

High quality postal services have been an important factor in facilitating Hong Kong's development as a leading business, financial and industrial centre. Hongkong Post aims to provide reliable, efficient and universal postal services at reasonable prices to meet the needs of Hong Kong as well as fulfilling its international postal obligations.

Postal Services: The laws of Hong Kong empower Hongkong Post to handle local and overseas mail and mail for transit to other places. The Postmaster General is the head of Hongkong Post.

The exchange of mail between Hongkong Post and other places in the world started as early as 1841. With the growth in population and the development of business activities in Hong Kong, the range and level of services provided by Hongkong Post have multiplied. There were 124 post offices as at April 2020, 30 located on Hong Kong Island, 35 in Kowloon, 56 in the New Territories and the outlying islands, and 3 mobile post offices. In 2019-20, the Hongkong Post handled an average of 3.06 million mail items daily. With over 90 per cent of the mail handled coming from the industrial and business sectors, it is clear that Hongkong Post has played a significant role in facilitating the development of commerce and industry in Hong Kong.

Hongkong Post changed to a trading fund operation on August 1, 1995. The new status provides Hongkong Post with a high degree of financial autonomy, enabling it to respond more effectively to changing market demand and customer needs, and to pursue new initiatives and improvements. Despite the changes in its financial and accounting framework, Hongkong Post remains a government department.

Letter Mail Services: In 2019-20, Hongkong Post handled 843 million local letters. 99.9 per cent of the small letters are delivered to addressees on the next working day after posting.

Overseas letter mail services include Air Mail, Bulk Air Mail, Surface Mail, Bulk Bag and Direct Agent Bag. A total of 238 million air and surface letters were posted to destinations abroad in 2019-20.

Parcel Services: Both local and overseas parcel services are available. Customers may send parcels by air or surface to around 230 international destinations. In 2019-20, Hongkong Post handled about 0.71 million international and local parcels. The service standard is to deliver local and inward parcels to addressees within two working days after the day of posting or arrival for Hong Kong, Kowloon and major commercial and industrial areas in the New Territories, and within 3 working days to other areas.

Speedpost Service: Speedpost is the international courier service provided by Hongkong Post, and is the local brand name of the global Express Mail Service (EMS) of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). Speedpost provides reliable, convenient and value for money express delivery services to customers. With a global reach of destinations, packages can be delivered to major international cities on the following business day at the earliest. To provide more convenience

to our customers, a pick-up service is available, or they can go to any post office to send their Speedpost items.

Customers can also open a Speedpost account to enjoy the convenience of monthly billing and promotion offers. The dedicated online platform myspeedpost.hongkongpost.hk helps customers manage their accounts, track their mail items and prepare posting forms. Online preparation of Speedpost items facilitates customs clearance. Mail items posting to most parts of the Guangdong Province can even enjoy speedy online customs clearance service on the "Internet + Mail Clearance E-pass" online platform which is jointly developed by Guangzhou Customs and Guangdong Post.

e-Express Service: e-Express Service offers senders end-to-end visibility of the items sent, providing them with extra convenience in internet trading. It currently covers 43 destinations with a surging service demand. Senders can prepare an all-in-one shipping label, which include posting information and customs declaration, on the EC-ship online portal. It also offers flexible payment options, including online credit card payment, payment through permit mailing deposit account (prior application with Hongkong Post is required), or payment at posting counters by cash, EPS or Octopus.

Local CourierPost: This service specially caters for the need of both individuals and businesses for local express delivery of documents and packages. Local CourierPost Service items can conveniently be posted at all post offices throughout the territory. Customers can choose to register as account holders and enjoy a pick-up service. For major industrial and commercial areas, the service guarantees that items accepted before the cut-off time are delivered by 1:00 p.m. on the following working day.

Smart Post: This service provides customers with an economical local mail delivery solution, which includes the function of checking delivery status of mail items, email / SMS notification of their mail acceptance and delivery status, and a choice of mail delivery or counter collection to suit their preferences. Smart Post allows users to prepare their posting documents online and both senders and recipients can check the delivery status of their items online.

EC-Ship Online Portal: The portal provides a one-stop selling and shipping solution to customers who can prepare shipping labels via the portal and have the option of using six types of international mail service, namely the e-Express Service, Speedpost Standard Service, Air Registered Mail, Surface Registered Mail, Air Parcel and Surface Parcel service, and four types of local mail service, namely Smart Post, Local Registered Packet (Mail Delivery), Local CourierPost and Local Parcel. All mail items prepared via the portal can be posted at all post offices (except mobile post offices).

"Easy Pre-Customs" Online Platform for Submission of Electronic Customs Data:

The platform is tailor-made for senders to submit electronic customs data for sending mail items to overseas places or Mainland China prior to posting. The data will be transmitted to the destination's postal administration and customs

authority for pre-customs clearance. "Easy Pre-Customs" online platform and its mobile application (APP) do not require pre-registration. Senders can use this platform to input electronic customs data before they go to the post office. The platform is suitable for Speedpost Standard Service, Air & Surface Parcel, Air & Surface Registered Mail and Air & Surface Ordinary Mail. All post offices (except mobile post offices) are also installed with the "Easy Pre-Customs" kiosk or tablets for data input by customers.

Mail Collection Number: Customers can register on the EC-Ship online portal to obtain a Mail Collection Number, and select a designated post office or iPostal Station to collect mail. An iPostal Station is a self-serviced locker suite located at a convenient location within the community for collecting mail items that are larger in size. Mail recipients will receive a passcode on their mobile phones once their items have arrived at the designated post office or iPostal Station. iPostal Stations operate longer hours, and some even operate around the clock, allowing customers greater flexibility in mail collection.

Philatelic Services: Like many postal administrations, Hongkong Post issues two kinds of postage stamps – definitive stamps and special/commemorative stamps. Usually there are around ten or more sets of special/commemorative stamps issued each year. Hong Kong postage stamps, which reflect Hong Kong's history, life and development, are designed and printed to a consistently high standard. The low postage rates prevailing in Hong Kong make philately an interesting and inexpensive hobby. Apart from handling and promoting philatelic services, Hongkong Post Stamps provides a wide variety of philatelic products to meet the needs of local and overseas stamp collectors. It also offers Heartwarming Stamps Customised Service and one-stop service in producing special stamp souvenirs for individuals and corporations. In addition to its extensive post office network, Hongkong Post also makes use of its well-established advance order system and online shopping platform to enable local and overseas philatelists to purchase Hong Kong stamps and philatelic products in a convenient manner.

PayThruPost Service: The PayThruPost Service has provided customers with greater convenience to settle government, utility and other bill payments by cash, cheque and EPS at all post offices (fixed penalty tickets cannot be settled at mobile post offices).

ShopThruPost: ShopThruPost is an online shopping platform of Hongkong Post where customers can place advance orders for or make purchases of our latest stamp products, supported by Hongkong Post local and cross-border delivery services. It also carries a broad range of philatelic products and postal stationeries offered by Hongkong Post for the public.

Hongkong Post Mobile Application: The Hongkong Post Mobile App, available for both iPhone and Android mobile devices, allows the public to track mail delivery status, calculate postage, check the locations of post offices, iPostal Stations and street posting boxes, search correct local mailing addresses, make appointments for Speedpost or Local CourierPost pick-up service, apply for mail redelivery service, settle Hongkong Post bills with e-Cheque, submit electronic customs data of mail items for customs clearance, and obtain other postal service information of Hongkong Post anytime and anywhere.

Certification Authority (CA) Service: To encourage the development of electronic commerce in Hong Kong, Hongkong Post established a public key infrastructure and began acting as the first public CA in Hong Kong in January 2000. As empowered by the Electronic Transactions Ordinance, the Postmaster General is a recognised CA in Hong Kong. Hongkong Post Certification Authority (HKPCA)

issues digital certificates, namely Hongkong Post e-Certs, to individuals and businesses to facilitate the identity verification of the subscribers over the Internet. The operation and services of HKPCA have been outsourced to Certizen Limited since 1 April 2012. By the end of April 2020, HKPCA has issued about 2.19 million digital certificates to businesses, government departments and individuals.

Development of Postal Services: Automation of letter sorting was introduced in July 1990 with the commissioning of the Mechanised Letter Sorting System (MLSS), which was the first in the world using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Video Coding technology to sort letters by reading the addresses of the letters, without the need of reading post codes or zip codes. To further enhance operating efficiency, the new MLSS has been put into full operation in June 2009. The new MLSS combines and improves the functions of Optical Character Reader, Video Coding Machine and Letter Sorting Machine to streamline and optimise the mail processing flow. The MLSS Letter Sorting Machines added a Chinese Optical Character Recognition function in 2016 to sort letters bearing printed Chinese local addresses.

The Central Mail Centre is installed with Culler-Facer-Canceller machines to automatically segregate mail items into packets and letters, cancel the postage stamps on letters with a date impression and further segregate them into local/surface mail and air mail.

The Air Mail Centre at the Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok is equipped with machines for automating the sorting of packets and parcels, and for handling airline containers.

The Integrated Postal Services System (IPSS) introduced to post offices in 2015 has automated counter operations with re-engineered workflow. The new Mail Flow Management and Tracking System (MTS) launched in 2017 enhances the functionalities for tracking mail items and mail despatches throughout the mail flow. The instant data exchange capability of IPSS and MTS facilitates the planning and deployment of manpower and other resources. Hongkong Post makes mail tracing information available to customers through an interactive voice response system, and on its web page and mobile app.

An "e-signature" function was added in 2016 for counter staff to capture the signatures of mail recipients electronically as a proof-of-delivery, and was further extended to the new generation of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) used by delivery postmen in 2018.

Postage Label Vending Machine (PLVM): New PLVMs have been rolled out progressively to replace all the existing Electronic Stamp Vending Machines. All the replacement works are expected to complete by mid-2020. PLVM provides sale of new self-adhesive postage labels of 10 pre-set denominations and postage enquiry function. Customers can enquire about postage and purchase postage labels required according to the destination, format and weight of the mail item.

International and Regional Involvement: Hongkong Post participates as a member of the delegation of the People's Republic of China in meetings and activities of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). Established in 1874 in Berne, Switzerland, the UPU aims to foster the sustainable development of quality and efficient universal postal services in order to facilitate communication among the people of the world, and to guarantee the free circulation of postal items through an interconnected single postal territory. The Universal Postal Union Congress is held once every four years to determine strategic policy issues and to review existing postal working procedures and regulations to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the community.

Hongkong Post remains a separate postal administration and effectively exchanges international mail and has bilateral postal agreements with the postal administrations of other countries.

Apart from the UPU, Hongkong Post also participates in the meetings and activities of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) as a member of the China delegation. The APPU is a regional postal union which deals with postal matters in Asia and Oceania. It aims at improving postal services through promoting understanding and co-operation among the postal administrations in the region.

Hongkong Post is also a member of the Asia Pacific Post Cooperative (APP Cooperative), which was established in 1998 to improve the quality of postal services in the Asia-Pacific region, enable member postal organisations to enhance their market share; and address operational, commercial, technical and economic issues of postal services in the region. Currently, 28 postal organisations are members of APP Cooperative with a governing board of seven members. Hongkong Post has been serving as a governing board member of APP Cooperative since its establishment.