complaints that arise when a customer's mail arrived with missing contents, was stolen, or was vandalized. In FY 2005, 514,614 complaints fell into this subcategory (21.72% of total). In FY 2006, 161,588 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (27.54% of total), 168,634 during the 2nd Quarter (29.17% of total), and 135,921 during the 3rd Quarter (27.91% of total).

The Mail Fraud subcategory covers complaints related to reported activities that use the mail to defraud the Postal Service or its customers. In FY 2005, 6,968 complaints fell into this subcategory (0.29% of total). In FY 2006, 1,435 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (0.24% of total), 1,353 during the 2nd Quarter (0.23% of total), and 1,310 during the 3rd Quarter (0.27% of total).

The Mail Pick-Up subcategory covers complaints related to outgoing mail that was not picked up. In FY 2005, 37,220 complaints fell into this subcategory (1.57% of total). In FY 2006, 8,939 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (1.52% of total), 9,498 during the 2nd Quarter (1.64% of total), and 8,328 during the 3rd Quarter (1.71% of total).

The Mail Returned to Sender subcategory covers complaints arising from instances where mail is returned, but the customer states the address is valid. In FY 2005, 231,017 complaints fell into this subcategory (9.75% of total). In FY 2006, 50,908 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (8.68% of total), 62,524 during the 2nd Quarter (10.82% of total), and 54,326 during the 3rd Quarter (11.16% of total).

The Misdelivery subcategory covers complaints related to mail that was not delivered as addressed. In FY 2005, 269,664 complaints fell into this subcategory (11.38% of total). In FY 2006, 64,584 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (11.01% of total), 67,848 during the 2nd Quarter (11.74% of total), and 56,188 during the 3rd Quarter (11.54% of total).

The No Delivery subcategory covers complaints that arise when no mail is received for two business days, or if it is a regular occurrence on a certain day of the week. In FY 2005, 364,425 complaints fell into this subcategory (15.38% of total). In FY 2006, 74,418 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (12.68% of total), 65,712 during the 2nd Quarter (11.37% of total), and 58,261 during the 3rd Quarter (11.96% of total).

The Requested Service subcategory covers complaints related to problems with any service requested by a customer. In FY 2005, 85,939 complaints fell into this subcategory (3.63% of total). In FY 2006, 21,519 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (3.67% of total), 20,981 during the 2nd Quarter (3.63% of total), and 22,011 during the 3rd Quarter (4.52% of total).

The Time of Delivery subcategory covers complaints related to late delivery of items. In FY 2005, 66,244 complaints fell into this subcategory (2.80% of total). In FY 2006, 26,951 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (4.59% of total), 16,177 during the 2nd Quarter (2.80% of total), and 9,873 during the 3rd Quarter (2.03% of total).

The Unsolicited Mail subcategory covers complaints that arise when customers receive mail that they did not request. In FY 2005, 5,951 complaints fell into this subcategory (0.25% of total). In FY 2006, 1,320 complaints fell into this subcategory during the 1st Quarter (0.22% of total), 1,707 during the 2nd Quarter (0.30% of total), and 1,677 during the 3rd Quarter (0.34% of total).

(d) There is no formal coding system for customer complaint categories and there are no coding rules. Rather, there are general guidelines on what type of complaint corresponds to each subcategory, which are fairly self-explanatory, based on the title of each subcategory. For example, the guideline for “Misdelivery” instructs that the subcategory applies to “Mail that was not

delivered as addressed,” and the guideline for “Mail Pick-Up” states that the subcategory applies if “Outgoing mail was not picked up.”