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October XX, 2020

TO: Officers, PCES, and Pay Band Managers

SUBJECT: Supplemental Guidance Memorandum

On September 21, 2020, we issued Clarifying Operational Instructions about the Postal Service's practices concerning Overtime, Hiring, Retail Hours, Collection Boxes, Late and Extra Trips, Mail Processing, and Election Mail. On September 25, 2020, we issued a Memorandum entitled "Additional Resources for Election Mail Beginning October 1" which identified additional resources being made available for District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers to utilize, as they determine, to support the timely and expeditious handling of the increased volume of Election Mail. We write today to supplement the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the Additional Resources Memorandum in accordance with a recent federal district court order, in order to reiterate our earlier guidance and to assist in carrying out the specific directives required by the court order.

### **Election Mail is the Postal Service's Number One Priority**

Proper handling and timely delivery of Election Mail is the Postal Service's number one priority. As described in the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the Additional Resources Memorandum, many long-standing recommended practices about how to treat Election Mail are now policy requirements. District Managers, Postmasters, Division Directors, and Plant Managers are instructed to ensure that all Election Mail is prioritized and delivered on time. To reiterate, and by way of example, it is Postal Service policy that:

- To the extent excess capacity permits, Election Mail should be prioritized, regardless of the paid class. More detailed guidance on the prioritization of Election Mail is laid out in the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the Additional Resources Memorandum, and below.
- Specifically, Election Mail entered as Marketing Mail should be prioritized and advanced ahead of all other Marketing Mail and processed expeditiously so that it is generally delivered in line with First-Class Mail standards;
- Processing windows on letter and flat sorting equipment should be expanded as necessary to ensure that all Election Mail received prior to the First-Class Mail Critical Entry Time is processed that same day;
- To the extent possible, Election Mail received after the Critical Entry Time should be processed and advanced as if it arrived prior to the Critical Entry Time, unless doing so would disrupt on-time service for Election Mail received prior to the Critical Entry Time;
- Election Mail, including ballots with Green Tags 191, should be prioritized when loading trucks;
- All identifiable ballots returned by voters should be "cancelled" or "postmarked," regardless of the method of payment of postage used, and early cancellations should be conducted the week before Election Day to ensure all collected ballots are processed timely;
- Furthermore, the Postal Service will utilize ballot monitors in each mail processing facility in order to ensure that as many ballots being returned by voters as possible are cancelled as required by our policy;

- Daily “all clears” should be used to ensure that all Election Mail is accounted for in the system and mail scheduled or “committed” to go out is processed accordingly;
- Standardized log sheets should be used to track Election Mail through processing;
- Ballots mailed close to Election Day, regardless of paid class, may be manually separated and moved by air or according to Priority Mail Express delivery standards;
- Extra delivery and collection trips are authorized and instructed to be used to ensure that completed ballots entered on Election Day reach the appropriate election official by the state’s designated deadline on Election Day;
- The use of extraordinary measures beyond our normal course of operations is authorized and expected to be used between October 26, 2020, and November 24, 2020, to accelerate the delivery of identifiable ballots. The Additional Resources Memorandum provides examples of extraordinary measures that may and should be taken if necessary to ensure the expeditious delivery of ballots, which may also include manually separating ballots and moving them by air, consistent with practices used in past elections.

For additional discussion of the Postal Service’s policy requirements concerning the treatment of Election Mail, please refer to the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the Additional Resources Memorandum referenced above.

### **Late and Extra Trips Are Not Banned and Should Be Used When They Would Facilitate the Expeditious Delivery of Election Mail**

To reiterate, late and extra trips are not banned. Pre-approval is not needed for late and extra trips. Because the proper handling and timely delivery of Election Mail is our number one priority, authorizing late and extra trips through November 6, 2020, will not result in disciplinary action. To the contrary, late and extra trips that would facilitate the on-time delivery of Election Mail are authorized and encouraged—we are committed to using such trips to deliver Election Mail on time.

For example, if a truck needs to be held to receive Election Mail and that delay would not cause the truck to miss a later connection that might delay other Election Mail, the truck should be held until it can receive the Election Mail.

### **Overtime Should Be Used to Deliver Election Mail**

Overtime is authorized and instructed to be used to facilitate the timely delivery of Election Mail. Further discussion regarding the use of overtime needed to expeditiously move Election Mail is communicated in the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the Additional Resources Memorandum.

For example, if overtime would ensure that ballots can be processed and delivered in line with First-Class Mail delivery standards, or that a facility clears all of its Election Mail to the greatest extent possible without impacting downstream operations that might likewise contain Election Mail, that overtime is authorized and instructed to be used.

### **Report Violations of Election Mail Policies and Practices**

In the event that any of our current Election Mail policies and practices are not being observed, please report any such concerns as soon as possible so they can be corrected promptly. In the first instance, reports should be made to the relevant ballot ambassador. If the relevant ballot ambassador is not available or is not known, reports should be made to a relevant union representative, who can refer reports of any Election Mail concerns to ballot ambassadors on the reporter's behalf. If the individual reporting the concern is unable to reach either a ballot ambassador or union representative, the individual should contact the relevant Election Mail coordinator; the contact information for all Election Mail coordinators is listed at <https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/pdf/political-election-mail-coordinators.pdf>.

For example, please report any delayed ballots or any ballots that have not been prioritized, to the relevant ballot ambassador or the Election Mail coordinator.

### **Recent Guidance Should Be Explained to Your Direct Reports**

As soon as possible, please explain to each of your direct reports the policies and practices described here, including the reporting structure discussed above. Please also explain to each of your direct reports the policies and practices described in the Clarifying Operational Instructions and the and Additional Resources Memorandum that are relevant to each direct report, taking into account their individual responsibilities.

### **If You Have Questions About Recent Guidance, Ask**

To provide consistent guidance across the nation, if you have questions regarding Logistics and Processing Operations, please contact Mike Barber, Vice President, Processing and Maintenance Operations. If you have any questions regarding Retail and Delivery Operations, please contact Joshua Colin, Vice President, Delivery Operations or Angela Curtis, Vice President, Retail and Post Office Operations. Contact information for these individuals can be found in the internal directory.