

Postal Regulations Regarding Ordering of Devices

(dates are from Postal Manual or Domestic Mail Manual updates)

4/3/57 "When you receive the first application at your office to use precanceled stamps, requisition a handstamp (item No. 762)....."

7/27/67 Write-ins permitted. No more than ten stamps of each denomination. "Precanceled stamps are available only at post offices which prepare or obtain them for sale to permit holders."

The implication is that devices would not be ordered to satisfy collector requests.

8/19/68 Same wording as above.
& 10/1/70

2/17/72 Regulations amended to allow sale to collectors of one sheet from "available supplies" in post offices. And, section 143261, (b) now reads "Precanceled stamps are available at post offices which have them on hand or have a hand stamp (item No. 762) for precanceling purposes. It is not necessary to be providing stamps for a permit holder before honoring a philatelic request involving the use of a hand stamp. Hand stamps, once acquired, should be retained by post offices to fill requests from philatelists."

Sending stamps in is specifically prohibited. [*For the first time*]

While the implication seems to be that devices would not be ordered to satisfy collectors, no current permit holder is no longer an excuse to turn down a collector.

10/1/74 Wording is added to the effect that care should be taken to provide legible and well centered cancelations. Other requirements remain the same.

12/15/75 143.261 (b) has this added: "All offices with 36 or more revenue units should acquire a handstamp for the purpose of honoring philatelic requests for precanceling."

[NOTE: A 12/20/73 notice (almost a year earlier) directed to first, second and third class offices in the Southern postal region to honor requests from philatelists for precancels, and states, "In the event that you do not have a precancel

handstamp, item 762, and receive a request for precanceled stamps from a philatelist, immediately requisition the subject stamp....." "Notify the requester that the precanceled stamps will be issued in approximately 30 days."

The Western Regional Postal Bulletin No. 116, 7/29/74 , which predates the above by about 5 months, addresses requests from collectors, and says, in part, "If you receive a request and do not have a precancel handstamp (Item No. 762) requisition from the Area Supply Center"

Clearly the gates had been opened

9/21/78 The Postal Bulletin of this date lifts the quantity limit on sale to collectors.

It also contains this wording in 143.213 " Post Offices may not acquire a precancel handstamp solely to meet philatelic demand."

So, for two years and nine months, policy was to order devices for collectors. And one could only assume that the old rules were bandied about by collectors after 9/21/78.

11/1/81 Postal Bulletin repeats what was in the 9/21/78 issue.

7/1/93 The Domestic Mail Manual was completely reorganized and largely rewritten. There is no longer a discussion of devices. Section P023.4.0 covers sale to collectors - "Subject to USPS Policy in G 900, precanceled postage may be bought for philatelic purposes as well as postage payment."

4/1/04 The current Domestic Mail Manual contains the above, as well as the following:

"Precanceled commemorative stamps are not available"

"Creating philatelic oddities or precanceling issues or denominations that would not otherwise see legitimate mail use is not permitted."