



## City of Ketchum

October 17, 2022

Representative Mike Simpson  
802 West Bannock Street  
Boise, ID 83702

Re: Group E Exemption – Free PO Box Service

Dear Representative Simpson:

We are writing to request your assistance with the post office box fees charged to Ketchum residents and businesses by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) in Ketchum. As detailed in this September 28, 2022 article in the Idaho Mountain Express, <https://tinyurl.com/5n6vejf4>, the residents and businesses of Ketchum have never received home or business mail delivery. Instead, our residents and businesses must receive U.S. mail at a post office box at the Ketchum post office. The USPS delivers mail only to those post office boxes, and it will often return mail to sender if the address lists a physical address instead of the post office box.

Ketchum residents and businesses have no choice in how they receive mail. Instead, they are required to pay fees to have their mail delivered to them only at a post office box. The Ketchum post office currently charges \$138 and \$176 respectively for the two smallest post office box sizes. These prices have tripled in the past seven years, yet we have seen no improvement in service nor any explanation from the USPS as to why such steep price increases are necessary.

According to Section 508-4.5 of the U.S. Postal Service Manual, located here - <https://pe.usps.com/DMM300/Index> - Ketchum residents and businesses should qualify for the Group E exemption to payment of a post office box fee, as follows:

#### 4.5.2 Fee Group E — Free PO Box Service

Customers may qualify for Group E (free) PO Box service at a Post Office if their physical address location meets all of the following criteria:

- a. The physical address is within the geographic delivery ZIP Code boundaries administered by a Post Office.
- b. The physical address constitutes a potential carrier delivery point of service.
- c. USPS does not provide carrier delivery to a mail receptacle at or near a physical address for reasons in [4.5.3b](#). “At or near a physical address” is defined by reference to how carrier delivery is established in a particular locale or ZIP Code.

#### 4.5.3 Additional Standards for Free PO Box Service

Only one Group E (free) PO Box may be obtained for each potential carrier delivery point of service, under the following conditions:

- a. Group E PO Box customers are assigned the smallest available box that reasonably accommodates their daily mail volume.
- b. Eligibility for Group E PO Boxes does not extend to:

1. Individual tenants, contractors, employees, or other individuals receiving or eligible to receive single-point delivery to a location such as a hotel, college, military installation, campground, or transient trailer park.
  2. Locations served, or eligible to be served, by centralized delivery or grouped receptacles such as cluster box units, apartment style receptacles, mailrooms, or clusters of roadside receptacles.
  3. Locations where circumstances not within the control of the Postal Service prevent extension of carrier delivery, such as town ordinances, private roads, gated communities, unimproved or poorly maintained roadways, or unsafe conditions.
  4. Locations served by a delivery receptacle that a customer chooses to locate along a carrier's line of travel and to which the Postal Service makes delivery.
- c. A customer must pay the applicable fee for each PO Box requested in addition to the initial free Group E PO Box.
  - d. The online application tools described in [4.2.1b](#) cannot be used for free PO Box service.

Over the years, our councilmembers, residents and business owners, and the media have asked both Ketchum Postmaster John McDonald, and David Rupert, USPS Communications Director for the Western United States, for an explanation of why we don't qualify for the Group E exemption. See the Idaho Mountain Express article linked above. McDonald and Rupert keep citing an alleged decision by "the city" sometime in the 1990s that our residents did not want home and business mail delivery. Yet we cannot find any ordinances passed by the city during that time that barred mail delivery, nor any evidence of a public referendum.

The situation in Ketchum meets the plain language of the Group E exemption in the USPS Manual, but the Ketchum post office refuses to apply the Group E exemption when our residents and business owners request it. We are therefore requesting your assistance with the USPS to obtain the Group E exemption for Ketchum residents and businesses. The cost of living is rising for all Idahoans, and it is not fair that Ketchum residents and businesses must pay ever-increasing fees for a service that is provided free of charge to most other Idaho residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mayor Neil Bradshaw  
Council President Michael David  
Councilor Amanda Breen  
Councilor Courtney Hamilton  
Councilor Jim Slanetz