

**U.S. Postal Service
Washington, DC 20260-7310**

**Maintenance Handbook MS-110
Associate Office Postmaster's Facilities Maintenance Guidelines**

**Transmittal Letter 2
January 15, 1988**

A. Explanation

This is a complete revision of Maintenance Handbook MS-110, *Associate Office Postmaster's Facilities Maintenance Guidelines*.

B. Distribution

1. **Initial.** Copies of this complete issue are being distributed to all facilities. Management should ensure that maintenance personnel are provided with this handbook.
2. **Additional Copies.** Order additional copies by submitting Form 7380, *Supply Center Requisition*, to the Supply Center, specifying HBKMS110.

C. Rescissions

Maintenance Handbook Handbook MS-110, Transmittal Letter 1, is rescinded and should be discarded.

D. Comments and Questions

Suggestions for improving this handbook are solicited from all sources. Anyone wishing to make such recommendations should use the preaddressed comment cards at the back of this handbook.

E. Effective Date

These instructions are effective upon receipt.

for 
James C. Wilson
Director
Office of Maintenance Management
Engineering & Technical Support
Department

FOREWORD

The design and purpose of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive, easy reference document to help you, the Postmaster, in maintaining your facility in the best possible condition. To assist you in developing a program of maintenance awareness and to direct you in effecting the necessary actions to correct known or expected facility deficiencies, this handbook presents the following:

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the critical role the Postmaster/installation head plays in the maintenance of the facility.

Chapter 2 covers information on good housekeeping practices, including contract cleaning checklists.

Chapter 3 contains information for the day-to-day maintenance, inspection, and monitoring of repair and maintenance.

Chapter 4 contains procedures for handling emergency repairs.

Chapter 5 includes maintenance responsibilities for Postmasters with facilities in USPS-owned buildings.

Chapter 6 includes responsibilities for Postmasters with facilities in leased buildings where the USPS is responsible for maintenance.

Chapter 7 contains responsibilities for Postmasters with facilities in leased buildings where the owner is responsible for maintenance.

Chapter 8 covers maintenance situations in General Services Administration controlled buildings.

Chapter 9 includes contracting procedures for maintenance.

Appendixes are lists of referenced USPS service offices or organizations.

The handbook chapters on housekeeping (Chapter 2), building inspection (Chapter 3), and contracting procedures (Chapter 9) are applicable to all USPS facilities.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

110 GENERAL

111 As Postmaster/installation head, you have a critical role to play in ensuring that your building is maintained properly. You are the postal official with the most complete knowledge of the condition of your building and the first to know when maintenance, repair, or improvement is needed. It is your responsibility to initiate action for these needs.

112 You, the Postmaster, must maintain your facility in the best possible condition to ensure that:

- a. Your employees are provided with a clean, hazard-free, efficient working environment.
- b. The Postal Service' investment in your facility is preserved economically as well as aesthetically.
- c. Your facility upholds the image of the Postal Service and provides your customers with a pleasant atmosphere to conduct their postal business.
- d. Adequate security measures are in place and followed. See Exhibit 1-1 of this chapter. (Exhibit 1-1 is a facimile of Publication 266, available from your supply center. See Pub 23 for ordering instructions.)

113 The objective of this handbook is to help you, as Postmaster, resolve facility maintenance and repair problems. Resolution of problems at your level will expedite the completion of facility maintenance projects, and result in reduced administrative costs.

120 AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE

Technical maintenance assistance is available from your Management Sectional Center (MSC). The Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, at your MSC should be contacted when you require technical support.

130 CORRECTIVE ACTION

Where correction of deficiencies is necessary, within your responsibility and local spending authority, and technical assistance is not required, you must effect the necessary corrective action in a timely, efficient manner, in accordance with the appropriate chapter of this handbook.

CHAPTER 2

POSTMASTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

210 GENERAL

211 Consistent, good housekeeping practices are an integral part of the overall maintenance of your postal facility. A clean, well-maintained post office has a positive, motivating influence on employees and maintains a good Postal Service image in the community.

212 You, as Postmaster, are responsible for the cleanliness of your facility. It is important that you carry out the following:

- a. Establish and maintain a regular cleaning schedule
- b. Supervise the activities of custodial employees or act as contracting officer's representative for contract cleaners where applicable
- c. Purchase the necessary house-keeping products and equipment

213 In considering your responsibility for good housekeeping, keep in mind that the Postal Service wishes to be a good tenant whether it owns or leases the building. Treat the property with the same care and respect that you would your own property.

214 The following handbooks, manuals, and bulletins are available to you to determine your custodial workload, staffing requirements, and custodial allowances:

- a. Handbook MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*, provides guidelines for determining the necessary work force allowance and job cleaner contract work requirements.
- b. *Administrative Support Manual*, Section 533.5.
- c. Handbook MS-10, *Floors, Care and Maintenance*.
- d. Handbook MS-39, *Fluorescent and Mercury Vapor Lighting*.

e. Housekeeping methods are also updated and issued in maintenance bulletins.

f. A filmstrip presentation of custodial techniques, "A Program for Good Housekeeping," is available from all Postal Employee Development Centers (PEDCs).

220 CUSTODIAL WORKLOAD AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

221 Handbook MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*, contains the procedures for determining and scheduling the custodial workload for your facility. Custodial staffing levels should be reviewed whenever workload changes occur, buildings or grounds are modified, or new cleaning or maintenance methods, materials, or equipment are introduced.

222 The results of this analysis will assist you in determining whether you should employ Postal Service maintenance employees or contract cleaning services to perform this work. Your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, should be contacted to assist you in determining your custodial needs. Post offices in CAGs H, J, and K which provide full-time postal services and occupy 1,000 or more square feet of interior floor space normally do not qualify for contract cleaning services and are authorized special custodial allowances in Management Instruction AS-530-81-17 or the most current management instruction concerning special custodial allowances. Where economically feasible or otherwise in the best interest of the USPS, Division General Managers may authorize contract cleaning.

230 POSTAL CLEANING

231 In facilities where postal employees provide the custodial services, the Postmaster will provide the necessary supervision. You should become thoroughly familiar with the duties and responsibilities of your custodial employee(s).

232 Written work assignments as per HBK MS-47 must be prepared for all custodial duties. Precise, written work routines are invaluable management tools that provide the following:

- a. Effective utilization of available staff
- b. Continuity in custodial tasks
- c. Positive direction to personnel

233 Employees benefit from a written work routine and it accomplishes the following:

- a. Delineates duties
- b. Specifies when and where work is to be done
- c. Ensures equal assignment of workload

234 While written work assignments are good, they are no substitute for effective supervision. Employees must know your requirements and how to accomplish quality work.

235 All cleaning procedures should be accomplished as presented in the Building Services Training Program 56531-00.

240 CONTRACT CLEANING

241 In facilities where contract cleaners are employed, it is the responsibility of the Postmaster to check the quality and quantity of the work against the cleaning contract. The Postmaster should be sure the contractor knows at the outset of the contract what is expected.

242 In the event that a contract cleaner's performance is judged to be inadequate, progressive corrective action should be taken.

- a. The Postmaster should take the following action:
 1. Discuss problems with contractor
 2. Send letter of complaint to the Contracting Officer at the Procurement and Materiel Management Service Office (PMMSO) or, for the Special Divisions, to the Contracting Officer at the Procurement Service Office (PSO). Send a copy to the Manager, Plant

and Equipment Engineering (See Appendix E for the list of PMMSOs and Appendix F for the list of PSOs.)

- b. The Contracting Officer may issue a letter of warning to the contract cleaner.

NOTE

A warning letter should be issued only by the Contracting Officer as it involves contract administration and amounts to a cure notice.

243 All questions concerning poor performance or failure to provide custodians should be directed to the Contracting Officer for cleaning services at the PMMSO or, for the Special Divisions, at the PSO. The Postmaster is responsible for developing a documentation file to support the complaint of poor performance on the part of the contractor.

244 Postmasters should develop checklists to record the dates when quarterly and semiannual tasks were completed and to remind cleaners when tasks are due to be performed; e.g., floor stripping and waxing, window washing, and overhead cleaning. See Exhibit 2-1, this chapter.

245 It should be noted that the Postmaster does not have the authority to terminate the contract. This authority can be exercised only by the Contracting Officer at the PMMSO or, for the Special Divisions, at the PSO.

250 HOUSEKEEPING INSPECTION

251 Housekeeping inspections should be performed quarterly using Form 4851, *Housekeeping Inspection*. See Exhibit 2-2, this chapter. Instructions for completing the housekeeping inspection form can be found in HBK MS-47, *Housekeeping Postal Facilities*.

252 The Postmaster should keep the inspection checklist on file for audit purposes.

253 Any questions about housekeeping practices and procedures in your facility should be directed to the MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING INSPECTION

310 GENERAL

311 Because of age and use, facilities and equipment require periodic repair and maintenance. The Postmaster or installation head is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance, inspection, and monitoring of repair and maintenance obligations. Since you as Postmaster are the eyes of the U.S. Postal Service at the local level, your participation and effort are necessary to ensure that your postal facilities are maintained at a satisfactory level.

312 Twice a year, preferably during Accounting Period 1 and Accounting Period 6, you should make a complete inspection of your facility. This will allow you to determine the condition of your building and grounds before the onset of winter weather and spring rains. Exhibit 3-1 of this chapter is the inspection form for this task and for reporting deficiencies to your MSC maintenance manager or building lessor.

313 Performing this inspection identifies work to be done, without concern for who is responsible. Determining responsibility and establishing priority for repair, replacement, or improvements that may preclude further damage, can be made after the inspection with the help of your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, if necessary.

320 COMMON MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES

321 General

The following is a sample listing of common maintenance deficiencies you might find in your building. It is not intended to be all-inclusive; but rather, it is designed to give you general information regarding the more common types of maintenance repairs. A good rule of thumb to apply during your inspection is, "Would you allow this condition to go untended if you found it in your own home?"

322 Building Interior

322.1 Floors

.11 Broken, missing, or worn floor tiles are the most common problems. Broken or missing floor tiles constitute a safety hazard and should be treated as a high priority item. Flooring showing considerable wear should be treated with lower priority. This condition may be indicative of a poor floor maintenance program.

.12 Cracks in floors (separation between tiles) are a potentially hazardous item and should be noted. If no tripping hazard results, the work should be given priority accordingly. Cracks in the floor resulting in differences in floor height are another potential hazard that may not create any particular problems. However, the building lessor should be notified as this is an indicator of the building settling and possibly more severe problems in the future.

322.2 Interior Walls

.21 The most common problem found here is "needs painting." The question to ask is, "Why does it need painting?" If the answer is "marked up by our employees or equipment" or "paint peeled when wall posters were removed," then action should be taken to minimize these situations. Also, if the areas around the heat registers are dirty, it is suggested that instead of painting, you first check the furnace filters and then try washing the walls in those areas.

.22 Minor cracks in the walls are another problem. During your inspection, note whether there has been any change in either the width or length of these cracks. If a crack reaches a width of approximately 1/8 inch, it is an indication of possible building settling and should be reported in writing to the building lessor or MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering.

322.3 Ceilings

The two most common types of problems with ceilings result from roof leaks that are still active or roof leaks that have been repaired, but ceilings that have not.

322.4 Plumbing

The problems here may run from relatively simple deficiencies such as dripping faucets and defective flush valves to severe problems such as inadequate, plugged, frozen and/or broken water lines, sewer lines and plumbing fixtures.

322.5 Electrical

All electrical fixtures, switches, and outlets should be checked to ensure proper operation and repaired accordingly. High priority corrective action should be given to major electrical deficiencies such as recurrent blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers, or unusually warm switches, outlets, or electrical panels.

322.6 Heating Systems

Inspection of a heating system to determine if you have a problem that needs to be addressed need not be complicated. An example is as follows:

- a. On a cold day, is the system capable of maintaining adequate temperature (65 °F)?
- b. Are there extreme cold or hot spots within the heated building area?
- c. Does the furnace seem to run abnormally long?
- d. When was the last time the filters were changed?
- e. In a fuel oil system, when was the last cleaning?
- f. Can you smell fumes when the furnace is running?
- g. Does the boiler have a current USPS inspection certificate?

322.7 Air-Conditioning Systems

.71 Air-conditioning systems are generally window air-conditioners. The preliminary inspections are relatively simple. An example is as follows:

- a. With the air-conditioner on, does the air coming out of the exhaust duct seem cold enough?
- b. Is the air-conditioning capable of maintaining reasonable temperature (78 °F)?
- c. When the air-conditioner was new, did it seem to work better?

- d. How old is the system and when was the last time it was serviced?
- e. ARE THE FILTERS CLEAN?

.72 These indicators will not necessarily tell you if anything is wrong, but they will identify potential problems which need to be addressed.

- a. If you identify a safety-type problem, you should set a very high priority on solving it.
- b. If you determine the problem can be solved simply (such as changing filters), proceed accordingly.
- c. If the potential problem falls somewhere in between, contact your MSC for guidance.

323 Building Exterior**323.1 Doors and Locks**

.11 Broken/worn doors or locks that create potential "security of the mail" problems should be treated as a high priority item. If you are having a problem with door locks that could be eliminated by installing a better grade lock, proceed accordingly. In a leased facility, the lessor may be receptive to installing a better lock if you offer to absorb the cost differential. If damage is caused by an act of vandalism, it must be reported immediately to the Postal Inspection Service, the local police authority, the MSC, and the lessor, in that order. If the broken door or lock presents a security risk or safety hazard, it must be sealed, boarded, or replaced immediately. In replacing doors and locks, ensure compliance with National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code-IV.

.12 Doors that stick should be noted, but treated with a lower priority.

.13 Drafts around doors are another common problem that impacts your energy conservation program and, thus, should not be overlooked. These problems are relatively easy to fix with weatherstripping and/or door sweeps, and can generally be handled by the Postmaster.

323.2 Windows

.21 Several types of window problems are as follows:

- a. Broken and missing glass in windows
- b. Cracked glass

- c. Windows that require recaulking
- d. Windows not operable (e.g., painted shut or hardware broken)
- e. No storm windows
- f. No screens
- g. Rotten components of wood windows, frames, or sills

.22 The severity of each of these items must be assessed to determine the priority of action required.

323.3 Roof Leaks

High priority should be given to roof leaks because they never get better by themselves, and they usually leak the worst when the repairs are impossible. The first sign of a roof leak is usually a stained ceiling or ceiling tile. This condition should immediately be reported to the lessor and MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering. The Postmaster should ensure that roofs and gutters, including roof drains on flat roofs, are clean and free from debris.

323.4 Downspouts and Guttering

The most common problems are gutters clogged with leaves and downspouts damaged as a result of vehicles backing into them. Other problems are gutters and downspouts that are rusted out or have been removed, causing a dripping problem over sidewalks, steps, etc.

323.5 Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers must be tagged with Form 4705, *Inspection Tag*, and must be inspected both monthly and annually. Procedures for maintenance, inspection, and tagging are defined in HBK MS-1, *Operation and Maintenance of Real Property*, and HBK MS-56, *Fire Prevention and Control*.

323.6 Dock Areas

A common cause of damage to dock canopies is postal trucks that are too tall to fit under the canopy. When such damage occurs, the Postal Service must bear the cost of correcting the damage:

- a. If the damage to the dock or to any other part of the building is caused by a contract employee, such as a Star Route Contractor, the Postal Service is not directly responsible for the damage,

but is responsible for notifying the MSC of the damage and its cause.

- b. In this case, you should notify the lessor so arrangements for reimbursement may be made to the lessor by the Postal Service, the contract employee, or insurance carrier. Failure on the part of a contract driver to accept responsibility requires that you secure an estimated cost of damage and submit it to your MSC for processing. At times, you may be instructed to get repairs made (using postal funds) and submit through channels for reimbursement.

323.7 Other Areas

Typical problems are as follows:

- a. Inadequate or inoperable exterior lighting
- b. Broken or missing signs or identification
- c. Exterior painting such as flaking, peeling, or chipped paint, or mortar falling out between bricks or blocks

324 Parking and Maneuvering Areas

Parking and maneuvering areas generally fall into two categories, paved or unpaved. Regardless of the surface, the most frequent problems are generally in the area of potholes and inadequate drainage:

- a. Potholes (regardless of surface) are relatively easy to repair if they have not been allowed to become severe.
- b. Inadequate drainage is potentially a more difficult problem. If the poor drainage has recently been noted, the cause may be simply a plugged drain. However, if the drainage problem has been long-term in nature, the repair or improvement may be more difficult, and you should contact your MSC.

325 Grounds

325.1 The most common problems with the grounds are cracked sidewalks, dead or dying bushes and shrubs, weeds, dead lawn areas, trees that need trimming, and damaged or inoperable flagpoles.

325.2 Determine if these conditions constitute a safety problem, e.g., uneven sidewalks causing a tripping hazard or large dead branches that may fall from trees.

330 RESPONSIBILITY/ACTION

331 At this point you should have completed the building inspection and developed a list of those items that you feel need to be addressed. You should also have prioritized these items in the order to be accomplished.

332 Another consideration at this time is to determine whether the action required is a repair or improvement project. Repairs are defined as actions required to restore permanent existing features of the facility to good and operable condition. Improvements are defined as the addition of any item that was not provided when the building was occupied, was added by approved modification, and impacts the value of the property.

333 Examples of improvements are storm windows and/or doors, setback thermostats, weatherstripping, ceiling insulation, remodeled screenlines, baffles behind service counter, and paving the maneuvering areas. Normally, improvement projects must be coordinated with your MSC and divisional Manager, Support Services Department.

334 To determine responsibility and the action required to carry out repairs and improvements, refer to the chapter of this handbook that pertains to your category of office. Where noted deficiencies constitute an emergency situation, refer to Chapter 4, "Emergency Repairs." Where corrective action will

be accomplished by contract within your spending authority, refer to Chapter 9, "Contracting Procedures."

340 OTHER INSPECTIONS

In addition to your inspection responsibilities, the divisional Manager, Support Services Department, has the responsibility to inspect your office at least once every 5 years, depending on the age and size of your facility. Their primary function is to identify requirements for building repairs and alterations, develop project documentation, accomplish the projects once they are approved, and if necessary, develop the documentation required for expanding or replacing facilities.

350 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

351 A needed repair that constitutes a threat to the safety or health of postal employees or customers, or threatens the security of the mail, is an emergency repair.

352 Refer to Chapter 4, "Emergency Repairs," of this handbook for procedures concerning emergencies.

CHAPTER 4

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

410 GENERAL

411 An emergency repair is action taken to correct a situation that constitutes a threat to the safety or health of postal employees or customers, or threatens the security of the mail. Some examples of emergency repair situations are as follows:

- a. Loss of heat during severe winter temperatures
- b. Broken door lock
- c. Water line break that causes flooding in the building or disables sanitation services
- d. Leak in roof over mail processing or customer services areas
- e. Electrical short circuit or power failure
- f. Clogged sewer
- g. Breach in or penetration of exterior wall

412 Note how each of these examples meets the criteria in the definition of an emergency repair: 1) Loss of heat during very cold weather constitutes a threat to the health of employees and customers; and 2) a broken door lock constitutes a threat to the security of the mail.

413 If you have known about and lived with a situation for several days or weeks, it probably cannot be classified as an emergency.

420 EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

421 General

The following procedures apply when resolving emergency situations concerning USPS-owned buildings, leased buildings with USPS responsible for maintenance, or leased buildings with lessor responsible for maintenance.

422 USPS-Owned Buildings

422.1 In emergency situations where there is not time to circulate paperwork for signatures before contracting for repairs, contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, by telephone to advise the manager of the problem and to obtain verbal permission to proceed. This manager or the divisional Manager, Support Services Department, will be available to provide any technical assistance required in developing a scope of work or specification to be included in any contract solicitation. The necessary paperwork should be submitted as soon as possible for written authorization.

422.2 In most cases, the MSC "in-house" maintenance staff can be utilized to "temporarily" correct any imminent hazard. Once the immediate problem has been resolved, normal procedures should be followed in effecting a permanent correction.

422.3 A detailed report should be submitted to the MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, and the divisional Manager, Support Services Department, after the emergency situation is resolved.

423 Leased Buildings with USPS Responsible for Maintenance

423.1 Emergency situations for facilities under this category may have to be resolved using owned or leased building procedures, depending on which part of the building is affected by the emergency.

EXAMPLE

If your particular lease states that the lessor remains responsible for structural maintenance such as walls and roof structures, then a roof leak over a mail handling area would be the responsibility of the lessor, and emergency procedures for leased buildings with lessor responsible should be followed.

423.2 Should the emergency situation fall under an area for which the Postal Service is responsible, the emergency procedures for USPS-owned buildings should be followed.

424 Leased Buildings with Lessor Responsible for Maintenance

424.1 When you first become aware of an emergency maintenance situation, your first action should be to attempt to contact the lessor.

424.2 If you are unable to reach the lessor after a reasonable length of time (the amount of time you would wait would depend upon the severity of the emergency), you should contact the appropriate repair personnel listed on Form 7426, *Designation of Emergency Repair Personnel*, to have the work accomplished (see Exhibit 4-1 of this chapter). Form 7426 allows the lessor to preselect the person to do emergency repair work and should be updated annually.

424.3 If you need a completed Form 7426, contact the facilities service organization that serves your area and request that they obtain a completed copy of Form 7426 for you from the lessor. Remember, it is to be used only for emergency repairs, not for routine maintenance.

424.4 You must contact the field division support services who will, in turn, contact the appropriate facilities service organization serving your area, if during an emergency:

- a. Neither the designated repair personnel nor the lessor can be reached,
- b. Designated repair personnel or the lessor refuses to make the needed repairs or to make the repairs as soon as required by the nature of the emergency, or
- c. There is no Form 7426 on file.

If the required repairs are within your delegation of authority, and you have obtained authorization from the field division support services, solicit as many estimates as practicable, and contract for the emergency repairs immediately. Send a certified letter to the lessor, return receipt, copy to field division support services and appropriate facilities organization, informing the lessor of the repairs and the estimated cost of the work. Should the work be above your delegation of authority, contact the field division support services to have the repairs accomplished.

424.5 In the rare instance when you do not have Form 7426 on file, and you are unable to reach the lessor, or the lessor or the designated repair personnel refuses to perform the work or to do it in a timely fashion, and you cannot make contact with the field division support services, or the facilities service organization, you are authorized (even obligated) to have the emergency repair corrected. However, when you have the repair corrected, have only enough work done to eliminate the emergency. Do not have additional work of a nonemergency nature done. You would, of course, only take this action if, in your judgment, the emergency was severe enough to warrant it.

424.6 Should you take such action, you must be certain that the situation is a true emergency. If in doubt, test it against the definition of an emergency repair. If you have lived with a situation for several days or weeks, it probably cannot be classified as an emergency. Your best safeguard against being placed in the position of having to spend the lessor's money without that person's consent is always to have a complete, current Form 7426 on file. Proper use of the form will keep you on safe, legal ground should a dispute with the lessor later occur.

424.7 Your facilities service organization will provide you with a current Form 7426 along with your copy of each new lease that is negotiated. If there is a change of ownership of your facility, a new Form 7426 will be required. If you become aware that any of the repair personnel listed on the form have gone out of business or are no longer doing business with the lessor of your building, contact the appropriate facilities service organization and request that you be provided with the name of a new repair person.

424.8 As soon as the repair work has been satisfactorily completed, pay the contractor, and promptly forward the contractor's invoice including backup documentation to the field division support services. Support services sends a copy of the contract, certified invoice, payment documentation, letter to the lessor, and copies of all backup information to the facilities service organization. The contracting officer at the facilities service organization then makes the final decision on whether all required procedures have been followed; whether additional documentation is necessary; or whether the repair cost (with or without administrative expenses) is to be deducted from future rents due the lessor.

430 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

431 Additional information regarding the proper procedure to follow for handling an emergency repair is found in the following postal publications:

- a. *Administrative Support Manual*, Section 514.1
- b. HBK MS-45, *Field Maintenance Program*

432 One last thing should be remembered concerning correction of emergency situations. When in doubt, the health and safety of your employees and customers is the deciding factor—fix it first!

CHAPTER 5

USPS-OWNED BUILDINGS

510 GENERAL

511 As the "building owner," the Postal Service is responsible for correcting all building problems or deficiencies. As the building manager, you are responsible for ensuring building repairs are made in a timely, efficient manner.

512 Your building repairs can be accomplished by using one or more of three basic means:

- a. In-house maintenance capability
- b. Assignment of qualified USPS maintenance personnel from the MSC or a nearby office
- c. Contract maintenance and repair (see Chapter 9)

520 IN-HOUSE MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY

521 Many facilities within the USPS-owned building category have maintenance employees; e.g., general mechanic, custodial/laborer, or fireman/laborer as part of the craft complement. These individuals should be adequately trained to handle minor building or equipment repairs. If, however, these employees perform more complex maintenance work, higher level pay will be required. In this case, the provisions of the USPS-APWU/NALC National Agreement should be applied.

522 A maintenance plan must be developed for your facility which identifies specific maintenance requirements and frequency of performance. Maintenance Handbook MS-45, *Field Maintenance Program*, establishes the procedures necessary to determine,

perform, and control your maintenance workload. Contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, for assistance.

530 NO MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY

If your facility does not have in-house maintenance capability, it may be possible to receive assistance by assignment of qualified USPS maintenance employees from a nearby office or your MSC. This assignment will normally be arranged by your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering. Maintenance Handbook MS-45, *Field Maintenance Program*, establishes the procedures necessary to receive this assistance.

540 CONTRACT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

541 Where USPS maintenance employees are not available to provide repair service, you are required to exercise your responsibility, within the limits of your spending authority, to arrange for a repair or service contract. Where it is estimated that the contract cost is above your spending authority and/or technical assistance is required, you should contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering.

542 Refer to Chapter 9 of this handbook for contracting procedures.

550 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Occasionally you may have an emergency maintenance situation. When this occurs, there is a special procedure that must be followed. Refer to Chapter 4, "Emergency Repairs," of this handbook.

CHAPTER 6

LEASED FACILITIES WITH USPS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE

610 GENERAL

When the USPS has maintenance responsibility at leased facilities, you, as building manager, are responsible for ensuring building repairs are made in a timely, efficient manner.

620 LESSOR MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

621 In many cases at offices in this category, the lessor is only responsible for maintenance of the structure, which includes items such as the foundation or wall and roof structures. Because of changes that may be made in the lease at the time of renewal or by modification, it is important that each lease be read carefully to determine who has the responsibility to maintain the premises and to what degree they are responsible. When necessary, enforcement of the lessor's responsibilities should be handled as set forth in Chapter 7 of this handbook.

622 Become familiar with the terms and conditions of the lease. If you have questions about the terms of the lease, contact the appropriate facilities service organization (facilities service center, facilities service office, or special field division support services) serving your area. Leases are negotiated on an individual basis. Read through the lease for your building. Pay particular attention to any paragraphs that have been added or deleted. This will assist you in determining who has responsibility for particular maintenance items.

623 If you do not have a copy of the lease for your building, contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, and request a copy of the full lease agreement. Your MSC Manager/ Postmaster will obtain a copy of the lease for you from the divisional Manager, Support Services Department, or appropriate facilities service organization.

630 LEASE FILE--DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

It is important that you maintain a lease file in your office. The file should contain the following:

- a. A complete copy of the current lease, including the agreement to lease, if applicable.
- b. Copies of any renewal options that may be or have been exercised.
- c. Copies of any lease extension agreements that may have been negotiated.
- d. Current Form 7426, *Designation of Emergency Repair Personnel*, which should be updated annually. This form should be completed and furnished by the lessor for maintenance repairs for which the lessor is responsible (see Exhibit 4-1 in Chapter 4). If there is a change of ownership of your facility, contact the facilities organization serving your area and request that they obtain a completed copy of Form 7426 for you from the lessor.
- e. Any supplemental agreements that may exist.
- f. Any change of ownership documents that may exist.
- g. Record of improvements accomplished by the Postal Service.
- h. Building drawings and site plan.

640 POST OFFICE MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Your building repairs can be accomplished by using one or more of four basic means:

- a. In-house maintenance capability
- b. Assignment of qualified USPS maintenance personnel from the MSC or a nearby office
- c. Contracting with the lessor
- d. Contracting procedures (see Chapter 9)

650 IN-HOUSE MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY

651 Many facilities within this building category have maintenance employees; e.g., general mechanic, custodial/laborer, or fireman/laborer as part of the craft complement.

652 These individuals should be adequately trained to handle minor building or equipment repairs. If these employees perform more complex maintenance work, higher level pay will be required. In this case, the provisions of the USPS-APWU/NALC National Agreement should be applied. A maintenance plan must be developed for your facility that identifies specific maintenance requirements and frequency of performance. Maintenance Handbook MS-45, *Field Maintenance Program*, establishes the procedures necessary to determine, perform, and control your maintenance workload. Contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, for assistance.

660 NO MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY

If your facility does not have in-house maintenance capability, it may be possible to receive assistance by assignment of qualified USPS maintenance em-

ployees from a nearby office or your MSC. This assignment will normally be arranged by your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering. Maintenance Handbook MS-45, *Field Maintenance Program*, establishes the procedures necessary to receive this assistance.

670 CONTRACT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Where USPS maintenance employees are not available to provide maintenance or repair services, you are required to exercise your responsibility, within the limits of your spending authority, to arrange for a repair or service contract. When the estimated contract cost is above your spending authority and/or technical assistance is required, you should contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering. Refer to Chapter 9 of this handbook for contracting procedures.

680 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Occasionally, you may have an emergency maintenance situation. When this occurs, there is a special procedure that must be followed. Refer to Chapter 4, "Emergency Repairs," in this handbook.

CHAPTER 7

LEASED FACILITIES WITH LESSOR RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE

710 GENERAL

711 At leased facilities where the building lessor has responsibility for maintenance and repairs, you, as the building manager, have responsibility for ensuring that building repairs are made in a timely, efficient manner. The language used in postal lease forms has changed over the years; it is very important that each lease be read and carefully studied to determine who has responsibility for maintaining the premises and to what degree. Even though "the lessor always fixed it before," the terms and conditions for your new lessor or lease agreement may be different. You should become familiar with the terms and conditions of the lease. If you have questions about the terms of the lease, contact the appropriate facilities service organization (facilities service center, facilities service office, or special field division support services) serving your area.

712 If you do not have a copy of the lease for your building, contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, and request a copy of the full lease agreement. Your MSC Manager/Postmaster will obtain a copy of the lease for you from the divisional Manager, Support Services Department, or appropriate facilities service organization.

713 Leases are negotiated on an individual basis. Read through the lease for your building. Pay particular attention to any paragraphs that have been added or deleted. This will assist you in determining who has responsibility for particular maintenance items.

714 When you are advised that there has been a change of ownership, advise the former lessor to contact the facilities service organization to obtain change of ownership forms. The facilities service organization will obtain an updated Form 7426, *Designation of Emergency Repair Personnel*, for your files and process the paperwork for directing the rent payments to the new lessor.

720 LEASE FILE--DETERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITY**721 File Maintenance**

It is important that you maintain a lease file in your office. The file should contain the following:

- a. A complete copy of the current lease, including the agreement to lease, if applicable.
- b. Copies of any renewal options that may be or have been exercised.
- c. Copies of any lease extension agreements that may have been negotiated.
- d. Current Form 7426, *Designation of Emergency Repair Personnel*, which should be updated annually. This form should be completed and furnished by the lessor for maintenance repairs for which the lessor is responsible (see Exhibit 4-1 in Chapter 4).
- e. Any supplemental agreements that may exist.
- f. Any change of ownership documents that may exist.
- g. Record of improvements accomplished by the Postal Service.
- h. Building drawings and site plan.

722 Knowledge of Lease Provisions

Familiarity with your lease provisions and understanding of the respective responsibilities of the Postal Service and lessor will ensure maintenance of good relations with the lessor, preclude legal complications, and ensure that postal money is not spent on work which is the lessor's responsibility.

723 Considerations Prior to Repair**723.1 Repairs Needed Due to USPS Negligence**

Damages caused by negligent or irresponsible employee actions are not the responsibility of the lessor. Such items can include, but are not limited to, wall damage caused by nutting trucks, electrical damage caused by overloading circuits, etc.

723.2 Repairs or Renovations Considered as Building Improvements

.21 An improvement is any item that was not provided when the building was leased, and/or was not added as a negotiated modification to the lease.

.22 Common examples of improvements are as follows:

- a. Additional lighting
- b. Insulation
- c. Weatherstripping (when there was none before)
- d. Rugs (runner strips)
- e. Window screens, storm windows, or venetian blinds (when none were provided before)
- f. Additional air-conditioning

723.3 Repairs Viewed as Preventive Maintenance

.31 Unless included in the lease agreement, lessors cannot be required to perform certain work that might be viewed as preventive maintenance.

EXAMPLE

Applying a sealer coat to asphalt even though it would probably extend the life of the paved area.

On the other hand, if the paved area deteriorates, the lessor would be required to make necessary repairs. When you have a question about whether an item is or is not required maintenance, contact the facilities service organization serving your area.

.32 Contact the lessor if the repair in question has the potential of causing progressive damage to the lessor's property.

724 The lessor is obligated only to replace items with items of like quality. For example, if a door lock needs to be replaced and a better type of lock is required, the Postal Service must pay the difference in cost between the improved type of lock and a lock similar to the one presently installed.

725 If there is any doubt in your mind as to whether an item is an improvement or a repair, contact the facilities service organization serving your area for clarification before you contact the lessor.

730 BUILDING REPAIRS

731 Repairs are generally defined as action required to restore a permanent feature of the facility to good and operable condition.

732 Repairs are generally the responsibility of the lessor; however, prior to assigning the responsibility to the lessor, you must review a copy of the current lease and any supplemental agreements to this lease.

733 Following are some items which may not be specifically identified in the lease, causing some confusion regarding responsibility for repair:

- a. Inoperable window air-conditioners may have been installed (including wiring) by the Postal Service.
- b. Set-back thermostats installed by the Postal Service.
- c. Exterior scissors lifts.
- d. Energy-efficient fluorescent tubes installed creating a higher than usual "burn-out" rate of ballasts.

NOTE

These items may have been previously installed as Postal Service improvements for which the lessor is not responsible.

734 Minor repairs such as dripping faucets, defective flush valves, etc., may be the responsibility of the lessor. Although there is no requirement to do so, many postal officials find it convenient to make repairs of a very minor nature themselves.

735 If the item you are requesting is an improvement, you must process the request through proper channels. Make your request through your MSC Manager/Postmaster, who will then forward the request to the Division General Manager/Postmaster. If the request is approved, a "Request for Services" will be sent to the field division support services or the facilities service organization, who will proceed to have the work accomplished.

740 LESSOR MAINTENANCE ENFORCEMENT

741 General

After you have determined that the building lessor is responsible for maintenance, and the repairs needed are appropriate for the lessor to accomplish, initiate action by using the following procedures.

742 Lessor Contact and Initial Confirming Letter

742.1 Contact the lessor in person or by phone. Review each item needing attention. Try to reach agreement with the lessor on a reasonable date for completing the work. Tell the lessor you will send a confirming letter. Then send the letter promptly, by certified mail (see Exhibits 7-1 and 7-2, this chapter). Keep a copy of the letter and the returned, signed receipt card for your file. A copy of this letter is sent to the field division support services and the facilities service organization serving your area.

742.2 It is extremely important that you avoid making requests of your lessor too frequently. If you call the lessor too often with insignificant requests, it could very likely be viewed as harassment. This could damage your working relationship with the lessor to the degree that it will become very difficult to obtain cooperation when you go to the lessor with important requests for repairs.

743 Completion Date

743.1 If the lessor does not agree to a completion date, set a reasonable one yourself and include it in the confirming letter. In establishing the date, remember to give the lessor adequate time in which to complete the repairs. Keep in mind that it is difficult to get workers in some parts of the country during certain seasons of the year.

743.2 If you have a question as to how much time to allow the lessor to complete the repairs, contact the field division support services.

744 Second Letter

744.1 If the lessor fails to complete the work by the established date, forward a second, similar letter (see Exhibit 7-3) to the lessor by certified mail, return receipt requested, which reiterates the requested repairs and sets a reasonable time for compliance. The letter states that if the lessor fails to comply within the stated time period, the Postal Service may have the work accomplished by separate contract (or other means) and deduct all expenses, including reasonable administrative costs, from subsequent rental payments. Also send a copy of the second letter to the field division support services, the facilities service organization, and the assignee of rents and the mortgagee, if any.

744.2 If the cost estimate of the repairs exceeds 25 percent of the annual rent or \$10,000, whichever is less, the second letter to the lessor requests the lessor's participation in an on-site inspection of the facility to discuss the proposed repairs. In this instance, request that the second letter be sent by field division support services.

745 Lessor Failure to Complete Work

745.1 If the lessor is nonresponsive, send all notes and correspondence through the MSC to the General Manager/Postmaster Field Division requesting action to complete the necessary work. Depending on the complexity and cost of the repairs, the work will be contracted at field division support services, or forwarded to the facilities service organization for processing.

745.2 Occasionally the work will be done by an outside party and the cost deducted from future rental payments. Should this occur, you may be asked by field division support services to obtain bids from contractors in your area.

745.3 As soon as the repair work has been satisfactorily completed, and the contractor paid, the contracting officer sends a copy of the contract, invoice, payment documentation, letters to the lessor, and copies of all backup information to the facilities service office. The contracting officer at the facilities service office then makes the final decision of

whether all required procedures have been followed; whether additional documentation is necessary; or whether the repair cost (with or without administrative expenses) is to be deducted from future rents due the lessor.

750 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

751 Occasionally, you may have an emergency maintenance situation. When this occurs, there is a special procedure that must be followed.

752 A needed repair that constitutes a threat to the safety or health of postal employees or customers, or threatens the security of the mail, is an emergency repair.

753 Refer to Chapter 4, "Emergency Repairs," of this handbook.

CHAPTER 8

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) CONTROLLED BUILDINGS

810 GENERAL

811 An agreement between the General Services Administration (GSA) and the United States Postal Service governs the level of service and responsibilities relative to our relationship of owner and tenant. See Exhibit 8-1 in this chapter.

812 When maintenance or repairs are needed in occupied space in GSA buildings, submit a written request to the GSA building manager.

813 If you are unable to get satisfactory results, request assistance through your MSC from the divisional Manager, Support Services Department.

820 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Emergency situations must be brought to the attention of the GSA building manager by telephone. A followup letter concerning the emergency should be sent to the building manager, if necessary, with a copy to your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering.

CHAPTER 9

CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

910 PROCEDURES FOR REPAIR WITHIN SPENDING AUTHORITY

911 After having determined that corrective repair action will be taken by you, within your spending authority, you must obtain written estimates for the work required. Depending on the urgency and/or requirements of the work, documented telephone quotes for the services may be allowable. Written estimates should specify what is to be provided, the costs, and any other pertinent information needed for the work required.

912 You should attempt to obtain at least three estimates. Although more time consuming, there are advantages to obtaining more than one estimate.

912.1 Obtaining Estimates

.11 If the contractors are aware of being in competition, you are likely to receive lower estimates.

.12 If you are unsure, contact your MSC Manager, Plant and Equipment Engineering, for technical advice.

.13 Making contact with different local contractors allows an opportunity to establish good community relations.

.14 After your estimates have been obtained and you have determined the amounts are within your local purchasing authority, have the low bidder proceed with the job. If for any reason you are not satisfied with the estimates received, request assistance through the appropriate channels within your MSC.

912.2 Allowing Exceptions

You are not required to utilize the low bidder if, for a justifiable reason, you are not satisfied with the low-bid contractor. For example:

- a. Contractor cannot begin within a reasonable timeframe, or cannot guarantee completion within a reasonable time.

- b. You have received verifiable information that the contractor does unsatisfactory work. (This should be documented in your file.)

912.3 Following Job Completion

Following job completion, you will be responsible for determining if the work was done satisfactorily. If for any reason you are unsure, request assistance through your MSC.

920 PROCEDURES FOR PAYMENT

921 When the repair/service has been completed, pay the contractor and send the following documentation to the MSC:

- a. Identified problem
- b. Contacts made with the lessor
- c. Information showing nonresponsiveness of the lessor
- d. A copy of the bills

922 The MSC will in turn forward this to divisional Manager, Support Services Department.

923 All expenditures for custodial building supplies and services--P.O. will be recorded using AIC 583 on Form 1552-B. (See Exhibit 9-1 of this chapter.)

NOTE

If additional information regarding the accounting of supplies and services is needed, refer to Handbook F1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures*, issued 12-20-86. See Section 750, "Local Disbursements for Supplies and Services," (Exhibit 9-2 of this chapter).

924 Document your cashbook entry by attaching copies of estimates and billing statements to your daily Form 1412 (A or B). (See Exhibit 9-3 and 9-4 of this chapter.)

NOTE

Occasionally, special nationwide projects require special account codes. Example: Phase IV Energy, AIC 619. You will be notified should such an entry be required.

930 PROCEDURES FOR REPAIR OVER SPENDING AUTHORITY

Should the cost estimates you obtain be higher than your local purchasing authority, request assistance through your MSC via the following procedures:

- a. Submit a Form 7381, *Requisition for Supplies, Services or Equipment*. See Exhibit 9-5 of this chapter. Fill out completely, writing a brief description of the work required under the area labeled supplies, service, or equipment requested.
- b. Attach copies of all information; e.g., cost estimates of the work required, contacts made with lessor, if applicable, and information showing nonresponsiveness of lessor.
- c. Forward to the appropriate staff unit designated by your MSC. As you are the postal official who is ultimately responsible for correcting a building deficiency, you should maintain contact with your MSC until the requested project has been completed.
- d. See "Emergency Repairs," Chapter 4, for special circumstances.

940 PROCEDURES AT MSC LEVEL

941 General

Requests for services (Form 7381) received from local postmasters for building and equipment repair or alteration projects should be resolved using the following procedures.

942 Within MSC Purchasing Authority

942.1 If the amount estimated is within your purchasing authority, and you are satisfied that:

- a. The work requested is necessary and/or justified,
- b. The amount estimated is fair and reasonable, and
- c. The low bid contractor is professional and reliable,

then proceed toward job completion.

942.2 Make payment according to procedures established within your MSC.

943 Over MSC Purchasing Authority

943.1 Follow the current procedures outlined by your divisional Manager, Support Services Department, staff units.

943.2 As monetary authority, required paperwork, and routing procedures are subject to change, please include as an attachment to these instructions the current established format for project(s) resolution within your division.