



E000 Special Eligibility Standards

## E020 Department of State Mail

**Summary** E020 describes the standards for sending mail to the U.S. Department of State for transmission overseas.

### 1.0 AVAILABILITY

**General** Subject to its own conditions and restrictions, the U.S. Department of State transmits certain types of personal mail to authorized U.S. citizen employees of the federal government stationed in other countries. If authorized, the mailer pays domestic postage rates and avoids foreign customs clearance standards. Current information on services provided by the Department of State, including restrictions, may be obtained from the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Pouch Division.

1.1

**Inspection** The Department of State opens and inspects mail sent to it for transmission abroad to determine whether the mail meets its standards. Mail that does not comply may be returned to the USPS.

1.2

**If Not Available** If Department of State facilities are not available, senders may send articles to the addressee directly, either as regular international mail or, if the addressee has an APO or FPO address, as military mail under [E010](#).

1.3

**Express Mail** Express Mail may not be sent through the Department of State.

1.4

### 2.0 CONDITIONS FOR AUTHORIZED MAIL

**Mailability** USPS mailability standards for international mail apply to mail sent to the Department of State for transmission abroad, in addition to any restriction imposed by the Department of State.

2.1

**Address Format** All items authorized for transmission by the Department of State must be addressed:

2.2

NAME  
FOREIGN CITY [OMIT NAME OF COUNTRY]  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON DC 20521

**Special Services** The following special services are not available for mail transmitted through the Department of State: certified, COD, Delivery Confirmation, insured, registered, restricted delivery, return receipt, return receipt for merchandise, Signature Confirmation, and special handling. If one of those services is requested on this mail, it is returned to the sender endorsed "Service Not Available."

2.3

**Weight and Size** Weight and size limits are 40 pounds, 24 inches in length, and 62 inches in length and girth combined.

2.4

**Postage Rates** Postage at the applicable domestic rate for the class of mail and the type of service requested applies to mail sent through the Department of State. Zoned rates are computed from Washington, DC.

2.5

**Customs** Customs declarations and stickers are not required on mail sent through Department of State facilities.

2.6

**Prohibited Material**

2.7

The Department of State does not accept dangerous or fragile materials, glass containers, parcels not meeting its size and weight limits, and items specified in its regulations, including the following:

- a. The personal effects of deceased U.S. citizens.
- b. Any item that is illegal to import into the receiving country or export from the sending country.
- c. Goods from third-country sources addressed to the Department of State requiring clearance by customs authorities before onward shipment to posts abroad.
- d. Alcoholic beverages, plants, and animals.
- e. Foodstuffs weighing more than 25 pounds per authorized individual per calendar year.
- f. Any item shipped to circumvent the weight limits provided for household effects, air freight, and food allowances. *This prohibition does not preclude the occasional shipment of clothing, gifts, printed materials, personal necessities, or household wares.*

**3.0 MAIL SECURITY**

The Department of State does not assume liability for loss or damage to any mail it accepts for transmission abroad. By using the department's facilities, the sender consents both to the department's examining the mail by means such as x-ray and letter-bomb detector and to the department's opening, searching, and divulging the content of any package. The Department of State does not open a sealed envelope that it believes to contain only correspondence or documents, except with the consent of the sender or addressee or under a federal search warrant.