

S900 Special Postal Services  
S910 Security and Accountability

## S911 Registered Mail

**Summary** S911 describes the standards for registered mail including what matter is eligible and ineligible for this service. It also discusses fees, liability, and procedures for preparing registered mail.

### 1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

**Description** [5-20-03] Registered mail is the most secure service that the USPS offers. It incorporates a system of receipts to monitor the movement of the mail from the point of acceptance to delivery. Registered mail provides the sender with a mailing receipt and, upon request, electronic verification that an article was delivered or that a delivery attempt was made. Customers can retrieve the delivery status in three ways: (1) over the Internet at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) by entering the article number shown on the mailing receipt; (2) by telephone at 1-800-222-1811; or (3) by bulk electronic file transfer for mailers who provide an electronic manifest to the Postal Service. A delivery record (which includes the signature) is maintained by the Postal Service for a specified period of time.

**Eligible Matter** Only matter prepaid with postage at the First-Class Mail rates may be registered.  
1.2 The face (address side) of the registered article must be at least 5 inches long and 3-1/2 inches high, regardless of thickness. Items returned under merchandise return service ([S923](#)) may be registered without prepayment of postage and fees.

**Place of Mailing** Registration may be obtained by presenting mail to the following:  
1.3

- a. A retail employee at a post office, station, or branch (including any contractor-operated unit). A postmaster may require that an article of unusually high value be presented only at the main office or at designated stations and branches.
- b. A rural carrier on a rural route. The article and sufficient cash for postage and required fees for mailing the article may be left in a rural mailbox. The carrier must hand any change to the sender or place it in an envelope and leave the envelope in the box on the carrier's next trip. Responsibility is not assumed for the article or cash until a receipt is issued. No responsibility is assumed for the change left in the box by the carrier.
- c. A rural carrier at a nonpersonnel rural unit. The sender must meet the rural carrier to have mail registered.

**Ineligible Matter** Registration may not be obtained for mail that is handled as follows:  
1.4

- a. Sent as business reply mail or in a business reply envelope.
- b. Placed in a street letterbox or post office maildrop.
- c. Addressed to a post office to which it cannot be transported safely.
- d. Prepared improperly or packed inadequately to withstand normal handling (see [3.7](#)).
- e. Tied or fastened with one or more articles, unless enclosed in the same envelope or wrapper.
- f. Presented for mailing in a padded envelope; envelope or mailer manufactured of spun-bonded olefin, such as Tyvek; plastic envelope or mailer; or envelope or mailer made of glossy-coated paper.



- Additional Services

1.5
- Purchasing registered mail service allows customers to then purchase restricted delivery service or a return receipt. The following additional services may be combined with registered mail if the applicable standards for the services are met and the additional service fees are paid:
- a. Collect on delivery (COD) service.

b. Delivery Confirmation.

c. Signature Confirmation.

2.0 FEES AND LIABILITY

- Full Value

2.1
- Regardless of any insurance that may cover the article, the mailer must always declare its full value to the USPS when presenting it for registration and mailing (see chart below). The mailer must tell the USPS clerk (or enter on the firm sheet if a firm mailer) the full value of mail matter presented for registration. Private insurance carried on registered mail does not modify the requirements for declaring the full value. The accepting USPS employee may ask the mailer to show that the full value of the matter presented is declared, and may refuse to accept the matter as registered mail if a satisfactory declaration of value is not provided. Only articles of no value may be mailed as registered mail without insurance.

Mail Matter	Value to Be Declared
Negotiable Instrument (instruments payable to bearer, including stock certificates endorsed in blank)	Market value (value based on value at time of mailing)
Nonnegotiable Instrument (registered bonds, warehouse receipts, checks, drafts, deeds, wills, abstracts, and similar documents (certificates of stock considered nonnegotiable so far as declaration of value is concerned unless endorsed in blank))	No value or replacement cost if postal insurance coverage desired (see note below)
Money	Full value
Jewelry, Gems, Precious Metal	Market value or cost
Merchandise	Market value or cost
Nonvaluable (matter without intrinsic value such as letters, files, records)	No value or replacement cost if postal insurance coverage desired
<b>Note:</b> A mailer who does not know replacement costs should contact a person or firm familiar with such documents and determine replacement costs before mailing the articles.	

- Payment

2.2
- The fee and postage may be paid with ordinary postage stamps, meter stamps, or permit imprints. If a permit imprint is used, the exact amount of postage and fees paid must be shown within the permit imprint. For pieces that are part of a manifest mailing, only the registry fee must be shown within the permit imprint. The fee and postage on official mail of authorized federal agencies may also be paid with penalty stamps, penalty meter stamps, or penalty permit imprints. The fees and postage on items registered with merchandise return service are paid through a postage due account under S923.

- Postal Insurance

2.3
- Postal insurance is provided for articles with a value of at least \$0.01 up to a maximum insured value of \$25,000. Insurance is included in the fee. Postal insurance is not available for articles with no value (\$0.00).

- Refund

2.4
- A fee for registered mail is not refunded after the USPS accepts the mail even if the sender later withdraws the mail under 3.10. A fee for return receipt service or restricted delivery service is not refunded unless the USPS fails to provide the service. The sender must present the registered mail receipt showing payment of these services.

- Official Mail**  
2.5 Official mail of authorized government agencies, if prepared under applicable standards in [E060](#) for transmission of mail without prepayment of postage, may be sent by registered mail without prepayment of a registration fee.
- Merchandise Return**  
2.6 Matter registered with merchandise return service under [S923](#) may be sent by registered mail without prepayment of postage and fees.
- Indemnity**  
2.7 Except for matter registered with merchandise return service, no indemnity is paid for any matter registered without prepayment of postage and fees. If a government agency wants indemnity coverage, both the applicable postage and registry fee must be paid in full with stamps or meter stamps.

### 3.0 MAILING

- USPS**  
3.1 USPS employees are not permitted to help customers prepare or seal mail to be registered.

- Addressing**  
3.2 The mail must bear the complete names and addresses of both sender and addressee.

- Opened Envelope**  
3.3 Any envelope or package that appears to have been opened and resealed, or otherwise improperly prepared, may not be registered.

- Label 200**  
3.4 Registered mail must bear a barcoded red Label 200 (see [Exhibit 3.4](#)). The label must be placed above the delivery address and to the right of the return address, or to the left of the delivery address on parcels. A large-volume mailer can obtain Label 200 in rolls of 600.

**Label 200**  
Exhibit 3.4



- Privately Printed Label 200**  
3.5 If authorized, a mailer may use a privately printed Label 200 for domestic mail only. Privately printed labels must be nearly identical in design and color to the USPS form, with a barcode and human-readable numbers that meet USPS specifications in Publication 109. A minimum of three preproduction samples must be submitted to the business mail entry manager serving the mailer's location for review by the mailpiece design analyst. Once approved, the mailer must print sample labels with barcodes to be certified under the technical requirements in Publication 109.

- Sealing**  
3.6 The mailer must securely seal envelopes. Paper or cellulose strips or wax or paper seals must not be placed over the intersections of flaps of letter-size envelopes where the postmark impressions are made. Packages must be sealed with mucilage or glue or with plain paper or cloth tape. Packages containing currency or securities may not be sealed exclusively by paper strips, but must first be sealed securely with mucilage or glue. Large envelopes (flats) that are completely sealed and that also have paper strips or paper tape across the intersections of the flaps may be considered packages for sealing requirements. To be used on registered

mail, tape must visibly damage the envelope or wrapper if removed and must absorb the ink in a postmark impression.

**Fragile Item**  
3.7 The mailer must tell the USPS employee whether the item is fragile and, if so, describe the interior packing. All articles presented for registration must be packed as specified in [C010](#). The USPS may refuse packages not properly packed to withstand normal handling in the mail. Indemnity may be denied if articles are not properly packaged.

**Window Envelope**  
3.8 A window envelope must have a transparent panel covering the opening to be eligible for registry. If the panel is glued to the envelope, the envelope may contain only matter without intrinsic value. If the panel is part of the envelope, the envelope may be used for all registered mail.

**Firm Sheet**  
3.9 If three or more registered articles are presented for mailing at one time, the mailer may use Form 3877 (firm sheet) or privately printed firm sheets. Privately printed or computer-generated firm sheets that contain the same information as Form 3877 may be approved by the local postmaster. The mailer may omit columns from Form 3877 that are not applicable to registered mail. The mailer submits the forms in duplicate and receives one copy as a mailing receipt after the entries are verified by the postal employee accepting the mailing. All entries made on firm sheets must be made by typewriter, ink, or ballpoint pen. Alterations must be initialed by the mailer and accepting employee. All unused portions of the addressee column must be obliterated with a diagonal line.

**Withdrawal or Recall**  
3.10 The sender may withdraw or recall registered mail without charge before its delivery by writing on the receipt "Withdrawn before dispatch," and signing and surrendering the receipt; or filing a written request for its return after dispatch at the post office where the article was mailed, giving names and addresses of sender and addressee, the registry number, and date of mailing. The sender must pay for all telephone calls. If remailed, the article must be under new cover and bear new postage and fees.

#### 4.0 DELIVERY

**Basic Standards**  
4.1 Delivery of registered mail is subject to [D042](#). The postmaster may require the addressee to call for registered mail at the post office if delivery by carrier would not be safe.

**Bad Condition**  
4.2 If the addressee accepts a registered article in bad condition (i.e., one repaired with sealing stamps or reenclosed in a new envelope or wrapper), the addressee must open it without disturbing the seal, in the delivering employee's presence. If anything is missing, the envelope or wrapper must be given to the employee after it is endorsed to show what was missing.

#### 5.0 INQUIRY ON UNINSURED ARTICLE

**Who May File**  
5.1 If postal insurance was purchased, the claim procedures in [S010](#) apply. The procedures in this section apply only to uninsured registered mail. Only the mailer may file an inquiry on uninsured registered mail. For matter registered without postal insurance with merchandise return service, only the permit holder may file an inquiry.

**When to File**  
5.2 The mailer may not file any inquiry until 15 days after the mailing date of the article. An inquiry may be filed at any post office, classified station, or classified branch, except for an inquiry about matter registered with merchandise return service,



which must be filed by the permit holder at the post office where the permit is held. Form 1000 must be used in processing an inquiry for uninsured registered mail. An inquiry may be filed in the following manner:

- a. Any mailer filing an inquiry for the alleged loss of registered mail must provide proof that a loss occurred before a post office may accept the inquiry.
- b. Proof may be provided by these methods:
  - (1) The mailer may obtain Form 1000 from any post office. The mailer must complete the form and send it to the addressee. USPS employees may not mail the inquiry for the mailer, but they may help a mailer complete the form if requested. The addressee must complete item 13 and items 17 through 19 on Form 1000 and return it to the mailer. If the addressee signs the claim form and indicates the article was not received 15 days or more after the mailing date, the mailer may then take the claim form, with the original mailing receipt, to a post office and file an inquiry.
  - (2) If the mailer has the addressee's written and signed documentation (such as a letter dated at least 15 days after the mailing date) stating the addressee did not receive the article, the mailer may take this documentation to a post office, with the original mailing receipt, and file an inquiry.
  - (3) If the mailer cannot obtain the addressee's cooperation in signing Form 1000 for a registered article or, if preferable, the mailer may send a check or money order for the "return receipt requested after mailing" fee in [R900.23.0](#) to the post office of address and request a copy of the delivery record, if 15 days or more have passed since the mailing date. Any such request for a delivery record must contain the date the article was mailed, the registered number, and the complete names and addresses of the mailer and addressee. The response to this search of delivery records ends the inquiry process.
- c. A merchandise return permit holder must ask the addressee to complete items 1 through 12 and 14 through 16 of Form 1000 and return it, along with the original mailing receipt, to the permit holder. The permit holder must complete item 13 and items 17 through 19 and submit the completed form, along with the original mailing receipt, to the post office where the permit is held. An inquiry may be filed no sooner than 15 days after the mailing date.

**Duplicate Inquiry**  
5.3

A duplicate inquiry may not be filed sooner than 30 days after the original inquiry.

