

and prohibited executive agencies from taking action to conform mailing procedures to ZIP code system using more than 5 digits during the period from Aug. 13, 1981 to Dec. 31, 1982.

#### § 404. Specific powers

(a) Subject to the provisions of section 404a, but otherwise without limitation of the generality of its powers, the Postal Service shall have the following specific powers, among others:

(1) to provide for the collection, handling, transportation, delivery, forwarding, returning, and holding of mail, and for the disposition of undeliverable mail;

(2) to prescribe, in accordance with this title, the amount of postage and the manner in which it is to be paid;

(3) to determine the need for post offices, postal and training facilities and equipment, and to provide such offices, facilities, and equipment as it determines are needed;

(4) to provide and sell postage stamps and other stamped paper, cards, and envelopes and to provide such other evidences of payment of postage and fees as may be necessary or desirable;

(5) to provide philatelic services;

(6) to investigate postal offenses and civil matters relating to the Postal Service;

(7) to offer and pay rewards for information and services in connection with violation of the postal laws, and, unless a different disposal is expressly prescribed, to pay one-half of all penalties and forfeitures imposed for violations of law affecting the Postal Service, its revenues, or property, to the person informing for the same, and to pay the other one-half into the Postal Service Fund; and

(8) to authorize the issuance of a substitute check for a lost, stolen, or destroyed check of the Postal Service.

(b) Except as otherwise provided, the Governors are authorized to establish reasonable and equitable classes of mail and reasonable and equitable rates of postage and fees for postal services in accordance with the provisions of chapter 36. Postal rates and fees shall be reasonable and equitable and sufficient to enable the Postal Service, under best practices of honest, efficient, and economical management, to maintain and continue the development of postal services of the kind and quality adapted to the needs of the United States.

(c) The Postal Service shall maintain one or more classes of mail for the transmission of letters sealed against inspection. The rate for each such class shall be uniform throughout the United States, its territories, and possessions. One such class shall provide for the most expeditious handling and transportation afforded mail matter by the Postal Service. No letter of such a class of domestic origin shall be opened except under authority of a search warrant authorized by law, or by an officer or employee of the Postal Service for the sole purpose of determining an address at which the letter can be delivered, or pursuant to the authorization of the addressee.

(d)(1) The Postal Service, prior to making a determination under subsection (a)(3) of this section as to the necessity for the closing or consolidation of any post office, shall provide

adequate notice of its intention to close or consolidate such post office at least 60 days prior to the proposed date of such closing or consolidation to persons served by such post office to ensure that such persons will have an opportunity to present their views.

(2) The Postal Service, in making a determination whether or not to close or consolidate a post office—

(A) shall consider—

(i) the effect of such closing or consolidation on the community served by such post office;

(ii) the effect of such closing or consolidation on employees of the Postal Service employed at such office;

(iii) whether such closing or consolidation is consistent with the policy of the Government, as stated in section 101(b) of this title, that the Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining;

(iv) the economic savings to the Postal Service resulting from such closing or consolidation; and

(v) such other factors as the Postal Service determines are necessary; and

(B) may not consider compliance with any provision of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.).

(3) Any determination of the Postal Service to close or consolidate a post office shall be in writing and shall include the findings of the Postal Service with respect to the considerations required to be made under paragraph (2) of this subsection. Such determination and findings shall be made available to persons served by such post office.

(4) The Postal Service shall take no action to close or consolidate a post office until 60 days after its written determination is made available to persons served by such post office.

(5) A determination of the Postal Service to close or consolidate any post office may be appealed by any person served by such office to the Postal Regulatory Commission within 30 days after such determination is made available to such person under paragraph (3). The Commission shall review such determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of such determination. The Commission shall make a determination based upon such review no later than 120 days after receiving any appeal under this paragraph. The Commission shall set aside any determination, findings, and conclusions found to be—

(A) arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law;

(B) without observance of procedure required by law; or

(C) unsupported by substantial evidence on the record.

The Commission may affirm the determination of the Postal Service or order that the entire matter be returned for further consideration, but the Commission may not modify the determination of the Postal Service. The Commission

may suspend the effectiveness of the determination of the Postal Service until the final disposition of the appeal. The provisions of section 556, section 557, and chapter 7 of title 5 shall not apply to any review carried out by the Commission under this paragraph.

(6) For purposes of paragraph (5), any appeal received by the Commission shall—

(A) if sent to the Commission through the mails, be considered to have been received on the date of the Postal Service postmark on the envelope or other cover in which such appeal is mailed; or

(B) if otherwise lawfully delivered to the Commission, be considered to have been received on the date determined based on any appropriate documentation or other indicia (as determined under regulations of the Commission).

(e)(1) In this subsection, the term “nonpostal service” means any service that is not a postal service defined under section 102(5).

(2) Nothing in this section shall be considered to permit or require that the Postal Service provide any nonpostal service, except that the Postal Service may provide nonpostal services which were offered as of January 1, 2006, as provided under this subsection.

(3) Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, the Postal Regulatory Commission shall review each nonpostal service offered by the Postal Service on the date of enactment of that Act and determine whether that nonpostal service shall continue, taking into account—

(A) the public need for the service; and

(B) the ability of the private sector to meet the public need for the service.

(4) Any nonpostal service not determined to be continued by the Postal Regulatory Commission under paragraph (3) shall terminate.

(5) If the Postal Regulatory Commission authorizes the Postal Service to continue a nonpostal service under this subsection, the Postal Regulatory Commission shall designate whether the service shall be regulated under this title as a market dominant product, a competitive product, or an experimental product.

(Pub. L. 91–375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 724; Pub. L. 94–421, §9(a), Sept. 24, 1976, 90 Stat. 1310; Pub. L. 105–241, §3, Sept. 28, 1998, 112 Stat. 1572; Pub. L. 109–435, title I, §102(a), title IV, §403(b)(2), title VI, §604(a), title X, §§1006(a), 1010(e), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3200, 3227, 3241, 3258, 3261.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, referred to in subsec. (d)(2)(B), is Pub. L. 91–596, Dec. 29, 1970, 84 Stat. 1590, as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 15 (§651 et seq.) of Title 29, Labor. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 651 of Title 29 and Tables.

The date of enactment of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, referred to in subsec. (e)(3), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 109–435, which was approved Dec. 20, 2006.

#### AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109–435, §403(b)(2), substituted “Subject to the provisions of section 404a, but

otherwise without” for “Without” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (a)(6) to (9). Pub. L. 109–435, §102(a)(1), redesignated pars. (7) to (9) as (6) to (8), respectively, and struck out former par. (6), which read “to provide, establish, change, or abolish special nonpostal or similar services;”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109–435, §1010(e), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (d).

Subsec. (b)(5). Pub. L. 109–435, §604(a), substituted “Postal Regulatory Commission” for “Postal Rate Commission”.

Subsec. (b)(6). Pub. L. 109–435, §1006(a), added par. (6). Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109–435, §1010(e), added subsec. (c). Former subsec. (c) redesignated (e).

Pub. L. 109–435, §102(a)(2), added subsec. (c).

Subsecs. (d), (e). Pub. L. 109–435, §1010(e), redesignated subsecs. (b) and (c) as (d) and (e), respectively.

1998—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 105–241 amended par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, par. (2) read as follows: “The Postal Service, in making a determination whether or not to close or consolidate a post office, shall consider—

“(A) the effect of such closing or consolidation on the community served by such post office;

“(B) the effect of such closing or consolidation on employees of the Postal Service employed at such office;

“(C) whether such closing or consolidation is consistent with the policy of the Government, as stated in section 101(b) of this title, that the Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining;

“(D) the economic savings to the Postal Service resulting from such closing or consolidation; and

“(E) such other factors as the Postal Service determines are necessary.”

1976—Pub. L. 94–421 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a) and added subsec. (b).

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2006 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109–435, title X, §1006(b), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3258, provided that: “This section [amending this section] and the amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to any determination to close or consolidate a post office which is first made available, in accordance with paragraph (3) of section 404(b) of title 39, United States Code, after the end of the 3-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 20, 2006].”

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 94–421, §9(b), Sept. 24, 1976, 90 Stat. 1311, provided that: “The amendments made by subsection (a) of this section [amending this section] shall take effect on the day after the date on which the Commission on Postal Service transmits its final report under section 7(f)(1) of this Act [set out as a note under section 3661 of this title].”

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

Pars. (1), (3) to (9) of subsec. (a) of this section effective July 1, 1971, pursuant to Resolution No. 71–9 of the Board of Governors and par. (2) of subsec. (a) 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.

#### REFERENCES TO POSTAL RATE COMMISSION

Pub. L. 109–435, title VI, §604(f), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3242, provided that: “Whenever a reference is made in any provision of law (other than this Act [see Tables for classification] or a provision of law amended by this Act), regulation, rule, document, or other record of the United States to the Postal Rate Commission, such reference shall be considered a reference to the Postal Regulatory Commission.”

**§ 404a. Specific limitations**

(a) Except as specifically authorized by law, the Postal Service may not—

(1) establish any rule or regulation (including any standard) the effect of which is to preclude competition or establish the terms of competition unless the Postal Service demonstrates that the regulation does not create an unfair competitive advantage for itself or any entity funded (in whole or in part) by the Postal Service;

(2) compel the disclosure, transfer, or licensing of intellectual property to any third party (such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, and proprietary information); or

(3) obtain information from a person that provides (or seeks to provide) any product, and then offer any postal service that uses or is based in whole or in part on such information, without the consent of the person providing that information, unless substantially the same information is obtained (or obtainable) from an independent source or is otherwise obtained (or obtainable).

(b) The Postal Regulatory Commission shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section.

(c) Any party (including an officer of the Commission representing the interests of the general public) who believes that the Postal Service has violated this section may bring a complaint in accordance with section 3662.

(Added Pub. L. 109-435, title IV, § 403(a), Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3226.)

**§ 405. Printing of illustrations of United States postage stamps**

(a) When requested by the Postal Service, the Public Printer shall print, as a public document for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, illustrations in black and white or in color of postage stamps of the United States, together with such descriptive, historical, and philatelic information with regard to the stamps as the Postal Service deems suitable.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 505 of title 44, stereotype or electrotype plates, or duplicates thereof, used in the publications authorized to be printed by this section may not be sold or otherwise disposed of.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 724.)

## 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.

**§ 406. Postal services at Armed Forces installations**

(a) The Postal Service may establish branch post offices at camps, posts, bases, or stations of the Armed Forces and at defense or other strategic installations.

(b) The Secretaries of Defense and Transportation shall make arrangements with the Postal Service to perform postal services through personnel designated by them at or through branch post offices established under subsection (a) of this section.

(Pub. L. 91-375, Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 724.)

## 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.

**§ 407. International postal arrangements**

(a) It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to promote and encourage communications between peoples by efficient operation of international postal services and other international delivery services for cultural, social, and economic purposes;

(2) to promote and encourage unrestricted and undistorted competition in the provision of international postal services and other international delivery services, except where provision of such services by private companies may be prohibited by law of the United States;

(3) to promote and encourage a clear distinction between governmental and operational responsibilities with respect to the provision of international postal services and other international delivery services by the Government of the United States and by intergovernmental organizations of which the United States is a member; and

(4) to participate in multilateral and bilateral agreements with other countries to accomplish these objectives.

(b)(1) The Secretary of State shall be responsible for formulation, coordination, and oversight of foreign policy related to international postal services and other international delivery services and shall have the power to conclude postal treaties, conventions, and amendments related to international postal services and other international delivery services, except that the Secretary may not conclude any treaty, convention, or other international agreement (including those regulating international postal services) if such treaty, convention, or agreement would, with respect to any competitive product, grant an undue or unreasonable preference to the Postal Service, a private provider of international postal or delivery services, or any other person.

(2) In carrying out the responsibilities specified in paragraph (1), the Secretary of State shall exercise primary authority for the conduct of foreign policy with respect to international postal services and international delivery services, including the determination of United States positions and the conduct of United States participation in negotiations with foreign governments and international bodies. In exercising this authority, the Secretary—

(A) shall coordinate with other agencies as appropriate, and in particular, shall give full consideration to the authority vested by law or Executive order in the Postal Regulatory Commission, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Transportation, and the Office of the United States Trade Representative in this area;

(B) shall maintain continuing liaison with other executive branch agencies concerned with postal and delivery services;