

Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards
U.S. House of Representatives

1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6230
(202) 225-9337

Date: February 17, 2009

To: Member and Committee Offices

From: The Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission)

Re.: The regulations and procedures governing the use of a Template

Template \tem-plə\ n: A mass communication having a preset format, used as a starting point to give notice of the date, time, and location of a recurring official event so that the format does not have to be recreated or receive an Advisory Opinion each time it is used.

The Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards (Franking Commission) has amended the regulations governing the procedures applicable to the submission of a request for an Advisory Opinion regarding the frankability of mass communications to be used to give notice of recurring official events. This procedure eliminates the previous requirement that each such communication be submitted to the Commission for an Advisory Opinion prior to being distributed. The procedure has been designed to facilitate the expeditious distribution of such notices – notices that are often time sensitive – and, at the same time, ensure timely public disclosure.

Effective immediately, a Member *may submit a single request* for an Advisory Opinion on the frankability of a Template to be used to give notice of a recurring official event when such notice will be distributed via other than the U.S. Postal Service. An Advisory Opinion issued in response to such a request may be applied to each subsequent use of the Template over the course of the year in which the Advisory Opinion is issued AS LONG AS NO CHANGES ARE MADE TO THE TEMPLATE OTHER THAN THE DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION OF THE EVENT. Within two business days of a subsequent use of an approved Template, the Member must submit a completed “Notice of Use of Approved Template” Form to the Franking Commission. This notice will be included in the permanent records of the Franking Commission and a copy of the notice forwarded to the Legislative Resource Center for inclusion in the Member’s public disclosure file.

EXAMPLES OF RECURRING OFFICIAL EVENTS include but are not limited to town hall meetings (actual, virtual, telephone, etc.) and community/neighborhood office hours.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATIONS ELIGIBLE TO BE CONSIDERED AS A TEMPLATE include but are not limited to e-mail, scripts for automated telephone calls and public service announcements, advertisements (newspaper, periodical, radio/TV, web banner, post-it ads, etc.), posters and flyers, and newspaper inserts.

The content of a Template must comply with applicable federal law and House Rules and regulations and clearly identify the Member as the exclusive host/sponsor of the official event. The primary purpose of the Template must be to give notice of the:

- Event itself;
- Date, time, and location of the event; and
- Availability of ADA accommodations at the event.

For your convenience, a copy of the applicable regulations and "Notice of Use of Approved Template" Form are attached. The form will also be available in an interactive smart form and PDF format in the near future.

Expenses incurred in support of the printing, production, and/or distribution of a notice prepared using an approved Template should be submitted to the Finance Office for payment on a completed voucher, accompanied by the vendor's original receipt or invoice, a copy of the Advisory Opinion deeming the corresponding Template frankable (Advisory Certificate with copy of the original notice), and a copy of the notice for which payment is being requested.

If you have any questions regarding this regulation and/or the related procedures, please contact the Franking Commission at x57666 (majority) or x60647 (minority).

★ PLEASE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLATE PROCEDURE DOES NOT APPLY TO MASS MAILINGS ★
TO BE DISTRIBUTED VIA THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE UNDER A MEMBER'S FRANK.

**AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF THE CONGRESSIONAL FRANK
BY OFFICES OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Approved by the Franking Commission: APRIL 8, 2008

Effective: January 3, 2009

**TEMPLATES FOR TOWN MEETING NOTICES, QUALIFYING ADVERTISEMENTS, POSTERS AND FLYERS, AND
SCRIPTS FOR AUTOMATED TELEPHONE CALLS AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS
TO BE DISTRIBUTED VIA OTHER THAN THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE (USPS).**

A Member may submit a single request for an Advisory Opinion on the frankability of a Template of a communication to be used to give notice of a recurring official event, e.g., town hall meetings or community office hours, to be hosted by the Member over the course of the current year. The Advisory Opinion issued may be applied to each subsequent use of the template in that year as long as no changes are made to the Template other than the date, time, and location of the event.

Within two business days of a subsequent use of an approved Template, the Member must submit a completed "Notice of Use of Approved Template" Form to the Franking Commission. A copy of this notice shall be included in the permanent records of the Franking Commission and the Legislative Resource Center.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS REGULATION DOES NOT APPLY TO NOTICES TO BE DISTRIBUTED AS VIA USPS.

**EACH NOTICE TO BE DISTRIBUTED AS A MASS MAILING MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE FRANKING
COMMISSION FOR REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO BEING MAILED.**
