

1 Introduction

1-1 Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook, AS-353, *Guide to Privacy and the Freedom of Information Act*, describes the Postal Service's policies and procedures governing the privacy of information relating to customers, employees, or other individuals, and the release and protection of Postal Service records. The Postal Service is mandated by law, and has adopted policies, to protect the privacy of its customers, employees, individuals, and suppliers. The Postal Service is also required to make its records available to the public consistent with the Freedom of Information Act and good business practices.

1-2 Customer Trust and Privacy Protection

For more than two centuries, the Postal Service has maintained a brand that customers trust to protect the privacy and security of their information. As the privacy landscape evolves, the Privacy Office keeps up with developing legal and policy frameworks, new technologies, and best-in-class business models and practices. The Privacy Office has developed its customer privacy policy and procedures on a synthesis of the best business models and practices of the public and private sectors. This includes established government agency laws, regulations, and guidelines, as well as privacy principles and best practices followed by the private sector.

1-3 Handbook Application

This handbook covers the laws, policies, and procedures for all Postal Service records and information related to customers, employees, individuals, and suppliers. This handbook applies to Postal Service employees, suppliers, or other authorized users with access to Postal Service records and information resources. The policies and procedures in this handbook cover the following types of information or information systems:

- Postal Service records.
- Information related to customers, employees, other individuals, and suppliers.

- Technologies, information systems, infrastructure, applications, products, services, and other information resources associated with collecting, maintaining, using, disclosing, and safeguarding customer, employee, or other individuals' information.

1-4 Roles and Responsibilities

1-4.1 General Responsibility

All Postal Service employees, business partners and suppliers, and other authorized users are responsible for following the policies and procedures in this handbook.

1-4.2 Specific Responsibility

1-4.2.1 Officers, Managers, and Employees

All officers, business and line managers, supervisors, and other employees are responsible for implementing privacy policies as required by this handbook and their Postal Service duties. Officers and managers ensure compliance with privacy policies through organizations and information resources under their direction, and provide resources required to appropriately protect the privacy of customer, employee, or other individuals' information.

1-4.2.2 Suppliers, Business Partners, and Customers

Suppliers, business partners, and customers are responsible for the following:

- a. *Suppliers and Business Partners.* All Postal Service suppliers and business partners who develop or have access to information resources that contain customer, employee, or other individuals' data, or who help to develop or implement a Postal Service Web site or marketing e-mail campaign, are responsible for complying with Postal Service privacy policies and related business, security, and contracting practices.
- b. *Customers.* Customers must follow the applicable procedures for privacy and FOIA.

1-4.2.3 Chief Privacy Officer

The chief privacy officer (CPO) is responsible for the following:

- a. Developing and implementing policies, processes, and procedures for privacy, records, and FOIA.
- b. Reviewing privacy impact assessments and determining information sensitivity during the Business Impact Assessment (BIA) process.
- c. Advising management on strategic direction and trends.
- d. Evaluating technology that impacts privacy.

- e. Providing guidance on privacy and records policies.
- f. Directing the activities of the Privacy Office and the Records Office, and reporting to the Consumer Advocate.

Contact the Privacy Office at the following address:

PRIVACY OFFICE
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 10433
WASHINGTON DC 20260
E-MAIL: *PRIVACY@USPS.GOV*

1-4.2.4 **Records Office Manager**

The manager of the Records Office is responsible for the following:

- a. Managing the Records Office.
- b. Establishing procedures and guidelines to ensure that record management practices comply with the Privacy Act and FOIA.
- c. Answering questions about the policies and procedures in this handbook.

Contact the Records Office manager at the following address:

MANAGER, RECORDS OFFICE
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 5821
WASHINGTON DC 20260
PHONE: (202) 268-2608

1-4.2.5 **Freedom of Information Act Coordinator**

The FOIA coordinator, which is an ad hoc position located within each area and district office, is responsible for the following:

- a. Providing procedural guidance, upon request, to records custodians in a geographical area.
- b. Helping the manager of the Records Office with national records management activities, such as annual reporting of local FOIA and Privacy Act activities.

1-4.2.6 **Records Custodian**

Records custodians are responsible for ensuring that records within their facilities or organizations are managed according to Postal Service policies. Vice presidents are the custodians of records maintained at Headquarters. In the field, the records custodian is the head of a Postal Service facility such as an Area, District, Post Office, or other Postal Service installation that maintains Postal Service records. Senior medical personnel are the custodians of restricted medical records maintained within Postal Service facilities. The custodian of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) records is the Postal Service counselor, a supplier, or the Public Health Service, whichever provided the services.

1-4.2.7 Corporate Information Security Manager

The manager of the Corporate Information Security Office is responsible for ensuring compliance with information security policies, including the protection of information resources containing customer, employee, or other individuals' information.

1-4.2.8 General Counsel

The general counsel or designee is responsible for deciding administrative appeals filed under the Privacy Act and FOIA. Appropriate legal counsel should be consulted by FOIA coordinators, records custodians, and others with legal questions about the Privacy Act or FOIA.

For appeals related to records other than inspector general records, contact the general counsel's designee at the following address:

CHIEF COUNSEL
CUSTOMER PROTECTION AND PRIVACY
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 6138
WASHINGTON DC 20260

1-4.2.9 Chief Postal Inspector

The chief postal inspector of the Inspection Service is responsible for handling Privacy Act and FOIA requests for Inspection Service records. Contact the chief postal inspector at the following address:

CHIEF POSTAL INSPECTOR
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 3100
WASHINGTON DC 20260

1-4.2.10 Office of Inspector General

The inspector general is responsible for handling Privacy Act and FOIA requests and appeals for Office of Inspector General records. Contact the inspector general at the following address:

FOIA OFFICER
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
US POSTAL SERVICE
1735 NORTH LYNN STREET, STE 10000
ARLINGTON, VA 22209

1-5 Definitions

The following terms are used in this handbook.

1-5.1 **Record**

Recorded information, regardless of media, format, or physical characteristics, including electronic data developed or received by the Postal Service that it maintains in its custody or is maintained on its behalf. Machine-readable records are a collection of logically-related data treated as a unit. Records created during Postal Service business activities are Postal Service property. Postal Service records should be marked, for instance confidential or restricted, if the records should be protected from access or disclosure.

1-5.2 **System of Records**

A file, database, or program from which information about customers, employees, or individuals is retrieved by name or other identifier.

1-5.3 **Customers**

External customers of the Postal Service, including individual consumers and business customers.

1-5.4 **Individual**

Individual consumer, employee, or other individual.

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