



March 2003

Dear USPS Employee,

Many postal customers you serve are also Philatelists and First Day Cover collectors. These customers are enthused by collecting stamps, and sometimes travel around the country in pursuit of their hobby. We appreciate their interest and devotion, and want to do everything we can to meet their needs.

This informational letter contains provisions and guidelines from the Postal Operations Manual to better accommodate these customers. The services described below may be requested by customers at Post Office stations and Philatelic windows. Please feel free to research the Postal Operations Manual for verification.

Handback Service 231.4 a.(1)

"When a customer personally presents an addressed or unaddressed envelope, postal card,.....to a postal clerk for cancellation with the current day's postmark, the post office must postmark the item and return it, or hand it back, to the customer."

Often, collectors travel across the country to receive these postmarks. It is usually to commemorate an anniversary or event in your city. They must present the items on or before the requested cancel date. The items must bear uncanceled postage, at the current First-Class rate. For 50 or more cancels, there is a fee of 5-cents per cancel (misc. non-postal).

Postmarking Devices 231.33

"Postmarking devices may be used only under the supervision of authorized postal personnel."

Often window clerks cannot interrupt their service to other postal customers to apply postmarks for Philatelists. However, our Postal Operations Manual does allow the postmarking to be done by the collector as long as it is "under supervision." We interpret that to mean in sight of the window clerk.

Unofficial First Day Covers 233.9

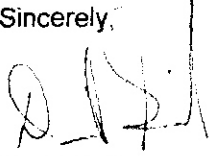
"Stamps acquired at the First Day post office may be cancelled at any post office. Envelopes containing new stamps cancelled on the first day of sale at a post office other than the issuing office are known as "unofficial first day covers".

Often collectors travel to post offices (sometimes in other cities) from the First Day of Issue city or event, to obtain postmarks. They are not requesting the official First Day of Issue cancel, but a round date or postmark from your station or Philatelic window. The Postal Operations Manual provides customers this service.

Many stamp and cover collectors share their hobby with children, students, and clubs. They help keep the hobby alive and well for future generations. It is in our best interest to work with the customers so they can better enjoy their hobby.

I hope this information has been helpful. If you have any questions, or would like to learn more, you can contact Linda Aipperspach at 816-545-1349, or email at laippers@email.usps.gov. Thank your for you cooperation and support of the stamp program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Failor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line extending upwards from the top of the signature.

David Failor
Manager
Stamp Services

Did you know...

That the job you do helps people share in the enjoyable and valuable hobby of stamp collecting?

That stamp collecting encourages the public to buy and retain stamps?

That stamp collecting provides revenue for the Postal Service?

That pictorial cancellation postmarks are also a means of stamp collecting?

That Handbook PO-230 provides information on the pictorial cancellations program?

Now that you know, will you...

Support stamp collecting and pictorial cancellations in your community today?



Handbook PO-230 is available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim> and on the Internet at www.usps.com.

You can also order Handbook PO-230 from the MDC — call 800-332-0317 to place an order.

Pictorial cancellations from across the nation, along with pertinent information, are published in issues of the *Postal Bulletin*, which are available on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim>; click on *View Postal Bulletins*.

Please Post on All Bulletin Boards