

Safety first

No evidence virus spread through mail, packages

April 6 at 1:47 p.m.



USPS, an essential public service, is continuing mail delivery and other normal operations during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Postal Service is sharing guidance from public health organizations and other authorities that have stated there's no evidence the coronavirus is spread through the mail.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the virus is spread through respiratory droplets, and there is currently no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 with package shipments.

"In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures," CDC *states* on its website.

In a frequently asked questions [section](#) on its website, the World Health Organization (WHO) addresses concerns about the safety of receiving packages from areas where COVID-19 has been reported.

"The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low," WHO states.

Surgeon General Jerome Adams has also weighed in. "There is no evidence right now that the coronavirus can be spread through mail," he said recently.

Additionally, during a television interview last week, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, spoke about the likelihood of the coronavirus being transmitted through things like mail and package delivery.

"I don't think we need to get completely obsessed about packages that come in because those types of surfaces — the virus might live there for a very short time," Fauci said. "But people say, 'Should I get a package from a grocery store that says made in China?' I wouldn't worry about that. That's not the issue."

Strictly confidential

USPS protects employee health information

April 6 at 12:20 p.m.

The Postal Service wants employees to know that the organization keeps their health information confidential. This includes employees who contract COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The Rehabilitation Act and the Privacy Act, two federal laws, require agencies to keep specific employee medical information confidential and to share it only in very limited circumstances with individuals legally entitled to know.

USPS will inform employees if someone in their workplace is confirmed to have COVID-19, but the organization will not identify the individual by name.

The Postal Service also works closely with local public health departments and the organization's own occupational health nurse administrators to identify anyone who has been in close contact with the individual to help them assess their health risk.

Otherwise, USPS cannot share with employees the name or medical condition of any employee, including those who tested positive for COVID-19.

The Postal Service is providing this information to employees through stand-up talks and reminding workers that the best defense against COVID-19 and other illnesses is [good personal hygiene](#), including [washing your hands](#) regularly for at least 20 seconds.

The COVID-19 [Blue](#) and [LiteBlue](#) pages have additional resources for employees.



Under federal law, USPS and other agencies are required to keep specific employee medical information confidential and to share it only in very limited circumstances.

Beautiful and strange

Video shows Wild Orchids stamp event

April 6 at 11:18 a.m.



The Postal Service shares highlights from the recent Wild Orchids stamp dedication ceremony in a [new video](#).

"Orchids are beautiful but strange critters," Jim Fowler, the photographer whose images appear on the stamps, says in the video, explaining how some orchids require fungi to germinate.

Part of the largest family of plants on Earth, wild orchids grow in many climates under a variety of conditions.

The stamps *feature images of several species* and are available in booklets of 20 and coils of 3,000 and 10,000.

The ceremony was *held Feb. 21* in Coral Gables, FL.

News Briefs

Employee honored

Area newsletter also highlighted

April 6 at 11:02 a.m.

Purchasing power. The General Services Administration (GSA) recently recognized Nancy Croteau-Westcott, a purchase card coordinator in the Postal Service's Purchasing Shared Service Center, for her efforts to help USPS save money.

During the previous fiscal year, the Postal Service had 323 purchase card convenience check accounts and issued more than 950 checks to suppliers, resulting in \$5,397 in check fees.

Croteau-Westcott worked with USPS suppliers to increase the acceptance of purchase cards, which reduced the number of purchase card convenience check accounts to six.

"Nancy's commitment to helping USPS reduce its convenience check usage has resulted in significant cost savings and better card management practices," said Erin VanDagna, branch chief of GSA's Center for Charge Card Management.

Croteau-Westcott, who serves as the primary agency program coordinator for the USPS Purchase Card Program, was featured in the spring edition of GSA's SmartPay 3 News Bulletin.

Pacific press. The Postal Service recently mailed Pacific Area Update's latest issue to employees in the area.

This edition, which is also available on *Blue* and *LiteBlue*, features articles about employee sales leads, workplace engagement programs and more.

Got news? Email your submissions to uspslink@usps.gov.



Nancy Croteau-Westcott, a purchase card coordinator, helped USPS reduce its number of purchase card convenience check accounts from 323 to six.

Archives

ABOUT THE BUSINESS

Archives



Making it easy

Click-N-Ship offers convenience for customers

Today

Making it easy

Click-N-Ship offers convenience for customers

Today at 11:01 a.m.

In a time when the nation's commerce is increasingly moving online, the USPS Click-N-Ship service makes it easy for customers to send packages from their home or office.

To use Click-N-Ship, customers must *set up a free usps.com account*, which they can use to make labels for their packages.

For each label, the customer must enter the package's ship-to address and weight. If the customer isn't sure what the package weighs, he or she can order free Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes online — and if it fits, it ships at a low flat rate.

USPS delivers the boxes to customers, usually within 7-10 business days.

For peace of mind, the Postal Service includes tracking capabilities, and \$50 of insurance comes free with most Priority Mail shipments, but customers can add more along with Delivery Instructions and other Extra Services.

Customers who ship internationally or to someone in the military can complete the customs forms online.

And if customers want to save time on future transactions, they can set preferences for the types of packages they ship the most, the tracking updates they'll get after a package is en route, and how the Postal Service notifies the package recipients.

Once the customer has printed a label, he or she can use usps.com to schedule a free Package Pickup — another service that helps the organization serve the growing package market.

HEROES' CORNER

Archives



Telltale signs

Employee's concern leads to customer's rescue

🕒 April 6

Telltale signs

Employee's concern leads to customer's rescue

April 6 at midnight

McKeesport, PA, Carrier Technician Ross Trunzo was recently delivering mail when he grew concerned about an older customer.

The woman's mail was piling up over several days, and Trunzo had not seen her sitting on her porch as usual.

The Postal Service employee notified a next-door neighbor, who contacted the woman's family.

The customer was soon found stranded in her bathtub, where she'd fallen, and paramedics were dispatched to the scene to take her to a hospital.

A family member later mailed a note of appreciation to the local Post Office, mentioning that assisted-living arrangements for the woman were being pursued.

"God bless you," the family member wrote. "Thank you for all you do."

BEST PRACTICES

Archives



Growing the business

Employee offers tips on finding sales leads

🕒 April 6

Growing the business

Employee offers tips on finding sales leads

April 6 at 11:53 a.m.

Ashley Ortiz never misses an opportunity to help USPS grow its business.

The Derry, NH, letter carrier particularly enjoys finding sales leads, which she submits through the Customer Connect program.

"I have just enough life experience that I can connect with a lot of people," she says.

The Postal Service wants all employees to follow Ortiz's example.

The organization is conducting Race for a \$Billion, a campaign to generate \$1 billion in estimated revenue through employee-provided leads before the current fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

To help other employees find leads, Ortiz follows these tips:

- **Know how to find leads.** One example: While on her lunch break at a restaurant in her community, Ortiz learned from a cashier that he was running a T-shirt business out of his home.

She told him that she could arrange for someone from USPS to give him a call to discuss his mailing and shipping options. Next, she took down his contact information and submitted it through Customer Connect — a process that eventually led to the man agreeing to ship his shirts through the Postal Service, generating \$55,000 in estimated revenue for the organization.

- **Know the Postal Service's offerings.** Educate yourself on shipping products like Priority Mail, as well as services like Every Door Direct Mail.
- **Know how to participate.** It also helps to be familiar with the differences between the Postal Service's various lead programs.

In addition to Customer Connect, the letter carrier-oriented program that Ortiz uses to submit her leads, USPS offers Clerks Care (for retail associates and distribution and machine clerks), Mail Handlers (for mail handlers), Rural Reach (for rural carriers) and Submit a Lead (for everyone else, including Executive and Administrative Schedule employees).

The bottom line, Ortiz says, is you have to be willing to talk to potential customers.

"I talk to everybody all the time," she says.



All parts, great and small

Employee keeps postal vehicles moving

🕒 April 3

All parts, great and small

Employee keeps postal vehicles moving

April 3 at 10:21 a.m.

My name is John Dickey and I'm an auto parts storekeeper at the USPS Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Merrifield, VA. I help supply parts for every postal vehicle in the local fleet.

We have about 15 people in my department, including contractors. We all stay busy servicing about 1,400 vehicles. This facility is huge. We have 10 work bays.

We don't want vehicles down for repair. That's a big no-no. If a vehicle breaks down, we immediately work to get it repaired. Vehicle safety is very important, so if parts need to be changed, we change them. We change engines and transmissions, too.

My workday starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. The first thing I do is check to see what outstanding orders are left, then purchase them through the postal procurement system. I can't buy a pen without certain approvals. There's a lot of paperwork.

It's all pretty fast-paced. It feels like once I get here, by the time I look up, it's time to go home.

I've been with the Postal Service since 1985. Previously, I drove a school bus in Washington, DC. My friend, a letter carrier, told me USPS was hiring. I took the test and started as a truck driver. Later, I worked as a tire repairman. I did that for about 20 years. I loved it.

When I'm not on the job, I like to work around my house and in my yard. My three kids are all grown now. I have seven grandkids. I'm thinking about retiring. I can retire anytime I want, but I don't plan to do it for a few more years.

At the end of the day, everything we do is about getting the mail to the customer. My job contributes to that. Without us getting these vehicles ready to go, customers won't get their mail.

I can't complain one bit about anything. I'm honestly grateful to have to this job. I love the logistics, but some days, man, I would love to be back out on the floor just changing tires.

THE LIST



Maine man

5 facts about artist Edward Hopper

🕒 Today

Maine man

5 facts about artist Edward Hopper

Today at 10:43 a.m.

The Maine Statehood Forever stamp, *featuring* Edward Hopper's "Sea at Ogunquit" painting, was released March 15. Here are five facts about the artist (1882-1967).

1. Hopper studied at the New York School of Art and Design. While at the school, which later became the Parsons School of Design, he was influenced by the works of the French impressionists Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas. Hopper also traveled to Paris

three times between 1906 and 1910 to study art.

2. Hopper would leave New York City during the summer to escape the heat. Initially, he would travel to the Massachusetts coast, where he started painting outdoor scenes, before making Maine his regular destination.

3. Hopper spent nine summers in Maine. He traveled to the state for the season for the first time in 1914 and continued until 1929. During these years, he painted scenes of the Maine coast, using oil and watercolors.

4. "Sea at Ogunquit" is now part of the Whitney Museum of American Art's collection. The oil-on-canvas painting was donated to the New York City *museum* by Hopper's wife, Josephine.

5. One of Hopper's paintings, "Chop Suey," was sold at auction in 2018 for \$92 million. He created 366 paintings during his lifetime and his works can be found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the High Museum of Art, among others, as well as in private collections.

MAILBAG

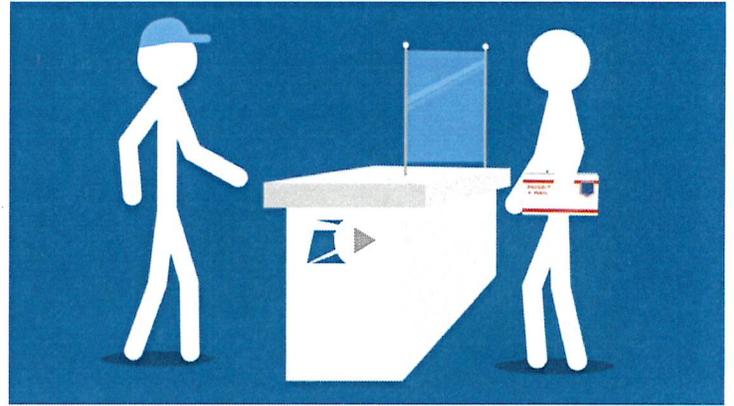
What do you think?:

Link wants to hear your thoughts about "Steadfast service" and other stories about the coronavirus pandemic. Email your feedback to uspslink@usps.gov. Your comments could be featured in "Mailbag."

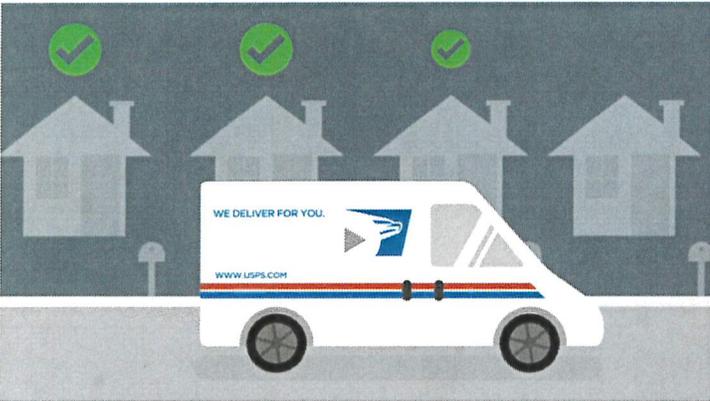
LATEST VIDEOS



'Wild Orchids'
April 6



'Help Us Serve You: Post Offices'
April 2



'Help Us Serve You: Mail Carriers'
April 1



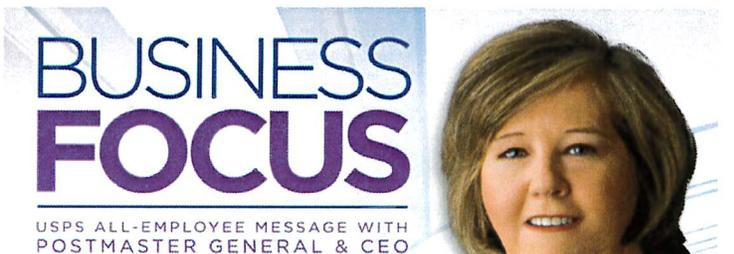
'Fight Germs: Wash Your Hands!'
March 18



'Gwen Ifill'
March 13



'Made of Hearts'
March 12





'Year of the Rat'
March 11

MEGAN BRENN



'Business Focus: Special Edition'
March 9