

6 Delivery Services

632

Mail Receptacles

632.1 Customer Obligation

632.11 Responsibilities

Appropriate mail receptacles must be provided for the receipt of mail. The type of mail receptacle depends on the mode of delivery in place. Purchase, installation, and maintenance of mail receptacles are the responsibility of the customer. Appropriate locations for installation should be verified with local Postmasters. Customer obligations are as follows:

- a. In locations where door delivery has been authorized, customers must provide either house-mounted boxes that provide adequate protection and security for the mail and that are approved by the local Postmaster, or they must provide door slots (see [632.3](#)).
- b. If curblane delivery is authorized, customers must erect curb-mounted receptacles that comply with USPS-STD-7c (see [632.5](#)).
- c. If sidewalk delivery is authorized, customers must erect sidewalk-mounted receptacles that comply with USPS-STD-7c (see [632.5](#)).
- d. If centralized delivery is authorized, customers must install mail receptacles that comply with USPS STD 4C Wallmounted Mail Receptacles or USPSB1118, Postal Service specification, Cluster Box Units (see [632.6](#)).

Note: There is no local authority for the use of or approval of unauthorized centralized delivery equipment or centralized delivery systems. Contact Engineering or Delivery Post Office Operations at Headquarters for any necessary assistance.

632.12 Exception

The Postal Service may elect, under certain conditions, to purchase, install, and maintain curb-mounted mail receptacles or cluster box units.

632.13 Receptacles Not Required

Business complexes are not required to provide mail receptacles where door delivery was approved and authorized by the Postal Service and businesses are open to receive mail. If the offices are not open when the carrier arrives on normal service days, centralized mail receptacles must be provided.

632.14 Approach to Mailbox

The customer is responsible for keeping the approach to his or her mailbox clear to facilitate delivery. Where the approach to the mail receptacle located at the curb is temporarily blocked by a parked vehicle during normal delivery hours for the area, or snow or ice hampers the approach to the mailbox, the

carrier normally dismounts to make delivery. If the carrier continually experiences a problem in serving curblin boxes and where the customer is able to control on-street parking in front of his or her mailbox but does not take prompt corrective action after being properly notified, the postmaster may, with the approval of the district manager, withdraw delivery service.

632.2 **Keys to Customer's Private Mail Receptacle**

632.21 **General**

Carriers are prohibited from accepting keys for locks on private mail receptacles, buildings, or offices, except where an electromechanical door lock system or a key keeper box located within convenient reach of the door is used. Both devices must incorporate an Arrow lock to access the key or device needed to gain entry to the building. If customers place locks on their receptacles, the receptacles must have slots large enough to accommodate their normal daily mail volume so that delivery may be made by the carrier without using a key.

632.22 **Locks and Keys**

The Postal Service is responsible for providing every customer a compartment lock and three keys to his or her postal-owned Cluster Box Unit (CBU). No key deposits are required; advise customers that they may duplicate their keys at no expense to the Postal Service. Postal managers must take the following actions in issuing and controlling locks and keys for postal-owned CBUs:

- a. Give all compartment keys to customers with a notice stating that the Postal Service keeps no duplicate keys and if they lose all the keys, the Postal Service will have to install a new lock at the customer's expense.
- b. If customers lose their keys, arrange for the repairs and charge the customer accordingly.
- c. Request that customers return all compartment keys to the Post Office when they move from their residence. When a customer moves, the Post Office should change the lock before reissuing the compartment. The new customer is not charged for the first lock and keys even though the Postal Service replaced it.
- d. When new centralized delivery equipment is installed, the keys may either be taped to the inside of the receptacle until the compartment is issued, or stored at the Post Office. A suggested method of storage is to use P-570 envelopes labeled with address, compartment number, CBU location, and CBU identifying number.

Note: The builder or property owner is responsible for providing lock and key service for privately owned CBUs.

632.3 **Door Slot Specifications**

The clear rectangular opening in the outside slot plate must be at least 1-1/2 inches wide and 7 inches long. The slot must have a flap, hinged at the top if placed horizontally or hinged on the side away from the hinge side of the door if placed vertically. When an inside hood is used to provide greater privacy, the hooded part must not be below the bottom line of the slot in the outside plate if placed horizontally or beyond the side line of the slot in the outside plate nearest the hinge edge of the door if placed vertically. The hood at its greatest projection must not be less than 2-1/16 inches beyond the inside face of the door. Door slots must be placed no less than 30 inches above the finished floor line.

632.527 **Locks**

The use of locks, locking devices, or inserts on curbside mailboxes on rural and highway contract routes is prohibited. See the list of curbside mailbox manufacturers for approved locking style mailboxes (a current listing of approved manufacturers and models can be obtained from the office listed in section [632.511](#)). The Postal Service does not allow carriers to open locked boxes and does not accept keys for this purpose.

632.53 **Nonconforming Mailboxes**

Carriers must report to the postmaster any existing mailboxes that no longer conform to postal regulations. The postmaster sends PS Form 4056, *Your Mailbox Needs Attention*, to the owners of these boxes to request that they remedy the irregularities or defects. All newly installed or replacement mailboxes must be approved models in accordance with USPS-STD-7. A

current listing of approved manufacturers and models can be obtained from the office listed in section [632.511](#).

632.54 **State and Local Regulations**

Some states have enacted laws that are more stringent and specific about the type of mailbox that may be used, the post or support that must be used to mount the mailbox, and the location of the delivery equipment. Regulations and recommendations published here might not reflect appropriate requirements for your area. When providing guidance to the general public concerning mailbox placement and replacement, advise them not only of postal regulations but also of any mailbox regulations that you know have been enacted by state or local authorities.

632.6 **Apartment House Receptacles**

632.61 **General**

Specifications for construction and approval procedures for manufacturers are covered in USPS STD 4C (RDD), Wallmounted Mail Receptacles. Individuals or firms interested in the manufacture of apartment house mailboxes should write to:

ENGINEERING
IP DELIVERY & RETAIL SYSTEMS
US POSTAL SERVICE
8403 LEE HWY, MERRIFIELD VA 22082-8101

632.62 **Installation**

632.621 **General**

Owners and managers of apartment houses, or other multi-unit dwellings with obsolete apartment house mail receptacles should install up-to-date receptacles currently approved by the Postal Service to ensure safety of access and security of the mail. When such buildings are substantially renovated or remodeled, or when box locations change, obsolete receptacles should be replaced with currently approved receptacles.

632.622 **Location and Arrangement**

Regulations for the location and arrangement of receptacles are subject to Postal Service approval as follows:

- a. All new or remodeled apartment houses can only install USPS-approved 4C equipment. When installing this equipment, a requirement is to have at least one parcel locker for every five customer mail compartments. For those buildings with a minimum of five mail compartments, there must be at least one parcel locker installed.
- b. Receptacles and parcel lockers in apartment houses should be located reasonably close to the entrance in vestibules, halls, or lobbies. The carriers must be able to serve the boxes without interference from swinging or open doors. The area must be adequately lighted to afford the best protection to the mail and to let carriers read addresses on mail and names on boxes without difficulty.
- c. Installation of standard, approved apartment receptacles in exterior walls of buildings may be authorized, provided that they are not installed directly on the street or a public sidewalk. Wherever possible, keep at least 15 feet between the boxes and the street or sidewalk; the location should be clearly visible from one or more apartment windows. A canopy must be provided, and it must be designed and located to afford maximum protection from the weather, including driving rains. In addition, adequate night lighting must be installed.

632.623 **Access to Rear-Loading of Horizontal-Type Receptacles**

Carrier access to the rear area of mailrooms containing rear-loading mailbox panel(s) shall be provided via a secure access door fitted with an ANSI 156.13 F15 lock. A security door, frame, and the F15 lock shall be selected and installed in accordance with all the requirements for residential mailrooms as specified in Handbook RE-5, *Building and Site Security Requirements*, Chapter 3, and in Central Delivery Guidelines, Section 10. A key to the door lock must be available to the carrier via a key keeper manufactured and installed in accordance with United States Postal Service Specification for Key Keepers, USPS-B-3180. The rear of the mailbox panel(s) must have a door or cover in accordance with USPS STD 4C to prevent the removal of mail from adjacent boxes and to prevent mail from coming out through the back. The cover or door must be easily opened and closed or else removed and replaced.

632.624 Installation With Telephone Units

The guidelines for installing receptacles with telephone units are as follows:

- a. When it is necessary or desirable to install mail receptacles with a standard-size telephone unit, vertical-type receptacles may be placed in two tiers. They may also be installed in groups of fewer than seven if necessary to properly arrange the groups in two tiers. This does not apply if the telephone unit is installed independently of the mail receptacles. Although there is no objection to combining these two services, the mail receptacles must be separated from the telephone or electrical unit. Electric push buttons, connected to wires outside the mail receptacles, may be placed in the frame of the installation if the push buttons can be removed from the outside and if the wire connections can be repaired without removing the receptacles.
- b. Telephone units combined with mail receptacle units must allow access to the telephone unit without having to enter the mail receptacle; the mail receptacle must not be accessible when the telephone unit is opened.

632.625 Key and Record Controls

The following key and record controls apply to apartment houses:

- a. Apartment house managers must maintain a record of the number of keys supplied by manufacturers so that new keys may be ordered when necessary. The record should match the key number to the receptacle number. Do not place key numbers on the outside barrels of the locks because this would allow unauthorized persons access to keys and boxes. Clearly number each individual receptacle lock on the back; replace lost keys as needed according to lock numbers. Master-keying is not permitted.
- b. Apartment house managers must also maintain a record of key numbers and combinations of keyless locks so that new tenants may be given the combination. These records must be kept in the custody of the manager or a trusted employee. The record of key numbers must be kept until the lock is changed, when the old record may be destroyed and a replacement record created.
- c. Combination locks are not approved under current Postal Service receptacles standards.

632.626 Directories

Guidelines for Postal Service apartment house directories are as follows:

- a. For all apartment houses with 15 or more receptacles, maintain a complete directory of all persons receiving mail. If an apartment house is divided into units, each with separate entrances and 15 or more receptacles, each unit should have a separate directory. In addition, if mail is not generally addressed to specific units, a directory must be kept at the main unit of the building listing all persons receiving mail in the various units.
- b. Directories must be alphabetical by surname and must be maintained and kept up-to-date. The receptacle number and apartment number should always be the same, and the apartment number should appear to the right of the name in the directory. If the apartment number is

different from the receptacle number, the receptacle number should appear to the left of the name in the directory. Follow the same arrangement for apartments that are either lettered or lettered and numbered.

- c. The directory must be legible, enclosed in a suitable protective frame, and attached to the wall immediately above or to the side of the mail receptacles where it can easily be read. If mailrooms are used, the directory should be placed for the carrier's convenience. If an attendant, such as a telephone operator, doorman, or elevator conductor, is on duty between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., and the mail is delivered either to apartment house receptacles or in bulk for distribution by employees of the building, the employee on duty in the building may keep the directory to make it available to the carrier on request.

632.627 **Maintenance and Repair**

The guidelines for receptacle maintenance and repair are as follows:

- a. Owners or managers of buildings must keep receptacles in good repair. When an inside-letterbox Arrow lock is no longer needed, the building management must immediately notify the postmaster, who will then send a postal employee to supervise removal of the lock from the master door and return it to the Post Office.
- b. Carriers will report on PS Form 3521, *House Numbers and Mail Receptacles Report*, all apartment houses that are being remodeled and all unlocked or out-of-order mailboxes. Delivering employees and postmasters must ensure that all inside-letterbox Arrow locks are recovered when buildings are torn down or remodeled.
- c. When informed of equipment needing repair or irregularity in the operation of apartment house mail receptacles, postmasters will promptly initiate an investigation and direct what repairs must be made at the expense of the owners or managers. To avoid any questions about disposition or treatment of mail, repairs must be made only when a postal representative is present. It is unlawful for anyone other than postal employees to open receptacles and expose mail.
- d. Failure to keep boxes locked or in proper repair as directed by postmasters is sufficient justification for withholding mail delivery and requiring occupants to call for their mail at the Post Office or carrier delivery unit serving the location. A reasonable notice of approximately 30 days will be given in writing to the customers and the owner or manager of the apartment building.
- e. If mail deposited by a carrier in an apartment house mail receptacle is reported lost or stolen, or if there is an indication that the mail has been willfully or maliciously damaged, defaced, or destroyed, the postmaster must immediately report the circumstances to the Postal Inspection Service.
- f. The U.S. Code prescribes criminal penalties for the wrongful possession of mail locks and the willful or malicious injury or destruction of letterboxes and the theft of mail therefrom.

632.628 Approved Manufacturers and Models

A current listing of approved manufacturers and models can be obtained from the office listed in section [632.511](#).

632.63 New or Remodeled Apartment Buildings

When new apartments are being erected or existing ones remodeled, postmasters will inform builders and owners of these regulations' requirements and will provide a suitable inspection to ensure that only approved receptacles are installed in conformance with regulations.