Important Update: USPS Mail Rules Could Impact Tax Filing Deadlines

Recent clarification from the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) may significantly affect how "timely mailing" is determined for tax filings and payments—and it's important that you're aware of the change.

What Changed?

USPS has clarified that mail is not considered "postmarked" when you drop it off at a post office or place it in a collection box. Instead, most mail is postmarked later—when it reaches a regional processing center, which could be a day or more after you send it.

Why This Matters for Taxes

For IRS purposes, the "mailbox rule" (Internal Revenue Code Section 7502) states that a document is considered filed on time if it is postmarked on or before the deadline.

However, under the new USPS clarification:

- Dropping your return or payment in the mail on the due date is no longer enough
- If the postmark is applied after the deadline, your filing or payment may be considered **late**

This can result in:

- Late filing penalties
- Interest charges
- Missed elections or deadlines

Real-World Risk

In many areas, especially rural locations, mail may travel long distances before being processed. This increases the likelihood that a return mailed "on time" could receive a late postmark.

What You Should Do

To avoid issues, we strongly recommend:

✔ **File and pay electronically whenever possible**
✔ **Submit mailed documents several days before the deadline**
✔ **Use Certified Mail (Return Receipt) or Certificate of Mailing** for proof
✔ **Avoid last-minute mailing—especially on tax deadlines like April 15**

Final Thoughts

This change doesn't alter IRS rules, but it changes how those rules are applied in practice. Relying on the old assumption of "mail it by the deadline" can now create unnecessary risk.

If you have any questions about filing options or deadlines, feel free to reach out. We are here to help you stay compliant and avoid surprises.