

# National Color Code Policy for Standard Mail

## Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure the timely processing, dispatch, and delivery of Standard Mail within established service standards.

## General Principles and Definitions

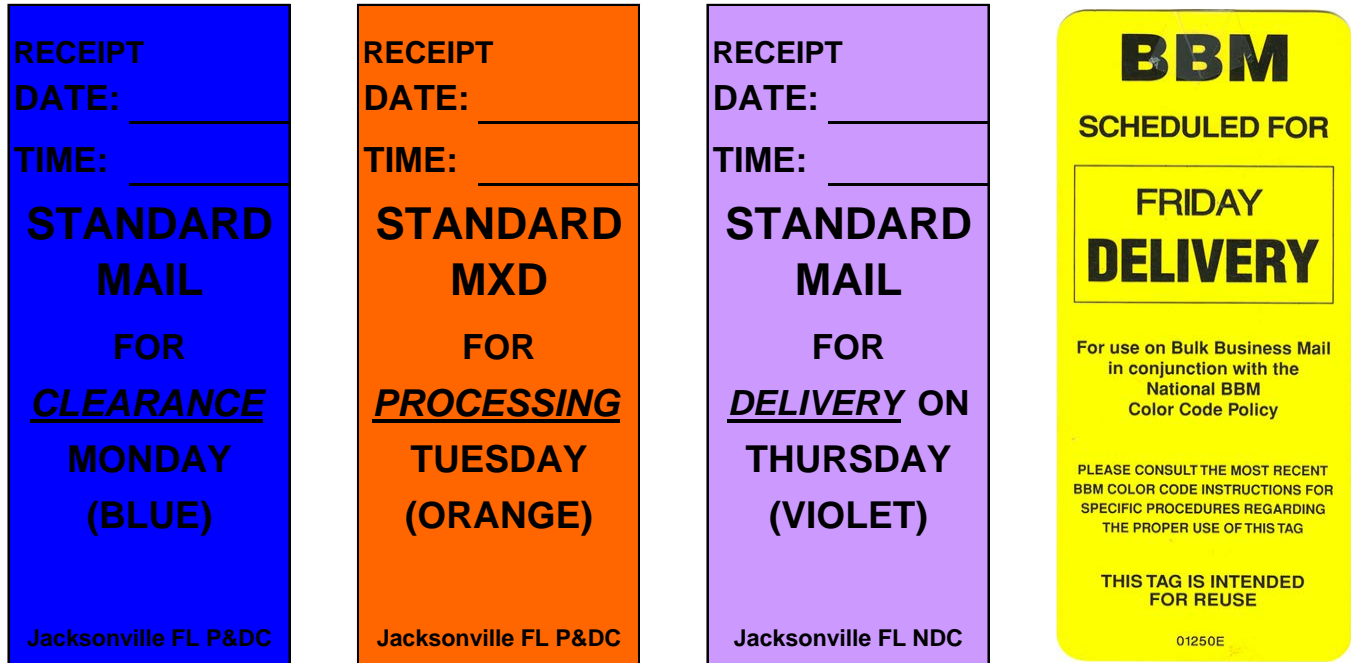
1. A service standard is defined as “a stated goal for service achievement for each mail class.” Service standards serve as the benchmark for measuring service performance. Color coding procedures provide a guide to help maintain service goals for Standard Mail.
2. The critical entry time (CET) is the latest time a minimal amount of mail can be received at designated induction points in the postal network in order for it to be processed and dispatched in time to meet service standards.
3. If the Postal Service accepts a mailing before the posted CET for that day, the day of receipt is designated as the arrival date. If the mailing is accepted after the CET, the mailing will have an arrival day of the following applicable processing day. The application of color code tags to Standard Mail is based upon the date and time of receipt in relation to the facility’s approved operating plan. In all color code applications, the actual calendar date and time of arrival will be recorded on each tag applied.
4. Outgoing Standard Mail is defined as Standard Mail that originates in one facility, and is dispatched to another facility outside the origin’s service area for processing and delivery.
5. Turnaround Standard Mail volume is defined as Standard Mail generated from an outgoing operation for processing and delivery within the facility’s service area. Once identified, the Turnaround volume carries with it the established delivery commitment. Delivery Color Code tags are applied to Turnaround volume according to each facility’s Delivery color code matrix based upon the original entry date and time of the mail, not the extraction date or time.

6. Destinating Standard mail is defined as Standard Mail arriving for processing and final point of delivery within the facility's service area.
7. If Standard Mail is mixed with a higher class of mail (e.g., First-Class Mail) in such a manner as it loses its identity, the Standard Mail must be considered upgraded and treated as the higher class of mail.
8. Standard Mail will be processed in sequence according to the color code commitment, with the oldest mail processed first. Delayed mail received from upstream facilities or operations should be queued to be processed in front of Standard Mail with a later commitment.
9. Holidays will not change the application of color codes.
10. Anytime Standard Mail is sent back upstream (back-flowed) for delivery point sequencing (DPS), automated carrier route processing, or other processing, the mail must retain the original color code and delivery schedule as if it had remained in the downstream unit.
11. When Standard Mail is discovered in a facility, upon or after its initial receipt, without a color code or incorrectly identified with multiple color codes, and it cannot be reasonably determined what the color code should be, the following procedures must be followed:
  - If Standard Mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance, processing, or delivery date has passed.
  - If Standard Mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance, processing, or delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
  - If Standard Mail is observed without any color code at all, and there is no other mail in the unit at the time of its discovery, then it is to be color coded with the current day's clearance, processing, or delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.

# Standardized Color Code Tags

All color code tags will comply with a standardized national format which will require employees to enter the date and time of mail entry on each tag. Clearance, Delivery and Processing color code tags will identify the facility that applied the color code tag. Delivery units may continue to utilize plastic color code cards to separate and place mail at carrier cases.

The following illustration provides an example of the standardized color code tag format in a reduced size, as well as an example of the reusable plastic delivery unit card.



## Application of Clearance Color Codes for Standard Mail

All outgoing Standard Mail received at Network Distribution Centers (NDCs), Auxiliary Service Facilities (ASFs), Processing and Distribution Centers (P&DCs), Logistics and Distribution Centers, or any other processing location will be color coded with a 1-day Clearance Color Code as listed in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 represents the Clearance Matrix for NDCs, and Table 2 represents the Clearance Matrix used by all other processing facilities. Any outgoing Standard Mail received at plants through their delivery units prior to midnight will receive that day's Clearance Color Code. The Clearance Color Code represents the day that primary processing and entry into the network must be completed.

Once applied, Clearance Color Code tags will remain with outgoing Standard Mail when dispatched from the plant to the NDC or Consolidation Gateway. At Tier 1 NDCs, Clearance Color Code tags will remain with outgoing Standard Mail when dispatched to a Tier 2 NDC or Consolidation Gateway. At Tier 2 NDCs, all Clearance Color Code tags will be removed from containers for outgoing destinations as the container is loaded on the trailer for dispatch.

Clearance Color Code tags will be applied by Tier 3 NDCs to all cross-dock Standard Mail volume received from Tier 2 NDCs. The Clearance Color Code tags applied to cross-dock containers must be applied at the incoming dock as the containers are unloaded from arriving trailers. Date and time of receipt for application of color codes to cross-dock containers from other NDCs is based upon date and time of yard arrival. Clearance color code tags will be removed from cross-dock pallets for outgoing destinations as the pallet is loaded on the trailer for dispatch.

Clearance Color Code tags will be applied to outgoing Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Mail identified at a plant or NDC for transport to a designated Consolidation Gateway. Consolidation Gateways are facilities identified in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) labeling lists L009, L010, and L011 as those facilities that receive and process Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Mail. Clearance Color Code tags applied at plants or NDCs for Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Mail will remain with the mail to the Consolidation Gateway.

Table 1

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
NDC	OUTGOING CLEARANCE MATRIX	
	COLOR CODE APPLIED	ONE DAY CLEARANCE
DAY OF RECEIPT		
SAT	PINK	SAT
SUN	WHITE	SUN
MON	BLUE	MON
TUE	ORANGE	TUE
WED	GREEN	WED
THU	VIOLET	THU
FRI	YELLOW	FRI

Table 2

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
P&DC/P&DF/ASF MPC/MPF/CSPC CSPF/L&DC	OUTGOING CLEARANCE MATRIX	
	COLOR CODE APPLIED	ONE DAY CLEARANCE
DAY OF RECEIPT		
SAT	WHITE	SUN
SUN	BLUE	MON
MON	ORANGE	TUE
TUE	GREEN	WED
WED	VIOLET	THU
THU	YELLOW	FRI
FRI	PINK	SAT

## Application of Processing Color Codes for Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Mail Received at a Designated Consolidation Gateway

Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Flat Mail or Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Letter Mail that is received or identified at a consolidation gateway will be color coded with a Processing Color Code tag. Consolidation gateways are facilities identified in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) labeling lists L009, L010, and L011 as those facilities that receive and process Mixed States Residue (MXD) Standard Mail.

1. Standard ADC Mixed States Residue (MXD) L009 flat mail entered or identified at a designated consolidation gateway will be color coded with a 2-day Processing Color Code according to the Processing Matrix in Table 3.
2. Standard AADC/ADC Mixed States Residue (MXD) L010 and L011 letter mail entered or identified at a designated consolidation gateway will be color coded with 2-day Processing Color Code according to the Processing Matrix in Table 3.
3. Once the Processing Color Code tag is applied, it will remain with the mail until processed at the consolidation gateway. The application of the Processing Color Code tag must be based upon the original entry date and time of the mail, not the extraction date or time.

Table 3

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
CONSOLIDATION GATEWAY L009, L010, L011	MXD MIXED STATES RESIDUE PROCESSING MATRIX	
	DAY OF RECEIPT	COLOR CODE APPLIED
SAT	BLUE	MON
SUN	ORANGE	TUE
MON	GREEN	WED
TUE	VIOLET	THU
WED	YELLOW	FRI
THU	PINK	SAT
FRI	WHITE	SUN

## Application of Delivery Color Codes for Standard Mail Received at Network Distribution Centers (NDCs)

1. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival date and time of the mail entered at the facility. Network Distribution Centers (NDCs), or any Annexes performing the NDC function must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail based on its arrival, even when such mail is entered into various mechanized or automated sorting systems.
2. Color code all destinating Standard Mail received at a NDC or Annex with a 5-day Delivery Color Code according to the Delivery Matrix in Table 4. Once a Delivery Color Code tag is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery. The application of the Delivery Color Code tag must be based upon the original entry date and time of the mail, not the extraction date or time.
3. SCF re-directs from a Plant to a NDC will be color coded to meet the Plant's SCF service commitment.
4. Delivery Color Code tags will be applied to Standard Mail generated from destinating operations at NDCs for downstream ASFs within their service area as listed in Table 5 below. The application of Delivery Color Code tags to downstream ASF mail must be based upon the original entry date and time of the mail, not the extraction date and time. Once a Delivery Color Code tag is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.

Table 4

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
NDC	DESTINATING DBMC, AADC, ADC, SCF, 3-DIGIT, 5-DIGIT, CRT DELIVERY MATRIX	
	DAY OF RECEIPT	COLOR CODE APPLIED
SAT	VIOLET	THU
SUN	YELLOW	FRI
MON	PINK	SAT
TUE	BLUE	MON
WED	BLUE	MON
THU	ORANGE	TUE
FRI	GREEN	WED

Table 5

Parent NDC	Downstream ASF
Pittsburgh NDC	ASF Buffalo NY
Des Moines NDC	ASF Sioux Falls SD
Minneapolis/St. Paul NDC	ASF Fargo ND
Dallas NDC	ASF Oklahoma City OK
Denver NDC	ASF Billings MT
Denver NDC	ASF Salt Lake City UT
Denver NDC	ASF Phoenix AZ
Denver NDC	ASF Albuquerque NM

**Application of Delivery Color Codes for  
Destinating Standard Mail Received at  
Processing and Distribution Centers/Facilities (P&DCs/P&DFs)  
Auxiliary Service Facilities (ASFs)  
Mail Processing Centers/Facilities (MPCs/MPFs)  
Customer Service Processing Centers/Facilities (CSPCs/CSPFs)  
Logistics and Distribution Centers (L&DCs)**

1. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival date and time of the mail entered at the facility. Processing Centers, Processing Facilities, Auxiliary Service Facilities, or any Annexes performing the function of a processing center or facility must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail based on its arrival, even when such mail is entered into mechanized or automated sorting systems.
2. Color code all destinating Standard Mail entered at a Processing Center, Processing Facility, Auxiliary Service Facility, or Annex with a 3-day Delivery Color Code according to the Delivery Matrix in Table 6.
3. Destinating Standard Mail received at plants from their Tier 1 NDC will arrive with a 5-day Delivery Color Code tag applied. The plants will maintain this 5-day delivery commitment.
4. Destinating Standard Mail received at plants directly from Tier 2 or Tier 3 NDCs will arrive without a color code. A 3-day Delivery Color Code will be applied to this destinating volume according to the Delivery Matrix in Table 6.
5. Once a Delivery Color Code tag is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery. The application of the Delivery Color Code tag must be based upon the original entry date and time of the mail, not the extraction date or time.
6. SCF re-directs from a Plant to a NDC will be color coded to meet the Plant's SCF service commitment.

Table 6

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
P&DC/P&DF/ASF MPC/MPF/CSPC CSPF/L&DC	DESTINATING AADC, ADC, SCF, 3-DIGIT, 5-DIGIT, CRT DELIVERY MATRIX	
DAY OF RECEIPT	COLOR CODE APPLIED	THREE DAY DELIVERY
SAT	ORANGE	TUE
SUN	GREEN	WED
MON	VIOLET	THU
TUE	YELLOW	FRI
WED	PINK	SAT
THU	BLUE	MON
FRI	BLUE	MON

## Application of Delivery Color Codes for Destinating Standard Mail Received at Delivery Units, including Post Offices, Stations, and Branches

1. The application of color codes to mailer entry Standard Mail is based on the arrival date and time of the mail entered at the facility. Delivery Units must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail based on its arrival, even when such mail is entered into various mechanized or automated sorting systems.
2. Delivery Units receiving Standard Mail drop shipments or Standard Mail directly from mailers for their delivery area will apply a 2-day Delivery Color Code based upon entry of the Standard Mail according to the Delivery Matrix in Table 7. Once a Delivery Color Code tag is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.
  - a. For eligible\* in-home date mailings, if the mailer-requested delivery date is later than the scheduled color coded day, the mail is to be color coded according to the last requested in-home delivery date.
3. Delivery Units will receive Standard Mail from upstream distribution facilities with a Delivery Color Code attached. This mail will retain the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.
  - a. For eligible\* in-home date mailings, if the mailer-requested delivery date is later than the scheduled color coded day, the mail is to be recolor coded according to the last requested in-home delivery date.
4. Delivery Units may continue to utilize plastic color code cards to separate and place mail at carrier cases.

Table 7

STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODE		
DU	DESTINATING 5-DIGIT, CRT DELIVERY MATRIX	
DAY OF RECEIPT	COLOR CODE APPLIED	TWO DAY DELIVERY
SAT	ORANGE	TUE
SUN	N/A	N/A
MON	GREEN	WED
TUE	VIOLET	THU
WED	YELLOW	FRI
THU	PINK	SAT
FRI	BLUE	MON

\*Eligible in-home date mailings are non-machinable, non-barcoded letters and flats that are entered at the DSCF or DDU as saturation, high density, or basic carrier-route.