

What USPS's New Postmark Rule Means for Your Business Mail

Effective December 24, 2025: A Postmark occurs when mail is processed, not dropped off

If you're confused—or concerned—about the new USPS postmark rules, you're not alone. Here's what's actually happening and why businesses with compliance mail, time-sensitive documents, and regulatory filings need to pay attention.

The Core Change: Your Mail Won't Be Postmarked the Day You Mail It

The [USPS Rule 39 CFR Part 111](#) added Section 608.11 clarifying that a postmark will no longer indicate the date a piece of mail was deposited with U.S. Postal Service. Instead, the postmark date represents "the date mail is officially accepted into USPS possession through a verified acceptance process and received in an automated processing operation." The USPS says the change is aimed at meeting its goal to cut costs and streamline mail processing by concentrating it in a smaller number of processing facilities, which are often regional hubs.

Translation: If you drop a mailing at your local post office on Monday, it might not get postmarked until Tuesday, Wednesday, or later—depending on how far it must travel to reach a USPS processing center.

What Does "In USPS Possession" and "Verified Acceptance" Mean?

"Officially accepted into USPS possession" means the USPS has physically taken control of your mail and formally acknowledged it through a "verified acceptance process." Until that happens, your mail is not considered mailed, regardless of whether it's printed, presorted, or staged on a dock. "Verified acceptance" means that USPS confirms that postage has been paid correctly, documentation (eDoc/postage statement) is accurate, and mail meets eligibility and preparation requirements.

The clock starts when USPS accepts your mail—not when it's dropped at the local post office.

Can I Postmark Mail Manually?

Yes, you can request a manual [USPS postmark](#). However, USPS advises customers who need same-day postmarking to request a manual postmark at a USPS location. But there are practical limitations:

- **Volume restrictions:** Customers presenting significant mail volume—50 or more mailpieces—for manual postmarks need to contact the postmaster or other manager in advance to ensure that adequate resources are available
- **Access challenges:** In rural areas or communities with limited post office hours, manual postmarking may be difficult or impossible for time-sensitive mailings.
- **Operational burden:** For businesses mailing compliance documents regularly, manual postmarking at retail counters isn't a scalable solution.

What Does All This Means for My Business Mailings?

If your business handles compliance mail, time-sensitive documents, or regulatory filings, you will need to make important adjustments.

Start by reviewing your compliance and time-sensitive mailings to identify which documents require a verified postmark or acceptance date for legal or regulatory reasons. Next, adjust internal timelines to build in additional buffer days before deadlines, ensuring mail is officially accepted by USPS in time—even during peak periods. For the most critical communications, consider alternatives such as manual postmarking or other tracked delivery options to reduce risk and maintain compliance.