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

SPECIAL SERVICES REFORM, 1996

Docket No. MC96-3

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RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
TO PRESIDING OFFICER'S RULING MC96-3/22
AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO INTERROGATORY
DBP/USPS-T3-19 SUBPARTS (e) THROUGH (i)
AND (q) THROUGH (w)
(November 4, 1996)

Presiding Officer's Ruling MC96-3/22, issued on October 25, 1996, denied three motions and partially granted the fourth. This responds to the partial grant of the motion to compel responses to interrogatories DBP/USPS-T3-19 parts (e) through (i) and (q) through (w). Specifically, the Postal Service was ordered to respond "to the extent described in the body of this ruling." Ruling at 9.

The body of the Ruling more specifically states, at pages 6-7:

Accordingly, the Postal Service is directed to provide an institutional response to Mr. Popkin's request for copies of any general guidelines that govern the decisions of local postmasters to set hours for access to box sections, or to provide box holders with keys to postal lobbies. To minimize the burden on the Postal Service, it is directed to examine administrative manuals that have nationwide applicability to postmasters for such guidelines. It is also directed to ask the postal manager most directly responsible for national box rental policy and programs to identify any such guidelines of which he or she is aware. Finally it is directed to ask the Postal Inspection Service official most directly responsible for security policy and programs for postal lobbies nationwide to identify any such guidelines of which he or she is aware.

Counsel for the Postal Service discussed this matter with the identified managers and other appropriate personnel, and also conducted additional research. Only two regulations responsive to the ruling have been identified, and they are quoted in their respective entireties below.

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Both regulations appear in the *Postal Operations Manual* (POM).¹ The most recent issue is dated August 1, 1996, although the distribution pipeline apparently is not well filled so copies are not yet widely available.²

POM section 124.2, *Admission to Postal Property*, has subsection 124.22, *Identification*, which provides in pertinent part:

Except as otherwise ordered, properties must be closed to the public after normal business hours end.

POM section 126.4, *Retail Hours*, contains subsection 126.44, *Lobby Hours*, which provides in pertinent part:

As a minimum, customers must have access to their post office boxes during all retail service counter hours. Normally, separate post office box lobbies should remain open when someone is on duty in the postal unit. At the postmaster's discretion, when no one is on duty, lobbies may remain open to allow customers access to post office boxes and self-service equipment, provided that customer safety, security provisions, and police protection are deemed adequate by the Inspection Service.

These sections are consistent with the Postal Service's previous statements to the effect that hours of operation of postal lobbies are inherently a local matter.

¹ The re-issued POM was the culmination of several years of effort begun by the re-writing of the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) effective with Issue 46. Some regulations were moved into the Domestic Mail Manual Transition Book, with the expectation that they would emerge in the new POM (the next most recent version of which dates from 1984). The new POM thus completes the initiatives begun when the DMM was reorganized. It is available from Materiel Distribution Centers.


² Copies have been ordered, but not yet received. This response is based upon a review of the single copy now available in the Postal Service library.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

Daniel J. Foucheaux, Jr.
Chief Counsel, Ratemaking



Kenneth N. Hollies

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon all participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the Rules of Practice.



Kenneth N. Hollies

475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260-1137
(202) 268-3083; Fax -5402
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