P-2540 Problems

A. Stamp Replacement

All replacements must be made no later than 10 days after the recipient reports the non-receipt or loss (15 days if the stamps were sent by certified mail).

1. Period of Intended Use
Replacement stamps will be issued only if the loss is reported in the period of their intended use. For stamps issued via the monthly run (which are always issued at the end of the calendar month), the period of intended use begins on the date of issuance (the mailing date) and extends through the end of the calendar month following the date of issuance. For stamps issued via the daily list, the period of intended use begins on the date of issuance and extends through the end of the calendar month which follows the calendar month in which the date of issuance occurred.

2. Non-receipt of Stamps
For replacements of stamps sent by certified mail, see #6. For all other replacements, follow these steps.

a. When a recipient reports that food stamps were never received, do not replace them until the fourth postal delivery day after the stamps were due (to allow sufficient time for their receipt).
b. Check ACCESS to see how many envelopes were mailed, and if the address was correct.

Look at INOD to see if the stamps were returned to Food Stamp Accounting. (Stamps usually are not returned to Food Stamp Accounting until three or four days after they were mailed.)

c. If Food Stamp Accounting has the stamps, see P-2560 A.
d. If Food Stamp Accounting does not have the stamps, complete and have the recipient sign the DSW 278A (Food Stamp Household Loss Affidavit). A separate DSW 278A is needed for each separate issuance. If one issuance is split into two envelopes, only one DSW 278A is needed. If the recipient's mailing address is

dO (care of) another individual, both must sign the DSW 278A.

e. If stamps are lost or stolen in the mail twice in a six-month period, the recipient will receive any future stamps by certified mail.

P-2540 Problems (Continued)

2. Non-receipt of Stamps (Continued)

No replacement will be made to households who report stamps lost or stolen in the mail if they have already been issued two replacements in the previous five months (a six month period).

File the DSW 278A in the case record. Send a manual DSW 220 (Notice of Decision) with the following blurb:

> "Your request for replacement of $_____ in Food Stamps for the period _____ to _____ has been denied because federal regulations limit us to two replacements in six months when stamps are reported lost or stolen in the mail. You have already received two replacements in six months. (CFR 274.6)"

f. In ACCESS, void the disbursement transaction and enter replacement instructions.

Send the DSW 278A to Food Stamp Accounting at the same time. Food Stamp Accounting will mail the stamps on the same day they receive the daily list if they have the DSW 278A.

3. Destroyed Stamps

a. When a recipient reports Food Stamp coupons (or food purchased with Food Stamp coupons) were destroyed in a household disaster, such as a fire or flood, complete and have the person sign the DSW 278A (Food Stamp Household Loss Affidavit). Verify the disaster through a collateral contact, documentation from a community agency (for example, the fire department or the Red Cross), or a home visit. Determine the amount which was lost. Replace only the portion of the allotment which was destroyed up to a maximum of one month's allotment (unless the issuance includes restored benefits which you replace up to their full value).

NOTE: Before replacing any stamps, check INQD to see if the client had any replaced within the last six months. There is a limit of two replacements in six months for household disasters.

b. Using FIAT/C/FS REPLACE, enter the amount of benefits to be replaced with reason code RD. This input will generate a control document and a daily list so Food Stamp Accounting can mail the replacement coupons.

P-2540 Problems (Continued)

A. Stamp Replacement (Continued)

3. Destroyed Stamps (Continued)

c. Send the DSW 278A to Food Stamp Accounting at the same time that you input the information into ACCESS. Food Stamp Accounting will mail out the stamps on the same day they receive the daily list if they have the DSW 278A.

4. Damaged Stamps or Incomplete Stamp Books

a. When a recipient reports damaged stamps or receipt of books which are missing stamps, determine whether or not the stamps qualify for replacement. At least 3/5 of the stamps must be recognizable so that Food Stamp Accounting can verify the amount of the loss. If they aren't, do not replace the stamps. If the damage occurred in a household disaster, follow procedures in P-2540 A#3.

b. Complete the DSW 278A (Food Stamp Household Loss Affidavit) and have the client sign it.

C. Send the DSW 278A with the mailing envelope and damaged stamps or incomplete stamp books to Food Stamp Accounting. See P-2540 E for mailing instructions.

d. The Food Stamp Accounting Supervisor will examine the stamp books or stamp remains to verify the amount of the loss.

e. Food Stamp Accounting will send the stamps directly to the recipient.

f. If a client is not entitled to a replacement, Food Stamp Accounting will notify you or your supervisor.

5. Insufficient Books Received In Mail

a. When a recipient reports that he or she did not receive as many food stamp books as he or she was supposed to, complete the

DSW 278A and have the recipient sign the form.

b. Send the DSW 278A, the Food Stamp letter, and the envelope in which the stamps were delivered to Food Stamp Accounting.

P-2540 Problems (Continued)

5. Insufficient Books Received In Mail (Continued)

c. Food Stamp Accounting will determine if the report of the partial allotment is due to an issuance error. This error must be corroborated by a discrepancy in the issuance unit's inventory. This determination cannot be made without the envelope. If an error exists, Food Stamp Accounting will issue the remainder of the allotment. If no error is found, you will be notified.

NOTE: Do not enter anything in ACCESS for these cases.

6. Certified Mail

Stamps are sent by certified mail if they have been lost or stolen in the mail twice in a six-month period (P-2540 A#2).

If you believe certified mail is justified but stamps have not been lost or stolen in the mail twice in a six-month period, you may direct that certified mail be used (see ACCESS manual SPEC/FSSH). Document your reason in the case file (example: history of thefts in the neighborhood).

Food Stamp Accounting and/or Operations has the same discretion to direct that certified mail be used for certain addresses or streets.

Replacing Stamps

If the stamps were sent by certified mail, and the client reports them lost or stolen, follow these steps:

a. Call the Post Office to see if they were signed for, and if so, who signed for them. Ask for a copy of the signature card.

If the stamps were not signed for, ask the Post Office if they still have them. If so, send the client to pick them up.

b. If the stamps were signed for, determine whether or not the person who signed for them is a member of the food stamp household. If so, the stamps cannot be considered lost or stolen. Do not replace them. (If you believe there may be extraordinary circumstances, contact Operations.)

c. If the stamps were signed for by a non-household member, inform the client and ask about the circumstances under which this person signed. If appropriate, ask that a DSW 109 (Theft Report) be filed with the police.

d. On the DSW 278A (Food Stamp Household Loss Affidavit), or in dri attached memo, explain the loss and recommend whether or not the stamps should be replaced. Attach a copy of the signature card.

P-2540 Problems (Continued)

6. Certified Mail (Continued)

e. Give the DSW 278A and attachment(s) to the District Director. If the District Director approves the replacement, he or she will sign it and send it to the Food Stamp Accounting Unit (FSAU) at State Office. Until ACCESS is programmed to replace stamps sent by certified mail, FSAU will replace the stamps.