

Gift Offerings: USPS Guidelines for Workers

The Postal Service is reminding employees of the rules about accepting gifts from outside sources during the coronavirus national health emergency.

“As the men and women of the Postal Service deliver through this pandemic, we are incredibly proud and grateful for their dedication, but we aren’t the only ones. The American public also appreciates their service,” said Kristin Seaver, incident commander for the organization’s COVID-19 Response Command.

“Many businesses, community organizations and other customers want to show their appreciation to our employees, so it’s important for everyone in the postal workforce to understand — and honor — the rules regarding the acceptance of gifts.”

Although the ethics rules generally *prohibit the acceptance* of gifts, individual postal employees may accept free supplies, materials or services related to the COVID-19 crisis.

This includes meals and restaurant or store gift cards — as long as the value of the gift is \$20 or less and the source doesn’t provide any single employee with gifts that exceed \$50 during a given year.

In all cases — including during the current crisis — the ethics rules prohibit Postal Service employees from soliciting or asking for donations or gifts from customers, suppliers, vendors or any other outside source.

The Postal Service has “agency gift acceptance authority” — which means it is authorized to allow gifts and certain other items for the purpose of completing its work — and the Ethics Office has determined that postal facilities may accept donated COVID-19 supplies such as hand sanitizer.

However, USPS has not used its agency gift acceptance authority to accept donations of food or refreshments. If a business is proposing to drop off food for an entire facility, that type of gift would not be permitted.

If an employee receives COVID-19 supplies in excess of \$20 from an outside source, the employee should turn over the supplies to management for postal use.

If a donor requires a signed agreement or waiver to receive such supplies, the employee should politely explain that he or she lacks the authority to sign on the Postal Service's behalf. If the donor won't give the supplies to the employee without the signed agreement, the employee should decline the donation.

Employees who have questions should email the Ethics Office at ethics.help@usps.gov.
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