

(b) The Postal Service shall consult with and receive the advice of the Advisory Council regarding all aspects of postal operations.

(c) The members of the Council representative of the public at large shall receive for each meeting of the Council an amount equal to the daily rate applicable to level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5. All members of the Council shall be reimbursed for necessary travel and reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings of the Council.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 722.)

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Aug. 12, 1970, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COUNCILS

Advisory councils in existence on Jan. 5, 1973, to terminate not later than the expiration of the 2-year period following Jan. 5, 1973, unless, in the case of a council established by the President or an officer of the Federal Government, such council is renewed by appropriate action prior to the expiration of such 2-year period, or in the case of a council established by the Congress, its duration is otherwise provided by law. See sections 1001(2) and 1013 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

**§ 207. Seal**

The seal of the Postal Service shall be filed by the Board in the Office of the Secretary of State, judicially noticed, affixed to all commissions of officers of the Postal Service, and used to authenticate records of the Postal Service.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 722.)

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 16, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-5 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

**§ 208. Reservation of powers**

Congress reserves the power to alter, amend, or repeal any or all of the sections of this title, but no such alteration, amendment, or repeal shall impair the obligation of any contract made by the Postal Service under any power conferred by this title.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 722.)

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-9 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

**CHAPTER 4—GENERAL AUTHORITY**

Sec.	
401.	General powers of the Postal Service.
402.	Delegation of authority.
403.	General duties.
404.	Specific powers.

Sec.	
404a.	Specific limitations.
405.	Printing of illustrations of United States postage stamps.
406.	Postal services at Armed Forces installations.
407.	International postal arrangements.
408.	International money-order exchanges.
409.	Suits by and against the Postal Service.
410.	Application of other laws.
411.	Cooperation with other Government agencies.
412.	Nondisclosure of lists of names and addresses.
413.	Postal services at diplomatic posts.
414.	Special postage stamps.
415.	Prohibition on restriction or elimination of services.
416.	Authority to issue semipostals.

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

- 2012—Pub. L. 112-234, §2(e)(2), Dec. 28, 2012, 126 Stat. 1625, renumbered Pub. L. 106-253, §2(d). See 2000 Amendment note below.
- 2006—Pub. L. 109-435, title IV, §403(c), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3227, added item 404a.
- 2000—Pub. L. 106-253, §2(c), formerly §2(d), July 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 636, as renumbered §2(c) by Pub. L. 112-234, §2(e)(2), Dec. 28, 2012, 126 Stat. 1625, added item 416.
- 1998—Pub. L. 105-241, §4(b), Sept. 28, 1998, 112 Stat. 1573, added item 415.
- 1997—Pub. L. 105-41, §2(c), Aug. 13, 1997, 111 Stat. 1121, added item 414.
- 1990—Pub. L. 101-524, §5(b), Nov. 6, 1990, 104 Stat. 2303, added item 413.

**§ 401. General powers of the Postal Service**

Subject to the provisions of section 404a, the Postal Service shall have the following general powers:

- (1) to sue and be sued in its official name;
- (2) to adopt, amend, and repeal such rules and regulations, not inconsistent with this title, as may be necessary in the execution of its functions under this title and such other functions as may be assigned to the Postal Service under any provisions of law outside of this title;
- (3) to enter into and perform contracts, execute instruments, and determine the character of, and necessity for, its expenditures;
- (4) to determine and keep its own system of accounts and the forms and contents of its contracts and other business documents, except as otherwise provided in this title;
- (5) to acquire, in any lawful manner, such personal or real property, or any interest therein, as it deems necessary or convenient in the transaction of its business; to hold, maintain, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of such property or any interest therein; and to provide services in connection therewith and charges therefor;
- (6) to construct, operate, lease, and maintain buildings, facilities, equipment, and other improvements on any property owned or controlled by it, including, without limitation, any property or interest therein transferred to it under section 2002 of this title;
- (7) to accept gifts or donations of services or property, real or personal, as it deems, necessary or convenient in the transaction of its business;

(8) to settle and compromise claims by or against it;

(9) to exercise, in the name of the United States, the right of eminent domain for the furtherance of its official purposes; and to have the priority of the United States with respect to the payment of debts out of bankrupt, insolvent, and decedents' estates; and

(10) to have all other powers incidental, necessary, or appropriate to the carrying on of its functions or the exercise of its specific powers.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 722; Pub. L. 109-435, title IV, § 403(b)(1), title V, § 504, Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3227, 3235.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

2006—Pub. L. 109-435, § 403(b)(1), substituted “Subject to the provisions of section 404a, the” for “The” in introductory provisions.

Par. (2). Pub. L. 109-435, § 504, amended par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (2) read as follows: “to adopt, amend, and repeal such rules and regulations as it deems necessary to accomplish the objectives of this title;”.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Pars. (1) and (3) to (10) effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-9 of the Board of Governors and par. (2) effective Aug. 12, 1970. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

#### Executive Documents

##### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FUNCTIONS

For assignment of certain emergency preparedness functions to the Postmaster General, see Parts 1, 2, and 26 of Ex. Ord. No. 12656, Nov. 18, 1988, 53 F.R. 47491, set out as a note under section 5195 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare.

##### EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 13975

Ex. Ord. No. 13975, Jan. 14, 2021, 86 F.R. 6547, which encouraged Buy American policies for the United States Postal Service, was revoked by Ex. Ord. No. 14005, § 14(a), Jan. 25, 2021, 86 F.R. 7478, set out as a note under section 8301 of Title 41, Public Contracts.

#### § 402. Delegation of authority

Except for those powers, duties, or obligations specifically vested in the Governors, as distinguished from the Board of Governors, the Board may delegate the authority vested in it to the Postmaster General under such terms, conditions, and limitations, including the power of re-delegation, as it deems desirable. The Board may establish such committees of the Board, and delegate such powers to any committee, as the Board determines appropriate to carry out its functions and duties. Delegations to the Postmaster General or committees shall be consistent with other provisions of this title, shall not relieve the Board of full responsibility for the carrying out of its duties and functions, and shall be revocable by the Governors in their exclusive judgment.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 723.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 16, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-5 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

#### § 403. General duties

(a) The Postal Service shall plan, develop, promote, and provide adequate and efficient postal services at fair and reasonable rates and fees. The Postal Service shall receive, transmit, and deliver throughout the United States, its territories and possessions, and, pursuant to arrangements entered into under sections 406 and 411 of this title, throughout the world, written and printed matter, parcels, and like materials and provide such other services incidental thereto as it finds appropriate to its functions and in the public interest. The Postal Service shall serve as nearly as practicable the entire population of the United States.

(b) It shall be the responsibility of the Postal Service—

(1) to maintain an efficient system of collection, sorting, and delivery of the mail nationwide;

(2) to provide types of mail service to meet the needs of different categories of mail and mail users; and

(3) to establish and maintain postal facilities of such character and in such locations, that postal patrons throughout the Nation will, consistent with reasonable economies of postal operations, have ready access to essential postal services.

(c) In providing services and in establishing classifications, rates, and fees under this title, the Postal Service shall not, except as specifically authorized in this title, make any undue or unreasonable discrimination among users of the mails, nor shall it grant any undue or unreasonable preferences to any such user.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 723; Pub. L. 96-70, title I, § 1331(e)(1), Sept. 27, 1979, 93 Stat. 482.)

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

1979—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 96-70 substituted “The Postal Service” for “Except as provided in the Canal Zone Code, the Postal Service”.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1979 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 96-70 effective Oct. 1, 1979, see section 3304 of Pub. L. 96-70, set out as an Effective Date note under section 3601 of Title 22, Foreign Relations and Intercourse.

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 20, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71-10 of the Board of Governors. See section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as a note preceding section 101 of this title.

#### CONTINUATION OF MAIL DELIVERY SERVICES

Provisions requiring continuation of six-day delivery and rural delivery of mail at not less than the 1983 level