

PART 2030 - COMMUNICATIONS

Subpart A - Correspondence and Mail Management Programs
Rural Development Field Offices

<u>Table of Contents</u>		
<u>Sec.</u>		<u>Page</u>
2030.1	Scope.	1
2030.2	Purpose.	1
2030.3	Objectives.	1
	(a) Correspondence management.	1
	(b) Mail management.	2
2030.4	Program responsibilities.	2
2030.5	Authority.	2
2030.6	Correspondence.	3
2030.7	Letters.	3
	(a) Informal letters.	3
	(b) Formal letters.	3
	(c) Multiple letters.	3
	(d) Form letters.	3
	(e) Guide letters.	3
2030.8	Signature authority and signature formats.	4
	(a) State Offices.	4
	(b) Area Offices.	4
	(c) Local Offices.	4
	(d) Signature formats.	5
2030.9	Congressional correspondence.	5
	(a) State Office.	5
	(b) Area and Local Offices.	6
2030.10	Telecommunication services.	6
	(a) Facsimile transmission.	6
	(b) Electronic Mail (EM).	7

<u>Sec.</u>		<u>Page</u>
2030.11	Informal correspondence methods.	8
	(a) Letters of transmittal.	8
	(b) Endorsement method.	8
	(c) Post cards and form letters (preprinted).	9
2030.12	General letter writing guides.	9
2030.13	Copy distribution.	9
	(a) Courtesy copies.	9
	(b) Copy distribution.	9
	(c) Legend.	10
	(d) Copies required for multiple letters.	10
2030.14	Correspondence control and follow-up.	10
2030.15	[Reserved]	10
2030.16	Automated data processing.	10
2030.17	Personal correspondence.	11
2030.18	Official Mail.	11
2030.19	Economy practices.	11
2030.20	Classes of mail.	12
	(a) Domestic Mail.	12
	(b) First Class Mail.	12
	(c) Priority Mail.	12
	(d) Standard Mail (Parcel Post).	13
2030.21	Special and other services offered by United States Postal Service (USPS).	14
	(a) Certified Mail.	14
	(b) Certificates of Mailing.	14
	(c) Form PS 3811, "Return Receipt."	14
	(d) Registered Mail.	15
	(e) Insured Mail.	15
	(f) Special Handling.	15
	(g) Federal Express.	15

<u>Sec.</u>	<u>Page</u>
2030.22 Mailing instructions, envelopes, and Official Penalty Mail Stamps.	16
(a) Use of pouch (batching) mailing system.	16
(b) Mail code on remittance envelopes.	17
(c) Envelopes.	17
(d) Preparation.	19
2030.23 Postage-due Mail.	19
2030.24 [Reserved]	20
2030.25 Withholding of Standard Mail during December.	20
2030.26 Zone Improvement Program (ZIP) Code.	20
2030.27 Official Mail Reporting System (OMRS).	20
2030.28 [Reserved]	20
2030.29 Metered Mail.	20
(a) Opening, closing, and relocation of field offices.	21
(b) Postal meter licensing.	21
(c) Meter replacement.	21
(d) Resetting "Postage-By-Phone" meters.	21
(e) Meter setting log.	21
(f) Spoiled meter postage.	21
(g) Premetered envelope.	22
(h) Meter malfunctions.	22
2030.30 - 2030.50 [Reserved]	22
Exhibit A- Informal Letter Format	
Exhibit B- Formal Letter Format	
Exhibit C- General Letter Writing Guides	
Exhibit D- Two-Letter State Abbreviations	
Exhibit E- Prestamped Commercial Envelopes	
Exhibit F- The Proper Way to Address an Envelope	
Exhibit G- Electronic Return Receipt	

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PART 2030 - COMMUNICATIONS

Subpart A - Correspondence and Mail Management Programs - Rural Development State, Area, and Local Offices.

§ 2030.1 Scope.

The provisions of this Instruction apply to Rural Development's State, Area and Local Offices (herein after referred to as field offices).

§ 2030.2 Purpose. This Instruction:

- (a) establishes Rural Development correspondence and mail management programs;
- (b) prescribes the responsibility for the administration and implementation of these programs;
- (c) prescribes the objectives and procedures for guidance in the preparation of correspondence and use of official mail; and
- (d) supplements the provisions of the U.S. Government Correspondence Manual (USGCM) to meet internal requirements. If requirements are different from the USGCM, Rural Development requirements will take precedence.

§ 2030.3 Objectives.

- (a) Correspondence management. The correspondence management program is designed to:
 - (1) limit correspondence to essential requirements;
 - (2) standardize correspondence practices, point out economies in its practices, and increase productivity by developing standards that speed correspondence preparation; and

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RD Instruction 2030-A
§ 2030.3(a) (Con.)

(3) improve correspondence from the standpoint of usability and readability.

(b) Mail management. The mail management program is designed to provide rapid handling and accurate delivery of mail throughout Rural Development at a minimum cost.

§ 2030.4 Program responsibilities.

(a) The Chief, General Services Branch (GSB), Support Services Division (SSD) will:

(1) recommend and implement policies and responsibilities for agencywide mail management; and

(2) provide assistance and guidance to field offices in accomplishing the objectives of the program.

(b) The State Directors, in their respective areas of responsibility, will:

(1) implement the policies and procedures as prescribed in this Instruction; and

(2) develop supplemental instructions as necessary to meet their needs in training and in establishing standards and control of a correspondence and mail management program. However, the prescribed formats or any basic provision of this Instruction or USGCM cannot be changed without prior approval from the National Office (NO).

(c) The State Office Mail Managers (SOMM) will be responsible for:

(1) the training of field office personnel in the application of this Instruction; and

(2) advising the State Director and the Administrative Programs Director, of any problems relating to correspondence and mail management in the field offices.

§ 2030.5 Authority. This Instruction implements:

(a) The Federal Records Act of 1950 (44 U.S.C. 3102).

(b) Federal Property Management Regulation 41 C.F.R. §§ 102.191 to 102.194.

§ 2030.5 (Con.)

- (c) United States Postal Service (USPS) Domestic Mail Manual.
- (d) Department Regulation (DR) 3060-1 USDA Correspondence Management Regulation can be found at <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR3060-001.pdf> for reference.

§ 2030.6 Correspondence.

Correspondence, as used herein, refers to the conduct of "Official Business" by means of formal and informal letters, telecommunication services, facsimile transmission, and other methods of informal written communications as prescribed by the USGCM. Exhibits are attached for the convenience of the users, illustrating text requirements, standard formats, and typing guides.

§ 2030.7 Letters.

- (a) Informal letters. The informal letter ("To": and "Subject": format) will be used for most correspondence in the transaction of daily routine business within Rural Development and to other Federal, State, and local government agencies. The informal format will not be used for correspondence outlined in paragraph (b) of this section. (See Exhibit A of this Instruction and USGCM Part 1, Chapter 1.)
- (b) Formal letters. The formal letter format contains an inside mailing address, salutation, and complimentary close, and will be used when the addressee would expect to receive a more personalized letter. This format will be used when writing to the general public, mayors, governors, foreign officials, independent agencies, heads of departments, and Members of Congress. (See Exhibit B of this Instruction and USGCM Part 1, Chapter 1.)
- (c) Multiple letters. The term "multiple letters" is used when the same letter is sent to more than one addressee and an original letter is required for each recipient. (See § 2030.13(d) of this Instruction for preparation of file copies.)
- (d) Form letters. Form letters are pre-written and the text is required by a particular RD Instruction and may not be altered.
- (e) Guide letters. Guide letters are examples to be used as a guide, which may be altered to fit the circumstances.

§ 2030.8 Signature authority and signature formats.

Redelegations of signature authority will be made in writing in accordance with RD Instruction 2006-F. No official is authorized to sign correspondence which exceeds the authority of the signer or which would be in conflict with Rural Development policy and procedures. In this respect, all correspondence sent to more than one State Director or State Office within Rural Development, and any correspondence which establishes policy, changes policy, or implements or changes a Directive or Instruction, must be signed by the Administrator or the official designated to serve in that position (except as otherwise noted in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section). A signed copy of ALL written delegations of authority will be made a part of the official record.

(a) State Offices. The State Director will make delegations of signature authority. In delegating signature authority to an "Acting" State Director, the State Director will authorize individuals to sign under the name and title of the State Director, using the "for" format. The State Director may also authorize individuals to sign routine-type issuances under their own name and title. (EXAMPLE: Administrative Programs Director.) However, all correspondence of a policy nature sent to more than one addressee within a State's authorized jurisdiction must be signed by the State Director.

(b) Area Offices. The Rural Development Manager is the regular signing official in the Area Office. Due to the staffing in Area Offices, redelegations of signature authority will be made in writing by either the Rural Development Manager or the State Director. The person authorized to sign in the absence of the Rural Development Manager will sign under the name and title of the Rural Development Manager using the "for" format. However, the State Director or the Rural Development Manager, at his/her discretion, may authorize the Rural Development Specialist or the Rural Development Loan Specialist to sign under his/her own name and title, correspondence concerning those subjects within his/her delegated authority. This correspondence should not impact either on policy or instructional-type issuances.

(c) Local Offices. The Rural Development Manager and (when authorized in writing) the Rural Development Specialist are the regular signing officials in the Local Office.

(1) Rural Development Managers may authorize Rural Development Assistants and Rural Development Technicians to sign routine-type correspondence under the name and title of the Rural Development Manager, using the "for" format.

§ 2030.8(c) (Con.)

(2) Rural Development Managers cannot authorize employees to sign correspondence, which requires the personal attention of the Rural Development Manager, as prescribed in Rural Development Instructions.

(3) Rural Development Managers are responsible for signed correspondence, and should use discretion when delegating signature authority to Rural Development field employees.

(d) Signature formats. The following signature formats are only authorized in Rural Development:

(1) Formal and informal letters. The name (in all capital letters) and title of the regular signing official will be typed on all correspondence. When an "acting" official signs, he/she will write the word "for" before the typed name of the regular signing official. Signature and title are typed flush to the left margin. (See Exhibit A & B of this Instruction and USGCM Part 1, Chapter 1.)

(2) Legal documents, agreements, and contractual commitments. When an "acting" official signs legal documents, agreements, or contractual commitments, the name of the acting official will be typed on the document, with the word "Acting" in front of the title of the regular signing official. Signature and title are typed flush to the left margin.

§ 2030.9 Congressional correspondence.

(a) State Office. Only the State Director or the Acting State Director is authorized to sign congressional correspondence.

(1) Reply prepared in State Offices. When the nature of the reply to a congressional inquiry permits disclosure of information or documentation under the provisions of RD Instructions 2015-E and 2018-F, the State Director will:

(i) reply within 7 calendar days from the date the congressional inquiry was received in the State Office; and

(ii) send a courtesy copy on letterhead to the Congressional Office (unless otherwise stated on the incoming correspondence).

RD Instruction 2030-A
§ 2030.9(a) (Con.)

(2) Reply prepared in the NO. The reply will be prepared in the NO when the congressional inquiry involves disclosure of information or documentation prohibited under RD Instructions 2015-E and 2018-F. In such instances, the State Office will promptly acknowledge the incoming congressional letter explaining that their letter is being forwarded to the NO for reply.

(3) NO request for information. On occasion, the NO must obtain specific information by telephone from a State Office to reply to a congressional letter. Every effort should be made to provide a response by use of telephone, electronic mail, or facsimile transmission within 24 hours. Should the congressional letter require a detailed field report, the field office should complete the report as soon as possible. The State Office will notify the NO as to the date the completed report may be expected.

(b) Area and Local Offices. Upon receipt of a congressional letter in an Area and Local Office, the Rural Development Manager/Community Development Manager will:

(1) promptly acknowledge the congressional letter, advising that the letter is being sent to the State Director for reply; and

(2) send the State Director the original incoming letter, a copy of the acknowledgement, and complete information to enable the State Director to prepare a complete reply to the congressional letter.

§ 2030.10 Telecommunication services.

(a) Facsimile transmission. This service should be used when the transmitted information requires immediate receipt in a distant city. Facsimile equipment is available for use between the National, St. Louis, and field offices via the Federal Telecommunications System (FTS2000) or commercial phone networks. This equipment will transmit an exact copy of the written word or other image on a page at the other end of the telephone line. Notify the NO, ATTN: Information Technology Division, of any changes in location of the equipment and/or telephone number used to transmit facsimiles. All correspondence sent by facsimile transmission requires the same clearance procedures and signature authority as other outgoing (hard copy) mail.

§ 2030.10(a) (Con.)

(1) Facsimile machines may be used between field offices for faster review of loan documents, more timely response to requests for personnel actions, resolution of public complaints, etc. They may also be used for more timely review of loan applications with banks and attorney's offices.

(2) When faxing information that contains the name of a borrower or other sensitive information, the recipient of the facsimile should be notified when the fax is being sent and asked to stand by for receipt. This will minimize the risk of nonessential disclosure of sensitive information.

(3) Form RD 2030-8, "Facsimile Transmission," and/or General Services Administration (GSA) Optional Form (OF) 99, "FAX Transmittal," may be used for facsimile transmissions.

(4) Facsimile machine usage is restricted to "Official Government Business." The use of facsimile equipment for personal use is strictly prohibited.

(b) Electronic Mail (EM). This is a service that provides communications between offices by use of terminals, processing equipment, and the multifunction work stations (MFWS). This media provides an office the capability of sending and receiving messages, letters, and other correspondence to other offices electronically. It can be used to send Administrative Notices, and is generally used to send Unnumbered Letters to all offices of Rural Development. It can be useful in responding to congressional and presidential inquiries as necessary documentation may be provided quickly from field offices.

(1) EM, either transmitted within Rural Development or outside Rural Development, requires the same clearance procedures and signature authority as any other outgoing hard copy correspondence. No Rural Development official is authorized to sign and send, by EM, any correspondence which either exceeds the authority of the signer or which would be in conflict with any existing Rural Development policy or procedure. EM is considered Government property. Its use is restricted exclusively to "Official Government Business." Therefore, the use of EM for personal use either within Rural Development or outside Rural Development is strictly prohibited.

RD Instruction 2030-A
§ 2030.10(b) (Con.)

(2) Field offices may not sign any EM that establishes policy, or implements or changes a Directive or Instruction; all such correspondence may only be transmitted by the NO. Field offices may be instructed to retransmit the aforementioned message or correspondence.

(3) State Directors are authorized to set procedures for the informal use of EM within their respective state.

§ 2030.11 Informal correspondence methods.

The following informal correspondence methods are simple to prepare and require a minimum of processing by the clerical staff. The use of these methods will speed the flow of mail and substantially reduce costs in correspondence practices.

(a) Letters of transmittal. Prepare a letter of transmittal only if official file copies are needed for record purposes and the material being sent is not self-explanatory. When the material is self-explanatory, a routing slip or OF-41, "Routing and Transmittal Slip," may be used. Appropriate notations such as to whom sent and the date may be on the file copies of the materials, which were transmitted.

(b) Endorsement method. When a simple acknowledgement or an informal comment is sufficient for reply, it may be typed or handwritten on the incoming letter, signed by the person making the acknowledgement or comments, and returned to the sender. If a file copy is needed, make a machine copy of the original letter and comments. This method cannot be used:

- (1) outside of the Government other than to fill a request for pamphlets or other printed stock items;
- (2) to issue delegations of authority;
- (3) to announce policy; or
- (4) to change an account/contract or when the reply of the endorsing office would change its basic record. (See USGCM, Part 1, Chapter 2.)

§ 2030.11 (Con.)

(c) Post cards and form letters (preprinted). The use of a form letter or post card will be prescribed by Rural Development Instructions and identified by form number. The use of either of these methods lessens paper work requirements and filing.

§ 2030.12 General letter writing guides.

Specific letter writing requirements are contained in Exhibit D of this Instruction and should be used whenever applicable. Appropriate abbreviations may be used as outlined in Exhibits E and F of this Instruction.

§ 2030.13 Copy distribution.

The "Official Agency File Copy" shall be designated as such in the legend area at the end of the correspondence. If more than one copy is made, the first copy should be designated as the "Official Agency File Copy" so that it can be easily located for initialing purposes. A reader file copy may also be used for reference purposes.

(a) Courtesy copies. A courtesy copy should be prepared only for those addressees who have indicated a need for one. EXCEPTION: In preparing congressional correspondence, a courtesy copy (prepared on white letterhead) is always made. Do not show carbon copy information on courtesy copies unless it is typed on the original letter (see paragraph (b) of this section).

(b) Copy distribution. Indicate "carbon copy" by typing "cc:" two lines below the signer's title or "Enclosure(s)." Distribution of file and information copies is typed only on copies retained in the originating office. EXCEPTION: A special "cc:" notation may be typed on the original letter (and all copies) when it is the intention of the writer that the addressee should know the other recipients of the correspondence.

EXAMPLE:

cc:
Honorable James B. Doe
Assistant to the Vice President
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

(c) Legend. The legend is typed under "cc:" information and appears on file and information copies retained in the originating office. It identifies the office, the writer's initials, and surname, the typist's initials, and the date the letter was typed. (EXAMPLE: B&I:ABRoe:al:4/30/92). When the writer is the typist, the typist's initials will be omitted. The telephone number or extension of the writer may be included in the legend if it would be helpful to reviewers and signers of letters. (EXAMPLE: RH:ASDoe:eg:720-9700:4/30/92).

(d) Copies required for multiple letters. Prepare only one set of file and information copies for multiple letters. At the end of the letter, under the "legend" or starting at the center of the page directly opposite the signer's name and title, type "Identical letter to:" begin the list of recipients, typing the names and addresses continuously on the same line.

EXAMPLE: Mrs. John P. Doe, 2244 Quincy Road, Tulsa, OK 74121
If more space is required, type the list on a separate sheet and attach the list to each file and information copy.

§ 2030.14 Correspondence control and follow-up.

The establishment of a follow-up and control system is a local decision and is best determined by the volume of correspondence processed. Offices may consider the use of any of the following optional methods or develop a system more adaptable to their office.

(a) Keep a log of incoming and outgoing mail, including dates for follow-up.

(b) On the reader's file copy of outgoing correspondence, indicate the date of follow-up and hold it in a pending file.

§ 2030.15 [Reserved]

§ 2030.16 Automated data processing.

Data processing is a valuable concept in correspondence management. Its potential should be developed to the fullest extent possible. State Offices are encouraged to develop standards for mechanizing correspondence for their own use and, wherever practicable, in conjunction with their Area and Local Offices. (EXAMPLES: Multiple letters, form letters, guide letters and paragraphs, State Instructions, and any repetitive documentation which can be stored for retrieval and revision.)

§ 2030.17 Personal correspondence.

This Instruction does not restrict in any way the right of an employee to correspond with any person or public official with respect to matters of concern to the employee as a private citizen.

§ 2030.18 Official Mail.

As prescribed in this Instruction, all mail used to conduct the business of Rural Development is "Official Mail." As such, Rural Development mail is considered Government property and is subject to all rules governing the use of Government property and the requirements of the Domestic Mail Manual.

(a) Mail, as described herein, includes letters, post cards, documents, publications, directives, forms, packages, and any other written communication received for distribution or dispatch.

(b) Mailings, which do not relate exclusively to Government business, cannot be sent as "Official Mail." Therefore, the use of "Official Mail" items for personal use is prohibited. The filing of job applications is considered a personal matter; therefore, the use of postage paid envelopes, Official Mail Stamps, or metered mail envelopes for this purpose is strictly prohibited.

§ 2030.19 Economy practices.

(a) Use pouch (batched) mail when mailing between Rural Development offices.

(b) Use the most practical and economical class of mail without jeopardizing the efficiency or the security of essential mail.

(c) Use special services only for security measures, when prescribed in Rural Development Instructions, or required by law.

(d) Fold material that permits folding to fit the smallest envelope to accommodate the enclosure instead of placing it flat in a large envelope. First Class Mail postage rates are based on the size of the envelope as well as weight.

§ 2030.20 Classes of mail.

To insure desired service and to eliminate the need for judgmental decisions by U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employees, endorse (mark) all mail larger than the normal number 10 envelope (business envelope) as to the type of service desired.

- (a) Domestic Mail. The term "Domestic Mail" is defined as mail transmitted within, among, and between the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories and possessions, or to any of the Armed Services post office addresses.
- (b) First Class Mail. "Official Mail" weighing 13 ounces or less. It is the fastest service (next to Express Mail) for Domestic Mail. If the First Class Mail is not letter size, make sure it is marked First Class Mail before it leaves your office rather than Priority Mail in order not to be charged the minimum priority rate.
- (c) Priority Mail. It is First Class Mail weighing more than 13 ounces. The maximum weight for Priority Mail is 70 pounds and the maximum size is 108 inches in length and girth combined. Packages must be so marked to receive priority handling and the return address must be shown on the address side of each piece to receive priority handling. In order not to be charged the minimum priority rate, only those packages over 13 ounces should be marked priority. We encourage the use of priority mail envelopes and stickers that are provided by the USPS.
 - (1) On envelopes, type (in all capital letters), stamp, or hand print the word "PRIORITY" on the address side of the envelope. On packages, either use a rubber stamp or hand print "PRIORITY" opposite the address label so the endorsement is easily seen, or ask your post office for a supply of Priority Mail stickers.
 - (2) When speed of delivery is essential, packages may be sent at the priority rate rather than the Fourth-Class Parcel Post rate. Unless it is endorsed "PRIORITY" it will receive Standard Mail (B) handling.
 - (3) Priority Mail postage rates, in most cases, are more than three times the rates for Parcel Post. The sender should determine that the speed of delivery is more important than the cost of the special service. EMPLOYEES ARE REMINDED TO MAIL EARLY to insure that expensive special services are used only when absolutely necessary.

§ 2030.20 (Con.)

(d) Standard Mail (Parcel Post). This service is available for packages weighing 1 pound or more that does not require priority treatment. The maximum weight for Parcel Post is 70 pounds and the maximum size is 108 inches in combined length and girth. On the package, either rubber stamp or hand print "Standard Mail" in large letters. Standard Mail is divided into the following categories:

(1) Machineable. Packages weighing 35 pounds or less are machineable if they can be processed by Bulk Mail Centers (BMC) parcel sorters. See FOOTNOTE* in paragraph (d)(2) of this section for exceptions.

(2) Non-machineable.

(a) Irregular size packages. See FOOTNOTE* for size-weight criteria.

(b) All Standard Mail packages weighing 35 to 70 pounds.
FOOTNOTE*: Packages weighing 35 pounds or less are normally machineable. However, if packages weighing 35 pounds or less meet any of the following irregular size criteria, they are classified non-machineable:

Weight:	Less than 8 ounces. Pieces weighing between 6 to 8 ounces are machineable if all sides are rectangular in shape and they meet the other minimum dimensions.
Width:	Less than 3 inches or more than 17 inches.
Height/Depth:	Less than 1/4 inch or more than 17 inches.
Length:	Less than 6 inches or more than 34 inches.
Rolls or Tubes:	Up to 26 inches long.

§ 2030.21 Special and other services offered by USPS.

(a) Certified Mail.

(1) Only First Class and Priority Mail can be certified. Certified Mail does not travel any faster than First Class Mail.

(2) Certified Mail provides a receipt and a record of delivery to the sender. The carrier delivering the item obtains a signature from the addressee on a postal receipt, which is kept at the post office for 2 years.

(3) Certified Mail should be used only when prescribed in Rural Development Instructions or required by law. EXAMPLE: Non-negotiable bonds and interest coupons will be sent by Certified Mail as prescribed in RD Instruction 2018-E.

(4) The endorsement for "Certified Mail" is placed above the address and to the right of the return address. If PS Form 3811, "Return Receipt," is requested, the endorsement on the envelope should read "CERTIFIED - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED." (See USPS Domestic Mail Manual Section 503.3.3.5)

(5) Certified Mail should not be sent to a post office box address, rather it should be sent to a street address.

(b) Certificates of Mailing. A "Certificate of Mailing" provides evidence that the item was mailed. The fee paid for a Certificate of Mailing does not insure the article against loss or damage. Certificates of Mailing are prepared by the mailer, except those who live on rural routes, (See USPS Domestic Mail Manual Section 503.5.0, Certificate of Mailing). Individual and Firm Mailing Book Certificates must show the name and address of both the sender and addressee and may show the amount of postage paid. Identifying invoice or order numbers may also be placed on the certificate. This is an excellent cost reduction service for anyone who simply requires proof that the USPS has accepted the item for mailing.

(c) Form PS 3811, "Return Receipt." A return receipt provides proof of delivery. The receipt will show who signed for the mail and date it was delivered. It may be obtained for mail, which is sent "Registered" or "Certified" by affixing the required amount of postage in addition to the registered or certified postage. It should be requested only when it is essential for the records of the sending office.

§ 2030.21(c) (Con.)

The USPS offers the use of Electronic Return Receipt at participating USPS offices. The traditional green card hardcopy receipt is not affixed to the mail piece. Instead, the sender receives a proof of delivery letter via e-mail with an electronic attachment that includes the date, time of delivery, and an image of the recipient's signature. The mailer can print the attachment or forward it to others. The cost for use of each piece of mail sent with Electronic Return Receipt is less expensive than the traditional return receipt. The use of Electronic Return Receipt is not available on mail addressed to APO/FPO locations and it may not be available at all USPS locations. State Offices should contact their local USPS office to determine if they are set up to provide this service. The service is available for National Office. (See Exhibit G of this instruction and USPS Domestic Mail Manual Section 6.2.1) (Revised 05-07-08, PN 419.)

§ 2030.21 (Con.)

(d) Registered Mail. It is the general policy of the Federal Government to self-insure all risks of monetary loss. Therefore, the use of registered mail for "Official Mail" is prohibited.

(e) Insured Mail. It is the general policy of the Federal Government to self-insure all risks of monetary loss. Therefore, the use of postal insurance for "Official Mail" is prohibited.

(f) Special Handling.

(1) Mail sent by "Special Handling" is given preferential handling to the extent practicable in dispatch, transportation, and expedited delivery at destination.

(2) The endorsement "Special Handling" is placed above the address and to the right of the return address. (See USPS Domestic Mail Manual Section 503.12.2.5)

(g) Federal Express.

(1) Federal Express is a service guaranteeing next day delivery. This service is used primarily for loan dockets, critically urgent mail and the shipment of damaged equipment to vendors. Each State Office should monitor Federal Express usage by Area and Local Offices to stay within their allocation.

(2) Federal Express airbills are prepared for each package. Preprinted information will appear on every airbill. Block 1 contains preprinted information: shipper's account number, address, and the internal billing reference information. Block 3 contains preprinted information on the third party billing. Only a few items will need to be filled out by the shipper. Under Block 1, fill in sender's name and commercial phone number. Fill in all information for Block 2 and under Block 4 "Services," check the appropriate box under the heading Government Priority Overnight. Area and Local Offices should also have their "Internal Billing Reference Information" with their office code preprinted, and under Block 3, "Payment" Block 3 should be checked and the State Office Federal Express account number should be preprinted.

(3) Federal Express will carry up to 150 pounds per package. The fee is based on weight only.

(4) Federal Express personnel will deliver express mail packages directly to the room number of the addressee. Packages will not be accepted in the Department's Mailroom. Therefore, the room number of the addressee must appear in the address section of the airbill.

(5) Overnight service will not be used on Fridays or the day before a holiday unless a record is maintained of why the package needed to be sent via overnight services and the record shows the name and telephone number of the person who will accept the package at the delivery address on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday.

§ 2030.22 Mailing instructions, envelopes, and Official Penalty Mail Stamps.

(a) Use of pouch (batching) mailing system. This system provides that mailings to, from, and between Rural Development offices will be accumulated and placed in a pouch envelope large enough to adequately accommodate the enclosures. To speed the flow of essential mail, it should be mailed on a daily basis. All pouch mail being sent to the NO must be placed in individual envelopes and addressed with addressee name and STOP code (see example). The use of a routing slip stapled to the correspondence without the use of a separate envelope is not acceptable.

Example:

JOHN DOE
STOP XXXX
WASHINGTON DC 20250-XXXX

(1) "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" identification on envelope. Material designated "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" will be placed in a separate, sealed, unmetered envelope identified as such on the envelope, and forwarded in the mail pouch to the designated Rural Development office. If the envelope is to be opened only by the one to whom it is addressed, "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY--TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY" may be shown on the envelope.

(2) Audit and investigation reports. The following audit and investigation reports and related correspondence will be placed in separate, sealed envelopes marked "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" and sent by pouch mail to the attention of the appropriate division or staff as shown below:

§ 2030.22(a) (Con.)

- (i) Audit Report: ATTN: Director, Financial Management Division (FMD), STOP 0707;
- (ii) Fiscal, disciplinary, or personnel matters: ATTN: Assistant Administrator for Human Resources, STOP 0730;
- (iii) Discrimination complaints made by Rural Development personnel, and discrimination complaints made by OTHER than Rural Development personnel: ATTN: Director, Civil Rights Staff, STOP 0703; and
- (iv) Investigation reports and related correspondence concerning OTHER than personnel or discrimination complaints: ATTN: Director, Financial Management Division (FMD), STOP 0707.

(3) Correspondence pertaining to Freedom of Information (FOIA) and Privacy Acts (PA). When sending correspondence concerning the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts by pouch mail to the NO, place it in a plain envelope and print or type "FOIA OFFICER, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SSD, STOP 0742, WASHINGTON DC 20250-0742," on the front of the envelope or "FOIA OFFICER, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE (RUS), STOP 1522, WASHINGTON DC 20250-1522."

(4) Correspondence pertaining to Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). When sending correspondence concerning the Federal Tort Claims Act by pouch mail to the NO, place it in a plain envelope and print or type "FTCA OFFICER, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SSD, STOP 0742, WASHINGTON DC 20250-0742," on the front of the envelope.

(b) Mail code on remittance envelopes. Show the field office mail code below the return address in the upper left-hand corner of remittance envelopes.

(c) Envelopes.

(1) Ordering envelopes and labels. Envelopes may be ordered directly from local, designated GSA contractors with the field office return address. Labels may also be obtained from GSA Customer Supply Centers. When ordering envelopes, refer to the GSA Federal Supply Schedule for printed envelopes. Three envelope styles are recommended: envelope numbers 201, 202, and 203. Printing format "A" must be designated in order to allow six lines of type in the upper left corner of the envelope. The exact copy you desire to be printed as your return address must be included with the Form AD-838, "Purchase Order."

(2) Address correction requested. State Offices at the discretion of the State Directors, may include "ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED" on their printed envelopes. The statement should appear 1/4 inch below the return address. Envelopes printed with "ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED" will not be charged a fee by USPS unless they are actually used for an address correction. When an envelope is forwarded to a new address, the USPS will issue a form to the sender indicating the new address of record.

(3) TYVEC envelopes. This type envelope is resealable and tearproof and should be reused as many times as possible. Turning TYVEC envelopes inside out and reusing them is an acceptable practice. This also includes the reuse of Federal Express and Express Mail TYVEC envelopes by turning them inside out. Tape should be used to seal the flap after the adhesive fails.

(4) Window envelopes. These envelopes should be used when applicable. Be sure only the addressee's name and complete mailing address, including the Zone Improvement Program (ZIP) code, are clearly visible through the "window" portion of the envelope. No part of the text of the letter or confidential information should be seen; i.e., social security number, borrower case number, etc.

(5) Non-standard surcharge. On first-class envelopes, a surcharge will be added to the regular postage if any of the following size limitations are exceeded and the weight is 1 ounce or less:

Length exceeds 11 1/2 inches, or
Height exceeds 6 1/8 inches, or
Thickness exceeds 1/4 inch, or
The length divided by height, is less than
1.3 or more than 2.5 inches.

EXAMPLE: Placing one or two pieces of paper flat in a 9 x 12 envelope.

To avoid the surcharge and additional postage required for mailing larger envelopes, fold all material that permits folding and use the smallest size envelope to accommodate the enclosures.

§ 2030.22(c) (Con.)

(6) Plain white envelope. These envelopes should be used when a response is requested and the response benefits those other than the Agency. The originating office should either type or stamp their address on the address side of the envelope prior to placing it in a larger envelope to be mailed to the recipient. Person(s) responding shall be responsible for providing First Class Postage, not Rural Development. (See § 2030.29(i) for an alternate envelope).

(d) Preparation. The address on the envelope should be typed in all capital letters, with no marks of punctuation, using the State two letter abbreviation, and the ZIP Code. Use the ZIP+4 Code if it is known. The attention line should be the first line of the address followed by the company name on the second line. The line directly above the City, State and ZIP Code line will be the address where the mail is delivered whether it is a post office box or a street address. Use standard abbreviations when possible. (See Exhibit K of this Instruction for further description.) The following is an example of how the USPS would like envelopes addressed:

ATTN: ADEL BAKER
XYZ COMPANY
144 BISHOP RD
BRANDY MD 20223-1115

§ 2030.23 Postage-due Mail. (Also known as "Shortpaid Mail".)

Government agencies must pay all postage due on mail accepted without sufficient postage. Field offices will use discretion in determining whether Postage-due Mail should be returned to the sender or accepted. Postage-due Mail may be handled in one of two ways:

- (a) If the mail is not deemed essential to Rural Development operations, it should be refused and returned to the sender.
- (b) In accordance with Section P011.3.1 of the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, Postage-due Mail may no longer be paid with penalty meter strips or penalty mail stamps, a postage due account must be established.

RD Instruction 2030-A

§ 2030.24 [Reserved]

§ 2030.25 Withholding of Standard Mail during December.

The USPS requests the withholding of Standard Mail printed material such as newsletters, etc., from December 1 through December 26 of each year.

§ 2030.26 Zone Improvement Program (ZIP) Code.

The ZIP Code is the last part of the total address and the use of the ZIP Code is a requirement. Therefore, all offices who obtain, furnish, record in any manner, or otherwise use an address, must include the ZIP Code. Offices, which do not have a National ZIP Code Directory, may access this information at <http://www.usps.gov/ncsc> or consult their local postmaster for any needed ZIP Code information. Use the ZIP+4 Code whenever it is available to speed delivery.

§ 2030.27 Official Mail Reporting System (OMRS).

The Pitney Bowes OMRS report details all transactions made on each Rural Development OMRS meter. The report is sent to each SOMM (except Puerto Rico) on a quarterly basis. Each SOMM will be responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the report in conjunction with their respective field offices. Discrepancies will be reported to the NO Mail Manager (NOMM). Each field office will continue to maintain a daily record or log of their transactions (i.e., daily meter readings) on the OMRS meters and inform the SOMM of any irregularities to ensure up-to-date information on any discrepancies that may occur.

§ 2030.28 [Reserved]

§ 2030.29 Metered Mail.

All field offices nationwide are authorized to use official postal meters unless the volume of outgoing mail is not sufficient to warrant leasing a basic stand alone meter (such as a suboffice) whereupon that office will be authorized to use Prestamped Commercial Envelopes. The postage meter key will be locked in a fireproof cabinet for safekeeping.

§ 2030.29 (Con.)

(a) Opening, closing, and relocation of field offices. Prior to the opening, closing, or relocation of any field office, the NO, SSD, must be notified 30 days prior to the opening, closing, or relocation. The State Office (SO) will contact the Agency's postal meter vendor and make all arrangements to have meters moved or deactivated. The SO will contact the vendor to have new meters installed. When an office using a postage meter moves to another town, the meter license must be adjusted.

(b) Postal meter licensing. A separate postal meter license must be obtained by the field office at their respective local U.S. Post Office prior to the installation of a meter. A postal license may be obtained by submitting PS Form 3601-A, "Application for a Postage Meter License," to the local post office. PS Form 3601-A may be obtained from the USPS. No fees are charged for obtaining the license. Once the license is approved, a copy of the approved license must be sent to the NOMM, SSD.

(c) Meter replacement. If a meter needs to be replaced and the remaining postage is transferred from the original meter to the replacement meter, the NOMM, SSD, should be notified. Postage will be transferred to a replacement meter only. It will not be transferred to a meter operating under a different license number.

(d) Resetting "Postage-By-Phone" meters. Offices having a "Postage-By-Phone" meter will set the meter over the phone lines, through the vendor's Data Center.

(e) Meter setting log. State Directors will be responsible for determining the need for meter setting logs in their field locations.

(f) Spoiled meter postage. Do not destroy spoiled or unused meter postage. Obtain a PS Form 3533, "Application and Voucher for Refund of Postage and Fees," from the USPS and complete it at the setting post office each time the meter is set. The USPS will credit the meter bill for the unused postage. The unused or spoiled postage should be attached to the entire unused envelope or enough of an unused package to insure that the package was not mailed using the meter imprint. No refund will be made in cash or applied to a meter.

(g) Premetered envelope. This envelope should only be used when certain that a response is forthcoming. Postage may be affixed by placing an undated meter strip on envelope #32 (special envelopes which specify "No Postage Stamp Necessary - Postage has been Prepaid by the Rural Development, USDA") with the required amount of First Class postage. The First Class postage affixed to this envelope is expended whether the envelope is used or not. Therefore, it is important that a response be fairly definitive from the recipient prior to using this envelope. The originating office should either type or stamp their address within the brackets on the address side of the envelope prior to placing that envelope inside of a normal business envelope and mailing it to the recipient to return to the Agency.

(1) Premetered envelopes cannot be provided to:

(i) bidders, contractors, or their affiliates;

(ii) private persons, non-governmental concerns, and organizations for mailing applications for Rural Development services or employment, financial remittances from borrowers, or other information, which they are required to provide by, law;

(iii) respondents required by law to reply to the Agency; or

(iv) respondents that will benefit from the return of the requested information (i.e., loan applications, etc.)

(2) If it is in the best interest of Rural Development and you wish to provide an envelope as prescribed in paragraph (i) of this section, use plain white envelope #824 (see § 2030.22(c)(6) of this Instruction).

(h) Meter malfunctions. If a meter malfunctions or other problems do not permit metering, use one of the following:

(1) Commercial Mail Stamps.

(2) Commercial Prestamped Envelopes.

§§ 2030.30 - 2030.50 [Reserved]

Attachments: Exhibits A, B, C, D, E, F.

oOo

[ON LETTERHEAD] Informal Letter Format

2 ↓ lines down from letterhead
December 1, 1993 (Added after signature)

3 ↓ lines down

TO: Rural Development
2 tabs Support Services Division
STOP 0742
Washington, DC 20250-0742

REPLY TO ATTN OF:

2 | lines

FROM: (Option **)

2 | lines

SUBJECT:

3 | lines to body of the letter

This letter shall be prepared on letterhead. It illustrates the informal letter format used throughout the United States Government. This format will be used to prepare most day-to-day letters in the transaction of routine business within the Department and with other Federal agencies.

Begin the body of the memorandum three lines below the last line of the subject. Single space lines in the paragraph and double space between paragraphs. Short letters of 10 lines or less, double space between lines and triple space between paragraphs.

The name of the signer will be typed on the fifth line below the last line of an informal letter, flush with the margin. If more than one line is needed for the signer's title, begin succeeding line indented two spaces. The entire signature element should not run over four lines. **When using FROM: There is no signature block at the bottom of the letter.

5 | lines

JOHN P. RUTHERFORD
State Director

2 | lines

cc: Area Director, Carter (May be typed on original
Local Supervisor, Grayson if so determined by writer)

(USGCM Part 1 Chapter 1 figures 5&6)

2 ↓ lines
Attachments

oOo

[FORMAL LETTER FORMAT ON LETTERHEAD]

3 | lines
↓
December 1, 2003

14 | lines down to show through window
↓

MR. JOHN G. EDWARDS
NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION
5906 WEAVER PLACE
HARRISBURG PA 15714

3 | lines
↓

Dear Mr. Edwards:

2 | lines
↓

This exhibit illustrates the format for preparing formal letters throughout the United States Government. The formal letter should be used when protocol dictates, or when the addressee would expect or should receive a more formal or personalized letter.

The date may be typed or stamped approximately three lines below the letterhead.

Left and right margins are at least 1 inch and not more than 1 and ¼ inches. Each part of the letter is double-spaced from the previous text. The signing official's name and title are typed at least five lines below the complimentary close.

Start typing the signer's name flush with the left margin on the fifth line below the complimentary closing. Please refer to Exhibit A of this Instruction for instructions in completing the signer's title.

2 | lines
↓

Sincerely,

5 | lines
↓

JOHN P. ROE
State Director

2 | lines
↓

Enclosure [DR-3060-1 14(q) (1)]

oOo

GENERAL LETTER WRITING GUIDES

The following paragraphs reflect letter writing requirements in Rural Development:

- (1) Letters replying to Rural Development borrowers. In response to borrowers/applicants and others seeking our assistance, it is the policy of Rural Development that our letters should reflect a personal interest, be friendly in tone, and understanding of their needs.
- (2) Letterhead. Official letterhead paper should be used for the first page of internal and external correspondence. If the letter is more than one page long, print the succeeding pages on plain bond paper.
- (3) Telephone number of office. When preparing correspondence to the general public, include the commercial telephone number of the office. The telephone number should be typed under the return address at the top of the letter or included in the text of the letter. This will serve as a convenience to the borrower/applicant in calling the office. (See Exhibit B of this Instruction.)
- (4) Two-letter State abbreviations. Two-letter State abbreviations may be used only on the envelope or in the address portion of the letter when using window envelopes. They should not be used in the body of the letter or in formal writing. (See Exhibit E of this Instruction and U.S. Government Correspondence Manual, Part 2, Chapter 5.)
- (5) "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" correspondence.
 - (a) The term "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" will be used in identifying nondefense classified material which requires limited access handling or restricted processing. No other term will be used.
 - (b) "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" will be typed two lines above the "TO" on an informal letter, or two lines above the inside address on a formal letter, flush with the left margin. (See §2030.22(a)(1) of this Instruction for preparing the envelope.)
- (6) "Special Services" Mail.
 - (a) Special service mailing instructions (Certified, etc.) will be typed two lines above the "SUBJECT" on informal letters, and two lines above the addressee's name on formal letters, flush with the left margin. When more than one instruction is used, type them continuously on the same line separating them with a dash. EXAMPLE: "Certified - Return Receipt Requested."

(b) If the space above the "Subject" or the addressee's name has been used for identifying "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" correspondence, type the special service instruction two lines under the signer's title, or under "Enclosures."

(7) Subject. Begin typing the "subject" of an informal letter three spaces after the colon. If the letter concerns a borrower, type the borrower's name and case number as the "subject," showing the last name first.

(8) Addressing letters. When using window envelopes for formal letters, the addressee's name and complete address, including ZIP Code, will be typed on the 14th line from the top of the paper. The address portion should not exceed five vertical typing lines to fit within the window of the envelope. On informal letters, start typing the name of the addressee opposite the "TO:" caption. (See Exhibit A of this Instruction.)

(9) Date. Date stamp or type the name of the month in full (do not abbreviate) and the day and year in numerals. If the date the letter will be signed is known, start typing the date:

(a) On informal letters the date shall be two lines down from the letterhead. (See Exhibit A of this Instruction.)

(b) On formal letters the date will be placed three lines under the letterhead. (See Exhibit B of this Instruction.)

(c) If the date is omitted at the time of typing, it may be stamped after the letter has been signed.

(10) Sender's reference (optional). On outgoing informal letters, the sender's reference may be used on an optional basis. The office symbol and/or name of the individual to whom the reply should be sent may be shown by typing "REPLY TO ATTN OF:" opposite the "TO:" caption, approximately 4 inches from the right edge of the paper. (See Exhibit A of this Instruction.)

EXAMPLE: REPLY TO ATTN OF: WWD (OR)
REPLY TO ATTN OF: WWD: B.E. Glenn

(11) Salutation and complimentary close. When writing a formal letter, the following will apply:

(a) Salutation. The salutation (followed by a ":") will be typed two lines below the inside address. (See Exhibit B of this Instruction.)

(b) Complimentary close. The complimentary closing "Sincerely" is generally used for formal letters and will be typed two lines below the last line of the letter, flush with the left margin. (See Exhibit B of this Instruction.)

(12) Response to incoming correspondence. The first paragraph of letters responding to incoming correspondence should show the nature of the incoming letter. In replying to congressional letters, include the constituent's full name, city, and state.

(13) Use of "RURAL DEVELOPMENT" Acronym. When Rural Development is mentioned in correspondence, the complete title will be spelled out. The acronym "RD" may only be used when referring to specific RD Instructions or Forms.

(14) National Office. For the convenience of field offices, a listing of names of NO division and staff offices showing abbreviations is contained in Exhibit F of this Instruction.

(15) Double or single spacing. Double spacing may be used when the text of the letter consists of one paragraph and is 10 lines or less. Double spacing should be used when preparing drafts with triple spacing between paragraphs. Otherwise, letters will be single spaced with double spacing between paragraphs.

(16) Contact reference in text of letter.

(a) In preparing letters to the public, other Government agencies, and Rural Development offices, include the name, address, and/or telephone number the recipient may contact for more information when appropriate.

(b) In written replies to oral or telephone requests, identify the requester in the text of the letter, or address the letter to the attention of the individual who made the request.

(17) Letters addressed to the NO. Letters addressed to the NO will be addressed to the pertinent division, including the STOP number. In addition, when the sender knows it, the correspondence may be sent to the attention of the individual concerned.

EXAMPLES:	Address for letters sent by pouch mail (prepare a separate envelope for each STOP code.)	DIRECTOR, BUDGET DIVISION STOP 0722
	Address for mail not sent by pouch mail and a label or separate envelope is prepared or a window envelope is used.	DIRECTOR, BUDGET DIVISION RURAL DEVELOPMENT STOP 0722 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW WASHINGTON DC 20250-0722

(18) Enclosure(s)/separate cover.

(a) When material accompanies a letter, identify it in the text or in the bottom notation as an enclosure(s).

(b) When an enclosure, is identified in the text, type the word "Enclosure" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of the signer's title. For more than one enclosure, use the plural form and indicate the number of enclosures as "3 Enclosures."

(c) When an enclosure(s) is not identified in the text, type the notation as indicated in the example below. Under the notation, flush with the left margin, list each enclosure on a separate line. Describe each enclosure by title or in as few words as are needed to identify it. If more than one line is needed to identify an enclosure, begin succeeding lines indented two spaces.

EXAMPLE: 3 Enclosures:
Form Letters Handbook
Plain Letters Pamphlet
Organizational Chart, U.S. Department
of Agriculture

(d) When material referred to in the text is to be sent under separate cover, type "Separate Cover:" flush with left margin, two lines below the signer's title or the enclosure notation, if used. List the material whether or not identified in the text. Send a copy of the letter with the material sent under separate cover.

EXAMPLE: Separate Cover:
Form Letters Handbook
U.S. Government Correspondence Manual - 10 copies

(e) If typing the notations flush as prescribed in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section with the left margin below the signer's title would require starting a new page, type them directly opposite the signer's name and title, starting at the center of the page on the same line with the signer's typed name.

(19) Avoid long letters. When a letter includes detailed information such as statistical data, listings, reports, etc., include this information to the extent possible as an enclosure.

(20) Succeeding pages. The text of the letter must be arranged to allow for a minimum of two lines to be carried over to the next page. When more than one page is required, print the succeeding pages of the letter on white bond paper. Starting with the second page, type the name only of the addressee exactly as it is shown on the first page, six lines from the top edge of the page, flush with the left margin. Type the page number on the same line, flush with the right margin. Continue the text two lines below the name of the addressee, allowing side margins of at least 1 inch and bottom margins of 1 inch.

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TWO-LETTER STATE ABBREVIATIONS

Federal Government agencies may use two-letter abbreviations of the States of the United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, but only in the address portion of a letter and on the envelope itself.

Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
California	CA	New Jersey	NJ
Colorado	CO	New Mexico	NM
Connecticut	CT	New York	NY
Delaware	DE	North Carolina	NC
District of Columbia ..	DC	North Dakota	ND
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma.....	OK
Guam.....	GU	Oregon.....	OR
Hawaii	HI	Pennsylvania	PA
Idaho	ID	Puerto Rico	PR
Illinois	IL	Rhode Island	RI
Indiana	IN	South Carolina	SC
Iowa	IA	South Dakota	SD
Kansas	KS	Tennessee	TN
Kentucky	KY	Texas	TX
Louisiana	LA	Utah	UT
Maine	ME	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Virgin Islands	VI
Michigan	MI	Washington	WA
Minnesota	MN	West Virginia	WV
Mississippi	MS	Wisconsin	WI
Missouri	MO	Wyoming	WY

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PRESTAMPED COMMERCIAL ENVELOPES

Prestamped Commercial Envelopes are available through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and may be used only in conjunction with the Official Business of Rural Development.

Prestamped Commercial Envelopes.

- (a) Prestamped commercial envelopes can be ordered by State Offices in addition to the commercial Mail Stamps to be used at times when equipment is out of order.
- (b) Each State Office will be responsible for ordering the prestamped envelopes. There are two options: via the internet at www.usps.com or purchasing at the local post office. The prestamped commercial envelopes must be ordered with the return address of the field office, which will use the envelope.
- (c) The prestamped commercial envelopes are accountable items and must be treated the same as cash. An audit system must be in place to account for the envelopes.

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THE PROPER WAY TO ADDRESS AN ENVELOPE

**ACME COMPANY
ATTN: MR JOHN DOE
PO BOX 850
BOZEMAN MT 59771-0850**

This box depicts the suggested address area as outlined in the Domestic Mail Manual.

This envelope will be delivered to the address that appears on the line directly above the City, State, and ZIP Code line of the address. In this case, the envelope will be delivered to the post office box.

Also, please note the way the address is constructed. The address appears in all capital letters, with no punctuation, the State abbreviation is used, and the ZIP+4 Code is also shown. The attention line appears one line below the company name. This is the format that the United States Postal Service recommends all mailers use to take advantage of their automated systems. Please follow this format in all correspondence.

NOTE: Nothing should appear below the City, State, and ZIP Code line. This enables the Post Office to bar code the mail for a more efficient delivery.

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ELECTRONIC RETURN RECEIPT

Directions for sending out Electronic Certified Return Receipt

1. Fill out the PS Form 3800 "Certified Mail Receipt," which can be found at <http://www.usps.com>.
2. Total up the postage and fees (postage plus .85 for the electronic fee), then type ".85-electronic," under return receipt fee.
3. Write down the Certified Mail Receipt number for your records.
4. Mail the item as usual.
5. On the next business day, log into <http://www.usps.com>. Click on "Track & Confirm," then type in the Certified Mail Receipt number and click on "Go."
6. If the item mailed was accepted by the recipient, a link will appear which will allow access to view and print the signed receipt.

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