

Statements

# Media Statement – COVID-19

April 2, 2020

The United States Postal Service is proud of the work our more than 600,000 employees play in processing, transporting, and delivering mail and packages for the American public. We provide a vital public service that is a part of this nation’s critical infrastructure. The Postal Service has a dedicated Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Command Response leadership team that is focusing on employee and customer safety in conjunction with operational and business continuity during this unprecedented epidemic. We continue to follow the strategies and measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health departments. The CDC has information available on its website at <https://www.coronavirus.gov> that provides the latest information about COVID-19.

To reduce health risks for our employees and customers and to safeguard our operational and business continuity, the Postal Service is doing the following:

- Ensuring millions of masks, gloves and cleaning and sanitizing product are available and distributed to more than 30,000 locations every day through our Postal Service supply chain. We also have opened up local purchasing authorities and sourcing options so that our employees can access additional supplies within the communities they serve. We have expanded our national sourcing of supplies and services to ensure that increasing demands are met.
- Reinforcing workplace behaviors to ensure that contact among our employees and with our customers reflects the best guidance regarding healthy interactions, social distancing, and risk minimization. We have implemented measures at retail facilities and mail processing facilities to ensure appropriate social distancing, including through signage, floor tape, and “cough/sneeze” barriers. **We have changed delivery procedures to eliminate the requirement that customers sign our Mobile Delivery Devices for delivery. For increased safety, employees will politely ask the customer to step back a safe distance or close the screen door/door so that they may leave the item in the mail receptacle or appropriate location by the customer door.**
- Updated our cleaning policies to ensure that all cleaning occurs in a manner consistent with CDC guidance relating to this pandemic.
- Updated our leave policies to allow liberal use of leave and to therefore give our employees the ability to stay home whenever they feel sick, must provide dependent care, or any other qualifying factor under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. We have entered into agreements with our unions to provide 80 hours of paid leave to non-career employees for issues related to COVID-19, and have expanded the definition of sick leave for dependent care for covered employees to deal with the closures of primary and secondary schools across the country.
- Expanded the use of telework for those employees who are able to perform their jobs remotely.
- Issuing a daily cadence of employee talks, articles, videos, and other communications to ensure employees have the latest information and guidance.
- Leveraging localized continuity of operations plans that can be employed in the case of emergencies to help ensure that the nation's postal system continues to function for the American people. With a longstanding history of quickly adapting its operational plans to changing conditions, the Postal Service maintains steady communications with mailers during natural disasters or other events that require emergency responses and advises residential customers and business mailers with regard to postal facility disruptions that may impact delivery in an affected area via its USPS Service Alerts webpage at: <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/>.

The Postal Service delivers much needed medications and Social Security checks, and we are the leading delivery service for online purchases. The Postal Service is an essential service for purposes of compliance with state or municipality shelter-in-place orders or other social distancing restrictions. The statute that created the Postal Service begins with the following sentence: “The United States Postal Service shall be operated as a basic and fundamental service provided to the people by the Government of the United States, authorized by the Constitution, created by an Act of Congress, and supported by the people.” 39 U.S.C. §101(a).

Importantly, the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>), the World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>), as well as the Surgeon General have indicated that there is **currently no evidence that COVID-19 is being spread through the mail.**

Specifically, according to the World Health Organization, “the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and been exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.” And according to the CDC, “in general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets.” Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods.”

