

residential or other types of structures. The new standard was developed through a consensus process and was agreed to by a committee of representatives from mailbox manufacturers; mailbox distributors; mailbox installers and servicers; Postal Service customers; multi-unit residential and commercial property builders, owners, and managers; and the Postal Service™. In addition, *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM™) standards provide manufacturers and customers with notice of the specifications.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As justification for changes to Standard 4B, the Postal Service presented the committee with evidence of changing customer mailing habits and specific mail and package volume trends. Postal Service statistics indicate customers receive more mail and of varying sizes today than at the time of the last updated standard. A new standard would provide designed receptacles with increased protection for the mail, benefiting both senders and addressees; would improve the overall safety of the equipment in use; should reduce maintenance costs incurred by buildings; and would result in cleaner lobbies with less clutter. Finally, the newly designed receptacle would be easier to access and serve by carriers, thereby helping to reduce Postal Service costs.

In a proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* on April 21, 2004 [69 FR 21455], the Postal Service proposed to replace United States Postal Service Standard 4B, *Receptacles, Apartment House, Mail*, with a new standard, designated United States Postal Service Standard 4C, *Wall-Mounted Centralized Mail Receptacles*. The proposal also included new provisions in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) to provide manufacturers and customers notice of the new standard. The Postal Service received four comments. After thorough consideration of the issues raised in these comments, and for the reasons discussed below, the Postal Service adopts the rules as proposed.

As discussed in the proposal, a Postal Service Apartment Mailbox Consensus Committee, which included representatives of mailbox manufacturers; mailbox distributors; mailbox installers and servicers; Postal Service customers; multi-unit residential and commercial property builders, owners, and managers; and the Postal Service, developed the new standard through a consensus process.

The members of the committee met six times as an advisory group and negotiated among themselves and with the Postal Service to reach a consensus on a new standard. Committee members were selected for the purpose of, and accepted the responsibility for, representing other interested individuals and organizations that were not present at committee meetings and to keep them informed of the committee's proceedings. As part of the consensus process, the Postal Service agreed to use a recommendation by the committee as the basis of the revised standard.

Standard 4C represents the committee's recommendation. With one exception, each member of the committee signed the final agreement recommending adoption of this standard. That one committee member, a builders association, though supportive of the process and generally in concurrence with the new standard, declined to sign the agreement because a provision of the adopted standard establishes a minimum ratio of parcel lockers to customer compartments. This committee member stated its concerns in a comment submitted on the proposed rule, which the Postal Service will address with the other comments received.

The current standard, adopted in 1975, prescribes design limitations that are no longer consistent with the operational requirements of the Postal Service. The revised Standard 4C is consistent with the day-to-day use of the mail by Postal Service customers, addresses the operational needs of the Postal Service, and provides security for mail through improved design of the equipment. The previous standard was entitled *United States Postal Service Standard 4B, Receptacles, Apartment House, Mail*. The revised standard is entitled *United States Postal Standard 4C, Wall-Mounted Centralized Mail Receptacles*. The Postal Service made the change in the title solely to reflect that the standard applies to receptacles in a variety of residential and commercial buildings, and not only "apartments." The final rule does not result in any change in Postal Service policies concerning the purchase of this delivery equipment or the provision of delivery equipment for Postal Service customers previously in effect under Standard 4B.

The new standard does the following:

1. Creates a new form factor and increases the minimum size requirement to 12" w × 15" d × 3" h.
2. Introduces 12 suggested design types. **Note:** The allowable design types are not limited to these 12, which we

present only as possible compartment configurations.

3. Eliminates the vertical form factor (5" w × 6" d × 15" h) design. The letter carrier delivers mail into the receptacle through the top of the receptacle down into the customer compartment.

4. Introduces a parcel locker requirement based on a 1:10 parcel locker to customer compartment ratio.

5. Strengthens security requirements for the entire receptacle.

6. Standardizes and improves tenant compartment customer lock design.

7. Adds testing requirements to verify acceptability for either indoor or outdoor use.

8. Incorporates a preliminary review by Postal Service engineers intended to identify design discrepancies before manufacturers build prototypes and make tooling investments.

9. Allows manufacturers to submit their designs to approved independent laboratories for initial environmental and functional testing. The Postal Service will perform security tests.

10. Introduces quality management systems provisions.

11. Enhances design flexibility for concept, ergonomics, and materials.

12. Meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

13. Provides a progressive phase-in period to allow consumers to become aware of the new standard and include it in development plans.

Analysis of Comments

The Postal Service received four comments in response to the proposal. Two commenters, a building material supplier and a trade association of builders that was a member of the consensus committee, submitted comments.

The two individual commenters expressed a concern that the committee did not include any party representing the interests of individual apartment residents. However, in establishing the committee, the Postal Service attempted to assure representation of all interests. Before the selection of the committee, the Postal Service chose a facilitator who attempted to identify all interests and secure a suitable representative for each. The Postal Service also published a notice in the *Federal Register* and other publications announcing its intention to revise this mailbox standard, employing a negotiated rulemaking process, and identifying those whom it planned to invite. The notice encouraged any member of the public who believed he/she was not adequately represented to seek committee membership. The Postal Service received no applications by

representatives from the "general public". After the committee convened, the Postal Service and the committee facilitator continued to seek out representatives of apartment and condominium dwellers. Some apartment and condominium residents attended meetings and participated actively, but chose not to serve as committee members. Further, the Postal Service ensured that all committee meetings were open to the public, and that every individual who expressed any interest in wall-mounted centralized mail receptacles received notice of meetings and copies of all relevant documents in advance.

Moreover, even though none of the committee members directly represented apartment residents, members shared some of the substantive concerns expressed by the individual commenters. For example, building managers, owners, and builders shared the concern for affordable receptacles; and Postal Service customers shared the concern that the receptacles should be secure and large enough to allow mail delivery without damage.

Two commenters noted issues with retrofitting; *i.e.* replacement of receptacles that met the specifications in effect at the time of their installation with receptacles that meet the specifications in Standard 4C. The committee discussed retrofitting at length from the first meeting until near the midpoint of the meetings, at which time members reached consensus on how to address retrofitting concerns. These discussions generally contrasted the benefits of retrofitting against the costs of purchasing new receptacles and, in some cases, making structural alterations necessary to accommodate those boxes. Committee members also raised concerns involving building codes, waivers, historical buildings, and objective standards that might trigger a retrofitting requirement. The committee agreed that building owners and property managers might retrofit voluntarily; and that such voluntary retrofits might be encouraged. However, the new standard imposes no general retrofit requirement.

One commenter raised the concern that Postal Service officials might allow the use of non-Postal Service-approved mail receptacles. However, the standard did not change the general and longstanding requirement that, in order to receive delivery service, the Postal Service must approve the delivery equipment provided by the customer.

One commenter objected to the requirement that parcel lockers be provided. It questioned the Postal Service's authority to require the

installation of these receptacles and asserted the opinion that this requirement would give the Postal Service an advantage over other parcel delivery companies that cannot require buildings to provide such receptacles.

The Postal Service does not, of course, require its customers to provide receptacles. Rather, it establishes the type of equipment that customers, including multi-unit residential and commercial structures, must provide if they wish to receive postal delivery service. Moreover, the new standard does not invariably require the installation of parcel lockers when receptacles meeting the requirements of Standard 4C are installed. There are certain buildings that will be exempt from the requirement (*i.e.*, buildings with relatively few units). Moreover, to be exempt from the requirement, buildings may provide an alternative procedure for delivery of parcels.

The parcel locker requirement is consistent with the Postal Service's statutory responsibility to provide an efficient system for the delivery and collection of mail (39 U.S.C. 403(b)(1)). Although the receptacles are commonly called "parcel lockers," the Postal Service will use them for more than the delivery of parcels. For example, for delivering mail held pursuant to a customer's request during the period while a customer is absent, and for periodically delivering mail to customers whose volume exceeds the size of their assigned receptacle. Accordingly, they will be used for a broader variety of matter than that generally delivered by parcel delivery companies and will save the Postal Service the time and expense needed to attempt redelivery of mail, and customers the time and expense of trips to a Postal Service facility to retrieve mail that could not be delivered.

However, even if the parcel lockers were only used for parcels, the adoption of the parcel locker requirement would be fair. The commenter observed that the cost of the receptacles will ultimately be passed on by building owners to residents. Therefore, the residents would ultimately bear the costs of their mail delivery, which also seems fair. The alternative would be that the Postal Service incur the costs and pass them on to all customers, through postal rates, even though they may not be residents of multi-unit structures. Parcel delivery companies would also pass their costs on, through the rates they charge, to the specific customers that use their services rather than to all residents of the country.

Two commenters raised as an issue the changes in the size of the customer

compartment, coupled with the parcel locker requirement, and the resulting increase in the "footprint" for the equipment. The committee recognized that increased size would present challenges and create pressures on lobby size, architectural design, industry education, and construction costs. The committee debated these factors and reached compromises that address those concerns by allowing buildings currently under design, as well as buildings just beginning construction, time for approval of plans without requiring modifications. The committee established a timeline for

mandatory compliance in new construction, at 2 years from the publication of the final rule. This

timeline allows committee members and the Postal Service time to educate the public and members and employees of their respective organizations of the provisions of the Standard 4C.

Moreover, as briefly noted above, the standard does not require parcel lockers in buildings with less than 10 customer compartments, and establishes the parcel locker to customer compartment ratio at 1:10 in buildings with more than 10 customer compartments. The standard provides that postmasters shall consider and may excuse buildings from the need to provide parcel lockers if they have an agreement in place with the building owners or property managers that establishes an alternate parcel delivery service (*e.g.*, concierge service or acceptance at the building management office). The standard

allows flexibility in the location of parcel lockers (subject to local approval) if not fully integrated in the mail receptacle or if located adjacent to customer compartments. The standard also recognizes that some commercial and residential buildings provide receptacles for tenants that exceed the minimum size requirements and can accommodate parcels.

Commenters also addressed the potentially increased cost of new receptacles to property owners/managers and the possibility of property owners/managers passing these cost increases on to their tenants. The committee included manufacturers of apartment mailboxes who estimated increases in cost for materials, components, and tooling would vary between 15 and 30 percent over current costs depending on many factors including the size and abilities of the manufacturer, the materials and components they use to manufacture mail receptacles, and market conditions. One commenter questioned whether these estimates were accurate, although

cannot be moved. A limited loading shall be permitted on the end of the Arrow lock bolt only when the Arrow lock is used as an actuator to engage locking pins. In this case, the locking pin(s) shall secure the Arrow lock door to the master loading door frame. Only Arrow locks dimensioned in figure 13 shall be acceptable. The latching mechanism shall be rigid in design to avoid distortion. Locknuts shall be included for installing the Arrow lock. The master loading door(s) shall be easy to open, close, and lock. The carrier access shall not have pinch points or sharp edges. Clearance between the door and door opening shall be evenly spaced and consistent in size. The master loading doors shall be easily unlatched and opened using one hand. The latch mechanism may be mounted either on the unit frame or the master loading door. Clearance below the latch handle in either case shall be a minimum of 1.25 inches. When the carrier activates a master loading door latch mechanism mounted on the unit frame, the outer edge of the master loading door shall be automatically opened a minimum of 1 inch outside the door frame, enabling the carrier to easily grasp the door. When the latch mechanism is mounted on the unit frame, the handle must provide between 1.25 and 1.50 inches of grip length and a minimum of 1 square inch of surface area. When the carrier activates a master loading door latch mounted on the door, the latch handle may be used to pull the door open. When the latch mechanism is mounted on the door, the handle must provide a minimum of 1.75 inches of grip length. In any double master door design, when the master loading door with the Arrow lock traps, or locks the left master loading door, a push-out device shall not be required if the carrier can easily grasp and open the left door.

3.6.2 Rear Loader Designs—The master loading door for any rear loading units shall be in the form of a rear cover or door, which can be opened or removed and closed or replaced by the mail carrier, which will permit delivery of mail to each compartment. The cover or door shall prevent the mail from falling out between the cover or door and shelves, and be strong enough to prevent theft of the contents of adjoining receptacles by manually forcing the rear door or cover from the front of the receptacle through a compartment. The cover or door shall be capable of being latched or secured; locking is not required.

3.7 Customer and Parcel Compartment Sizes—Customer and

parcel compartment size requirements shall be as specified below.

3.7.1 Customer Compartment Sizes—The minimum interior dimensions of each customer delivery compartment shall be 3 inches high by 12 inches wide by 15 inches deep. Optional compartment heights, greater than the 3 inch minimum, shall be allowable, and mixed size customer compartments may be offered in any one unit. However, no combination shall preclude any of the critical installation requirements, or any other requirement, from being met. In addition, no compartment size shall be offered as “approved” that is larger than any Postal Service-tested and approved size for that particular manufacturer.

3.7.2 Parcel Compartment Sizes—The minimum interior dimensions of the parcel compartments shall be as follows:

- (a) Standard Parcel Locker—15 inches high by 12 inches wide by 15 inches deep
- (b) Large Parcel Locker—18 inches high by 12 inches wide by 15 inches deep

3.7.2.1 Parcel Locker to Customer Compartment Ratio—A minimum of one standard parcel locker shall be provided for every ten customer compartments. For installation sites with less than ten customer compartments, there shall be no mandatory parcel locker requirement, however, it shall be the intent of the Postal Service to strongly encourage the inclusion of a parcel locker.

3.8 Collection Mail and Carrier Access (front-loading designs only) Compartment—All units shall have one reinforced collection mail compartment. A mail deposit slot 10.75 inches wide by .75 inches high shall be provided with a weather shield and a security shield to protect the deposited mail from the rain and snow and to prevent removal of the mail by fishing and pilfering techniques through the deposit slot. This compartment shall not be numbered or lettered. The phrase “OUTGOING MAIL” shall be marked on the deposit slot shield in black, recessed lettering. Marking shall be permanent and lettering size shall be $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch high.

3.8.1 Front-Loading Designs—For front-loading designs, the front of the minimum-sized collection compartment shall consist of the carrier access (Arrow lock) door, as described in section 3.5.3, and the mail collection/deposit slot, which is framed by separate elements providing the weather and security shielding. The mail deposit slot frame design shall be hard mounted to the master door structure. Optional

outgoing mail compartment heights shall be allowable. Hard-mounted front blanking plates shall be used as required under the Arrow lock door for any larger collection mail compartment offerings. In addition, no offered outgoing mail compartment height shall preclude any of the critical installation requirements, or any other requirement, from being met, and no compartment size shall be offered that is larger than any fully tested size.

3.8.2 Rear-Loading Designs—For rear-loading designs, the front of the minimum-sized collection compartment shall consist of a blanking plate hard mounted to the master door structure and the mail collection/deposit slot, which is framed by separate elements providing the weather and security shielding. Optional outgoing mail compartment heights, requiring blanking plates larger than the minimum, shall be allowable. However, no offered outgoing mail compartment height shall preclude any of the critical installation requirements, or any other requirement, from being met. In addition, no compartment size shall be offered that is larger than any fully tested size.

3.9 Identification—Customer and compartment identifications shall be in the following manner.

3.9.1 Customer Compartment Identification—Customer compartment doors shall be identified using either numbers or letters, optionally, in sequence from top to bottom. For any double master door designs, the numbers or letters shall start from the upper left corner compartment. In addition, they shall be $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch high, sequential, black, and recessed. They may be engraved or stamped. Brushed aluminum decals with black numbering may be used, provided the decals are recessed in the door or a raised rib is provided around the decal to enhance the decal’s location and limit removal. Decals shall be secured using a permanent type of adhesive. Numbers shall be made with one decal and not a combination of two single letter or number decals. In the horizontal direction, the centerline of the numbers shall be to the right of the customer lock (top lock) centerline. In the vertical direction, the customer lock and the numbers shall be the same centerline.

3.9.2 Parcel Compartment Identification—Parcel compartment doors shall be provided with $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch high, sequential, black, recessed numbers. Numbers may be engraved or stamped. Brushed aluminum decals with black numbering may be used, provided they are recessed in the door or a raised rib is provided around the