

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Mail Management
Purpose:	The purposes of this Directive and Standard (D&S) are to provide the requirements for properly handling incoming and outgoing mail. The benefits of this D&S are to ensure that mail service throughout the Bureau of Reclamation is expedient, dependable, accurate, cost effective, secure, safe, and processed in accordance with General Services Administration (GSA), United States Department of the Interior, and United States Postal Service (USPS) regulations.
Authority:	41 CFR 102-192, <i>Mail Management</i> ; 39 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), <i>Postal Service</i> ; Federal Property Management Regulations, Subchapter A, 101-9, <i>Federal Mail Management</i> ; USPS <i>Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)</i> ; <i>International Mail Manual (IMM)</i> ; the GSA Mail Communications Policy Office, <i>Mail Center Security Guide</i> ; and 382 DM 2, <i>Mail Management</i> .
Approving Official:	Director, Mission Support Organization (MSO)
Contact:	Mission Support Organization (84-27000)

1. **Introduction.** Mail facilities located throughout Reclamation send and receive official mail through the use of the (USPS) and private carriers. These mail facilities also distribute official mail and packages to Reclamation employees at official duty stations.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to all Reclamation mail managers and mailroom personnel, as well as employees and contractors who work in or use mail facilities.
3. **Definitions.**
 - A. **Agency Code.** The three-digit code that identifies each Federal agency authorized to use penalty mail.
 - B. **Distribution Center.** An office that does not pay for postal services and only distributes mail received from the mailroom personnel.
 - C. **Large Facility.** An office that pays for postal services and has three or more people processing incoming and outgoing mail (e.g., date stamped upon receipt and administering postage).
 - D. **Mail Management.** The concepts and practices of management techniques applied to mail to ensure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Mail management includes policies, standards, and responsibilities encompassing mail preparation and handling;

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mail movement; mail operations staff and facilities; operational relations with the USPS; and the monitoring and evaluation of mail operations for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and directives.

- E. **Negotiable Instruments.** Transferable document (e.g., a bank note, check, draft or money order) containing an unconditional promise or order to pay a specified amount to its holder upon demand or at a specified time. In the U.S., the Uniform Commercial Code governs negotiable instruments.
 - F. **Official Mail.** Letters, books, reports, maps, drawings, or other materials relating exclusively to the business of the U.S. Government.
 - G. **Penalty Mail.** Official mail, sent by U.S. Government agencies, relating solely to the business of the U.S. Government, which is authorized by law to be transmitted in the mail without prepayment of postage. The name comes from the endorsement: "Penalty for Private Use."
 - H. **Business Reply Mail.** Pre-addressed reply postcard, envelop, or carton that can be mailed free by the responder.
 - I. **Small Facility.** An office that pays for postal services and has one or two people processing incoming and outgoing mail (e.g., date stamped upon receipt and administers postage).
 - J. **Suspicious Package.** A parcel or letter is considered suspicious when it has more than one of the following characteristics: strange return address or none at all; unusual weight given its size, lopsided or oddly shaped; excessive postage; odor, discoloration or oily stains; marked with restrictions, such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do Not X-Ray;" an unusual amount of tape; and/or handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no names, or misspellings of common words.
4. **Responsibilities.**
- A. **Mission Support Organization or MSO.** The Reclamation Property Policy Section (RPPS) has the responsibility to provide mail management requirements and assistance, including the development and issuance of Reclamation-wide standards.
 - B. **Bureau Mail Manager.** The Bureau Mail Manager has the responsibility of establishing and maintaining an effective mail management and operations program, updating this D&S based on organizational requirements and updated security requirements, assessments, and fulfilling all Reclamation-wide reporting requirements (including reportable incidents).

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- C. **Regional Mail Managers.** Regional mail managers have the responsibility of implementing this D&S at the region and local office level, as well as overseeing operations in regional mail facilities and providing oversight of area and field office mail facilities. These operations include: ensuring mailroom safety and security; receiving, processing, and distributing official mail; and following mail management standards and requirements.
 - D. **Employees and Contractors.** Employees and contractors are responsible for following the requirements outlined in this D&S for mail management.
5. **Official Mail.** Reclamation mail facilities will transmit official mail at government expense through facilities provided by the USPS or other authorized carriers.
- A. **Letter.** A mail processing category that consists of letters and cards meeting minimum size standards and not exceeding the maximum letter size mail dimensions of 11 ½ inches long, 6 ½ inches high, and ¼ inch thick.¹
 - B. **Flat-Size Mail.** A mail piece that exceeds one of the dimensions for letter-size mail but that does not exceed the maximum dimension for the mail processing category (15 inches long, 12 inches high, and ¾ inch thick). Flat-size mail must be rectangular with four square corners or with finished corners that do not exceed a radius of 1/8 inch. Flat-size mail must also be flexible. Flat-size mail may be unwrapped, sleeved, wrapped, or enveloped.¹
 - C. **Parcel.** Mail that does not meet the mail processing category of letter-size mail or flat-size mail, usually enclosed in a container such as a carton. A package.²
 - D. **Penalty Mail.** Agencies must reimburse the USPS the equivalent amount of postage and fees due for the penalty mail service they receive.
 - E. **Personal Mail.** The use of Reclamation mail services for personal mail is prohibited. This includes incoming and outgoing and the use of internal distribution services. However, under special circumstances, a Director or Area Manager may authorize an employee the temporary use an office address.
 - F. **Business Reply Mail.** The recipient (charged a permit fee by the post office for offering this service) pays the standard mailing charges for each piece of mail delivered.
 - G. **Undeliverable Mail.** Mail facilities will make every attempt to deliver official mail; however, incoming bulk business rate mail addressed to an individual shall be disposed of if the facility cannot readily ascertain the intended recipient. Bulk business rate mail

¹ United States Postal Service Publication 32 – Glossary of Postal Terms-Contents
https://about.usps.com/publication/pub32/pub32_terms.htm

² The commissioner's Office is a distribution center, Paragraph 14.A. details how mail is managed.

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that is obviously unrelated to Reclamation business shall be discarded. Undeliverable First-Class mail must be returned to the sender, per the DMM.

H. **Reclamation Mailing Addresses.** To facilitate mail routing within Reclamation, a system of alpha-numeric and numeric codes is utilized to represent organizational components and/or individuals. Mail codes reflect office locations and individuals or groups within that office. For example, in the mail code MP-3730, “MP” identifies the Mid-Pacific Regional Office; “3730” is the numeric code assigned to an individual or work group. To ensure accurate and timely delivery, the sender must include an individual’s name following the mail code.

- (1) **Address Changes.** It is the responsibility of the Commissioner’s Office, each regional and area office, and the offices located in Denver to prepare a memorandum announcing any changes in organization names, mail codes, street addresses, or post office box (P.O. Box) numbers (this includes establishing/closing an office as well as internal reorganizations). This memorandum shall be distributed to the Reclamation Leadership Team with courtesy copies to the mail facilities located in the Commissioner’s Office², the RPPS, and each region, as well as the Printing and Duplicating Team located in the Denver Office. It is important that this announcement be made as early as possible to ensure minimal disruption to mail service.
- (2) **Reclamation Office Directory.** Reclamation officials, organization titles, telephone and fax numbers, organization codes, street addresses, and official post office mailing addresses are listed in the Reclamation Office Directory. The Commissioner’s Office, each regional office, and the offices located in Denver will report any changes in the current directory to 84-21131.

6. Mail Carriers.

A. **USPS Mail.** Mail sent through the USPS is governed by regulations contained in the DMM and the IMM and will be processed accordingly.

B. **Private Carrier Express and Small Package Service.**

- (1) Reclamation participates in contracts authorized for private carrier express mail, small package, and freight. As a participant in this contract, Reclamation is required to use the services under the contract and cannot elect to use any other private carrier unless the contract carrier is unable to meet special requirements.
- (2) Express mail will only be used only for urgent mail; excessive use shall be avoided. Generally, express mail must not be used on Fridays, weekends, or the day before a holiday unless urgency is required.

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- C. **Alternate Private Carriers.** Use of alternate private carriers is only permissible when the carriers identified in Paragraphs 6.A. and B. cannot meet shipping requirements (e.g., pallet shipments). In no case, shall a private carrier be used to transmit letter mail (i.e., official correspondence).
7. **Mail Facilities.** Facilities for receiving, routing, and dispatching all mail will be consolidated in each Reclamation office location. Official mail will not be received at, addressed to, or dispatched from the private residence or P.O. Box number of an employee except when authorized through proper channels as necessary to perform official government business.
8. **P.O. Box Numbers.**
- A. **Reclamation Mail Facility.** When a Reclamation mail facility needs a P.O. Box number, it will be acquired and rented on a 6-month term. Employees who have purchase authority will use their government charge card for this purpose.
- B. **Individual Employee.** Reclamation mail facilities will be used whenever possible; however, if it is determined that an individual employee requires a P.O. Box number, authorization must be in writing by the appropriate local managing official in coordination with the local mail manager. Rental and use of the P.O. Box number must be necessary to accomplish Reclamation's programs. The P.O. Box number must be rented under Reclamation's name, not the name of the employee. The P.O. Box number must be used solely for official mail; personal mail shall not be delivered to this P.O. Box number. Employees who have purchase authority will use their government charge card for this purpose when rental of a P.O. Box number is authorized.
9. **Mailroom Procedures.** Written requirements for mailroom personnel vary according to the size of the office, complexity of the organization, and variety of official mail processed. Therefore, each mail facility is responsible for preparing requirements, as needed, to ensure safe, consistent, effective, and efficient operation. This includes establishing mailroom hours of operation; coordinating mail arrival and departure with the local post office; and planning, organizing, and controlling the workflow within the mail facility so that safe and timely service is provided.
10. **Safeguarding Mail.** Each mail facility will establish procedures necessary to safeguard proprietary information, protect Privacy Act information from disclosure, and security of classified information.
- A. **Negotiable Instruments.** Offices receiving negotiable instruments payable to the government by mail, a designated mailroom employee will receive, record, and transmit the negotiable instruments to the authorized Reclamation collection officer. Form 7-2625 (2-11), *Daily Abstract of Remittances*, will be prepared and signed by the designated mailroom employee. Once each day, the form and negotiable instruments

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received will be delivered to the collection officer. Offices shall maintain on file a copy of the completed and signed form for a minimum of 3 years.

- B. Official Personnel Folder (OPF).** OPFs transmitted through the mail must be trackable and require a signature upon delivery. They must be packaged, securely sealed, and reinforced in such a manner as to prevent damage of contents or mutilation of folder tabs. Each envelope or package containing OPFs must be labeled in such a way that the term “OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOLDER” is placed on the inside packaging of the folder.
- C. Receipt of Sealed Bid.** When an office receives a sealed bid in response to a request for solicitation, the bid must be sent **unopened** to the Contracting Officer. If the bid is accidentally opened, use Form 7-2531, *Mail Management Oversight*, to notify the Contracting Officer that the bid was opened inadvertently by the mailroom. A copy of form 7-2531 shall be maintained on file for 3 years in accordance with DRS 1.1.1.
11. **Screening Mail.** Because the mail facility is a first line of defense for the office, mailroom personnel must examine every piece of mail before delivering to addressee. Mailroom personnel must inspect every piece of mail through a screening process (e.g., with an x-ray machine), and look for suspicious characteristics. Mailroom personnel must be trained to recognize and report suspicious packages on an annual basis at minimum. Mail screening requirements must be easily accessible to mailroom personnel, preferably in a basic checklist or poster format. Mail screening requirements should be posted at all locations where mail is handled or sorted for distribution
12. **Incident Reporting Procedures.** Mail facility managers must follow the incident reporting procedures outlined in Reclamation Manual D&S, *Emergency Notification System* (SLE 07-01).
13. **Mail Service Provided by Contract Employees.** Contractors engaged by Federal government agencies, either directly or through the Government Printing Office, who will mail official mail on behalf of an agency must prepare and mail such mailings in accordance with the requirements in this D&S, the Departmental Manual, the CFR, and the DMM.
14. **Payment for Postal Services.** Reclamation pays for postal services as follows:
- A. Commissioner’s Office.** Mail services for offices located in Washington, D.C., are furnished by the Department under a memorandum of understanding.
- B. Regional Offices, and Area/Field Offices.** These offices use commercial accounts, as well as USPS and commercial carriers. Reclamation offices must track this annual costs and report mail expenses to their office/regional mail manager.
- C. Annual Fiscal Year End Mail Management Report to GSA.** All regional mail managers must consolidate their area offices’ and field offices’ fiscal year end costs

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into one combined report and submit this report to the Bureau mail manager (84-27111) by no later than October 15 . The RPPS will then send a combined Reclamation report to the Interior Business Center by October 31.

15. **Authorizations.** Offices authorized by the USPS to use penalty mail must obtain licenses or permits to use penalty postage meters (see Paragraph 17), penalty permit imprints, and penalty business reply mail (see the DMM for complete guidelines). Reclamation is assigned the following identifiers:
 - A. **Agency Code.** Agency Code 118 is assigned to Reclamation.
 - B. **Business Reply Mail (BRM).** BRM Permit No. 12849 is required on all Reclamation penalty business reply mail. Offices using the Commercial Payment Method must establish a commercial account at their local post offices.
 - C. **Permit Imprint Number.** Permit Imprint Number G-110 is assigned to Reclamation for penalty mail use.

16. **Envelopes.**
 - A. **Envelopes for USPS.** Envelopes will conform to USPS requirements. Borders, markings, slogans, emblems, or designs will not be printed on mailing envelopes except when specifically approved by GSA. Names and titles of officials, plus names of offices are not permitted in the office return address. The words "Official Business" must appear immediately below the return address.
 - B. **Blue Envelopes.** Blue envelopes marked "SPECIAL ATTENTION MAIL to be opened only by _____," are to be used only to send official government business materials subject to the Privacy Act and other materials of a sensitive nature. Blue envelopes are to be addressed with an accurate office name, including city and state (if other than the originating office), organization code, and, when appropriate, the name of the intended recipient. The sender's name and organization code will be provided in the upper left-hand corner. Blue envelopes are to be opened only by the individual or office addressed. During a named recipient's absence, the supervisor may open the envelope to determine the proper action needed.
 - C. **Messenger Service Envelopes.** Optional Form-65-B, *Messenger Service Envelopes* (holey envelopes), will not be used for transmitting material which is security classified or contains Privacy Act information.

17. **Postage Meters.**
 - A. **License.** An office must obtain a license to use penalty postage meters by submitting Form 3601-A to the post office where their meters are set. The office must include their three-digit agency code on each license application and will assign one cost code

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to each license. Licenses will be obtained from the USPS per instructions in the DMM. When the license is no longer required, it will be canceled by the mail facility office for which the meter was obtained. Mail facilities will notify 84-27113 of license numbers being obtained or canceled.

- B. Permits.** Offices must obtain a permit to use Business Reply Mail by submitting PS Form 3615 to the local servicing post office (Offices must include their three-digit agency code on each permit application and assign one cost code to each permit). Permit accounts must be maintained with available funds for debit by the USPS. Monthly statements shall be maintained on file for a period of no less than 3 years. When a permit is no longer required, it will be cancelled by the mail facility office for which the permit was obtained. Mail facilities will notify 84-27111 of permit numbers being obtained or canceled.
 - C. Computerized Meter Resetting System (CMRS).** Under CMRS, meters are reset electronically at the place of business by the meter manufacturer. After a meter is reset, the manufacturer must provide documentation of the transaction and the balance remaining in the account, or provide a monthly statement documenting all transactions for the period and the balance after each transaction. A copy of the resetting transaction will be maintained by the Reclamation office mailroom.
 - D. Internet Based Postage Services.** Offices using internet based postage services in lieu of a CMRS shall establish one central account for all of the offices mailing activity. Invoices shall be maintained on file for a minimum of 3 years with a record of the method of payment used.
 - E. Meter Security.** Large postage meters will have password protection and small postage meters will be placed in a secure space during off-business hours (e.g., placed in a locked room, file cabinet, or locked safe) to prevent loss or unauthorized use. A report of meter register readings will be maintained for each meter to ensure accurate fiscal year end cost reporting in Paragraph 14.C.
 - F. Scales.** Scales will be checked according to manufacturer specifications to ensure their accuracy.
18. **Penalty Mail Stamps.** Only those Reclamation offices with small mail volumes are authorized to use postage stamps on a routine basis. Other offices may use postage stamps only for special circumstances; for example, to provide a customer a self-addressed stamped envelope used to facilitate returning documents to Reclamation. Penalty mail stamps will not exceed a 90-day supply. Stamps will be secured in locked safes, file cabinets, desk drawers, etc., or a locked room. Additional security will be administered as required.
19. **Incoming Mail.** All official letter-size and flat-size mail addressed to Reclamation including USPS, FedEx, and UPS will be subjected to a screening process for safety and security prior to delivery to the intended recipient. The screening process shall include but

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is not limited to, sorting and inspection for suspicious marking. All mail will be delivered unopened and stamped within 24 hours of receipt; it is recommended that the stamp include the phrase "Received by The Bureau of Reclamation." Mail will only be opened by mail room personnel under the following circumstance: To identify the intended recipient, in coordination with a law enforcement investigation, or to address security concerns. Mail opened in error shall have a Form 7-2531 "Opened by Mistake" signed and attached to envelope to notify the recipient that the item was opened by mail room staff. Local mailrooms should address additional security concerns based on operational limitations, threat assessment and management's direction. A copy of form 7-2531 shall be maintained on file for three years in accordance with Department Retention Schedule (DRS) 1.1.1.

- A. **Priority Handling.** Priority handling is given to express mail, White House Mail, congressional mail, Freedom of Information Act mail, Privacy Act mail, and fax messages.
 - B. **Return Postage.** Enclosed stamps or self-addressed stamped envelopes supplied by an addressee will be used to return requested information. If the return envelope is not the appropriate size, a government envelope will be used and the stamped self-addressed envelope returned.
 - C. **Postage Due.** Payment for official mail bearing insufficient postage will be made by mail meter strips or stamps in the exact amount of the postage due. Postage due mail received from the general public will be refused.
20. **Incoming Parcels.** Incoming USPS, FedEx, and UPS Parcels shall be forwarded to an Appointed Receiving Official for security screening and proper receipt of contents prior to delivery to the recipient named on the shipping label. Exceptions based on management discretions are items addressed to non-administrative staff in Law Enforcement, EEO, and all HR items that are clearly identified as Privacy Act Material. Sensitive items that are accidentally opened will require a Form 7-2531 "Mail Management Oversight" completed and attached to the outside of the box, to notify the recipient that the item was opened by an Appointed Receiving Official. A copy of form 7-2531 shall be maintained on file for 3 years in accordance with DRS 1.1.1.
21. **Outgoing Mail.** Outgoing mail will be processed by the responsible Reclamation mail facility to ensure compliance with regulations and the most economical use of postal services. As much of the daily mail for a single address shall be enclosed in one envelope or package as is practical, without overloading, and consistent with postal regulations.
- A. **Records of Transactions.** Each mail facility will keep records of costs associated with mail metering and stamps, express mail, and other classifications of mail used. Records necessary for tracking purposes will also be maintained for controlled, express, registered, certified, and insured mail. Mail facilities shall follow the records retention requirements outlined in the *Information Management Handbook*, Volume II, Records Retention Schedules.

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- B. **Separate Enclosures.** When an enclosure is handled separately from its transmittal letter, the enclosure will be shipped via a trackable method. The method in which the enclosure is shipped will be notated at the end of the transmittal letter. The author must provide the necessary information needed to send the enclosure via a trackable method.
22. **Mail Facility Security Plan.** Each large and small Reclamation mail facility must develop a written, site-specific mail center security plan as outlined in 41 CFR 102-192 Subpart C, Security Requirements for all Agencies.
- A. **Mail Facility Security Plan Development.** The mail facility manager shall follow the [GSA Mail Communications Policy Office, Mail Center Security Guide](#), and coordinate with agency security personnel to develop an appropriate security plan for their mail facility, and to ensure that the mail facility operating procedures create a safe and secure environment. A mail facility security plan template is available from the Mission Support Organization or MSO (84-27111).
- B. **Mail Facility Security Plan Testing, Reporting, and Updating.** The following lists the specific dates for internal and external testing, reporting, and updating for all Mail Facility Security Plans.
- (1) **Annual Mail Facility Security Plan Reviews.** The Bureau Mail Managers will send a request for all mail managers to submit a completed, up to date copy of their Mail Facility Security Plan or certification of “No changes required” to the RPPS by no later than November 30 of each year. By no later than December 31 of each year the Director MSO will submit Security Plans and certifications to the Office of Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement (SSLE) in the Denver Office for review. SSLE will complete its review by March 31 of each calendar year.
 - (2) **Recommendations and Updates to Mail Facility Security Plans.** The Bureau Mail Manager and mail facility managers will take all SSLE recommendations into consideration. A memorandum, from the Director, MSO to all Reclamation mail facility managers, will be sent by May 31 listing recommendations for incorporation into Mail Facility Security Plans. Mail Facility Security Plans are required to be updated and submitted annually to the RPPS by June 30.
 - (3) **Annual Mail Facility Security Plan Testing.** All Reclamation mail facility managers shall test their Mail Facility Security Plan annually, including their area offices and field offices. This test must be completed annually by July 31.
 - (4) **Annual Mail Facility Security Plan Test Report.** All Reclamation mail facility managers must complete form 7-2627 (8-12), *Bureau of Reclamation Annual Mail Facility Security Plan Testing and Reporting*; in addition, all regional mail managers must consolidate their area offices’ and field offices’ forms and submit all forms to the RPPS (84-27111) by August 31. Form 7-2627 (8-12) assures compliance with the above regulations, as well as provides any feedback on the

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Annual Mail Facility Security Plan testing and reporting. The RPPS will then send a combined Reclamation report to the Director, MSO by September 30 each calendar year.

- C. **Mail Facility Risk Assessment Methods.** As stated in the Best Practices for Mail Screening and Handling by the Combating Terrorism Technology Support Office/Technical Support Working Group, *While the mail facility is the focal point of the assessment, it should be completed with the assistance of the agency's security organization and facilities manager. The level of risk associated with an individual agency may vary widely from a similar facility in a different agency located across the street. Therefore, the mail facility assessment should reflect the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Facility Security Level (FSL) designation (Level I-V) for the location.* The following are resources that are available to complete the risk assessment for each Mail Facility Security Plan:

- (1) *General Services Administration – Mail Communications Policy Office – Mail Security Guide – Fourth Edition – 2014:* http://www.gsa.gov/portal/mediaId/196975/fileName/Mail_Security_Guide.action
- (2) United States Department of Homeland Security's ISC Standards and Best Practices: http://www.dhs.gov/files/committees/gc_1194978268031.shtm
 - (a) *May 2017/3rd Edition – The risk Management Process for Federal Facilities, Appendix B: Countermeasures (FOUO)*
 - (b) *November 2016/2nd Edition – The Risk Management Process for Federal Facilities, Appendix Section 4.0: Facility Security Level Determinations for Federal Facilities*
 - (c) *January 2016/10th Edition – The Management Process for Federal Facilities, Appendix A: Design Basis threat Report (FOUO)*
 - (d) *Best Practices for Managing Mail Screening and Handling Processes: A Guide for the Public and Private Sectors (non-FOUO)*
- (3) The three For Official Use Only (FOUO) documents and the FSL process are handled by your respective regional/area security offices.
- (4) As required within 41 CFR 102-192 (specifically, 102-192.90), Mail Center Security Plans are strongly encouraged to incorporate the security standards established by the ISC. In doing so, the FSL Determination process drives the risk assessment on the mail operations themselves.

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- D. **Physical Security of Mail Facility.** Mail facility managers must reference Reclamation Manual D&S, *Facility Security*, SLE 03-02, for physical security material, as well as consult with the local security organization and facility manager.

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____