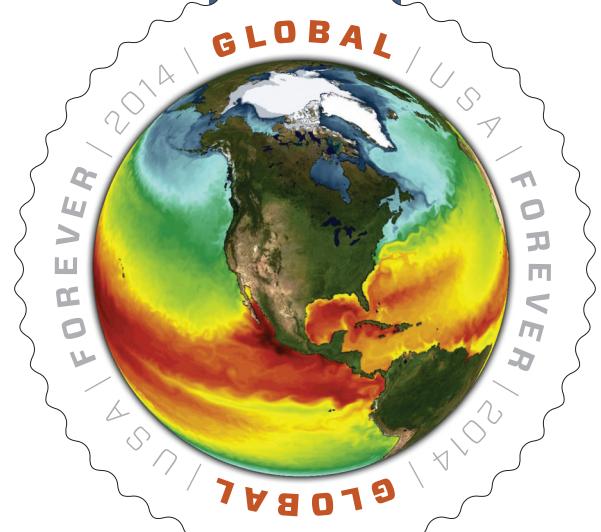


# United States Postal Service Climate Change Adaptation Plan

June 2014



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# A Statement from the Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer

The U.S. Postal Service® is a unique organization with a long history of service to the American people. We are committed to ensuring that the Postal Service™ continues that legacy of service and becomes a more resilient organization by preparing for the effects of climate change now and in the future. Increased flooding, rising sea levels, more intense weather events, and changes in temperature, precipitation, and drought patterns could potentially disrupt our ability to provide mail service.

Taking a proactive approach now to address the impact of climate change on the Postal Service will better position our organization to manage emerging mission risks, ensure effective operation, and help us identify new opportunities. Within this planning framework, the Postal Service will begin to incorporate climate change adaptation into its strategies, plans, business processes, and programs. I have established a Climate Change Adaptation Working Group with representatives from appropriate departments. This group, chaired by the Chief Sustainability Officer, will track and manage integrating climate change considerations into appropriate actions and policies.

These actions will enhance the Postal Service's resiliency and support our mission—to provide every U.S. resident and business with reliable, affordable, universal mail service, now and for future generations.



Patrick R. Donahoe



# Policy Statement

## Climate Change Adaptation Policy Statement

June 30, 2014

**Purpose:** This policy statement affirms the Postal Service's commitment to climate change adaptation and formalizes the continued integration of a changing climate into the Postal Service's decision-making processes.

**Background:** The Postal Service released a climate change policy and plan in recognition of issues raised in Executive Order (EO) 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance*, and EO 13653, *Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change*. The Postmaster General released an internal memorandum in June 2013 establishing a USPS™ Climate Change Adaptation Working Group. This group of functional experts was tasked with creating the USPS Climate Change Adaptation Plan released June 2014, and with continuing to adjust the Postal Service's integrated approach to climate adaptation planning over time.

**Vision and Strategic Approach:** As stated in EO 13653, the impacts of climate change are already affecting communities across the nation — including “prolonged periods of excessively high temperatures, more heavy downpours, an increase in wildfires, more severe droughts, permafrost thawing, ocean acidification, and sea-level rise.” The Postal Service’s mission to provide universal mail service to the people of the United States means that we deliver throughout the United States, including communities vulnerable to the results of a changing climate. These communities are our customers — and we are positioned to support their mailing needs.

The Postal Service’s climate change adaptation planning will (1) identify the policies and actions that support organizational resilience and (2) integrate consideration of a changing climate into relevant policies and activities. Our vision is of a Postal Service resilient to climate change impacts, an organization that makes decisions informed by climate projections and uses this information to mitigate the effects of severe weather events on service and infrastructure.



The Postal Service is a leader in accounting for its greenhouse gas emissions. USPS recognizes that climate change adaptation is a critical complement to mitigation. The Climate Change Adaptation Working Group operates cross-functionally to integrate a changing climate into the Postal Service’s operational and long-term planning, strategies, and processes. This group will continue to meet to track the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

**Responsibilities:** The chief sustainability officer will chair the Climate Change Adaptation Working Group, lead climate change integration efforts into appropriate actions and policies, and coordinate with other federal, state, and interagency efforts as appropriate on climate change adaptation issues that cut across agency jurisdictions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T G Day".

Thomas G. Day  
USPS Chief Sustainability Officer

# Introduction

The U.S. Postal Service's mission is to provide secure, efficient, and reliable mail service to every address in the United States. With an over 200 year history, USPS continually responds to changing customer needs for postal services. Climate change represents one of our newest emerging challenges.

The Postal Service has a longstanding history of resiliency. When severe weather events destroy or damage the postal infrastructure, or otherwise disrupt mail service, we are quick to respond and restore services. The Climate Change Adaptation Plan does not seek to alter those efforts. Rather, it looks to take steps in advance of these events to either significantly mitigate or possibly prevent the damage and disruption that might otherwise have occurred.

We began by addressing one of the causes for climate change — greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing GHG emissions begins with reporting, and we have reported our GHG inventory every year since 2008. In addition, our sustainability reporting tracks our implementation of strategies that seek to reduce the Postal Service's contribution to climate change. However, even as many organizations seek to cut emissions, the world's carbon emissions are continuing to increase. The Postal Service is taking the next step to integrate climate adaptation into our business processes so we can adjust to future changes and improve our ability to respond to climate-related risks.

Climate change adaptation planning is essentially risk management. Based on current projections, climate change could drive an increase in the intensity and/or duration of certain extreme weather events. The projections also point to an increase in flooding driven by intense precipitation and rising sea levels, and an increase in the number of extreme heat events. As these events can disrupt the Postal Service's ability to provide mail service, as well as increase costs for maintaining our infrastructure, it is important to plan for them now.

Further, climate risk is a business risk. We are a revenue-driven organization that provides universal mail service to the nation. Climate planning is embedded in a larger process of ensuring that the mail continues to arrive in a timely manner and that we are satisfying our customers' needs.

This plan is the result of the dedicated collaboration of experts from across the organization. The Postal Service is building on the work it began in June 2011, when we released our first climate change adaptation policy. The following June, we published a high-level climate adaptation plan. In June 2013, the Postmaster General established a Climate Change Adaptation Working Group representing functional experts from across the Postal Service. This group investigates opportunities to embed climate change considerations into new or existing policies and plans. USPS also initiated a campaign to raise awareness about climate change and its potential impacts on the Postal Service.

This plan identifies and prioritizes actions for USPS to better understand and address climate change impacts. The Postal Service will report annually to the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) on our progress.



# Adaptation Planning and Evaluation Process

## Objectives

Our vision for the Postal Service is to be prepared and aware of climate change impacts and to incorporate this knowledge into the plans and policies of all functional areas within the Postal Service.

The objectives of adaptation planning are to be proactive in our ability to:

- Assess and identify risks from the effects of climate change by conducting vulnerability assessments and other studies;
- Strengthen existing adaptive capacity; and
- Manage risks and maximize opportunities from climate change impacts by integrating adaptation considerations into policy, programs and operations, where appropriate and in order of priority.

## Approach

Each year we will review and revise the plan to reflect our maturing adaptation capacity and the continued identification of Postal Service's vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

As represented in Figure 1, our continuous adaptation approach will identify relevant climate change impacts, assess the severity and likelihood of the risks, identify affected policies and programs, identify existing adaptation capacity, prioritize activities based on the type of risk, and also continually monitor progress. This strategy is adapted from a framework in the National Academies Board of Atmospheric Science and Climate report from 2010, *Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change*. Figure 1 also includes the dates when USPS was first active in each step.

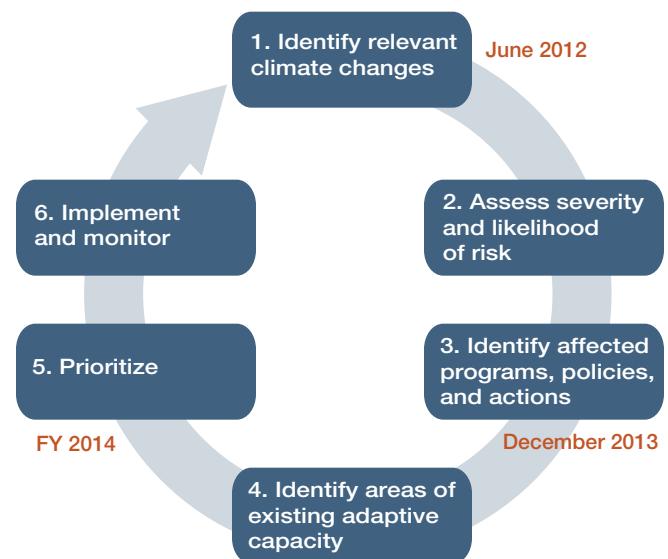


Figure 1: Guiding Adaptation Approach and Milestone Dates

## Climate Change Adaptation Working Group

The U.S. Postal Service Climate Change Adaptation Working Group (CCAWG) includes experts from different functions throughout the organization. Convening this group was a key action item identified in the June 2012 climate adaptation plan. The USPS chief sustainability officer chairs the CCAWG and meets monthly with the group to discuss progress on climate adaptation planning. The Office of Sustainability coordinates the integration of adaptation into the Postal Service's policy, programs, and operations.

**CCAWG Members:**<sup>1</sup> The Postmaster General's memorandum identified the functions within the Postal Service to participate in the CCAWG. Each office listed below identified delegates to participate in this group.

- Postmaster General
  - Office of National Preparedness
- Deputy Postmaster General
  - Office of Sustainability
  - Corporate Communications
  - Government Relations
- Chief Postal Inspector
- Chief Financial Officer
  - Finance and Planning
  - Supply Management
- Chief Operating Officer
  - Delivery and Post Office Operations
  - Network Operations
  - Facilities
- Chief Human Resources Officer
  - Labor Relations
  - Employee Resource Management
- Chief Information Officer
  - Information Technology
  - Engineering

## USPS and Climate Change Vulnerability

The Postal Service defines climate change vulnerability as the degree to which the organization's employees, network, fleet, facilities and infrastructure are susceptible to and burdened by the changes associated with climate change. By increasing the adaptive capacity of the Postal Service's assets and programs, USPS can reduce its risk. USPS completed a high-level vulnerability assessment in 2012, which considered the exposure and sensitivity of the Postal Service's assets to climate impacts and hazards. As USPS evaluates policies and programs to address vulnerability, we will continue to assess this risk (steps 1, 2, and 3 of the *Guiding Adaptation Approach* shown in Figure 1 on page 7).

## Risk Determination and the Mission

Our continuing risk determination process includes evaluating climate impact projections and findings made by federal agencies, cities, states, and research organizations. We also review recent decisions and the impacts on our operations from severe weather events to design long-term policies moving forward.

Our mission is most affected by extreme weather events which can delay and disrupt mail delivery. The Postal Service's existing planning for disruptions to mail delivery includes our preparation and response to these events. However, our climate adaptation initiative seeks to identify how long-term planning and collaboration across functions can reduce the costs associated with extreme weather events. This can include infrastructure design, network configuration, and creation of common resources that help decision-makers take the changing climate into consideration.

Further, our climate adaptation planning must take into account not just the cost to rebuild a facility after a weather-related event, but also downtime, equipment loss, availability of backup processing support and other significant cascading effects. The objective of our adaptation process is to avoid or minimize these damages. Through long-term informed planning, we can reduce costs. By collaborating across functions, we are identifying how network configuration decision-making today can affect how well we can respond and manage delays in the future.

The main climate change impact categories considered relevant for the Postal Service include: changes in the severity of damages related to extreme storm events, sea level change, precipitation changes, and temperature changes that lead to temperature-related health risks and infrastructure damage. Table 1 on page 9 shows these areas of vulnerability that could potentially affect the Postal Service's mission. We tested the validity of these vulnerabilities by reviewing site-specific infrastructure across the United States and certain recent decisions about renewing leases.

<sup>1</sup> CCAWG members are represented at meetings by delegated expert staff.

Climate Change Impact Categories	Employees	Network and Fleet	Facilities and Infrastructure
Extreme storm events			
Increased storm damage from winds and flooding (severity)	✗	✗	✗
Exacerbated storm damage related to sea level rise	✗	✗	✗
Wildfires	✗	✗	✗
Sea level change			
Coastal land loss/ Flooding		✗	✗
Salt water intrusion			✗
Precipitation changes			
Higher precipitation on average (regional)	✗	✗	✗
Drought		✗	✗
Temperature changes			
More hot days on average	✗	✗	✗
More heat waves/ extreme heat	✗	✗	✗

Table 1: Identified Vulnerabilities on Employees, Network and Fleet, and Facilities and Infrastructure

We will also consider our strategic mission not just in the short term but also over the next 30 to 75 years to determine how climate change could affect future Postal Service efforts. Our planning must take into account how our mission will change and if we need to adjust our networks.

## Existing Risk Mitigation Processes

The Postal Service has procedures in place to address major events such as hurricanes and other natural disasters.

The Office of National Preparedness (ONP) partners with USPS Operations, at both the headquarters level and with line management in the field, to ensure we are prepared for or can quickly recover from any incident that could impact operations. These efforts include:

- Plans — *The Hurricane Preparedness Guide*, Continuity of Operations Plans, facility and network off-load plans, and all hazard Integrated Emergency Management Plans which associate roles and responsibilities with preparedness and recovery tasks.
- Training — Annual Emergency Management Team training completed.
- Exercises — Facilitated discussions, table top and full scale exercises at all levels completed annually.
- After Action Reviews — Event and training reviews completed after each occurrence.
- Awareness — Providing daily coverage of current and upcoming weather events that could impact operations to allow for preparation activities.
- Annual/Seasonal preparedness reviews.
- Event-specific support to the field — An example of this support is deploying large generators to provide temporary power for critical network facilities. For example, during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, ONP monitored the progress of the storm, staged emergency generators before the storm, and deployed them as power outages occurred. When power losses affected facilities, Operations adjusted schemes and implemented mail off-load to alternate processing facilities.

Coordination is vital to minimize operational downtime and expedite site restoration and remediation. For example, the *Facilities Guide for Disaster Response* provides standardized procedures for natural disaster planning, initial response, assessment, mitigation, and facility repair. This guide provides instructions on how to coordinate National, Area, and District Emergency Disaster Response Plans and leverages other federal agency specialties such as hazardous event detection and warnings. Ongoing revision is informed by actual experience with such situations, such as the disaster management information garnered from the Facility Assessment Tool (FAT) and the Facility Post-Cleanup/Renovation Checklist (FRAC). These tools are used to specifically assess site conditions after a hazardous event and whose results are compiled in the Environmental Tool Kit (ETK) providing data that is useful for adaptation planning. Other existing data can be used in a similar way.

Our climate adaptation actions and policies should support these existing processes. By adding long-term considerations, our resiliency planning will be better able to manage our potentially shifting needs.

## Extreme Storm Events

Evidence indicates that climate change is expected to increase the intensity of storms and hurricanes. An increased incidence of extreme storms leads to infrastructure damage and transportation disruptions (USGCRP, 2009).

Extreme storm events are a risk for employee safety, integrity of infrastructure, and continuity of delivery. Under future climate scenarios, the Postal Service's extreme weather response programs will need to be able to manage more intense natural disaster events that may affect areas not previously vulnerable, and so less prepared to manage the damage on their own.

Figure 2 on page 11 illustrates the effects of climate change events. We analyzed these events to determine the impacts on the Postal Service.

The Postal Service's preparedness program is scalable. We will continue to maintain a system that can manage changes in the frequency or intensity of extreme weather events. In addition, we need a Postal network that positions itself over time to reduce the need for and cost of recovery — even as we may decrease our building footprint.

Our policies and actions for climate adaptation in response to extreme weather events include investing in new technologies that improve our response to events, organizing our network to be able to handle the potential loss of key facilities, and building our infrastructure and facilities to be resilient in a disaster. These activities must be designed to integrate with our existing response program. We're collecting information on our programs and sites and adding climate change as a criterion for decision-making.

## Sea Level Change

Rising sea level in combination with increased severity of storms is anticipated to amplify risk of major coastal impacts, including both temporary and permanent flooding of airports, roads, rail lines, and tunnels (USGCRP, 2009).

In the United States, almost 40 percent of the population lives in coastal counties, an area that is only 10 percent of our entire land area (NOAA, 2014). The Postal Service serves these populations as part of our mission. We've reviewed some of our important sites on the Atlantic and Gulf Coast. We plan to continue to consider how sea level change may impact our owned and leased real estate portfolio and management processes, including site identification, leasing, and design and construction.

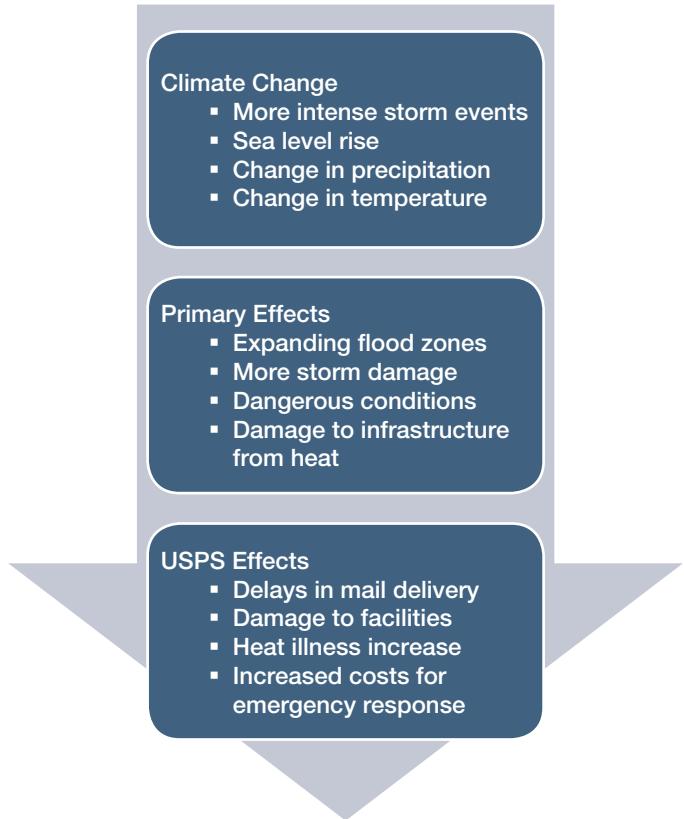


Figure 2: Effects on USPS from climate changes

The Postal Service is addressing sea level change by identifying coastal locations and projected rates of sea level rise. We are looking at our facilities and considering sea level rise in investment decision-making. Sea level change impacts the Postal Service by exacerbating extreme weather events that can prove to be threats to employees and our mission. Sea level change could lead to increased regular flooding, contamination of the facility water source through sea water intrusion, changing delivery points due to shifts in populations, and increased storm surge damage to delivery routes and infrastructure.

## Precipitation Changes

Floods and droughts are likely to become more common and more intense, which will increase risk of delays and disruptions in transportation (USGCRP, 2009).

Postal facilities, equipment, and fleet can be damaged or destroyed by extreme precipitation events. Areas prone to flooding driven by heavy precipitation may be at increased risk of damage. Some regions of the United States, such as the Northeast, are projected to experience increases in average precipitation levels, which could affect some Postal facilities.

The Postal Service, where appropriate, will continue to follow the guidelines of the National Flood Insurance Program in its facility portfolio management processes, including site identification, lease decisions, design, and construction of facilities to withstand flooding. Our existing practice of documenting flood events and other environmental impacts to our facilities in our Environmental Toolkit (ETK) has generated invaluable information.

## Temperature Changes

Extreme heat represents a serious health threat to employees delivering mail. Under climate change projections, the number of extreme heat events will increase, which would increase the risk of illness. Extreme heat can also limit some transportation operations and cause pavement and other infrastructure damage (USGCRP, 2009). Even as extreme heat instances are projected to increase, there will still be extreme cold events.

The Postal Service's safety program includes communications on and procedures for operating in extreme heat and cold. For climate change, USPS is concerned about regions and employees experiencing temperature extremes that are unfamiliar. This will be relevant for communities faced with more heat waves, as well as continuing to manage extreme cold. The Postal Service is responding to extreme heat and cold by evaluating its extreme temperature-related policies for delivery and employee safety.

# Adaptation Policies and Actions

Adaptation planning for the Postal Service addresses both the magnitude of risk and the uncertainty of impacts. This is more than a one-time decision. The USPS CCAWG meets and discusses climate change risks and is ensuring that climate change is included in the policies and programs to protect important assets.

The CCAWG identified and prioritized a set of policies and actions that the Postal Service is reviewing. Below, we describe each policy, its purpose, and the time frame for action. This interim report will be updated to include more information as the planning process continues.

We are led by the guidance from the White House Council of Environmental Quality to prioritize the most vulnerable populations, use best-available science, apply risk-management methods and tools, and maximize mutual benefits.

The USPS adaptation policies are categorized as follows:

1. Climate change integration and collaboration
2. Employees
3. Network and fleet
4. Facilities and infrastructure

## 1. Climate Change Integration and Collaboration

These policies and actions support the climate adaptation process through awareness and coordination activities.

**The Postal Service established and operates the CCAWG to develop policy and monitor implementation of climate planning activities.**

The first step in adaptation planning was the establishment of the CCAWG to connect experts from throughout the organization. This group identifies relevant policies and programs and provides insight on the costs and benefits of different policies and actions.

### Milestones

Postmaster General released a memo establishing the CCAWG

**Status:** Complete – June 2013

The CCAWG meets monthly to coordinate climate adaptation procedures and discuss risk and climate change

**Status:** Ongoing

The CCAWG identifies planning milestones including an interim plan in March, an updated plan in June, and a road map for action in September 2014

**Status:** Planned – September 2014

**The Postal Service will support a communications plan that spreads awareness about climate change and the activities of the CCAWG.**

The Postal Service also coordinates awareness activities for employees and the public about our programs — both related to climate change and disaster recovery. This has included:

- Videos on disaster response after Superstorm Sandy: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g90aDmSe9k&list=PL1NEtJgO49CXszmsbon76KHYglx-fmRJT>,
- A presentation during the Deputy Postmaster General's Town Hall meeting in 2013 highlighting climate change adaptation planning, and
- An Energy Action Month video featuring a NASA scientist discussing climate change with the USPS Chief Sustainability Officer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRKg2ISJr50&list=PL22EB0D3268894E25>.

USPS will continue to develop a communication strategy for education and outreach. By engaging employees and multiple functions, we intend to identify actions and policies that prove beneficial to USPS for long-term climate planning as well as supporting existing programs.

## Milestones

The CCAWG and Office of Sustainability will create ad hoc awareness pieces

**Status:** Ongoing

Develop a climate change communications approach utilizing existing communications resources

**Status:** In Progress

The CCAWG identifies planning milestones including an interim plan in March, an updated plan in June, and a road map for action in September 2014

**Status:** Planned – September 2014

**The Postal Service will create a central repository for common understanding of available resources pertaining to climate change, mitigation activities, and adaptation strategies.**

A priority of the CCAWG is to complement existing efforts and to identify critical sources of information, thus providing a helpful tool for USPS functions. This is an example of the co-benefits of climate adaptation planning.

## Milestones

Identify existing programs and resources that contribute to a climate-resilient USPS as education for the CCAWG

**Status:** In Progress

Leverage existing databases

**Status:** Under Evaluation

Continue to develop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) use in relevant processes and procedures

**Status:** Under Evaluation

Ensure that critical environmental information on storage tanks, hazardous materials, etc., is provided in times of emergency for safety and security purposes

**Status:** In Progress

## 2. Employees

Employee-related climate adaptation actions include ensuring the safety of our employees during extreme weather events and from damaged infrastructure.

**The Postal Service will update the extreme temperature and weather safety management and engagement policy for climate change considerations.**

USPS recently updated its extreme temperature policies to include revised advisories, communication and training strategies. Our communication strategy includes the measures employees should take to be safe in all weather — hot and cold. The Postal Service is continuously reviewing heat and cold safety-related instances in order to properly design and adjust policy. The outcome of these policies is that employees will continue to be engaged and be aware of temperature safety.

## Milestones

Update heat and cold weather policy for USPS

**Status:** Complete

Continuously review safety related instances

**Status:** Ongoing

The Postal Service will identify strategy for managing and delivering in extreme weather, informed by climate change.

The Postal Service focuses on ensuring that employees are safe during deliveries, and continues to evaluate policy and resources related to mail delivery during extreme weather events. The next policy relates to our continuing process of identifying how best to handle mail delivery during extreme events.

#### Milestones

Identify opportunities to address operations during extreme weather, and determine if these procedures need changes

Status: In Progress

Engage Area and local personnel on the variables they evaluate to make local delivery decisions during weather events

Status: In Development

### 3. Network and Fleet

The Postal Service's climate considerations include policies and actions that strengthen the entire Postal network, including routes, fleet vehicles, facility locations, and the supply chain. There is some overlap with this category of adaptation strategies and those found in the Facilities and Infrastructure section.

**The Postal Service will include climate evaluations in proposals brought to Investment Review or other major decision-making processes to ensure that climate is considered as a risk component for major investments including facilities, equipment, programs, and the fleet.**

The Postal Service does not provide grants, loans, or technical assistance to other entities. Therefore, supporting climate resilient investment by removing barriers to increase the nation's resilience to climate change is outside the scope of our operations.

#### Milestones

The Office of Sustainability is assigned as an approver in the decision analysis review process

Status: Complete

Climate change criteria is included in investment review templates

Status: In Progress – 2014

Create a checklist of climate criteria for the CCAWG to guide climate change related evaluations including data resources, climate change projections, etc.

Status: In Progress

Evaluate the effectiveness of participation in the investment review process

Status: In Progress – 2015

**The Postal Service will ensure that climate-related forecasts and impact projections are included in the formal assessment of decisions to close, open, expand, or change functions for network operations facilities.**

In addition to the major investments that are included in the decision-analysis reviews, other large decisions involve closing, opening, or changing the operations of major facilities during network changes and consolidations. The Postal Service is working towards including climate change as a consideration in the Area Mail Processing consolidation procedure identified in Handbook PO-408, *Area Mail Processing Guidelines*. We are collecting the information and resources necessary to make informed decisions that balance the many variables that are important for any network configuration decision.

#### Milestones

Identify critical climate considerations that should be included in network consolidation decisions

Status: Complete

Review all processing centers for climate risks for consolidation decision making

Status: In Progress

Add climate consideration as an addendum to current assessment of decisions

Status: In Progress

Implement changes to the facility site selection and closure process to integrate climate considerations

Status: Outyear

**The Postal Service will invest in disaster management resources to improve its capability and capacity to scale up response for more intense or broader events, and to reload to deal with more frequent events.**

Part of our climate change adaptation approach is to support our disaster management programs and continue to improve on them. Increasing our resilience is an important co-benefit to both climate adaptation planning and disaster management planning.

### Milestones

Evaluate purchasing Web EOC software to assist in managing emergency communication

Status: Pilot – Jan/Feb 2014

Provide Postal Police Officers United States Postal Inspection Service® credentials/badges

Status: Complete

Evaluate natural disaster and extreme weather event After Action Reports and develop corrective action plans

Status: Ongoing

Set up a national mobile refueling contract designed for quick response to natural disasters

Status: In Progress

### The Postal Service will ensure critical personnel have sufficient network connectivity to support systems from a remote location.

In response to our experience during past extreme weather events and in light of existing projections about storm severity related to climate change over time, the Postal Service is evaluating policies that can enable the organization to quickly recover after disruptions. Below, we discuss the steps to increasing network connectivity options for critical personnel — so the operations of the Postal Service can continue even if an individual's main office is closed.

### Milestones

Adjust job descriptions for critical personnel to require network connectivity

Status: In Progress

Continue investment and investigation of technology that can ease connection to the Postal Network

Status: In Progress

## 4. Facilities and Infrastructure

The network-related policies support programs that affect the operations of the delivery network from site to site. Facilities and infrastructure policies are intended to strengthen and assess the overall building portfolio and individual facilities and equipment for climate change impacts.

### The Postal Service will update building design standards and frame design strategies to incorporate climate change criteria.

Our Handbook RE-6, *Facilities Environmental Guide*, as implemented and building design standards continue to include floodplain considerations and recommend a minimum elevation of 1 foot above the 100-year floodplain designated by FEMA and 2 feet when feasible. The 2014 building design standard update currently in progress adds the consideration of urban flooding and local insight into flooding frequency and severity in an area. In all cases, design and construction conforms to the more stringent of local code, FEMA local requirements, and internal postal guidelines.

### Milestones

Implement revisions to building design standards that include expanded investigation of flooding risk

Status: In Progress

Continue to revise building design standards as more information arises about high-risk areas and climate considerations, as appropriate

Status: Ongoing

Ensure that we continue to use locally-specific design standards that incorporate local climate extremes

Status: Ongoing

### The Postal Service will add climate risk to regular facility condition assessments, post-event facility assessments, and other local site evaluations.

Beyond building design, the Postal Service is also investigating the addition of climate risk to routine facility assessments and evaluations. The Postal Service's management of climate change includes consideration of climate risk factors in its existing real estate portfolio management processes. All such decisions have an element of environmental due diligence. Site decisions for new facility construction and leases include facility and real estate assessment and risk factors weighed with operational criteria. Facility condition assessments may identify flooding or other climate related impacts that can be avoided in the future. As we gain more knowledge about how climate impacts the Postal Service, we can leverage this program to enhance confidence to our decision making.

## Milestones

Identify what climate data could be collected as part of the facility condition assessment process, including engaging local staff/experts on frequency of extreme events

Status: In Progress

Adjust the facility condition assessment process, where effective, to collect data on climate risk factors

Status: In Progress

Validate that "higher ground" lot locations are re-verified as new flood map data are published by NOAA or as local staff identifies site-specific flooding risks that may not be captured in flood maps

Status: In Development

## The Postal Service will evaluate climate risk for real estate-related plans, including leasing, and design and construction related plans.

The Postal Service's adaptation planning also looks at real estate-related plans, including leases and design and construction. Our policies and actions are designed to ensure that these decisions are based on current climate information.

## Milestones

Verify that the existing lease renewal and new construction site decisions consider current climate risks

Status: Ongoing

Research evolving information about future climate risks to ensure that this existing process continues to appropriately reflect risk

Status: Ongoing

Continue to assess this process for improvement over time including through communications and other procedures

Status: Ongoing

Analyze and prioritize critical facilities that are leased from or through the General Services Administration (GSA). We will partner directly with GSA to address the vulnerabilities of these sites and facilities to incremental climate change and variability

Status: Ongoing

## The Postal Service will ensure equipment can meet temperature thresholds and that operational needs are met.

The Postal Service depends on sophisticated equipment to process and sort the mail. At this time, processing equipment is able to operate during the extreme heat and cold events we have experienced. USPS will continue to consider how extreme temperatures could impact our equipment over time.

## Milestones

USPS identified that processing equipment has been able to withstand the temperature extremes currently experienced throughout the country

Status: Complete

Continue the existing process of monitoring processing equipment performance and identify if extreme temperature may become a consideration in the future

Status: Ongoing

Continue to support risk mitigation plans for critical supplies

Status: In Development

Consider extreme temperature changes in vehicle investment decisions

Status: Under Evaluation

## The Postal Service will implement building retrofits at select mail processing facilities to shorten the time to connect alternate power during emergencies (critical facilities experiencing power outages).

Part of climate resilience is making investments to reduce recovery times and costs related to disruptions due to storms or changing Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) requirements that can heighten the need for electric-based cooling, which puts increased burdens on the electric grid.

## Milestones

Implement investments in cabling for connecting alternate power

Status: In Progress

Integrate climate considerations into future generator and supporting infrastructure investments, as applicable

Status: Ongoing

## Monitoring and Evaluation

USPS will create a monitoring and evaluation plan of climate change adaptation actions. In these initial years, USPS will assess its progress by reviewing stakeholder engagement as well as policies that have been evaluated.

## Interagency Coordination and Supporting a Resilient Nation

Our letter carriers are a constant presence at the front door of citizens across the country. Often, after disasters, a letter carrier delivering mail on a route is the first sign of a return to normalcy. The Postal Service ensures that medicines and important mail are delivered as quickly as possible after a disruption, a service that is important to the public. Our preparedness planning and our climate change adaptation planning are designed to ensure that our operations can continue through each challenge. The quick restoration of the Postal network supports important businesses and communications throughout the nation.

We partner with other agencies to use our national delivery network to support their missions. This includes onetime events — such as in 2009, when the Postal Service distributed a flyer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to households in 63 counties across two states about contaminated food products. In addition, we also supported accelerating delivery of Social Security checks in advance of pending extreme storms.

Federal agencies also offer the Postal Service technical expertise. For example, this document and the work of the Climate Change Adaptation Working Group are supported by technical assistance from our federal colleagues at the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Global Change Research Program, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). We also receive safety information from the Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration.

We depend on state and local governments to maintain the roads and bridges that serve as our main transportation network. The transportation of mail by our various air carriers relies on our federal, state, and local partners who maintain the U.S. air network.

There may be future opportunities for the Postal Service to assist federal, state, and local climate change resiliency efforts across the nation via a wide range of products and services. For example, our Every Door Direct Mail® product could be utilized to assist community efforts to communicate with specific neighborhoods on climate change issues.

Our nearly 500,000 employees live and work in communities throughout the nation. All employees are continuously educated on a number of topics each year and this includes issues relevant to a changing climate, such as dealing with extreme heat and cold, and emergency planning. For Energy Action Month 2013, we shared basic information with employees on climate change through a YouTube video and a Climate Change information web page. Our intent is that employees not only utilize this information at work but also will share it at home.

We also discuss climate adaptation with posts across the globe through the International Post Corporation. The U.S. Postal Service partners with more than 20 other posts across the world to report on greenhouse gas mitigation efforts. Every fall this effort culminates in presentation of business cases which showcase best practices throughout the world. USPS officials also meet in person with foreign posts once a year for informal information sharing. Past topics have included the USPS BlueEarth™ Federal Recycling Program, fleet fuel reduction best practices, and many more. As a sector, the postal industry has taken responsibility for reporting on its greenhouse gas emissions — we are also starting to discuss climate adaptation.



## Conclusion

USPS is taking a proactive approach to creating an adaptation plan that will guide informed decision making to minimize risk in a changing climate. As our organization changes, we expect that this plan will grow and change as well. Our aim is to continue as we have for more than 200 years — successfully adjusting to the times while continuing our mission to bind the nation together through the mail.

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