NIH National Institutes of Health
Office of Management

Mail Services Guide

DIVISION OF MAIL MANAGEMENT SERVICES (DMMS)
NIH OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES (ORS)

INTRODUCTION

This Mail Services Guide for National Institutes of Health (NIH) employees has been prepared by the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB), Division of Mail Management Services (DMMS), Program and Employee Services (PES), Office of Research Services (ORS). It is a source of information intended to help NIH customers receive the most efficient and cost-effective mail and inter-office communications distribution services.

This guide discusses topics such as addressing envelopes, inter-office communications, United States Postal Service (USPS) mail classifications, specialized delivery services and other mail-related information; it will be a useful desk companion for NIH employees.

The information provided in this guide is subject to periodic changes in regulation and services provided by the USPS and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The more the DMMS knows about your individual needs and concerns, the better we can provide responsive service. Whether it is information on special mail services, how to prepare a large mailing, an office move, or sending or receiving something out of the ordinary.

For questions regarding any aspect of NIH mail service, contact the DMMS Mail Customer Service Branch at 301-496-3586 or e-mail us at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov**. A DMMS representative will provide prompt assistance.

This guide and additional information are available on our web site:
http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dmms/Pages/default.aspx

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I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Locations and Hours of Operation

The Division of Mail Management Services (DMMS) operates the main mail processing center on Industrial Drive in Gaithersburg and three on-campus satellite mail centers. Following are the locations, hours of operation and telephone numbers of each mail facility.

MAIN MAIL CENTER

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

16071 Industrial Drive, Gaithersburg, MD

Director, Division Mail Management Services	Room 131	301-402-4171
Mail Operations Manager	Room 136	301-402-4172
Mail Customer Service Branch	Room 137	301-496-3586
Main Mail Center	Room 140	301-496-3586

SATELLITE CENTERS

Satellite Locations:

On-Campus	Hours	Address	Phone Number
Building 1	7:30 - 4:30	Room B2W36	301-496-6410
Building 10	7:30 - 4:30	Room B1N111	301-496-5518
Building 31	7:30 - 4:30	Room 1W-34	301-496-1950

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

B. Customer Service

The Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) assists the NIH community with mailing needs and promptly responds to questions and concerns.

The primary responsibilities of the MCSB are:

1) Assist in resolving general mail and/or distribution problems

2) Provide guidance on mail preparation and processing (permit imprint mail, business reply mail, proper addressing, mail transit times, etc.)

3) Provide guidance (upon request) on USPS regulations and manuals, internal NIH regulations, standard operating procedures, and policy letters regarding mail services

4) Participate in IC staff and building occupant meetings (upon request) to discuss mail related issues

5) Provide information about mail security

6) Assist NIH employees to establish mail pick-up and delivery points

7) Assign mail stop codes (MSC)

8) Provide or order USPS mailing supplies that are not carried in self-service stores

9) Coordinate mail forwarding for relocating offices

10) Receive and process congressional, undeliverable, return to sender and misdirected mail received via the USPS

11) Review and forward improperly addressed mail and inter-office communications generated by the NIH community

12) Initiate tracking actions on NIH inter-office specials, USPS registered, certified, express and delivery confirmation mail with the USPS as necessary

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

C. Available Mail Services

The DMMS assists NIH employees with mail-related services. These services include:

1) Daily pick-up and delivery of USPS and interoffice mail

2) Processing outgoing USPS domestic, international, and overnight express mail

3) Processing incoming USPS and inter-office communications

4) Providing technical assistance to commercial vendors contracted by NIH ICs to process high volume mailings

5) Assisting with the design of business mail (postcards, envelopes, and labels)

6) Assisting with the selection of the most cost-effective method of processing the various types of mail based upon desired delivery time

7) Assisting with business reply mail and permit imprint mailings

D. Mail Pick-Up and Delivery Schedule

Mail is collected and delivered each day for all mail stop codes in Bethesda, Rockville and Gaithersburg, Maryland. Mail is delivered and collected no later than 3:00 p.m. each business day.

NIH offices with critical outgoing inter-office specials or express mail that cannot wait for the next scheduled mail collection/delivery should contact the Mail Customer Service Branch to arrange for a special mail pick-up. Inter-office specials and accountable mail (USPS Express, Registered, Certified and Delivery Confirmation) is delivered to the appropriate individual and/or office within 24-hours of receipt at our main mail center. A signature receipt is necessary for these items.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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I. MAIL SERVICES GENERAL INFORMATION

E. Mail Stops

Mail stops (pick-up and delivery points) are established according to number of people supported and mail volumes. To streamline mail processing and expedite mail delivery, ICs should request a single mail stop code to support multiple offices located within the same building. The MCSB assigns mail stop codes on a case-by-case basis. The MCSB team is available to answer questions regarding mail stops at 301-496-3586 or by emailing **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov**.

1) Opening Mail Stops

NIH offices submitting written requests for mail stop codes (MSC) should use our online MSC request form https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dmms/services/Pages/Mail-Stop-Code.aspx. A MCSB representative will contact the designated individual after receipt of the request to fill in the remaining information necessary, such as the names of personnel occupying the space/building, room numbers, a point of contact, contact phone number, job titles of key personnel, start-up date and the number of desk-to-desk copies of internal distribution required.

Before submitting a new MSC request, NIH employees should first evaluate whether an existing MSC assigned to the same IC, building or floor may be able to support additional IC employees prior to requesting an additional mail stop code.

2) Closing Mail Stops

NIH employees should notify the MCSB as soon as possible when a mail stop code is no longer needed. The notification of closing a MSC may be emailed to **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov** or may be submitted via our online MSC request form https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dmms/services/Pages/Mail-Stop-Code.aspx. A MCSB representative will contact the designated individual after receipt of the request to fill in the remaining information necessary, such as building name/number, room, MSC, point of contact, phone number and date when mail deliveries should be canceled. Where applicable, mailbox keys should be returned to a MCSB representative.

NIH offices closing mail stops should advise their personnel to immediately notify their correspondents of their new forwarding address.

Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov**

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3) Relocation

To maintain accurate mail delivery services without delay or interruption, NIH employees should notify the MCSB as early as possible of a pending relocation. If the move is to a different room within the same building, it may be possible to keep the same mail stop code. If moving to a different building, the MCSB will establish a new mail stop code. NIH employees can notify the MCSB via our online move form https://ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dmms/services/Pages/Change-of-NIH-Mailing-Address.aspx or via email **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov** of an impending individual move.

F. Clustered Mail Delivery Service

Clustered Mail Delivery Service is a centrally located cluster of mailboxes where the customer controls the distribution of mail within the mailstop. This type of service is more economical and efficient than the door-to-door mail service.

This service is implemented in all new buildings constructed on the NIH campus and in newly leased/renovated facilities off-campus where NIH employees are the sole occupants. Door-to-door mail service that is currently provided to some NIH offices will be phased out and eventually replaced exclusively by Clustered Mail Delivery Service.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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II. INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

A Standard Form 65-B, Government Messenger Envelope (also referred to as a "Holey Joe" or "shotgun" envelope, see samples 1 and 2) or a preprinted Inter-Office Communication envelope (see samples 3, 4, and 5) which can be purchased from the NIH self-service store should be used for inter-office communications. This will clearly identify inter-office correspondence from other types of mail received for processing.

A. Addressing Government Messenger Envelopes (Standard Form 65-B)

When addressing envelopes for inter-office correspondence always use mail stop codes (MSC's) in addition to building names/numbers and room numbers. Names and routing information should be legibly printed to ensure timely and proper delivery.

When using Government Messenger Envelopes (Holey-Joe, shotgun), the address should be placed on the next unused line. Mark out all previous entries to prevent misrouting. Clearly enter the addressee's name and enter the mail stop code (MSC) in the box marked "STOP" (see sample 1). Building and room numbers are also encouraged (see sample 2).

Sample 1: Sample SF-65 Name and MSC

> ### U.S. Government Messenger Envelope
>
> **NAME (OR TITLE) OF ADDRESSEE, AGENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT, ADDRESS AND ROOM**
>
> **STOP**
>
> JOHN E. DOE   0071

Sample 2: Sample SF-65 Name, Building, Room and MSC

> ### U.S. Government Messenger Envelope
>
> **NAME (OR TITLE) OF ADDRESSEE, AGENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT, ADDRESS AND ROOM**
>
> **STOP**
>
> JOHN E. DOE
> BLDG 100 RM 3A45   MSC 0071

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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B. Addressing Pre-printed Interoffice Communications Envelopes

When using preprinted Inter-Office Communications envelopes, a two-line address format is best. Place a return address in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope (name, building, room and MSC). Clearly enter the addressee's name in the center of the envelope and list the mail stop code below the name (sample 3). The building and room number may be used by placing them on the line with the MSC (see samples 4 and 5).

Sample 3: Two-line address format with MSC

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE
BLDG 13 Rm 23 MSC 0021

ROGER PAPER
MSC 0003

Sample 4: Two-line address format with Building and Room

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE
BLDG 13 RM 23 MSC 0021

ROGER PAPER
BLDG 98 RM 1090 MSC 0003

Sample 5: Two-line address format for "SPECIALS"

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION
National Institutes of Health

D.V. DOE
BLDG 13 RM 23 MSC 0021

"SPECIAL HAND CARRY"

ROGER PAPER
BLDG 98 RM 1090 MSC 0003

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II. INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

C. Prohibitions

The following items are prohibited from the NIH Inter-Office mail stream:

1) Solid Objects

Metal or glass objects should not be mailed in Inter-Office Communication envelopes or placed into the inter-office communication mail stream. These objects require special packing for safe handling.

2) Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials should never be mailed through the inter-office communication mail stream. Materials such as chemicals, research vials, blood samples, and tissue samples, should be transported by other means specifically designed for the safe transport of these materials. Contact the Mail Customer Service Branch for assistance.

3) Chain Letters

Chain letters mailed through the inter-office mail is misuse of government resources and is strictly prohibited. Report the receipt of such materials immediately to the Mail Customer Service Branch so the appropriate security officials may be notified.

4) Personal Mail

The NIH mail centers are for official government mail only. The use of the inter-office mail system for personal mail is prohibited.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

A. Domestic Mail Classes

1) Priority Mail Express (formerly Express Mail)
Fastest and most costly. This service should be used only when absolutely necessary. Priority Mail Express International service is available to most foreign countries. Contact the Mail Customer Service Branch for delivery schedules and information.

2) First-Class Mail
Any mailable letter or flat-sized item weighing 13 ounces or less. Items such as letters, post cards, official notes, and checks should be mailed via First-Class Mail.

Mail Shape Helps Determine Cost

(a) Postcards:

- Maximum length 6"   Minimum length 5"
- Maximum height 4-1/4"   Minimum height 3-1/2"
- Maximum thickness 0.016"   Minimum thickness 0.007"

(b) Letters:
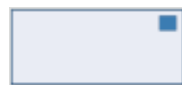
- Maximum weight 3.5 ounces
- Maximum length 11-1/2 "   Minimum length 5"
- Maximum height 6-1/8"   Minimum height 3-1/2"
- Maximum thickness 1/4"   Minimum thickness 0.007"

If your letter exceeds any of the above factors it will be classified and priced as a large envelope (flat).

(c) Large envelopes (flats):

- Maximum weight: 13 ounces
- Maximum height: 12"   Minimum height 6-1/8"
- Maximum length: 15"   Minimum length 11-1/2"
- Maximum thickness: 3/4"

A large envelope that exceeds any of these dimensions will be classified and priced as a package (parcel). Large envelopes must also be flexible, rectangular and uniformly thick. A large envelope that exceeds 13 ounces is classified and priced as Priority Mail.

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(d) USPS Ground Advantage: (Formerly First-Class Packages)
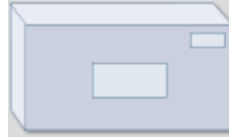
- Maximum weight: 70 lbs.
- Maximum size no more than 108" in combined length and girth

3) Priority Mail

Any mailable item weighing over 13 ounces and up to 70 pounds that needs delivery within about two to five days. When the speed of Priority Mail Express is not needed, and preferential handling is desired, use Priority Mail.

4) Bound Printed Matter

Consists of advertising, promotional, directory, or editorial material (or any combination of such material) up to 15 lbs. The material must be bound by permanent fastenings such as staples, spiral binding, glue or stitching. Loose-leaf binders and similar fastenings are not considered permanent. Contact the Mail Customer Service Branch when planning to mail this material as it's only allowed for bulk permit mailing.

5) Library Mail

Mailable matter not required to be mailed as First-Class weighing more than 5 ounces. This class of service can only be used when it is mailed from a library, academic institution, museum, non-profit or similar organization and addressed to schools, colleges, universities, public libraries and nonprofit religious, educational and scientific organizations, or associations. Library Mail cannot contain advertising or other non-media materials except for a packing slip.

6) Media Mail

Mailable matter not required to be mailed as First-Class weighing more than 5 ounces. This service should be used for items such as CDs, videos, books, scholarly bibliography, printed music, bound volumes of academic thesis in typewritten or duplicated form, periodicals, and sound recordings. Media Mail cannot contain advertising or other non-media materials except for a packing slip.

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B. Special Mail Services

These additional mail services are available upon request at additional cost to the IC.

1) Certified Mail
Provides a mailing receipt and a record of delivery is maintained at the post office of address.

2) Registered Mail
Provides the most secure USPS option offered. It is designed to provide added protection for valuable and important mail. Registered Mail may be insured for up to $25,000.

3) Return Receipt
(PS Form 3811 for Domestic Mail and PS Form 2856 for International Mail)
Provides the sender with proof of delivery. It shows who signed for the piece and the date it was delivered.

C. Sending Domestic Mail

1) Preparing and Addressing Outgoing Domestic Mail

The USPS requires that all outgoing NIH official mail bearing one of the following: A NIH (G-series) Permit Imprint number, Business Reply Mail (BRM) permit number, or a government postage meter stamp, must have a complete NIH return address and bear the required penalty statement "Official Business Penalty for Private Use, $300" directly below the NIH return address.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

(a) USPS Return Address

The return address tells the USPS where the sender wants the mail returned if it is undeliverable. If a return address is not included, the mail is sent to the dead letter section of the U.S. Postal Service where it will eventually be destroyed.

A complete return address should be included on all correspondence. The following format for the return address is recommended:

> **Return Address**
> Mailer's Department
> Mailer's Name (Optional)
> Mailer's Agency/IC
> Mailer's Street Address (bldg, street name, rm., MSC)
> Mailer's City, State, and Nine-digit Zip Code
> _____
>
> OFFICIAL BUSINESS
> PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300
>
> **Sample Return Address**
> DEPARTMENT OF
> HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
> DR. JOHN DOE
> NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NIAAA
> 22 SUCCESS PL RM 9030 MSC 0080
> BETHESDA MD 20892-0080
> _____
>
> OFFICIAL BUSINESS
> PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

Section VI of this mail guide contains a sample of a properly addressed envelope, a listing of USPS directional and secondary address indicators, a list of state abbreviations and a list of the most commonly used street abbreviations.

It is best to capitalize the address and eliminate all punctuation as this will speed machine processing by the USPS. The USPS list of common address and state abbreviations on pages 30 – 31 of this guide should be used. Always place the address or post office box on the line above the city and state and always place the ZIP+4 Code on the last line.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

(b) NIH ZIP Codes

The following city, state, and ZIP Codes should be used when receiving mail through the NIH main mail center:

Domestic Mail: BETHESDA MD 20892-MSC
International Mail: BETHESDA MD USA 20892-MSC
Business Reply Mail: BETHESDA MD 20814-9692

*Note: The ZIP Code "**20894-MSC**" should only be used by National Library of Medicine Buildings 38 and 38A*
(See NIH Street Addresses at http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dmms/services/Pages/Mailing-Addresses.aspx

(c) Delivery Address

A complete delivery address is necessary on all NIH official mail dispatched via the USPS. The address must have all of the elements to allow an exact match with the USPS ZIP+4 file (addressee name, firm, or other identifier; street number and name; secondary address (APT, STE, etc.); city and state; and a correct five-digit ZIP Code with ZIP+4 Code (if known).

The following format is recommended for addressing outgoing official mail:

> **<u>Delivery Address</u>**
> Recipient's Name
> Recipient's Organization/Company
> Recipient's Street Address
> Recipient's City, State, ZIP Code or ZIP+4 (if known)
>
> **<u>Sample Delivery Address</u>**
> JANE DOE
> SUNNY DAY INSTITUTE
> 6721 SMILEY AVE STE 400
> BERKELEY CA 94700-3201

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2) Forwarding Domestic First-Class Mail

To forward First-Class Mail to persons no longer assigned to NIH activities or employed by NIH, a forwarding address should be used to avoid having mail returned to sender:

1. Using a black marker, draw a single diagonal line through the address.
2. Using a black marker, obscure the barcode (if present) on the bottom-front of the envelope.
3. Using pen write the following statement and address directly above the address line "FORWARD TO: Write the forwarding address."
4. Place the piece back into the mail stream.
5. (You may also apply computer-generated labels in place of the preceding process):

3) Returning Domestic First-Class Mail

First-Class Mail addressed to persons no longer assigned to NIH activities or employed by NIH and no forwarding address is available should be returned to the sender.

1. Using a black marker, draw a single diagonal line through the address
2. Using a black marker, obscure the barcode on the bottom-front of the envelope
3. Using a pen write the following statement directly above the address line "RETURN TO SENDER: No longer at NIH/address unknown."
4. Place the mail back into the mail stream (you may also apply computer-generated labels in place of the preceding process):

D. Helpful Mail Practices

1) Have personal mail sent to your home not the office.

2) Whenever possible consolidate outgoing mail going to the same address. The cost will be lower for a consolidated package than multiple single rate pieces.

3) Whenever possible fold and place correspondence that is less than five pages in regular #10 mailing envelopes instead of flat envelopes (9" x 12").

4) Do not place odd-shaped items in envelopes that are not padded.

5) Prior to contracting out large mailings contact the MCSB for assistance in receiving the best service at the best cost.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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6) Before adding barcodes to mail pieces contact the MCSB so that the mail can be tested before it is dispatched to the USPS. This should be done during the design phase for the mail piece.

7) It is best to capitalize the entire address and avoid using punctuation.

8) Type or print address information directly on envelopes, or apply computer-generated labels. This will help eliminate most problems with USPS optical scanning equipment.

9) Separate inter-office correspondence, international, and domestic mail prior to placing them into the mail stream.

E. Business Reply Mail (BRM)

Business Reply Mail (BRM) should only be used for official business. BRM service enables the NIH to pay the return postage for official reply mail. The Nine-Digit ZIP Code to use on Business Reply Mail is 20814-9692. The use of any other ZIP Code on Business Reply Mail will normally delay the receipt and delivery of this mail.

For assistance with designing a NIH BRM mailer (postcard, label, or envelope), please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch at 301-496-3586.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

1) Addressing Business Reply Mail

The USPS requires Business Reply Mail to bear the permit number and the required Penalty Statement "Official Business Penalty for Private Use, $300". The following return address format is recommended for addressing Business Reply Mail:

<u>Business Reply Mail Address</u>
NIH Institute or Center (include Division, Branch, etc.)
Recipient's Name (Optional)
Recipient's Street Address (BLDG, ST, RM, and MSC)
Recipient's City, State, and Nine-Digit ZIP Code

<u>Sample Business Reply Mail Address</u>
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NIAAA
DR. JOHN DOE
22 SUCCESS PL RM 9030 MSC 0080
BETHESDA MD 20814-9692

ICs should be aware that in addition to postage, a fee is paid for each reply received. In accordance with postal regulations, the address on Business Reply Mail (BRM) must be the address of the permit holder, which in this case will be a NIH location. Contractors distributing Business Reply Mail (BRM) on behalf of NIH must have NIH printed on the Business Reply Mail (BRM). A very important requirement of the USPS is that the unique ZIP Code 20814-9692 be used for NIH Business Reply Mail (BRM).

2) Prohibitions

Business Reply Mail (BRM) envelopes, labels and post cards may not be used for any other purpose even if postage is affixed.

Special Services: for example, insurance, registered, certified, and return receipts are not available when using Business Reply Mail.

Use of Business Reply Mail envelopes, labels, or post cards for other than NIH official business is strictly prohibited and carries a penalty for private use.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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F. International Mail

Special care should be taken when using any of the international mail services identified below. A return address should be used on each piece of mail. Appropriate customs forms should be completed and securely attached to all parcels. Extra packing material is encouraged for international parcels. Before sealing international parcels place a separate sheet of paper with both the destination and the return addresses inside the parcel in case the shipping label becomes detached. Make sure both the destination and the return addresses are placed on the parcel directly in the center of the top side of the envelope /box, with large clear print.

1) Types of International/Foreign Mail

(a) Global Express Guaranteed

An expedited premium international document and non-document mail service. It provides reliable, high-speed, date-certain service to locations in most countries and territorial possessions. This service is a partnership between the U.S. Postal Service and FedEx. The official USPS delivery time frame is from 1-3 days.

(b) Priority Mail Express International (Formerly Express Mail International)

An on-demand type service equivalent to Domestic Express Mail Service. Mailable matter such as letters, documents and some merchandise may be sent to most foreign countries. The official USPS delivery time frame is from 3-5 days.

(c) Priority Mail International

The equivalent handling of Domestic Priority Mail. The official USPS delivery time frame is from 6-10 days.

(d) First Class Mail International

Includes post cards, letters, flats, letter packages – regular printed matter, books, periodicals and small packets. This service is equivalent to the Domestic First-Class and Package Services Mail.

There are some differences from domestic mail in size or weight requirements (noted by

$*$). There is no USPS official time frame for this mail class.

(i)   First Class Mail International Postcards:

- Maximum length 6"   Minimum length 5-1/2" $*$
- Maximum height 4-1/4"   Minimum height 3-1/2"
- Maximum thickness 0.016"   Minimum thickness 0.007"

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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(ii) First Class Mail International Letters:

- Maximum weight 3.5 ounces
- Maximum length 11-1/2"   Minimum length 5-1/2" *
- Maximum height 6-1/8"   Minimum height 3-1/2"
- Maximum thickness 1/4"   Minimum thickness 0.007"

If your letter exceeds any of the above factors it will be classified and priced as a large envelope (flat).

(iii) First Class Mail International Large envelopes (flats):

- Maximum weight: 16 ounces*
- Maximum height: 12"   Minimum height 6-1/8"
- Maximum length: 15"   Minimum length 11-1/2"
- Maximum thickness: 3/4"

A large envelope that exceeds any of these dimensions will be classified and priced as a package (parcel). Large envelopes must also be flexible, rectangular and uniformly thick. A large envelope that exceeds 13 ounces is classified and priced as Priority Mail.

(iv) First Class Package International Mail Service:
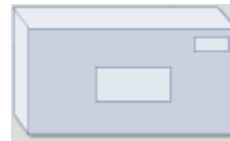
- Maximum weight: 16 ounces*
- Maximum length: 24" *
- Maximum size no more than 36" in combined length + height + thickness*

"*****" Indicates a difference for international vs. domestic requirements.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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2) Addressing International Mail

When preparing mail to be sent to international countries, the following address format is necessary to insure delivery:

> <u>**Delivery Address**</u>
> Recipient's Name
> Recipient's Organization
> Recipient's Street Address
> Recipient's Postal Delivery Code, City, or Province
> Recipient's Country Name in CAPITAL letters
>
> <u>**Sample Delivery Address**</u>
> Dr. K.B. Loo
> Roman Laboratories
> 45 Kane CT AP57
> 90032 Rome
> ITALY

3) Preparing Global Express Guaranteed, Priority Mail Express International, Priority Mail International, and First Class International:

(a) Global Express Guaranteed Service, Priority Mail Express International
Appropriate USPS labels should be used for these services. The labels may be obtained from any DMMS mail center or from the Mail Customer Service Branch. After the label has been prepared (including foreign ZIP Code, if available), attach it to the front of the Global Express Mail or Priority Mail Express International envelope in the area designated, seal the document and place into the NIH mail stream. Please do not remove any copies of these labels.

Although USPS service specific envelopes are preferred, plain white envelopes may be used if they are larger than the label and the label should be placed on the front of the envelope. AIR MAIL envelopes should not be used for Global Express Mail-Guaranteed or Priority Mail Express International.

Parcels mailed using these services must also include a completed PS Form 2976-A, Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note that is placed within PS Form Envelope 2976-E. This form should be centered and placed next to the label on the top of the box, if possible. In addition, Global Express Guaranteed Service requires use of PS Form 6182, Commercial Invoice. These forms are only available from the USPS website at https://cfo.usps.com/ .

Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov

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(b) Priority Mail International and First-Class Mail International

Packaging should be sufficient to withstand the wear and tear of international handling. Do not leave room in the parcel for contents to shift around and don't over-pack the parcel.

You should place an 8 ½" by 11" sheet of paper inside the parcel with addresses for both recipient and sender. In case of the unlikely event that the parcel is damaged in transit, then the contents of your parcel could be delivered or returned.

Letters of five pages or less should be folded and placed in a #10 letter-sized envelope. Letters and documents with more than five pages and too large to place in letter envelopes but too small for boxes, should use the larger flat envelopes (9" x 12") for mailings.

Customs forms are required for Priority Mail International and First Class International parcels. These forms are only available from the USPS website at https://cfo.usps.com/ .

4) **Customs Forms**

Customs forms are necessary for parcels dispatched to all countries. For the correct form go to the USPS website at https://cfo.usps.com/ . You will be asked a series of questions which will result in the correct form being designated for your mailing.

5) **Forwarding and Returning International Mail**

International mail for persons no longer assigned or employed by NIH should be handled following the same procedures as forwarding and returning domestic mail (page 14).

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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G. Permit Imprint Mail

Use of NIH Permit Imprint numbers for any purpose other than official government business is strictly prohibited. Authorization to use Permit Imprint numbers must be expressly granted to contractors performing mail services for NIH IC's. Each piece of mail prepared and dispatched to the USPS must contain "The National Institutes of Health" and the required Penalty Statement "Official Business Penalty for Private Use, $300" in the return address. NIH ICs should obtain mailing documentation from contractors. Permit Imprint mailings must contain a minimum of 200 pieces or 50 pounds.

All Permit Imprint mailing must be faced (address facing in the same direction) and meet the preparation standards for the rate claimed. Mail must be deposited and accepted at the post office that issued the permit. ICs or their contractors should contact the Mail Customer Services Branch during the design stage and prior to depositing mail at the post office. Failure to do so could result in a rejection of the mailing by the USPS if it is not properly formatted or presented.

1) Most commonly used types of Permit Imprints by NIH:

Mail Type	USPS Required Form
First-Class	PS Fm 3600-FCM
Presorted First-Class	PS Fm 3600-FCM
Priority	PS Fm 3600-PM
Presorted Standard	PS Fm 3602-EZ or 3602-R
Parcel Select	PS Fm 3605-R
Media	PS Fm 3605-R
Library	PS Fm 3605-R

(a) A completed PS Form 3615 should be presented to the Post Office (Accompanied by the appropriate 3600 series form and mailing) when using the permit number for the first time at that location.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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2) Preparing Permit Imprint Mailings

(a) A return address and the Penalty Statement "Official Business Penalty for Private Use, $300" must be placed on each piece bearing the NIH Permit Imprint number prior to depositing mail at the Post Office

(b) Typed or computer-generated address labels should be used

(c) The Permit Imprint must be legible and of a color that contrasts sufficiently with paper and background colors for machine readability

(d) Whenever possible, place correspondence of five pages or less in regular business envelopes

(e) We recommend printing the Permit Imprint indicia directly on the mail pieces, but pre-printed stickers may also be used.

(f) Permit Imprint indicia cannot be stamped, typewritten or hand drawn.

(g) Permit Imprint indicia on mail pieces and labels must be aligned parallel with the return address and placed in the upper right corner of the address side or address label, as appropriate.

(h) Presorted permit imprint mailings must be prepared in accordance with USPS regulations and be accompanied by standardized documentation produced by USPS approved software appropriate for the class of mail and rate claimed.

(i) Please contact DMMS Mail Customer Service Branch to receive information on mail presort requirements

3) Permit Imprint Content and Format

The example formats on the next page are provided for the most commonly used Permit Imprints for NIH. It is extremely important that ICs and their contractors coordinate large Permit Imprint mailings with the Mail Customer Service Branch during the design phase and prior to depositing at the post office.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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III. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAIL

Examples of Permit Imprint Formats for NIH Official Mail

First-Class Official Mail

PRIORITY MAIL **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NICHD** **PERMIT NO. G-000**	**FIRST-CLASS MAIL** **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NICHD** **PERMIT NO. G-000**	**PRESORTED** **FIRST-CLASS MAIL** **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NICHD** **PERMIT NO. G-000**

Standard Official Mail

PRESORTED STANDARD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
NIH/NHLBI
PERMIT NO. G-000

Package Services Official Mail

MEDIA MAIL **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NCI** **PERMIT NO. G-000**	**LIBRARY MAIL** **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NLM** **PERMIT NO. G-000**	**STANDARD POST** **POSTAGE & FEES PAID** **NIH/NCI** **PERMIT NO. G-000**

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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IV. PARCEL GROUND SERVICE

A. Definition.

A nationwide, economical, date-certain, guaranteed parcel ground delivery service available to any physical address within the 48 contiguous United States, except to Post Office Boxes, (also excludes Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands).

This "add-on" service guarantees door-to-door delivery to most U.S. cities in one to six days (depending on distance) at significantly lower costs and improves transit time for parcels that could normally take up to 14 days for delivery via USPS Media Mail. This service also allows customers to track parcels by telephone or using the Internet. Contact the Mail Customer Service Branch for assistance with tracking.

When parcels meeting weight requirements up to 70 pounds are received, DMMS will perform a cost and transit time comparison between the USPS and other carriers to determine which carrier will be the most cost effective and provide the least transit time for NIH parcels. Customers can expect improved delivery time and reduction in mailing costs.

B. Procedures for Using Parcel Ground Service.

No special requirements are needed. Prepare the parcel in accordance with USPS addressing standards and place in the NIH outgoing mail stream. Customers with parcels too large to fit into collection boxes should contact the Mail Customer Service Branch to schedule a pick-up. Customers located near DMMS satellite mail facilities may always take packages there or call for assistance if the parcel is too large to carry.

Customers with high-volume mailings meeting weight requirements should contact the Mail Customer Service Branch at the beginning of the planning stage.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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V. SUSPECT LETTERS AND PACKAGES

A. Screening Mail

Since September 11, 2001, and with growing concerns about the safety of our mail, the DMMS has prepared policies and procedures for screening all incoming USPS mail.

1) All mail is screened by the Mail Customer Service Branch personnel as it enters the NIH mail system. For this reason, mail should not be accepted from any sources other than DMMS.

2) Even though mail is initially screened by DMMS, each IC should establish procedures to screen incoming mail and report anything suspicious to the proper authorities.

3) If a suspicious letter or package is identified:

   (a) DO NOT OPEN or handle excessively by squeezing, shaking, smelling, etc.

   (b) Isolate the item, if possible, by placing it in an open plastic bag and moving it to a location away from the immediate work area.

   (c) Immediately notify the proper authorities

B. Suspect Letters and Packages Illustrations

The illustrations on the following two pages represent general checklists for suspect letters and packages. These lists are not all-inclusive and additional items could also identify a mail piece as suspicious. Common sense must prevail at all times. The presence of one or even two of the items on these checklists does not automatically mean the mail is a threat.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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V. SUSPECT LETTERS AND PACKAGES
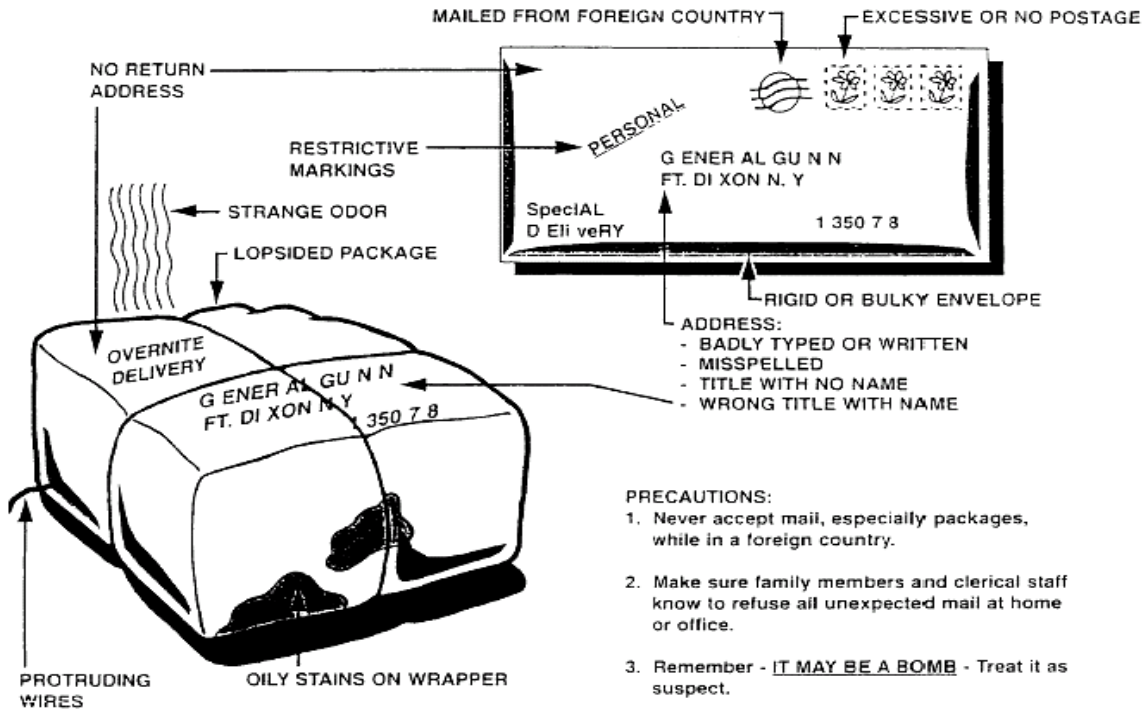
Suspect Letter and Package Checklist

Every NIH staff member should be cautious and vigilant for suspicious mail. This checklist will help to identify suspicious mail, packages, or other items:

- ✓ Is the addressee familiar with the name and address of sender?
- ✓ Package/letter has no return address
- ✓ Is the addressee expecting the package/letter? If so, verify expected contents
- ✓ Improper or incorrect title, address, or spelling of addressee name
- ✓ Title but no names
- ✓ Wrong title with name
- ✓ Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- ✓ Misspelling of common words
- ✓ Return address and postmark are not from the same area
- ✓ Stamps (excessive postage, unusual stamps) versus metered mail
- ✓ Special handling instructions ("special delivery", "open by addressee only", etc.)
- ✓ Restrictive markings such as confidential, personal, etc
- ✓ Over wrapped, excessive securing material such as tape, string or wrappings
- ✓ Oddly shaped or unevenly weighted packages
- ✓ Lumpy or rigid envelopes (stiffer than normal, heavier than normal, etc.)
- ✓ Lopsided or uneven envelope
- ✓ Oily stains or discolorations
- ✓ Item is leaking powder or an oily substance
- ✓ Strange odors
- ✓ Protruding wires or tinfoil
- ✓ Visual distractions (drawings, unusual statements, hand drawn postage, etc)

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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Suspect Letter and Package Indicators
WARNING!

MAILED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRY — EXCESSIVE OR NO POSTAGE

NO RETURN ADDRESS

RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS

PERSONAL

G ENER AL GU N N
FT. DI XON N. Y

SpeciAL
D Eli veRY

1 350 7 8

STRANGE ODOR

LOPSIDED PACKAGE

RIGID OR BULKY ENVELOPE

ADDRESS:
- BADLY TYPED OR WRITTEN
- MISSPELLED
- TITLE WITH NO NAME
- WRONG TITLE WITH NAME

OVERNITE DELIVERY

G ENER AL GU N N
FT. DI XON N. Y   350 7 8

PROTRUDING WIRES

OILY STAINS ON WRAPPER

PRECAUTIONS:
1. Never accept mail, especially packages, while in a foreign country.

2. Make sure family members and clerical staff know to refuse all unexpected mail at home or office.

3. Remember - IT MAY BE A BOMB - Treat it as suspect.

Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov

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VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

A. Proper Addressing of Mail

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
LARRY E ELM
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NINDS
31 WEAVER DR RM 31C00 MSC 0071
BETHESDA MD 20892-0071
────────────────

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE $300

JUSTIN ARTIST
MIRROR GRAPHICS INC
805 S ARLINGTON BLVD APT 1A
ARLINGTON VA 22200-1123

5/8-inch clear zone to allow for USPS barcode

- It is best to capitalize everything in the address and center on the envelope
- Eliminate all punctuation (except the dash in the ZIP+4)
- Use the USPS list of common address and state abbreviations (pp. 30-31)
- Always use a return address including IC, building address, room # and mail stop code
- Always place the street address or post office box on the line above the city and state
- Always place the ZIP+4 Code on the last line of the address
- Always leave the bottom *5/8* inch (both front and back) blank and unobstructed to allow for USPS barcode

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

B. How to Address Envelopes Completely and Correctly (Sample)

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
LARRY E ELM
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH/NINDS
31 WEAVER DR RM 31C00 MSC 0071
BETHESDA MD 20892-0071
_____

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE $300

JUSTIN ARTIST
MIRROR GRAPHICS INC
805 S ARLINGTON BLVD APT 1A
ARLINGTON VA 22200-1100

5/8-inch clear zone to allow for USPS barcode

Always use your return address and include IC, Room, MSC, and the Penalty Statement.

Use the ZIP Code. And if you know the Zip+4, please use it

Indicate whether it is North (N), East (E), West (W), or South (S)

Is it Street, Avenue, Lane, Place, Road, Drive, Boulevard, or Circle?

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

C. USPS Directional Abbreviations

NORTH - N	SOUTHEAST - SE	NORTHWEST - NW
SOUTH - S	EAST - E	SOUTHWEST - SW
NORTHEAST - NE	WEST - W	

D. USPS Secondary Address Abbreviations

APARTMENT - APT	FLOOR - FL	ROOM - RM
BUILDING - BLDG	SUITE - STE	

E. USPS Street Designator Abbreviations

ALLEY - ALY	HEIGHTS - HTS	PLAINS - PLNS
ANNEX - ANX	HIGHWAY - WY	PLAZA - PLZ
AVENUE - AVE	HILL - HI	POINT - PT
BEACH - BCH	ISLAND - IS	PORT - PRT
BOULEVARD - BLVD	JUNCTION - JCT	RIVER - RIV
BRANCH - BR	LAKE - LK	ROAD - RD
CAUSEWAY - CSWY	LANE - LN	SPRING - SPG
CENTER - CTR	LODGE - LDG	SQUARE - SQ
CIRCLE - CIR	LOOP - LOOP	STATION - STA
COURT - CT	MANOR - MNR	STREET - ST
COVE - CV	MEADOWS - MDWS	TERRACE - TER
CRESCENT - CRES	MILL - ML	TUNNEL - TNL
CROSSING - XING	MISSION - MSN	TURNPIKE - TPKE
DRIVE - DR	MOTORWAY - MTWY	UNION - UN
ESTATES - EST	MOUNTAIN - MTN	VALLEY - VLY
EXPRESSWAY - EXPY	ORCHARD - ORC	VIEW - VW
EXTENSION - EXT	PARK - PARK	VILLAGE - VLG
FALLS - FLS	PARKWAY - PKY	WALK - WALK
FREEWAY - FWY	PLACE - PL	WAY - WAY

Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov**

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VI. SAMPLES AND DIRECTIONS

F.   USPS Two-letter State Abbreviations

ALABAMA - AL
ALASKA - AK
ARIZONA - AZ
ARKANSAS - AR
CALIFORNIA - CA
COLORADO - CO
CONNECTICUT - CT
DELAWARE - DE
DISTRICT OF
    COLUMBIA - DC
FLORIDA - FL
GEORGIA - GA
GUAM - GU
HAWAII - HI
IDAHO - ID
ILLINOIS - IL
INDIANA - IN
IOWA - IA
KANSAS - KS
KENTUCKY - KY

LOUISIANA - LA
MAINE - ME
MARSHALL ISLANDS -
    MH
MARYLAND - MD
MASSACHUSETTS - MA
MICHIGAN - MI
MINNESOTA - MN
MISSISSIPPI - MS
MISSOURI - MO
MONTANA - MT
NEBRASKA -NE
NEVADA - NV
NEW HAMPSHIRE - NH
NEW JERSEY - NJ
NEW MEXICO - NM
NEW YORK - NY
NORTH CAROLINA -NC
NORTH DAKOTA - ND

NORTHERN MARIANA
    ISLANDS - MP
OHIO - OH
OKLAHOMA - OK
OREGON - OR
PENNSYLVANIA - PA
PUERTO RICO - PR
RHODE ISLAND - RI
SOUTH CAROLINA - SC
SOUTH DAKOTA - SD
TENNESSEE - TN
TEXAS - TX
UTAH - UT
VERMONT - VT
VIRGIN ISLANDS - VI
VIRGINIA - VA
WASHINGTON - WA
WEST VIRGINIA - WV
WISCONSIN - WI
WYOMING - WY

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VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountable Mail - Mail that requires special handling and a signature for delivery. This mail includes Registered, Certified, Express, Delivery Confirmation and some inter-office mail services.

Activities - NIH Institutes, Centers, and Divisions and specifically, laboratories, offices, etc.

Business Reply Mail (BRM) - Specially printed cards, envelopes and labels that may be mailed by recipient (public) without prepayment of postage. The postage and fees are collected when the mail is delivered back to the sender (NIH).

Clustered Mail Service - A group of mailboxes centrally located in a designated area of a building where mail is picked up and delivered to NIH activities on-and off-campus.

Domestic Mail - Mail addressed and destined for delivery to locations within the United States and its territories.

Foreign or International Mail - Mail addressed and destined for delivery to locations not in the United States or its territories.

GPO - Government Printing Office

IC's - Institutes and Centers

Inter-office correspondence - Generated by and intended for delivery to NIH activities on- and off-campus

Mail Stop Code (MSC) - The four-digit ZIP Code add-on used to locate, pick-up and deliver mail to NIH activities and clustered mailboxes on- and off-campus

NSC - Neuroscience Center

Optical Character Reader (OCR) - USPS computer-controlled automation equipment that locates, reads, and interprets address information.

Permit Imprints - Simplified method to affix postage to each piece of mail.

Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at ***mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Special - Correspondence sent by NIH offices through inter-office mail that requires a signature upon delivery.

Tracer Action - Action to locate a piece of non-delivered accountable mail by the USPS when it has been at least 30 days since mailing.

USPS - United States Postal Service

ZIP Code - ZIP is an acronym for "Zone Improvement Plan". The ZIP Code is a USPS system that divides the USA into delivery areas to simplify mail processing, transportation, and delivery.

ZIP+4 - a nine-digit numeric code incorporating the original five-digit ZIP Code, a hyphen, and four additional digits. The first five digits identify the city and delivery office. The four-digit add-on identifies a specific delivery segment such as a city block, a floor of a building, a department within a firm, or a group of post office boxes.

*Any questions? Need assistance? Please contact the Mail Customer Service Branch (MCSB) on 301- 496-3586 or through email at **mcsbcs@mail.nih.gov***

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