

National Color Code Policy for Standard Mail

Edited For
Bay-Valley Customer Services
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OBJECTIVE

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

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

1. A service standard is defined as “a stated goal for service achievement for each mail class.” Service standards serve as the benchmark for measuring service performance. Color coding procedures provide a guide to help maintain service goals for Standard Mail.
2. Arrival time is defined as the documented arrival at a postal facility. For Standard Mail entered by mailers, it is the date and time the mailing is cleared to operations.
3. The application of color codes to Standard Mail is based on the arrival date and time and the depth of sort of the mail entered at the entry facility. The day of arrival at the facility will be defined as day “zero.”
4. Destinating and/or Turnaround Standard Mail must be color coded with a Delivery Color Code that represents the scheduled day of delivery. Once a Delivery Color Code is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.
5. 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.
6. Holidays will not change the color code process.
7. Anytime Standard Mail is sent back upstream (back-flowed) for delivery point sequencing (DPS), automated carrier route processing, or other processing, the mail must retain the original color code and delivery schedule as if it had remained in the downstream unit.
8. When Standard Mail is discovered in a facility, after its initial receipt, without a color code 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:

- a. If Standard Mail is identified with multiple color codes, then the oldest color code is assumed to be correct, even if the clearance, processing, or delivery date has passed.
- b. If Standard Mail is observed without any color code at all, then it is to be color coded with the same clearance, processing, or delivery color code as the oldest mail in the unit at the time of its discovery.
- c. If Standard 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, processing, or delivery color code and treated as if it were delayed.

COLOR CODING PROCEDURES

Delivery Units, including Post Offices, Stations, and Branches

1. Delivery units will receive Standard Mail from upstream distribution facilities with a Delivery Color Code attached. This mail will retain the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.
2. Delivery units receiving Standard Mail drop shipments or Standard Mail directly from mailers for their delivery area will apply a 2-day Delivery Color Code based upon **entry** of the Standard Mail according to the Delivery Matrix in Table 2.6. Once a Delivery Color Code is applied, the mail retains the delivery day commitment until it is taken out for delivery.

Table 2.6

DU		DEPTH OF SORT: OUTGOING ONE DAY CLEARANCE MATRIX		DEPTH OF SORT: 5-DIGIT, CRT TWO DAY DELIVERY MATRIX	
STANDARD MAIL COLOR CODING PROCEDURES		COLOR CODE APPLIED	ONE DAY CLEARANCE	COLOR CODE APPLIED	TWO DAY DELIVERY
RECEIPT TIME	DAY OF RECEIPT				
FRI 16:01 - SAT 16:00	SAT	WHITE	SUN	BLUE	MON
SAT 16:01 - SUN 16:00	SUN	BLUE	MON	ORANGE	TUE
SUN 16:01 - MON 16:00	MON	ORANGE	TUE	GREEN	WED
MON 16:01 - TUE 16:00	TUE	GREEN	WED	VIOLET	THU
TUE 16:01 - WED 16:00	WED	VIOLET	THU	YELLOW	FRI
WED 16:01 - THU 16:00	THU	YELLOW	FRI	PINK	SAT
THU 16:01 - FRI 16:00	FRI	PINK	SAT	BLUE	MON

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Question.** Assume that a mailer deposits a Standard Mailing at a facility's BMEU, prior to the CET for Standard Mail. If the BMEU does not clear the mailing to operations until after the CET, is the facility obligated to apply a color code based on the time the mailer arrived at the BMEU?
 - o No. The facility will apply a color code based on the time the mailing was actually cleared by the BMEU.
2. **Question.** Regarding the portion of the color code policy on Delivery Units (DU) which refers to "outgoing Standard Mail," may outgoing mail deposited by a customer in my post office on a Tuesday be "held" to Wednesday?
 - o No, you cannot "hold" the outgoing Standard Mail for the next day. As per your normal operation, all mail must be sent no later than your daily closeout dispatch. The plant will apply a color code based on the time of arrival.
3. **Question.** How is Standard Mail with mailer requested In-Home delivery dates color coded?
 - o Standard Mail with requested in-home delivery dates will be color coded according to the instructions provided in the National Color Code policy. (Per Pacific Area, the In-Home Date SOP is discontinued effective April 28, 2008.)
4. **Question.** What is the status of Standard Letters sent back for DPS? What about DPS errors?
 - o Anytime Standard Mail is returned to the plant for DPS or any other type of processing, the original color commitment and delivery schedule must remain with the mail. Once Standard Mail is commingled with First-Class Mail in the DPS process, it is all upgraded to First-Class status. DPS errors would be treated as First Class-Mail.
5. **Question.** Will the BMEU be required to meet the Plant CET?
 - o All mail cleared by the BMEU prior to the plant's CET will receive that day's color code commitment. Any mail cleared after the plant's CET will be color coded with the following day's commitment.
6. **Question.** Do plant color code tags have to have a date?
 - o Yes, all tags must be dated and timed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM PACIFIC AREA

1. There will be a compliance/audit phase from April 28 through July 1.
2. There will be a "National" option in CSDRS to capture mail delayed from the plant.
3. ADVANCE data entry will still be required.