

## USPS Report on PRC Rate and Service Inquiries for May, 2009

The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 22 inquiries to the Postal Service in May. Customers received responses on average within 11 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into three main categories:

- Delivery services (7) – i.e., the time of delivery, forwarding, and method of delivery.
- Customer services (5) – i.e., hours of service, availability of retail products, and product tracking.
- Policies/procedures (10) – 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. The references to the Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service - Domestic Mail Manual are accessible on the Postal Service's Web site at [pe.usps.com](http://pe.usps.com).

Delivery - The delivery of mail is provided according to USPS policies and procedures, the characteristics of the area to be served, and the methods needed to provide adequate service. Customers must keep the approach to their mailboxes clear of obstructions to allow safe access for delivery. Safety always comes first. If a letter carrier believes a delivery point to be unsafe, the customer may be asked to pick up his or her mail at the Post Office. Changes in the type of delivery authorized for a delivery point may be considered if service by existing methods imposes an extreme physical hardship on the customer. Domestic Mail Manual, Section 508, Recipient Services.

Forwarding – The Postal Service handles approximately 46 million change of address requests each year. With few exceptions, First-Class Mail will be forwarded, free of charge, for one year. Magazines and periodicals are an exception and will only be forwarded for 60 days. Pay particular attention when completing the change of address order to indicate whether the move is for an individual or for the family. Selecting the “family” option will result in all of the mail for the same last name being forwarded to the new address. Depending on the distance of the move, customers can expect to receive mail sent to their previous address in 7 – 10 business days. To expedite the process, local Post Offices have Post Cards that can be used to notify people and businesses of the new address. Notifying people at least two weeks in advance of the move can help make sure that mail arrives without delay at the new address. More information on forwarding of mail is contained in the Domestic Mail Manual, Section 507.2, Forwarding.

Post Office boxes – Customer address information is protected under the Privacy Act to include Post Office boxes that are used for personal or business purposes. Collected information is shared in very limited circumstances as required or allowed by law—to a congressional office on your behalf; to financial entities regarding financial transaction issues; to a USPS auditor; to entities, including law enforcement, as required by law or in legal proceedings; to customs agencies relating to outgoing international mail; to contractors and other entities to fulfill your product or service; or with your consent. Customers can obtain more complete information on the Postal Service's privacy policy at [www.usps.com/privacyoffice](http://www.usps.com/privacyoffice).

Money orders – After a domestic money order has been issued, customers can obtain payment information by completing a PS Form 6401, *Money Order Inquiry*, and paying the appropriate fee. A separate form and separate fee is required for each money order upon which an inquiry is being made. Further information on how money orders are handled can be found in Domestic Mail Manual, Section 503.14.

Customers can also access answers to frequently-asked questions on rates and service and contact the Postal Service directly at [www.usps.com/customerservice/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/customerservice/welcome.htm)