



Pictorial Cancellations

Handbook PO-230

February 2000
Transmittal Letter

A. Explanation. This handbook provides information for postal personnel having responsibility for pictorial cancellations.

B. Distribution

- 1. Initial Distribution.** One copy will be distributed to vice presidents of Area Operations; area Marketing managers; district Customer Service and Sales managers; Marketing managers; postmasters at cost ascertainment group (CAG) A–G offices and community post offices; and station managers at classified stations.
- 2. Additional Copies.** Offices may order additional copies by submitting PS Form 7380, *MDC Supply Requisition*, to the material distribution center.

C. Comments and Questions. Send a memorandum with comments or questions regarding the content of this handbook to:

PICTORIAL CANCELLATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER
STAMP SERVICES
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4474-EB
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2437

D. Effective Date. This handbook is effective upon receipt.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James C. Tolbert, Jr." with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

James C. Tolbert, Jr.
Manager
Stamp Services

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1 Introduction

Handbook PO-230, *Pictorial Cancellations*, organizes in one document the guidelines and procedures for managing the pictorial cancellation program efficiently, consistently, and in accordance with national policies. It is intended to serve as a guide for new and veteran postmasters, Marketing managers, and pictorial cancellation program managers. It also serves as a working reference for everyone involved in philately.

Most of the information in this handbook is found in the *Postal Operations Manual* (POM). However, some of the information here has been revised specifically to address pictorial cancellations. Additionally, some new guidelines and procedures have been incorporated into the program.

This handbook will be updated periodically and reissued. Recommendations are helpful in revising the handbook and making it more useful. Submit your comments or suggestions to the following address:

PICTORIAL CANCELLATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER
STAMP SERVICES
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4474-EB
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2437

2 General Information

Pictorial cancellations are postmarks offered by the Postal Service to commemorate local community events, such as fairs, conventions, or other types of local celebrations. They are initiated by sponsors and organizers of events, and they may feature wording and/or graphics relating to those events.

Pictorial cancellations are provided upon request to collectors at temporary philatelic stations established at events and through mail-back service. They may not be obtained at regular stamp or retail windows.

Devices used for applying pictorial cancellations are generally rubber composition handstamps. There is no charge to the sponsor for the production of these handstamps or for the Postal Service's staffing of the temporary philatelic station.

Upcoming pictorial cancellations are announced in each issue of the *Postal Bulletin* and through news releases distributed to the press and philatelic publications.

Pictorial cancellations should not be confused with "special cancellations," which are metered cancellations approved by the manager of Business Mail Acceptance at Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

3 Format Requirements and Restrictions

3-1 Required Information

Each pictorial cancellation must contain the following information:

- a. The name of the temporary philatelic station.
- b. The word "Station" or "Sta." (e.g., Gift of Life Station, Founder's Day Sta.).
- c. The city, state, and ZIP Code of the physical location of the temporary philatelic station.
- d. The month, day, and year when the cancellation is offered.

The standard two-letter abbreviation should be used for the state name. The name of the city must be spelled out.

3-2 Size Limitations

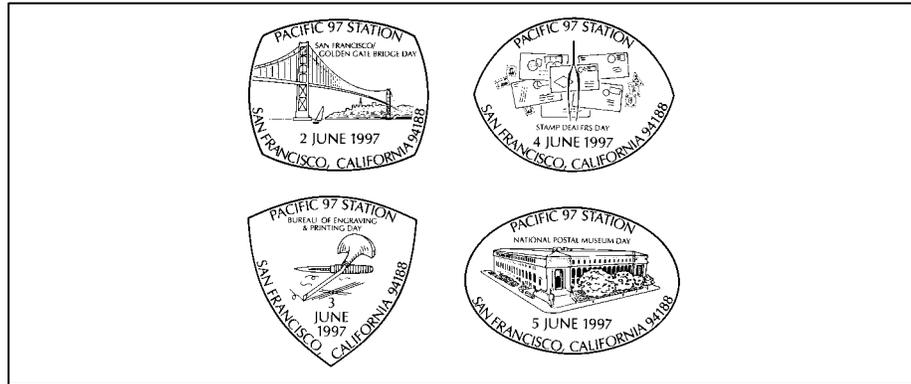
A pictorial cancellation must not be larger than 4 inches wide or 2 inches high.

3-3 Design Limitations

Only one cancellation design will be authorized for a temporary philatelic station, regardless of whether the station is operated at a 1-day or a multiple-day event.

The only exception to this restriction is for international philatelic exhibitions recognized by Stamp Services. Exhibit 3-3 shows multiple cancellation designs for an international philatelic exhibition recognized by Stamp Services.

Exhibit 3-3
Multiple Cancellation Designs for an International Philatelic Exhibition



3-4 Dating Cancellations for Multiple-day Events

When a temporary philatelic station is operated for more than 1 day, the cancellation used for each day of the event must display the date only for that day. Consequently, stations operated for more than 1 day actually require more than one cancellation stamp or a stamp that has a “date-plug” for changing dates.

In many cases, the design for a multiple-day event contains a “bull’s-eye” whose date changes each day, but other designs incorporate the date in different parts of the text. Exhibit 3-4a shows properly designed cancellations for multiple-day events.

Multiple dates must not appear in a cancellation. Exhibit 3-4b shows an improperly designed cancellation displaying multiple dates.

Exhibit 3-4a
Properly Designed Cancellations for Multiple-Day Events

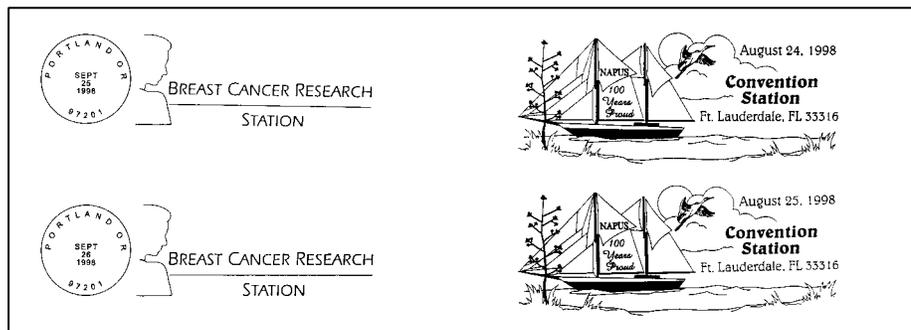


Exhibit 3-4b
Improperly Designed Cancellation Displaying Multiple Dates



3-5 Restricted Illustrations, Wording, and Designs

The Postal Service places the following restrictions on illustrations, wording, and designs featured on a pictorial cancellation:

- a. The illustrations, wording, and designs must directly reflect the event to be commemorated.
- b. The pictorial cancellation cannot promote or endorse the following:
 - (1) The sale or use of nonpostal products.
 - (2) The beliefs, ideals, policies, or programs of any individual or organization.
 - (3) A political candidate or campaign.
- c. The pictorial cancellation cannot feature illustrations, wording, or symbols (including religious or antireligious symbols or subject matter) that refer to, promote, or endorse the beliefs, ideals, policies, or programs of any individual or organization. However, the Postal Service may approve a pictorial cancellation in which a symbol of this nature is merely incidental to the design.

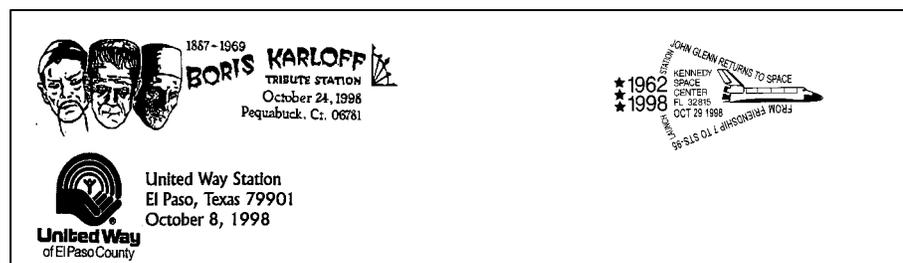
3-6 Authorization for Artwork

The Postal Service cannot approve a pictorial cancellation without express written authorization from the individual or company that created the design featured in the pictorial cancellation. See also Section 4-2.

3-7 Authorization for Names and/or Images

The Postal Service cannot approve a pictorial cancellation that features the name and/or image of any individual without express written authorization from the appropriate owners, families, or estates. Authorization is also required for copyrighted material and other proprietary material such as trademarks, service marks, registered marks, insignias, logos, etc. See also Section 4-2. Samples of cancellations requiring authorization are shown in Exhibit 3-7.

Exhibit 3-7
Cancellations With Proprietary Material



4 Applying for Pictorial Cancellations

4-1 Letter of Request and Pictorial Cancellation Artwork

At least 10 weeks before the date of the event, sponsors or organizers of events who wish to use a pictorial cancellation must submit a letter of request to the postmaster of the city where the cancellation is to be used. Requests submitted less than 10 weeks before the date of the event are subject to rejection.

Each request must include the following information:

- a. The name of a contact person.
- b. The contact's telephone number.
- c. Camera-ready artwork for the pictorial cancellation design.
- d. A complete description of the event.
- e. The dates the cancellation will be offered.
- f. Any and all supporting information required for the pictorial cancellation (see Section 4-2).

4-2 Supporting Information

The sponsor or organizer must submit express written authorization from the individual or company that created the pictorial cancellation design authorizing the Postal Service to reproduce and distribute the design. See also Section 3-6.

If any word, symbol, or illustration featured in a pictorial cancellation design is the proprietary interest of another person or organization, the sponsor or organizer must submit express written authorization for the Postal Service to use such proprietary material in the pictorial cancellation. See also Section 3-7.

Authorization is also required from the following individuals:

- a. Each living person who is named or featured in the pictorial cancellation.
- b. An authorized representative of the estate of each deceased individual who is named or featured in the pictorial cancellation.
- c. The owner of copyrighted material or other proprietary material that is featured in or incorporated in the pictorial cancellation (e.g., trademarks, service marks, registered marks, insignias, logos, etc.).

5 Approving or Rejecting Requests

5-1 Overview

A request for a pictorial cancellation travels the following the path:

1. Sponsor makes a request.
2. Postmaster reviews the request and, if approved, forwards it to the district manager (or designee).
3. District manager (or designee) reviews the postmaster's approval and, if acceptable, forwards it to the program manager of pictorial cancellations in Stamp Services at Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C.
4. Program manager of pictorial cancellations reviews the district manager's (or designee's) approval and, if acceptable, forwards it to the *Postal Bulletin* editor at Postal Headquarters.
5. *Postal Bulletin* editor reviews the submitted material and, if acceptable, publishes it in the *Postal Bulletin*.

5-2 Conditions for Acceptance

A request will be considered for acceptance if all the following conditions are met:

- a. The request must include all required information. (See Section 4-1.)
- b. The request must include camera-ready artwork that meets all requirements. (See Chapter 3.)
- c. If required, the request must include express written authorization from the appropriate individual or organization allowing the Postal Service to use the pictorial cancellation design. (See Sections 3-6 and 4-2.)
- d. If required, the request must include express written authorization allowing the Postal Service to use any word, symbol, or illustration featured in the pictorial cancellation design that is the proprietary interest of another person or organization. (See Sections 3-7 and 4-2.)
- e. The sponsor must ensure that the temporary philatelic station will be established in an adequately secured area at the event. (See Section 13-2.)

- f. The Postal Service must be able to provide adequate staffing for sales and cancellation service at the temporary philatelic station during the period requested. (See Section 13-4.)
- g. Sales and cancellation services at the event must support the primary goals of the Postal Service, such as those outlined in the Voice of the Employee (VOE), Voice of the Customer (VOC), and Voice of the Business (VOB).

If there is doubt as to whether a request meets all of these conditions, the postmaster should consult with the district manager (or designee) before granting approval.

5-3 Approval/Rejection of the Request

5-3.1 **Response Time**

The Postal Service, through the postmaster, should respond to a sponsor within 14 days of receiving the sponsor's letter of request.

5-3.2 **Initial Action by Receiving Postmaster**

Upon receiving the sponsor's letter of request, the postmaster must stamp it with the date received, review it to ensure it meets the conditions in Section 5-2, and either approve it and forward it to the district manager (or designee) or reject it.

If the request is rejected, the postmaster must respond to the requester in writing and indicate the reason for the denial. A copy of the denial letter and the original request must be kept in a permanent file.

The postmaster should complete the review within 7 days so that, if the request is approved, the district manager (or designee) still has sufficient time to review it and provide a response within the required time frame (see Section 5-3.1).

5-3.3 **Action by the District Manager (or Designee)**

The district manager (or designee) should review the postmaster's approval, either concur with the approval or reject it, and respond to the postmaster about the matter.

If the request is approved, the district manager (or designee) must forward a pictorial cancellation announcement form (see Exhibit 5-3.3) to the program manager of pictorial cancellations at the following address:

PICTORIAL CANCELLATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER
STAMP SERVICES
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4474-EB
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2437

Exhibit 5-3.3

Pictorial Cancellation Announcement Form



Pictorial Cancellation Announcement

<p>Complete this announcement and forward it to the following address:</p> <p>PICTORIAL CANCELLATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER STAMP SERVICES US POSTAL SERVICE 475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4474-EB WASHINGTON DC 20260-2437</p>	<p><i>Insert pictorial cancellation Copy here</i> (Camera ready or reproducible) No larger than 4" horizontal x 2" vertical (the dimensions of this box)</p>
--	---

Postal Service Contact (name, address, phone)	
Station Date(s)	
Sponsor	
Station Name	
Complete Street Address or PO Box Number	
City/State/ZIP+4	

Mail Cancellation Requests to:

Station Name	
Addressee Name (usually "Postmaster")	
Complete Street Address or PO Box 9998	
City/State/ZIP+4	

Pictorial Cancellation Announcement Form, January 2000

When possible, the district manager (or designee) should try to consolidate announcements and send them together in one package rather than sending each one separately. An announcement must be sent at least 6 weeks before the date of the event and must include the following information:

- a. A reproducible copy of the finished cancellation artwork.
- b. The name, address, and telephone number of the Postal Service contact.
- c. The date(s) that the temporary philatelic station is to be open.
- d. The sponsor's name.
- e. The name and complete address of the temporary philatelic station.
- f. A *complete* mailing address for customers requesting the cancellation by mail (in the "Mail Cancellation Requests to:" section).

If the request is rejected, the district manager (or designee) must indicate the reason for the denial in the response to the postmaster.

The district manager (or designee) must complete the review and respond to the postmaster as expeditiously as possible so that the postmaster can then respond to the sponsor within the required time frame (see Section 5-3.1).

5-3.4 **Action by Postmaster After Approval or Denial**

After receiving a response from the district manager (or designee), the postmaster must respond to the sponsor. If the request has been rejected, the postmaster must respond in writing and indicate the reason for the denial. A copy of the denial letter and the original request must be kept in a permanent file.

6 Publicity

6-1 Policy

The Postal Service endeavors to make all unusual postmarking services known to customers through advance publicity so that the services are available to as wide an audience as possible rather than only to small groups of people.

6-2 Arranging National Publicity

The program manager of pictorial cancellations in Stamp Services at Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C., must submit electronically to the *Postal Bulletin* editor a Microsoft Word file of the text information for each report of an upcoming pictorial cancellation.

Only the program manager — not the postmaster or the district manager — should directly contact the *Postal Bulletin* editor.

6-3 Arranging Local Publicity

The postmaster should contact the area Corporate Relations office to coordinate publicity for a pictorial cancellation offered at a temporary philatelic station. The area Corporate Relations office will develop and distribute press releases to local newspapers. (See *Administrative Support Manual (ASM)*, Section 335.)

An announcement must be posted on the main post office lobby bulletin board so that collectors can be advised of the temporary philatelic station. Announcements also may be posted in other post offices within a 10-mile radius of the event. For larger events, the announcement may also be posted throughout the district or as requested by Headquarters.

Announcements should be placed on display at least 15 days but not more than 30 days before the event.

All announcements should include the following information:

- a. The name of the event.
- b. The location, dates, and hours of operation of the temporary station.
- c. A copy of the pictorial cancellation.

Announcements should focus on the philatelic aspects of the event, including mail-back service for those unable to attend. (See Section 9-1.2.)

Announcements should not include unnecessary promotional information about other aspects of the event. Additionally, the post office must not distribute free flyers to homes, sell or distribute tickets, exchange ticket coupons, or authorize the use of post office facilities for direct event promotion.

Postal publications used for announcements include *Newsbreak* and *Postal News*. Samples of these publications are shown in Exhibits 6-3a and 6-3b. Announcements also may be made on postal television networks.

6-4 Canceling or Amending Previously Published Announcements

To cancel or amend a pictorial cancellation announcement that has already been published in the *Postal Bulletin*, the postmaster or district manager (or designee) must contact the program manager of pictorial cancellations with the following information:

- a. The date and issue number of the *Postal Bulletin*.
- b. The name of the temporary station.
- c. The city, state, and ZIP Code of the temporary station.
- d. The date of the cancellation.
- e. The necessary action to be taken.
- f. The name and telephone number of a contact person.

If changes are needed to the cancellation artwork, the postmaster or district manager (or designee) must send a hard copy of the corrected artwork to the program manager of pictorial cancellations at the following address:

PICTORIAL CANCELLATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER
STAMP SERVICES
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4474-EB
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2437

Additionally, the postmaster or district manager (or designee) must send announcements about the canceled or amended pictorial cancellation to all the organizations and publications that received the original announcement.

Exhibit 6-3a
Sample of Newsbreak



LOCAL NEWSBREAK

NUMBER 22

June 2, 1998

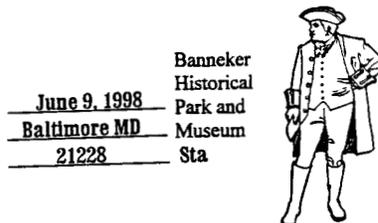
POSTMARK COMMEMORATES OPENING OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER MUSEUM

(Baltimore MD) -- Baltimore Post Office will issue a commemorative postmark in honor of the opening of the Benjamin Banneker Museum on Tuesday, June 9, 1998. Baltimore postmaster Michael S. Furey will join County Executive C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger, Councilman Sam Moxley, and representatives of the Friends of Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks at the grand opening celebration at 4:00 PM, at the museum in the Banneker Historical Park, 300 Oella Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21228.

The unique postmark featuring an image of Banneker is free. Postal personnel at the temporary post office set up inside the museum from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM will apply it to any item bearing first-class postage. To order the postmark by mail, write to: Benjamin Banneker Station, Main Office Window Services, US Postal Service, 900 E Fayette St., Baltimore MD 21233-9715. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Mail order requests must be postmarked no later than July 9, 1998.

The completion of the museum facility culminates a 15-year partnership of community and government to forge a national historical center at the site of Banneker's homestead. Gwen Marable, a descendant of Banneker, will be installed as honorary postmaster as part of the festivities.

(postmark pictured below)



PLEASE COPY AND POST ON ALL EMPLOYEE BULLETIN BOARDS.
USPS EAGLE SYMBOL AND LOGOTYPE ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Exhibit 6-3b
Sample of Postal News



POSTAL NEWS

Monday, October 26, 1998

Contact: Joseph Breckenridge
 (770) 390-3381

Digital Pager: (888) 378-4216

Postal Service Web page: <http://www.usps.gov>

U.S. Postal Service marks John Glenn's second historic flight

***Special postage stamp cancellation makes it inexpensive and easy to
 get and give a memento of Glenn's return to space***

TITUSVILLE, FLA. – The U. S. Postal Service will mark John Glenn's historic return to space with a special postal cancellation next Thursday, October 29.

"In 1962, shortly after Glenn's three-orbit trip around the Earth, the Postal Service issued a stamp commemorating the Mercury program," said Titusville Postmaster Ed Link. "Now, more than 30 years later, we're honored to mark Glenn's return to space with another postal commemoration."

Link said the special cancellation combines a profile of the Mercury capsule and the Space Shuttle. "Glenn's Friendship Seven is formed by text which connects America's first manned orbit with Glenn's shuttle mission, number STS-95," explained Link. "It's a stamp cancellation mark that's more than the usual circles and bars. It's a picture that tells a story."

The postmaster said the Glenn cancellation is free. "We will apply the cancel on any envelope that has proper postage," he said. For space enthusiasts who are looking for an appropriate stamp, Link suggests they obtain the Space Discovery stamps which were recently issued at the Kennedy Space Center on the 40th anniversary of NASA.

John Glenn postal cancellations will be available October 29, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at two locations in Titusville. For those who cannot be present on launch day, the cancellation will be available by mail for 30 days after the event. The cancellation will be available at the following post offices:

- Launch Station (former Titusville P.O.), 2503 S Washington Ave, Titusville, FL 32780-9998
- Astronaut Trail Station, 5 Main Street, Titusville, FL 32782-9998

For 30 days after the event, collectors can obtain the cancellation by sending, under separate cover, a stamped, addressed envelope to:

Launch Station, 2503 S Washington Ave, Titusville, FL 32780-9998



7 Pictorial Cancellation Handstamps, Ink, and Ink Pads

7-1 Procurement and Use of Handstamps

A postmaster may request pictorial cancellation handstamps and other supplies from the district office, or may, upon receiving approval from the district manager (or designee), procure the supplies directly.

Handstamps may be used only under the supervision of authorized postal personnel.

7-2 Color of Ink

Black is the standard color of ink used for cancellations. However, another color may be used in place of black if the following conditions are met:

- a. The sponsor or organizer of the event requests a color in place of black.
- b. The requested color is related to and appropriate for the event (such as red for a strawberry festival or green for a forest festival).
- c. Stamp Services at Postal Headquarters approves the request.

All hand-stamped postmarks must be made with black ink unless specifically requested by the customer and approved by Stamp Services.

7-3 Return and Disposition of Handstamps

All handstamps must be returned to the purchasing office (district or host post office) no later than 65 days after the close of the event, by which time all requests for replacement of pictorial cancellations are to be handled (see Chapter 12). The purchasing office must destroy the handstamp upon receipt, unless a request has been made to retain the handstamp for display purposes only (see Chapter 8).

8 Special Requests to Retain Handstamp

8-1 Requests to Retain a Pictorial Cancellation Handstamp

A sponsor or organizer may request to retain the pictorial cancellation handstamp used at its event so that it may be placed in a secure location in a museum, library, historical site, or other appropriate site. The request must be submitted in writing to the postmaster of the city where the cancellation was used no later than 30 days after the date of the cancellation. If the request is approved, the postmaster must deface the handstamp before returning it (see Section 8-2.4).

8-2 Approving and Rejecting Requests

8-2.1 Response Time

The Postal Service, through the postmaster, should respond to a sponsor within 14 days of receiving the sponsor's letter of request.

8-2.2 Initial Action by Receiving Postmaster

Upon receiving the letter of request, the postmaster must stamp it with the date received.

The postmaster has 7 days to review the request and either approve it and forward it to the district manager (or designee), or reject it. If the request is rejected, the postmaster must respond to the requester in writing and explain the reason for the denial. A copy of the denial letter and the original request must be kept in a permanent file.

8-2.3 Action by the District Manager (or Designee)

The district manager (or designee) has 7 days to review the request received from the postmaster and to respond to the postmaster with a concurrence of the approval or a rejection (keeping in mind that the postmaster must contact the sponsor, in writing if the request is rejected, by the end of those 7 days).

8-2.4 Action by Postmaster After Approval or Denial

After receiving a response from the district manager (or designee), the postmaster must respond to the sponsor. If the district manager (or designee) approves the request to retain the handstamps, the postmaster, before releasing the stamps to the sponsors or organizers, must deface the handstamps in such a way that improper use of the handstamps may be recognized. Copies of the original and defaced cancellation imprint must be kept on file with the original request.

If the district manager (or designee) rejects the request to retain the handstamps, then the postmaster must destroy the handstamps (see Section 7-3) and respond in writing to the requester explaining the reason for the denial. A copy of the denial letter and the original request must be kept in a permanent file.

9 Pictorial Cancellation Service

9-1 Types of Service

9-1.1 **Hand-back Service**

Hand-back service for pictorial cancellations takes place when a customer personally presents an addressed or unaddressed envelope, postal card, or other item to a postal clerk at a temporary philatelic station for cancellation with the current day's pictorial cancellation. All such material must bear uncanceled postage at the applicable First-Class rate, but unlike mail-back service, it does not need to be addressed. The clerk must cancel the item and hand it back to the customer. The envelope, card, or other item does not enter the mailstream. Hand-back service may be provided only on the date of the cancellation. (See also Section 9-2.)

9-1.2 **Mail-back Service**

Mail-back service for pictorial cancellations permits customers to submit envelopes and cards through the mail to a designated post office for cancellation with a specific pictorial cancellation.

To qualify for this service, mail-in requests must be postmarked no later than 30 days following the requested cancellation date (see also Section 9-3). Envelopes and cards that are to receive pictorial cancellations must bear unused postage at the applicable First-Class rate and must have complete addresses.

Customers should supply self-addressed stamped envelopes to protect the items receiving the pictorial cancellation from being marred during their return through the mailstream. If customers do not provide self-addressed stamped envelopes, the postmaster may choose to furnish protective covers when returning the items through the mailstream.

9-2 Conditions for Servicing

9-2.1 **General Information**

Materials submitted for pictorial cancellations at temporary philatelic stations or philatelic outlets, or submitted through the mailstream for mail-back service, must bear uncanceled postage at the applicable First-Class rate.

Photographs, postcards, other materials having a glossy-coated or hard-calendered surface, or other materials that do not readily accept ink are submitted for cancellation at the customer's risk. The Postal Service is not responsible for smudged cancellations or offsetting on such types of material.

9-2.2 **Special Materials on Which Cancellations Are Requested**

The materials described in this section may be canceled as indicated as long as they bear unused postage at the applicable First-Class rate.

- a. *Plain Cards, Slips of Paper, and Blank Envelopes.* Postal personnel may place postmarks for customers on plain slips of paper, plain cards, or blank envelopes provided that such items bear unused postage at the applicable First-Class rate.
- b. *Picture Postcards (Maximum Cards).* Picture postcards with the stamp placed on the face of the card rather than on the address side are known as "maximum cards." Postal personnel may cancel these cards and hand them back to the person presenting them at the day of the event.
- c. *Posters, Portfolios, and Other Memorabilia.* These items may be canceled when presented in person for hand-back service provided that such items bear unused postage at the applicable First-Class rate. However, such items cannot be submitted and returned through the mail.
- d. *Already Canceled Stamps/Multiple Cancellations.* Items bearing previously canceled stamps and postmarks are acceptable for additional cancellation only when they bear unused postage at the applicable First-Class rate. The new cancellation must strike the unused postage. The previously canceled stamps or postmarks also may be hit with the same stroke.
- e. *Currency.* Currency, or items bearing currency, having stamps at the applicable First-Class rate affixed or adjacent thereto may be canceled when presented in person for hand-back service. However, such items cannot be submitted and returned through the mail. The Postal Service does not accept responsibility for currency in its possession in conjunction with philatelic services.
- f. *Backs of Envelopes.* Envelopes having canceled stamps on the front can still be canceled if they bear on the back unused stamps at the applicable First-Class rate. These items may be canceled when presented in person for hand-back service. However, such items cannot

be submitted and returned through the mail, even when outer envelopes are provided. Such a cancellation denotes only that the item was presented to the temporary philatelic station or philatelic outlet for postmarking on that date; it does not denote that the envelope was carried by the Postal Service.

- g. *Foreign Postage Stamps.* Unused foreign postage stamps may be canceled with a U.S. Postal Service postmark only when unused U.S. postage at the applicable First-Class rate is canceled with the same stroke.

9-2.3 **Items That Must Not Be Serviced**

Cancellation service must not be provided on the following items:

- a. Envelopes or cards that are submitted through the mail unaddressed, unless they are accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes for their return through the mailstream.
- b. Items submitted through the mail that bear stamps issued after the date of the pictorial cancellation, such as first-day-of-issue stamps that were not yet available at the location and on the date that the pictorial cancellation was offered. (Note, however, that first-day-of-issue stamps issued in another location on the same day as the pictorial cancellation can be accepted for cancellation on a hand-back basis only.)
- c. Items that bear only previously canceled stamps.
- d. Items that are presented for hand-back service after the date of the pictorial cancellation.
- e. Items that are submitted through the mail more than 30 days after the date of the pictorial cancellation (see also Section 9-3).

9-2.4 **Service Limitations**

The sponsor or organizer may obtain for its members any reasonable amount of hand-backs free of any service charge. Also, special folders or programs prepared by the sponsor may be canceled and made available upon the opening of the show. However, under no circumstances may any postmarked material be released before the date of the cancellation.

For any single individual or group other than the sponsor or organizer, hand-stamping as a free service is limited to 50 covers. There is a service charge of \$0.05 for each cancellation above 50, to a maximum of 1,000 cancellations. Requests for more than 1,000 cancellations must be approved by the district manager and Stamp Services.

9-3 Extending Mail-back Service

The standard period of mail-back service for a pictorial cancellation is 30 days after the cancellation date. However, requests for extending the period may be made by the sponsor, the postmaster, or the district manager (or designee). Requests must be approved by Stamp Services at Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

If the request is approved, an extension is normally made for 30 days. Items submitted through the mail during the extension period are to receive the cancellation, provided that they meet all other conditions for acceptance as discussed in Sections 9-1.2 and 9-2.

10 Backdating and Pre-dating

It is the policy of the Postal Service to prohibit backdating and pre-dating of mail except in the following cases:

- a. When postal operating requirements and public demand necessitate that cancellation commence before and/or continue after the date contained in the postmark. However, under no circumstances may any postmarked material be released before the date of the cancellation.
- b. When replacements are made for damaged, defective, or missing cancellations or covers.
- c. When all requirements for cancellations are met by a customer but cancellations are not applied because of errors by postal personnel.
- d. When authorization is specifically provided in writing by a Stamp Services manager or the Philatelic Fulfillment Service Center manager.

11 Cooperation With Collectors

11-1 Clear and Legible Postmarks

Postal personnel should strive to furnish clear and legible postmarks to collectors by ensuring that handstamp devices are properly inked. Postal personnel must give special attention to requests for light cancellations and to mail bearing an endorsement of philatelic value, and they should avoid canceling stamps by pen or illegible smudging. However, stamps must be canceled sufficiently to protect postal revenue.

11-2 Handling

Postal personnel should exercise care in handling all philatelic covers to ensure that they are not damaged in mailhandling. These covers are generally identifiable by a design printed on the left side of the envelope. Postal personnel should ensure that philatelic covers are not mishandled; overcanceled, backstamped, marked "received this date," or otherwise defaced on front or back; used as a tip piece for labeling purposes in a bundle for a destination package; or bent, folded, mutilated, or damaged by rubber bands.

11-3 Covers in the Mailstream

The Postal Service cannot provide special attention to a philatelic cover that has been routinely entered into the mailstream by the sender. Customers are encouraged to supply self-addressed stamped envelopes to protect the items receiving the pictorial cancellation from being marred during their return through the mailstream. For customers that do not provide self-addressed stamped envelopes, the postmaster may choose to furnish, at the office's expense, protective covers for returning the items through the mailstream (see also Section 9-1.2).

12 Damaged or Missing Covers

12-1 Requests for Replacements

Requests for replacements of pictorial cancellations may be accepted at the appropriate post office for 60 days from the postmark date. Claims for replacement cancellations filed after 60 days are not honored, but the postmaster must respond to the customer with a short explanation that the request could not be honored because it was filed after the deadline.

12-2 Conditions for Replacements

Replacement cancellations are made for poor quality of cancellation, damage to the envelope, or other similar defects, or if the items are lost by the philatelic unit. However, replacements are not made if envelopes are marked on the back by letter sorting machine code numbers as they moved through the mail system.

The Postal Service makes every effort to provide a clean, crisp cancellation to each item it receives. However, because a pictorial cancellation is a manual operation, it is not reasonable to expect a "perfect" cancellation on each item. Postmasters must use their own best judgment when determining whether a customer's complaint about a "poor quality" cancellation is actually reasonable or is based on a standard that is too rigorous for a manual operation.

12-3 Customer Returns

The customer must return the unsatisfactory cover or covers to the appropriate post office for replacement.

12-4 Stale Postmarks

The Postal Service must return replacement covers to the customer in a USPS postage-paid envelope so that the stale postmark does not appear in the mailstream.

12-5 Time Limit for Claims

All claims for nonreceipt of covers submitted for servicing by the Postal Service must be sent to the appropriate post office no later than 60 days from the date of postmark or from the date cancellations were last applied. Claims for replacement cancellations filed after 60 days are not honored, but the postmaster must respond to the customer with a short explanation that the request could not be honored because it was filed after the deadline.

12-6 Cacheted Covers

The Postal Service is not responsible for damage to or loss of cacheted covers or other items of value.

13 Temporary Philatelic Stations

13-1 Purpose

Temporary philatelic stations are established at events to offer pictorial cancellations and to display and sell stamps, philatelic products, and other locally created items that are related to the special occasion and approved by Headquarters. They are frequently located at stamp shows, philatelic exhibitions, stamp ceremonies, state fairs, conventions, parades, or other activities of significant public or philatelic interest.

13-2 Set-up

Temporary philatelic stations should be located in a secured, heavily traveled area that is easily accessible by customers. Stations may consist of booths, counters, or mobile retail units, if available. If these items are unavailable, one or more tables should be used for hand cancellation service and for sales of stamps and other approved items. An additional table should be available for customers to use while affixing stamps to envelopes. Each table should be covered with a tablecloth and bordered with skirting. Booths, counters, or tables should be positioned in a manner that prevents customers from approaching clerks from the rear.

13-3 Signs and Displays

Signs should be designed and used to direct customers to the section of the temporary philatelic station that provides the product or service they need. Professionally made signs should be used whenever possible; computer-generated or typewritten signs are permissible, but handwritten signs should never be used. Displays should be designed and used to make customers aware of the products and services offered and to communicate information about them, such as their features, quality, and value.

13-4 Staffing

Special consideration should be taken in selecting postal personnel who have retail experience and who are courteous, friendly, highly motivated, and knowledgeable about philately. Additionally, these postal personnel should be fully trained in stamp sales and cancellation policies.