

USPS Report on PRC Rate and Service Inquiries for October 2009

Postal Regulatory Commission

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The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 53 inquiries to the Postal Service in October. Customers received responses on average within 14 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into three main categories:

- Delivery services (26) – i.e., the time of delivery, forwarding, and method of delivery.
- Customer services (9) – i.e., hours of service, availability of retail products, and product tracking.
- Policies/procedures (18) – 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:

First-Class Mail International Classification - The First-Class Mail International classification encompasses all categories of international mail that before May 14, 2007, were categorized as airmail letter-post and economy letter-post, postcards, printed matter, and small packages that were formerly categorized as LC (letters and cards) and AO (other articles).

The weight limit for a letter-size First-Class Mail International mailpiece is 3.5 ounces. Letter-size items exceeding 3.5 ounces are charged the First-Class Mail International flat-size (large envelope) price. The weight limit for a First-Class Mail International flats and packages (small packet) is 4 pounds. First-Class Mail International items may contain any mailable matter that is not hazardous or prohibited by the destination country, and at the sender's option, they may be prepared in the form of a "self-mailer" (i.e. without being enclosed in an envelope or wrapper). More information regarding the physical characteristics, standards and weight limits of first-class mail can be found online in the International Mail Manual at http://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc2_016.htm.

First-Class Mail International can not be tracked or traced and does not receive scanning in the foreign country. Global Express guaranteed, Express Mail International, Express Mail International with Guarantee, Registered Mail and insured or ordinary parcels do receive scanning. Additional information is available at http://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc9_002.htm. Inquiries are not accepted for First-Class Mail International ordinary letters, Priority Mail International flat-rate envelopes, Priority Mail International small flat-rate boxes, or M-bags. Customers must wait a reasonable amount of time for an international item to be delivered in the foreign country before initiating an inquiry.

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Contract Postal Units (CPUs) - The Postal Service has 33,000 retail locations. In today's fast paced society these locations cannot keep pace with the needs of the consumer in a 24/7 world. The Postal Service is aggressively seeking to expand its reach to the consumer where they live, work, and shop.

The Postal Service has used CPUs as a way to provide additional access to Postal products and services for over 100 years. The program has over 4,000 CPUs across the United States. CPUs offer the general public alternate access to Postal Services after normal business hours where they live, work and shop. These locations are typically in retail establishments under contract to the Postal Service and are staffed by the retailer's employees. CPUs offer all the regular services available in a Post Office with the

exception of Post Office Boxes and money orders. This includes domestic and international mail as well as insurance, delivery and Signature Confirmation and other extra services. CPUs sell postal products and services exclusively. In addition, CPUs cannot have private Post Office Boxes.

The supplier sets hours of operation in consultation with the local Post Office, but they should be in excess of the hours of operation of a traditional Post Office. Additional information is available online at <http://www.usps.com/suppliers/howto/contractpostalunit.htm>.