

321. Each Postmaster or Telephonist is to submit to his Chief Postmaster by the first mail in the new year a specimen impression of the date-stamp; and the Chief Postmaster is to see that the impression is received and is correct.

322. (a.) Postal packets of all kinds must be date-stamped with the date of posting, the only exception being of postal packets for which exemption from date-stamping at the time of posting is specially provided for by other rules.

(b.) Posting-boxes in post-offices must be cleared and the articles therein date-stamped at the time of closing the office.

323. (a.) The date and the index letter or figure of every date-stamp must be carefully adjusted at the beginning of each day, and the index changed punctually throughout the day at the appointed times. Each time the date or the index is changed, a clear impression of every date-stamp in use must be made in the impression-book, and both the officer who changes the stamp and a second responsible officer must initial the book. At a chief post-office the second officer initialling should be the head of the mail staff or the officer acting in that capacity. The record impressions must be carefully examined to see that the dates, &c., are correct. The correct assembling of date-stamps at non-permanent offices is to be checked at the circulating offices by a regular examination of the date-stamp impressions on the correspondence posted at the non-permanent offices.

(b.) Except in loose-type postmarking-machines the date should be arranged in the date-stamp thus: "9 Sp. 11." In those stamps which provide four spaces within the circle the index number should be at the top, the date on the left-hand side of the impression, the month on the right, and the year at the bottom. In loose-type postmarking-machines the type are to be arranged so that the date follows the month.

(c.) Special care is required in manipulating wheel date-stamps. When day type up to and including the figure 9 is required, the first wheel of the stamp is to be turned so as to show the small hyphen-bar and not the blank face provided for the purpose of additional engraving. By this means the impression of the blank face is prevented from showing.

(d.) Chief Postmasters will decide how often the index is to be changed at offices under their control. G and J are not to be used as index letters. As the object of the date-stamp is to indicate the day, so the object of the index is to indicate the hour at which a postal packet is received or despatched. If, therefore, the index is not changed punctually, a Postmaster may be blamed for a delay for which he is not responsible. Postmasters supplied with date-stamps having type symbols for hour and minute will note that, as far as possible, regular half-hourly changes should be made, and that the time shown should always be later than the actual time of stamping. Thus, a letter posted at 4.50 p.m. would bear the time 5 p.m., and a letter posted at 5.2 p.m. the time 5.30 p.m.

(e.) For the four working-days prior to Christmas Day clock-time is to be omitted from all obliterating date-stamps at chief post-offices, but the symbols "a.m." or "p.m." are to be retained. This arrangement may also apply to any large sub-office at which an appreciable saving of time and labour would be effected thereby.

324. Date-stamps engraved "Telegraph Office" are on no account to be used for impressing postal matter.

325. The date-stamp must not on any account be altered from the current date. Any mark required of another date must be written.