

Archive Photography and Publication Policy

Version 3.0

Archive Team

Version 2.0 agreed: June 2018 by Archivist & Archivist Records Manager

Version 3.0 agreed: 23/05/2024 by Archivist (Access) & Senior Archivist

Overview

This policy sets out the conditions under which copies may be made, or images reproduced, of material in The Royal Mail Archive. The Postal Museum (TPM) is the home of The Royal Mail Archive, which covers Royal Mail and Post Office records going back to 1637. For questions about this policy, to request copies of archive material or a licence to publish images, please contact the Archive Team.

Copying records using personal devices

COPYING / PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PERSONAL RESEARCH

TPM allows visitors to make copies, by taking photographs, of the archive records using their own personal devices. Records are viewed and photographed in TPM's Archive Room free-of-charge.

Any personal device (e.g. laptop, tablet, camera, smartphone etc.) may be used in the Archive Room as long as the following conditions are met:

- Use of the device does not disturb other visitors, or the general quiet nature of the Archive Room (e.g. devices must operate in silent mode, calls must not be taken or made on mobile phones).
- Use of the device does not pose a threat to the safety of the records, or of other people.
- Cameras must be in still photography mode (no filming).
- Flash and tripods are not used.
- No other type of copying equipment is used e.g. hand-held scanners (for document preservation reasons).
- If photographing the display case, cameras should not come into contact with the glass.

DOCUMENT HANDLING

The preservation of the documents will always be the priority, above the quality of image to be obtained. If an Archivist believes the documents to be at risk from photography at any stage, they reserve the right to stop the session. In most cases advice will be given on the correct handling procedure to protect the documents, before stopping the session is considered.

All document handling procedures as required by TPM must be adhered to. All necessary aids such as cushions and weights etc are provided for visitors' convenience.

For records encased in Melinex (a clear, protective covering), the possibility of removing the material to take a clear photograph must be considered by an Archivist on a case-by-case basis depending on the condition of the item.

IMAGE QUALITY

TPM bears no responsibility for the quality of the images taken by members of the public. No printing facility is offered for images taken on personal devices.

RESTRICTIONS

TPM does not allow visitors to photograph the following records:

- Records at risk of damage.
- Records which are available to visitors only on microform or in electronic format. Instead, these may be printed on the Archive Room printer, for a charge. Images may also be downloaded digitally, free-of-charge. Photography of the microfilm screens is allowed, but the quality of such images cannot be guaranteed.
- Records, which for security reasons are only available under 1:1 supervision, may only be photographed at the discretion of the supervisor. Philatelic materials, and other high-value items in the files cannot be photographed.

COPYRIGHT

Visitors will be alerted to the lawful copying notices that are positioned around the Archive Room.

Visitors who wish to take photographs of records for a non-commercial purpose or private study and do not intend to publish the images, are not required to complete any paperwork.

Please note: Neither this policy nor any guidance offered by any member of staff at The Postal Museum constitute legal advice.

Anyone reproducing material held at The Postal Museum, whether as transcripts, from photographic or digital copies lawfully supplied by The Postal Museum or from a website of The Postal Museum, is responsible for any infringement of copyright that might result.

If you need legal advice, you should consult a solicitor.

Copying orders

TPM can produce digital copies on behalf of visitors or remote enquirers. All enquirers will be informed of the charges, the timeline for producing the images and asked to complete a 'Copying Request' form.

A 'research quality' copying service is provided by the Archive Team, suitable for people wishing to view documents for their own research purposes. TPM's professional Digitisation Studio provides high-quality images suitable for publication.

Photography for publication

Anyone wishing to publish images of material from The Royal Mail Archive, will be asked to complete a 'Reproduction Request Form'. This will be passed to the Senior Archivist for their approval. If the request is approved a licence to publish will be provided.

There may be a charge for the publication of images from The Royal Mail Archive. The Senior Archivist will provide details if this applies. Enquirers can either use their own device to take copies free-of-charge, under the conditions listed above, or request copies from TPM via the 'Reproduction

Request Form'. Copies provided by TPM will incur a charge, in addition to any charge for the licence to publish.