

Registered Post Retired: What Happens to Your Legal Notices Now?

Authors: *Vasanth Rajasekaran, Harshvardhan Korada and Tazeen Ahmed*

Introduction

On 2 July 2025, the Department of Posts ("DoP") issued a directive titled "*Merger of Registered Post with Speed Post*". It announced that DoP will merge its Registered Post service with Speed Post with effect from 1 September 2025 in a bid to improve delivery speed, tracking, and efficiency. For decades, Registered Post has been relied upon in Courts, government offices, and banks and by businesses as valid proof of delivery.

Whether Courts will assign the same evidentiary value to Speed Post receipts remains to be seen. There is panic and frenzy that the transition may cause confusion in pending litigation and official communications, particularly where notices were originally sent via Registered Post. This article examines whether the change could create a grey zone for legal compliance and proof of service of legal documents.

Registered Post vs. Speed Post: The Difference?

Registered Post is "*addressee-specific*". What this means is that documents are delivered only to the person they are addressed to or their authorised representative. It requires mandatory identity verification and an acknowledgement due (AD) card, which serves as proof of delivery. On the other hand, Speed Post is "*address-specific*". This means that delivery can be made to anyone at the address, whether a family member, neighbour, office staff, or even a security guard. This difference may appear minor, but it is not just a technicality; it carries legal implications.

Registered Post and the Law

Registered Post has enjoyed a unique status under Indian law. Many Statutes and contracts specify '*Registered Post Acknowledgement Due*' (RPAD) as the mode of service. Section 27 of the General Clauses Act, 1897 states that when any Central Act requires document service by post, "*service is considered valid only when it is sent by Registered Post, unless a different intention is expressed in the Act*". It is a settled position of law that service of notices, summons, or legal communications by RPAD constitutes valid proof of delivery. In several judgments, take, for instance, *C.C. Alavi Haji v. Palapetty Muhammed*¹, the Supreme Court has also stated that once a notice is sent by Registered Post to the correct address, there is a presumption of service under Section 27 of the General Clauses Act, 1897. Besides, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (*see*, for instance, Order XXI Rule 1, Order V Rule 9), and various labour and tenancy laws explicitly or implicitly recognise Registered Post as an acceptable means of service for notices and summons.

Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (now replaced with Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023) allows courts to presume certain facts based on common experience and natural events. Illustration (f) of section 114 of Evidence Act illustrates that if a letter

¹ *C.C. Alavi Haji v. Palapetty Muhammed*, (2007) 6 SCC 555.

is shown to have been posted, the Court may presume it was delivered, unless there is proof of disturbances that may have interrupted delivery. Section 114 of the Evidence Act is at par with Section 27 of the General Clauses Act, which also allows the presumption that a letter properly addressed, prepaid, and posted is deemed to have been delivered.

Diverging Stance Taken by High Courts

The Allahabad High Court in *Mirzapur Electrical Indus. Ltd. v. CCE*², held that "the registered post and speed post are the same method of service, of which the record is kept by the post office. The object of sending the post by registered post is to keep a record, which is also served by sending an article by speed post through the same agency." Similarly, the Orissa High Court in *Jay Ralaji Jyoti Steels Ltd. v. Customs, Excise & Service Tax*³ observed that both registered post and speed post would come within the fold of Section 28 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 (Registration of Postal articles), as both provide for receipts and records of delivery. The only difference is the higher charges for speedy delivery. This case, however, never delved into the 'address-specific' nature of Speed Post and the 'addressee-specific' nature of Registered Post. In contrast, the Bombay High Court in *Amidev Agro Care Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India*⁴, held that service of notice by speed post cannot be treated to be compliant with the statutory requirement of "registered post" as under Section 37C(1)(a) of the Central Excise Act, 1944.

The Rajasthan High Court, in *LRs of Sohan Lal Paliwal v. Amba Lal Bohara*⁵, considered the above cases and section 28 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898; Rules 58 to 66 of the Indian Post Office Rules, 1933 (governing registered post), and Rule 66-B (which introduced speed post in 1986). The court noted that Rule 63 of the Indian Post Office Rules, 1933 states that no registered article shall be delivered to the addressee unless and until he or his agent has signed a receipt for it. It emphasised that Speed Post, though receipt-based, was not expressly brought under the statutory regime of "registered post," nor were the provisions applicable to registered post (Rules 58-66) extended to Speed Post. The Rent Control Act, 2001, though enacted after the introduction of speed post, continued to insist upon RPAD in Section 9(a), without incorporating or mentioning the term "speed post". On this reasoning, the Court held that sending documents by speed post did not satisfy the statutory requirement of service by "registered post" under Section 9(a) of the Act of 2001.

Conclusion

India Post clarified that Speed Post will include tracking, delivery confirmation, and proof of service. As previously noted, many statutes use the term "Registered Post with Acknowledgement Due". Contrary to the myth that legal procedures will be affected because Courts might not accept Speed Post acknowledgment, the reality is that Courts do accept digital proof of service. Any mention of "Registered Post" in laws will now be understood as referring exclusively to "Speed Post".

2 *Mirzapur Electrical Indus. Ltd. v. CCE*, 2013 SCC OnLine All 14704.

3 *Jay Ralaji Jyoti Steels Ltd. v. Customs, Excise & Service Tax*, W.P.(C). No.4896 of 2014 (24.12.2014).

4 *Amidev Agro Care Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India*, (2012) 279 ELT 353.

5 *LRs of Sohan Lal Paliwal v. Amba Lal Bohara*, 2019 SCC OnLine Raj 6172.

In fact, India Post did take note of the legal complications that may arise with this change and issued a letter to all ministries on 6 June 2025, to replace "Registered Post" with "Speed Post" in their Legislations, Rules, Regulations and Official instructions.⁶ So far, no guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been made public. This leaves postal workers, lawyers, and litigants to navigate this uncertainty for the time being.

Contact

For any query, help or assistance, please reach out at info@trinitychambers.in or visit us at www.trinitychambers.in.

Authors



Vasanth Rajasekaran
Founder & Head
vasanth@trinitychambers.in



Harshvardhan Korada
Counsel
harshvardhan@trinitychambers.in



Tazeen Ahmed
Associate

⁶ Government of India, Ministry of Communications, Department of Posts. (2025, June 6). *Office memorandum: Rationalisation of mail products – Replacement of “Registered Post” with “Speed Post” in legislations, rules, regulations, and official instructions etc.* (Mail-30/5/2025-D-DOP). Dak Bhawan, Sansad Marg, New Delhi. Available at https://mowr.nic.in/core/Circulars/2025/GA_06-06-2025_29.pdf.