



# Frequently Asked Questions

(And Answers from  
State Court Administrative Office  
Friend of the Court Bureau)

**FAQ 2009-01**

**June 30, 2009**

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## **Using a Postal Verification to Administratively Change a Legal Address: Clarification of FAQ 2005-01**

This FAQ answers a commonly asked question and clarifies policy related to [SCAO Administrative Memorandum 2004-15](#), Friend of the Court Guidelines for Determining, Changing, or Suppressing Addresses of Parties and Nonparties. Court staff who have questions or who would like additional information or clarification should contact Toni Beatty at [BeattyT@courts.mi.gov](mailto:BeattyT@courts.mi.gov) or 517-373-2137.

**#1 Q: Can a friend of the court (FOC) office administratively change the legal address of a party under MCR 3.203(D)(2) after the office receives postal verification of a new address from the United States Postal Service (USPS)?**

**A: Yes.** MCL 552.603(7)(a) requires parties to notify their FOCs in writing within 21 days of a change in their address. When mail is returned from a legal address as undeliverable, the FOC may administratively change the legal address when the new address is verified. MCR 3.203 and SCAO Administrative Memorandum 2004-15.

A postal verification is not completely certain.<sup>1</sup> Various individuals are allowed to change a postal address, and the USPS verification only confirms that mail for an individual is delivered to a particular address, not that the person actually lives there. However, an administrative change of address made under these circumstances will possibly be valid—which is preferable to a situation in which mail continues to be mailed to an incorrect address and continues to be returned as undeliverable.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The process has some safeguards. Anyone who submits false or inaccurate information on this form is subject to punishment by fine or imprisonment or both under 18 USC 2, 1001, 1702, and 1708.

<sup>2</sup> Some FOCs have received notice from the USPS that their FOC office may be charged increased mailing costs if they do not make timely updates of addresses that have been returned to the FOC office as undeliverable under a “move update” found at <http://www.usps.com/ncsc/addressservices/moveupdate/moveupdatemenu.htm>. The USPS requires mailers who claim presort or automation rates for first class mail service to demonstrate that they have updated the addresses in their mailing lists within a specific timeframe prior to the mailing date. The State of Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) has equipment that automatically handles this concern for FOC offices that use DMB mailing services.