

APO/FPO Guide for Exchange Suppliers

Overseas Military Mail (the APO/FPO system)

An important part of morale for Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines of the United States Armed Forces is the receipt of mail from home and/or orders placed online. However, the logistical challenges of delivering mail to far-flung and oftentimes dangerous corners of the world can make the process difficult.

The United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the United States Postal Service, to this end, established the Overseas Military Mail system, which allows for rapid processing and shipment of mail from the United States to military posts, United States Navy, Coast Guard and US Naval Reserve vessels, and United States Embassies worldwide.

How does the Overseas Military Mail System work?

The system depends on three broad regions or "states" based upon where the particular unit is stationed:

- AA, **Armed Forces Americas**, which serves all of the Americas, (including military bases within the United States), except for Canada;
- AE, **Armed Forces Europe**, which serves Europe, Canada, Africa and the Middle East;
- AP, **Armed Forces Pacific**, which serves Asia and the Pacific.

These codes point to three Military Gateways (receiving centers for military mail):

- AA mail is routed to Miami;
- AE mail is routed to New York City;
- AP mail is routed to San Francisco.

From here, the mail is sorted by the individual unit or ship, and then is transferred into the custody of either the Navy (for FPO addresses) or Army or Air Force (for APO addresses), and is delivered to its final destination. The military, along with the State Department, also handles a new designation -- DPO, or "Diplomatic Post Office", established in January, 2009, and which serves 16 Embassies worldwide (the other 90 Embassies currently bear APO addresses, though they are scheduled to gradually be changed over).

Each APO and FPO is assigned a ZIP Code of their own, corresponding closely to the Military Gateway city's ZIP, and from there organized by country or region -- the first two numbers designate the routing center, the third designating the country or region within the "state". For instance, a ZIP beginning in "962" will be in AP, going to a military post in South Korea, while a ZIP beginning in "095", in AE, designates a US Navy ship in the Atlantic, Mediterranean or Persian Gulf.

Addressing an Overseas Military Mail Mailpiece

To properly address a mailpiece, you need the following information:

- Name of the recipient (rank/grade/rating is optional)
- The PSC (Postal Service Center), CMR (Community Mail Room), UMR (Unit Mail Room), RPO (Regional Post Office), APO (Army Post Office) or OMDC (Official Mail Distribution Center) number.
 - It is not necessary to add the specific military formation (for instance "1/20 24th Infantry") that the recipient is attached to.
 - At times, operational security may demand that the unit not be named.
 - For FPO addresses aboard a United States Navy or United States Coast Guard vessel, put the ship's name and hull number, if applicable, (for instance "USS Cochrane (DDG-21)") instead of a PSC number.
- If applicable, the recipient's Military Post Office Box number.
- When mailing to a DPO address, do not add the street address of the embassy or the recipient's job title, such as "Ambassador John Adams" as this may cause processing errors.
- The APO and "state" designator (AA, AP, AE)
 - Please do not use the state that the distribution hub is in (FL, CA, NY), as this may cause delays in the package being processed.
- The correct ZIP Code for the unit, preferably the ZIP+4.
- In case your package accidentally falls open during transit, consider including a card within, listing both yours and the recipient's addresses and a full listing of the contents.

For instance, here is a sample APO Address:

GEN Omar Bradley
PSC 1234, Box 12345
APO AE 09204-1234

For a FPO:

CAPT John Paul Jones
USS Cochrane (DDG-21)
FPO AP 96543-1234

For a DPO:

John Adams
Unit 8400, Box 0000
DPO, AE, 09498-0048

Overseas Military Mail Restrictions

- Please do not send mail addressed to "Military Mail" or "any soldier" or "any sailor" or "any service member," or any other formulation that does not name a specific individual. Such mailpieces will be rejected and returned to the sender. While it was a tradition for the USPS to allow anonymous mail to be sent to random troops as a morale booster, DoD has requested it be ended due to heightened security concerns.
- All packages must be 70 lbs. or less
- Packages cannot exceed 130 in. combined length and girth.
- You cannot send [any item restricted](#) by the United States Postal Service. In addition, you cannot send perishable foods.
 - Further, you cannot send any items that are restricted by the unit's host country, regardless of their mailability by the USPS. Any mailpieces being sent to troops deployed in the Middle East or Afghanistan cannot contain articles contrary to the Islamic faith (exception: single copies of non-Islamic religious texts and religious objects intended for personal use are permitted), anything that could be considered pornographic or politically inflammatory, or pork/pig-derived products.
 - You can see the full restrictions in the USPS Rate Calculator, or by contacting your local Post Office, calling 1-800-ASK-USPS or contacting the Military Postal Service Agency at <http://hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa>.
- Please remove any batteries from battery-powered items (radios, shavers, media players) in case they accidentally get switched on in transit. You can wrap them securely and place them with the item.
- All packages must have complete customs forms attached if being sent to an APO in a foreign country.

Stamps.com

- Stamps.com is a service that allows you to print official United States Postal Service postage directly from your PC and printer. No special hardware is needed. Once your package is ready to go, simply hand it to your mail carrier. It's that easy. Think of it as a bank account for postage. The postage that you print will automatically be deducted from your Stamps.com account.

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