

620 Contests

621 **Scope**

This subchapter establishes the policy and procedures for contests and related awards.

622 **Objective**

Contests are intended to provide a motivational tool for improving performance in particular functions. Such programs can be used for, but are not limited to, safety awareness and sales promotion. Each contest must have a specific start and end date, and the purpose must be clearly defined.

623 **Responsibilities**

623.1 **Approval Authorities**

The appropriate district manager, senior plant manager, area vice president, or Executive Committee member approves a proposed contest. The level of approval is determined by the geographic scope of the contest.

623.2 **Districts and Plants**

The district manager or senior plant manager approves all proposed contests for a district or below. The approving official:

- a. Determines the appropriateness of each proposed contest in terms of specific objectives to be achieved and approves or disapproves the contest and the awards to be presented.
- b. Oversees the accountability of an approved contest in terms of monetary benefits, improved safety, improved customer services, etc.
- c. Forwards a copy of the proposal for an approved contest to the area functional manager and the area Human Resources manager.
- d. At the conclusion of each contest, evaluates the results against the objectives and submits a full report to the area functional manager.

623.3 **Areas**

623.31 **Area Vice President**

The area vice president approves all proposed area contests.

623.32 **Area Functional Managers**

The appropriate area functional manager:

- a. Together with the area Human Resources manager, monitors each area contest to determine compliance with program criteria in 624.1.
- b. Announces the contest winners.

- c. Analyzes the results of each contest to determine its benefits to the Postal Service (for example, reduction in the number of motor vehicle accidents, or increase in the number of firms using ZIP+4) and provides the district manager or senior plant manager with any guidance appropriate for future contests.

623.4 **Executive Committee Member**

The appropriate Executive Committee member:

- a. Approves all proposed national contests.
- b. Monitors national contests to ensure compliance with program criteria in 624.1.
- c. Announces contest winners.

624 **Establishment**

624.1 **Criteria**

Responsible officials:

- a. Establish clear objectives, guidelines, and rules in advance.
- b. Specify start and end dates.
- c. Structure the contest to make it competitive. (If individual competition is involved, at least 10 employees must be included.)
- d. Establish objectives that are clear and measurable.

624.2 **Structure**

To achieve the broadest possible participation and facilitate control, responsible officials ensure that each contest:

- a. Is divided into competitive units, such as competition among plants or Post Offices. Competition may also be arranged between comparable units on a single tour, tour against tour, or station or branch against other stations or branches.
- b. Includes all individuals involved in the activity at the organizational level of the contest.
- c. Is conducted within a specific time frame, such as a month, a quarter, or a year.
- d. Has objectives that (1) clearly state what is to be accomplished (for example, reduction in the number of motor vehicle accidents, or increase in the number of firms using ZIP+4); and (2) can be measured.

624.3 **Contest Rules**

Responsible officials ensure that all rules and procedures (1) are made clear before the contest begins; (2) are posted or distributed to each employee involved; and (3) state the measurable objective that will be used to determine the winners.

625 **Implementation**

625.1 **Eligibility**

Employees are eligible to participate in all contests without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or physical or mental handicap.

625.2 **Evaluation**

625.21 **Winners**

Responsible officials ensure that (1) award decisions are based on the rules and procedures established for each contest; and (2) selection of the winning individual or group is based on a predetermined measurable objective.

625.22 **Ties**

Responsible officials resolve ties by chance drawing or other equitable form of elimination.

626 **Types of Awards**

626.1 **Acceptable**

Acceptable awards are characterized as follows:

- a. Only noncash items such as trophies, plaques, pins, or gift certificates may be awarded.
- b. The value of each award may vary from contest to contest or be graduated within a contest with progressive levels of competition.
- c. To ensure maximum interest, prizes should be alternated periodically, or a variety of prizes should be made available for individual selection from a catalog.
- d. Prizes offered must be appropriate for both sexes.
- e. The maximum value of a contest award cannot exceed \$500. (See ELM 470 for more information on awards.)

626.2 **Unacceptable**

Cash and cash equivalent items are not authorized as prizes.

627 **Limitations**

627.1 **Numbers and Types of Contests**

The following guidelines apply:

- a. Sponsoring organizations may conduct no more than four contests per year.
- b. Identical contests may not be carried over automatically from year to year.

627.2

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- c. Approval must be received before each contest, even if it is similar, or identical, to a previously authorized contest.

627.2 Expenditures**627.21 District and Plant Contests**

The district manager or senior plant manager determines the total annual expenditure (publicity, printing, awards, pictures, certificates, etc.) for each contest. The expenditure should be offset by operational savings.

627.22 Area Contests

The area vice president determines the amount allocated for areawide contests.

627.23 National Contests

The appropriate Executive Committee member grants prior approval of the amount allocated for nationwide contests.