



<http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov>



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# Commonwealth of Virginia Mail Services Guide

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A Resource for State Agencies Utilizing Postal  
Services

February 2007

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## Introduction

This Mail Services Guide has been prepared as a resource to help state employees and state agencies obtain the best available information processing mail. The guide covers a variety of topics; express services, inter-agency mail, mail classifications, parcels, specialized delivery services, and other information basic to our customer's everyday needs. State Mail Services hopes that this Guide will be a useful desk companion for you.

The more we know about the needs and concerns of our customers the better we can address them. Whether you have a request for a special service, a mass mailing projects or if you are sending or if you are receiving something out of the ordinary, please let us know in advance so we can meet your needs.

The SMS staff is dedicated to its customers by focusing on providing safe, accurate, timely and cost effective service. We hope this Guide will better enable us to serve you, help cut your postage expenses, and speed up the delivery of your mail. Any questions concerning the procedures or contents of this Mail Services Guide should be directed to State Mail Services. You may download the most recent version of this Guide and find supplemental information on the SMS website: <http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov>.

Should you have any questions regarding 'mail', we urge you to contact State Mail Services at (804) 236-3592 or [StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov).

## Background of Mail Service

In the fall of 2004, the Commonwealth embarked on a study of mail operations at agencies located at the Seat of Government both in and around the city of Richmond focusing primarily on two objectives: 1) understanding the mail security processes agencies utilize, collecting relevant data for evaluation, and determining future security enhancements; and 2) identifying cost efficiencies that would result from the consolidation of similar mail functions performed by multiple agencies.

The Governor's Commission on Efficiency and Effectiveness recommended that the basic business functions of state government needed to be better organized at a high level and that the considerable duplication of effort between and among state agencies and institutions needed to be reduced.

The Virginia Secure Panel recommended that the Commonwealth evaluate the feasibility of creating a central mail processing facility to serve all state agencies and institutions in, and around, the Seat of Government.

The improvement of mail services at the Seat of Government is an issue that has long been discussed to promote greater business efficiencies. More recently security and safety issues set forth even more compelling arguments for reevaluating how the Commonwealth mail is received, screened, distributed, and sent.

The 2004 Executive Directive 3 directed the Secretary of Administration to perform an assessment, develop a plan for, and begin the implementation of a consolidated mail processing service. It also noted that state agencies are to cooperate with and provide assistance to the Secretary of Administration in preliminary assessments, as well as in the development, and implementation of this service.

In 2006 the General Assembly directed the Department of General Services, in conjunction with effected agencies, to develop and implement a consolidated mail service.

The Virginia Acts of Assembly – Chapter 3; Item 73 E:

“The Department of General Services shall, in conjunction with affected agencies, develop, implement, and administer a consolidated mail function to process inbound and outbound mail for agencies located in the Richmond metropolitan area. The consolidated mail function shall include the establishment of a centralized mail receiving and outbound processing location or locations, and the enhancement of mail security capabilities within these location(s).”

All reports and studies can be found on the SMS website: <http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov>.

# Chapter 1

## General Information about Mail

### About SMS

State Mail Services (SMS) is a postal service provided by the Department of General Services. SMS provides mail services and customer support to state agencies located at the Seat of Government in the Richmond metropolitan area. Our goal is to develop partnerships to provide optimum mailing efficiency, mail security, cost savings, and customer service.

The primary role of SMS is to serve as a consultant to state agencies on everything related to mail. Through this role we will establish centralized mail reception and outbound processing locations to enhance mail security capabilities, provide cost savings by optimizing efficiencies, and offer excellent customer service with state employees.

State Mail Services provides most services that are offered by the US Postal Service. These services are offered to state agencies with no additional service charges and will provide tremendous cost saving opportunities. SMS can deliver and collect incoming and outgoing USPS mail and provide inter-agency mail service. In addition, SMS can apply postage to agencies' outgoing letters and parcels. SMS also provides consultation to all agencies concerning any questions or problems they may have regarding mail.

### Hours of Operation and Contact Information

The SMS Mail Center is open from 8:00am to 4:30pm each working day. You may contact State Mail Services at:

<http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov>  
Email: [StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov](mailto:StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov)

Phone: (804) 236-3592  
Fax: (804) 236-3595

1910 Darbytown Road  
Richmond, VA 23231

### Scheduled Delivery and Pick-Up Times

State Mail Services has daily routes for pick-up and delivery of USPS and inter-agency mail throughout the Richmond metropolitan area. The morning routes start at 9:00am and are completed by 12:00pm. The afternoon routes begin at 1:30pm and end by 4:00pm. Please see the SMS website for a current list of routes and stops.

## Holidays and Inclement Weather

SMS follows the Commonwealth of Virginia holiday schedule and will not operate during holidays or inclement weather closings. If offices open late or close early, SMS will only conduct one run of the routes either in the morning or afternoon depending on closing time. Please contact SMS if you have questions about our operating schedule.

## Mail Stop Codes

The term mail stop is used to identify a location served by SMS during delivery and pick-up routes. SMS has assigned each stop location a unique five digit mail stop code. This code is related to the agency number. Please consult the SMS website for a current listing of mail stop codes and their corresponding location. If you have questions about mail stop codes or need to request an additional stop, please contact SMS.

## Change of Address

Special care should be taken to insure uninterrupted mail service for state agencies that are moving or have moved to new locations. Please notify SMS of your move plans as soon as move dates are established to insure all agency mail is properly rerouted. Please send SMS the following information:

- Name of agency and present location
- Address of new location including building, floor, and room number
- Contact information for the person in charge of move and mail
- Dates for scheduled move including vacating date and scheduled move in date

Mail stop codes are permanently assigned to agencies and will be the same at the new location. Any mail addressed with a mail stop code will seamlessly be sent to the new physical location.

## Non-Mailable Items

Items such as metal pieces, glass parts, product samples, chemicals, etc., cannot be mailed in envelopes. They require special packaging before mailing or shipping. SMS can assist in determining the most appropriate method for handling such mail. In addition to jamming and/or damaging the mailing machines, these items can also cause serious injury to postal employees.

The following are examples of non-mailable in envelopes:

- |                |                                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| - Aerosol cans | - Alcoholic beverages              |
| - Ammunition   | - Drug paraphernalia               |
| - Fireworks    | - Flammable or explosive materials |
| - Scissors     | - Illegal or infectious substances |
| - Metal pieces | - Poisonous materials              |

Some envelopes and cards are also classified as non-mailables and may be returned to sender if pieces are less than:

3 1/2" in height  
or  
5" in length  
or  
.007" in thickness (thickness of a post card)

All foreign countries also impose various restrictions depending on country and item(s) being mailed.

It is recommended that when mailing questionable items, the mailer should contact SMS for assistance.

## Envelopes

Mail of any kind for transport by the US Postal Service should be enclosed in an appropriate envelope or parcel and sealed. The types of enclosures determine the mailing classification.

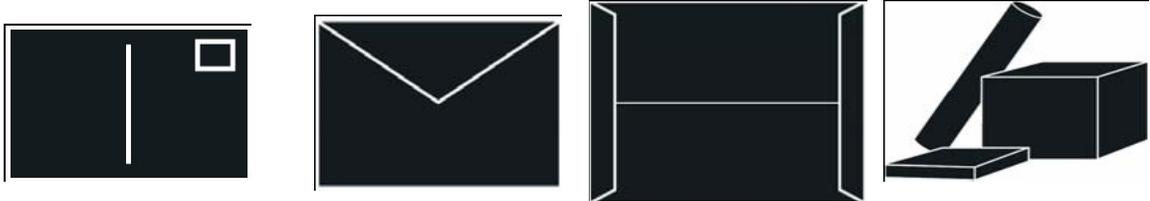
### Appropriate Size and Strength

Envelopes should be of the right size and strength to accommodate the enclosures. The size should properly accommodate the insert(s). Excessively large envelopes will not keep the inserts firm. The inserts in such envelopes slide creating an imbalance of the envelope, increasing the risk of ripping and loss of contents. A snug fit keeps the enclosure firm in the envelope. Conversely, when an envelope is overstuffed it can burst at the seams. The result can be a total loss of the mailing.

The strength of the envelope should withstand the weight of its contents. If there is stress at the seams the envelope is overloaded and can burst increasing the chance of contents being lost. Improperly packed enclosures with sharp edges can also cause an envelope to burst.

### Sizes and Types

The size of the envelope should properly accommodate the contents. In the US Postal System there are two categories of envelopes: letter size and flats. Letters, non-letters and barcoded flats are rated differently by the USPS. To assure the best rate, call SMS for size and rates before preparing the mail item. Please use light colored envelopes for legibility. Avoid brilliant colors envelopes.



	<b>Postcard</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Flat/Large Envelope</b>	<b>Parcel/Package</b>
	Rectangular cardstock mail piece not contained in an envelope	Small rectangular mail piece no thicker than 1/4"	Flat rectangular mail piece no thicker than 3/4"	A three dimensional mail piece contained in a box, thick envelope, or tube, weighing up to 70 lbs
Length	5" min. 6" max.	5" min. 11 1/2" max.	11 1/2" min.	Length + girth (distance around the thickest part of the package) cannot exceed 130"
Height	3 1/2" min. 4 1/4" max.	3 1/2" min. 6 1/8" max.	6 1/8" min.	

### Flats/Large Envelopes

Non letter size envelopes are larger than the maximum letter size, but not larger than 12" high by 15" long and 3/4" thick. The US Postal Service has established specific size requirements for flats to be compatible with automation and qualify for postage discounts. Contact SMS for more information.

### Window Envelope Enclosures

Window envelopes can reduce cost by eliminating labeling. It is important that enclosures are designed so that the address appears in the window. The address must be in the window with 1/8" clearance all the way around even after the mail piece is tapped firmly in any direction. Only address data should show through the window. If the addressed enclosure does not properly fit the window, use an envelope without a window.

### Unusual Shapes and Sizes

Sometimes a piece of mail requires additional postage because it is a certain shape or size that is difficult to process on mail sorting machines. These are examples of mail that may require additional postage:

- Square envelopes
- Packages larger than 34" long, or 17" wide, or 17" high
- Packages weighing more than 35 pounds
- Tubes and rolls

## Chapter

## 2

## US Postal Service Mail

Outgoing mail is picked up from mail stops at the same time as the incoming mail is delivered unless other arrangements have been made. If you have a large mailing, please contact SMS to schedule a special pick-up.

Outbound mail collected during the morning routes is processed for delivery to the USPS at 1:00pm and mail collected during the afternoon routes is processed at 4:00pm. To receive prompt service, please try to meet these dispatch times.

SMS never holds first class mail over night.

SMS provides liaison services between state agencies and the USPS. Contact SMS before establishing a new box number (caller service), new permit account, a new Business Reply account, or any other USPS service. SMS will consult with you to make sure you are getting the most efficient and cost effective product to meet your needs.

### Addressing USPS Mail

The following address format is recommended to ensure efficient handling and expeditious delivery by the US Postal Service.

(Example format for addressing USPS mail)

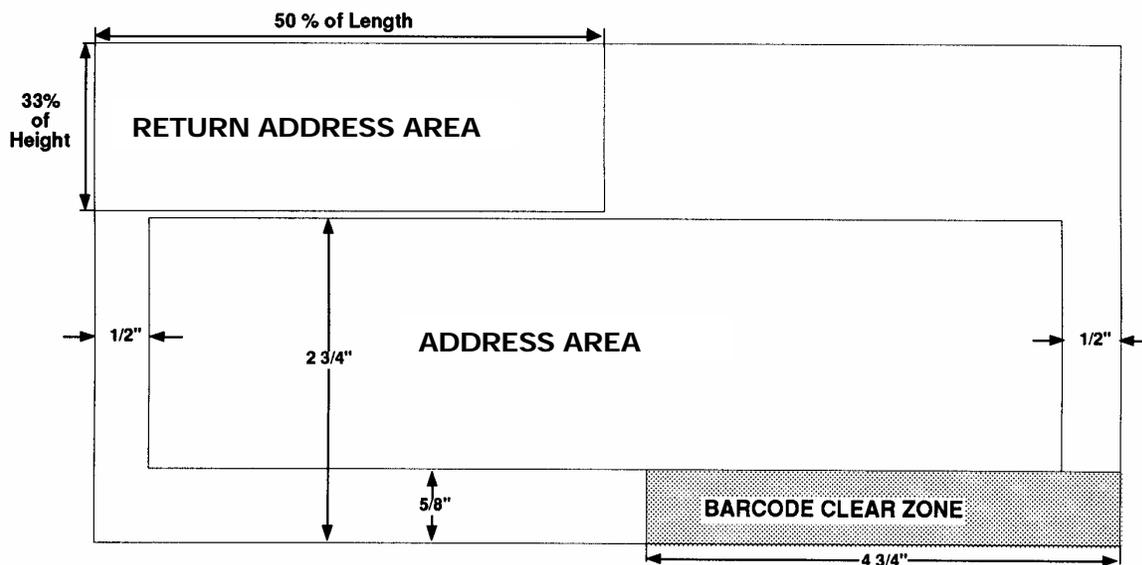
Line 1: Attention Line	MR JOHN DOE
Line 2: Department Name Line	OFFICE OF STATE SERVICES
Line 3: Firm Name Line	DEPARTMENT OF COMMONWEALTH SERVICES
Line 4: Street Address Line	2022 COMMONWEALTH ST
Line 5: Delivery Address Line	PO BOX 528
Line 6: City, State & Zip Code + 4	RICHMOND VA 23219-3424

Lines 3, 5 & 6 are mandatory lines on all addresses to comply with USPS automation formats

Lines 1, 2, & 4 are optional lines; they may be used if needed

## Recommended Standards:

- Machine printed (typed or computer generated) with black ink on white/pastel paper.
- Maintain uniform left margin.
- Use font size of 10 or 12 points. Preferred font is Sans Serif, common examples are Arial and Helvetica. Gothic, italicized, highly stylized or script fonts should not be used.
- Ensure address characters do not touch or overlap.
- Use all uppercase letters (capitalized).
- Omit all punctuation except for the hyphen in the Zip+4 code.
- Use standard abbreviated state name and correct zip code.
- Leave two spaces between state and zip code.
- Second line up from the bottom (Line 5) must be the delivery address only. If addressee has a PO Box it should be on this line.
- Bottom line of address (Line 6) must be city, state and zip code only. Nothing below this line.
- Nothing should be printed on the bottom 5/8 inch of any letter size envelope.
- When using window envelopes, make sure the complete address is always visible, even when the insert moves.



**Address Area-** The complete address should be located within this area. Extraneous (non-address) printing or markings should appear as high on the mail piece and as far away from the address as possible.

**Barcode Clear Zone-** Please make sure that this area remains clear of all printing. It's reserved for the bar code that will be printed by the mail processor.

For more information on postal addressing standards, you can download USPS Publication 28 from the USPS website.

*Please contact SMS with any questions about addressing*

## Standard Address Abbreviations

Alabama	AL	Kentucky	KY	Oklahoma	OK
Alaska	AK	Louisiana	LA	Oregon	OR
Arizona	AZ	Maine	ME	Palau	PW
Arkansas	AR	Marshall Islands	MH	Pennsylvania	PA
American Samoa	AS	Maryland	MD	Puerto Rico	PR
California	CA	Massachusetts	MA	Rhode Island	RI
Colorado	CO	Michigan	MI	South Carolina	SC
Connecticut	CT	Minnesota	MN	South Dakota	SD
Delaware	DE	Mississippi	MS	Tennessee	TN
District of Columbia	DC	Missouri	MO	Texas	TX
Federal States of Micronesia	FM	Montana	MT	Utah	UT
Florida	FL	Nebraska	NE	Vermont	VT
Georgia	GA	Nevada	NV	Virginia	VA
Guam	GU	New Hampshire	NH	Virgin Islands	VI
Hawaii	HI	New Jersey	NJ	Washington	WA
Idaho	ID	New Mexico	NM	West Virginia	WV
Illinois	IL	New York	NY	Wisconsin	WI
Indiana	IN	North Carolina	NC	Wyoming	WY
Iowa	IA	North Dakota	ND		
Kansas	KS	Northern Mariana Is.	MP		
		Ohio	OH		
<b>Directional Abbreviations</b>			<b>Secondary Address Unit Indicators</b>		
North	N	Apartment	APT		
East	E	Building	BLDG		
South	S	Floor	FL		
West	W	Suite	STE		
Northeast	NE	Room	RM		
Southeast	SE	Department	DEPT		
Southwest	SW				
Northwest	NW				

<b>Street Designators (Street Suffixes)</b>							
Alley	<b>ALY</b>	Estates	<b>EST</b>	Lakes	<b>LKS</b>	Ridge	<b>RDG</b>
Annex	<b>ANX</b>	Expressway	<b>EXPY</b>	Landing	<b>LNDG</b>	River	<b>RIV</b>
Arcade	<b>ARC</b>	Extension	<b>EXT</b>	Lane	<b>LN</b>	Road	<b>RD</b>
Avenue	<b>AVE</b>	Fall	<b>FALL</b>	Light	<b>LGT</b>	Row	<b>ROW</b>
Bayou	<b>YU</b>	Falls	<b>FLS</b>	Loaf	<b>LF</b>	Run	<b>RUN</b>
Beach	<b>BCH</b>	Ferry	<b>FRY</b>	Locks	<b>LCKS</b>	Shoal	<b>SHLS</b>
Bend	<b>BND</b>	Field	<b>FLD</b>	Lodge	<b>LDG</b>	Shoals	<b>SHLS</b>
Bluff	<b>BLF</b>	Fields	<b>FLDS</b>	Loop	<b>LOOP</b>	Shore	<b>SHR</b>
Bottom	<b>BTM</b>	Flats	<b>FLT</b>	Mall	<b>MALL</b>	Shores	<b>SHRS</b>
Boulevard	<b>BLVD</b>	Ford	<b>FOR</b>	Manor	<b>MNR</b>	Spring	<b>SPG</b>
Branch	<b>BR</b>	Forest	<b>FRST</b>	Meadows	<b>MDWS</b>	Springs	<b>SPGS</b>
Bridge	<b>BRG</b>	Forge	<b>FGR</b>	Mill	<b>ML</b>	Spur	<b>SPUR</b>
Brook	<b>BRK</b>	Fork	<b>FRK</b>	Mills	<b>MLS</b>	Square	<b>SQ</b>
Burg	<b>BG</b>	Forks	<b>FRKS</b>	Mission	<b>MSN</b>	Station	<b>STA</b>
Bypass	<b>BYP</b>	Fort	<b>FRT</b>	Mount	<b>MT</b>	Stravenue	<b>STRA</b>

Camp	<b>CP</b>	Freeway	<b>FWY</b>	Mountain	<b>MTN</b>	Stream	<b>STRM</b>
Canyon	<b>CYN</b>	Gardens	<b>GDNS</b>	Neck	<b>NCK</b>	Street	<b>ST</b>
Cape	<b>CPE</b>	Gateway	<b>GTWY</b>	Orchard	<b>ORCH</b>	Summitt	<b>SMT</b>
Causeway	<b>CSWY</b>	Glen	<b>GLN</b>	Oval	<b>OVAL</b>	Terrace	<b>TER</b>
Center	<b>CTR</b>	Green	<b>GN</b>	Park	<b>PARK</b>	Trace	<b>TRCE</b>
Circle	<b>CIR</b>	Grove	<b>GRV</b>	Parkway	<b>PKY</b>	Track	<b>TRAK</b>
Cliffs	<b>CLFS</b>	Harbor	<b>HBR</b>	Pass	<b>PASS</b>	Trail	<b>TRL</b>
Club	<b>CLB</b>	Haven	<b>HVN</b>	Path	<b>PATH</b>	Trailer	<b>TRLR</b>
Corner	<b>COR</b>	Heights	<b>HTS</b>	Pike	<b>PIKE</b>	Tunnel	<b>TUNL</b>
Corners	<b>CORS</b>	Highway	<b>HWY</b>	Pines	<b>PNES</b>	Turnpike	<b>TPKE</b>
Course	<b>CRSE</b>	Hill	<b>HL</b>	Place	<b>PL</b>	Union	<b>UN</b>
Court	<b>CT</b>	Hills	<b>HLS</b>	Plain	<b>PLN</b>	Valley	<b>VLY</b>
Courts	<b>CTS</b>	Hollow	<b>HOLW</b>	Plains	<b>PLNS</b>	Viaduct	<b>VIA</b>
Cove	<b>CV</b>	Inlet	<b>INLT</b>	Plaza	<b>PLZ</b>	View	<b>VW</b>
Creek	<b>CRK</b>	Island	<b>IS</b>	Point	<b>PT</b>	Village	<b>VLG</b>
Crescent	<b>CRES</b>	Islands	<b>ISS</b>	Port	<b>PRT</b>	Ville	<b>VL</b>
Crossing	<b>XING</b>	Isle	<b>ISLE</b>	Prairie	<b>PR</b>	Vista	<b>VIS</b>
Dale	<b>DL</b>	Junction	<b>JCT</b>	Radial	<b>RADL</b>	Walk	<b>WALK</b>
Dam	<b>DM</b>	Key	<b>CY</b>	Ranch	<b>RNCH</b>	Way	<b>WAY</b>
Divide	<b>DV</b>	Knolls	<b>KNLS</b>	Rapids	<b>RPDS</b>	Wells	<b>WLS</b>
Drive	<b>DR</b>	Lake	<b>LK</b>	Rest	<b>RST</b>		

## City, State, and Zip Code

To find the correct spelling of a city name or find a zip code, visit [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) or call 1-800-ASK-USPS. Using the correct zip code helps to direct your mail more efficiently and accurately.

## Classes of Mail

The Postal Service divides mail into different categories, called 'classes'. Each class of mail has different features, service levels, postage rates, and presort requirements. The cost of mailing varies with each classification. Detailed information is available to the USPS website: [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com). If you have questions about appropriate class or services, please contact SMS.

### First Class Mail

Postcards, letters, and large envelopes can be sent using first class mail. This service, along with priority mail and express mail, can be used for personal correspondence, handwritten or typewritten letters, and bills or statements of account. Mail containing personal information must be mailed as first class mail, priority mail, or express mail. Personal information is any information specific to the addressee. It may also be used for advertisements and lightweight merchandise. The weight limit for first class mail is 13 ounces. For heavier items use priority mail.

First class mail receives expeditious handling and transportation. Service objectives for delivery are 1 to 3 days, however delivery time is not guaranteed. First class mail includes forwarding service to a new address for up to 12 months.

First class mail is closed against postal inspection. Federal law and Postal Service regulations restrict both opening and reviewing the contents of first class mail by anyone other than the addressee.

## Priority Mail

Priority mail is first class service for mail weighing more than 13 ounces and not exceeding 70 pounds. Use priority mail when 2 to 3 day service is desired. SMS can provide you with free priority shipping supplies like envelopes, boxes, and stickers.

## Presort Standard Mail / Bulk Mail

Standard mail is used for advertising mail, catalogues, and newsletters that are not required to be mailed as first class. Standard mail must weigh less than 16 ounces. A minimum of 200 identical pieces in size, weight, and contents is required. Standard mail has no promised delivery standards but is usually delivered within a week or two and regularly should take no more than 5 days within a radius of 500 miles. Postage costs for standard mailings are about one-third the cost of a first class mailing.

Standard mail must be prepared according to specific USPS standards, including a permit number preprinted on the envelopes. If you are interested in conducting a standard mailing contact SMS before you begin planning.

## Overnight Mail

Express Mail is USPS's fastest service for delivering time-sensitive letters, documents or merchandise. Guaranteed next-day and second-day delivery nationwide. Express Mail provides next day delivery by 12:00pm or by 3:00pm to most addresses in the United States, including PO Boxes. Express Mail items need to be mailed by a certain time for next day service. Contact SMS to verify the cut-off times. Deliveries are made to most locations 365 days a year, including Sundays and holidays at no extra charge. Express Mail is automatically insured to \$100 against loss or damage. At no additional cost the service will include the signature proof of delivery upon request and tracking information.

For a mail piece to be considered Express Mail it must be sent using the appropriate mailing labels or official envelopes. You can receive free labels and pre-printed Express Mail envelopes from SMS. An Express Mail label is still suggested if you are utilizing the official envelopes, but it is not required. Flat-rate envelopes are available, which offer one low rate for any amount of material that it can hold.

## Package/Parcel Services

Packages may be sent using package delivery services. Refer to chapter 3 of this Guide.

## International Mail

Most items are mailable to foreign countries. A special envelope may be required for international mail. Due to restrictions and service variations, contact SMS to determine the proper classification and documentation required for customs declarations. If customs regulations are not followed and the documentation is not exact, the item will be impounded by customs until the addressee makes arrangements for clearance and the payment of whatever duties are required for the release of the item.

When sending international mail, please note that the country name always stands alone on the bottom line (completely spelled out in English).

Example:

Mr Thomas Clark  
117 Russell Drive  
LONDON WIP 6HQ  
ENGLAND

## Special USPS Services

Contact SMS if you have questions about which service would best fit your needs. Visit the USPS or SMS websites for the latest information on costs for these services. SMS can provide customers with USPS forms or envelopes.

### Certified Mail

Provides you with a mailing receipt and a record of delivery is maintained at the recipient's post office for two years. A return receipt provides you with proof of delivery and can be obtained for an additional fee. Certified mail service is available only for first class mail. No insurance coverage is provided. Use USPS Form 3800.

### Delivery Confirmation Mail

Provides the mailer with information about date and time an article was delivered. If delivery was attempted you will get the date and time of attempted delivery. You can easily access tracking information through the USPS website. Delivery confirmation service is available only at the time of mailing. Delivery confirmation service does not include insurance, but insurance may be purchased as an additional service. Use USPS Form 152.

### Signature Confirmation Mail

Requires a signature from the person who accepts your package. It provides the mailer with information about the date and time an article was delivered. If delivery was attempted you will get the date and time of attempted delivery. You can easily access tracking information with the USPS website. A delivery record, including the recipient's signature is maintained by the USPS and is available via fax or mail, upon request. Signature confirmation service is available only at the time of mailing. Signature confirmation service does not include insurance, but insurance may be purchased as an additional service. Use USPS Form 153.

## Return Receipts

Provides the sender with evidence of delivery (to whom the mail was delivered and date of delivery). It is available for insured mail, certified, registered and express mail shipments. It is not necessary to utilize a return receipt on all certified or registered mailings. Use USPS Form 3811.

## Restricted Delivery

Requires USPS to only deliver the mail piece to the addressee or addressee's authorized agent. The addressee must be an individual specified by name. Use when you want your mail to reach a specific recipient. May be combined with delivery confirmation, return receipt, or signature confirmation. To utilize the services write "Restricted Delivery" above the delivery address to the right of the return address.

## Insured Mail

Provides indemnity coverage of up to \$5,000 for a lost, rifled or damaged article of mail. Record of delivery is maintained by USPS for pieces insured for more than \$50. Insurance applies to all classes of mail. This service may be combined with Delivery Confirmation, Signature Confirmation, special handling, return receipt and restricted delivery. For items of greater value requiring additional insurance, use Registered Mail, which covers up to \$25,000. Use USPS Form 3813-P.

## Registered Mail

When you're sending valuable or irreplaceable items through the mail, protect them with Registered Mail. Registered mail is the most secure mail the Postal Service offers. It incorporates a system of receipts to monitor registered articles from the point of acceptance to delivery. Postage insurance may be purchased to cover articles valued up to \$25,000. Return receipt and restricted delivery services are available for additional fees. Added security may delay delivery by 24 - 48 hours. Use USPS Form 3806.

**Reference Chart for Special Postal Services**

Special Service	Classes to Which Applicable	Evidence of Mailing	Proof of Delivery	Additional Security Against Loss	Insurance Against Loss	Travels Enroute with Other Mail
Certificate Of Mailing	First Standard (A) Standard (B)	X				X
Certified Mail	First Priority	Optional	X			X
Registered *	First	X	X	X	Optional	
Insured ** ***	First Standard (B)	Optional	X		X	X

\* Postal Insurance is optional for registered items under \$100.

\*\* Applies to 1st Class/Priority Mail that contains merchandise.

\*\*\* Express mail containing merchandise is insured at no cost to \$500.

Most of the time, customers choose Certified Mail with Return Receipt. These services are the most economical and provide proof of mailing and delivery. If you are unsure of what type of service you will need, please contact SMS.

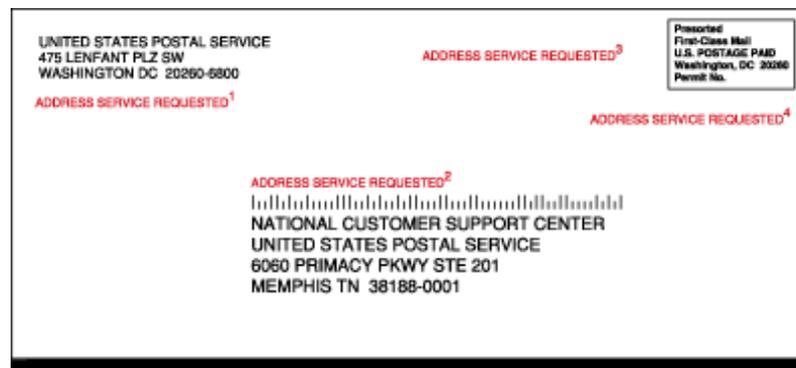
## Endorsements

Undeliverable-as-addressed mail is forwarded, returned to sender, or treated as dead mail as authorized for the particular mail class. A mailer endorsement is used to instruct USPS about treatment action for a mail piece when they determine that the mail piece is undeliverable-as-addressed. The different classes of mail automatically have certain services associated with them that require no endorsement added to the envelope.

If you choose to add an endorsement to your envelope, you must follow these guidelines. Endorsements must be at least 8-point type and appear in one of the following locations:

- Immediately below the return address.
- Immediately above the delivery address.
- Immediately to the left of the postage area and below any rate marking.
- Immediately below the postage area and below any rate marking.

In addition, there must be at least 1/4" clear space around the endorsement.



The following information will help determine the proper endorsement for your objective.

Endorsement	If Forwarding Order on File with USPS		If No Order, Expired Order, or Bad Address	
	Forwarding	Separate Notification	Return	Notification
Address Service Requested	Yes	Yes, new address	Yes	New address or reason, attached
Forwarding Service Requested	Yes	No	Yes	New address or reason, attached
Return Service Requested	No	No	Yes	New address or reason, attached
Change Service Requested	No	Yes, new address or reason	No	New address or reason, separate
<i>No endorsement: per class</i>				
First-Class Mail	12 months	No	Yes	New address or reason, attached
Periodicals	60 days	No	No	New address or reason, separated*
Standard Mail (A)	No	No	No	No
Standard Mail (B)	12 months	No	Yes	New address or reason, attached

\* Mailer is only notified after 60 days or if the piece is undeliverable as addressed. The periodical is disposed of if not forwarded.

## Business Reply Mail

Business reply mail is a service that allows customers to respond at no cost. The sending agency incurs the postage and handling charges only on the mail which is returned. The USPS has very rigid standards for business reply mail. Before printing business reply envelopes/postcards, please contact SMS.

## Chapter 3

# Package Delivery Services

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a mandatory statewide contract for the shipment and delivery of packages. All state agencies must utilize the UPS contract (contract # 91026). This contract and supporting documentation can be found on the eVA website ([www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov)) in the state contracts section.

## Utilizing UPS

Depending on your agency there are two methods for sending UPS packages.

### *1) Agencies that Utilize SMS Metering Services*

SMS can handle your UPS shipping. Please complete the SMS UPS Shipping Form and attach to each package. The UPS Shipping Form should be attached with one strip of tape to enable SMS to remove the form for processing. Small shipments can be left with your agency's outgoing mail. SMS will pick it up and dispatch the package that day. For larger shipments you should contact SMS to schedule a special pick-up. Please note that we do not have the ability to handle individual packages over 70 lbs. Parcels picked-up by SMS after 4:00pm will be shipped the next day. UPS charges will be included in your agency's monthly bill from SMS.

### *2) Agencies Directly Utilizing UPS Services*

The agency must contact the UPS Business Development Contact, Patty Fallen, at 1-888-461-5046 to establish an assigned UPS account number. Agencies should be prepared to provide the following information:

- Agency Name
- Division Name
- Physical Address
- Contact Name
- Contact Phone Number
- Average Weekly Volume by Service

After an account has been established, the agency will use the UPS website to create shipping labels and arrange for UPS to pick-up the package. UPS will directly bill the agency.

## UPS Service Options

Check the UPS contract on the eVA website for the current rates of these services.

When shipping within Virginia the majority of USPS first class mail will be delivered the next day.

- *UPS Next Day Air Early AM* - Guaranteed overnight delivery by 8:00am to major cities in the 48 contiguous states and by 8:30am to many other U.S. cities, including Anchorage, Alaska.
- *UPS Next Day Air* - Guaranteed overnight delivery by 10:30am, noon, or end of day the next business day depending on destination (noon or 1:30pm on Saturdays), to every address in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- *UPS Next Day Air Saver* - Affordable end of day guaranteed delivery to all 50 states and Puerto Rico (this service is not available to destinations where UPS Next Day Air is committed for end of day or is not available).
- *UPS 2nd Day Air AM* - Guaranteed morning delivery on all your second business day shipments to commercial locations in the 50 states.
- *UPS 2nd Day Air* - Guaranteed on-time delivery to every address in the United States (excluding intra-Alaska shipments) and Puerto Rico by the end of the second business day.
- *UPS 3 Day Select* - Guaranteed delivery within three business days to and from every address in the 48 contiguous states.
- *UPS Ground* - Guaranteed day-definite delivery defined by zip code to every address in the U.S. 48 contiguous states and Canada's ten provinces.

## Express Mail

For letters and documents that need to be sent the next day please refer to the Overnight Mail section in chapter 2 of this Guide.

## Chapter 4

# SMS Services

State Mail Services provides a large array of services to Commonwealth of Virginia agencies and employees. Please contact SMS for additional information on using these services. All forms and additional information can be found on the SMS website.

## Mail Consultation

State Mail Services has trained personnel who are experienced and well-informed in the various and rapidly changing regulations and technology of the mailing industry. We are here to help. If you have a mailing challenge of any kind, we are available to meet with you at your convenience to discuss the issue. We will help you develop solutions that meet your needs and your budget. There is no charge for this service. Please inform us of your needs in advance so we can provide you with special assistance you may require whether it is mass mailing project or if you are sending or receiving something out of the ordinary.

Agencies that want to rent a new postage meter or renew a rental contract for their individual use must consult with SMS prior to committing to a rental. SMS can assist with determining what equipment is appropriate for your mail volume. SMS acts as the Commonwealth's liaison with the USPS and mail equipment vendors, please contact SMS with your questions or concerns with either of these groups.

### Contact SMS...

- if you have any 'mail' related questions.
- before you create a large mailing.
- if you have questions about SMS, UPS, or USPS services.
- for assistance with mail design to maximizing postal discounts.
- for information on lowering your mailing costs.
- to receive postal products and literature.
- before you purchase postal equipment or a USPS service.
- to learn more about mail security.

A SMS representative will gladly meet with you to provide mail consultation and/or training.

## Metering

If your agency wants to eliminate the expense of a meter or the hassle of stamps, you may submit an application to utilize the State Mail Services metering service. SMS will pick-up outgoing mail from your office and apply postage at the most efficient rate. Agencies will be billed only for postage used.

### Preparing Outgoing Mail

All outgoing mail should be separated by budget or cost code then bundled with a paper clip or rubber band. A completed Metered Mail Card must then be attached to each bundle. Create a separate bundle and use a separate Metered Mail Card for each budget or cost code against which your mail is to be charged. Mail that lacks a completed Metered Mail Card or proper addressing will be returned. All envelopes should be facing the same way. Do not mix stamped mail or non-postage necessary envelopes together with the mail requiring metered services. Leave flaps up on all mail to be sealed by the SMS postage machine. SMS will collect outgoing mail on the daily routes, please contact SMS to schedule a special pick-up for mass mailings projects. SMS will meter the mail daily at the most efficient rate for the size and type of mail.

### Envelope Sealing

Automatic sealing of standard size gummed envelopes is provided by SMS. For envelopes requiring sealing, leave the flaps open, nest into each other and then secure the contents of the envelopes with a rubber band. Confidential, valuable, or odd or bulky sized mail is not eligible for automatic sealing and should be sealed before pick-up. Seal or tape shut all envelopes containing more than three sheets of paper.

### Presort Discounts

SMS will automatically apply postage discounts when metering agency mail that is letter sized and machine readable. SMS prepares the mail and works with a presort vendor to achieve maximum postage savings for agencies. By combining mail volume SMS is able to offer discounts formally reserved only for large mailings, on all qualified outgoing mail. In order to take advantage of these savings make sure you prepare outgoing mail to the USPS address standards set in Chapter 2 of this Guide. Consult the SMS website for more information about presort and the potential savings.

### Utilizing USPS Special Services

See Chapter 2 of this Mail Services Guide for descriptions of each of these services. Mail that is using a USPS special service should be bundled separately. Complete a Metered Mail Card and mark the appropriate services. The correct USPS Form should be completed and properly affixed to the mailpiece. Contact SMS to receive any of the forms with your next inter-agency mail delivery. Visit the USPS or SMS websites for the current prices of these services.

Service	Instructions
Certified Mail (For Letters & Flats)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Complete address information on USPS Form 3800</li> <li>• Affix form to mail piece</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use <a href="http://www.usps.com">www.usps.com</a> or 800-222-1811 to access delivery information</li> </ul>
Delivery Confirmation Mail (For Parcels & Priority Mail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Complete USPS Form 152</li> <li>• Affix form to mail piece</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use <a href="http://www.usps.com">www.usps.com</a> or 800-222-1811 to access delivery information</li> </ul>
Signature Confirmation Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Complete USPS Form 153</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use <a href="http://www.usps.com">www.usps.com</a> or 800-222-1811 to access delivery information</li> </ul>
Return Receipt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Complete USPS Form 3811</li> <li>• Affix form to mail piece</li> <li>• Write "Return Receipt Requested" above the delivery address to the right of the return address</li> <li>• USPS will mail the receipt to the address on the back of the form after delivery</li> </ul>
Restricted Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Write "Restricted Delivery" above the delivery address to the right of the return address</li> </ul>
Insured Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card and indicate what the contents are worth</li> <li>• Complete address information on USPS Form 3813-P</li> <li>• Affix form to mail piece</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> </ul>
Registered Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card and indicate what the contents are worth</li> <li>• Complete USPS Form 3806</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use <a href="http://www.usps.com">www.usps.com</a> or 800-222-1811 to access delivery information</li> </ul>
International Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Complete proper customs form</li> <li>• Use an international envelope that are available from SMS</li> </ul>
Packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the SMS UPS Shipping Form</li> <li>• Attach to package with one strip of tape to enable SMS to remove the form for processing</li> </ul>

Service	Instructions
Overnight Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact SMS to determine what time the item needs to be mailed for next day service.</li> <li>• Mark on Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use an Express Mail envelope</li> <li>• Complete USPS Express Mail label (Labels and envelopes are available from SMS)</li> <li>• Affix label to mail piece</li> <li>• SMS will return the receipt to the sender at the mail stop listed on the Metered Mail Card</li> <li>• Use <a href="http://www.usps.com">www.usps.com</a> or 800-222-1811 to access delivery information</li> </ul>

## Unknown or Mis-Addressed Mail

Mail not properly addressed will be researched using the State Employee Directory on the [virginia.gov](http://virginia.gov) website. Agencies are welcome to send employee directories to SMS to assist with mystery mail research. There may be a delay in the delivery of mail requiring research. An addressee not found in the State Employee Directory will be returned to the sender for address correction. Unknown USPS mail is not kept on-site over two business days. Undeliverable inter-agency mail may be opened by SMS to determine disposition.

## Special Pick-Ups

SMS will work with you to accommodate your special needs. If you have a large mailing or multiple packages that could be difficult for your normal delivery person, please contact SMS to arrange a special pick-up. When contacting SMS be prepared to describe the amount and kind of mail to enable us to provide the appropriate level of service. This allows us to coordinate with you and plan effectively to meet your deadlines and at the same time continue to service regular needs without disruption. The sooner you contact SMS the better we will be able to serve you.

In some critical situations we can arrange for later than normal pick-ups. Contact SMS to make arrangements.

## Security

Mail security is a top priority for State Mail Services. SMS utilizes various equipment and processes to increase mail security and heighten protection for state employees and property. All mail routed through the SMS mail center, including inter-agency mail, is scanned by an X-ray machine to detect harmful objects. SMS staff is trained to identify suspicious mail pieces and will open such pieces in a secure environment to ensure the contents are safe. Pre-employment background checks and loss prevention training are standard for all SMS staff.

Please refer to the Commonwealth Mail Security Guide for details on safely handling mail. Contact SMS anytime you have a question about mail security.

## Envelopes, Forms, and Mail Trays

SMS occasionally has recycled inter-office envelopes that we make available to requesting offices. Also, we can provide you with mail trays, buckets, and all postal forms. Please ask your SMS courier or contact us for more information.

## Billing

By the tenth of each month DGS will send an invoice to each agency for the total postage used along with a report that shows the postage subtotals by agency budget or cost code. The monthly invoice will also include any UPS charges and any charges for special services that your agency incurred during the previous month. If the total monthly postage charges for an agency are less than ten dollars, the invoice will be combined with the invoice for the next month. For the current prices of special services and package shipping visit the SMS website. The invoice is payable within 30 days. If you any questions concerning your bill, please contact SMS.

If your agency wants to internally track postage expenses, email SMS an Excel file with the first column listing budget or cost codes and the second column should be the corresponding account names. This file must be received by SMS at least 5 days before metering begins.

The agency is responsible for emailing SMS anytime they want to add a budget or cost code. The update must be received two days prior to the first letter being sent out.

If SMS does not receive a list of codes the monthly billing report will group postage expenses as one item for the agency. If mail is sent without a valid agency budget or cost code the postage will be charged to the agency's default account.

## Inter-Agency Mail

Inter-agency mail is a free delivery service provided by State Mail Services to state offices located in the Richmond metropolitan area. Inter-agency mail is correspondence sent out by state employees for delivery to SMS mail stops.

For a list of locations serviced on a daily basis, consult the SMS website. Inter-agency mail is processed on a continuous basis. Mail picked-up on a morning route will be delivered to the addressee on the afternoon route. Mail picked-up in the afternoon, or if the mail stop is not serviced the afternoon pick-up, will be delivered the next morning.

### Addressing Inter-Agency Mail

To ensure prompt delivery, mail should be printed clearly in ink or typed and addressed as follows:

Addressee's Mail Stop Code:	194-02
Name:	John Doe
Division/Office (if known):	Office of State Services
Floor or Office Number (if known):	Room 412
'From' and Sender's Mail Stop Code:	From 150-04

If you know the addressee's room number you do not need to include division/office.

Failure to include complete information may delay delivery. Mail stop codes allow for the efficient sorting of internal mail. Including your mail stop code as a return address will allow SMS to contact you if there is a problem with delivery.

### Inter-Office Envelopes

These are envelopes used repeatedly for internal mailings. When using inter-office envelopes, make sure all previous addresses have been covered up to ensure proper handling and delivery to the intended recipient. The addressee should always appear on the last line. Do not address between previous markings because these envelopes will not be forwarded to our mail system.

**INTER-DEPARTMENT DELIVERY**  
NOTE: CROSS OUT ENTIRE LINE WHEN RECEIVED AND RE-USE UNTIL ALL LINES ARE FULL

DATE	DELIVER TO	DEPARTMENT	SENT BY	DEPARTMENT
4/23/93	S. Brown	Marketing	J. Johnson	Accounting
	○		○	
	○		○	
	○		○	

Example of an inter-office envelop that can be used to send inter-agency mail.

## Plain Envelopes

When it is possible use inter-office envelopes to conserve resources. If you use plain envelopes clearly mark as inter-agency to avoid entering the USPS mail stream and using unnecessary postage. Addresses can also be applied parallel to short side of the envelope to avoid confusion.

## Internal Parcels and Packages

SMS will deliver parcels for free to SMS mail stops. The addressing of parcels and packages for internal distribution is the same as envelopes. Please contact SMS to arrange a special pick-up if you are planning on sending large or multiple packages.

## Other Mail Services

The Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB), a division of the Department for the Blind & Vision Impaired, provides career opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired by employing them in a variety of service and manufacturing occupations. VIB has a full service mail operation focusing on the Richmond Metropolitan Area but also serves customers across the Commonwealth. VIB is a mandatory source for the following mailing services unless an agency is exempted by DGS/DPS or VIB. For additional information on mandatory sources refer to the Agency Procurement and Surplus Property Manual available on the eVA website.

Before a large mailing gets too far into the planning stage, include SMS in your mailing arrangements. SMS will work with VIB to assist in ensuring your mailing program is cost effective, efficient and timely.

For additional information about VIB services contact:

Phone: (804) 371-6126

Email: paul.thomas@dbvi.virginia.gov

[www.vdbvi.org/vib/mailingservices.htm](http://www.vdbvi.org/vib/mailingservices.htm)

### Folding

There are several types of manual or automatic folds available through VIB.

### Insertion (Envelope Stuffing)

Insertion of correspondence, reprints, and other printed matter into pre-addressed or window envelopes is available through VIB.

Before submitting a request for folding and/or inserting SMS will be glad to look at sample forms and envelopes to determine if the materials can be processed on mail processing systems. We can also offer suggestions for size and shape requirements to keep your mailing costs as low as possible.

### Assembly and Collating

Specialized assembly or collation of multiple units may be arranged by contacting VIB.

### Computer Generated Addressing

VIB offers computer generated ink jet addressing with bar codes.

## Appendix

## Appendix

## Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CASS	Coding Accuracy Support System
DGS	Department of General Services
DPS	DGS's Division of Purchase and Supply
MSC	Mail Stop Code
SMS	State Mail Services
UPS	United Parcel Service
USPS	United States Post Office
VIB	Virginia Industries for the Blind

## Glossary

**Accountable Mail:** Usually includes all mail requiring a signature upon delivery to the recipient such as overnight/express mail, registered and certified mail.

**Address:** The physical location's postal details to which information, sales literature or mailing can be sent.

**Barcode:** A series of vertical bars and half bars representing the ZIP + 4 Code, the delivery sequence and a check digit required for automation rate discounts. Although it is referred to as 11 digits, it is actually comprised of 12 digits.

**Bulk Mail:** Quantities of mail prepared for mailing at reduced postage rates, including discounted first class mail and advertising or non-preferential mail (standard mail). The Postal Service uses the terms "bulk" and "presorted" interchangeably. The term includes parcel post, circulars, or advertising mail generally sent in quantity.

**Business Reply Mail:** Specially printed return card or envelope, often with respondent's name and address information printed or affixed on it, which is included in the package to facilitate responding to an offer. Postage and fees are collected when the mail is delivered back to the original sender.

**Caller Service:** Available for a fee to business mailers who require more than standard USPS service or the largest installed post office box size. Some businesses are required to use caller service because of high volumes of mail coming to a post office box. The major advantage of caller service is it gives mailers the option to pick up mail at a post office call window or loading dock when the post office is open.

**CASS or CASS-certified:** Stands for Coding Accuracy Support System. An address correction system which compares an address to the last address on file at the USPS for the recipient.

**Dead Mail:** Mail that is undeliverable as addressed and cannot be returned to the sender (usually because there is no address on the piece).

**Endorsement:** Handwriting or hand stamping on a mail piece, which designates class (First), handling (Fragile or Address Service Requested).

**Flat:** The general term for non-letter or flat-size mail. These large mail pieces exceed the dimensions for letter-size mail and are specially sorted without bending so that the mail piece remains flat.

**First Class:** The type of mail the average citizen sends every day. First class mail receives fast delivery service at a high postage and includes priority, post cards, letters, and sealed parcels. Mail that is personal correspondence, bills and statements of account are first class mail.

**Inclement Weather:** The existence of abnormal climatic conditions (whether they be those of hail, snow, cold, high wind, severe dust storm, extreme high temperatures or the like) by virtue of which it is unsafe for staff members to continue working when exposed to this weather.

**Inserting:** The act of placing one or more component pieces, such as letters, invoices, brochures, or reply envelopes, into the mail piece envelope; either by machine, or by hand.

**Inter-Agency Mail:** A free delivery service provided by SMS for mail sent between agencies at state offices located in the Richmond metropolitan area.

**Mailing Permit:** An authorization to mail with a permit imprint instead of an adhesive postage stamp or meter stamp. Payment is made against an account established with the USPS.

**Metered Mail:** Mail with postage printed by a USPS approved meter; stamps are not used.

**Package Services (formerly Standard B and, before that, 4th class):** Small parcels like compact discs and checks that weigh 16 ounces or more.

**Parcel:** A parcel is a mailable or shippable item other than a letter, book, or other document. Often called a package.

**Postal Classifications:** The Postal Service divides mail into different services, called 'classes'. Each class of mail has different features, service levels, postage rates, and presort requirements. The cost of mailing varies with each classification.

**Periodicals (formerly known as 2nd class):** Commercial and nonprofit rates. Magazines and newspapers and other printed publications that are issued at least four times per year at regular, specified intervals. Periodicals usually must have a list of subscribers or requesters.

**Presort:** The process by which a mailer prepares mail so that it is sorted to the finest extent required by USPS standards. Presorting is required to bypass certain operations at the Post Office because the mailer groups pieces in a mailing by ZIP Code or by carrier route or carrier walk sequence. This process allows the mailer to take advantage of a discounted postage rate.

**Presort Standard Mail:** See Bulk Mail.

**Standard (formerly Standard A and, before that, 3rd class):** Commercial and nonprofit rate. Includes fund raising, alumni mail, small catalogs, small publications, etc. Must weigh less than 16 ounces.

**Undeliverable:** When a mailing can not be delivered as addressed.