

MAIL CENTER
Fort Bend County, Texas

POLICY & PROCEDURES
Effective March 28, 2017

The Mail Center is authorized to receive and process the County's mail through its agreement with licensed agencies and the U.S. Postal Service.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide client offices and departments with a centralized mail process. The Mail Center will process outgoing U.S. and privately handled letters and parcels displaying the statement "Official Business – Penalty for Private Use." The Mail Center will route incoming U.S. mail as well as in-house mail to the appropriate departments. Mail Center staff will also provide, subject to the availability of staff, other services including folding, tabbing, manual stuffing of envelopes, and photocopying.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

No outgoing US mail will be opened by Mail Center staff and incoming mail will be opened by Supervisor only when there is no other way to determine the intended recipient. Employees are required to acknowledge the confidential nature of their responsibilities by signing a Confidentiality Statement upon hire, and are made to understand that they are subject to possible termination if they violate the policy.

APPROPRIATE USAGE:

No outgoing U.S. or privately handled mail will be metered or otherwise paid for by the Mail Center unless it displays the statement "Official Business – Penalty for Private Use." Seasonal, special occasion and sympathy cards will **not** be deemed official business. Any questionable items will be referred to the County Auditor and/or returned to the submitting department.

Mail Center personnel will receive outgoing personal mail as a courtesy to the public and to County employees only when postage has been affixed. Receipt of personal mail by County employees at their workplace is facilitated but not encouraged.

TRACKING MAIL BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS:

When the need arises for tracking mail sent between departments of the County, the sending department(s) shall notify the Mail Center. The Mail Center staff will affix to the mail in question a form containing blanks for all requested data. Unless otherwise required by law or circumstance, execution of this form shall be used in lieu of certified or other accountable mail.

MAIL PERMITS AND REMOTE METERS:

The Mail Center Supervisor shall exercise control over the issuance and usage of all Fort Bend County mailing permits and all of the county's postage meters.

DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES AND RULES:

Hours: The Supervisor will open the Mail Center at 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, except on designated holidays or closures. When the Supervisor is unavailable, a designated Mail Clerk shall open the Mail Center.

Off-Site Pickup and Delivery: Mail Center staff makes a daily, early-morning and mid-morning pickup of U.S. mail from the Richmond Post Office. Staff also makes daily pickup and delivery of mail to designated County buildings as established by the Mail Center Supervisor.

A licensed or designated authorized agent of the U.S. Post Office will receive and take possession of the County's outgoing mail.

Separation of Mail: Departments are requested to separate all inter-office mail and personal mail from outgoing mail requiring postage. All inter-office mail should be clearly marked as such and preferably placed in an inter-office envelope to prevent it from inadvertently being metered. The Mail Center maintains a supply of used inter-office envelopes.

Inter-office mail will be sorted and distributed to department mailboxes on a continuing basis during work hours.

Delivery to Mail Center: Outgoing mail should be delivered to the Mail Center as soon as possible. Departments with large volumes of mail or more than usual are requested to deliver their mail to the Mail Center multiple times a day.

All outgoing U.S. mail should be received by the Mail Center prior to 4:00 p.m. in order to be processed and postmarked by the U.S. Post Office on that date. After 4:00 p.m. departments are responsible for same-day delivery to the U.S. Post Office.

All courier and next-day correspondence should be delivered to the Mail Center no later than 3:00 p.m.

Addressing: Whenever possible, outgoing mail should be prepared in typewritten form with a proper address format in the return and delivery areas. It will be metered and its cost attributed to the proper department.

Inter-office correspondence should legibly display date, recipient/department, and sender/department, and preferably be placed in an inter-office envelope.

Changes: Departments are requested to give the Mail Center reasonable notice in advance of significant changes to their daily mail routine, such as quantity or delivery time of mail deposited. These changes should be discussed in detail with the Mail Center Supervisor preferably during the annual budget request process prior to being finalized.

Permits and Meters: The Mail Center Supervisor shall be responsible for acquiring and maintaining all Postal Permits for the County. Likewise, the Mail Center Supervisor shall exercise control over the funding and operation of all postage meters. Departments using off-site meters are required to notify the Supervisor in writing 48 hours prior to requesting a drawdown of funds.

REVISED and ADOPTED on the _____ day of _____, 2017.

SIGNED by:

Robert E. Hebert
Fort Bend County Judge

ATTESTED by:

Laura Richard
Fort Bend County Clerk

REVIEWED by:

Edna Chavez
Mail Center Supervisor

Note: Original Mail Center Policy and Procedures was adopted by Commissioners ' Court on the 3rd day of August, 2004.