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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Before Commissioners: Edward J. Gleiman, Chairman;
H. Edward Quick, Jr., Vice Chairman;
George W. Haley; and W. H. "Trey" LeBlanc III

Special Services Fees and Classifications

Docket No. MC96-3

NOTICE OF INQUIRY NO. 1 REGARDING POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS
IN THE ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF DMCS PROVISIONS
RELATED TO VARIOUS SPECIAL SERVICES

(November 14, 1996)



In addition to revisions to the Domestic Mail Classification Schedule (DMCS) reflecting substantive aspects of its filing in this case, the Postal Service has proposed several unrelated minor editorial changes.¹ The Commission believes these changes can serve as a starting point for broader improvements in the organization, format, and editorial presentation of the underlying DMCS, similar to those considered in the previous reclassification cases. Accordingly, participants are invited to comment on the matters set out below, and on related editorial or organizational issues that warrant consideration, no later than December 3, 1996.

The Commission contemplates publishing proposed revisions for comment prior to recommending specific DMCS language.

¹ See, for example, the proposed elimination of a gender-specific term in § 3.010 and the substitution of "ask" for "request" in § 10.021.

1. The DMCS Special Services numbering system differs from that used for the classes of mail. In addition, gaps in the series are left unexplained. Comments are invited on the advisability of the following changes:

A. Adoption of a numbering system for the Special Services more closely resembling that used for the classes of mail, such as a series beginning with 700 or 900.

B. Use of a standard editorial device, such as the notation “[Reserved],” where the absence of a service offering or related fee schedule leaves a gap in the numbered series.

C. Replacement of the heading “Classification Schedules” with “Special Services.”

Examples of the potential changes referred to in 1. A - C appear in Attachment A.

2. Editorial revisions and changes would improve the clarity of many of the Special Services provisions.² Comments are invited on the appropriateness of the following:

A. Establishing additional standard internal headings, such as “Restrictions on Availability.”

B. Developing a consistent practice regarding the main content and level of detail appearing under each heading.

² For purposes of this docket, “editorial revisions” refer to changes in existing DMCS provisions or schedules affecting basic presentation, content and clarity. The phrases “minor editorial change” or “editorial change” are used interchangeably to refer to matters such as stylistic conventions, basic terminology, grammar and punctuation.

C. Moving the post office box fee schedule for facilities serving academic institutions, which now appears in § 10.031 of the main DMCS text, to the rate schedule section, with an appropriate cross-reference (similar to that in § 10.030) in the main text.

D. Revising the manner in which prorated fees for post office rental in § 10.031 are expressed (consider, for example, the references to “Full semi-annual fee” and “1-1/4 semi-annual fee”).

E. Making minor editorial changes of the type noted in Attachment B.

3. Participants are invited to comment on the appropriateness of applying the following guidelines for implementing various editorial and organizational improvements. The Postal Service is requested to address whether it anticipates filing a request for reclassification within the next 6 months, of special or other services not included in this case.

A. Across-the-board application of a new numbering system, for the Special Services regardless of whether the underlying service or related schedule is substantively affected in this filing.

B. Adoption of editorial revisions in sections or schedules substantively affected by the Service’s proposal (or by the Commission’s enlargement of the docket), as noted in Attachment C.

C. Adoption of editorial revisions [*see* fn. 2] in sections or schedules not substantively affected in this filing, or deferral for consideration in a separate proceeding which the Postal Service expects to initiate shortly.


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D. Adoption of minor editorial changes in any section or schedule,
regardless of whether the underlying service is substantively affected in this filing.

By the Commission:

(S E A L)



Margaret P. Crenshaw
Margaret P. Crenshaw
Secretary

Supplement to Question No. 1

The following material illustrates one method of implementing the changes noted in Question No. 1. It replaces the heading "Classification Schedules" with "Special Services" and replaces the existing alpha-numeric series with a three-digit numbering system. It also indicates the absence of a schedule by inserting the notation "Reserved," along with a number.

Special Services

- [700] [Reserved]
- 701 Address Correction Service
- 702 Business Reply Mail
- 703 Caller Service
- 704 Certificate of Mailing
- 705 Certified Mailing
- 706 Collect on Delivery Service
- [707] [Reserved]
- 708 Domestic Postal Money Orders
- 709 Insured Mail
- 710 Post Office Box Service
- 711 Mailing List Services
- 712 On-Site Meter Setting
- 713 Parcel Airlift (PAL)
- 714 Registered Mail
- 715 Restricted Delivery
- 716 Return Receipts
- [717] [Reserved]
- 718 Special Handling
- 719 Stamped Envelopes
- 720 Merchandise Return

Supplement to Question No. 2.E.

Question 2.E. raises the possibility of making minor editorial changes. For discussion purposes, the following topics are put forth for comment. Examples cited here are illustrative only, and not an exhaustive list of potential changes.

1. Correction of grammatical errors and inconsistencies in punctuation (compare the use of “that provides” and “which provides” throughout the Special Services provisions).
2. Review of the accuracy and appropriateness of many of the references and stylistic conventions used throughout the Special Services provisions (compare, for example, the use of “prescribed” in § 222.32 with “specified” in § 222.41; note the repeated use of “sent under this classification schedule” throughout the Special Services provisions; consider, in § 5.010 and § 5.022, whether the “office of address” and “office of delivery” refer to the same office; consider also whether, in § 5.023, “notice of arrival” should be changed to “notice of attempted delivery.”)
3. Revision of terminology (for example, replacing “Second-class mail” in SS-1 with “Periodicals” and replacing references to “indemnity” in SS-9a and other places it appears with “compensation”). The Service’s interest in changing “rents” to “uses” is also open for discussion under this topic.
4. Elimination of superfluous language (such as the term “later” in § 3.080).
5. Standardized presentation of various fee payments (compare § 160 versus § 260 versus § 362).
6. Extension of the Service’s suggested elimination of gender-specific terms to other provisions (for example, revision of the phrase “for which he has not been paid” in SS-6, Collect on Delivery Service).

Impact of the Service's Special Services Filing on the DMCS

<i>Service or Class</i>	<i>Impact</i>
SS-1 Address Correction Service	Unaffected
SS-2 Business Reply Mail	Unaffected*
SS-3 Caller Service	Minor editorial changes
SS-4 Certificate of Mailing	Corresponding technical change
SS-5 Certified Mail	Corresponding technical change
SS-6 Collect on Delivery Service	Corresponding technical change
<i>Existing series skips to SS-8</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
SS-8 Domestic Postal Money Orders	Unaffected
SS-9 Insured Mail	Substantive change
<i>Note: Proposal adds new schedule (SS-9A)</i>	Substantive change
SS-10 Post Office Box Service	Substantive change
SS-11 Mailing List Services	Minor editorial change
SS-12 On-Site Meter Setting	Unaffected
SS-13 Parcel Airlift (PAL)	Corresponding technical change
SS-14 Registered Mail	Substantive change
SS-15 Restricted Delivery	Unaffected
SS-16 Return Receipts	Substantive change
SS-17 Special Delivery	Substantive change
SS-18 Special Handling	Corresponding technical change
SS-19 Stamped Envelopes	Substantive change
	Corresponding technical change
SS-20 Merchandise Return	Unaffected
-- Expedited Mail	Substantive change
-- First-Class Mail	Corresponding technical change
-- Standard Mail	Corresponding technical change
-- Periodicals	Corresponding technical change

Key

Substantive change	= significant change in a rule or policy
Corresponding technical change	= necessitated by a substantive change
Minor editorial change	= non-substantive change in wording, punctuation or grammar (other than that necessitated by a substantive change)

*Added at an intervenor's request