

of any letter or mail carrier, before it has been delivered to the person to whom it was directed, with design to obstruct the correspondence, or to pry into the business or secrets of another, or opens, secretes, embezzles, or destroys the same, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(I), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §317 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §194, 35 Stat. 1125; Feb. 25, 1925, ch. 318, 43 Stat. 977; Aug. 26, 1935, ch. 693, 49 Stat. 867; Aug. 7, 1939, ch. 557, 53 Stat. 1256).

Section 317 of said title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., was incorporated in this and section 1708 of this title.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$2,000”.

### § 1703. Delay or destruction of mail or newspapers

(a) Whoever, being a Postal Service officer or employee, unlawfully secretes, destroys, detains, delays, or opens any letter, postal card, package, bag, or mail entrusted to him or which shall come into his possession, and which was intended to be conveyed by mail, or carried or delivered by any carrier or other employee of the Postal Service, or forwarded through or delivered from any post office or station thereof established by authority of the Postmaster General or the Postal Service, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(b) Whoever, being a Postal Service officer or employee, improperly detains, delays, or destroys any newspaper, or permits any other person to detain, delay, or destroy the same, or opens, or permits any other person to open, any mail or package of newspapers not directed to the office where he is employed; or

Whoever, without authority, opens, or destroys any mail or package of newspapers not directed to him, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 778; May 24, 1949, ch. 139, §37, 63 Stat. 95; Pub. L. 91-375, §6(j)(16), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(B), (G), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2146, 2147.)

#### HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

##### 1948 ACT

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., §§318, 319 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, §§195, 196, 35 Stat. 1125, 1126).

Section consolidated sections 318 and 319 of said title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed. The embezzlement and theft provisions of each were incorporated in sections 1709 and 1710 of this title.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

##### 1949 ACT

This section [section 37] corrects typographical errors in section 1703 of title 18, U.S.C.

#### Editorial Notes

##### AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$500” in subsection (a) and “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$100” in last par.

1970—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 91-375, §6(j)(16)(A), amended subsec. (a) generally, which prior to amendment read as follows: “Whoever, being a postmaster or Postal Service employee, unlawfully detains, delays, or opens any letter, postal card, package, bag, or mail entrusted to him or which shall come into his possession, and which was intended to be conveyed by mail, or carried or delivered by any carrier or other employee of the Postal Service, or forwarded through or delivered from any post office or station thereof established by authority of the Postmaster General; or secretes, or destroys any such letter, postal card, package, bag, or mail, shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 91-375, §6(j)(16)(B), substituted “Postal Service officer or employee” for “postmaster or Postal Service employee”.

1949—Subsec. (a). Act May 24, 1949, §37(a), substituted “secretes” for “secrets”.

Subsec. (b). Act May 24, 1949, §37(b), substituted “newspapers” for “newspaper”.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1970 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 91-375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by Board of Governors of United States Postal Service and published by it in Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of Title 39, Postal Service.

### § 1704. Keys or locks stolen or reproduced

Whoever steals, purloins, embezzles, or obtains by false pretense any key suited to any lock adopted by the Post Office Department or the Postal Service and in use on any of the mails or bags thereof, or any key to any lock box, lock drawer, or other authorized receptacle for the deposit or delivery of mail matter; or

Whoever knowingly and unlawfully makes, forges, or counterfeits any such key, or possesses any such mail lock or key with the intent unlawfully or improperly to use, sell, or otherwise dispose of the same, or to cause the same to be unlawfully or improperly used, sold, or otherwise disposed of; or

Whoever, being engaged as a contractor or otherwise in the manufacture of any such mail lock or key, delivers any finished or unfinished lock or the interior part thereof, or key, used or designed for use by the department, to any person not duly authorized under the hand of the Postmaster General and the seal of the Post Office Department or the Postal Service, to receive the same, unless the person receiving it is the contractor for furnishing the same or engaged in the manufacture thereof in the manner authorized by the contract, or the agent of such manufacturer—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 91-375, §6(j)(17), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 778; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, §330016(1)(G), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2147.)