

## **5 FAH-10 H-520 DIPLOMATIC POUCH MAIL**

*(TL:PMH-6; 12-05-2002)*  
*(Office of Origin: A/LM/PMP/DPM)*

### **5 FAH-10 H-521 GENERAL**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

a. The Vienna Convention and international law limit the use of diplomatic pouches to correspondence and items for official use.

b. The Department permits U.S. citizen employees to use pouches to transmit limited amounts of mail, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Department. When permitted, transmission is at the sender's risk.

c. DPM personnel must not accept mass mailings (in any form) of unsolicited advertisements or like materials from individuals, organizations or businesses for pouch transmission.

d. The Department accepts no liability for loss or damage except as provided in 6 FAM 300. Registry, insurance, and other special postal services are not permitted by the United States Postal Service (USPS) when mail is forwarded to a final destination by diplomatic pouch.

### **5 FAH-10 H-522 POSTAGE**

*(TL:PMH-6; 12-05-2002)*

a. All mail authorized for the diplomatic pouch must have sufficient postage affixed to it. The United States Postal Service (USPS) will not accept mail without postage. Letter mail will be returned to the sender. Parcels (returned merchandise) will be held by **A/LM/PMP/DPM** until the sender makes arrangements to provide the necessary postage. If no action is taken within 15 working days, the item will be returned to post.

b. **A/LM/PMP/DPM** will provide current USPS postal rate charts upon request. All domestic U.S. postage stamps affixed abroad to mail included into the diplomatic pouch will be introduced into the USPS by DPM at the nearest Washington, DC post office servicing the Department. Postage stamps on mail will show a Washington, DC cancellation mark.

c. Affixing official postage to personal mail is prohibited by law.

d. The Information Management Officer or a representative is responsible for managing official postal meters and franking machines financed from official funds.

## **5 FAH-10 H-523 DIRECTORY SERVICE AND FORWARDING**

### **5 FAH-10 H-523.1 Directory Service**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

The Department will not provide directory service or worldwide distribution of bulk mailings not specifically addressed to an authorized pouch user or other items of mail that are insufficiently addressed. Mail that qualifies for return to sender via USPS will be returned. Undeliverable, unclaimed mail that is not returnable will be held for 15 working days.

### **5 FAH-10 H-523.2 Forwarding**

*(TL:PMH-6; 12-05-2002)*

a. Post may forward, by air pouch, letters and merchandise parcels received by pouch for employees transferred to other posts, provided the new post of assignment is clearly indicated on the item and the notation "employee transferred" is added. The post funds this forwarding.

b. Letters, flats, and parcels received by pouch for employees transferred to other posts must be forwarded **DIRECTLY** to the new post **or domestic address (non-official)**.

**(1) First Class, priority, and express mail, will be forwarded to a new address for 12 months. After 12 months mark the mail "return to sender."**

**(2) Periodicals (includes newspapers and magazines) will be forwarded to a new address for 60 days. Mark "return to sender" after 60 days only if the publisher has indicated "Address Service Requested" or has another similar endorsement.**

**(3) Packages will be forwarded to a new address within the local mailing area for 12 months at no cost. Mailing costs will be charged to the addressee for packages forwarded to a new address outside the local mailing area.**

c. **United States Postal Service (USPS) forwarding guidelines are very detailed depending on the mailer's endorsement. Mailer endorsements are:**

**Address Service Requested**  
**Forwarding Service Requested**  
**Return Service Requested**  
**Change Service Requested**

**For further guidance contact A/LM/PMP/DPM who will coordinate with the USPS to answer your inquiry.**

**d. Correspondence with catalog companies to correct mailing lists by posts is considered official business after the departure of the employee.**

## **5 FAH-10 H-523.2-1 Change of Address**

*(TL:PMH-6; 12-05-2002)*

a. The employee is responsible for ensuring that correspondents are informed of address changes. The USPS *Change of Address Form, PS-3576* can be used for this purpose. See 5 FAH-10 H-523 Exhibit H-523.2-1. This form can be reproduced at post. Posts should not alter the format of the form.

**(1) The employee must leave a copy of the USPS Form PS-3576 with their post's mailroom and the post's Human Resources Officer (HRO).**

**(2) The HRO should include this action as part of the employee checkout sheet for departure from post.**

b. Employees at category A posts should obtain change of address forms from the local APO/FPO office.

c. Detaching address labels from magazine and other subscriptions may accelerate the companies' ability to take appropriate action.

## **5 FAH-10 H-523.2-2 Emergencies**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

a. In an emergency evacuation of a post, the employee must provide a forwarding address to the post prior to departure. The forwarding address must be included in the telegram from the post authorizing evacuation. Diplomatic pouch mail will be processed according to the type of evacuation orders the employee is issued.

(1) Authorized departures from post: all mail will be forwarded to post. The post will then forward the mail to the address provided by the employee.

(2) Ordered evacuation from post: mail will be forwarded by the Department to the address specified in the evacuation telegram.

(3) Closed post: all mail will be sorted by Bureau personnel and mailed to the forwarding address specified in the evacuation telegram.

b. In an emergency evacuation, employees should immediately contact all of their correspondents (especially financial institutions, credit card companies, banks, credit unions, etc.) to advise them to change the address as soon as possible because they have been evacuated from post.

c. In emergencies, personnel at posts using APO/FPO facilities must advise correspondents immediately of a change of address. The Department has no control over mail sent via the APO/FPO military channel.

### **5 FAH-10 H-523.2-3 Authorized Student Pouch Users**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

Mail and parcels without postage affixed that belong to students who are authorized pouch users, delivered by messenger from the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC) and other Department training centers, should only contain official materials associated with training. Employees assigned to Washington for training are authorized to mail or hand-carry letters and parcels to the Diplomatic Pouch and Mail facility located at Sterling, VA, while attending training center classes. Since USPS will not accept mail that does not possess postage, the employee is at risk and must ensure arrangements are made for someone to take possession of parcels rejected because they exceed size and weight limitations or contain prohibited items.

### **5 FAH-10 H-523.2-4 Congressional Mail**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

a. Communications may be sent by [A] pouch. If enclosed in official congressional franked envelopes, the mail requires no postage. Other communications in unofficial envelopes addressed to an addressee in the United States require domestic postage at the official rate for the type of service desired from Washington, DC to the addressee.

b. The Department forwards parcels to the U.S. customs in Washington, DC and informs the office of the Member so that prompt customs clearance can be arranged.

c. Parcels must be registered and comply with pouch requirements for size and weight limitations.

d. Posts must advise DPM via telegram of the registry number, pouch invoice number, date of dispatch, routing and air waybill number.

## **5 FAH-10 H-524 RESTRICTIONS ON DIPLOMATIC POUCH MAIL**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

The Department will not authorize full diplomatic pouch privileges to personnel assigned to a category "A" post (already serviced by an APO or FPO). See 5 FAM 343 for personnel restrictions on using the diplomatic pouch.

### **5 FAH-10 H-524.1 Pouches to the Department**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

Employees must not send flats or parcels to the United States by pouch, except for Homeward Bound Mail (see 5 FAH-10 H-525) . Personnel at Category B and C posts may return items to the United States that were purchased during the current tour. These parcels must:

- (1) Have appropriate U.S. postage for mailing between the Department and final destination;
- (2) Be marked that they contain merchandise described above and are being returned to the United States; and
- (3) Be addressed to a manufacturing or retail outlet.

### **5 FAH-10 H-524.2 United States Postal Service (USPS) Restrictions**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

The USPS will not accept special service mail (registered, insured, etc.) for final delivery to the addressee by pouch. In some instances, postal clerks are not aware of the regulations and will accept special services mail. When this mail reaches the Washington, DC post office, it is usually returned by the USPS marked "Service Not Available." If these items slip through the USPS screening and arrive at the Department's pouch and mail facility, they will be accepted and pouched with no liability to the Department.

## **5 FAH-10 H-525 HOMEWARD BOUND MAIL SERVICE (HBMS)**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

a. Homeward Bound Mail Service (HBMS) is a private mail service to the United States that is available only at posts without APO/FPO facilities (Category B). Post participation is voluntary. Post Employee Associations must run this service on a voluntary basis at no cost to the government. This service is available to only U.S. citizen personnel who meet the following criteria:

(1) U.S. government employees recruited from outside the host country and their dependents;

(2) Personal service contractors recruited from outside the host country and their dependents and;

(3) TDY personnel with official orders who meet the criteria in (1) or (2) above.

b. Customers participate in this service at their own risks and neither the Employee Association nor the Embassy can accept responsibility for packages once they have left the premises.

c. Insured, registered or certified mail is not available. Priority mail is available for items weighing eleven ounces or more.

d. HBMS pouch material should not be intermingled with official pouch material.

### **5 FAH-10 H-525.1 Employee Association Responsibilities**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

Employee Associations at posts must obtain approval from A/OPR/ST/CR before implementing HBMS. They are also responsible for:

(1) Complying with 6 FAM 500 regulations regarding operating the employee association and the HBMS;

(2) Establishing procedures to collect payment from users of the service;

(3) Ensuring postal supplies are available;

(4) Determining frequency of shipments;

- (5) Establishing procedures to abide by USPS standards;
- (6) Protecting personal property; and
- (7) Reimbursing the post for the cost of the procured supplies and air freight.

## **5 FAH-10 H-525.2 IMO/IPO Responsibilities**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

The post IMO/IPO is responsible for:

- (1) Keeping HBMS pouches separate from post regular pouch service even though the HBMS pouches may be transported under the same air waybill as post regular pouches.
- (2) Closing HBMS pouches and devising an accounting system that separates the HBMS pieces and weight from official pouches.
- (3) Providing the HBMS data to the Employee Association manager and Budget and Fiscal Officer;
- (4) Ensuring that HBMS pouches contain invoices in numerical sequence with regular air pouch shipment series;
- (5) Ensuring that new shipments are listed on the ERS telegrams; and
- (6) Providing empty pouch bags for association. Official pouch material has priority when stock is low.

## **5 FAH-10 H-525.3 A/LM/PMP/DPM Responsibilities**

*(TL:PMH-6; 12-05-2002)*

DPM will:

- (1) Open and provide a receipt for HBMS pouches;
- (2) Introduce HBMS parcels into the USPS/Customs systems; and
- (3) Treat HBMS parcels as incoming mail for post if rejected by the USPS or Customs Service.

## **5 FAH-10 H-525.4 Mailing Procedures**

*(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)*

Persons wishing to use the HBMS service must follow the procedures listed below:

- (1) Make sure the service is available at the post;
- (2) Secure and wrap packages to avoid damage or loss and to facilitate proper handling;
- (3) Use the following return address clearly marked in the upper left corner:

(NAME OF SENDER)  
AMERICAN EMBASSY (NAME OF POST)  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20521-(4-DIGIT EXT.)

## **5 FAH-10 H-526 THROUGH H-529 UNASSIGNED**



# 5 FAH-10 H-523 Exhibit H-523.2-1 CHANGE OF ADDRESS

(TL:PMH-4; 01-30-1998)

## FRONT

Change of Address  
Request for:

Correspondents  
Publishers and  
Businesses

Please Type or Print

**NAME** *(Correspondent or Title of Publication)*

**ADDRESS** *(Street Number, Street Name and Apt. # if applicable)*

**CITY**                      **STATE**                      **ZIP + 4 CODE**

## BACK

As soon as you know your new address, mail this card to all of the people, businesses, and publications who send you mail.

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For publications, tape an old address label over name and old address sections and complete new address.

Your Name (Print or type, Last name, first name, middle initial.)

Old Address	No. & Street	Apt/Suite No.	PO Box	RR No.	Rural Box No.
	City	State	ZIP + 4		
New Address	No. & Street	Apt/Suite No.	PO Box	RR No.	Rural Box No.
	City	State	ZIP + 4		
Sign Here		Date new address in effect	Keyline No. (If any)		

PS Form 3576, November 1990 RECEIVER: Be sure to record the above new address.