



G990 Experimental Classifications and Rates

## G993 Parcel Return Services

[10-3-04] [10-19-03]

**Summary** G993 describes the eligibility, standards, physical characteristics, markings, and rates that apply to the experimental Parcel Return Services classification.

### 1.0 BASIC INFORMATION

**Description** [8-5-04] The standards in G993 apply to parcels that are retrieved in bulk by authorized permit holders or their agents who are approved participants in the Parcel Return Services (PRS) experiment. The permit holder guarantees payment of postage and retrieval of all PRS parcels mailed with a PRS label. The provision, by a merchant or other party, of an approved PRS label to its customers or others constitutes the party's designation of the permit holder identified on the label as the party's agent for receipt of mail bearing that label and authorizes the Postal Service to provide that mail to the permit holder or its designee. The permit holder has the option of retrieving parcels at a designated return delivery unit (one of the postal delivery unit facilities designated as a pickup location for PRS parcels, also known for PRS purposes as an "RDU") or at the bulk mail center (also known for PRS purposes as an "RBMC") that serves the post office where returned parcels are deposited by customers. Payment for parcels returned under PRS is deducted from a separate advance deposit (postage due) account that is funded through the Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS).

**Applicability** 1.2 Parcels may use PRS when all of the following conditions apply:

- Parcels contain merchandise being returned to the merchant.
- Parcels bear a PRS label that meets the standards in 4.0.
- The parcel shows the permit number, and the permit holder has paid the annual PRS permit fee and the annual PRS accounting fee.

**Services** 1.3 Package Services pieces using Parcel Return Services are not eligible for ancillary or special services.

**Customer Mailing Options** 1.4 Returned parcels must be mailed within the service area of the post office shown in the return address on the label. They may be deposited at:

- The main post office or any associated office, station, or branch.
- In any collection box (except an Express Mail box).
- With any rural carrier.
- On business routes during regular mail delivery if prior arrangements are made with the carrier.
- As part of a collection run for other mail (special arrangements may be required).
- At any place designated by the postmaster for the receipt of mail.



- Participation**  
1.5 Companies who wish to participate in this experiment must send a request, on company letterhead, to the manager, Mailing Standards (see [G043](#) for address). Requests may be sent also via e-mail to [sherry.l.freda@usps.gov](mailto:sherry.l.freda@usps.gov); or by fax to 202-268-4955. The request must contain the following information:
- Company name and address.
  - Individual contact name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address.
  - The rate category or categories to be used; proposed retrieval locations (delivery units and bulk mail centers); and individual contact information for the company contact or agent at each location.
  - A list of clients, if the applicant is not the merchant (required for mailer identification number assignment).
  - Projected volume per quarter for each RDU and/or RBMC.
  - Label and instruction examples that comply with [4.0](#).
  - Date(s) label distribution will begin for each client.
  - Description of the electronic returns manifesting system to be used to document returns, by location and rate eligibility.
  - Current Parcel Select and BPM parcel profile (volumes and weights).
- Evaluation**  
1.6 The electronic returns manifesting system will be subject to approval by the manager, Business Mailer Support (BMS). BMS can provide applicants information for developing and receiving approval for a parcel returns system, electronic file transfer requirements, and certification process. Once approved, participants must comply with the terms of the PRS Service Agreement and pay the annual fees in [2.2](#) and [2.3](#). The manager, Mailing Standards may request additional data and a visit to the applicant's plant. In selecting participants, the manager, Mailing Standards uses the following additional criteria:
- The applicant must be prepared to begin operation at a mutually agreed upon time soon after selection.
  - The applicant must demonstrate the ability to retrieve parcels on a regular schedule mutually agreed upon from the designated RDU, RBMC, or both.
- Authorization**  
1.7 Participants during the first year of this experiment will be limited to the first 20; depending on the results in year one, 10 additional participants may be approved during the second year. The manager, Mailing Standards will review each request and will proceed as follows:
- If the applicant meets the conditions required for the PRS experiment and the application is otherwise consistent with the purposes and goals of the experiment, the manager, Mailing Standards will approve the letter of request. For the purposes of the experiment, the Postal Service may require additional documentation and periodic review and inspection of each participant's PRS processing and accounting operations.
  - If the application does not appear to meet the conditions required for the PRS experiment, the manager, Mailing Standards will deny the request and send a written notice to the applicant, with the reasons for denial.
- Procedure**  
1.8 Upon approval and payment of fees, participants must provide a copy of the approval to each contact at each pickup location. The manager, Mailing Standards will provide a copy to each district manager, Business Mail Entry that has a pickup location. Local post offices can determine payment of fees through CAPS.



**Pickup Schedule** 1.9 [8-5-04] Unless more frequent pickups are specified in the service agreement, parcels must be retrieved on a regular schedule: from RBMCs, a minimum of every 48 hours excluding Sundays and USPS holidays; and from RDUs, a minimum of once every 7 days. Permit holders or their agents will be required to set up a recurring or standing appointment to retrieve PRS parcels. If the permit holder (or agent) already has existing appointments to deliver Parcel Select parcels to a BMC or DDU that meet these standards, the same appointment can be used for retrieving PRS parcels.

**2.0 POSTAGE AND FEES**

**Postage** 2.1 There are three PRS rate categories:

- a. *Parcel Select RDU*. Parcels returned as Parcel Post to, and retrieved in bulk from, a designated delivery unit.
- b. *Parcel Select RBMC*. Parcels returned as Parcel Post to, and retrieved in bulk from, a designated BMC.
- c. *Bound Printed Matter RBMC*. Parcels returned as Bound Printed Matter to, and retrieved in bulk from, a designated BMC.

**Permit Fee** 2.2 A \$150.00 permit fee must be paid annually at the post office where the PRS permit is held. The permit must remain valid during the course of the experiment.

**Advance Deposit Account and Annual Accounting Fee** 2.3 The participant must pay postage through an advance deposit account and must pay an annual accounting fee of \$475.00. The account must remain valid during the course of the experiment.

**3.0 RATES**

**Parcel Select Return Services—Return Delivery Unit** 3.1 Regardless of weight, any parcel that measures more than 108 inches (but not more than 130 inches) in combined length and girth must pay the oversized rate.

Weight (pounds)	Rate
Not over 70	\$2.00
Oversized	7.51



**Parcel Select Return Services—Return BMC Machinable**  
3.2

Parcels that weigh less than 15 pounds but measure more than 84 inches in combined length and girth are charged the applicable rate for a 15-pound parcel.

<b>Weight Not Over (pounds)</b>	<b>Zones 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>Zone 3</b>	<b>Zone 4</b>	<b>Zone 5</b>
1	\$2.10	\$2.13	\$2.19	\$2.28
2	2.67	2.70	2.77	2.88
3	3.22	3.25	3.34	3.46
4	3.42	3.76	3.86	4.00
5	3.59	4.16	4.29	4.49
6	3.75	4.52	4.65	4.94
7	3.90	4.83	4.98	5.35
8	4.47	5.12	5.28	5.74
9	4.60	5.36	5.59	6.09
10	4.77	5.67	5.88	6.42
11	4.90	5.88	6.14	6.72
12	5.05	6.08	6.40	7.01
13	5.18	6.24	6.64	7.27
14	5.30	6.36	6.89	7.52
15	5.41	6.53	7.10	7.76
16	5.52	6.70	7.30	7.98
17	5.65	6.86	7.52	8.19
18	5.74	7.01	7.71	8.38
19	5.86	7.16	7.89	8.57
20	5.96	7.30	8.05	8.74
21	6.05	7.44	8.20	8.91
22	6.16	7.56	8.34	9.06
23	6.24	7.72	8.48	9.21
24	6.33	7.84	8.60	9.36
25	6.41	7.96	8.72	9.49
26	6.51	8.07	8.85	9.62
27	6.59	8.20	8.96	9.74
28	6.66	8.32	9.05	9.86
29	6.75	8.44	9.16	9.97
30	6.83	8.54	9.26	10.07
31	6.91	8.62	9.35	10.18
32	7.00	8.74	9.45	10.27
33	7.06	8.84	9.53	10.37
34	7.14	8.92	9.61	10.45
35	7.20	9.03	9.69	10.54



**Parcel Select Return Services—Return BMC Nonmachinable**  
3.3

Parcels that weigh less than 15 pounds but measure more than 84 inches in combined length and girth are charged the applicable rate for a 15-pound parcel. Regardless of weight, any parcel that measures more than 108 inches (but not more than 130 inches) in combined length and girth must pay the oversized rate.

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Weight Not Over (pounds)	Zones				Weight Not Over (pounds)	Zones			
	1 & 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5		1 & 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
1	\$3.45	\$3.48	\$3.54	\$3.63	36	\$8.65	\$10.49	\$11.14	\$12.00
2	4.02	4.05	4.12	4.23	37	8.72	10.56	11.20	12.06
3	4.57	4.60	4.69	4.81	38	8.76	10.63	11.25	12.11
4	4.77	5.11	5.21	5.35	39	8.82	10.71	11.29	12.16
5	4.94	5.51	5.64	5.84	40	8.85	10.76	11.33	12.21
6	5.10	5.87	6.00	6.29	41	8.92	10.85	11.37	12.26
7	5.25	6.18	6.33	6.70	42	8.95	10.90	11.42	12.30
8	5.82	6.47	6.63	7.09	43	8.99	10.96	11.46	12.33
9	5.95	6.71	6.94	7.44	44	9.04	11.02	11.50	12.36
10	6.12	7.02	7.23	7.77	45	9.07	11.07	11.64	12.39
11	6.25	7.23	7.49	8.07	46	9.14	11.14	11.67	12.42
12	6.40	7.43	7.75	8.36	47	9.19	11.18	11.70	12.45
13	6.53	7.59	7.99	8.62	48	9.22	11.25	11.72	12.48
14	6.65	7.71	8.24	8.87	49	9.27	11.30	11.75	12.51
15	6.76	7.88	8.45	9.11	50	9.28	11.35	11.77	12.54
16	6.87	8.05	8.65	9.33	51	9.35	11.39	11.80	12.57
17	7.00	8.21	8.87	9.54	52	9.39	11.47	11.82	12.60
18	7.09	8.36	9.06	9.73	53	9.40	11.50	11.83	12.63
19	7.21	8.51	9.24	9.92	54	9.44	11.52	11.86	12.66
20	7.31	8.65	9.40	10.09	55	9.48	11.54	11.89	12.69
21	7.40	8.79	9.55	10.26	56	9.52	11.56	11.91	12.72
22	7.51	8.91	9.69	10.41	57	9.57	11.56	11.91	12.75
23	7.59	9.07	9.83	10.56	58	9.60	11.58	11.93	12.78
24	7.68	9.19	9.95	10.71	59	9.63	11.59	11.95	12.81
25	7.76	9.31	10.07	10.84	60	9.68	11.60	11.95	12.84
26	7.86	9.42	10.20	10.97	61	9.72	11.61	11.97	12.87
27	7.94	9.55	10.31	11.09	62	9.75	11.62	12.01	12.90
28	8.01	9.67	10.40	11.21	63	9.78	11.62	12.06	12.93
29	8.10	9.79	10.51	11.32	64	9.82	11.62	12.09	12.96
30	8.18	9.89	10.61	11.42	65	9.85	11.64	12.13	12.99
31	8.26	9.97	10.70	11.53	66	9.90	11.64	12.18	13.02
32	8.35	10.09	10.80	11.62	67	9.94	11.65	12.23	13.05
33	8.41	10.19	10.88	11.72	68	9.94	11.65	12.25	13.08
34	8.49	10.27	10.96	11.80	69	9.99	11.65	12.30	13.11
35	8.55	10.38	11.04	11.89	70	10.02	11.65	12.34	13.14
					Oversized	25.99	26.31	27.00	28.05



**Bound Printed Matter  
Return Services—  
Return BMC**  
3.4

Weight Not Over (pounds)	Zones 1 & 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
1.0	\$1.63	\$1.68	\$1.72	\$1.80
1.5	1.63	1.68	1.72	1.80
2.0	1.70	1.76	1.82	1.92
2.5	1.77	1.85	1.92	2.05
3.0	1.84	1.93	2.02	2.17
3.5	1.91	2.02	2.12	2.30
4.0	1.98	2.10	2.22	2.42
4.5	2.05	2.19	2.32	2.55
5.0	2.12	2.27	2.42	2.67
6.0	2.26	2.44	2.62	2.92
7.0	2.40	2.61	2.82	3.17
8.0	2.54	2.78	3.02	3.42
9.0	2.68	2.95	3.22	3.67
10.0	2.82	3.12	3.42	3.92
11.0	2.96	3.29	3.62	4.17
12.0	3.10	3.46	3.82	4.42
13.0	3.24	3.63	4.02	4.67
14.0	3.38	3.80	4.22	4.92
15.0	3.52	3.97	4.42	5.17

#### 4.0 LABEL FORMAT

**Label Preparation**  
4.1

PRS labels must be certified for use by the Postal Service prior to distribution. In addition, permit holders must obtain Postal Service certification for barcode symbologies. Any photographic, mechanical, or electronic process or any combination of such processes may be used to produce PRS labels. The background of the label may be any light color that allows the address, barcodes, and other required information to be easily distinguished. If labels are electronically transmitted to customers for their local printing, the permit holder must advise customers of these printing requirements as part of the instructions in 4.3.

**Labeling Methods**  
4.2

If all applicable content and format standards are approved (including instructions to the user), a PRS label may be distributed by any of the following methods:

- a. As an enclosure with merchandise when initially shipped, as part of the original invoice accompanying the merchandise, or as a separate label preprinted by the permit holder. If the reverse side of the label bears an adhesive, it must be strong enough to bond the label securely to the mailpiece.
- b. As an electronic file created by the permit holder for local output and printing by the customer.



- Instructions**
- 4.3 Regardless of label distribution method, written instructions always must be provided to the user of the PRS label that, at a minimum, direct the user to do the following:
- a. “If your name and address are not already printed in the return address area, please print them neatly in that area or attach a return address label there.”
  - b. “Attach the label provided by the merchant squarely onto the largest side of the mailpiece, unless you need to use another side to make the parcel more stable. Place the label at least 1 inch from the edge of the parcel, so that it does not fold over to another side. If you are using tape to attach the new label, do not put tape over any barcodes on the label, even if the tape is clear, because the reflection interferes with barcode readers.”
  - c. “If you are reusing the original container to return the merchandise, use the label to cover your original delivery address and the barcodes and any other postal information on it. If it is not possible to cover all that information with the label, either remove old labels containing these items, mark them out completely with a permanent marker, or cover them completely with blank labels or paper that cannot be seen through. If that cannot be done, or if the original container is no longer sound, please use a new box to return the merchandise and attach the return label to that new box.”
  - d. “Once repackaged and labeled, you can mail the parcel at a post office, deposit it in a collection box, or give it to the carrier at the original delivery address. If the parcel is addressed to Return Delivery Unit, mail it at a local post office near the original delivery address. If the parcel is addressed to Return Bulk Mail Center, you can mail it at any post office or collection box in the town, city, or metropolitan area of the original delivery address.”

- Label Format Elements**
- 4.4 **[8-5-04]** There is no minimum size for PRS labels; however, the label must be of a sufficient size to accommodate all of the label elements and standards in this section. All PRS label elements must be legible. Except where a specific type size is required, elements must be of a type size large enough to be legible from a normal reading distance and to separate them from other elements on the label. Examples of PRS label formats are shown in [Exhibit 4.4a](#), [Exhibit 4.4b](#), [Exhibit 4.4c](#), and [Exhibit 4.4d](#). The following elements are required:
- a. Postage Guarantee. The imprint “No Postage Necessary if Mailed in the United States” must appear in the upper right corner.
  - b. Horizontal Bars. A minimum of three horizontal bars must appear directly below the imprint in the upper right corner. The bars must be uniform in length, at least 1 inch long, 1/16 inch thick, and evenly spaced.
  - c. Parcel Return Service Legend. The legend must be placed directly above the address and include:
    - (1) Line 1: In capital letters at least 3/16” high, “PARCEL SELECT RETURN SERVICE” (or “PARCEL SELECT RTN SVC”) or “BOUND PRINTED MATTER RETURN SERVICE” (or “BPM RETURN SERVICE”), as appropriate.
    - (2) Line 2: In all capital letters, Permit holder's name, left justified, followed by PERMIT NO., followed by the permit number.
  - d. Customer's return address. The return address of the customer using the label to mail the parcel back to the permit holder must appear in the upper left corner. If it is not preprinted by the permit holder or merchant, space must be provided for the customer to enter the return address.



- e. Address for return delivery unit (RDU) labels. The address must be the physical location of the return delivery unit, as provided by the Postal Service specifically for PRS. The address must consist of at least three lines in all capital letters, as specified below. As an option, the PRS participant's or merchant's name may appear above the first line. The ZIP Code may appear left-justified on a line directly below the city and state line.
- (1) Line 1: "RETURN DELIVERY UNIT."
  - (2) Line 2: Street address, including number, of the RDU.
  - (3) Line 3: City, state, and ZIP Code.
- f. Address for return bulk mail center (RBMC) labels. The address must consist of at least three lines in all capital letters, as specified below. The ZIP Code must be printed in at least 12-point type and may appear left-justified on a line directly below the bulk mail center line.
- (1) Line 1: PRS participant's or merchant's name.
  - (2) Line 2: "PARCEL RETURN SERVICE" (or "PARCEL RETURN SVC").
  - (3) Line 3: "BULK MAIL CENTER," followed by the unique PRS ZIP Code assigned by the USPS in the service agreement.
- g. Parcel Return Service Barcode. A PRS barcode must be printed directly on the label. The barcode may appear in any location on the label, except the upper left, upper right, and lower right corners. The barcode must meet the standards for barcodes in Publication 91, with the following exceptions:
- (1) The barcode must be produced using the UCC/EAN Code 128 barcode symbology.
  - (2) The service type code (STC) contained in the barcode must identify the rate associated with the label destination. For labels addressed to a return delivery unit, the STC must be 58. For labels addressed to a return bulk mail center, the STC must be 57.
  - (3) Human-readable text above the barcode must read "USPS PARCEL RETURN SERVICE" (or "USPS PARCEL RTN SVC"). If the barcode is a single concatenated barcode with the postal routing code described in [4.4h](#), the text above the barcode must read "BMC ZIP – USPS PARCEL RETURN SERVICE" (or "BMC ZIP – USPS PARCEL RTN SVC"). In the text below the barcode, the leading application identifier ("420"), ZIP Code information, and subsequent numbers must be parsed as shown in [Exhibit 4.4b](#), [Exhibit 4.4c](#), and [Exhibit 4.4d](#).
  - (4) The clear zone between the barcode, human-readable text, and the horizontal bar above and below the barcode must be at least 1/16 inch.
- h. Postal Routing Barcode. If a single concatenated barcode is not used for the PRS barcode, a postal routing barcode also must be printed directly on the label. The barcode may appear in any location on the label, except the upper left, upper right, and lower right corners. Postal routing barcodes must meet the standards in [C850](#), except that the human readable text below the barcode must read "BMC ZIP -," followed by the unique PRS ZIP Code assigned by USPS in the service agreement.



- i. Mailer Identification (ID). An individual mailer ID must appear in the lower right corner. The mailer ID is assigned by the permit holder to each individual client (merchant) of the permit holder. The mailer ID must consist of a single, uppercase alpha character followed by a two-digit number, with no spaces or dashes (e.g., A01). The mailer ID must be at least 3/16 inch high and surrounded by a border (box), with a clearance of at least 3/16 inch between the mailer ID characters and the border. The mailer ID may be reverse-printed.
- j. Additional Information. Additional information (e.g., company logo, return authorization number, inventory barcode) is permitted on the PRS label if it does not interfere with any required format elements. Inventory barcodes must not resemble the barcodes described in C850.

**Exhibit 4.4a [8-5-04] Parcel Select Return Service Label Addressed to a Return Delivery Unit With Separate Parcel Return Services and Postal Routing Barcodes**



**Exhibit 4.4b [8-5-04] Parcel Select Return Service Label Addressed to a Return Delivery Unit With Concatenated Parcel Return Services and Postal Routing Barcodes**





Exhibit 4.4c [8-5-04] Parcel Select Return Service Label Addressed to a Return Bulk Mail Center

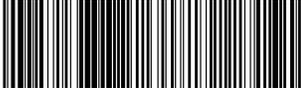
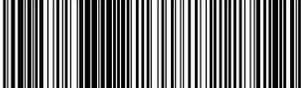
John Doe 1258 Return Ln Bethesda MD 20817	NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES
<b>PARCEL SELECT RETURN SERVICE</b> ABC RETURNS INC PERMIT NO. 77999	
<b>BMC ZIP - USPS PARCEL RETURN SVC</b>	<b>AGENT/CLIENT NAME</b>
	<b>PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b>
420 56999 9157 0268 3733 1000 0010 15	<b>BULK MAIL CENTER</b>
	<b>56999</b>
	<b>X01</b>

Exhibit 4.4d [8-5-04] Bound Printed Matter Return Service Label

John Doe 1258 Return Ln Bethesda MD 20817	NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES
<b>BPM RETURN SERVICE</b> ABC RETURNS INC PERMIT NO. 77999	
<b>BMC ZIP - USPS PARCEL RETURN SVC</b>	<b>AGENT/CLIENT NAME</b>
	<b>PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b>
420 56999 9157 0268 3733 1000 0010 15	<b>BULK MAIL CENTER</b>
	<b>56999</b>
	<b>X01</b>