

**SECTION - SUPPORTIVE SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 624  
(Replaces A.D. No. 624 dated 1/11/07)**

Effective Date: April 12, 2007

**SUBJECT: INDIVIDUALS' MAIL AND PACKAGES**

**I. PURPOSE**

To ensure a coordinated set of guidelines and procedures regarding the responsibilities, procedures, and limitations which govern an Individual's incoming and outgoing mail and packages. It provides for the right of Individuals to send and receive mail and packages, and it ensures that the hospital operates according to its security needs, fire regulations, and physical space limitations.

**II. AUTHORITY**

Department of Mental Health Special Order Number 248.01 and 249.01 also pursuant to Section 4136 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

**III. POLICY**

The mission of the hospital is to provide Individuals with the right to have access to letter writing materials, including stamps, and to send and receive mail and packages. The hospital has detailed processes in place to ensure Individuals and staff understand how incoming and outgoing mail and packages will be handled.

**IV. METHOD**

Definitions:

- A. "Mail" is defined as paper documents sent in a standard sized envelope, manila envelope, or special handling envelope (Priority mail, Express mail, etc.) with a weight under 16 ounces and less than ½" thick. All other materials falling outside this description will be deemed as a package and will be forwarded to Mail Services for processing, then to Police Services Package Center (PSPC) for issuance according to established procedures.
- B. "Package" is defined as any items(s) delivered in a box, large manila envelope with bubble wrap, or other container that is not standard envelope size or is more than 16 ounces or ½" thick. Exceptions are Periodicals, Catalogs, or Literature Search Materials from Federal and/or State agencies.

- C. "Third-Party Mail" is defined as mail addressed to hospital staff or volunteers for delivery to an Individual, or mail given to an employee by an Individual to mail outside normal hospital mailing procedures. Approved vendor packages with the purchaser's name located in the shipping address along with identifiable Individual's full name and correct address will not be considered third-party mail or package.
- D. "Letter" is defined as one-ounce first class mail.
- E. "Periodical" is defined as any published material at regular intervals of more than one day; of or relating to a publication issued at such intervals (e.g. magazines or news letters). Exception note: regardless of size not to be counted as a package and will be subject to contraband review by staff.
- F. "Catalog" is defined as a systematized list, often featuring descriptions of listed items; a publication containing such a list (mail-order catalogue). Exception note: regardless of size not to be counted as a package and will be subject to contraband review by staff.
- G. "Literature Search" is defined as a systematic search for investigation of published material relating to a given subject (published material from Federal, State Agencies or by a Recognized Charitable Organization). Exception note: regardless of size not to be counted as a package and will be subject to contraband review by staff.
- H. "Educational Materials" are defined as those from an accredited college or university, which have been approved by Central Program Services Education Staff and the Wellness and Recovery Team. This may include educational materials in CD or DVD format, and which normally would be considered contraband if purchased from an unapproved vendor. Authorization does not include items that are considered contraband regardless of source, such as firearms or drugs.
- I. "Approved Vendor" is defined as an established Coalinga State Hospital (CSH) approved mail-order business, individual and/or organization. Allowable items can only be ordered from those listed as approved vendors. Packages from vendors not on the Approved Vendor List will be refused and returned. Individuals may submit requests for the addition of new vendors to the Contraband Committee during the month of July.

V. GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR MAIL AND PACKAGE PROCESSING

- A. Addressing and Labeling of Individuals' Mail and Packages:
  - 1. All incoming/outgoing mail and packages must be addressed properly including the Individual's full name, unit number and identification number to ensure proper and timely delivery. Incoming/outgoing mail and/or packages with "Coalinga State Hospital" in the address line may be subject to opening by receiving staff as an unknown vendor purchase.

Example: John J. Doe  
Unit 00, Identification CO-000000-0  
P.O. Box 5003  
Coalinga, CA 93210-5003

2. All incoming/outgoing mail and packages should have a return address, in the event that the mail and/or package are unable to be delivered.
3. Every effort shall be made to deliver mail and/or packages without a proper address. If multiple Individuals with the same name are located, an attempt will be made to confirm that the sender is known to one of the Individuals. If it cannot be confirmed that the sender is known to one of the Individuals, the mail or packages shall be returned unopened, to the sender, the post office of origin, or other shipping agent.
4. Individuals have the right to decline acceptance of mail and/or packages from one or more Individuals and/or vendors. Mail and/or packages that are declined by an Individual shall be sent back to Mail Services with instructions to return, unopened, to the sender. Mail or packages that are opened at the Individual's request may require the Individual to pay for return shipping costs.
5. Delivery or mailing of third-party mail is prohibited, and such mail shall be returned to the sender, unopened, via the Mail Services and the Individual's Wellness and Recovery team shall be notified.
6. Third class mail (junk mail) without CO # is not allowed and will be disposed of by the Mail Services.

B. Legal Mail and Packages:

1. All incoming/outgoing legal mail and/or packages should be marked "Legal Correspondence" on the outside. Legal mail that is not identified may be subject to processing in accordance with non-legal mail/package procedures.
2. Individuals have the right to mail legal documents to the courts. The state provides free mail for the first 30 days after initial admission. Thereafter, the cost of postage for mailing documents to the courts or attorneys will be charged against funds in, or later deposited in, the Individual's Trust Account.
3. Indigent Individuals' legal documents will be mailed to the courts using first class postage, at State expense.
4. Unit staff shall maintain a log of all outgoing legal correspondence, to include Individual's name, date, recipient, and staff's signature.

C. Writing Materials and Postage:

1. Newly admitted Individuals shall be allotted sufficient writing materials, including postage for first-class mail, for up to two one-ounce letters per week for the first thirty (30) days after initial admission. Thereafter, Individuals are required to purchase writing and mailing materials, and pay regular postage and special mail services fees out of their personal funds. Indigent Individuals, as defined below, shall be allowed limited free writing materials and postage each week.
2. For the purpose of this section, "Indigent Individuals" means any Individual whose income is not more than twelve dollars and fifty cents (\$12.50) per month.
3. After the initial 30 days upon admission, Indigent Individuals shall be allotted sufficient materials for one letter each week, including postage in an amount not to exceed the cost of one stamp for first-class mail for one-ounce letter, at no cost to the Individual.
4. Additional writing materials and postage shall be available for purchase at the stores or canteens on hospital grounds.

D. Mail and Package Receipt and Distribution:

1. Upon receipt of the mail; Mail Services staff identifies, sorts and delivers in accordance with established mail/package processing procedures. Unit staff shall provide a confidential area for Individuals to receive mail during mail call. Individuals who receive mail and are off the Unit shall be notified. Unit staff will deliver the mail to the Individual to whom it is addressed and in accordance with the hospital's rules open and inspect incoming mail for contraband without reading written material in the presence of the Individual. If contraband is found, it shall be removed and a "Receipt of the contraband/Confiscated Items" will be provided to the Individual as soon as practical. The Unit Supervisor shall be notified and contraband procedures will be followed.
2. All pictures, periodicals, catalogs and/or literature search materials received by Individuals in the mail will be reviewed by the Unit Staff for illegal or inappropriate content and are subject to review and approval by Wellness and Recovery Team before being given to the Individual.
3. An exception to the above procedures will occur if it is determined by Unit staff that the mail is considered suspicious. This would include suspecting an explosive device, drugs, weapons, or any other contraband items. In these cases, the mail will be opened before delivery to an Individual. These procedures would occur to ensure the safety and security of staff, Individuals, and the public.

4. All cash, checks, money orders or other instruments of payment received by the Individual through the mail will be placed in the Individual's trust account.
5. Mail may be declared undeliverable and un-returnable when the addressee and the return address are insufficient for delivery or return. Should any mail or package possess a biohazard or health risk, it will be declared undeliverable.
  - a. Undeliverable mail will be disposed of in a manner prescribed by the law.
  - b. Should there be no applicable law covering a given situation, the issue of disposal will be determined by the Executive Director.
  - c. If known, the Individual recipient will be advised in writing of the name and address of the party sending the mail or package and the circumstances surrounding its disposal.

E. Transferred Individual Mail:

1. Mail received for an Individual who is no longer on the Unit should be forwarded to the Individual or returned to the Mail Center with a note attached to it (use paper clip) stating the present location of the Individual. This information should not be written on the envelope.
2. It is suggested that Individuals leaving the hospital authorize forwarding address for first class mail which will remain in effect for sixty days using the "Individual Mail Forwarding Form" #34-100, submitted to Mail Services by Unit Staff via mail process bag procedure. No envelope required, as mail bag suffices for confidentially purposes.
  - a. Individuals agree that only First Class Mail will be forwarded for up to sixty (60) days from start date.
  - b. Periodicals, Non Profit, Bulk Rate, Standard, and all other mail types will not be forwarded by the United States Postal Service (USPS) and will be returned to sender by CSH Mail Center.
  - c. Individual is responsible to notify any publishers and other correspondences of change of address.
  - d. Individual is responsible to notify Mail Center staff upon return to CSH, to discontinue any previous mail forwarding requests.

F. Incoming Mail and Packages:

1. All incoming packages must be received through the USPO, common carrier, authorized shipping agents, approved vendor or other institution. No packages will be accepted from visitors. The main point of receipt for packages will be the Mail Services. Upon receipt of patient packages, the Mail Services' staff will verify in accordance with this policy:
  - a. Individuals' correctly labeled ship to address.
  - b. Senders' correctly labeled return address.
  - c. Individual Mail Forwarding Form 34-100 (Note: Packages will be returned to sender, only first class mail will be forwarded.)
  - d. Approved Educational Materials Form CSH-099
  - e. Authorization to Ship Items Warranty/Non-Warranty Repair Return (Form 34-101 Pending Forms Committee Review)
  - f. Approved Vendor
  - g. Third-Party Mail/Package
  - h. Allowable Weight
  - i. Allowable Size

G. Package Distribution and Search:

1. Packages addressed to Individuals at CSH are delivered to PSPC, who in turn will deliver the packages to the addressee in accordance with this policy.
  - a. All incoming packages shall be inspected for contraband and processed by PSPC on a first come – first served basis except that those packages intended for Individuals with a signed waiver form on file may take priority.
  - b. Upon determination of contraband, the receiving Individual will decide to destroy the contraband item and/or place Class 3, 4 or 5 contraband items into Property Storage, excluding corrosive or perishable items.
  - c. Once the Individual's Property Storage containers exceed the fifty pound limit, the determination of disposition may be made by the Individual if within the rules and regulations of CSH. Any costs involved with the disposition will be the responsibility of the Individual.

2. Periodicals, catalogs and/or Literature Search materials are not considered vendor or quarterly packages. All printed material determined to not be mail will be received and processed by PSPC for contraband and/or approval.
  - a. All incoming periodicals, catalogs and/or Literature Search materials will be scanned to prevent the introduction of contraband into the facility. Any contraband found will be taped to the received material and the Individual will decide on the disposition of the contraband items in the prescribed manner.
  - b. Periodicals, catalogs and/or Literature Search materials will be subject to review by the package officer. If determined to be inappropriate they will be held for secondary review and final determination within 10 days by the Package Review Panel or treatment staff, depending on question of inappropriateness.
  - c. If upon opening the package, the material is found to be a non-periodical/catalog it will be handled as one of the following:
    1. Package;
    2. Mail;
    3. Contraband will be handled in the prescribed manner.
  - d. If it is determined by appropriate staff that the package is considered suspicious including:
    1. Suspecting an explosive device;
    2. Drugs;
    3. Weapon;
    4. Other contraband item.

The package will be opened before delivery to the Individual. These procedures will occur to ensure the safety and security of the staff, Individuals and the public, if suspicious contraband is found the contraband will be handled according to procedure.
3. Package Limitations:
  - a. Incoming (non-Vendor) packages are limited to three (3) packages per Individual per calendar quarter for the first three quarters (January – March, April – June, July – September) and will be tracked by PSPC.

- b. Incoming (non-Vendor) packages are limited to four (4) packages per Individual during the fourth calendar quarter (October – December), due to the holidays, and will be tracked by PSPC.
  - c. Non-Vendor packages in excess of the quarterly limit will be returned to the sender, originating post office or shipping agent.
  - d. There is no limit on approved vendor packages.
  - e. All packages must be received through the USPS, common carrier, parcel carrier, shipping agent or other institution. Packages will not be accepted from visitors.
  - f. Packages will not exceed 30 pounds in weight or the size limit of 24" length x 19" width x 16" height. Packages exceeding the weight or size limitations will not be accepted and will be returned to the post office or shipping agent.
  - g. Items not in factory sealed containers or determined to be contraband will be disposed of in a prescribed manner.
  - h. Any undeliverable package will be returned to sender, USPS, Common Carrier, Shipping Agent, other institution or will be disposed of in a prescribed manner.
4. Allowable Items:
- a. Only those items and the amounts listed on the Acceptable Incoming Items (Allowables List) will be allowed. Items not on the list will be handled in the prescribed manner.
  - b. The hospital will provide a list of acceptable incoming items (Allowables List) to the Individuals and this list will also be available at the Front Lobby Desk for visitors.
  - c. A copy of the most current or updated list will be posted on units and the patient's library for Individuals to access.
  - d. It is the Program's responsibility to ensure that all units have the most current lists.
5. Package Pick-Up:
- a. Incoming packages will be distributed to the Individual according to procedures established by the PSPC.
  - b. These procedures will be posted on the units, library and at the PSPC.



6. Searching of Packages:

- a. The PSPC Staff will be responsible for opening packages; searching contents, inventorying, and if necessary disposing of unauthorized package contents. Approved Vendor Packagings are subject to random searches.
- b. All items received from sources other than an Approved Vendor (e.g. guardian, family, friends or loved ones) will be opened, contents searched and placed in packaging approved by the hospital.
- c. Package contents will be placed in paper bags for transport to the units by the Individual or staff. An inventory sheet will be included with the contents and a copy will be sent to the unit through the inter-hospital mail.

7. Package and Property Waiver Forms:

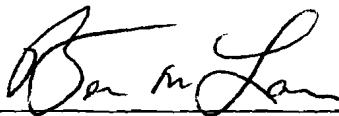
- a. Individuals will be present when packages addressed to them are opened unless they have a signed waiver on file.
- b. The waiver allows the package to be inventoried without the Individual's presence.
  1. There will be at all times; a patient representative present to observe the process.
  2. Waivers will remain in effect from the date signed until the Individual is discharged, transferred to another facility or withdraws the waiver.
- c. Individuals may withdraw their waiver at any time by signing the Cancel Waiver form and submitting it to the PSPC.
- d. As packages intended for Individuals with waiver forms on file can be handled in a much more expeditious manner and do not require the Individual's presence, such packages may be handled earlier than those addressed to Individuals without waiver forms on file.

H. Approved Vendor Purchases:

1. The Hospital has established a list of approved mail-order businesses, individuals and organizations referred to as approved vendors. Items can only be ordered from those listed as approved vendors.
2. This listing is intended to enhance compliance with contraband policies, eliminate returns of unacceptable purchases, and expedite the package-screening process.

3. Certain items must be purchased and received from approved vendors only. Not all items offered by an approved vendor are permitted and Individuals are advised to refer to the Acceptable Incoming Items List (Allowables List) and Contraband List for specifics.
  4. Individuals may submit requests for the addition of new vendors to the contraband committee during the month of July via the Contraband Committee.
  5. Mail Services will notify Individuals upon receipt/return of refused package via the "Notification of Refused Package Card". No information will be given out over the telephone to anyone; an Individual, their guardian, family, friends, or loved ones and/or CSH staff. Information regarding returned/refused packages will only be issued to the level of Program Manager by designated staff.
  6. Upon delivery of Individuals' packages to PSPC any Contraband that is discovered will be documented and handled in accordance with A.D. No. 818 Contraband and/or A.D. No. 626 Individuals' Property and Storage. Certain approved vendor packagings are subject to random opening and search.
  7. Approved Vendor purchases ordered by the Individual and received through the Mail Services that are then refused by the Individual at the time of issuance by the PSPC will require the Individual to pay for return shipping costs.
  8. Disposition and return of unopened packages to the Mail Services must be made within three (3) days of the date of package receipt to avoid additional return to sender shipping costs.
- I. Incoming Admission Property:
1. For the purpose of this directive, admission property is not considered to be a "package".
  2. Refer to the Administrative Directive A.D. No. 626, Individuals' Property and Storage for details.
- J. Mail Services for Outgoing Individuals' Mail and/or Packages:
1. Appointment scheduling for outgoing Individual packages:
    - a. To set up appointments for Individuals to send out mail and/or packages, Unit staff must call the Mail Services help line between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments will be set up at 10 minute intervals from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. One appointment is required for each piece of mail and/or package. Mail Services staff will log appointments in an appointment book. Mailing services will be closed on all State holidays.

- b. Unit staff must ensure, prior to sending the Individual to the Mail Services scheduled appointment, that the packages are properly and legibly addressed and labeled.
- c. Unit staff will be responsible for checking the mail and/or packages for contraband or other possible violation in the presence of the Individual. The Individual will then seal the package in the presence of the Unit staff prior to the appointment time. The Unit staff will then be responsible for the package and will retain it until the appointment time at the Mail Services to ensure the package is not tampered with. At approximately fifteen minutes prior to the Individual's appointment, the Unit staff will be responsible to legibly sign the package in the upper right hand corner of the package (where postage will be placed) and then call the Mail Services staff in the Mail Services to let them know that the Individual is on his way with the secured and verified sealed package. Individuals with a Person-served Access System (PAS) level one must be escorted to their appointment by Unit staff.
- d. Mail Services staff will be responsible to notify the Unit Supervisor of all no show Individuals for their pre-scheduled appointment time.
- e. Mail Services staff will weigh the package and inform the Individual of postage due. If the Individual is in agreement to the amount, Mail Services staff will then verify via the Gift Tran Individual "Cash Card" System that the Individual has adequate funds. If the funds are available, the Individual's transaction will be completed at the register and the postage will be placed on the package.
- f. If the Individual has insufficient funds or refuses to mail the package, the transaction will be cancelled. The unit will be called and the Individual will return to his unit with the package. Unit staff will open the package and give the Individual back his property. Unless the property is contraband, in which case it will be held in a secure area of the unit and the Individual will decide on the disposition of the contraband items in the prescribed manner. The copy of the property slip will go into the Individual's property envelop and his property will be checked off as returned on the master list.
- g. Packages may not exceed thirty (30) pounds.
- h. The Mail Services staff will receive the Individual packages for delivery to the United States Post Office.



BEN MCLAIN  
Executive Director (Acting)

Cross Reference(s):

A.D. No. 608 Patient Access to Courts

A.D. No. 626 Individuals' Property and Storage

A.D. No. 644 Trust Office Functions

A.D. No. 651 Processing of Departmental and United States Postal Services Mail

A.D. No. 818 Contraband