2 Philately

21 Philatelic Policies and Procedures

211 Policy

Employees should familiarize themselves with the national policies governing the release, sale, and discontinuance of postage stamps and postal stationery. These policies are established by Stamp Services at Headquarters. The policies governing philatelic products are also administered by Stamp Services. Uniform application of these policies provides a high degree of integrity to the entire program. All postal employees and contractors must comply with the policies and procedures in this subchapter. These policies are as follows:

a. Commemorative stamps and postal stationery (postal cards, embossed stamped envelopes, and aerogrammes) depict the cultural and historical heritage of the United States. They describe our nation's achievements, portray our country's natural wonders, instill pride in America, and focus attention on causes, issues, and interests that are of national concern. The Postal Service encourages the widespread use of these stamps and stationery items to promote national ideals, progress, and heritage.

b. Stamp products are designed and promoted to expand interest in the hobby of philately by demonstrating both the fun and the historic value of stamps.

c. Postal employees shall refrain from intentionally creating philatelic rarities.

212 Stamp and Stationery Subjects

212.1 Selection

Subjects for postage stamps and postal stationery may be proposed by the public through correspondence with the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC). The committee is responsible for evaluating the merits of all stamp proposals. CSAC is composed of individuals from outside the Postal Service whose backgrounds reflect a wide range of educational, artistic, historical and professional expertise. CSAC members are appointed by the Postmaster General. After reviewing suggestions submitted by the public, CSAC
212.2 **Criteria for Eligibility**

The Postal Service and the members of the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) use the following basic criteria to determine the eligibility of subjects for commemoration on U.S. stamps and stationery:

a. It is a general policy that U.S. postage stamps and stationery primarily feature American or American–related subjects.

b. No living person is honored by portrayal on U.S. postage.

c. Commemorative stamps or postal stationery items honoring individuals usually are issued on or in conjunction with significant anniversaries of their birth, but no postal item is issued sooner than 10 years after the individual’s death. The only exception to the 10–year rule is the issuance of stamps honoring deceased U.S. presidents. They may be honored with a memorial stamp on the first birth anniversary following death.

d. Events of historical significance are considered for commemoration only on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.

e. Only events and themes of widespread national appeal and significance are considered for commemoration. Events or themes of local or regional significance may be recognized by a philatelic or special postal cancellation, which may be arranged through the local postmaster.

f. Stamps or stationery items are not issued to honor fraternal, political, sectarian, or service and charitable organizations. Stamps or stationery are not issued to promote or advertise commercial enterprises or products. Commercial products or enterprises might be used to illustrate more general concepts related to American culture.

g. Stamps or stationery items are not issued to honor cities, towns, municipalities, counties, primary or secondary schools, hospitals, libraries, or similar institutions. due to the limitations placed on annual postal programs and the vast number of such locales, organizations, and institutions in existence, it would be difficult to single out any one for commemoration.

h. Requests for observance of statehood anniversaries are considered for commemorative postage stamps only at intervals of 50 years from the date of the state’s first entry into the Union. Requests for observance of other state-related or regional anniversaries are considered only as subjects for postal stationery, and again only at intervals of 50 years from the date of the event.

i. Stamps or stationery items are not issued to honor religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are associated with religious undertakings or beliefs.

j. Stamps or postal stationery items with added values, referred to as *semipostals*, are issued every 2 years in accordance with Public Law
106253. Semipostals are not considered part of the commemorative program, and separate criteria apply.

k. Requests for commemoration of universities and other institutions of higher education are considered only for stamped cards and only in connection with the 200th anniversaries of their founding.

l. No stamp will be considered for issuance if one treating the same subject has been issued in the past 50 years. The only exceptions to this rule are traditional themes such as national symbols and holidays.

212.3 Submission

Ideas for subjects must be submitted at least 3 years in advance of the proposed date of issue. This allows the committee enough time to consider the idea and to design and produce the stamps, if the subject is approved. Send ideas for stamp subjects that meet the criteria to the following address:

CITIZENS’ STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE
C/O STAMP DEVELOPMENT
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L’ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 5670
WASHINGTON DC  20260-2437

212.4 Approval and Design

Once a subject is approved, the Postal Service usually relies on design coordinators to help select artists who execute the designs. The Postal Service does not review or accept unsolicited artwork.

213 Stamp Distribution and Requisition

213.1 Stamp Distribution Offices

All Post Offices receive initial supplies of new stamp issues without requisition. Stamp products such as annual, commemorative stamp yearbooks, and the Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps are generally distributed automatically to stamp distribution offices (SDOs) and accountable paper depositories (APDs). These distribution destinations must:

a. Establish a program for distributing new stamp products to associate Post Offices and replenishing existing stamp products.

b. Ensure that less-than-bulk quantities of stamps are supplied to all Post Offices so the stamps can be placed on sale in accordance with instructions issued in the Postal Bulletin. Stamp distribution offices requiring additional stamp products should requisition them from their accountable paper depository. All other Post Offices should requisition stamp products from their stamp distribution office or their usual source of supply for less-than-bulk orders.

213.2 Post Office Accountable Paper Custodians

The accountable paper custodian or other individual in charge of the stamp stock at each Post Office is responsible for requisitioning and maintaining an
adequate inventory of stamps, postal stationery, and other stamp products required for efficient and effective operation. This individual should periodically evaluate demand and, when necessary, forward a requisition for additional stock to the designated supply source. All requisitioning must be in accordance with the procedures in Handbook F-1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures*, 420. When necessary, accountable paper custodians may reduce the quantity of stamps received automatically to reduce costly overstocking and subsequent destruction. To request a change for bulk quantities of more than 25,000 stamps, send a memorandum to:

**MANAGER STAMP DISTRIBUTION**  
US POSTAL SERVICE  
475 L’ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 5826  
WASHINGTON DC  20260-2436  

For quantities of 25,000 stamps or fewer, send memorandum to:

**FINANCE BRANCH**  
ACCOUNTING SERVICE CENTER  
MINNEAPOLIS INFORMATION SERVICE CENTER  
1 FEDERAL DR  
FT SNELLING MN  55111-9610

## 22 Types of Retail Sales and Centers

### 221 General

#### 221.1 New Issues

Stamps, postal stationery, and stamp products are sold at Post Offices and various types of postal retail facilities, which are described in this section. Most of these facilities have regular stamp windows, and some are designated as philatelic centers. Philatelic centers sell current stamps and philatelic products. Some Post Offices provide specialized philatelic services and sell the full range of stamps and philatelic products offered by the Postal Service. These facilities, as well as the Philatelic Fulfillment Service Center (PFSC), are referred to collectively as philatelic centers. The PFSC in Kansas City, Missouri, is a central facility that services mail and telephone orders for postage stamps of philatelic quality and other philatelic products.

#### 221.2 First-Day Issues

Only the Post Office or offices designated as official first-day-of-issue offices or as first-day-of-sale offices may sell a new item on the first day of sale. New issues will be placed on sale at all other offices on the next business day following the first day of sale, although there are special cases where new issues are placed on sale nationwide on the first day of issue.

#### 221.3 Withdrawals of Issues

Notices concerning stamp withdrawals are published in the *Postal Bulletin* and give effective dates for removing stamps from sale.
221.4 **Stamp Packets**
Stamps that are withdrawn from sale but are incorporated into philatelic products such as mint sets or stamp collecting kits may be sold at philatelic windows, Postal Retail Stores, philatelic centers, and the PFSC.

221.5 **Exceptions to Sales Policies**
Stamp Services may, at its discretion, establish exceptions to the sales policies. Exceptions applicable to postal outlets are ordinarily announced in the *Postal Bulletin*.

222 **Sales at Regular Stamp Windows**

222.1 **Definition**
Regular stamp windows are clerk stations in Post Offices that offer a variety of services (money order sales, meter setting, etc.), accept mail, and sell stamps, stamp products, and retail items.

222.2 **Commemorative Stamps**
Postal outlets should strive to sell all commemorative stamp stock, but only within the sales periods announced by Stamp Services. Offices place stamps on regular sale, holding aside only enough for local philatelic demand. All supplies of these stamp issues will normally be purchased within 60 days after being placed on sale. Commemorative stamps may remain on sale for a longer period, but in no case after the date of withdrawal from sale announced in the *Postal Bulletin* or elsewhere by Stamp Services.

222.3 **Plate Number Blocks/Marginal Markings (All Stamps)**

222.31 **Description**
Plate number blocks are the stamps located on one corner of a pane of stamps with a plate number or numbers printed in the margin (selvage). Plate number blocks may include as few as four stamps where a single number appears, or as many as 20 where interest extends to other marginal markings. Various kinds of markings may appear on the selvage of stamps printed in sheets in addition to the plate number, such as the Postal Service copyright notice, color control markings, informational inscriptions, or other Postal Service slogans.

222.32 **Setting Aside Plate Number Blocks**
Clerks must break panes of stamps for regular sale purposes as follows:

a. Tear stamps from the edge of the pane farthest from the plate number or marginal markings in order to preserve the plate block for collectors. Whenever possible, tear stamps from sheets of a single stamp design on an as-needed basis, one at a time.

b. Set aside quantities of plate blocks or marginal markings as the panes are broken during regular sales transactions, but do not set them aside in advance.
222.33 **Minimum Purchase Requirements and Sales Limitations**

The following is a list of the minimum purchase requirements and sales limitations for plate number blocks/marginal markings:

a. When the clerk has a broken pane of stamps from which the plate block or other marginal marking has been sold, and when no plate block or other marginal marking has been set aside, the following minimum purchases must be made by a customer desiring the plate block or other marginal marking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Minimum Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cent to 50 cents</td>
<td>Full marginal strip of stamps (two rows deep having all marginal markings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 cents to 99 cents</td>
<td>Half marginal strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.00 and above</td>
<td>Block of four stamps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: There are no minimum purchase requirements when a clerk has only full panes of the requested stamp in stock or a broken pane that contains the plate block or other marginal marking.*

b. There are limitations to sales as follows: Each customer for whom a pane is broken is limited to one marginal strip ($0.01 to $0.50), a half marginal strip ($0.51 to $0.99), or a block of four stamps ($1.00 and above) for each stamp subject, per day. It is necessary to place a limit on individual sales of plate blocks and other marginal markings so that the philatelic stock available at Post Office windows may accommodate as many collectors as possible each day.

c. Customers requesting more than the maximum permissible purchase in denominations of the single-ounce, First-Class rate and below should be asked to inquire on another day. Customers requesting more than the maximum permissible purchase in denominations higher than the single-ounce, First-Class rate should be asked to inquire on another day or to contact the PFSC.

222.4 **Coil Stamps**

Regular stamp windows may not open and break coils of stamps, except for coils of new stamp issues, which may be opened and sold in less-than-full coil quantities, subject to the following limitations:

a. Sales of newly issued coil stamps in less-than-full coils are restricted to a 1-month period beginning with the authorized first day of sale for each particular stamp issue.

b. These sales are further restricted to a single stamp window at each location designated by the postmaster to conduct such sales.

c. Coil stamps bearing fractional denominations must be sold in multiples that reach full-cent amounts.

d. Stamps remaining in partial coils after the sales period expires are sold at regular windows for postage.
222.5 **Precanceled Stamps**

Stamp collectors may buy precanceled postage for philatelic purposes, including collecting and exchanging philatelic items. There is no limitation on the sale to collectors of full coils of each of the precanceled denominations available. Purchases may be made in person or by mail by non-permit holders for philatelic purposes only. Collectors may not mail matter bearing precanceled postage if they do not have a permit to use precanceled postage at the Post Office where the mail is presented.

222.6 **Meter Stamps**

Customers may buy meter stamps and postage-due meter stamps for philatelic purposes from Post Offices that have been assigned postage meters. Meter stamps and postage-due meter stamps may not be issued for any amount less than the First-Class, single-piece rate. Postage & Mailing Center (PMC) strips may be sold for philatelic purposes at the current, First-Class rate only. Postage validator imprinter (PVI) strips are not meter stamps and may not be sold for philatelic purposes.

223 **Sales at Dedicated Philatelic Windows**

223.1 **Definition**

A dedicated philatelic window is a lobby window designated to sell stamps and related philatelic products only. Other postal services are ordinarily not available at dedicated philatelic windows, which are to be identified as such so that customers desiring normal postal services are directed to other windows. Many of the same items sold at philatelic centers are also sold at dedicated philatelic windows.

223.2 **Commemorative Stamps**

Commemorative stamps remain on sale at Post Offices until a notice of their removal from sale is published in the *Postal Bulletin* or is otherwise communicated by Stamp Services.

223.3 **Plate Number Blocks/Marginal Markings (All Stamps)**

See 222.3.

223.4 **Coil Stamps**

See 222.4.

223.5 **Precanceled Stamps**

See 222.5.

223.6 **Meter Stamps**

See 222.6.
224 Sales at Philatelic Centers

224.1 Definition

Philatelic centers are retail selling areas or self-contained facilities separate from the lobby window positions. These centers display and sell, with a few exceptions, all current postage stamps, postal stationery, and related philatelic products, including commemorative stamps, definitives, regular-issue stamps, coils, airmail stamps, booklets and booklet panes, packets of stamped embossed envelopes, postal cards, message reply cards, and aerogrammes. The PFSC, which handles only mail and telephone order requests from collectors for stamps, stationery, and related products, is also a philatelic center.

224.2 Commemorative Stamps

Philatelic centers may keep an issue on sale until a notice of its removal from sale is published in the Postal Bulletin or otherwise communicated by Stamp Services.

224.3 Plate Number Blocks/Marginal Markings (All Stamps)

The sales and disposition policies described in 222.3 apply except as follows:

a. Clerks may sell to each customer one matched set of four marginal strips for any stamp in stock. There are no limitations on the sale of plate blocks of stamps having denominations above $1.

b. The PFSC mail-order section may, however, sell at face value any quantity of marginal strips of stamp issues.

224.4 Coil Stamps

Philatelic centers may open coils of stamps as requested. (The PFSC may offer plate numbers on coil strips that vary from the minimums noted below.) To guarantee receipt of a plate number on coils, the following minimum purchases are required:

a. Precanceled stamps: 30 stamps.

b. $1 denominations or above: five stamps.

224.5 Precanceled Stamps

The sales policy described in 222.5 applies except that coils of precanceled stamps may be opened for the sale of individual stamps to collectors.

224.6 Meter Stamps

Customers may buy meter stamps and postage-due meter stamps for philatelic purposes from Post Offices assigned meters. Meter stamps and postage-due meter stamps may not be issued for any amount less than the First-Class, single-piece rate of postage. Postage & Mailing Center (PMC) strips may be sold for philatelic purposes at the current First-Class rate only. Postage validator imprinter (PVI) strips are not meter stamps and may not be sold for philatelic purposes.
224.7 Stamp Credit (Accountability)

224.71 Stock Levels

Philatelic centers should maintain a good working level of stamp stock, stationery, and stamp products to meet the needs of collectors and to encourage interest in philately. Therefore, postmasters may maintain a postage stock of up to $125,000 for each philatelic outlet at their office. This stock may be in excess of normal authorized stock limits. (This does not apply to the PFSC.)

224.72 Special Authorization

Special authorization for postage stock exceeding $125,000 requires these steps:

a. If operating requirements require postage stock in excess of $125,000, written notification must be submitted to the appropriate area manager, Customer Service Support, requesting special authorization.

b. The area manager, Customer Service Support, with concurrence of the local inspector in charge, may authorize postage stock up to $250,000. (The total amount of annual sales at the philatelic outlet must be included with any request for authorization to maintain a postage stock in excess of $125,000 for that outlet. Such requests are approved only when the total sales justify the increase in stock level.) If approved at the area office level, the request should be forwarded to Headquarters for concurrence of the manager, Stamp Distribution.

224.73 Stamp Credit

Responsibility for stamp credit is as follows:

a. All clerks working in philatelic centers are fully accountable for their own stamp credit.

b. Postmasters are responsible for providing adequate security equipment for secure storage of these credits at all times.

225 Sales at Temporary Philatelic Stations

225.1 Purpose of Participation

Post Offices establish temporary stations to provide philatelic services and to sell stamps and stamp products. These stations may include specially constructed counters or mobile retail units. Temporary stations are most frequently located at stamp shows, stamp exhibitions, stamp dedications, state fairs, conventions, parades, or other activity sites of significant public or philatelic interest.

225.2 Requests for Participation

Requests for Postal Service participation at such events should be made by the sponsors or organizers to the local postmaster for initial action. All first-day ceremonies are conducted under the direction of Stamp Development, Headquarters. Only requests for first-day-of-issue or other
special support that must come from the national level should be directed to Stamp Development. Once a postmaster has agreed to participate in an event, a unilateral withdrawal from such a commitment may not be made without the approval of Stamp Development. Any such withdrawal must be based upon a showing of good cause.

225.3 Authorization

Temporary philatelic stations may be authorized by postmasters. Postmasters may participate at events where admission fees are charged by the sponsor if the same cancellation used at the event is available on request to those not attending the event.

225.4 Ceremonies

Postmasters and other local officials are encouraged to participate in opening ceremonies for stamp exhibitions or other stamp ceremonies arranged by philatelic groups, whether or not a temporary philatelic station is authorized.

225.5 Announcement and Publicity

225.51 Posters

An announcement of the temporary philatelic station and any event cancellation must be posted on the main Post Office lobby bulletin board and may be posted in other Post Offices within a 10-mile radius of the event so that collectors will be advised of the Postal Service’s participation. In case of larger events, the posting may occur throughout the district or as requested by Headquarters. Posters should be placed on display at least 15 days before the event but in no case more than 30 days before the event. All announcements must emphasize the temporary philatelic station. The announcements should mention the name of the event, pictorial or standard cancellation (if any), the dates and hours open to the public, and the location. Promotional material for the event itself must not be incorporated.

225.52 Press Releases

The postmaster should also announce through press releases to local newspapers the planned establishment of the temporary philatelic station. The Post Office, however, must not distribute free flyers to homes, sell or distribute tickets, exchange ticket coupons, or authorize the use of Post Office facilities for direct event promotion.

225.6 Arrangements for Participation

225.61 Planning

Postmasters should ensure that detailed planning begins well in advance of the event so that participation brings credit to the Postal Service and provides a wide range of stamps and stamp products to collectors and other customers. Particular attention should be taken in selecting sales personnel who are knowledgeable about philately and who have retail experience. All clerks should be fully trained in stamp sales and cancellation policies.
225.62 **Stamp Stock**

The postmaster should secure a wide range of stamp products and current postage, using the *Stamps etc.* catalog as a guide. No stamp that has been withdrawn from sale by the PFSC may be sold by any philatelic station. Withdrawals are noted in the *Postal Bulletin*. Postmasters should requisition philatelic stock not already available in their Post Office from their stamp distribution office or usual source of supply on Form 17, *Stamp Requisition*, indicating the quantity required and that it is for a stamp show, exhibition, or other purpose as described in 225.1. For these events, stamps with denominations higher than $1 may be requisitioned in plate blocks of four, as noted in 222.31. At the conclusion of the event, excess philatelic stock, including remainders from commemorative sheets, should be sold at the regular stamp windows for postage purposes.

225.63 **Philatelic Products**

Postmasters should display, promote, and sell philatelic products such as commemorative stamp collections, the *Postal Service Guide to U.S. Stamps*, stamp collecting kits, and topical stamp sets.

225.64 **Sales Restrictions**

The sales policies regarding plate blocks and marginal markings are described in 222.31.

225.65 **Security and Facilities**

Postmasters should ensure that sufficient security for the stamp stock is provided at the event site and that all other facilities are adequate.

225.66 **Appearance**

Postmasters should ensure that the appearance of the temporary philatelic station brings credit to the Postal Service by using attractive signs and by having enough space for satisfactory service. The hours that the station is open must be posted.

225.67 **Prompt Service**

At those exhibitions where a large number of collectors are expected, postmasters should consider using a speedy line, distributing customer numbers that can be announced, or employing some other method to provide quicker service to customers so that they will not have to wait to make their purchases.

225.68 **Sales Report**

An event sales report showing both gross and net revenue must be submitted to the manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level, within 1 week of the close of every temporary philatelic station.
Mail Order

The PFSC services mail and telephone orders for postage stamps of philatelic quality and for other philatelic items. Customers may obtain a catalog listing items available by calling 800-STAMP-24, or by writing to:

STAMPS ETC CATALOG
US POSTAL SERVICE
POST OFFICE BOX 57
GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744-0057

Note: Post Offices may not fill mail orders for stamps and other philatelic items other than mail orders under the stamps-by-mail program and orders for local cancellations. Customers must furnish a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of precanceled stamps. Postmasters may not order precancel devices solely to satisfy collector demands.

23 Types of Cancellation Services

General

Definition

A postmark is a postal cancellation that contains the Post Office name, state, ZIP Code, and month, day, and year the canceling Post Office accepted custody of the material, except as provided in 231.61 and 231.7. Other postal markings are made by validators, obliterator, or special-purpose cancelers. Postmarking for philatelic purposes is provided at the request of collectors or cover servicers for postmarking outside ordinary mail processing. This service requires special procedures and arrangements so that other postal operations and services are not disrupted. This service may entail any hand stamping requested, either on a hand-back or mail-back basis, and the holding of mail for cancellation. Cancellation fees are as established by the PFSC. For 50 or more cancellations, advance approval by the PFSC is required before service is provided. Cancellation service should be provided separately from stamp sales whenever practical.

Policy

Publicity

The Postal Service endeavors to make all unusual postmarking services widely known to customers through advance national publicity to avoid such postmarks being available only to small groups of people.

Backdating and Pre-Dating

It is Postal Service policy to prohibit backdating of mail except:

a. When postal operating requirements and public demand necessitate that cancellation operations commence before or continue after the date contained in the postmark.
b. When replacements are made for damaged, defective, or missing cancellations.

c. When all requirements for cancellations are met by customers and cancellations are not applied because of errors of postal personnel.

d. When specifically authorized in writing by the manager, PFSC or a Stamp Services manager.

e. See specific references to First Day of Issue and Last Day of Sale cancellations in sections 231.4a(4), 231.4b, 231.63d, 231.7; and 232.4.

231.23 Clerk Availability and Training

A sufficient number of clerks should be available to provide speedy service. Clerks should be trained in advance to provide hand-stamped postmarks of philatelic quality. Refer to 231.3 for philatelic cancellation procedures.

231.3 Cooperation With Collectors

231.31 Postmarks

Employees should strive to furnish clear and legible postmarks to stamp collectors by ensuring that cancellation machines and hand-stamp devices are properly inked. Postal employees must give special attention to mail bearing an endorsement that is of philatelic value or to requests for light cancellations, and they should avoid canceling stamps by pen or illegible smudging. However, stamps must be canceled sufficiently to protect postal revenue.

231.32 Special Attention

The Postal Service cannot provide special attention to a philatelic cover if it has been routinely entered into the mailstream by the sender.

231.33 Postmarking Devices

Postmarking devices may be used only under the supervision of authorized postal personnel.

231.34 Hand-Stamped Postmarks

All hand-stamped postmarks are made with black ink unless the customer specifically indicates a preference for another color.

231.35 Philatelic Covers

Employees should exercise care in handling all philatelic covers to ensure that they are not damaged in mail handling. These covers are generally identifiable by a design (cachet) on the left side of the envelope.

231.36 Defacing Philatelic Covers

Postal employees should ensure that philatelic covers are not over-canceled, backstamped, marked “received this date,” or otherwise defaced on front or back; used as a top piece in a bundle for destination-package labeling purposes; or bent, folded, mutilated, or damaged by rubber bands.
231.4 **Hand-Back and Mail-Back Service**

Postmarks rather than other obliterations should be used to provide the following services whenever they are available:

a. **Hand-Back Service**

   (1) When a customer personally presents an addressed or unaddressed envelope, postal card, or other item described in 231.63 to a postal clerk for cancellation with the current day’s postmark, the Post Office must postmark the item and return it, or hand it back, to the customer.

   (2) The envelope, card, or other item does not enter the mailstream. All such materials must bear uncanceled postage at the applicable First-Class rate.

   (3) This service may be provided for special die hub or regular machine cancellations only when the particular cancellation machine is readily accessible to the postal clerk, and only when providing such service does not interfere with other sales or mail processing operations and does not inconvenience other customers.

   (4) The Last Day of Sale cancellation will be applied to customers’ covers or other items with one or more of the stamps being removed from sale affixed on a hand-back basis only.

b. **Mail-Back Service.** Mail-back service refers to service for stamp dealers and cover servicers that is authorized by the PFSC and that permits envelopes, cards, or other items submitted for cancellation to be returned in bulk through the mail. Conditions of service are further described in 242. This form of mail-back service must be approved in writing and in advance by the PFSC. Mail-back service is not to be provided for special die hub or regular machine cancellations. Last Day of Sale covers submitted for servicing and return through the mailstream will not be entered into the mails until the date appearing on the cancellation.
231.5 Permissible Cancellation Devices

231.51 Hand-Stamped Cancellations for Collectors

The postmark devices shown in Exhibit 231.51 may be used to provide hand-stamped cancellations for collectors.

Exhibit 231.51
Hand-Stamped Cancellations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Standard cancellation with killer bars (Item 550)</th>
<th>b. Circular cancellation without killer bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Washington, DC cancellation" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="San Diego, CA cancellation" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. First-day-of-issue cancellation at Post Office where item first issued</td>
<td>d. Bull's eye cancellation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Galveston, TX First Day of Issue" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Pictorial cancellation subject to 234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Interphil 76 Station" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
231.52 **Obliterators**

The devices (obliterators) shown in Exhibit 231.52 may be used for philatelic cancellation when the postmarks or postmarking devices described in 231.51 are not available.

Exhibit 231.52

**Obliterators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Validator, registry, or round dater stamp (Item 570)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Validator Registry or Round Dater Stamp]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. Parcel post canceler (Item 502)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Parcel Post Canceler]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. Rubber oval stamp (Item 0-681)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Rubber Oval Stamp]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. Receiving or dating stamp (Item 552)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Receiving or Dating Stamp]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

231.6 **When and Where Philatelic Cancellations May Be Done**

231.61 **Date and Place of Postmarking**

Post Offices may provide postmarking for philatelic purposes before the actual date of the cancellation and may continue after that date when demand, processing capability, or other requirements of the Postal Service dictate. However, under no circumstances may any postmarked materials be released before the date of the cancellation. The manager, Customer Service Support, or the manager, PFSC, may determine that local processing capability requires that philatelic cancellation services be performed at an office other than the Post Office whose cancellation is used; in these cases, however, all materials to be postmarked must be received at or deposited in the Post Office whose cancellation is being used, or at an office designated by the manager, Customer Service Support; the manager, PFSC; or the manager, Stamp Development. Return through the mail is permitted when items are accompanied by a package of similar size bearing the appropriate return address and postage.

231.62 **Preparation Requirements**

Postcards, postal cards, and envelopes submitted through the mail must bear postage at the applicable rate and complete addresses, except as provided in 231.4. Materials submitted for hand-back service need not be addressed.
231.63 **Special Materials on Which Cancellations May Be Requested**

Photographs, postcards, or other materials having a glossy-coated or hard-calendered surface, or any material that does not readily accept ink, are submitted for cancellation at the customer's risk. The Postal Service is not responsible for smudged cancellations or offsetting where the impression appears on the preceding item. The following materials may be canceled as indicated:

a. **Plain Cards, Slips of Paper, and Blank Envelopes.** Postal employees may not place postmarks for customers on plain slips of paper, plain cards, or blank envelopes without unused postage equaling or exceeding the First-Class rate.

b. **Picture Postcards (Maximum Cards).** Picture postcards with the stamp placed on the face of the card rather than on the address side are known as maximum cards. Minimum First-Class postage must be placed on the address side. Postmasters may cancel these cards and hand them back to the person presenting them. For mail-back service, refer to 231.4b.

c. **Posters, Portfolios, and Other Memorabilia.** These items with the stamps placed thereon may be canceled when presented in person for hand-back service. Submittal and return through the mail is not permitted, except as provided in 231.4b.

d. **Previously Canceled Stamps and Multiple Cancellations.** Items bearing previously canceled stamps and postmarks are acceptable for additional cancellations when uncanceled postage equaling or exceeding the First-Class Mail rate is affixed. Such material may be submitted and returned through the mail, except as provided in 231.4b. When fewer than 50 items are submitted for cancellation, they must all be addressed and must be returned to the addressee as individual pieces and not in outer envelopes. Return under separate cover is allowed only as specified in 241 and 243. First-day-of-issue cancellations may not be provided on a hand-back basis after the first day of issuance. Mint stamps to cover the First-Class Mail rate must be affixed for each cancellation. The Last Day of Sale cancellation will be applied to customers' covers or other items with one or more of the stamps being removed from sale affixed on a hand-back basis only. Any covers submitted for servicing and return through the mail will not be entered into the mails until the date appearing on the cancellation.

e. **Currency.** Currency bearing unused postage stamps of First-Class value or items bearing currency with stamps affixed or adjacent thereto may be canceled when presented in person for hand-back service. Submittal and return through the mail is not permitted. The Postal Service does not accept responsibility for currency in its possession in conjunction with philatelic services.

f. **Backs of Envelopes.** Post Offices may cancel unused stamps when they are affixed to the reverse side of envelopes bearing already canceled stamps. This service is available only for envelopes presented for hand-back service. They may not be returned through the mail even
231.7 Holding the Mail
Post Offices may hold mail to comply with customers’ requests that the mail be postmarked on a specified date. Post Offices may not, however, hold mail for an event where the date of occurrence is not certain or where it is subject to change or for cancellation on a day when the office will be closed, except as authorized by the PFSC or Manager, Stamp Services. In these latter instances, the envelopes submitted should be returned to the customer unserviced and in an outer envelope with an explanation of why the requested service cannot be provided. No more than 50 covers per customer may be held for cancellations. Except for first-day covers and last day of sale covers, where customers have affixed their own stamps, quantities above this number must receive prior written authorization from the PFSC. The PFSC may also authorize the holding of mail for events of nationwide interest.

231.8 Regular Machine Cancellations
Post Offices must not machine-cancel mail with the regular postmark when the envelopes are unaddressed or when the customer requests hand-back service, except as provided in 231.4. Mail-back (return in bulk) service is not provided, but cancellations may be provided on addressed envelopes or postal cards that are mailed to the addressee.

231.9 Standard Cancellations
Circular hand-stamped cancellations with or without killer bars may be provided upon request at Post Offices, stations, and branches. These cancellations are available each day that the office is open for business. No slogan or pictorial material may be included. Requests made by mail for these cancellations must be at the Post Office offering the service on the date of the cancellation to qualify for service.

232 First-Day Cancellations
232.1 First-Day Sale
A particular Post Office or postal facility is usually designated to have the exclusive sale of a new issue on the day that it is issued. No other postal facility may begin general sale of the new issue until the following business day unless otherwise authorized by the manager, Stamp Services.
purposes of this section, the word “issue” means postage stamp, stamp
toolkit, booklet pane, postal card, stamped envelope, or aerogramme.

232.2 Notification

New stamps and other issues are announced by notices displayed in Post
Office lobbies, in the Postal Bulletin, through news releases distributed to the
press and philatelic periodicals, and by print, radio, and television advertising.

232.3 First-Day-of-Issue Cancellation

This type of cancellation is provided by the Post Office when a new stamp or
stationery item is first placed on sale and is dated to show the date of
issuance. First-day cancellations may be either metal die or rubber
composition. The words “First Day of Issue” appear in the cancellation
design. Requests for first-day cancellations must be postmarked no later than
the date specified in the Postal Bulletin to qualify for service. Bull’s-eye
cancellations are used when the conventional first-day-of-issue postmark
cannot cancel all the unused stamps on an item presented for postmarking.

232.4 Last Day of Sale Cancellation

This type of cancellation is provided by the Post Office when stamps are
identified to go off sale and is dated to show the date of the last day of sale.
Last day of sale cancellations will be available only at events authorized by
Stamp Services. These events will be held in conjunction with nationally
recognized stamp shows, which are held at least four times a year. Field
offices may conduct events associated with the removal of stamps from sale;
however, they may not use the words “Last Day of Sale” in postmarks or
other material relating to their event. Last day cancellations may be either
metal die or rubber composition. The words “Last Day of Sale” appear in the
cancellation design. Requests for last day cancellations must be postmarked
no later than the date specified in the Postal Bulletin to qualify for service.
Bull’s-eye cancellations are used when the conventional last day of sale
postmark cannot cancel all the unused stamps on an item presented for
postmarking. The “Last Day of Sale” cancellation may be applied at the show
from the start of the show until the actual date the stamps are removed from
sale. “Last Day of Sale” cancellations may only be applied to items bearing at
least one of the stamps being removed from sale.

233 First-Day Covers

233.1 Definition

A first-day cover is an envelope, postcard, or other item of reasonable
dimension bearing a new stamp, booklet pane, postal card, stamped
envelope, or aerogramme canceled with a die reading “First Day of Issue”
and showing the place and date of first-day sale.
233.2 Procedures

All covers must bear addresses to the right side of the envelope and at least 5/8 inch up from the bottom of the envelope. Requests must be postmarked no later than the date specified in the media announcement (see 232.2) to qualify for cancellation service. As a free service, this is limited to 50 cancellations, except for covers presented in person by the customer in first-day-of-issue cities. Customers who want first-day cancellations of new stamps have two additional options:

a. They may buy stamps at local Post Offices, affix them to their own stamped envelopes, and mail them to the postmaster at the city of issuance for cancellation. Envelopes submitted by collectors must be of ordinary letter size and must be properly addressed. Collectors should place a filler of postal card thickness in each envelope and either turn in the flap or seal it.

b. They may order first-day covers without cachets by mail and telephone order, through the PFSC. Each cover will have an individual catalog number and will be offered in the Stamps etc. catalog produced by the PFSC. Item numbers and ordering instructions will also be provided in the news releases announcing new stamps. The price of the Postal Service’s first-day covers will vary with the denomination and number of stamps affixed. Remittance for mail orders should be made by money order or a cashier’s, certified, or personal check made payable to the U.S. Postal Service or by credit card as indicated in the Stamps etc. catalog. Mail orders containing personal checks will be held until the checks clear. Cash must not be sent. Neither postage stamps nor foreign coins and currency are accepted. Any orders containing such remittance will be returned unserviced. The covers remain on sale for at least 90 days after a stamp is issued.

233.3 Bulk Orders

The Post Office that services first-day covers will accept only stamp-affixed envelopes.

233.4 Hand-Stamped Cancellations

Hand-stamped cancellations are applied on covers at the location of the first-day ceremony and at the designated first-day Post Office, as well as on covers that cannot be fully canceled by postal cancellation machines. In all other cases, machine cancellations are supplied, except as provided in 24.

233.5 Hand-Back Service

Hand-back service for first-day cancellations is limited to the first day of issue. Material to be canceled must be presented to the designated first-day Post Office or ceremony location.

233.6 Unacceptable Covers

The issuing Post Office must not provide cancellation service on covers submitted through the mail that are unaddressed, or bear stamps issued after
the issue date and before the submittal cut-off date, or bear only previously canceled stamps; nor may the Post Office provide hand-back service on any items presented after the first day of issuance. These restrictions may be waived only by written authorization from the PFSC.

233.7 Mail Orders for Mint Stamps

The first-day Post Office may not accept mail order requests for uncanceled stamps from customers outside its service area, except for cover servicers as provided in 242.

233.8 Cancellation Deadlines

Deadlines for submitting covers for first-day-of-issue cancellations are established by Stamp Development and the PFSC. Any exceptions to these deadline dates must be authorized by both.

233.9 Unofficial First-Day Covers

Stamps acquired at the first-day Post Office may be canceled at any Post Office. Envelopes containing new stamps canceled on the first day of sale at a Post Office other than the issuing office are known as “unofficial first-day covers.”

234 Pictorial Cancellations

234.1 Description

Pictorial cancellations are postmarks offered by the Postal Service to commemorate local events celebrated in communities throughout the nation. These postmarks contain the name of a temporary philatelic station, city, state, ZIP Code, and month, day, and year of the cancellation. These cancellations may also feature wording and/or graphics relating to fairs, conventions, or other various types of local celebrations.

234.2 Sponsors

Pictorial cancellations are requested by sponsors or organizers of local events and are authorized to be used only at temporary philatelic stations and at other philatelic outlets. They may not be used at regular stamp windows for special local celebrations.

234.3 Cancellation Methods

Devices used for pictorial celebrations are generally hand stamps, except when volume requires the use of a machine cancellation. There is no charge to the sponsor for the production of the hand stamp or for the Postal Service’s staffing of the temporary station.

234.4 Criteria

Collectors may obtain pictorial cancellations at a temporary philatelic station established at an event or at a philatelic outlet, on the date of the
cancellation. Additionally, such cancellations may be requested by mail. Mail-in requests must be postmarked no later than 30 days following the requested cancellation date to qualify for this service.

235

Temporary Philatelic Station Cancellations

235.1 Approval

Postmasters may request authority from the appropriate manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level, to provide cancellation service at temporary philatelic stations. Only the standard circular cancellation will be provided unless the sponsors or organizers apply to the postmaster for use of a pictorial cancellation at least 10 weeks before the event. The sponsors or organizers must also propose a design and finished artwork for a pictorial cancellation. The cancellation service and design require the approval of the postmaster and the manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level. Different cancellations for each day of an event are authorized only for international philatelic exhibitions recognized by Stamp Development and held in the United States.

235.2 Requirements

235.21 Required Information and Dimensions

All cancellations must carry the name of the temporary station (the name of the exhibition or event, followed by the word “Station” or “Sta.”), the city, state, and ZIP Code of the actual location of the temporary philatelic station, and the month, day, and year of the cancellation. Overall dimensions must not exceed 4 inches horizontally and 2 inches vertically.

235.22 Approved Subject Matter

Illustrations, wording, and designs featured on cancellations must directly reflect the event to be commemorated. Cancellations that promote the sale or use of private, nonpostal products or that endorse or involve the ideals, policies, programs, products, campaigns, or candidates of religious, antireligious, commercial, political, fraternal, trade, labor, public-interest, or special-interest organizations may not be approved. However, cancellations may be approved that recognize events such as meetings, exhibitions, or conventions sponsored by or involving such organizations, provided that their designs do not include words, symbols, or illustrations referring to ideals, policies, programs, products, campaigns, or candidates. If there is doubt about whether a proposed cancellation meets these requirements, Stamp Development should be consulted before granting approval.

235.23 Publicity

The manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level (or designee), must submit a reproducible copy of the pictorial cancellation (actual size) to Stamp Development, so that national publicity may be arranged. The use of standard cancellations at temporary stations must also be reported. All reports should include the dates that the temporary philatelic station is to be open, the sponsor’s name, name of the temporary philatelic station, a
complete mailing address for customers requesting the cancellation by mail and a reproducible copy of the pictorial cancellation. Reports and copies of pictorial cancellations must be submitted by the first day of each month for those cancellations authorized 2 months later (e.g., January 1 for March authorization).

235.24 Equipment
Pictorial and standard cancellations shall be applied by rubber hand stamps purchased by the host Post Office or district office. If more than 100,000 pieces of mail are anticipated, the district may apply to the manager, PFSC, at least 60 days in advance for purchase of a metal die for machine cancellation. These cancellations may be provided only for the duration of the temporary philatelic stations.

235.25 Service Limitations
Hand stamping as a free service is limited to 50 cancellations for any single individual or group, except for cancellations at first-day-of-issue events. The sponsor may also obtain any reasonable amount of hand-backs free of service charge for its members, and special folders or programs prepared by the sponsor may be canceled and made available at the opening of the show. Other individuals or groups not in attendance at the first-day ceremony or at the first-day Post Office who require more than 50 hand-stamped cancellations may obtain this service only by paying a special fee. Written application for 50 or more cancellations must be made in advance to and be authorized by the PFSC.

235.26 Use and Disposition of Hand Stamps
Pictorial cancellation hand stamps, like other canceling devices, may be used only under the supervision of authorized postal personnel and must be returned by the postmaster to the manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level, 65 days after close of the exhibition or convention, by which time all replacement requests are to be handled. The manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level, must destroy the cancellation device upon receipt.

235.27 Special Requests to Retain Hand Stamps
Requests from sponsors to retain pictorial cancellation hand stamps for purposes of placement in a museum, historical site, or for any other appropriate use, must be approved by the appropriate manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level. Before release to the sponsor, the hand stamp must be defaced in such a way that it can be recognized if used improperly. Copies of the original and defaced cancellation designs must be kept on file in the local and/or district office.
236 Special Die-Hub Cancellations

236.1 Description
Special die-hub cancellations are cancellations in which a slogan or message publicizing an event is engraved on a die hub. These cancellations are applied by machine to live mail. Hand-back service may be provided only as described in 231.4. Mail-back (return in bulk) service cannot be provided, but cancellations can be provided on addressed envelopes or postal cards that are delivered to the addressee or addressees through mail delivery. Cancellations of philatelic quality are often not possible. All envelopes must be addressed. Any quantity of envelopes may be submitted, but they are not returned in bulk.

236.2 Criteria
236.21 General
Special cancellations are authorized when the scheduled event to be observed meets one of the following criteria:

a. It is for a national purpose for which Congress has made an appropriation.

b. It is of general public interest and importance, it will be observed for a definite period of time, and it is not conducted for private gain or profit.

236.22 Prohibitions
Special cancellations are not authorized for any of the following:

a. Events of interest primarily to a particular local group.

b. Fraternal, political, religious, service, commercial, or trade organizations.

c. Campaigns or events promoting the sale or use of private products or services.

d. Idea or slogan promotions not directly connected with an event of general public interest and importance.

e. Post Office anniversaries.

f. Recruitment programs.

g. Events that occur during a period when all canceling machines in the Post Office are scheduled for other special cancellation die hubs.

236.3 Periods of Use
Special cancellations may not be used longer than 6 months. Special cancellations that are approved on an annual basis are limited to one 60-day period annually during each year of repeated use.

236.4 Revocation
Permission to use any special cancellation may be curtailed or revoked when it is necessary to use special postmarking dies for Postal Service purposes.
236.5 Requirements

236.51 Initial Cancellation

The sponsor must submit the application in writing, for a purpose described in 236.21, to the postmaster at the Post Office where the special cancellation is to be used. The application described in this section should be in the form of a letter from the sponsor to the postmaster, giving all required information. The application must be submitted by the sponsor at least 4 months before the date the special cancellation is to be used and must provide the following information:

a. Complete description and schedule of the event to be observed, including evidence that it is not being conducted for private gain or profit.

b. Wording of the proposed cancellation is limited to three lines of not more than 20 letters, numbers, or spaces for each line. Do not use illustrations or designs because, in most circumstances, such designs are not easily reproduced on a die hub. The wording must directly reflect the event to be commemorated.

c. Name and telephone number of the Post Office where the cancellation is to be used.

d. Period of use desired.

e. Number of die hubs required.

f. Name, address, and telephone number of the sponsor who will be billed for the cost of manufacturing the die hubs.

236.52 National Events

Wording on a special cancellation must be standardized and approved by the sponsor’s national headquarters when the sponsor is an affiliate or local chapter of a national organization. Requests for national events must be forwarded to:

BUSINESS MAIL ACCEPTANCE
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L’ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 6801
WASHINGTON DC  20260-6808

236.53 Recurring Cancellations

A request must be submitted for reuse of recurring annual cancellations 3 months before the date that the sponsor wants the cancellation to be used again. In the case of national cancellations, a single request from the national sponsor is sufficient.

236.6 Referral of Postmaster

236.61 Forwarding Applications

Employees who receive applications must immediately forward them to their designated manager, Business Mail Entry, at the district level. (See DMM G040 for the 3-digit ZIP Code areas served by each district.) Enclose the information described in 236.51.
236.62 **Name of Manufacturer**

Furnish the name of the manufacturer and the model number of the canceling machine on which the special die hub will be used. If the machine is a Model Flier, Model M, or Model G, the correct die hub part number must be stated. The part number for Model Flier and Model M machines is 1535 for a hub that uses a round base ring die, and 1535-G for a hub that uses a square base ring die. The part number for a Model G machine is 218-A for a hub that uses a round base ring die, and 218-E for a hub that uses a square base ring die. A part number is not required for other machines.

236.63 **Effect of Approval**

State the effect the approval would have on the use of special cancellations already approved for that office.

236.7 **Approval and Disapproval**

The postmaster will inform the sponsor of the approval or denial of the application. If approved, the manager, Business Mail Entry at the district level, will arrange for the manufacture of the die hub and will instruct the postmaster on its use by memorandum or Form 3617, *Order for Special Canceling Machine Die Hubs*. If the request is not approved, the manager, Business Mail Entry, at the district level, will advise the postmaster of the decision and the reason.

236.8 **Cost**

The sponsor must pay the cost of manufacturing the special cancellation die hub and any cost incurred in adapting canceling machines for its use or for installing the hub. The approximate cost of a die hub can be obtained from the manager, Business Mail Entry, at the district level. The organization or person assuming the cost of manufacturing the die hub will be billed by the manufacturer.

236.9 **Disposition**

236.91 **After Use**

Used die hubs may not be given to sponsors or transferred to another Post Office. Used hubs not retained for future use must be sent for disposal to:

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

236.92 **Special Requests**

A request from the sponsor that a special cancellation die hub be retained for an appropriate purpose, such as placement in a museum, library, historical site, or other suitable use, may be approved by Business Mail Acceptance at Headquarters.
236.93 Replacement
When a special cancellation die hub must be replaced, local sponsors must be notified immediately so that they may, if they wish, apply for a replacement through the local postmaster. Sponsors must pay for replacement die hubs.

237 Mail Submitted for Special Die-Hub Cancellations

237.1 Postage and Addresses
Mailers requesting that their mail be canceled with a special die-hub cancellation must affix First-Class postage to the mail. Stamps issued by foreign countries may not be placed on the mail. The mail must bear a complete address.

237.2 Prohibitions

237.21 Holding the Mail
Mail must not be held to comply with a customer’s request that the mail be postmarked with a special cancellation on a particular date.

237.22 Backdating
Backdating of mail to comply with customer requests is prohibited. No exceptions to the above policy will be granted unless authorized in writing by the manager, PFSC.

237.23 Returns
Mail bearing the special cancellation must not be enclosed in another envelope for return, even if the customer provides a postage-paid envelope for return (see 231.4).

237.24 Replacements
Replacement of damaged envelopes canceled with a special cancellation is prohibited.

238 Military Post Offices and Special-Request Cancellations

238.1 Military Post Offices
Military Post Offices, including army Post Offices (APOs) and fleet Post Offices (FPOs), may hand stamp covers both on a hand-back basis and on a mail-order request in conformance with all policies and in accordance with all conditions and procedures stated in this section, except that:

a. The postal chief at each such installation may establish the maximum number of covers individual collectors or dealers may submit.

b. Military Post Offices may establish temporary philatelic stations or provide pictorial cancellations. Requests to establish temporary philatelic stations must be sent at least 90 days in advance of the
commemorative event to the responsible postmaster (New York City or San Francisco) for approval and coordination with Stamp Development.

238.2 **Special Requests**

Requests for cancellations at postal facilities that normally do not cancel mail must be made in writing to the appropriate manager, Customer Service Support, at the district level, at least 60 days in advance to permit area manager authorization and appropriate national publicity. These requirements also apply to requests for cancellations at offices that are inaccessible to the public or to requests for cancellations at any office on dates when mail is not normally canceled (for example, Sundays and holidays). Cover servicers, as described in 24, must submit their requests for cancellations to either the manager, PFSC, or the manager, Cancellation Services.

239 **Autographs**

Postal employees may, at their discretion, accept or refuse requests for autographs. Employees should exercise fairness in handling such requests. Nothing of value may be accepted or requested in exchange for autographs.

24 **Philatelic Cover Servicers and Dealers (Cachets)**

241 **General**

Cover servicers and dealers include those groups or commercial enterprises that submit 50 or more envelopes or other items for identical cancellations, whether presented in one or more packages, and request return in bulk. To provide more efficient philatelic services, Postal Service regulations on cover servicers and dealers specify that their submissions must be of 50 or more identical pieces. Smaller quantity orders can be better handled through the centralized first-day cover process.

242 **First-Day Cover Servicers**

Customers recognized as first-day cover servicers are permitted, though not required, to purchase mint stamps by mail from the first-day Post Office or from the PFSC on the date of issuance. Cancellations are provided only when stamp-affixed envelopes are submitted.

243 **Mail-Back Service**

243.1 **Service Charges and Authorizations**

Mail-back service for cover servicers and dealers is subject to a service charge established by the PFSC, which must be paid by check or money order before the mailing is processed. Additionally, written authorization must be obtained from the PFSC for more than 50 cancellations. Copies of authorizations are sent to the postmaster and the appropriate district office.
Postmasters must complete a cancellation confirmation information sheet and return it to the PFSC, which bills the cover servicer or dealer for the cancellation charge. The service charge for cancellations described in 231.1 applies to all customers.

243.2 Availability
Mail-back service, or return under cover in bulk, is available to dealers only when return postage, registration if desired, and all other applicable fees such as special handling are paid to the postmaster at the place of postmarking. Requests that do not include such payment are held until the proper amount is received. Post Offices in receipt of customer payments in excess of the postage and fees required should remit such overages to the PFSC for deposit to the customer's advance deposit account. The advance deposit account may be used to offset future applicable fees charged by the PFSC.

243.3 Acceptable Items
Mail-back service is generally permitted on first-day-of-issue, pictorial, or standard cancellations requested on the following materials: envelopes, postal cards, maximum cards and posters, portfolios, or other memorabilia. The Postal Service does not accept for first-day-of-issue cancellation covers that bear a stamp issued after the date of the postmark.

243.4 Cover Servicer Requirements
Unless the cover servicer receives written Headquarters approval for cancellation service, the envelopes are returned to the cover servicer unserviced, with a letter stating that advance approval from the PFSC must be obtained before the request can be honored.

244 Damaged or Missing Covers

244.1 Requests for Replacements
Requests for replacement of first-day cancellations, pictorial cancellations, and standard cancellations may be accepted at the appropriate Post Office for 60 days from the postmark date. All claims for nonreceipt of other covers submitted for servicing by the Postal Service must be sent to the appropriate Post Office no later than 60 days from the date of postmark or from the date cancellations were last applied. Claims for replacement cancellations filed after that time are not honored and are returned to the customer with a short explanation on why the request cannot be honored.

244.2 Criteria
Replacement cancellations are made for poor quality of cancellation, damage to the envelope, or other similar defects. Replacements are not made, however, in cases where envelopes were marked on the back by letter-sorting machine code numbers as they moved through the mail system.
244.3 **Procedures**
The customer must return the unsatisfactory cover or covers to the appropriate Post Office for replacement. Replacement covers must be returned to the customer in a Postal Service postage-paid envelope so that a stale postmark does not appear in the mailstream. Damaged covers must be disposed of in accordance with Handbook F-1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures*, 450.

244.4 **Exceptions**
The Postal Service does not replace missing or unsatisfactory standard machine cancellations or special die-hub cancellations because these cancellations are made in the course of live mail processing.

244.5 **Damaged or Lost Cacheted Covers**
The Postal Service is not responsible for damage or loss of cacheted covers or of other items of value.

245 **Special Philatelic Products**
Special philatelic products produced by the Postal Service for first-day postal ceremonies are permitted for major postal events only, such as the opening of a new philatelic center, a Postal Retail Store, or a dedicated philatelic window. All such products must be approved at least 3 months before the event by the appropriate area and Headquarters organizations. After approval but at least 2 months before the event, Stamp Development at Headquarters must be notified so that national publicity detailing product availability can be arranged.

246 **Postal Cacheted Envelopes**
Postal Service-produced cachets or cacheted envelopes are permitted only for first flights and for major postal or aviation events, such as the opening of a new philatelic center or dedicated philatelic window. All such cachets or cacheted envelopes must be approved by the area manager, Customer Services, and their approval must be communicated to Stamp Management at least 2 months before the event so that national publicity of their availability can be arranged.

247 **Protective Envelopes**
Cover servicers and dealers wanting to use a protective envelope other than the protective overwrapping provided by the Postal Service for mailing first-day covers must have a signed agreement on file with the Philatelic Fulfillment Service Center. This agreement specifies guidelines the cover servicer or dealer must meet to protect Postal Service revenue.
25 Stock for Promotions or Presentations

251 Authorization

251.1 General

To obtain canceled or uncanceled stamps, postal stationery, or philatelic products for information, official postal business or Postal Service presentations, district managers or postmasters must submit a funded Form 7381, Requisition for Supplies, Services, or Equipment, to the appropriate stock source as defined below. This form must identify the delivery address, contact name and telephone number, item number, quantity, description, amount, and the purpose or justification for the promotion or presentation. The postmaster or district manager must also enter account number 52325, Advertising and Sales Promotion, the finance number, and the Account Identifier Code (AIC) 596, Miscellaneous Advertising Expense, on Form 7381. Account number 52325 shows as a transaction to Line 34, Services, on the requesting office’s Postal Service Financial Report (PSFR). The postmaster or district manager has the option of obtaining stock locally or through the PFSC. Either request requires Form 7381.

251.2 Obtaining Stock Locally

To obtain stock locally, the postmaster or district manager authorizes and signs the completed Form 7381. The form is submitted to the window clerk servicing the same finance number shown on Form 7381. The window clerk fulfills items as requested and retains Form 7381 for submission with Form 1412-A, Daily Financial Form, as support for AIC 596. The window clerk records the transaction on Form 1412-A and enters the amount in AIC 596, with an offsetting entry to AIC 090, Postage Stock Sales, or AIC 092, Philatelic Product Sales. Form 7381 supports the entry to AIC 596. Offices that use Standard Field Accounting Procedures (SFAP) should submit Form 7381 to the appropriate district accounting offices. Statement of account offices should retain this form locally. The accounting office verifies the submitted Form 7381 for completeness and retains it as support for AIC 596 on the Statement of Account.

251.3 Obtaining Stock Through the Philatelic Fulfillment Service Center

Stock that is not available locally may be available through the PFSC. To obtain stock through the PFSC, in addition to completing Form 7381, the postmaster or district manager completes the order form in the Stamps etc. catalog. Each Post Office receives a supply of catalogs. To obtain additional Stamps etc. catalogs, postmasters or district managers should contact their assigned stamp distribution office. However, Form 7381 must include postage and handling as described in the Stamps etc. catalog. The postmaster or
district manager attaches the completed Form 7381 to the order form, in lieu of payment, and mails both forms to:

STAMPS ETC CATALOG
US POSTAL SERVICE
POST OFFICE BOX 57
GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744-0057

The postmaster makes no entries to the cash book. PFSC fulfills and mails the stock to the delivery address on Form 7381. PFSC enters the amount shown on the order form, supported with Form 7381, to AIC 596, with offsetting entries to AIC 090 or AIC 092, and AIC 114, Postage Due Invoices, for the postage and handling charges. PFSC accesses the Journal Voucher Transfer System through FACTS (Financial Accounting Control Tracking System) and enters the account number 52325 and the finance number indicated on Form 7381. The account number shows as a transaction to Line 34, Services, on the postmaster’s PSFR. The postmaster or district manager then sees an adjustment to either the prior period or the current period.

26 Copyright of Designs

261 Policy

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