

Head Postmaster

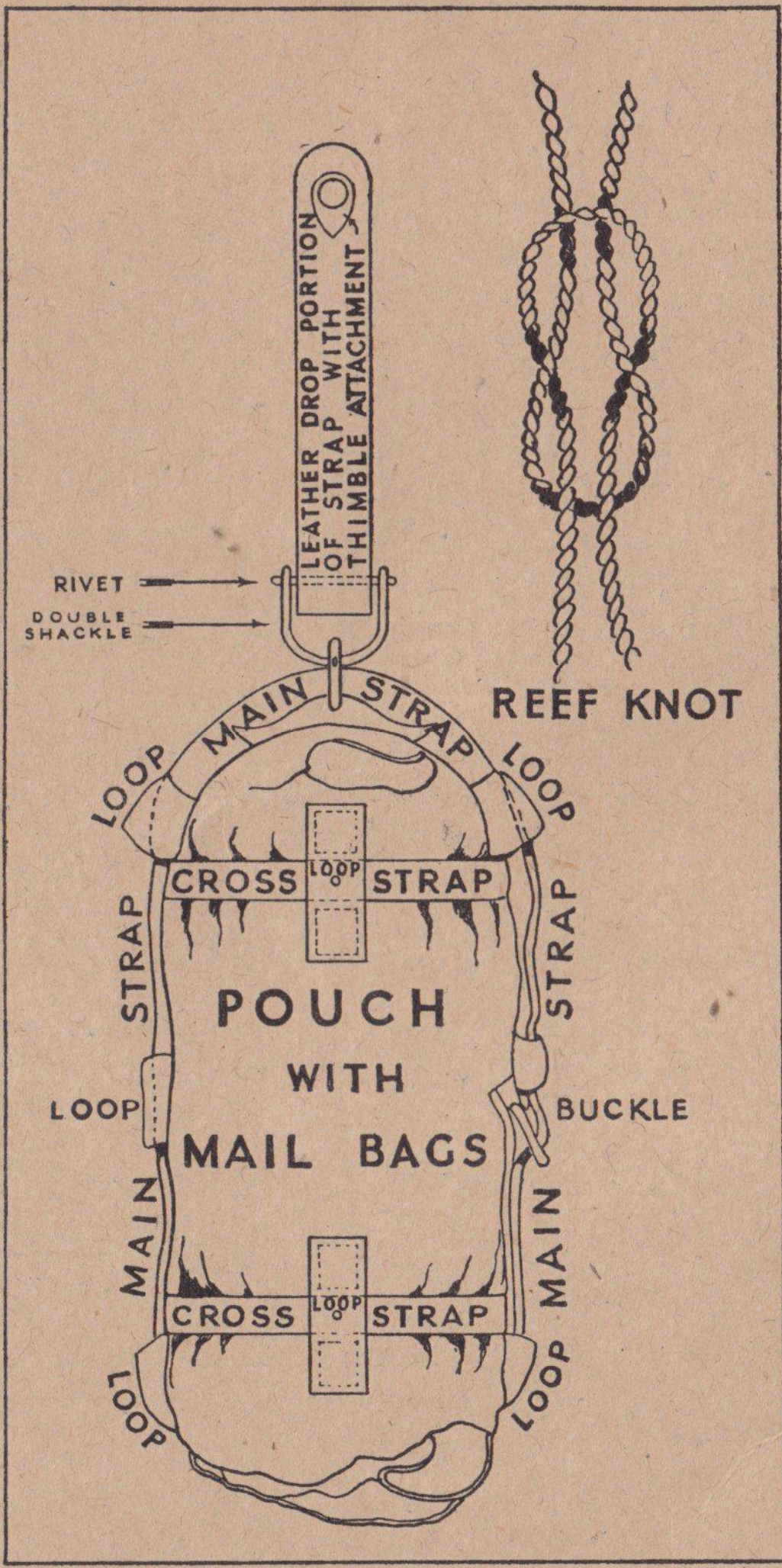
RULES

FOR WORKING

**LINESIDE MAIL
APPARATUS**



1947



RULES FOR WORKING LINESIDE MAIL APPARATUS

1. Apparatus to be worked by qualified officers only.—No officer should attempt to work the apparatus until he has been tested and passed as qualified by an Apparatus Officer of the T.P.O. Section.

A sufficient reserve of qualified officers should be available to cover absences of the regular officers. Tuition in working the apparatus and making up pouches when necessary should be given by a regular Apparatus Postman, and application should be made to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region, for an Apparatus Officer to test the reserve Postman after he has received tuition.

If at any time the employment of a Postman who has not been tested by an Apparatus Officer is unavoidable, the circumstances should be reported to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region.

2. Safety Precautions.—To prevent the standard being turned to the line by unauthorised persons each standard is fitted with a chain and padlock. These should be released to enable the standard to be used. After the T.P.O. has passed and the standard has been returned to the safe, out-of-working, position the chain should be passed round the standard to secure the handle in the slot in the standard base and secured by the padlock.

In the interests of safety, line-side apparatus officers should never pass BETWEEN the apparatus and the line on which the Mail train passes, on the way to or from the standard. They should always pass at the back of the apparatus. After the Mail train has passed,

the standard should be turned to the out-of-working position immediately and the net frame closed. The latter operation must be performed while standing between the wood and iron frames, and the frame should be eased down gently.

In the case of line-side nets where slot plates are fitted with safety pins, the pins should always be used to prevent the cross bar jumping out of the slot during the receipt of pouches.

3. Communication between apparatus hut and signal box.—Where there is telephone or electric bell communication between the signal box and the apparatus shelter hut, the Railway Company's instructions as well as the T.P.O. Section instructions should be carefully read and followed. The pouches must not be turned to the line until information is received of the approach of the Mail train, but they should be turned immediately after the receipt of such information. When advice is received that the Mail train is running late, the lineside net should not be set until 10 minutes before the Mail train will be due to pass.

4. Weight of pouches.—A pouch and contents for despatch to a T.P.O. should not weigh more than 50 lbs. If in order to avoid exceeding this limit, more than one pouch has to be made up, the weight should be distributed as evenly as possible. If it is necessary to exceed the limit on account of special circumstances, the matter should be reported to the Postmaster. A pouch despatched from a T.P.O. should not exceed 60 lbs. in weight. If it does, the fact should be reported. The average weight of an empty pouch is 20 lbs.

5. Making up pouches.—The contents of the bags should be carefully shaken into position so that the bags can be packed neatly in the pouch and completely covered by the leather. When only one bag is enclosed

in a pouch, the bottom of the bag should be laid at the lower end of the pouch, and the top of the bag should be turned over the seal. When two or more bags are enclosed in the same pouch they should be laid with the top of the second bag to the bottom of the first and so on alternately. The pouch should be packed in such a way that when suspended on the standard it will hang vertically. The small cross-straps should invariably be buckled, and the main strap should be passed through at least three of the five loops and round the pouch once only before buckling it; the remaining portion of the main strap should be carefully tucked in. (See printed illustration.) The pouch should be made up carefully and tightly to prevent the contents shifting at the moment of transfer into the T.P.O., but the straps should not be pulled so tight as to damage the correspondence.

6. Suspending and turning pouches to the line.— Pouches should be carried to the standard on the shoulder, and placed on the platform near to the pin to which they are to be attached. The platform should then be mounted and the pouch raised by the drop-strap to meet the pin. When the drop-strap is at the correct height, the right hand should be moved from the drop-strap and placed over the top of the pin box to guide the strap on to the pin and to help to keep the operator steady.

The standard should be turned carefully to prevent the pouch moving along the pin, and after the pouches have been turned to the line they should be examined to see that the drop-strap is well on the pin and held firmly by the jaws of the pin box. The standard should always be turned on and off by means of the handle, while the operator is standing on the ladder.

If after having turned the suspended pouches to the line it is observed that an approaching train is not the Mail train, no attempt should be made to reverse them unless it is evident that the standard can be turned to,

its out-of-working position before the engine of the approaching train reaches the apparatus. No attempt should be made to turn the standard while the operator is on the platform—this must be done while standing on the ladder.

7. Pouches to be tied to standard platforms to prevent movement.—Cases have occurred where pouches suspended on lineside standards have come into contact with the cab of the engine of the Mail train. This risk can be eliminated by tying the bottom of the pouch to the platform by means of string, and the following method should be used to tie-in all pouches :—

During the process of strapping up the pouch a length of string (SP 360) about 6 feet long should be placed along the inside of the bottom flap. The pouch strap should then be fastened in the normal manner leaving two loose ends of string hanging from the bottom corners of the pouch. After the pouch has been suspended from the lineside standard the loose ends should be tied to the eye bolts in the stage board of the standard. The string should be sufficiently taut to keep the pouch steady and to prevent it swinging out of the vertical towards the line (see diagram inside back cover of this rule book).

IMPORTANT.—Twine twist (SP 360) only must be used. In no circumstances should tarred cord or sisal twist be used as these do not break easily enough and are liable to damage the leather pouch.

8. Despatch of pouches.—The scheduled number of pouches due to be despatched should always be maintained, and when it is necessary to despatch extra pouches a note to that effect should be enclosed in one of the pouches. The same standards should be used for the same despatches each day.

9. Yellow and black enamel warning plates.—In order to call the attention of Enginemen to the location of the apparatus standards yellow and black warning plates are fixed on the approach side of all apparatus despatching stations.

After dark, when the pouches have been suspended and before they are turned to the line the electric hand lamp supplied for illuminating the warning plate at night time should be switched on and placed in the stand. It should be switched off and returned to the shelter hut when the standards have been turned from the line on completion of the working.

10. Use of the warning lamp on standards.—When turning the pouches into the working position at night time, the warning lamp should be placed in the bracket fixed to the platform of the standard. The warning light should be exhibited on the platform whenever the working takes place between 30 minutes after sunset and 30 minutes before sunrise. The warning light should be fixed whenever there is any doubt as to the lighting-up time, or at any time when it is unusually dark or foggy. After the pouches have been taken off the standard by the T.P.O., or turned back to the out-of-working position, the warning light must be withdrawn from the bracket.

11. Use of oil hand lamp.—During apparatus working after dark the light of the hand lamp should be thrown on the pouches suspended on the standard as the Mail train approaches the apparatus, and the light should be kept in the same direction until the train has passed. This should be done from a safe position near the shelter hut door.

12. Everything to be ready 10 minutes before the train is due.—All operations, including the setting of the net, should be completed 10 minutes before the

Mail train is due, but in cases where no communication exists between the signal box and the shelter hut, the pouches should not be turned to the line until within 5 minutes of the time at which the Mail train is due to pass.

Serious accidents have happened owing to the standards being in the working position during the passing of non-Mail trains, and it should be verified, where possible, by enquiry of some responsible railway official, that the next train to pass is the Mail train.

13. Working to be watched.—While the Mail train is passing, the working of the apparatus on the Mail carriage should be carefully observed (or if only a receipt is due the ground net should be watched), in order that the cause of any failure that may occur may be detected.

14. Pouch failing receipt into line-side net or T.P.O. carriage net.—If any bag or pouch which is due to be received has not been delivered into the net, careful search should be made for it over a distance of at least 400 yards on each side of the apparatus. A search should also be made in the vicinity of the standard when there is reason to suspect that the pouches hung for despatch have not been received into the carriage net. If the missing bag or pouch cannot be found, the irregularity should be reported by telegram to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region. The circumstances should also be reported to the local Postmaster.

When more than two pouches are due to be received from a Mail train, the numbers chalked on the pouches should be carefully observed and a report should be made if any pouch is not duly received in the net; the report should state the number of any pouch not received.

15. Contents of mail bags scattered.—If any bag or pouch has been damaged, and the contents scattered, careful search should be made of the line for any correspondence that may have fallen out. Any items found should be taken to the local Post Office. The chalked number of the pouch, if known, should be reported. A telegram should also be sent reporting the matter to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region.

If there is any reason to believe that items have been scattered over a large area, or between the lines where it is unsafe to make a search, the Signaller should be informed and asked to obtain the assistance of plate-layers to continue the search.

16. Apparatus to be examined after use.—Before leaving the apparatus, the springs should be examined and it should be ascertained that the standard and net have not been damaged during the working. If such damage has occurred that the apparatus cannot be worked, the local Postmaster should be requested to inform the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region, by telegram, stating the exact nature of the damage. Even if the damage is so slight that it will not prevent the apparatus from being worked, the matter should be reported to the local Postmaster, who will advise the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region, of the defect.

17. Pouches to be examined on receipt.—All pouches should be examined on receipt to ensure that they are in proper condition for use at the next despatch. If straps, buckles, shackles, loops, or thimbles are defective, or if the seams of the leather envelope are burst or torn, the pouch should not be used, but should be tied up into a compact parcel and returned as an enclosure with other pouches, suitably labelled "for repair." Any pouches which are received empty must always be opened.

18. Spare pouches.—At all apparatus stations from which despatches are made one spare pouch should be kept in the apparatus hut. At some specified stations this number is increased. When it has been necessary to use the reserve pouch, or pouches, application should be made immediately, through the local Postmaster, to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region, for replacements.

On no account must spare pouches be allowed to accumulate in the shelter huts. If more pouches are received than are necessary for the actual despatch of bags to the T.P.O. and for the maintenance of the specified number of reserve pouches, the surplus should be despatched to the T.P.O. at the earliest opportunity. If this cannot be done without exceeding the weight limit the local Postmaster should be asked to report the fact to the Chief Superintendent, T.P.O. Section, London Postal Region.

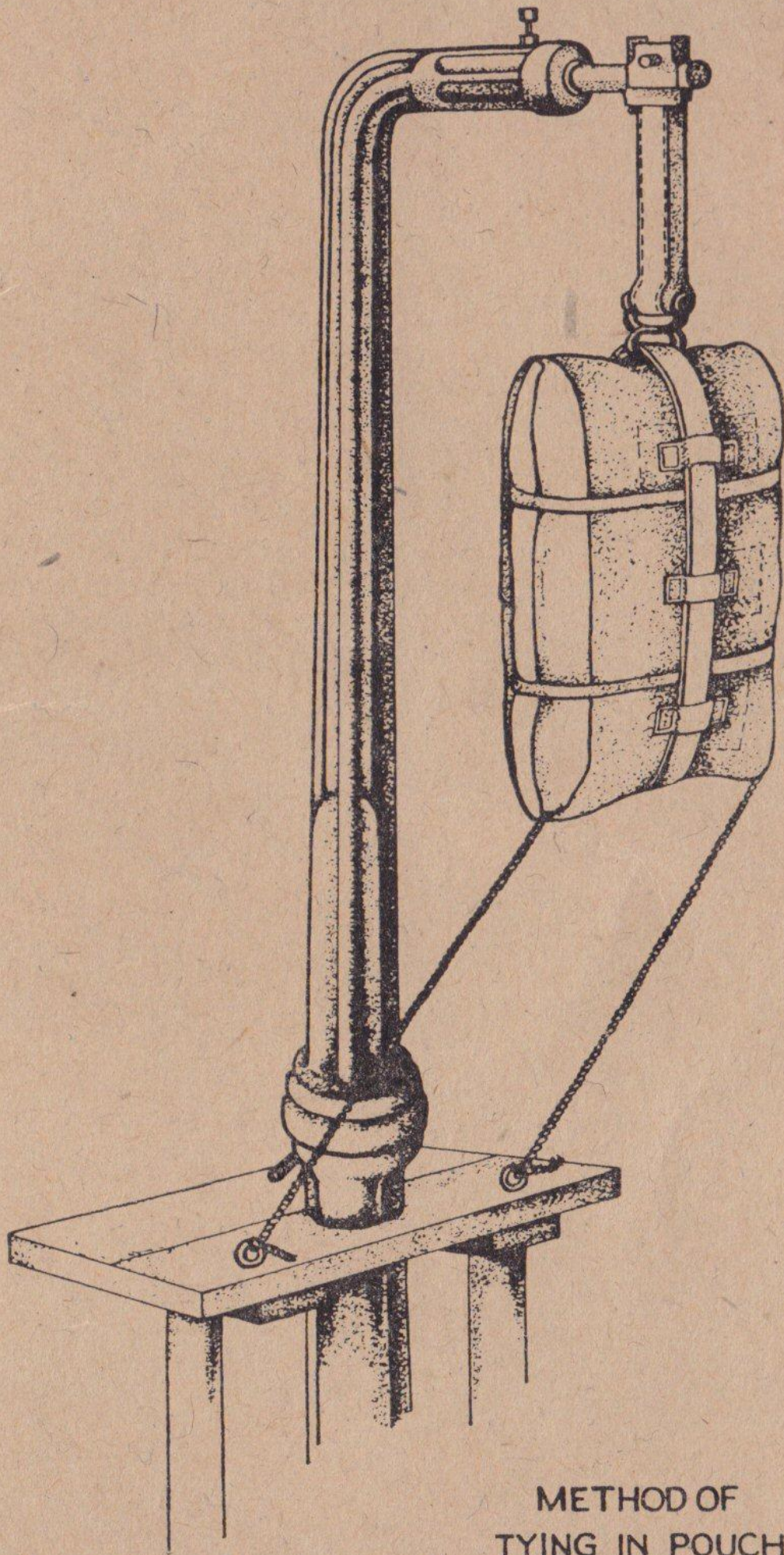
19. Care of Hand Lamps Electric No. 10.—The lamps are to be used only for illuminating the yellow and black warning plates during hours of darkness when despatches are made from the standards. They should be kept in the shelter hut when not in use, and handled with care to prevent damage.

The lamps are maintained by the Engineering Department. Should any fault develop, or the light become dim, the local Postmaster should be informed and he will ask the Supervisor of the local Telephone Exchange to give the matter attention before the next apparatus working.

T.P.O. Section,

LONDON POSTAL REGION.

1947.



METHOD OF
TYING IN POUCH
TO STANDARD PLATFORM.
(RULE 7.)

