

MILITARY COMMITTEE LAND STANDARDIZATION BOARD (MCLSB)

6 December 2005

NSA(ARMY)1015-CSS/2109

MC LSB

**STANAG 2109 CSS (EDITION 6) - POSTAL ORGANISATION AND COURIER
SERVICE FOR THE NATO FORCES**

Reference:

MAS(ARMY)180-LOG/2109 dated 25 June 1993 (Edition 5)

1. The enclosed NATO Standardization Agreement which has been ratified by nations as reflected in the **NATO Standardization Document Database (NSDD)**, is promulgated herewith.
2. The reference listed above is to be destroyed in accordance with local document destruction procedures.
3. The MC LSB, NSA considers this an editorial edition to the STANAG; previous ratifying references and implementation details are deemed to be valid.

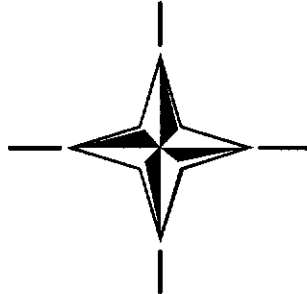
J. MAJ 
Brigadier General, POL(A)
Director, NSA

Enclosure:

STANAG 2109 (Edition 6)

NATO Standardization Agency – Agence OTAN de Normalisation
B-1110 Brussels, Belgium Internet site: <http://nsa.nato.int>
E-mail: nsa.army@hq.nato.int – Tel 32.2.707.55.79 – Fax 32.2.707.57.18

**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
(NATO)**



**NATO STANDARDIZATION AGENCY
(NSA)**

**STANDARDIZATION AGREEMENT
(STANAG)**

SUBJECT: POSTAL ORGANISATION AND COURIER SERVICE FOR THE NATO FORCES

Promulgated on 6 December 2005

J. MAJ 
Brigadier General, POL(A)
Director, NSA

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

No.	Reference/date of Amendment	Date Entered	Signature

EXPLANATORY NOTES

AGREEMENT

1. This NATO Standardization Agreement (STANAG) is promulgated by the Director NATO Standardization Agency under the authority vested in him by the NATO Standardization Organisation Charter.
2. No departure may be made from the agreement without informing the tasking authority in the form of a reservation. Nations may propose changes at any time to the tasking authority where they will be processed in the same manner as the original agreement.
3. Ratifying nations have agreed that national orders, manuals and instructions implementing this STANAG will include a reference to the STANAG number for purposes of identification.

RATIFICATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND RESERVATIONS

4. Ratification, implementation and reservation details are available on request or through the NSA websites (internet <http://nsa.nato.int>; NATO Secure WAN <http://nsa.hq.nato.int>).

FEEDBACK

5. Any comments concerning this publication should be directed to NATO/NSA – Bvd Leopold III - 1110 Brussels - BEL.

NATO STANDARDIZATION AGREEMENT
(STANAG)

POSTAL ORGANIZATION AND COURIER SERVICE FOR THE NATO FORCES

- Annexes: A. Handling of Naval Mails and Courier Material
 B. Classifications Authorised into National courier services
 by other NATO Nations
- Related Documents: Universal Postal Union Conventions
 AC/35-D/2002-REV2 – Security within the North Atlantic
 Treaty Organization

AIM

1. The aim of this agreement is to achieve secure, speedy, efficient and interoperable postal and courier services in the NATO Forces.

AGREEMENT

2. Participating nations agree that:
- a. The policy for the wartime Armed Forces Postal System is as detailed below.
 - b. The policy for peace and wartime Allied Courier System is as detailed below.
 - c. Mutual courier support will be provided on a reciprocal basis using existing resources and schedules with minimal or no financial implications.
 - d. The procedures laid down in this STANAG may be tested in peacetime; eg. during exercises.

DEFINITIONS

3. a. Postal services are by definition the movement of revenue paid private mails received from the host nation civil postal administration into the forces postal system addressed to members of the armed forces and its civilian members and components using an approved military form of address. Official non-revenue unclassified items originated by departments within the host nation armed forces addressed to units or individuals are also to be accepted as postal items.

- b. Courier services are by definition the movement of classified mails or materials originated by NATO nations addressed to other headquarters formations or units of a member nation and of an approved classification in accordance with Annex B.

DETAILS OF THE AGREEMENT

ORGANIZATION

- 4. Each nation is responsible for the organisation and control of its own armed forces postal and courier services. For courier services, nations are responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring safeguards are in place to prevent terrorist access to either the postal or courier services. This may include restricting access to the postal and courier services (through security checks of potential users), physical processing of items including scanning for explosive residue, improvised devices and biological and chemical agents and the provision of quarantining of suspect items
 - b. Ensuring material introduced into another national, or the ACE Courier Service, is qualified for and completed in accordance with the regulations of the receiving courier service(s). (See Annex B).
 - c. Ensuring that the following items are not introduced into the courier service of another NATO nation:
 - (1) Contraband, including controlled substances (particularly narcotics and dangerous drugs).
 - (2) Firearms, explosives, ammunition, or other material hazardous to personnel.
 - (3) Combustibles.
 - (4) Liquids, foodstuffs and perishable items.
 - (5) Currency, military payment certificates, bonds, securities, gold, silver, jewels, jewellery, postage stamps in quantity or other negotiable instruments.
 - (6) Office equipment and office supplies, including blank forms/paper, etc.
 - (7). Supply items such as blankets, repair parts, tools, radios and clothing.
 - d. Ensuring that Commands are aware of the importance of courier material and courier matters.

NATO/PfP UNCLASSIFIED

- e. Host nations may waive provisions of Annex B, Classifications Authorised into National Courier Services by other Nations, during wartime at the request of the shipping nation.
5. SACEUR is to be responsible for the co-ordination of the Forces Postal Systems and Allied Courier Services of NATO members. SACEUR will:
- a. Monitor the implementation of STANAG 2109 by member nations.
 - b. Maintain liaison with the national point of contact for postal and courier activity and establish an appropriate co-ordinate policy.
 - c. Assist in resolving postal and courier problems which may arise between NATO member countries.
 - d. Co-ordinate and assist in the exchange of postal and courier liaison officials between the armed forces postal and courier services and each NATO nation as appropriate.

OPERATIONS IN TERRITORIES OF OTHER NATO NATIONS

6. To meet security requirements and maintain adequate facilities, it is agreed that the armed forces postal and courier services of one nation, operating in the territory of another are permitted to:
- a. Establish armed forces post offices.
 - b. Receive closed mails from outside the territory of the host nation, subject to customs and exchange control requirements.
 - c. Dispatch closed mails to any other armed forces or civil post office in or outside the host nation.
 - d. Carry armed forces mails within the territory of operations, but do nothing that would prejudice the undoubted sovereign rights each nation has in the matter of postal monopoly.
 - e. Use their own postage or official franking on all correspondence posted at post offices under their control.
 - f. Have the right to provide and operate, within the host nation, remittance services in the currency of the homeland and not exceeding the equivalent of 250 US dollars per visiting service member per day.
 - g. Carry official, qualified courier material without prejudice to operations.

NATO/PfP UNCLASSIFIED

7. Each nation is to take all practicable steps to allow visiting NATO Armed Forces to operate with the freedom prescribed in the previous paragraph. However, it is understood that:

- a. Each nation is free to apply safeguards against abuse which it may feel to be necessary including punitive action.
- b. Any host nation incurring expenditure on behalf of the visiting NATO Armed Forces for carriage of mails, is entitled to the recovery of such expenditure in accordance with arrangements, rules and practices existing at the time (e.g. applicable conventions of the Universal Postal Union and bilateral agreements).

8. Units or detachments of nations which do not have a Forces Post Office of their own are to be served by the Forces Post Office of the nation responsible for provision of service in the locality. The postal officer of the organisation administering the area is responsible for the effective working of the arrangement.

RECIPROCAL PRIVILEGES

9. Subject to any reservations to this STANAG the following paragraphs apply:

- a. NATO Armed Forces personnel are to be accorded, at a Forces Post Office, the same postal privileges for posting and receiving mail as those accorded the armed forces personnel of the nation operating the Forces Post Office.
- b. Each member nation operating a courier service agrees to afford to NATO, and to any other individual member nation, the same carriage facilities and privileges for receipt and dispatch of courier material as those afforded to the courier service operator. Classifications authorised within the NATO national courier services are contained at Annex B.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION TO BE MADE AS NECESSARY

10. Arrangements are to be made as necessary for:

- a. Such exchange of postal and courier liaison officers between the Armed Forces Postal and Courier services of each of the NATO nations, and such liaison with the civil postal organisations as may be required to ensure maximum co-ordination and efficiency.
- b. Direct official exchange of technical information between the Armed Forces Postal and Courier services to the NATO nations, by correspondence and personal liaison, to ensure general co-ordination and prompt routing and exchange of mails and courier material.

NATO/PfP UNCLASSIFIED

- c. Consultations and liaison, where practicable, between appropriate postal headquarters and courier agencies before troops proceed to any theatre in which the Armed Forces of any of the NATO nations are or will be operating with a view to joint use of the Armed Forces postal installations and mutual use of courier services.
- d. Ensuring that all exchanges of information are made with due regard to security requirements.

AIR MAIL AND COURIER SERVICES

11. In order to reduce the heavy demands on air transport in periods of tension or in war, nations agree to use the lightweight Armed Forces air letter form (Aerogramme as prescribed in the airmail convention of the Universal Postal Union). Nations agree to use discretion and to establish effective administrative control of courier materials to ensure that weights are minimised.

12. To ensure that the Armed forces and their dependants make adequate use of such an aerogramme, preferential postage rates, with priority in air transit even over other forms of airmail may be required.

13. For courier materials, air transport priority, over other material, will be given to COMSEC material, all ATOMAL, COSMIC TOP SECRET, NATO SECRET, NATO CONFIDENTIAL in that order unless otherwise specified by the dispatching agency.

ARMED FORCES POSTAL ADDRESS AND COURIER ADDRESS

14. Insofar as their domestic position permits for postal services, the NATO nations are to ensure that:

- a. All correspondence from the Armed Forces carries the sender's authorised address on the outside, to facilitate reply or disposition in the event of non-delivery.
- b. Senders of correspondence to the Armed Forces are encouraged to furnish this address on the outside of the cover.
- c. Senders of courier materials to NATO addresses are encouraged to furnish this address on the outside of the cover.
- d. Packaging of courier materials is as stated in AC/35-D/2002-REV2, Annex 1.

IDENTIFICATION OF ARMED FORCES MAIL, COURIER MATERIAL AND CORRESPONDENCE

15. Some nations may have special requirements in identification of Armed Forces mail and correspondence and their right to make regulations designed to meet these requirements is acknowledged by the NATO nations generally.

NATO/PfP UNCLASSIFIED

16. It is acknowledged that some nations may have special identification requirements for courier items; however, standardization and interoperability in NATO courier operations is the desired goal.

17. To facilitate identification of mail bags intended for air transportation within a particular theatre, Armed Forces postal organisations are to identify such mail bags with a tag, mark or label in accordance with paragraph 40 and bearing, in blue, the superscription "Par Avion" or "By Airmail".

POSTAL RATES AND ARMED FORCES MAIL CLASSES

18. It is agreed that apart from adoption of the specific measure described in this document, the standardization of Armed Forces postage rates and mail classes between the NATO nations is not practicable.

EXCHANGE OF MAILS AND COURIER MATERIAL

19. Transfer points for mail transferred between Armed Forces and civil postal authorities are to be established by discussion and agreement between respective in-theatre parties.

20. Entry points for mail transferred among NATO courier services are to be identified or established by discussion and agreement between the respective parties.

21. Subject to the laws and regulations of the host nation such post offices of visiting Armed Forces as may be agreed upon between the Armed Forces and civil authorities concerned may, by direct agreement between the parties, be designated as transfer offices and regarded as agencies of the civil postal administration of the nation of the visiting Armed Forces concerned.

TRANSPORTATION

22. Each nation provides transportation for airmail and courier items as it deems suitable; however, whenever it becomes a question of sharing a limited amount of Armed Forces transport capacity, either air or surface transportation should be an equitable basis. Each nation should include its desired or expected movement priority. Transporting nation should make every effort to meet these delivery priorities.

23. The quantities of mails are to be agreed between the various postal representatives in-theatre having regard to all the factors involved, including particularly the relative sizes of the Armed Forces. Where necessary and desirable, any approach to outside transport agencies should be made on a joint basis.

24. The quantities of courier materials carried must be divided among the various courier agencies. Representatives will regard all the factors involved, including particularly the relative size of the courier capability, geography, mission requirements and resource constraints.

REDIRECTION OF MAIL

25. When personnel are serving, or moving to serve with Armed Forces of a NATO nation other than their own, the Armed Forces postal authority of the nation with which they are serving is to ensure that every facility is given to such personnel to advise a change of postal address to the losing unit and to relatives at home. Such facilities are to include the supply of redirection cards, or complete form of communication, for dispatch by the most expeditious means and, whenever possible, free of postage.
26. Each NATO nation agrees to:
- a. Make arrangements accordingly, and to take steps to impress on commanders of all units concerned their responsibilities in this matter.
 - b. Arrange that, in the case of personnel admitted to hospital, the hospital authorities themselves are invariably charged with the primary responsibility in the matter of advice to patients' change of addresses.
 - c. Arrange that the Armed Forces postal authorities in a theatre collaborate in ensuring that stocks of redirection cards in the appropriate language are available for use in all hospitals receiving patients of other NATO Armed Forces.

MISDIRECTED COURIER ITEMS

27. If material is misdirected, the possessing courier service will make every effort to redirect the material into the appropriate address or channel.

DISPOSAL OF UNDELIVERED MAIL AND COURIER MATERIAL

28. Mail which is received in the Armed Forces postal service of one nation addressed to a member of the Armed Forces of another NATO nation, and which is undeliverable, as addressed, is to be treated in accordance with any instructions left by the addressee with due regard being paid to any special instructions given by the sender. Where, however, the mail is altogether undeliverable, newspapers, periodicals and printed matter of no value should be destroyed and all other mail including books and registered papers immediately returned to the appropriate authorities of the nation of origin unless special arrangements to the contrary have been made by the parties concerned.
29. Received courier material which is undeliverable, as addressed, will be dispatched in accordance with instructions received from the originator. If no such guidance is forthcoming, the item will be returned to sender by the most expeditious means.

INDEMNITY OR COMPENSATION OF ARTICLES OF MAIL AND COURIER MATERIAL

30. The NATO nations between themselves agree to waive claims for loss of, or damage to, Armed Forces mails with the exception of the transfer of money. In this connection, it is generally understood that each nation is to seek to curtail drastically its registered and insured articles of mail, and also will expedite settlement.

31. The NATO nations between themselves agree to waive claims for loss of, or damage to courier material. Reported loss of courier material will be investigated in accordance with national regulations and AC/35-D/2002-REV 2.

POSTAL REMITTANCE SERVICE

32. It is not practicable to standardize the postal remittance services (money orders, postal orders, postal cheques, etc). The existence of channels other than the Armed Forces postal service for remitting money makes it doubtful that standardization means are required, but as special needs arise between the parties concerned, these are to be met by arrangements between the parties concerned.

NEWSPAPER AND PUBLICATIONS

33. Past experience has shown that in wartime the great volume of newspapers and periodicals sent to the Armed Forces abroad have overburdened the postal services and sometimes interfered with the expeditious handling of letter mail. Frequently, these newspapers and periodicals were undeliverable because the subscription addresses had been reassigned without providing a forwarding address.

34. Prohibitions on the sending of newspapers to the Armed Forces in the field cannot be recommended because of the morale factor involved. However, when welfare organisations provide some form of printed news services, steps may be taken to discourage or prohibit altogether the transmission of "subscription" and other newspapers mailed on a regular basis. The NATO nations, therefore, should examine the need for adopting such measures in time of war. They should bear in mind the desirability of introducing a regulation prohibiting or restricting the redirection of Armed Forces newspapers by units serving outside their homelands, having regard to the circumstances which may prevail in a specific theatre of war at any particular time.

PARCEL POST

35. The exchange of parcel post from or to the Armed Forces abroad is desirable, but it is impractical to impose a fixed limit of weight to meet all circumstances. However, in certain conditions of war, limitations may be placed upon the availability of transport. It is agreed that, in such circumstances, the appropriate authorities are to indicate action to secure the necessary restrictions on parcel post. In some circumstances, it may even be necessary to suspend temporarily the service.

LETTERS AND PACKETS

36. It may also be necessary to apply the same restrictions considered for parcel post to letters (except forces aerogrammes) and small packets.

CUSTOMS

37. Customs procedure is a matter for the government of each nation and it is impossible to predict the customs requirements in a future war. It is generally recognised that all Armed Forces postal organisations are bound to meet the customs requirements of any allied or friendly nation in which they are receiving, or to which they are dispatching mails. It is recognised, however, that no courier organisation is required to pay national customs duties, in respect of courier material, being sent to, or received in any allied or friendly nation, during the conduct of NATO business.

38. As an aid to promoting of efficient postal and courier services for NATO operations, the customs authorities of NATO nations have expressed their readiness to exempt from customs examination, upon instructions by the government of the country the mail is transiting, the following:

- a. All mail and courier material which is certified as being official and which is addressed to or sent by NATO Armed Forces. Such correspondence will be marked with the term "OFFICIAL" or its equivalent in the official language of the nation concerned.
- b. Closed mails and courier material to and from NATO Armed Forces in transit through an intermediate administration or service.

39. All mails and courier materials not covered by paragraph 38 above are subject to national customs inspections.

POSTAL FORMS

40. Although a measure of standardization already exists in this field, there is at present no scope for achieving closer standardization. However, airport or country destination labels/tags accompanying pouches/sacks of closed mails and redirection cards (see paragraphs 25 and 26) are to be uniformly marked with a diagonal green crossbar from the left-hand bottom corner to the top right corner.

COURIER FORMS

41. There is at present no scope for achieving closer standardisation of courier documentation. However, unit destination labels/tags accompanying pouches/sacks or closed pouches should contain sufficient detail to allow expeditious delivery by the transmitting agency. But see AC/35-D/2002-REV2, Annex 1.

NAVAL MAILS AND COURIER MATERIAL

42. Although the problems affecting naval mails and courier material are, the general principle of this agreement also applies to naval mails and courier material. Special arrangements for naval mails and courier materials somewhat different from those affecting Army and Air force mails and courier material are given at Annex A.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

43. The UK Postal and Courier Services employ an electronic mail version of the Forces Air Letter Form for the use of UK forces deployed on operations to communicate with home. This allows email systems to be utilised in conjunction with printing machines to facilitate a swift and secure means for forces to communicate with the national homebase. The interface between NATO nations is an area for further discussion.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

44. This STANAG is implemented when the necessary orders/instructions to adopt the policy described in this agreement have been issued to the forces concerned.

HANDLING OF NAVAL MAILS AND COURIER MATERIAL

GENERAL

1. The handling of naval mails and courier services is somewhat different from that of Army and Air Force. In general, the same problems affect the NATO navies and the methods employed to handle naval mails and courier material are essentially the same.

LABELLING AND TRANSPORTING MAIL AND COURIER MATERIAL

2. Mail and courier material for naval vessels shall be dispatched in sealed pouches and sacks via the appropriate mode of transportation for the class of mail and classification of courier material contained therein. Labels shall indicate the unit's name or assigned destination, and the local post office, consul, or military post offices (for courier material, the local port, consul or military facility) to which it is to be dispatched for delivery or onward routing. Detailed procedures will be established by NATO nations' postal and courier liaison officers.

SHIPS WITHOUT POSTAL FACILITIES

3. When ships without postal facilities are operating with Allied units, provisions are to be made for forwarding mail from these ships to their homelands. The problem of the exchange or forwarding of mails with postage is the same as with other Armed Forces and is to be handled in a similar manner. The same privileges and freedom to be granted to Armed Forces operating on territories of other NATO nations are allowed, to include "free" postage where applicable.

CUSTOMS

4. Naval vessels frequently move from country to country with varying customs restrictions. In accordance with procedures prescribed by the Conventions of the Universal Postal Union, closed mails which are destined for warships are to be considered in transit and free from custom inspection.

5. The provisions of customs exemption outlined in paragraphs 37-39 of STANAG 2109 also apply to naval mails.

MERCHANT VESSELS

6. The handling of mail for merchant vessels is not standardized. Some nations handle merchant vessels mail in the same manner as naval mail, while other nations provide separate arrangements from the Armed Forces postal service.

7. Because of the difficulties involved, it is desirable that each nation considers this problem and provide a plan for handling wartime merchant vessel mail.

POSTAL AND NAVAL COURIER ADDRESS

8. For security reasons, it is impossible to include in the postal address for naval mails an identification system showing the location of each vessel.

9. Mixed fleets will be operating in wartime. Therefore, it is essential that full and complete liaison be established between the Armed Forces postal and courier services of the NATO nations. On this basis, the naval postal and courier services can be kept fully informed on the locations of other nation's ships which are serving with national fleets, and correct and speedy routing of naval mails and courier material can be achieved.

**CLASSIFICATIONS AUTHORISED INTO NATIONAL COURIER SERVICES BY OTHER
NATO NATIONS**

	ATOMAL			CTS	NS	NC	NR	NU
	CTS/A	NS/A	NC/A					
ACE COURIER SERVICE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BELGIUM	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BULGARIA								
CANADA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CZECH REPUBLIC								
DENMARK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ESTONIA								
FRANCE					X	X	X	X
GERMANY	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
GREECE	X	X	X	X	X	X		
HUNGARY								
ICELAND					X	X	X	X
ITALY	X	X	X	X	X	X		
LATVIA								
LITHUANIA								
LUXEMBOURG	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NETHERLANDS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NORWAY	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
POLAND								
PORTUGAL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ROMANIA								
SLOVAKIA								
SLOVENIA								
SPAIN				X	X	X	X	X
TURKEY	X	X	X	X	X	X		
UNITED KINGDOM	X	X	X	X	X	X		
UNITED STATES	X	X	X	X				