

Royal Mail Mails Compliance Workbook 2024

Please note: This compliance training refers to Royal Mail and Parcelforce products and services only.

Introduction

Post Office works in partnership with Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide and other carriers to provide customers with an affordable, reliable and convenient way of sending mail to inland and international destinations. Mails transactions account for over half of all transactions completed in our branches. The mails market is more competitive than ever, so it's crucial now more than ever, that we give our customers a world-class service.

Customers will often come into your branch and ask for a particular mail product without fully understanding the range of options available to them. Your role is to help them to choose a service that matches their needs. It's not about selling premium services or charging them less than what **you** assume they may want to pay, it's about helping customers make informed choices and ensuring that their mail reaches its destination as expected.

It is important that the correct process is followed every single time when processing mail. When things go wrong, the way your customer feels about your branch changes, and this will drive them to use our competitors.

Objectives

By the end of this workbook, you will be able to recognise the correct processes to follow when accepting mail to ensure customers receive the correct service and a great experience. To achieve this, we will cover:

- Mails Integrity
- Processing mail accurately covering Quality data entry, Mails Segregation and Local Collect & Convenient Collect
- Mail Redirection Service

Once you have read this workbook, please log onto Horizon to complete the Mails Compliance test. The test is required for everyone who complete Mails transactions. Please make sure that this is successfully completed within the required time frame.

Please note: If you do not complete the training within the required time-frame, your Smart ID will be restricted, and you will not be able to access any Mails products through Horizon.

This workbook is also available in PDF format to read and print off. Go to Branch Hub and click the 'Training' tile <https://branchhub.postoffice.co.uk/bh>

Mails Integrity

Mails Integrity is a regulatory requirement and we should take all reasonable steps to make sure that letters and parcels are not lost, stolen, damaged or interfered with.

Anyone who has access to, or handles mail in any way, whether they work within or on behalf of Post Office Limited have a responsibility in keeping mail safe.

Protecting mail will ensure we prevent:

- Loss of business by having our ability to handle mail removed
- Any formal enforcement action, including prosecution and fines
- Customers from becoming dissatisfied and making complaints, leading to brand damage

Mails Integrity standards

When accepting mail in your branch, ensure:

- It is handled with care
- It is not opened whilst in your branch
- It is kept secure and out of reach of any member of the public
- It is safe from any risk of theft, loss or damage at all times
- It is transferred in a timely manner to the Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide, or other carrier collection officer

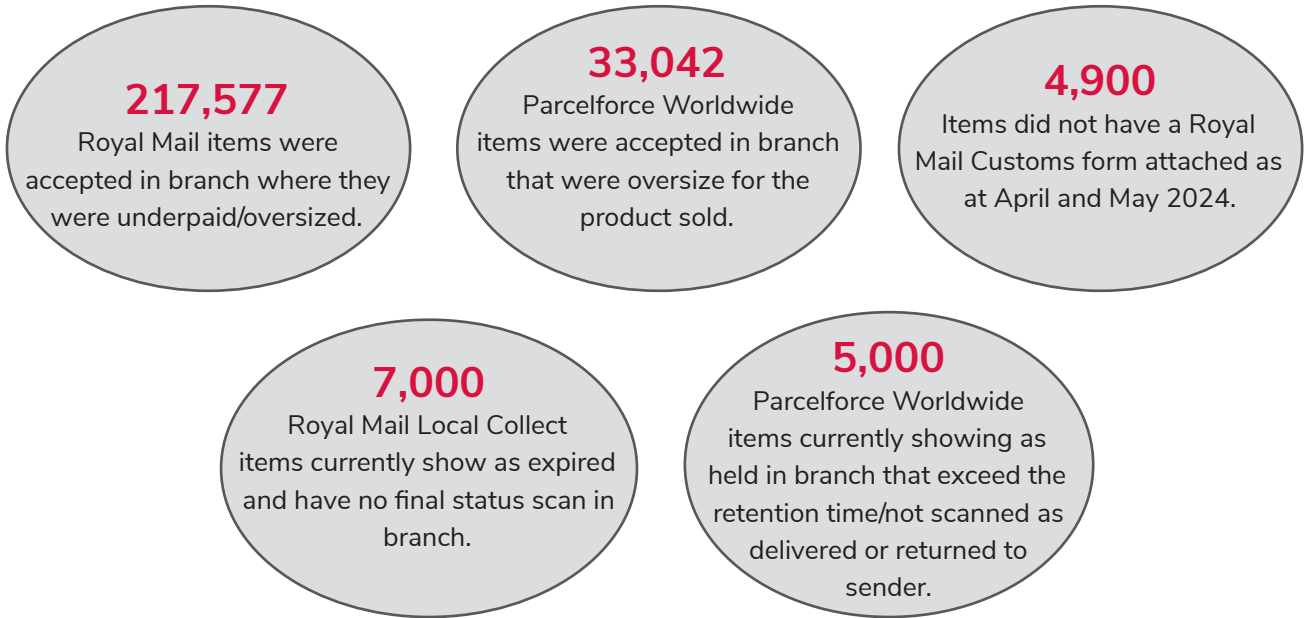
Mail storage

Store all mail items in the Post Office secure area or in a controlled area at all times to prevent public or unauthorised access until they are handed over to the Royal Mail, Parcelforce Worldwide, or other carrier collection officer.

It is important to make sure that mail being sent by other carriers are kept separate from each other so they go to the right place.

Should there be an incident involving theft, loss, interference or damage to mail held in your branch, report this to Grapevine.

Did you know?



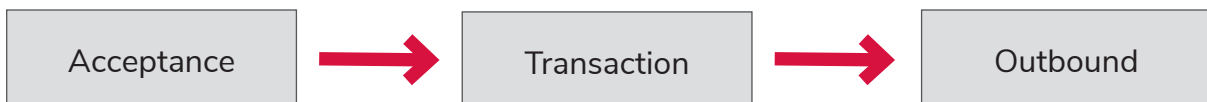
These figures have been provided by Royal Mail.

Simple mistakes whilst processing mail can lead to delays for customers leading to complaints and this also leads to a reduction in income for all of us.

We want you to be able to confidently sell and process the complete range of mails products and services, in the right way every time, for every customer.

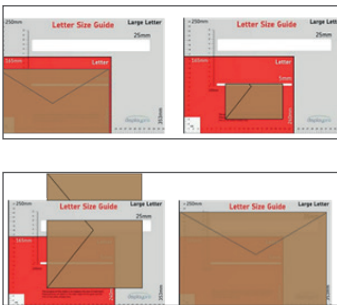
There is a lot of support material available to you to help you to achieve this and you will be signposted to support material along the way. In this workbook, we will cover some key things that you need to remember to ensure the correct process is followed when completing Mails transactions.

We will use the 3 step process **Acceptance - Transaction - Outbound** to remind you of the areas that need particular attention as we are failing on them consistently as indicated by mystery shops and data from Royal Mail. It's important that customers get the best experience and service we can provide.



Processing mail accurately

1. Acceptance



Check format and weight

You need to check the size and weight of every item to identify the correct format. This ensures the customer is charged correctly for the item they are sending and that the item won't be delayed in reaching its final destination.

To help your customers understand this, for Letter/Large Letter, you can demonstrate how it is measured using the template. Remind them that the item needs to fit within the red section or pass through the slot without forcing it through.

If you undercharge for an item, it can be delayed, as it will be pulled out of the sorting machine to be checked manually. It may help to explain to your customer that undercharging can cause the item to be delayed and the receiver may incur a fee.

Royal Mail charge us for underpaid items accepted in branch. Undercharging causes income, customer experience and service issues.

For parcels

- Always use the Royal Mail Small Parcel size guide box to check if inland mail item is a small parcel
- If a mail item doesn't fit in the Small Parcel size guide box, use a tape measure to check the size
- Do not put tubes/rolls diagonally in a small parcel box, use a tape measure

You can find all of the formats, sizes and weights in the 'Our prices' guide from Royal Mail and Parcelforce Worldwide - keep these at the counter as well as a tape measure. If customers are questioning the price of an item, they can check for themselves using this guide. Do not guess!

Packaging, wrapping & labels

There are certain items that need to be packaged more carefully before sending through the post. Make sure your customers follow the guidelines as it will ensure that eligibility for them to claim compensation isn't affected if the item doesn't arrive as expected.

Customers should be presenting items that can arrive at the destination safely and intact. They should use adequate and suitable internal and external packaging to protect the contents. This may include using boxes for heavier and larger items.

Where packaging has been reused, any old barcode labels and addresses should be covered or removed as this may cause confusion and delay during transit.

Top Tips

- For guidance on packaging, customers can visit the [Royal Mail](#) and [Parcelforce Worldwide](#) websites
- Packaging requirements for Prohibited and Restricted items, can be found on the Royal Mail website or the Prohibited and Restricted Items leaflet available in branch

2. Transaction

Quality data entry

In order for Royal Mail to deliver a parcel or letter successfully, the correct address and postcode is needed.

Always check the postcode and address you have entered on Horizon matches the address and postcode on the item. If it's sent to the wrong address, there will be a delay in the recipient getting the mail as it will have to be re-sorted.

Royal Mail sort parcels using the 2D barcode on the postage label. The barcode relays information input into Horizon. Sometimes we might make mistakes and often it can be difficult to read someone else's handwriting. If in doubt, ask the customer to confirm the details to you verbally.

Customs Declaration

All goods including gifts being sent abroad are subject to customs regulations and restrictions. Items with missing or incomplete forms may be returned to the sender or be delayed. You should only accept items with fully completed forms. The forms are scanned by optical character recognition, so it is important that they are filled in legibly, in English and in BLOCK CAPITALS.

There are two types of customs forms for goods sent abroad via Royal Mail: CN22 (goods up to the value of £270) and CN23 (goods with a value of more than £270). Please do not accept items unless all the relevant fields are completed.

The sender needs to complete the customs form and attach it to the front of the mail item. All international items that contain goods including Large Letter formats (except those from Northern Ireland to EU) need to have both a normal written customs form, as well as an electronic data capture requirement. The data capture is entered into Horizon at the time of processing.

After you have printed the postage label for an international item, the customs data capture process will launch on Horizon. Follow the Horizon prompts to input data accurately from the completed customs form.

Please note: The sender is legally responsible for the information on the customs declaration, so it's important to ensure that it is accurate and complete.

Royal Mail cannot despatch any parcels overseas to selected destinations where a customs form is missing. Royal Mail will return the item to the sending customer so they can send it again with the correct customs declaration attached, ensuring successful delivery of their parcel.

Top Tips

- Include the senders address on the reverse of the item so that the item can be returned in the event of non-delivery
- For parcels, include the addressee's telephone number to assist in delivery
- For further information, refer to the Royal Mail International Mails module available on Branch Hub or on Horizon Help

Please note: Customers can complete customs information in advance to save time in branch, on the Royal Mail or Post Office website. A QR code is produced to present at the counter. When this is scanned in branch, a label is produced. This label should be printed and affixed to the item next to the delivery address.

3. Outbound



Refer to the indicia on the postage labels, as highlighted in the red circle below, to check which bag the items should go in.



Mail segregation

Once you have accepted mail in branch, it needs to be placed into the designated bags or kept in a separate place. You should display the corresponding mail laminates above each mail bag in the following order:

1st Class Parcels > Letter/Large Letter > 2nd Class Parcels > keep separate

This is to avoid 1st and 2nd Class Parcels falling into neighbouring parcel bags and you are more likely to notice a parcel in the Letter/Large Letter bag.

Look at the indicia on the postage label, and check that you are placing the item in the correct bag.

Whilst the focus is on Letter/Large Letter, there are still some common errors across all three, such as not labelling the bag. Mail bags need to be tied around the neck with an appropriate bag label and cable tie (as shown in the image on the left), ready to be presented to the collection officer. Care must be taken to ensure the cable tie is tucked in to prevent injuries to the eye.

Keep separate

Refer to the 'Keep Separate' laminate to help you identify which items do not go into any of the other three bags.

Most Account Mail (PPI) should be presented by the customer in a sealed bag with a sales order for you to scan into Horizon (which should be kept separate and handed over to Royal Mail).

Remember - Loose Priority PPI mail should be segregated in to the Priority Mail bag.

Customer experience

Mails Segregation is essential, it ensures that you provide the best service possible for your customers. If a customer pays for a parcel to be sent 1st Class and it is placed in the incorrect mail bag, this will delay the item for the recipient and the customer won't receive the service they paid for.

Royal Mail carry out mail sampling at their mail centres and report the performance back to Post Office. Royal Mail can levy multimillion-pound penalties each year against Post Office for branches not meeting the required standard. The target to achieve mail segregation is 95% for each bag. When segregation checks take place, the person checks **all** items in the bags. If there is one or more Small Parcels in the Letter/Large Letter bag, this causes quality of service failure, customer dissatisfaction and customer complaints.

Mails Despatch Report

Before your mail items are collected, you need to print a Despatch Report for both Royal Mail and Parcelforce. Check the number of items you have, against the report and make sure it matches, then 'cut off' on Horizon ready for your mail to be collected. Refer to section 10 'End of Day Activities' in the Operational Training Guide for further information.

Top Tips

- Sample your bags regularly to ensure they are correct. Discuss any issues with your staff and come up with a plan to prevent further errors in mail segregation
- Order a Foamex Letter/Large Letter sizing template (MISC1793) for a drop bag frame to help with correct segregation

Real life errors when processing mail

The journey to getting the customers' item delivered on time and to the correct destination starts with you! The process below is simple - it's about paying attention to the customer and the item in front of you.

1. Add the delivery address information from the item into Horizon.

Horizon is set to check that the postcode is valid but problems can arise when a valid format is used but an incorrect letter or number is mistyped during entry on Horizon.

2. This data is captured within the 2D barcode printed from Horizon.

3. The delivery postcode and address information generated is electronically sent to Royal Mail Group on the day.

4. This data supplied is used to route items to the appropriate delivery office at every scanning point through the network.

5. Errors made when you input the information into Horizon can then lead to items being misrouted to the wrong destination.

For International destinations, the Country added is used to route items to flights, therefore, choosing and adding the correct country is crucial.

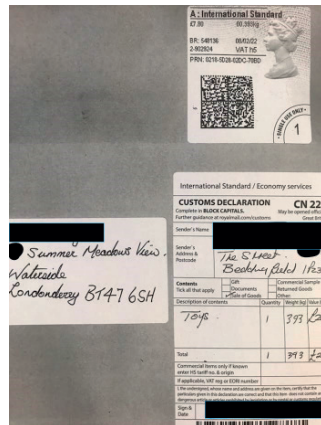


Inland Mail processing error

The postcode was input as B50 4DX and sent to Bristol. The Postcode should be B5U 4DX as per the address on the item and sent to Birmingham.

Impact on the customer and recipient - The item has not reached the intended destination leading to customer and/or recipient dissatisfaction. The customer has not received the service they have paid for.

What can you do differently? - While inputting the details onto Horizon, read the full address back to the customer and confirm if it is correct.



Northern Ireland Vs Republic of Ireland (ROI)

These items are destined for Northern Ireland which is an Inland destination. However, they have been sold as International Standard service.

Impact on the customer and recipient - The customers have been overcharged and the items delayed. The customer is out of pocket and they haven't received the service they had hoped for, leading to customer dissatisfaction.

What can you do differently? - **Remember:** If there is a postcode starting with BT, this is likely to be Northern Ireland (Inland destination).

Local Collect & Convenient Collect

1. Acceptance

These services offer customers sending items and recipients a convenient and secure place to collect their mail. They can track their items and collect at a time that suits them if you have processed the item in branch correctly.

Collect items are delivered by the carrier to the branch. All items should be scanned into Horizon straight away. If you are busy, make sure you scan the item within two hours. This scan generates a collection notification that is sent to the customer, and if they collect it quickly, it will free up valuable space in your branch.

Make sure you store the items securely in a dedicated area which is separate from other mail items. Having them in date order or by customer name will help to locate the item easier when the customer comes in to collect.

2. Transaction

When the customer collects the item, check their ID/Age as appropriate.

Age Verification items can only be collected by recipients aged over 18 years:

- If the person collecting the item is clearly not aged over 25 years, you need to check their age on their ID document to make sure they are over 18 years old
- A valid in-date passport or driving licence are the only acceptable forms of ID
- It is preferable, but not essential, for the named recipient to collect the item

Addressee ID Verification items can only be collected by the person who is named as the recipient on the item label. (Refer to the Operational Training Guide - Section 6 for acceptable addressee ID verification).

As with all collections complete an 'Alternative Collection Service Card' (P5769), completing all fields. This needs to be signed by the person collecting the item. Alternative Collection Service cards should be retained in branch for two years.

3. Outbound

Make sure the item is scanned out when the customer comes in to collect. Your branch will not receive income for the item unless it is scanned in and out, so you are storing and handling an item for free if you do not follow the process - don't work for free!

If the item is not collected, you need to return the item.

- Any Royal Mail item that has not been collected after 18 days should be scanned out and returned to Royal Mail
- Any Parcelforce Worldwide item that has not been collected after 16 days should be scanned out and returned to Parcelforce Worldwide

Failure to follow the procedure of returning the item within the time limits will result in a delay in the customer receiving their refund and creates unnecessary customer enquiries.

Top Tip

- To keep track of all items held in your branch, print a **Status Report** regularly to identify items that have exceeded their retention period. Follow the returns procedure for these items. This will help you to manage space and prevent too many items being held

Royal Mail Redirection Service

Redirection form completion is crucial to making sure customers mail moves with them. Post Office has a service level agreement of 97% for processing the forms correctly and the current performance is 92% year to date. There are financial implications if we do not achieve our target, but there is also an impact on our customers. Checking and processing the forms correctly means that customers won't miss important documents, and can prevent their details falling into the wrong hands and becoming a victim of fraud. It is therefore important to ensure that our customers receive the service they have paid for in a timely manner.

1. Acceptance

The Redirection form should be checked for accuracy. Any errors have to be followed up by Royal Mail with the customer directly, which may delay the start of their service.

- Your first task is to check that the customer has used the correct form and completed the eight customer sections on the form accurately and in full
- **Check that the customer has ticked one proof of name and one proof of address from the list on the form, and that the original documents have been seen by yourself**

2. Transaction

- **Horizon** - Record the information from the Redirection form on Horizon
- **Redirection Form** - Go through and tick the 'branch use only' checklist to confirm you have checked all sections of the form. This section needs to be completed in full so that Royal Mail are aware that you have checked the full form, seen the customers ID and that they have paid the correct fee.

3. Outbound

- Despatch the form to Royal Mail on the day it is processed using the correct envelope. Advise the customer that it will take a minimum of 5 working days (from date of receipt by Royal Mail) to set up their Redirection.

Top Tips

- Refresh your knowledge by going back to the Royal Mail Redirection module which is available on Branch Hub
- Understanding the areas where we are failing as a business will help you to be more aware of the issues and you will be more conscious about getting it right the first time. Review the table below with the most common errors listed

Common errors

There is a valid reason for every section on the Redirection form. There are consequences and impacts the customer when the form is not completed correctly, adding more stress to an already stressful time during a move. Take a look at the four most common errors, and what you can do to get it right.

Common customer errors	Get it right!
Missing information on application form, i.e., start date, duration, names and addresses.	Royal Mail cannot guess if information is missing. They need to know who they are redirecting the mail for, how long customers want their mail redirected and when to start. Double check the start date, as missing this is the worst offending error. Royal Mail requires at least five working days from the receipt of the application (excluding any bank/public holidays) to carry out security checks and to put the Redirection in place.
Common branch errors	Get it right!
Fee paid missing or incorrect fee paid in the branch use only section of the form.	Royal Mail need to know that the service requested has been correctly paid for. The correct fee also confirms the length of time the service is required. This is entered onto Horizon, but it still has to be entered on the form.
ID documentation seen at Post Office branch is not listed or missing	Make sure the customer has fully completed section 8 on the form and presents you with the correct documents that they have selected on it. You need to verify the documents are valid and acceptable. Royal Mail may not be able to set up a redirection if proof of ID and address from the list on the form has not been verified by yourself. This prevents any fraudulent transactions.
Branch code and/or date stamp on form missing	If there is an issue with the form, Royal Mail may need to contact the branch that processed the form, the date stamp is not always clear so the branch code is all they have to go by. Both are essential so they know the application was processed in branch.

Errors on forms or missing information leads to a delay in setting up the redirection, causing customer upset, inconvenience and stress at an already hectic time.

Taking the Mails Compliance test

Now that you have read through this workbook, you are equipped with the knowledge to complete your Mails Compliance test. The pass mark is 100% and you can have as many attempts as you need to achieve this result.

Successful completion of the test will confirm you understand your key responsibilities in relation to Mails Compliance.

Completing the test on Horizon

Your individual Smart ID is linked to your training records. If you don't complete the training and pass the test within the time frame it is available on Horizon, you will not be able to process mails items on Horizon.

Once you have logged onto Horizon, follow the steps below.

From the Home Screen, select:

- [F5] Licences and Government
- [F2] Compliance
- [22] Compliance Tests
- Select 'Mails'

Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the test:

1. Confirm that you are the correct user ID displayed on Horizon.
2. Confirm that what you are about to perform, is the 'Mails' compliance test in accordance with the associated course.
3. Enter your surname, forename, initial(s) and select title.
4. Select the correct Position in Branch button, before continuing with the test.

Directly Managed Branch Managers will need to complete the training and test on SuccessFactors Learning.

If you are in charge and the Postmaster is absent, please press the 'Officer in Charge' button.

If any colleagues are absent during the test window, they need to complete the training and take the test before resuming work.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you and all your team members (including any temporary or holiday relief colleagues), have completed the course and passed the test themselves. You also need to ensure that any new colleagues who join during the next 12 months receive the training and pass the test before starting their duties.

Further support or advice

If you have any questions or need further support, there are many resources available to you:

1. If you have any questions about the training, or need further support, contact the Branch Support Centre.
2. For further information on Mails Compliance processes and procedures, visit Horizon Help.