

March 24, 2020

# P&C Weekly

Product Classification Message Board

## UPDATE 7: International Mail Service Disruptions Due to COVID-19

On March 24, 2020, the Postal Service™ received notifications from various postal operators regarding changes in international mail services due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

### The following countries have suspended certain mail services:

**Chile *UPDATE*:** CorreosChile, has advised that, owing to the suspension of flights from Chile and the resulting lack of transportation, CorreosChile is unable to accept or dispatch outbound international letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items. CorreosChile is monitoring the situation and will adopt corrective measures as the situation evolves.

**Honduras *UPDATE*:** Empresa de Correos de Honduras (Honducor) has advised that it is necessary to suspend postal services until March, 29, 2020, or a later date to be communicated in due course. The suspension affects imports of international mail at land and sea borders, and at Ramon Villeda Morales Airport in San Pedro Sula and Toncontin Airport in Tegucigalpa. It therefore asks countries that normally send their mail to Honduras by air cargo flights not to do so for the time being; to avoid mail being stored in customs warehouses, generating significant extra costs. An exception may be made for humanitarian aid, which Honducor is able to process with the knowledge and prior authorization of the Honduran Government. Honducor asks to be excused from delivery time requirements and compensation for late delivery of postal items until normal operations resume.

**Montenegro:** Montenegro Post has advised that all inbound and outbound postal traffic will be suspended until further notice.

As a convenience for our customers, the Postal Service will continue to accept and process mail destined for the aforementioned countries. This mail will be held within our network and will be delivered once mail service is restored.

### The following countries have announced service disruptions:

**Belarus:** the Republican Unitary Enterprise of Posts “Belpochta” (RUE “Belpochta”) has advised that, owing to the suspension of flights and various measures taken by countries (such as self-isolation, social distancing, advising people to work from home), it is currently unable to send mail (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items) to a number of countries. The current situation will have a major impact on quality of service for all types of inbound and outbound mail. Under these circumstances, RUE “Belpochta” can no longer guarantee service delivery standards (including delivery times and other quality parameters). As far as possible, international and domestic operations will be continued on a regular basis.

**Bhutan:** Bhutan Post has advised that it is experiencing significant disruption to its daily operations due to the closure of businesses, airlines and other transportation providers, This is having a direct impact on

service quality for international inbound and outbound services, and severe delays are to be expected until normal transport capacity becomes available. Bhutan Post is therefore declaring a situation of force majeure in relation to all international letter-post (including Prime Express), parcel-post and EMS services.

**Canada UPDATE:** Canada Post has advised that additional measures are being taken in response to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). In accordance with physical distancing requirements, Canada Post has implemented revised delivery procedures. Items destined to Canada requiring the payment of customs duties and taxes will be sent to a retail post office for collection. Customers will receive a delivery notice card telling them which post office is holding their item. All other items that would ordinarily require a signature will be left in a safe location without obtaining a signature from the recipient. This change eliminates the need for signature at the doorstep and greatly reduces the number of parcels sent to Canada Post offices for collection.

**Estonia UPDATE:** Estonian Post, has advised that the Estonian Government declared a state of emergency on 12 March. This is provisionally due to last until 1 May 2020. Estonian Post is therefore considering the situation as a case of force majeure, and wishes to inform its partners of some temporary changes to the services provided.

**Air services** to most countries have been interrupted, and shipments to some countries have been temporarily suspended. Estonian Post is trying to find alternatives (including replacing air links by road) wherever possible, but in most cases, these will involve increased transmission times, with a major impact on operations and, consequently, on quality of service for letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items.

**Signature on delivery** has suspended for inbound items requiring proof of delivery in order to avoid human contact. Registered items will be delivered to mailboxes where possible. In case of delivery to the person, the courier will enter the receiver's name on the handheld device, but with the word "Courier" in place of the signature. Courier parcels will still be delivered to the addressee, but in place of the signature, there will be an image (picture) of an address card, which the recipient will first be asked to sign (preferably using their own pen). This temporary measure came into force on 16 March 2020 and will last until further notice.

**Israel UPDATE:** Israel Postal Company has advised that, effective March 22, 2020, the Israeli Ministry of Health has introduced measures including self-isolation, limiting the number of personnel at the workplace and advising people to work from home and restrict travel. Israel Postal Company will continue to process incoming and outgoing mail, giving priority to premium services such as Express and PRIME, and will make every effort to ensure the regular distribution of mail. Israel Postal Company can no longer guarantee service delivery standards and is invoking force majeure. In addition, since 17 March 2020, a signature is no longer required for items requiring signature on delivery, and such items will be left at the door after being scanned and photographed to prove that delivery has been made. If possible, the name of the addressee will be recorded.

**Luxembourg UPDATE:** Post Luxembourg has advised that International and domestic operations will continue as normal insofar as possible. However, measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of both customers and staff, including the following:

- In general, post offices will remain open, but will be closed on Saturdays;
- For all letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items requiring signature on delivery, the addressee's signature will be replaced by the mail carrier's signature, together with the delivery code, in the signature field.
- Post Luxembourg is no longer able to guarantee delivery times or comply with standard rules for signature on delivery.

**Malaysia UPDATE:** Pos Malaysia, has advised that delays are to be expected in the processing, transportation and delivery of both incoming and outgoing international shipments of letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items, owing to the suspension of services, cancellation of flights, shutdown of airports and implementation of preventative measures to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19. The dispatching of all outbound airmails (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items) to the following countries is expected to be severely delayed:

- Austria, Belgium, China (People's Rep.), Croatia, Czech Rep., Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom (from 18 March 2020);
- Canada and United States of America (from 30 March 2020).

For inbound mail deliveries, letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items will be handled as follows:

- Items requiring signature on delivery will no longer be signed for at the moment of handover to the recipient. Instead, the mail carrier will ask for the recipient's name and will enter this information in the signature field of the handheld device or delivery manifest. This temporary measure came into force on Monday, 16 March 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice.
- For delivery of items to a mail room, the addressee will receive a text message or telephone call.
- Deliveries to premises or areas needing to be closed down due to COVID-19 are suspended.

Pos Malaysia is therefore declaring a situation of force majeure in relation to all international mails (letter-post, parcel post and EMS items), owing to COVID-19 and its effects on postal services worldwide, until sufficient transport capacity becomes available.

**Mongolia UPDATE:** Mongol Post, has advised that all international flights to and from Ulaanbaatar are suspended until April 30, 2020. The international mail processing center (MNULNA) will remain closed until April 1, 2020. This closure may be extended.

**Papua New Guinea:** Post PNG, has advised that the Government of Papua New Guinea has officially declared a state of emergency for 14 days, effective March 24, 2020. In order to minimize human contact and preserve the personal safety of Post PNG's employees and customers, it has been deemed necessary to take certain preventative measures, including;

- restricting access to postal outlets,
- limiting the processing of all inbound and outbound mail (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items),
- In order to minimize human contact, it will not be mandatory for to collect and provide written proof of delivery for items that would normally require a signature.

This is expected to remain the case until the end of the pandemic. For this reason, service delivery standards cannot be guaranteed and Post PNG is invoking a situation of force majeure with regard to quality of service, until the situation returns to normal.

**Philippines UPDATE:** Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) has advised that international air and sea transport from and to international airports and seaports throughout the Philippines will remain operational during the community quarantine. However, domestic air, land and sea transport is suspended for the duration of the community quarantine imposed in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon island, and several areas of the Visayas and Mindanao islands. In view of this, the following changes are being made to PHLPost operations for the period of community quarantine (currently scheduled to run until April 12, 2020):

- International mail processing centers will maintain a skeleton workforce in order to accept incoming international dispatches. Inbound items received up to April 12, 2020 will not be

processed and forwarded to delivery post offices until the normal work schedule resumes (as from April 13, 2020).

- There will be no outbound international dispatches from the international mail processing centers from March 17, 2020 until end of the community quarantine.
- Outbound postal items received up to April 12, 2020 by post offices located in areas under community quarantine and in other areas of the Visayas and Mindanao islands will be processed and forwarded to destination countries upon resumption of the normal work schedule (April 13, 2020).

Delays to inbound and outbound postal items are expected during the community quarantine period. Detailed information on the areas covered by the community quarantine will be provided as soon as it is available.

**Saint Lucia:** Saint Lucia Postal Service has advised that it is currently operating a restricted postal service with reduced hours, reduced personnel and fewer sub-offices, effective Monday, March 23, 2020. This response plan will affect the processing of inbound and outbound mail as well as timely replies to queries.

**Senegal:** La Poste du Sénégal has advised that measures to close the borders and restrict travel have been implemented by the Government of Senegal and the airlines. These decisions will have a significant impact on shipment and delivery times for letter post, parcel post and packets. Consequently, La Poste du Sénégal is unable to guarantee compliance with delivery standards and is invoking a situation of force majeure with regard to quality of service. La Poste du Sénégal will continue to offer postal services insofar as possible.

**Slovakia:** Slovenska Pošta, a. s., has advised that the Slovakian government has introduced measures including self-isolation, social distancing, advising people to work from home and restricting travel. Given these new measures, all inquiries, including those handled electronically through Internet-based systems for parcel-post, EMS, registered and tracked items, are liable to be disrupted. In addition, call agents may be unable to deal with telephone inquiries. Consequently, there may be a severe impact on service quality for international inbound and outbound services and service delivery standards. Slovenska Pošta is therefore invoking the force majeure and analogous provisions of all such standards, until the situation has returned to normal.

Special processes have been put in place for postal items subject to delivery, specifically as follows:

- Parcels that would ordinarily require the addressee's signature can now be deposited in parcel terminals;
- Delivery of registered items is suspended and will only be notified. These items will be deposited at post offices and the customer will receive a notification (announcement to mailbox, electronic notification sent by e-mail or SMS).
- Slovenska Pošta has also extended by 14 days the current period of 18 days during which postal items will be stored at post offices.

Furthermore, Slovenska Pošta wishes to emphasize that, owing to the suspension of flights, it is currently unable to send letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items to an increasing number of countries both within and outside the European Union. Therefore, temporarily, Slovenska Pošta will no longer accept letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items for destinations to which transport capacities are unavailable.

**Spain *UPDATE*:** Correos y Telégrafos has advised that, owing to the suspension of flights from and to Spain, and the ensuing lack of transport capacity, it is currently unable to send mail (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items) to an increasing number of countries both within and outside the European Union. As a result, Correos y Telégrafos is therefore declaring a situation of force majeure and ceasing, with

immediate effect, to accept letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items destined for all concerned Union member countries, until sufficient transport capacity becomes available. Moreover, the Spanish Government has extended the “state of alert” that was declared on March 14, 2020, with effect until April 11, 2020, in order to reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The state of alert may yet be extended again. This will have a major impact on operations and, consequently, on quality of service for all types of inbound and outbound letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items.

**Switzerland *UPDATE*:** Swiss Post has advised that it has changed its delivery process for all items requiring signature on delivery. Effective March 16, 2020, letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items requiring signature on delivery will not be signed for by the recipient. In place of the recipient’s signature, the delivery agent will enter a code in the signature field of the handheld device. This temporary measure will apply until further notice. As a result, Swiss Post is no longer able to guarantee inbound and outbound mail standards, and is therefore invoking a situation of force majeure with regard to quality of service and remuneration for all categories of mail item (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items) until further notice.

**Turkey *UPDATE*:** Turkish PTT Corporation, has advised a period of leave has been declared for certain parts of its workforce, especially those in high-risk categories, in both the public and private sectors. This will have a major impact on operations and, consequently, on quality of service for all types of inbound mail (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items). For this reason, service delivery standards cannot be guaranteed and a situation of force majeure has been declared until the situation returns to normal.

**Ukraine:** Ukrposhta has advised that effective Monday, March 23, 2020, the Government of Ukraine has taken measures to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including the self-quarantine of staff. Delays are to be expected in the delivery of all inbound mail. Severe delays are also to be expected for outbound mail to all destinations, as a result of flight suspensions. Ukrposhta’s national and international operations centers remain open and continue to operate, but it is necessary to declare a situation of force majeure, with immediate effect, until sufficient transport capacity becomes available. In order to minimize human contact, it will not be mandatory for Ukrposhta to collect and provide written proof of delivery for letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items that would normally require a signature.