



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 57.01, **Mail Services**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to set forth policies and procedures of the services.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed on February 1 of each odd-numbered year (ONY) by the director of General Services or designee, with recommendations for revisions submitted to the chief financial officer or designee by March 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I. **Mail Services.** The United States Postal Service's (USPS) responsibility ends with completion of delivery to the authorized agent, TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services. TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services is responsible for distributing incoming mail and processing outgoing mail by applying the appropriate amount of postage to official state outgoing mail. Mail services are provided for official state business only. The rental or purchase of postage equipment or software technology for the affixing of postage is restricted to the responsibility of TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services. The use of university funds for personal mail is strictly prohibited. TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services is the only department authorized to function as permit holder and signature authority for first class, standard (third class or bulk) mail, and business reply permits.

A. **Departmental Delivery and Pick-up.** TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services will provide scheduled delivery/pick-ups to one location per department. The departments are then responsible for internal distribution of the mail. The departments are also responsible for checking their assigned mailboxes regularly. The Mail Services supervisor has the authority to assign mailboxes to departments.

B. **Campus Mail.** The campus mail system is a restricted state service. It is not available for the personal use or private gain by non-university groups for the advertisement of non-university sponsored programs.

An officer or employee may not knowingly use or authorize the use of the internal mail system for the distribution of political advertising. Any violation of this law (Election Code, Sec. 255.0031) is an offense (Class A misdemeanor).

C. **Outgoing Mail.** For outgoing U.S. mail requiring postage, the FOP (fund, organization, program) must be legibly written, typed, or printed in the upper left corner of the envelope or parcel, or the item will be returned to the sender. Only the top envelope of a secured bundle requires a visible FOP. Contact Mail Services for additional information on USPS guidelines, including services such as certified, return receipt and/or insurance. Department name must be on all receipts that will be returned with a round date from the USPS. Use of university postage for personal reasons or by non-official entities is prohibited. TTUHSC El Paso must ensure that all mail being submitted for dispatch is of an official nature. Therefore, all outgoing mail not bearing a valid official university return address will be returned to the sender for correction.

Mail Services may return mail to the department with an inadequate mail preparation form notifying the department of corrective action to be taken regarding incorrect

preparation. TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services will not be responsible for inaccurate postage applied to mail due to improper preparation.

- D. **International Mail.** For outgoing international mail, contact Mail Services for current USPS regulations and customs information.
- E. **Hazardous Materials/Dangerous Goods (HM/DG) Shipments.** Departments and individuals wanting to mail/transport HM/DG are affected by HM/DG regulations. Training is required to legally package and ship any HM/DG. Departments and individuals are encouraged to review HSCEP OP 75.13, Shipment of Hazardous and Infectious Materials, and contact Safety Services before preparing any HM/DG for transportation.
- F. **Non-Deliverable Mail.** The Mail Services Supervisor, or designees, is authorized to open and distribute, or return unidentified or otherwise non-deliverable mail. Unidentified mail is mail that does not have any of the following information in the addressee line or the information is not valid:
Department Name,
Intended Recipient's Name,
Mail Stop Code (MSC)
Unidentified mail that is marked "Personal" and/or "Confidential", or the intended recipient is unknown, will be held for ten days then returned to the sender. Departments have the opportunity to claim their unidentified mail during the ten day hold period.
- G. **Forwarding First-Class Mail.** The department is responsible for forwarding non-departmental business mail to former employees. First class and periodical mail is forwardable; bulk mail is forwardable only if it bears a USPS-approved move update endorsement. All other mail is considered undeliverable by the USPS and may be disposed of as waste. Unopened mail may be forwarded without additional postage. If the mail has been opened, the USPS will require additional postage for forwarding. The addressee's department will be charged for the expense.
- H. **Ownership of Mail / Opening of Mail by Departments.** The ownership of mail addressed to this institution or to an individual by name or title at the address of this institution rests with TTUHSC El Paso. The legal obligation of the USPS ends with mail delivery to TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services. TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services is restricted for official state business use; therefore, personal mail should not be directed to this institution. Incoming U. S. mail will be delivered by TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services to the respective department. Mail Services will not separate the mail for an individual in lieu of delivery to the appropriate department. The department from this point on is responsible for the delivery and/or opening of mail. The department chairperson or department head may decide proper procedures for handling incoming mail within their department. It is recommended that items marked "personal" and/or "confidential" be forwarded to the addressee unopened.
- The *United States Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual*, regulation DO42.41 states, "If disagreement arises where any such mail should be delivered, it must be delivered under the order of the organization's president or equivalent official." The TTUHSC El Paso president or chief financial officer shall have the authority to designate a change in delivery destination by memorandum to the director of General Services.
- I. **Postage Due Mail.** It is the policy of TTUHSC El Paso to accept postage due charges on mail with insufficient postage. The appropriate FOP will be charged.
- J. **Business Reply Mail.** Mail Services maintains the use of a business reply permit for TTUHSC El Paso activities requiring the use of this type of postage. Properly designed

business reply mail incurs less expensive postage rates.

K. **Permit Imprint Mailings.** TTUHSC El Paso is authorized by the USPS to mail non-profit, first-class or standard mail utilizing permit #2903 as follows:

- Before using an existing printed piece, Mail Services must check for compliance with USPS regulations, authorize use of the permit and confirm that the permit 2903 funds balance is adequate for the cost of the mailing.
- During the design of a new printed piece, departments must bring in a final draft of the mailing before production begins. Mail Services will check the mailing for compliance with USPS regulations. If the piece meets eligibility requirements, Mail Services will authorize use of the permit; if not, suggestions will be made for compliance or information about correct mailing rates will be given.
- If a department uses permit 2903 for a mailing and does not use TTUHSC El Paso addressing services, a permit use fee will be charged if not pre-qualified before submission for mailing.
- An authorization to mail at the nonprofit standard mail rates is a privilege reserved by law to authorized organizations. Civil and criminal penalties apply to false, fictitious or fraudulent statements made in connection with a nonprofit standard mail mailing. An authorized organization must make sure that only its own matter is mailed under its nonprofit standard mail authorization.

L. **Overnight Courier Services.** Federal Express (FedEx) is the overnight courier service. The TTUHSC El Paso mail service is the central processing agent for the overnight courier service, and will provide a bill of lading. Outgoing shipments must be received at TTUHSC El Paso and the Medical Education Building El Paso Mail Services by 3:30PM in order to be shipped the same day. General Services uses the Financial Transaction System (FiTS) to bill expenditures to departmental FOAPs (funds, organization, account, program). All shipments must be business-related.

NOTE: Departments utilizing overnight couriers are responsible for creating an electronic air bill.

M. **Suspicious Mail.** Mail Services personnel have been trained in recognizing mail or packages that might be detrimental to the health of the university population and to ensure that it is not distributed until certified as safe by TTUHSC El Paso Safety Services. However, if departments or activities receive something they consider suspicious, Texas Tech Police Department (TTPD) should be contacted immediately.

- **Do not** touch the piece after the initial contact.
- Call your supervisor to verify your concerns and continue with the following steps ONLY if your concerns are verified.
- Stop all activities and evacuate all personnel in the immediate vicinity of the piece.
- Turn off all air handling equipment and close all doors and windows in the area. Contact the TTPD and they will contact the office of the U.S. Postal Inspector if deemed appropriate.

II. **Post Office.** Departments are encouraged to review HSCEP OP 61.01, ***Use of TTUHSC El Paso Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Services for Private Purposes Prohibited***, Section 6. Office Supplies, which addresses departmental purchases and use of stamps.

Personal items (i.e., letters & packages); TTUHSC El Paso will weigh packages; employees must obtain their own postage stamps.

III. **Courier Service.** Refer to HSCEP OP 63.06, Moving and Delivery Services.

IV. **Mailing Lists.**

A. **Internal Mailing Lists.**

Employee address Lists are not to be released to the public for commercial purposes. (HSCEP OP 70.35).

The campus Mail System is a restricted state service. The service is not available for the personal use or private gain by non-university groups for the advertisement of non-university sponsored programs.

- B. **External Mailing Lists.** Departments are encouraged to electronically submit their externally generated or specialized lists for their mailings. The list will be cleansed and formatted according to USPS regulations. As USPS requirements for mass mailings are constantly changing, it is highly recommended that all mass mailing be checked by Mail Services personnel before being produced. According to USPS DMM 233.3.5.1, all mass mailings must meet the move update standard by an approved USPS method as defined in USPS DMM 233.3.5.2. Proof that the USPS move update standard has been met is required by USPS before mailing. TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services offers NCOA (National Change of Address) processing as the most effective USPS approved method for any bulk mailing utilizing TTUHSC El Paso Mail Services permit 2903. See section 1, item L of this HSCEP OP for additional information regarding permit imprint mailings.

- V. **Copyright Clearance.** It is the department's responsibility to ensure that all material meets copyright clearance prior to reproduction. Departments should review HSCEP OP 57.02, Guidelines for the Educational Use of Copyrighted Works before requesting the printing or copying of copyrighted work.

Identity Guidelines. It is the department's responsibility to ensure compliance with institutional guidelines when developing and producing any visual elements for internal or external use. The guidelines can be found at <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/communications/identityguidelines/>.

- VI. **Payment for All Services.** Departments must provide a FOP with adequate funds to cover all expenses. All charges will be totaled periodically and an invoice will be processed.

NOTE: If a department fails to provide a valid FOP and multiple attempts to contact the department are required, a \$10.00 research fee per item will be assessed for failure to comply.