

Mandatory Stand-Up Talk

Dec. 29, 2020

Staying respectful: Serving customers who are disabled

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the Postal Service remains a lifeline for millions of people. Our expectation is that all customers will be treated with dignity and respect and receive courteous and helpful service from our employees.

This expectation includes providing prompt and courteous service to customers who may have language barriers, hearing impairments, visual impairments or other physical or mental impairments.

Employees who deal with the public must accept persons with disabilities as individuals, entitled to the same respect and treatment they would want for themselves. And it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of disability.

Many persons who are deaf or hard of hearing find it even more difficult to communicate when everyone around them is wearing face coverings. Deaf or hard of hearing customers may use assistive technology to overcome communication barriers with our employees.

For example, special software is available on cellphones that transcribes speech to text. This allows deaf or hard of hearing individuals to read the questions being asked of them. Some software even “speaks” whatever a person may type, allowing these individuals to be more clearly understood.

Please remember:

- If you are not being understood, try using another word, hand gestures, or writing it down.
- If a person who is deaf or hard of hearing uses sign language and has an interpreter with him or her, continue to speak

directly to the deaf or hard of hearing individual. The interpreter serves as a tool to facilitate communication.

- Don't pretend that you understand the person when you don't. Mistakes can be costly.
- Treat adults with disabilities as adults. Do not patronize them.
- Listen to any instructions the person may want to give you.

It is imperative that our public-facing employees remain flexible and allow our customers to use tools such as the ones described above to complete their transactions.

Moreover, using these tools is in line with our policies on maintaining social distancing in our lobbies, protecting our employees and customers alike.

Thank you for your attention.

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