Abstract

Postage Meter with Improved Postal Lock

A postage meter has a secure housing and a printing means and accounting register within the secure housing. Formed in the secure housing is postal lock. In the postal lock, a door is movable between first and second positions relative to a cavity. When the door is closed (in its first position) it renders the cavity inaccessible, and when the door is open (in its second position) it renders the cavity accessible. The door has a latch. The latch is spring-loaded so that it engages a latch feature in the cavity and holds the door closed. Pushing the latch the other way (against the spring) causes the latch to engage a pawl in the cavity, and the pawl tends to push the door open. A protruberance on the rear of the door engages a locking gear in the cavity. The locking gear allows separation of two halves of the meter housing, or holds the two halves together. If the locking gear is in the position that permits separating the halves, then the door cannot be closed because the gear abuts with the protruberance. Only if the gear is in the locked position is it possible to close the door fully. The door is set up to accommodate postal regulations of many countries, including countries requiring a key and lead seal, a paper seal, a lead seal by itself, or a lead seal and paper seal.