



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

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Residents - Communication Access - Mail Service

Regional Processing Centre Guidelines



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Residents - Communication Access – Mail Service

Purpose

A mail service is available to Residents at Regional Processing Centres (RPCs) on Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Garrison and Welfare Service Provider (GWSP) is encouraged to provide support to Residents to utilise local Nauru and PNG mail services which are accessible to Residents since the introduction of Open Centre. This guideline details the procedures for incoming and outgoing mail as well as maintaining the security of the mail service.

1 Procedures

1.1 Incoming Mail

- The Garrison and Welfare Service Provider (GWSP) is encouraged to provide support to Residents to utilise local Nauru and PNG mail services which are accessible to residents due to Open Centre arrangements.
- The GWSP must ensure that all Residents are educated and equipped to collect their own mail from host government mail service centres. This should cover:
 - local mail service procedures if the mail is not collected within a reasonable timeframe; and
 - ensuring Residents provide authority for another individual to collect on their behalf, or have the mail redirected, if they leave Nauru or Manus for any reason.

Failing this, the local mail service centre may return the mail to sender.

- In the event where the GWSP collects mail for Residents (or former Residents) as the mail is addressed to the relevant RPC, the following procedures should be followed:
 - All mail received by the GWSP for Residents will be screened by the GWSP (using available screening equipment such as wands) and recorded in the incoming mail register. This addresses safety and security concerns and provides an auditable record of the delivery of mail services.
 - All mail addressed to a Resident will be treated confidentially and distributed unopened to that person by the GWSP on a daily basis (with exceptions under Security of Mail Services below).
 - Each Resident must sign the mail register to acknowledge receipt of their mail from the GWSP. In the case where mail is addressed to children, their parent or guardian may sign on their behalf.
 - Any mail sent to former Residents of a RPC will be passed on to the Settlement Service Provider for delivery if the former Resident resides in the local community. If the Resident or former Resident has been transferred to Australia, the GWSP will liaise with Australian Border Force (ABF) Operations staff at the RPCs to identify the appropriate forwarding address and facilitate the forwarding of the mail to that address.
 - The GWSP will hold any mail received for Residents that have been temporarily transferred to a third country for medical treatment. The mail will be documented and temporarily

secured within the Secure Storage Area for the duration of time the respective Resident remains absent from the RPC.

- In all cases where the forwarding address of a former Resident cannot be ascertained the mail will be returned to sender by the GWSP.
 - In the event that the addressee cannot be identified any mail will be returned to sender provided these details are available.
 - Any mail requiring to be returned to sender where the sender's details are not available will be forwarded onto the Nauru or PNG postal service and dealt with according to local postal procedures.
 - In the case the Nauru or PNG postal services refuse to accept mail which has no addressee or return address, the GWSP must return the mail directly to the postal services of the country of origin.
- Mail should not be destroyed. In the event that the above procedures do not provide an avenue for resolution, the GWSP should contact the Offshore Contracts Section for advice.

1.2 Outgoing Mail

- Aligning with procedures for incoming mail, the GWSP is encouraged to provide support to Residents to utilise local Nauru and PNG mail services which are accessible to residents due to Open Centre arrangements.
- The GWSP must ensure that all Residents are educated and equipped to facilitate their own outgoing mail using host government mail service centres.
- All mail sent from the RPC by Residents will be screened by the GWSP (using available screening equipment such as wands, etc) and recorded in the outgoing mail register. This addresses safety and security concerns and provides an auditable record for the distribution of mail services.
- Each Resident must sign the mail register to acknowledge handover of the outgoing mail. In the case where mail is being sent by children, their parent or guardian may sign on their behalf.
- Residents will be allowed to send and receive as many letters as they wish.
- As per clause 6.3.2 of the Contract, postage costs for mail sent by a Resident will be at the Resident's expense except when a Resident does not have the means to pay for postage, in which case the Service Provider will be required to refer to the Department for instructions.

1.3 Security of Mail Services

At RPCs the GWSP staff must screen all incoming and outgoing mail using available screening equipment.

If there is reasonable suspicion that a letter or package may contain illegal, prohibited and excluded or controlled items the addressee will be directed to open the letter or package addressed to them in the presence of GWSP staff.

Should the addressee refuse to open a letter or package in the presence of staff when requested to do so, the letter or package will be withheld and the relevant host government Operations Manager notified as soon as possible. The host government Operations Manager will advise the GWSP of their decision as to whether the letter or package should be provided to the addressee or a referral made to local law enforcement.

Where illegal, prohibited and excluded or controlled items are found in a letter or package, GWSP staff must deal with the items in accordance with the following three Guidelines:

1. Incident Management – Preservation of Evidence
2. Detection of Excluded, Controlled & Illegal Items; and
3. Incident Reporting.

It may be appropriate under relevant host government Centre Rules or legislation for Residents to take possession of Controlled item(s). In these cases, GWSP staff may allow the Resident to take possession of the item(s). In these cases RPC rules for Prohibited and Controlled items must be applied prior during access and egress. All reporting/notification requirements as advised by the host government Operations Manager must be followed.

Version Control

Version No.	Version date	Name and role of contributor	Description
0.1	6 August 2014	Offshore Contracts Section	First release
0.2	November 2015	Offshore Contracts Section	Drafted and reviewed
0.3	December 2016	Offshore Contracts Section	Major Review to whole document
1.0	11 October 2017	Offshore Contracts Section	Update to include minor changes from stakeholder engagement.