

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 is the responsibility of the customer. Appropriate locations for installation should be verified with local government officials. Customer obligations are as follows:

- a. If door delivery is 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 curblines delivery is authorized, customers must erect curb-mounted receptacles that comply with USPS®-STD-7 (see 632.5).
- c. If centralized delivery is authorized, customers must install mail receptacles that comply with USPS-STD-4B, *Postal Service Standard, Apartment House Mail Receptacles*, or USPS-B-1118, *Postal Service Specification, Cluster Box Units* (see 632.6).

632.12 Exception

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

632.13 Receptacles Not Required

Business complexes are not required to provide mail receptacles or door slots if they are open and someone is on hand to receive the mail when the carrier arrives. If the offices are not open when the carrier arrives, mail receptacles or door slots 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 curblines 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

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.

632.3 Door Slot Specifications

The clear rectangular opening in the outside slot plate must be at least 1¹/₂ 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 2¹/₁₆ inches beyond the inside face of the door. Door slots must be placed no less than 30 inches above the finished floor line.

632.4 Receptacles Purchased by Postal Service

Cluster Box Units (CBUs) and Outdoor Parcel Lockers (OPLs) may be purchased by the Postal Service from approved manufacturers. Specifications for construction of CBUs are covered in USPS-B-1118, *Postal Service Specification, Cluster Box Units*. Specifications for construction of OPLs are covered in USPS-B-1116, *Postal Service Specification, Outdoor Parcel Lockers*. Individuals or firms interested in the manufacture of these units should write to:

ENGINEERING
IP DELIVERY & RETAIL SYSTEMS
US POSTAL SERVICE
8403 LEE HWY
MERRIFIELD VA 22082-8150

632.5 Curbside Mailboxes

632.51 Specifications for Manufacturers

632.511 Policy

Manufacturers of all mailboxes designed and manufactured to be erected at the edge of a roadway or curbside of a street and to be served by a carrier from a vehicle on any city, rural, or highway contract route must obtain approval of their products according to USPS-STD-7, *Postal Service Mailboxes, Curbside*. A copy of USPS-STD-7 and a current listing of approved manufacturers and mailbox models may be obtained by writing to:

ENGINEERING
IP DELIVERY & RETAIL SYSTEMS
US POSTAL SERVICE
8403 LEE HWY
MERRIFIELD VA 22082-8150

632.512 Approved Manufacturers and Models

A current listing of approved manufacturers and models can be obtained from the office listed in section 632.511.

632.52 Installation and Use**632.521 Custom-Built Curbside Mailboxes**

Postmasters are authorized to approve curbside mailboxes constructed by individuals who, for aesthetic or other reasons, do not want to use an approved manufactured box. The custom-built box must conform generally to the same requirements specified in USPS-STD-7. Approval of such custom-built boxes will be done on a case-by-case basis. Such approval may be granted only for individual personal use, not for boxes produced as a commercial enterprise.

632.522 Identification

When box numbers are used on curbside mailboxes, the numbers must be inscribed in contrasting color in neat letters and numerals not less than 1 inch high on the side of the box visible to the carrier's regular approach, or on the door if boxes are grouped. Where street names and house numbers are assigned by local authorities and the postmaster has authorized use of a street name and house number as a postal address, the house number must be shown on the box. If the box is on a different street from the customer's residence, the street name and house number must be inscribed on the box. Placement of the owner's name on the box is optional. Advertising on boxes or supports is prohibited.

632.523 Posts and Supports

The Postal Service does not regulate mailbox supports in any way except for purposes of carrier safety and delivery efficiency. Posts and other supports for curbside mailboxes are owned and controlled by customers, who are responsible for ensuring that posts are neat and adequate in strength and size. Heavy metal posts, concrete posts, and miscellaneous items of farm equipment, such as milk cans filled with concrete, are examples of potentially dangerous supports. The ideal support is an assembly that bends or falls away when struck by a vehicle. Post or support designs may not represent effigies or caricatures that disparage or ridicule any person. Customers may attach the box to a fixed or movable arm.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that mailbox supports no larger than 4 inches by 4 inches, or a 2-inch diameter standard steel or aluminum pipe, buried no more than 24 inches, should safely break away if struck by a vehicle. According to FHWA, the mailbox must also be securely attached to its post to prevent separation if struck.

632.524 Location

Curbside mailboxes must be placed so that they may be safely and conveniently served by carriers without leaving their conveyances. They must be reasonably and safely accessed by customers. Boxes must also be on the right-hand side of the road and in the carrier's direction of travel in all cases where driving on the left-hand side of the road to reach the boxes would pose a traffic hazard or violate traffic laws and regulations. On new rural or highway contract routes, all boxes must be on the right side of the road in the carrier's direction of travel. Boxes must be placed to conform to state laws and highway regulations. Carriers are subject to the same traffic laws and regulations as are other motorists. Customers must remove obstructions,

including vehicles, trash cans, and snow, that make delivery difficult. Generally, mailboxes are installed at a height of 41 to 45 inches from the road surface to the bottom of the mailbox or point of mail entry. Mailboxes are set back 6 to 8 inches from the front face of the curb or road edge to the mailbox door. Because of varying road and curb conditions and other factors, the Postal Service recommends that customers contact the postmaster or carrier before erecting or replacing their mailboxes and supports.

632.525 **Grouping**

Boxes should be grouped wherever possible, especially at or near crossroads, service turnouts, or other places where a considerable number of boxes are presently located.

632.526 **More Than One Family**

If more than one family wishes to share a mail receptacle, the following standards apply:

- a. *Route and Box Number Addressing.* On rural and highway contract routes authorized to use a route and box numbering system (e.g., RR 1 BOX 155), up to five families may share a single mail receptacle and use a common route and box designation. A written notice of agreement, signed by the heads of the families or the individuals who want to join in the use of such box, must be filed with the postmaster at the distributing office.
- b. *Conversion to Street Name and Number Addressing.* When street name and numbering systems are adopted, those addresses reflect distinct customer locations and sequences. Rural and highway contract route customers who are assigned different primary addresses (e.g., 123 APPLE WAY vs. 136 APPLE WAY) should erect individual mail receptacles in locations recommended by their postmasters and begin using their new addresses. Customers having *different primary addresses* but wishing to continue sharing a common receptacle must use the address of the receptacle's owner and the "care of" address format:

JOHN DOE
C/O ROBERT SMITH
123 APPLE WAY

Customers having a common primary address (e.g., 800 MAIN ST) but different secondary addresses (e.g., APT 101, APT 102, etc.) may continue to share a common receptacle if single-point delivery is authorized for the primary address. Secondary addresses should still be included in all correspondence.

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.

632.528 Unstamped Newspapers

Curbside mailboxes are to be used for mail only, except for newspapers regularly mailed at Periodicals rates. Publishers of these newspapers may, on Sundays and national holidays only, place copies of the Sunday or holiday issues in the rural and highway contract route boxes of subscribers, with the understanding that these copies must be removed from the boxes before the next day on which mail deliveries are scheduled.

632.529 Newspaper Receptacles

A receptacle for the delivery of newspapers may be attached to the post of a curbside mailbox provided that no part of the receptacle interferes with the delivery of mail, obstructs the view of the flag, or presents a hazard to the carrier or the carrier's vehicle. The receptacle must not extend beyond the front of the box when the box door is closed. No advertising may be displayed on the outside of the receptacle, except the name of the publication.

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-4 (RDD), *Postal Service Standard, Apartment House 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, family hotels, flats, or complexes with obsolete apartment house mail receptacles should install up-to-date receptacles approved by the Postal Service to ensure more adequate protection. When such buildings are substantially renovated or remodeled to provide additional apartments, or when location of the boxes changes, obsolete receptacles should be replaced with currently approved receptacles.

632.622 Location and Arrangement

Regulations for the location and arrangement of receptacles are as follows:

- a. 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 undue eye strain.
- b. 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-4 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 either easily opened and closed or removed and replaced by the letter carrier.

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 pushbuttons, connected to wires outside the mail receptacles, may be placed in the frame of the installation if the pushbuttons 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 for 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 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 it may then be destroyed.
- c. Combination locks are not approved under current Postal Service receptacles standards.

632.626 **Directories**

The guidelines for apartment house directories for Postal Service use 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 be easily 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-repair mailboxes. Delivering employees and postmasters must ensure that all inside-letterbox Arrow locks are recovered when buildings are torn down or remodeled.
- c. Upon receipt of a report of lack of repair or irregularity in the operation of apartment house mail receptacles, postmasters will promptly initiate an investigation and direct what repairs must be made by, and 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 area. 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 the requirements of these regulations and will provide a suitable inspection to ensure that only approved receptacles are installed in conformance to these regulations.

633 Mail Keys**633.1 Types**

The following types of mail keys are available:

- a. LA keys.
- b. Rotary lock keys.
- c. Arrow lock keys used on street letter or collection boxes and apartment houses mail panels, and new neighborhood delivery and collection box units (NDCBUs).
- d. Serial padlock keys.
- e. Motor vehicle keys and motor vehicle padlock keys.
- f. Highway contract route keys, SR padlock.

633.2 Personnel to Whom Keys Are Issued**633.21 LA Keys**

LA keys are issued to all Post Offices, stations, branches, airport mail facilities, authorized postal employees, and military Post Offices.

633.22 Rotary Lock Keys

Rotary lock keys are issued to the following:

- a. CAG A-J Post Offices, airport mail facilities, and military Post Offices.
- b. Other Post Offices and installations as authorized by their district manager.

633.23 Other Keys

Other types of keys are issued to authorized postal employees.

633.3 Obtaining Keys**633.31 General**

Postal locks and keys are available from:

MAIL EQUIPMENT SHOPS
US POSTAL SERVICE
2135 5TH ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6224

Mail Equipment Shops (MES) manufactures most of the locks and keys used by the Postal Service. PS Form 4983, *Postal Key and Lock Requisition*, will be used to order Post Office box locks and keys.

633.32 LA and Rotary Lock Keys

Keys for newly established Post Offices will be furnished by the Mail Equipment Shops upon receipt of PS Form 4983, except that rotary lock keys for CAG K and L Post Offices must be requested by the district managers or their designees. Request additional and replacement keys on PS Form 4983 from:

MAIL EQUIPMENT SHOPS
US POSTAL SERVICE
2135 5TH ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6224

633.4 Safekeeping Keys**633.41 In Installations****633.411 LA Keys**

Attach LA keys in use to fixtures by a chain.

633.412 Rotary Lock Keys

Attach rotary lock keys in use to a safe by a chain, except when it is more practicable to attach to other fixtures for ready access.

633.42 Arrow Lock Keys

Employees must turn in Arrow lock keys daily on completion of duty. Carriers must keep Arrow lock keys attached to their clothing by a chain at all times while on duty. If a clearance employee is not available, Arrow lock keys (and any other postal keys in temporary use, such as for vehicles) should be deposited in a secure location, for instance, a designated storage box.

633.5 Record of Keys**633.51 Where to Record**

Keep a record of the date of receipt, number of the key, and the combination, if any, at CAG A-G Post Offices on PS Form 1628, *Individual Key Record*. Other Post Offices must maintain a record of mail keys in the space provided on the inside back covers of their cash books.

633.52 Keys Assigned to Carriers

Have each carrier receipt mail keys issued to them. To eliminate the need for the carrier to repeatedly sign the key record book or PS Form 1628, use one of the following plans:

- a. Make up sets of keys for each route and enter the number of each key in the key record book. Opposite the key number, place the number of the route to which the key is assigned. Issue metal or fiber key checks, each bearing a different number, to both regular and substitute carriers and obtain a receipt from the carriers. When a carrier calls for a set of keys assigned to the route the carrier is serving, have him or her surrender his or her key check. Place the check on separation in the key case. Return the check to the carrier when he or she returns the key.

- b. Make up sets of keys for each route and attach a tag bearing a serial number to each set. Enter this number, in addition to the route number, in the key record. This number will identify the set of keys and may be entered on the receipt to be signed by a substitute carrier for any set the carrier draws. The sets of keys may be issued to regular carriers upon surrender of key checks issued to them.

633.53 **Keys Assigned to Other Employees**

Keys assigned to other employees for collection purposes must be accounted for as prescribed above.

633.6 **Keys Lost, Stolen, Missing, or Found**

Report the recovery or finding of keys in the same manner as described in ASM 273, except that a duplicate copy of the memorandum shall be sent direct to the Mail Equipment Shops with the key. Retain serviceable LA keys for local use if needed.

633.7 **Keys From Discontinued Offices**

Handle keys from discontinued offices under instructions received from the district manager.

633.8 **Unserviceable Keys**

Forward unserviceable mail keys by Registered Mail to:

MAIL EQUIPMENT SHOPS
US POSTAL SERVICE
2135 5TH ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20260-6224

A letter of transmittal or a list of the keys by number is not necessary, but the package of keys must be properly identified. Do not send any other item or requisition in the same package with unserviceable keys.

633.9 **Receipt and Control**

Receipt and control all mail keys and locks according to the instructions in ASM 273.

64 City Delivery Service

641 **Establishment of City Delivery Service**

See 63 for authorized modes of delivery.

641.1 **Definition**

In this section, *establishment* refers to the initiation of city delivery service in a community through a Post Office that does not currently provide it.