

USPS Report on PRC Rate and Service Inquiries for April 2010

The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 86 inquiries to the Postal Service in March. Customers received response on average within 10 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into three main categories:

- Delivery Services (43) – i.e., the time of delivery, forwarding, and method of delivery
- Customer Service (17) – i.e., hours of service availability of retail products and product tracking
- Policies/procedures (26) – i.e., privacy and Freedom of Information Act requests, obtaining refunds or exchanging postage, and suggestions

While many of the inquiries were customer specific, the following topics are being highlighted for their possible interest to a larger audience.

Return Receipts after Mailing - Provides the sender with a proof of delivery letter showing the date of delivery and image of the recipient's signature. If a return receipt is not received and the item has been delivered, the customer can initiate a duplicate return receipt inquiry for the item. Duplicate return receipts are accepted by the courts and other authorities as proof that the article was delivered, and carry the same weight as an original return receipt. To request this service requires a visit to the Post Office where it will be necessary to complete PS Form 3811A - Request for Return Receipt after mailing; payment of the fee, if it was not purchased at the time of mailing or if the receipt showing purchase of this service has been lost. The applicable fee is waived if you can produce a receipt showing the applicable return receipt fee was paid. Customers may choose to receive the Return Receipt after Mailing proof of delivery letter by fax, mail, or electronically. For detailed information on fees, go to www.usps.com/prices and click on "Extra Services Prices."

Apartment Mail - The main function of the United States Postal Service is to deliver mail. However, address hygiene is an area in which all customers can assist the United States Postal Service with processing and transporting items more efficiently. It is difficult and often impossible to determine to whom mail should be delivered to in multi-tenant apartment buildings without an apartment number. With the heavy resident turn over in some apartment buildings and because many apartment complexes have several hundred tenants, it is difficult for postal personnel to remember each tenant's correct apartment number. The Postal Service encourages the use of apartment numbers on all inbound and outbound letters and packages. For more detailed information on acceptable addressing formats, go to www.usps.com/ncsc/addressstds/addressformats.htm.

Retail Access - The Postal Service is expanding customer access where it is convenient for customers, both online and where they shop. Access has been expanded through partnerships with retailers and with other medium such as kiosks. Contract postal units offer most postal products and services in supermarkets, card stores and other retail outlets. These units are staffed by the host retailer, and most feature evening, weekend, and holiday hours of operation. Nationwide there are 2,500 Automated Postal Centers (APC) in Post Offices, many are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The APC is a self-service kiosk that gives quick, convenient access to the most common retail transactions. Whether through traditional "brick and mortar" Post Office locations, other retail locations, or online, the Postal Service will continue to actively promote increased customer use of efficient and easy-to-use retail access channels. For more information on retail access, go to http://www.usps.com/strategicplanning/cs09/CSPO_09_032.htm.