

SOP Template: Return-to-Sender and Undeliverable Mail Process

This SOP details the **return-to-sender and undeliverable mail process**, covering identification of undeliverable items, proper handling and documentation, timely return procedures, communication protocols, and tracking of returned mail. The goal is to ensure efficient management of undeliverable correspondence to maintain accurate records and improve mail delivery effectiveness.

1. Purpose

To outline a standardized process for managing mail that is returned to sender or deemed undeliverable, ensuring compliance with record-keeping requirements and maintaining up-to-date address information.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff involved in the receipt, documentation, handling, and return of undeliverable mail within the organization.

3. Responsibilities

- **Mailroom Staff:** Identify and handle undeliverable items, document and process returns.
- **Department Managers:** Ensure staff are trained and processes are followed.
- **Records Keeper:** Track and report on undeliverable items and update records as needed.

4. Definitions

- **Undeliverable Mail:** Any correspondence that cannot be delivered to the recipient due to incorrect address, recipient not at address, or other delivery issues.
- **Return-to-Sender:** Mail that is returned to the originator when delivery cannot be completed.

5. Procedure

1. **Identification of Undeliverable Mail**
 - Scan or visually inspect all returned mail for USPS or carrier notations (e.g., "Moved," "No Such Address," "Refused," etc.).
 - Separate undeliverable items from regular incoming mail immediately upon receipt.
2. **Documentation**
 - Log each undeliverable item in the **Undeliverable Mail Log** (see below).
 - Record the date of receipt, recipient name, address, reason for return, and sender information.
3. **Handling and Processing**
 - Review each item for address accuracy.
 - If possible, verify correct address using available databases or contact departments/personnel as necessary.
 - Update internal records if an error is identified (e.g., incorrect address or recipient).
4. **Returning Mail**
 - For confirmed incorrect addresses, prepare the item for return to sender by affixing the appropriate label and including documentation of the return.
 - Return mail items within two business days of identification as undeliverable.
5. **Communication Protocols**
 - Notify the intended recipient or originating department of returned/undeliverable items within one business day.
 - Provide details for resolution where applicable (e.g., need updated address, further action required).
6. **Tracking and Reporting**
 - Maintain the Undeliverable Mail Log for monitoring trends and potential address issues.
 - Generate a monthly report on undeliverable mail for management review.

6. Undeliverable Mail Log Example

Date Received	Recipient Name	Address	Reason for Return	Sender	Action Taken
2024-06-01	Jane Smith	123 Main St., Apt 4	Moved - No Forwarding	HR Dept	Returned to sender, record updated

7. References

- USPS guidelines for undeliverable mail
- Internal mail handling protocols

8. Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
2024-06-05	1.0	Initial template	Admin