

National Color-Code Policy for Standard Mail

OBJECTIVE

The objective and intent of this policy is to ensure the timely processing, dispatch, and delivery of Standard Mail within established service commitments.

1. All Outgoing, area distribution center (ADC) or sectional center facility (SCF) Standard Mail, regardless of where received (e.g., associate office (AO), processing and distribution center (P&DC), or other location), must be coded with the color that represents the day the mail is scheduled to be cleared.
2. All other destinating Standard Mail must be coded with a delivery color that represents the scheduled day of delivery. Once you apply the color code, it remains on the mail until it is taken out for delivery. Apply the delivery color-code as outlined in the specific facility portions of this policy.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Distribute all Standard Mail within the framework of the approved operating plan. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival of the mail being used in conjunction with the facility critical entry time. "Arrival at the facility" means the day and time the mail arrives on the Postal Service's property.
2. If Standard Mail is mixed with a higher class of mail (e.g., First-Class Mail) in such a manner as it loses its identity, the Standard Mail must be considered upgraded and treated as the higher class of mail.
3. If a holiday falls on a scheduled delivery day, apply the normal color code to allow for proper sequencing in any downstream operation.
4. Color coding must not be the sole indicator used in evaluating what mail constitutes a plan failure (as related to mail condition reporting). Compliance with approved operating plan parameters must be the determining factor.
5. There are no prohibitions against management agreements being made below the national level which accelerate the color coding and/or delivery expectations for any Standard Mail versus this policy.
6. Remove color code tags used to identify Clearance Day targets in Outgoing, ADC and SCF operations before you dispatch the mail to downstream operations. Keep the Delivery Day color codes with the mail until it is taken out for delivery, unless we note otherwise in this policy.
7. Anytime Standard mail is sent back upstream (back-flowed) for delivery point sequencing (DPS), automated processing, or other processing, the mail must retain the original color coding and delivery schedule as if it had remained in the downstream unit.
8. Offices should make every effort to adhere to mailer-requested, in-home delivery dates. Do not deliver such mail earlier than the date the mailer has requested.







COLOR CODING PROCEDURES

Apply color codes to Standard Mail as outlined in the following sections, which are arranged by facility type and sortation level:

Bulk Mail Centers

1. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival of the mail being used in conjunction with the facility critical entry time. "Arrival at the facility" means the day and time the mail arrives on Postal Service property. Bulk mail centers (BMCs) must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail, based on its arrival on the premises, even when such mail is entered into the various mechanized sorting systems.
2. Code all outgoing Standard Mail with the 1-day color code that represents the day the mail is scheduled to be cleared. After you finish processing the mail, remove the Clearance Day tags used in outgoing operations before you dispatch to downstream operations and facilities.
3. If a BMC and another processing center share responsibility for performing the functions of an area distribution center (ADC) or sectional center facility (SCF) (i.e., a 115/185 operation) or the BMC is a designated ADC or SCF, code the mail with a 1-day color code indicating the day the operation should be cleared. Such color code tagging must be consistent with the arrival of the mail on Postal Service premises, and not when it is extracted or identified from a mechanized operation. After processing is completed, the Clearance Day tags used in the ADC/SCF operation are to be removed prior to dispatch to downstream operations. If any further distribution is performed below the ADC/SCF level in the BMC, then the portion of these instructions applicable to a P&DC, Delivery Unit, etc., are to be applied, as appropriate.

In accordance with item 3 above, the following color-coding procedures must apply:

ONE-DAY CLEARANCE MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Clearance Day
Saturday	White		Sunday
Sunday	Blue		Monday
Monday	Orange		Tuesday
Tuesday	Green		Wednesday
Wednesday	Violet		Thursday
Thursday	Yellow		Friday
Friday	Pink		Saturday

4. When Standard Mail is discovered in a facility, after its initial receipt, without color codes or incorrectly identified with multiple color codes, and it cannot be reasonably determined what the color code should be, the following procedures must be followed:
 - o If the mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance/delivery date has passed.
 - o If mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance/delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
 - o If mail is observed without any color code at all, and there is no other mail in the unit at the time of its discovery, then it is to be color coded with today's clearance/delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.








Processing and Distribution Centers
Processing and Distribution Facilities
Mail Processing Facilities/Centers
Customer Service Mail Processing Facilities

The following color-coding procedures must apply in each of the designated operations:

1. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival of the mail being used in conjunction with the facility critical entry time. Arrival at the facility is defined as the day/time the mail arrives on Postal Service property. These facilities must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail, based on its arrival on the premises, even when such mail is entered into mechanized sack sorting systems.
2. All outgoing mail, ADC and SCF/Incoming Primary Mail and carrier route mail must be color coded to indicate scheduled clearance 1 day after receipt at the facility:

ONE-DAY CLEARANCE MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Clearance Day
Saturday	White		Sunday
Sunday	Blue		Monday
Monday	Orange		Tuesday
Tuesday	Green		Wednesday
Wednesday	Violet		Thursday
Thursday	Yellow		Friday
Friday	Pink		Saturday

3. After processing is completed, the Clearance Day tags used in outgoing, ADC, SCF/Incoming Primary and carrier route operations are to be removed prior to dispatch to downstream operations/facilities.
4. The SCF/Incoming Primary Standard Mail addressed in item #2 above must be totally finalized and processed by the identified Clearance Day.
5. Facilities which process 3-digit SCF Standard Mail only to the 5-digit level must color code that 3-digit Standard Mail for clearance 1 day after receipt at that facility, as listed in the chart above. This mail must then be dispatched without color codes, and the proper delivery color code must be applied upon receipt at the facility that performs the secondary distribution.
6. All Standard Mail which must subsequently receive incoming secondary distribution at the facility performing the ADC or SCF operation must receive a 2-day color code based upon its arrival or upon its extraction and identification from its initial distribution operation (either the ADC or SCF operation), using the following 2-day matrix:

TWO-DAY DELIVERY MATRIX			
Arrival/Extraction Day	Color Code	Color	Delivery Day
Saturday	Orange		Tuesday
Sunday	Orange		Tuesday
Monday	Green		Wednesday
Tuesday	Violet		Thursday
Wednesday	Yellow		Friday
Thursday	Pink		Saturday
Friday	Blue		Monday

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8. In situations wherein ADC and SCF mail is, for operational reasons, commingled in the same processing operation, all such mail extracted for the local SCF must be color coded for a scheduled delivery day, also using the 2-day delivery matrix.
9. When Standard Mail with mailer-requested in-home delivery dates is retained at the facility for DPS processing, a delivery color code reflecting the last requested in-home delivery date may be affixed, provided the mail is segregated and the in-home delivery day identification placards accompany the mail.
10. When Standard Mail is discovered in a facility, after its initial receipt, without color codes or incorrectly identified with multiple color codes, and it cannot be reasonably determined what the color code should be, the following procedures must be followed:
 - o If the mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance/delivery date has passed.

- If mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance/delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
- If mail is observed without any color code at all, and there is no other mail in the unit at the time of its discovery, then it is to be color coded with today's clearance/delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.

Delivery Distribution Centers/Units

1. The application of color codes to Standard Mail mail is based on the arrival of the mail being used in conjunction with the facility critical entry time. Arrival at the facility is defined as the day/time the mail arrives on Postal Service property. These facilities must develop local procedures to ensure that they maintain the correct color code for all mail, based on its arrival on the premises.
2. All outgoing mail received from a mailer and destinating carrier route mail must be color coded to indicate scheduled clearance 1 day after receipt at the facility:

ONE-DAY CLEARANCE MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Clearance Day
Saturday	White		Sunday
Sunday	Blue		Monday
Monday	Orange		Tuesday
Tuesday	Green		Wednesday
Wednesday	Violet		Thursday
Thursday	Yellow		Friday
Friday	Pink		Saturday

3. After processing is completed, the Clearance Day tags are to be removed prior to dispatch.
4. All other destinating Standard Mail received at Delivery Distribution Centers/Units (DDC/DDU), including drop shipment mailings, must be color coded for 2-day delivery as follows:








TWO-DAY DELIVERY MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Delivery Day
Saturday	Orange		Tuesday
Sunday	Orange		Tuesday
Monday	Green		Wednesday
Tuesday	Violet		Thursday

Wednesday	Yellow		Friday
Thursday	Pink		Saturday
Friday	Blue		Monday








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6. DDCs and DDU's which perform secondary distribution for delivery units must also apply a 2-day delivery color code to that mail upon its arrival from upstream facilities.
7. Whenever a delivery day color code is applied, it must remain on the mail until it is taken out by the carrier at the delivery unit.
8. When Standard Mail is discovered in a DDC/DDU, after its initial receipt, without color codes or incorrectly identified with multiple color codes, and it cannot be reasonably determined what the color code should be, the following procedures must be followed:
 - o If the mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance/delivery date has passed.
 - o If mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance/delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
 - o If mail is observed without any color code at all, and there is no other mail in the unit at the time of its discovery, then it is to be color coded with today's clearance/delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.

Delivery Units, including Post Offices, Stations, and Branches

1. All outgoing mail received from a mailer must be color coded to indicate scheduled clearance 1 day after receipt at the facility:

ONE-DAY CLEARANCE MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Clearance Day
Saturday	White		Sunday
Sunday	Blue		Monday
Monday	Orange		Tuesday
Tuesday	Green		Wednesday
Wednesday	Violet		Thursday
Thursday	Yellow		Friday
Friday	Pink		Saturday

2. After processing is completed, the Clearance Day tags used in outgoing operations are to be removed prior to dispatch.
3. Delivery units not performing secondary distribution will receive Standard Mail from the distribution facility with a color code attached. This color code must remain on the mail until taken out for delivery.
4. Delivery units doing secondary distribution, receiving Standard Mail requiring secondary distribution (including drop shipment mailings and mail received directly from mailers) will apply the following 2-day delivery color code upon receipt of the mail. This color code must remain on the mail until taken out for delivery.
5. Delivery units receiving mailer prepared carrier route presort mail from upstream postal facilities or directly from mailers will apply the following 2-day delivery color code upon receipt of the mail. This color code must remain on the mail until taken out for delivery.

TWO-DAY DELIVERY MATRIX			
Receipt Day	Color Code	Color	Delivery Day
Saturday	Orange		Tuesday
Sunday	Orange		Tuesday
Monday	Green		Wednesday
Tuesday	Violet		Thursday
Wednesday	Yellow		Friday
Thursday	Pink		Saturday
Friday	Blue		Monday

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7. If a holiday falls on a scheduled delivery day, the delivery color code must remain unchanged and must be used to properly sequence the mail on the next delivery day. On the day following the holiday, the mail color-coded for the holiday is not considered delayed, but is worked prior to the mail with the current day's color.
8. Delivery units may receive Standard Mail with a mailer-requested delivery date later than the scheduled color-coded day. This mail is to be color coded or re-color coded at the delivery unit to match the last requested in-home delivery date, to comply with the mailer's request.
9. Delivery units may receive Standard Mail with a mailer-requested delivery date earlier than the color coded delivery day. Although this mail must remain color coded for delivery as outlined in these procedures, all reasonable efforts should be made to deliver this mail within the mailer's requested delivery window.
10. Delivery units may receive Standard Mail with a mailer-requested delivery date which has already passed. Although this mail must remain color coded as outlined in these procedures, the decision regarding the delivery or disposition of this mail must be consistent with the current national policy on this subject.

11. When Standard Mail is discovered within a delivery unit (function 2, function 4, and individual zones may be considered as separate units) after its initial receipt, without color codes or incorrectly identified with multiple color codes, and it cannot be reasonably determined what the color code should be, the following procedures must be followed:
- If the mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance/delivery date has passed.
 - If mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance/delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
 - If mail is observed without any color code at all, and there is no other mail in the unit at the time of its discovery, then it is to be color coded with today's clearance/delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.

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