345 Mail Preparation

Overview

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1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation

1.1 Definition of Presort Process

Presort is the process by which a mailer prepares mail so that it is sorted to at least the finest extent required by the standards for the rate claimed. Generally, presort is performed sequentially, from the lowest (finest) level to the highest level, to those destinations specified by standard and is completed at each level before the next level is prepared. Under standards for bundle reallocation for Standard Mail flats on pallets (see 705.8.0), mail will not necessarily be placed on the lowest (finest) level pallets (bundle reallocation is optional, but, if performed, must be done for the complete mailing job). Not all presort levels are applicable in all situations. [M011.1.1]

1.2 Definition of Mailings

Mailings are defined as:

a. A mailing is a group of pieces within the same class of mail and the same processing category that may be sorted together and/or presented under a single minimum volume mailing requirement under the applicable standards. Generally, types of mail that follow different flows through the postal processing system (e.g., automation, nonautomation carrier route, and other nonautomation) and mail for each separate class and subclass must be prepared as a separate mailing. Other specific standards may define whether separate mailings may be combined, palletized, reported, or deposited together.

b. Except as provided in 343.3.4, *Residual Volume Requirement*, the types of Standard Mail listed below may not be part of the same mailing.

   1. Automation Enhanced Carrier Route and any other type of mail.
   2. Automation rate and any other type of mail.
   3. Enhanced Carrier Route and any other type of mail.
   4. Enhanced Carrier Route letter rate pieces and Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter rate pieces.
   5. Presorted rate mail and any other type of mail.
   6. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces.

7. Except as provided by standard, Regular mail may not be in the same mailing as Nonprofit mail, and Enhanced Carrier Route mail may not be in the same mailing as Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route mail.
8. Customized MarketMail and any other type of mail. [M011.1.4]

1.3 Terms for Presort Levels

Terms used for presort levels are defined as follows:

a. *Carrier route:* all pieces for delivery to the same city route, rural route, highway contract route, post office box section, or general delivery unit.

b. *5-digit:* the delivery address on all pieces includes the same 5-digit ZIP Code.

c. *5-digit scheme (bundles and sacks) for AFSM 100-compatible flats:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces is one of the 5-digit ZIP Code areas processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in L007.

d. *5-digit scheme carrier routes (pallets and sacks) for Standard Mail flats:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces in carrier route bundles is one of the 5-digit ZIP Codes processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in L001.

e. *Merged 5-digit sacks:* the carrier route bundles and/or automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in a sack are all for a 5-digit ZIP Code that has an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route rate bundles with automation rate 5-digit bundles and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.

f. *Merged 5-digit pallet:* contains carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or presorted rate 5-digit bundles).

g. *Merged 5-digit scheme sack:* the 5-digit ZIP Codes on pieces in carrier route bundles and/or automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in a sack are all for 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in L001, and the automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or the Presorted rate 5-digit bundles also are for 5-digit ZIP Codes that have an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles with automation rate 5-digit bundles and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.

h. *Merged 5-digit scheme pallet:* contains carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or presorted rate 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in L001.

i. *5-digit metro pallets for Standard Mail flats:* the 5-digit ZIP Codes on pieces in carrier route, automation rate, and presorted rate bundles are all destined for the same mail processing facility listed in L006.

j. *3-digit:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with the same three digits (see L002, Column A).

k. *3-digit scheme bundles, for AFSM 100-compatible flats:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address begins with one of the 3-digit prefixes processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in L008.

l. *Origin/optional entry 3-digit(s):* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 3-digit prefixes processed at the sectional center facility (SCF) in whose service area the mail is verified/entered. Subject to standard, a separation is required for each such 3-digit area regardless of the volume of mail.

m. *SCF:* the separation includes pieces for two or more 3-digit areas served by the same sectional center facility (SCF) (see L005), *except that,* where required or permitted by standard, mail for a single 3-digit area may be prepared in an SCF separation when no mail for other 3-digit ZIP Code areas is available. For pallets, the SCF sort may include mail for a single 3-digit ZIP Code area.

n. *Origin/optional entry SCF:* the separation includes bundles for one or more 3-digit areas served by the same sectional center facility (SCF) (see L002, Column C, or L005) in whose service area the mail is verified/entered. Subject to standard, this separation is required regardless of the volume of mail.

o. *ADC:* all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same area distribution center (ADC) (see L004).

p. *ASF/BMC:* all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same auxiliary service facility (ASF) or bulk mail center (BMC) (see L601, L602, or L605).

q. *Mixed ADC:* the pieces are for delivery in the service area of more than one ADC.

r. *Residual* pieces/bundles/sacks contain material remaining after completion of a presort sequence. Residual mail lacks the volume set by standard to require or allow bundle preparation to a particular destination, and usually does not qualify for a presort rate. Residual mail is also referred to as *nonqualifying* or *working* mail. [M011.1.2]

1.4 Preparation Definitions and Instructions

For purposes of preparing mail:

a. *Pieces* refers to individually addressed mailpieces. This definition also applies when *pieces* is used in eligibility standards. Quantities indicated for optional or required sortations always refer to pieces unless specifically excepted.

b. A *full* letter tray is one in which faced, upright pieces fill the length of the tray between 75% and 100% full.

c. A *less-than-full* letter tray is one that contains mail for the same destination regardless of quantity or whether a full tray was previously prepared for that destination. Less-than-full trays may be prepared only if permitted by the standards for the rate claimed.

d. An *overflow* letter tray is a less-than-full tray that contains all pieces remaining after preparation of full trays for the same destination. Overflow trays may be prepared only if permitted by the standards for the rate claimed.

e. A *full* sack is defined in the standards for the class and rate claimed.

f. A *5-digit scheme sort for AFSM 100-compatible flats* yields 5-digit scheme bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Codes identified in L007. Presorting must be performed using L007. Pieces prepared in scheme bundles must meet the AFSM 100 compatibility criteria in 301.3.3. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Bundles prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered 5-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme sort is optional, except under 705.12.0, *Preparation of Merged Palletization of Bundles of Flats Using a 5% Threshold*, and 705.13.0, *Preparation of Merged Palletization of Bundles of Flats Using the City State Product and a 5% Threshold*. Mailpieces must be labeled using an optional endorsement line (OEL) under 708.7.0. Bundles are placed in appropriate containers using the OEL "label to" 5-digit ZIP Code.

g. A *5-digit scheme carrier routes sort for Enhanced Carrier Route rate Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks or as bundles on pallets* yields a 5-digit scheme carrier routes sack or pallet for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in L001 and 5-digit carrier routes sacks or pallets for other areas. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum sack or pallet volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Sacks or pallets prepared for a 5-digit scheme carrier routes destination that contain carrier route bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit areas are still considered to be sorted to 5-digit scheme carrier routes and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme carrier routes sort is required for carrier route bundles of Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail flats. Preparation of 5-digit scheme carrier routes sacks or pallets must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations.

h. A *5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets* yields 5-digit scheme pallets containing automation rate and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in L001 and yields 5-digit pallets containing automation rate and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles for other areas. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum pallet volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Pallets prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain 5-digit bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit areas are still considered to be sorted to the 5-digit scheme and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme sort is required for Standard Mail flats. The 5-digit scheme sort may not be used for other mail prepared on pallets, except for 5-digit bundles of Standard Mail irregular parcels that are part of a mailing job that is prepared in part as palletized flats at automation rates. Preparation of 5-digit scheme pallets must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations.

i. A *merged 5-digit sort for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks* yields merged 5-digit sacks that contain carrier route bundles and/or automation rate 5-digit bundles, and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles that are all for a 5-digit ZIP Code that has an "A" or "C" indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles, automation rate

5-digit bundles, and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit sack or pallet. The merged 5-digit sort is optional for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks. Sacks prepared for a merged 5-digit destination that contain only a single rate level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation rate 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted rate 5-digit bundle(s)) or that contain only two rate levels of bundle(s) are still considered to be merged 5-digit sorted and are labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit sacks is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit ZIP Code destinations with an "A" or "C" indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles, automation rate 5-digit bundles, and Presorted rate 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.

j. *A merged 5-digit sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets* yields merged 5-digit pallets that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles). The merged 5-digit sort is optional for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks under 705.10.0. Sacks or pallets prepared for a merged 5-digit destination that contain only a single rate level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation rate 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted rate 5-digit bundle(s)) or only two rate levels of bundle(s) are still considered to be merged 5-digit sorted and must be labeled accordingly.

k. *A merged 5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks under* 705.10.0 yields merged 5-digit scheme sacks that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation rate 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in L001. Sacks prepared for a merged 5-digit scheme destination that contain only a single rate level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation rate 5-digit bundle(s) or only presorted rate 5-digit bundle(s)), or only two rate levels of bundle(s), or bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered to be merged 5-digit scheme sorted and must be labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit scheme sacks is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations in L001.

l. *A merged 5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets under* 705.8.0*,* 705.10.0*,* 705.12.0*, or* 705.13.0 yields merged 5-digit scheme pallets that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation rate and/or Presorted rate 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in L001. Pallets prepared for a merged 5-digit scheme destination that contain only a single rate level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation rate 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted rate 5-digit bundle(s)), or only two rate levels of bundle(s), or bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered to be merged 5-digit scheme sorted and must be labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit scheme pallets is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations in L001.

m. *A 5-digit metro sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets* yields 5-digit metro pallets that contain carrier route and/or noncarrier route 5-digit and 3-digit bundles (automation rate and/or presorted bundles) for the 5-digit

ZIP Codes listed in L006. The ZIP Codes in L006 are treated as a single presort destination, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. The 5-digit metro sort is optional and need not be done for all possible destinations in L006.

n. A *3-digit scheme sort for AFSM 100-compatible flats* yields 3-digit scheme bundles for those 3-digit ZIP Codes identified in L008. Presorting may be performed using L008 starting January 6, 2005. The 3-digit scheme sort is optional, except under 705.12.0 and 705.13.0. For 705.12.0 and 705.13.0, presorting must be performed using L008 by April 18, 2005. Pieces prepared in scheme bundles must meet the AFSM 100 compatibility criteria in 301.3.3. The 3-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume, with no further separation by 3-digit ZIP Code required. Bundles prepared for a 3-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 3-digit ZIP Codes are still considered 3-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. Mailpieces must be labeled using an optional endorsement line (OEL) under 708.7.0. Three-digit scheme bundles are placed in 3-digit through Mixed ADC containers, as applicable, using the OEL "label to" 3-digit ZIP Code. Periodicals firm bundles must not be physically combined within 3-digit scheme bundles, but can contribute toward the six-piece minimum for rate eligibility.

o. An *origin 3-digit* (or *origin 3-digit scheme*) sack contains all mail (regardless of quantity) for a 3-digit ZIP Code (or 3-digit scheme) area processed by the SCF in whose service area the mail is verified. If more than one 3-digit (or 3-digit scheme) area is served, as indicated in L005, a separate sack must be prepared for each.

p. The *required at [quantity]* instruction (e.g., "required at 10 pieces") means that the particular unit *must* be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Bundles and containers may contain more than the specified *required at* quantity up to the applicable maximum physical size. Subject to applicable rate eligibility standards, smaller quantities may be prepared only if permitted. Where specified by standard, required preparation applies only if the mailer chooses to qualify for the corresponding rate.

q. The *optional at [quantity]* instruction means that the particular unit *may* be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Bundles or containers may contain more than the specified *optional at* quantity up to the applicable maximum physical size. Smaller quantities may be prepared only if permitted by applicable rate eligibility standards. Standards for quantities with which preparation is optional are often followed by standards for larger quantities with which preparation is required.

r. *Entry [facility]* (or *origin [facility]*) refers to the USPS mail processing facility (e.g., "entry BMC") that serves the post office at which the mail is entered by the mailer. If the post office where the mail is entered is not the one serving the mailer's location (e.g., for plant-verified drop shipment), the post office of entry

determines the *entry* facility. *Entry SCF* includes both single-3-digit and multi-3-digit SCFs. *Entry BMC* includes subordinate ASFs unless otherwise specified.

s. A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit. The presort process considers the total number of pieces available for the particular presort destination and assembles them into groups meeting applicable volume and size standards. When the standards for the rate claimed require securing the pieces in each group together, the result is a bundle. The term *bundle* does not apply to unsecured groups of pieces (e.g., pieces prepared in trays and identified by separator cards or tic marks). Bundle preparation is described in 2.0, *Bundles*.

t. A *"logical" presort destination* represents the total number of pieces that are eligible for a specific presort level based on the required sortation, but which might not be contained in a single bundle or in a single container (i.e., sack, pallet) due to applicable preparation requirements or the size of the individual pieces. For example, there may be 42 mailpieces for ZIP Code 43112 forming a Standard Mail "logical" 5-digit bundle, and they are prepared in three physical 5-digit bundles because of the applicable weight and height restrictions on bundles. For pallets, 2,800 pounds of mail may be destined to an SCF destination, and these would form the "logical" SCF pallet, but the mail is placed on two physical SCF pallets each weighing 1,400 pounds because of the 2,200 pound maximum pallet weight requirement.

u. *Cobundling* is an alternate preparation method available under 705.11.0 for Standard Mail that allows the combining of flat-size automation rate and Presorted rate pieces within the same bundle under the single minimum bundle size requirement. Regardless of the class of mail, pieces may not be combined in more than one physical bundle for each logical presort destination unless presented using an approved manifest mailing system under 705.2.0. [M011.1.3]

2.0 Bundles

2.1 Definition of a Bundle

A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit. The presort process considers the total number of pieces available for the particular presort destination and assembles them into groups meeting applicable volume and size standards. When the standards for the rate claimed require securing the pieces in each group together, the result is a bundle. [M011.1.3z]

2.2 Arranging Pieces in a Bundle ("Facing")

Except as noted in 2.3, all pieces in a bundle must be "faced" (i.e., arranged with the addresses in the same read direction), with an address visible on the top piece. [M020.1.1]

2.3 Preparing Bundles of Pieces of Nonuniform Thickness ("Counterstacking")

Bundles of flats and other pieces of nonuniform thickness may be prepared by counter-stacking under these conditions:

a. Counter-stacking should be used only to create bundles of more uniform thickness that are more likely to maintain their integrity during transportation and processing.

b. Counter-stacking is appropriate for saddle-stitched mailpieces and pieces where one edge is thicker than other edges or one corner is thicker than other corners.

c. When counter-stacking, pieces must all have addresses facing up and be divided into no more than four approximately equal groups, with each group rotated 180 degrees from the preceding and succeeding group(s); prepare as few groups as possible to create a bundle of uniform thickness.

d. Counter-stacked groups within a bundle should be as thick as possible, generally at least 1 inch thick.

e. When pieces are nonuniform in thickness because they are thicker in the center instead of along an edge or corner, counter-stacking will generally not result in a bundle of uniform thickness (i.e., a football-shaped bundle would be created). Instead of counter-stacking such pieces, limit the height (thickness) of the bundle to 3 to 6 inches to ensure the bundle will stay together during normal transit and handling. [M020.1.2]

2.4 Securing Bundles

Bundle preparation is subject to the following requirements:

a. Bundles must be able to withstand normal transit and handling without breakage or injury to USPS employees.

b. Bundles must be secured with banding, shrinkwrap, or shrinkwrap plus one or more bands. Banding includes plastic bands, rubber bands, twine/string, and similar material. Use of wire or metal banding is not permitted.

c. When one band is used, it must be placed tightly around the girth (narrow dimension).

d. Except under 705.8.5.11, *Bundles on Pallets*, bundles over 1 inch high (thick) must be secured with at least two bands or with shrinkwrap. When double banding is used to secure bundles, it must encircle the length and girth of the bundle at least once. Additional bands may be used if none lies within 1 inch of any bundle edge.

e. Banding tension must be sufficient to tighten and depress the edges of the bundle so pieces will not slip out of the banding during transit and processing. Loose banding is not allowed.

f. When twine/string is used to band bundles, the knot(s) must be secure so the banding does not come loose during transit and processing. [M020.1.4]

2.5 Preparing Bundles in Sacks

Standard Mail prepared in sacks must be secured in bundles as follows:

a. The maximum weight for all bundles is 20 pounds.

b. Bundles up to 1 inch in height (thickness) must be secured with appropriate banding, placed at least once around the girth (narrow dimension), or with shrinkwrap. Bundles over 1 inch in height must be secured with at least two bands (plastic bands, rubber bands, or twine/string), one around the length and one around the girth; or with shrinkwrap; or with shrinkwrap plus one or two bands.

c. Bundles should be measured at the lowest (thinnest) point to determine the bundle height.

d. A bundle that exceeds the maximum prescribed height by less than the thickness of a single piece meets the standard (e.g., if a glossy piece is 0.625 (5/8) of an inch thick, five pieces may be secured in a bundle 3.125 inches high; if a piece with uncoated cover stock is 0.75 (3/4) of an inch thick, 11 pieces may be secured in a bundle 8.25 inches high).

e. Bundles of pieces with covers of coated stock that are not individually enclosed in a mailing wrapper (e.g., magazines or catalogs with glossy covers not individually enclosed in an envelope, uncoated paper wrapper, or plastic wrapper (polybag)) are subject to these conditions:

   1. Except as noted in 2.5e2, bundles must not exceed 3 inches in height (thickness).

   2. Bundles of such pieces secured with shrinkwrap plus one or two plastic straps, or with at least two plastic straps, one around the length and one around the girth, must not exceed 6 inches in height (thickness).

f. Bundles containing pieces with outer surfaces of uncoated stock are subject to these conditions:

   1. “Uncoated stock” also refers to pieces with coated covers that are individually enclosed in a cover or mailing wrapper of uncoated stock such as an envelope, sleeve, protective cover, partial wrapper, or polybag and pieces with outer surfaces composed of material other than paper (e.g., plastic, cloth, fiberboard, or metal).

   2. Bundles must not exceed 8 inches in height (thickness); however, it is recommended that such bundles not exceed 6 inches in height (thickness). [M020.1.8]

2.6 Exception to Bundle Preparation—Full Single-Sort-Level Trays

In bundle-based mailings, mail need not be prepared in 5-digit bundles if placed in a full 5-digit tray. Similarly, mail need not be prepared in other levels of bundles when it will be placed in a full tray to the corresponding tray level, and none of the mail in that tray would have been more finely sorted if bundled. For example, the content of a full ADC tray need not be bundled if, when correctly sorted, it would have all been prepared in ADC bundles to the same destination; conversely, this exception would not apply if some pieces would require preparation in 5-digit or 3-digit bundles. [M020.1.9]

2.7 Pieces With Simplified Address

For mail prepared with a simplified address, all pieces for the same post office must be prepared in bundles of 50 when possible. If bundles of other quantities are prepared, the actual number of pieces must be shown on the facing slip attached to show distribution desired (e.g., rural route, city route, post office boxholder). Bundles must be secure and stable subject to specific weight limits in 705.8.0 if placed on pallets, and specific weight and height limits in 2.5 if placed in sacks. [M020.2.3]

2.8 Bundles With Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

An individual bundle may be prepared with fewer than the minimum number of pieces required by the standards for the rate claimed without loss of rate eligibility under either of these conditions:

a. A greater number of pieces would exceed the maximum physical size for a bundle and the total number of pieces for that presort destination meets the minimum volume standard (e.g., 30 pieces are available to meet a 10-piece minimum, but a bundle of eight pieces is 6 inches thick).

b. The pieces constitute the “last bundle” for a presort destination and previously prepared bundles met the applicable minimum volume standard (e.g., 505 pieces prepared in 10 50-piece bundles and one five-piece bundle). [M020.1.7]

2.9 Labeling Bundles

Unless excepted by standard, the presort level of each bundle (other than carrier route bundles) must be identified either with an optional endorsement line under 708.7.0 or with a barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle label. On flat-size mail, the label may be placed anywhere on the address side of the top piece in the bundle. Bundle labels must not be obscured by banding or shrinkwrap. The following colors and presort characters apply to bundle labels:

a. Five-digit presort level, red Label 5.

b. Three-digit presort level, green Label 3.

c. ADC presort level, pink Label A.

d. Mixed ADC presort level, tan Label X. [M020.1.3]

2.10 Use of Optional Endorsement Lines (OEL)

An optional endorsement line (OEL) may be used to label bundles instead of applying pressure-sensitive bundle labels or facing slips to the top piece of bundles under 708.7.0. [M013.1.1]

2.11 Use of Carrier Route Information Lines

Bundles for individual carrier routes, rural routes, highway contract routes, post office box sections, or general delivery units must be prepared with facing slips under 2.0, optional endorsement lines under 708.7.0, or carrier route information lines under 708.6.0. These standards apply to Enhanced Carrier Route Standard mailings. Carrier route information lines may be on all pieces in a mailing, regardless of presort level. [M014.1.0]

2.12 Facing Slips—All Carrier Route Mail

All facing slips used on carrier route bundles must show this information:

a. Line 1: Destination city, two-letter state abbreviation, and 5-digit ZIP Code.

b. Line 2: Content (as appropriate to the class), followed by carrier route type and route number (e.g., "STD FLTS CR R 012").

c. Line 3: City and two-letter state abbreviation of the origin post office. [M020.3.0]

3.0 Sacks and Trays

3.1 Standard Containers

Mailings must be prepared in sacks except when permitted to be prepared in letter trays, as shown in Exhibit 3.1 and under other applicable standards in this section. Containers for Customized MarketMail are specified in 705.1.0. The following additional standards apply:

a. Palletized mail is also subject to 705.8.0.

b. A postmaster may authorize nonpostal containers for a small-volume presorted mailing if the mailing weighs no more than 20 pounds, consists primarily of mail or bundles of mail for local ZIP Codes, and requires no USPS transportation for processing. [M033.1.2]

Exhibit 3.1 Standard Containers

PROCESSING CATEGORY	USPS CONTAINER
Standard Mail	
Flat-size under 345.3.2	Sack (white)
Flat-size under 345.3.4	Letter tray (with sleeve)

[Exhibit M033.1.2]

3.2 Sack Preparation

All sack preparation is subject to these standards:

a. Each sack must bear the correct sack label.

b. The weight of a sack and its content must not exceed 70 pounds. [M033.2.4]

3.3 Tray Sizes

These approximate measurements define the letter tray sizes that apply to all Standard Mail preparation standards:

a. 2-foot managed mail (MM) trays: 21 inches long by 10 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 4-5/8 inches high.

b. 1-foot MM trays: 10-1/4 inches long by 10 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 4-5/8 inches high.

c. 2-foot extended MM (EMM) trays: 21-3/4 inches long by 11-1/2 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 6-1/8 inches high. [M033.1.3]

3.4 Preparation for Flats in Letter Trays

Standard Mail flat-size pieces may be prepared in letter trays instead of sacks only if the following standards are met:

a. At least 90% of the mailing job must be claimed at automation rates or Enhanced Carrier Route rates. No more than 10% of the mailing job may be claimed at Presorted rates. The following minimum volumes for Standard Mail must be met:

   1. For the portion claimed at automation nonletter rates, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. For any portion of the job claimed at Presorted rates, no separate minimum is required.

   2. For any portion claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter rates, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met.

b. Automation rate pieces must meet the applicable flat-size dimensions in 301.3.0. Presorted and Enhanced Carrier Route pieces must meet the flat-size dimensions in 301.1.0.

c. The pieces must fit completely within the dimensions for height and the bottom (floor) dimensions for length and width specified in 3.3, *Tray Sizes*, for a managed mail (MM) letter tray or an extended managed mail (EMM) letter tray. If a single row of pieces is placed in a tray, all pieces must be upright, faced toward the end of the tray (the short dimension), and perpendicular to the length of the tray. If two rows of pieces are placed in a tray, the rows must be parallel to each other and to the length of the tray and all pieces must be upright, faced toward the end of the tray, and perpendicular to the length of the tray. Other applicable standards in 245.3.3, *Letter Tray Preparation*, must also be met.

d. Trays must bear tray-size labels that meet all applicable physical and barcode standards under 4.9, with Line 1 and Line 2 information as required for flat-size mail in sacks. Each label must contain a barcode as specified in 708.6.2.4 and the content identifier number required in Exhibit 708.6.1 for the same type of flat-size mail prepared in sacks.

e. All mail prepared under 5.0, *Preparation for Presorted Flats*, 6.0, *Preparation for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats*, or 7.0, *Preparation for Automation Rate Flats*, must be bundled except for full 5-digit trays and full carrier route trays. The exception to bundling in 2.6, *Exception to Bundle Preparation—Full Single-Sort-Level Trays*, may be used for other sort levels. All mail prepared under 705.9.0, *Preparation for Cotraying and Cosacking Bundles of Automation and Presorted Flats*, must be bundled.

f. All mail in the mailing job must be trayed. Sacking is not permitted except when the required minimum pallet load in 705.8.5.3 cannot be met.

g. All trays must be palletized under 705.8.10.2, except for mail prepared in trays for Priority Mail or Express Mail drop shipment or for mail prepared and claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route destination delivery unit rates. Trays of letter-size pieces must not be placed onto pallets with trays of flat-size pieces. Pallet labels must identify the mail as flat-size pieces.

h. All other applicable standards in 5.0, *Preparation for Presorted Flats*, 6.0, *Preparation for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats*, 7.0, *Preparation for Automation Rate Flats*, or 705.9.0 must be met, including required preparation sequence and use of sack minimums as tray minimums. [M033.2.2]

3.5 Tray Sleeving and Strapping

Each letter tray must be sleeved using USPS-provided sleeves. Except under 3.6, each sleeved letter tray must then be secured with one plastic strap placed tightly around the length of the tray without crushing the tray or sleeve. [M033.1.5]

3.6 Strapping Exception

Strapping is not required for any letter tray placed on a 5-digit, 3-digit, or SCF pallet secured with stretchwrap. In addition, if the processing and distribution manager gives a written waiver, strapping is not required for any mixed ADC letter tray or for any letter tray that originates and destinates in the same SCF (mail processing plant) service area. [M033.1.6]

3.7 Origin/Entry 3-Digit Sacks

After all finer sort levels are prepared, an origin/entry 3-digit sacks must be prepared to contain any remaining mail for each 3-digit area serviced by the SCF serving the post office where the mail is verified (origin), and may be prepared for each 3-digit area served by the SCF/plant where mail is entered (if that is different from the SCF/plant serving the post office where the mail is verified—e.g., a PVDS deposit site). In all cases, only one less-than-full sack may be prepared for each 3-digit area. [M033.1.7]

4.0 Sack and Tray Labels

4.1 Basic Standards

Only sack labels may be used for sacks; only tray labels may be used for trays. Machine-printed labels (available from the USPS) ensure legibility. Legible hand-printed labels are acceptable. Illegible labels are not acceptable. Container labels for automation rate mailings are subject to 4.9, *Barcoded Sack and Tray Labels* and 708.6.0. [M031.1.1]

4.2 Line 1 (Destination Line)

Line 1 (destination line) must meet these standards:

a. *Placement.* Line 1 must be the first visible line on the label. It must be completely visible and legible when placed in the label holder. This visibility is ensured if the top of this line is no less than 1/8 (0.125) inch below the top of the label when the label is cut and prepared.

b. *Information.* Line 1 must contain only the information specified by standard, including the appropriate destination facility prefix (e.g., “ADC”). Two zeros may follow the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix required by labeling standards (e.g., 223 as 22300).

c. *Overseas Military Mail.* On 5-digit sacks and trays for overseas military destinations, Line 1 shows, from left to right, “APO” or “FPO,” followed by “AE” (for ZIP Codes within the ZIP Code prefix range 090-098), “AA” (for ZIP Codes

within the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix 340), or "AP" (for ZIP Codes within the ZIP Code prefix range 962-966), followed by the destination 5-digit ZIP Code of the mail in the sack or tray. [M031.1.2]

4.3 Line 2 (Content Line)

Line 2 (content line) must meet these standards:

a. *Placement:* Line 2 must be the second visible line on the label. This line must show the class and processing category of the mail in the sack or tray and other information as specified by standards. [M031.1.3]

b. *Codes:* The codes shown below must be used as appropriate on Line 2 of sack and tray labels.

CONTENT TYPE	CODE
Barcoded	BC
Barcoded and Nonbarcoded	BC/NBC
Carrier Route	C (type of route)
Carrier Routes	CR-RT or CR-RTS
Digit	D
Flats	FLTS
General Delivery Unit	G
Highway Contract Route	H
Mixed	MXD
Nonbarcoded	NON BC (sacks) NBC (pallets and cotrayed or cosacked mail under 705.9.0)
Post Office Box Section	B
Rural Route	R
Scheme	SCH
Standard Mail	STD
Working	WKG

[M031.5.0]

4.4 Line 3 (Office of Mailing or Mailer Information Line)

Line 3 (office of mailing or mailer information line) must be the bottom line of required information and must show either the city and state of the entry post office or the mailer's name and the city and state of the mailer's location. It is recommended that the mailer's name also appear with the city and state of the entry post office. [M031.1.4]

4.5 Abbreviations for Lines 1 and 3

Lines 1 and 3 may contain abbreviated information if such abbreviations are those in the USPS City State Product or in Publication 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*. [M031.1.6]

4.6 Placement of Extraneous Information

Extraneous information is not permitted on the destination and content lines. It may be placed away from required lines, subject to these conditions:

a. It may be placed above Line 1 in not more than 0.083 inch high type (6-point type).

b. It may appear to the right of required Line 3 information but it must not consist of numerals that resemble a ZIP Code or 3-digit ZIP Code prefix.

c. It must not appear between Lines 1 and 2 (a blank line is permitted), but may appear between Lines 2 and 3 if it does not consist of numerals that resemble a ZIP Code or 3-digit ZIP Code prefix.

d. It may appear below Line 3.

e. A mailer code assigned by the USPS or such words as “Mailer,” “From” (or “FR”), or “Entered at” may appear before the required information on Line 3. [M031.1.5]

4.7 Sack Label

4.7.1 Physical Characteristics of a Sack Label

A sack label must meet these specifications:

a. Color: white or manila.

b. Weight: 70-pound or heavier stock (required for mailings of automation-compatible flats, optional for others).

c. Length (parallel to printing): 3.250 inches minimum; 3.375 inches maximum.

d. Height (perpendicular to printing): 0.937 inch minimum; 0.980 inch maximum. [M031.2.1]

4.7.2 Additional Standards for Automation-Compatible Flats

For sack labels used on mailings of automation-compatible flats only.

a. The human-readable content of sack labels must be machine-printed at five lines per inch. If the information cannot be shortened by postal abbreviations, it may be printed at a pitch of up to 15 characters per inch, if at least 22 human-readable characters fit on the label without interfering with the “quiet zone.”

b. The minimum acceptable height for the destinating ZIP Code is 0.111 inch (8-point type).

c. The minimum acceptable character height for all other information on Lines 1, 2, and 3 is 0.083 inch (6-point type). [M031.2.2]

4.8 Tray Labels

4.8.1 Physical Characteristics of a Tray Label

A tray label must meet these specifications:

a. Color: white or manila.

b. Weight: minimum 70-pound stock (500 sheets, 24 by 36 inches).

c. Height (perpendicular to printing): 1.860 inches minimum; 2.015 inches maximum.

d. Length (parallel to printing): 3.250 inches minimum; 3.515 inches maximum.

e. Thickness: 0.005 inch minimum. [M031.3.2]

4.8.2 Placement of a Tray Label

A tray label must be securely placed in an adhesive-backed label holder that is affixed to the specific location designated on the tray. Where no specific location is indicated the label must be securely placed in an adhesive-backed label holder that is affixed horizontally to the top left corner of one end of the tray. Do not use tape. Insert labels completely into the label holder to ensure that they do not fall out during processing. Do not insert labels upside down. [M031.3.1]

4.9 Barcoded Sack and Tray Labels

4.9.1 Basic Standards for Barcoded Sack and Tray Labels

Exhibit 4.9.1 shows the types of mail requiring barcoded tray or sack labels. Barcoded labels must meet these general standards:

a. Barcoded tray labels and sack labels must not be interchanged. Tray labels must be used only for trays, and sack labels must be used only for sacks.

b. Mailer-produced barcoded labels must meet the standards in 708.6.0.

c. All information on barcoded labels must be machine-printed. Alterations to preprinted barcoded labels (e.g., handwritten changes) may not be made.

d. Barcoded labels must be inserted completely into the label holder on the tray or sack to prevent their loss during transport and processing. [M032.1.1]

Exhibit 4.9.1 Required Barcoded Container Labels

RATE OR TYPE	PROCESSING CATEGORY
Standard Mail	
Automation rate	Flat-size
Cobundled and cosacked under 705.9.0 through 705.13.0	Flat-size
Automation, Presorted, and Enhanced Carrier Route in letter trays under 345.3.0	Flat-size
Automation and Presorted in letter trays cotrayed under 705.9.0 using 345.3.0 option	Flat-size

[Exhibit M032.1.1]

4.9.2 Additional Physical Standards for Barcoded Sack Labels

A barcoded sack label must meet these specifications:

a. Color: white or manila.

b. Reflectance: minimum reflectance requirements in 708.6.3.3i., *Barcode*.

c. Weight: minimum 70-pound paper stock (500 sheets, 24 by 36 inches).

d. Height: 0.937 inch minimum; 0.980 inch maximum.

e. Length: 3.250 inches minimum; 3.375 inches maximum. [M032.3.1]

4.9.3 Additional Physical Standards for Barcoded Tray Labels

A barcoded tray label must meet these specifications:

a. Color: white or manila.

b. Reflectance: minimum reflectance requirements in 708.6.3.3i., *Barcode*.

c. Perforations: perforations are not permitted through the barcode and barcode quiet zone on labels.

d. Weight: minimum 70-pound paper stock (500 sheets, 24 by 36 inches).

e. Height: 1.860 inches minimum; 2.015 inches maximum.

f. Length: 3.250 inches minimum; 3.515 inches maximum.

g. Thickness: 0.005 inch minimum. [M032.2.1]

5.0 Preparation for Presorted Flats

5.1 Basic Standards

All mailings and all pieces in each mailing at Regular Standard Mail and Nonprofit Standard Mail nonautomation rates are subject to specific preparation standards in 5.2 through 5.9 and to these general standards (automation rate mailings must be prepared under 7.0):

a. All pieces must meet the standards for basic eligibility in 2.0 through 4.0 in *Mail Preparation* and specific eligibility in 5.0, *Preparation for Presorted Flats*. Nonprofit Standard Mail must meet the additional eligibility standards in 703.1.0.

b. All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in 1.0 through 4.0 in *Mail Preparation* and the following:

   1. Subject to the marking standards in 302.2.0 and 302.3.0, regular Standard Mail pieces must be marked “Presorted Standard” (or “PRSRT STD”) and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must be marked “Nonprofit Organization” (or “Nonprofit Org.” or “Nonprofit”). Regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must not be marked “ECRLOT,” “ECRWSH,” “ECRWSS,” “AUTO,” “AUTOCR,” or “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”).

   2. Unless excepted by standard, all pieces must be in the flat-size processing category and must be prepared in sacks or on pallets. Certain flat-size pieces may be prepared in letter trays under 3.0, *Sacks and Trays*.

c. All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in 5.0 or the palletization standards in 705.8.0. Flat-size pieces may be prepared under 705.9.0 through 705.13.0 in *Advanced Preparation and Special Postage Payment Systems*.

d. Sortation determines rate eligibility as specified in 343.5.0. [M610.1.1]

5.2 Required Bundling

Except as provided in 5.4, *Loose Packing*, bundling is required before sacking. A bundle must be prepared when the quantity of addressed pieces for a required presort level reaches the required minimum bundle size in 5.3, *Bundling and Labeling*. Smaller volumes are not permitted except for mixed ADC bundles. [M610.4.1]

5.3 Bundling and Labeling

Preparation sequence, bundle size, and labeling:

a. 5-digit (required):

1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 or optional endorsement line (OEL).
2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.

b. 3-digit (required); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 or OEL.

c. ADC (required); 10-piece minimum; pink Label A or OEL.

d. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; tan Label X or OEL. [M610.4.2]

5.4 Loose Packing

District managers may authorize loose packing of unbundled pieces to fill Number 3 sacks if no pieces in a sack would be more finely sorted if bundled. Pieces must be faced and packed to remain oriented in transit. The total weight of sacks containing such pieces may not exceed 70 pounds. Requests for loose packing must be made in advance through the post office of mailing. [M610.4.3]

5.5 Required Sacking or Traying

Except as provided in 5.6, a sack, or a letter tray under 3.0, must be prepared when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first, subject to these conditions:

a. For identical-weight pieces, mailers must apply these methods:

1. Pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum.
2. Pieces weighing more than 1.92 ounces must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.

b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must apply either one of these methods:

1. The minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing is used. The net weight of the mailing is divided by the number of pieces, and the resulting average single-piece weight is used to determine whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies.
2. The actual piece count or mail weight for each sack is used, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows for each sack the number of pieces and the total weight.

c. The accompanying postage statement must indicate whether the 125-piece minimum, the 15-pound minimum, or both minimums are applied. [M610.4.4]

5.6 Drop Shipment

A mailer using Priority Mail or Express Mail to drop ship Standard Mail flat-size pieces may prepare sacks containing fewer than 125 pieces or less than 15 pounds of mail. [M610.4.5]

5.7 Sacking and Labeling

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

a. 5-digit (required); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.2 for overseas military mail).
2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 5D NON BC."

b. 3-digit (required); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L002, Column A.
2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D NON BC."

c. Origin 3-digit(s) (required) and entry 3-digit(s) (optional); one-bundle minimum (for origin or entry); labeling:

1. Line 1: L002, Column A.
2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D NON BC."

d. ADC (required); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L004, Column B.
2. Line 2: "STD FLTS ADC NON BC."

e. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:

1. [3-17-05] [02-03-05] Line 1: Use L009, effective May 15, 2005. Until then, use "MXD" followed by city, state, and ZIP Code of ADC serving the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix of the entry post office as shown in L004, Column B, or use L009, Column B.
2. Line 2: "STD FLTS NON BC WKG." [M610.4.6]

5.8 Cotraying and Cobundling Flats With Automation Rate Mail

The following standards apply:

a. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing, an automation rate mailing, and a Presorted rate mailing, then it must be prepared under one of the following options: 1) the carrier route mailing must be prepared under 6.0 and the automation rate and Presorted rate mailings must be prepared under 705.9.0, *Preparation for Cotraying and Cosacking Bundles of Automation and Presorted Flats*; or 2) all three mailings in the mailing job must be prepared under 705.10.0, *Preparation for Merged Containerization of Bundles of Flats Using City State Product*.

b. If the mailing job contains an automation rate mailing and a Presorted rate mailing, then it must be prepared under the cosacking standards in 705.9.0.

c. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing and a Presorted rate mailing, then it must be separately sacked under 5.0 and 6.0 or prepared using the merged sacking option in 705.10.0.

d. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing and an automation rate mailing, then it must be separately sacked under 6.0 and 7.0 or prepared using the merged sacking option in 705.10.0.

e. Presorted rate pieces may be cobundled with automation rate pieces under the standards in 705.11.0. [M610.1.2]

5.9 Merged Containerization of Carrier Route, Automation, and Presorted Flats

Under the optional preparation in 705.10.0, Presorted rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 5.2 through 5.8 are cosacked with carrier route rate bundles prepared under 6.0 and with automation rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 7.0 in merged 5-digit scheme sacks and merged 5-digit sacks. Under the optional preparation in 705.10.0, 705.12.0, or 705.13.0, Presorted rate 5-digit bundles are copalletized with carrier route rate bundles prepared under 6.0 and with automation rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 7.0 on merged 5-digit scheme pallets and merged 5-digit pallets. See 5.8a for information on when preparation under 705.10.0 may be required. [M610.1.7]

6.0 Preparation for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats

6.1 Basic Standards

All mailings and all pieces in each mailing at Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail and Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail nonautomation rates are subject to specific preparation standards in 6.2 through 6.7 and to these general standards:

a. All pieces must meet the standards for basic eligibility in 343.2.0 through 343.4.0 and specific eligibility in 343.6.0. Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail must meet the additional eligibility standards in 703.1.0.

b. All pieces must be in the flat-size processing category.

c. All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in 2.0 through 4.0 and 302, and the following:

1. Subject to the marking standards in 302., Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail pieces must be marked “Presorted Standard” (or “PRSRT STD”), and Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail pieces must be marked “Nonprofit Organization” (or “Nonprofit Org.” or “Nonprofit”). All pieces must also be marked “ECRLOT” for basic rate, “ECRWSH” for high density rate, or “ECRWSS” for saturation rate.

2. Unless excepted by standard, flat-size pieces must be prepared in sacks or on pallets. Certain flat-size pieces may be prepared in letter trays under 3.0.

3. Pieces must be sequenced according to 6.9.

4. Pieces with a simplified address format must meet the standards in 602.3.0, *Use of Alternative Addressing*.

d. All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in 6.0 or the palletization standards in 705.8.0. Flat-size pieces may be prepared under 705.9.0 through 705.13.0 in *Advanced Preparation and Special Postage Payment Systems*.

e. Sortation determines rate eligibility as specified in 343.5.0. [M620.1.1]

6.2 Residual Pieces

Pieces not sorted as a carrier route mailing must be prepared as a separate mailing at Standard Mail automation or Presorted rates or at single-piece First-Class Mail or Priority Mail rates. [M620.1.5]

6.3 General Carrier Route Bundle Preparation

Only carrier route bundles are prepared. Bundles are not required in full carrier route trays. [M620.2.1]

6.4 Bundle Preparation

Bundle size: carrier route; required (10-piece minimum). Carrier route bundle labels are based on the sack or tray level in which placed:

a. No label is required if the bundle is placed in a correctly labeled carrier route tray or sack.

b. Bundles in 5-digit carrier routes trays and sacks must have a facing slip unless the pieces in the bundle show a carrier route information line or an optional endorsement line. [M620.2.2]

6.5 Bundles With Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

As a general exception to 6.2 through 6.7, a bundle with fewer than 10 pieces and either a less-than-full tray or a sack with fewer than 125 pieces *and* less than 15 pounds of pieces may be prepared to a carrier route when the saturation rate is claimed for the contents and the applicable density standard is met. [M620.1.3]

6.6 Required Sack Minimums

A sack must be prepared when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first, subject to these conditions:

a. For identical-weight pieces, a single-piece weight of 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) results in 125 pieces weighing 15 pounds. Identical-weight pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum; those that weigh more must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.

b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must either use the minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing (divide the net weight of the mailing by the number of pieces; the resulting average single-piece weight determines whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies) or sack by the actual piece count or mail weight for each sack, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows (specifically for each sack) the number of pieces and their total weight.

c. Mailers must note on the accompanying postage statement whether they applied the 125-piece ("PCS") or 15-pound ("WT") threshold or the method in 6.6b, *Required Sack Minimums* ("BOTH").

d. Sacks with fewer than 125 pieces or less than 15 pounds of pieces may be prepared to a carrier route when the saturation rate is claimed for the contents and the applicable density standard is met. [M620.4.1]

6.7 Sack Preparation

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

a. Carrier route: required (minimum of 125 pieces/15 pounds).

1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.2 for overseas military mail).

2. Line 2: "STD FLTS ECRWSS" or "STD FLTS ECRWSH" or "STD FLTS ECRLOT" as applicable, followed by the route type and number.

b. 5-digit scheme carrier routes: required (no minimum).

1. Line 1: use L001, column B.

2. Line 2: "STD FLTS CR-RTS SCH."

c. 5-digit carrier routes: required (no minimum).

1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.2 for overseas military mail).

2. Line 2: "STD FLTS CR-RTS." [M620.4.2]

6.8 Merged Containerization of Carrier Route, Automation, and Presorted Rate Flats

Under the optional preparation in 705.10.0, carrier route rate bundles are cosacked with Presorted rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 5.0 and with automation rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 7.0 in merged 5-digit scheme sacks and merged 5-digit sacks. Under the optional preparation in 705.10.0, 705.12.0, or 705.13.0, carrier route rate bundles prepared under 6.3 and 6.4 are copalletized with Presorted rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 5.0 and with automation rate 5-digit bundles prepared under 7.0 on merged 5-digit scheme pallets and merged 5-digit pallets. Presorted rate pieces may be cobundled with automation rate pieces under 705.11.0. [M620.1.4]

6.9 Delivery Sequence Standards

6.9.1 Basic Standards

Mailpieces for which a walk-sequence discount is claimed must be organized in the delivery sequence determined by the USPS and prepared as a carrier route mailing under 6.0 and the standards below. Pieces prepared with a simplified address must also meet the corresponding standards. [M050.1.1]

6.9.2 Missing Addresses

Some mailpieces cannot be sequenced because an exact match for a name or address cannot be obtained. These pieces may be included in a sequenced mailing only if they are placed behind or after the sequenced mail. Arrange these pieces:

a. Alphabetically by complete street name, then either in ascending order by ZIP+4 code sector segments or numerically in ascending order by primary address.

b. Numerically for numbered streets, then either in ascending order by ZIP+4 code sector segments or numerically in ascending order by primary address. [M050.1.2]

6.9.3 Updating Walk Sequence Information—General

Walk-sequence rate pieces prepared with other than a simplified address format under 6.9.4 must be sequenced using USPS data from one of the following sources, issued within 90 days before the mailing date:

a. The Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS) file.

b. The Delivery Sequence File, Second Generation (DSF^2).

c. Delivery sequence information from USPS address sequencing services, as requested by the customer. [M050.2.2]

6.9.4 Updating Walk Sequence Information for Simplified Addressing

Walk-sequence rate pieces prepared with a simplified address must be based on delivery stop information obtained within 90 days before the mailing date, either from the Delivery Statistics File or from the postmaster of the destination office. [M050.2.1]

6.9.5 Out-of-Date Walk Sequence Information

Mailings prepared with out-of-date walk-sequencing information are not eligible for walk-sequence rates. [M050.2.3]

6.9.6 Updating Line-of-Travel Sequence Information

Unless the mail is prepared in carrier walk sequence, line-of-travel (LOT) sequence is required for mailings at Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route basic rates. LOT sequence is not an exact walk sequence but a sequence of ZIP+4 codes arranged in the order that the route is served by a carrier. (First the ZIP+4 groups are sequenced, then the addresses within each are identified as being in ascending or descending order.) The USPS eLOT product provides a list of the ZIP+4 codes each carrier route serves, identifies the order in which they are delivered, and provides an indicator specifying whether the addresses that share the same ZIP+4 code must be sorted in ascending or descending order. When a range of ZIP+4 codes on the same carrier route are assigned the same sequence number, the addresses bearing those ZIP+4 codes must be arranged in ascending ZIP+4 code order before the sequence number is assigned. LOT information must be updated within 90 days before the date of mailing. [M050.2.4]

6.10 Delivery Sequence Documentation

6.10.1 Basic Standards

The postage statement must be annotated in the “Carrier Route Sequencing Date” block on page 1. The mailer must annotate the postage statement to show the earliest (oldest) date of the method used to obtain sequencing information for the mailing. The mailer’s signature on the postage statement certifies that this standard has been met when the corresponding mail is presented to the USPS. The mailer

must maintain documentation to substantiate compliance with the standards for carrier route sequencing. Unless submitted with each corresponding mailing, the mailer must be able to provide the USPS with documentation (if requested) of accurate sequencing or delivery statistics for each carrier route to which pieces are mailed. Acceptable forms of documentation are:

a. The invoice showing that the addresses came from CDS.

b. DSF^2 invoice or documentation.

c. Copies of the delivery unit summaries that served as the mailer's bills for address sequencing service charges.

d. Evidence of receipt of information from postmasters for simplified address mailings (see 509.1.0, *Address Information System Products*).

e. Form 3553 showing the date of the eLOT product used, or the date from the USPS Qualification report produced by presort software. [M050.3.1]

6.10.2 High Density

For each carrier route to which high density rate mail is addressed, the mailer must document the total number of addressed pieces to the route. If there are fewer than 125 addressed pieces for a given route, the documentation also must show the number of possible deliveries on the route. [M050.3.2]

6.10.3 Saturation Density—Simplified Address Mail

For each carrier route to which mail with a simplified address is sent at the saturation rate, the mailer must be able to document that the mailing meets the applicable density standard. This documentation must show the total number of active possible deliveries and the total number to which mailpieces in the mailing are being addressed, by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route. It must be submitted with each applicable mailing. [M050.3.3]

6.10.4 Saturation Density—Other Mail

For each carrier route to which mail without a simplified address is sent at the saturation rate, the mailer must be able to document that the mailing meets the applicable density standards. This documentation must show either the total number of active possible *residential* deliveries and the number and percentage to which mailpieces are addressed, or the total number of *all* active possible deliveries and the number and percentage to which mailpieces are addressed, depending on whether qualification is based on the 90% or 75% criterion, respectively. The documentation must be listed by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route. It must be submitted with each applicable mailing. [M050.3.4]

6.10.5 Both Rates

If a mailing contains pieces qualifying for both walk-sequence rates, the documentation required by 6.10.2, *High Density*, and either 6.10.3, *Saturation Density—Simplified Address Mail*, or 6.10.4, *Saturation Density—Other Mail*, may be combined. Entries for pieces at the high density rate must be so annotated on the documentation. For the entire mailing, a summary of the total number of pieces at each rate must be provided. This documentation must be submitted with each applicable mailing. [M050.3.5]

6.10.6 Carrier Route Rate

If a mailing includes high density and saturation rate and basic carrier route rate pieces, in addition to the applicable information required by 6.10.2 through 6.10.5 in *Delivery Sequence Documentation*, the documentation for the basic carrier route rate mail must show, by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route, the total number of addressed pieces at each rate for each carrier route to which pieces are addressed. Pieces qualifying for the basic carrier route rate must be so annotated. For the entire mailing, a summary by 5-digit ZIP Code of the total number of pieces at each rate must be provided. This documentation must be submitted with each applicable mailing to meet the documentation standard for the carrier route rate. [M050.3.6]

7.0 Preparation for Automation Rate Flats

7.1 Basic Standards

Flat-size automation rate Standard Mail must be prepared under 7.0 and the eligibility standards for the rate claimed. Trays and sacks must bear the appropriate barcoded container labels under 4.9. [M820.1.1]

7.2 Mailings

All pieces in a mailing must meet the standards in 301.3.0, *Physical Standards for Automation Flats*, and be sorted together to the finest extent required. Standard Mail mailings may include pieces prepared at automation 3/5 and basic rates. The definitions of a mailing and permissible combinations are in 1.2. [M820.1.2]

7.3 Marking

All Standard Mail automation rate pieces must be marked under 302. Pieces claimed at an automation rate must bear the appropriate class marking and, except as provided in 302.2.0, “AUTO.” Pieces not claimed at an automation rate must not bear “AUTO” unless single-piece rate postage is affixed or the corrective single-piece rate marking “Single-Piece” or “SNGLP” is applied. [M820.1.4]

7.4 General Preparation

All pieces must be prepared in bundles and meet the following requirements:

a. Pieces that meet both the size dimensions and the turning ability and deflection standards under 301.3.3, *Criteria for AFSM 100 Flats*, must be prepared in separate bundles from pieces that do not meet all AFSM 100 dimensions and the turning ability and deflection standards (but that do meet the dimensions and other criteria for UFSM 1000 processing under 301.3.4).

b. Each AFSM 100 bundle and each UFSM 1000 bundle must separately meet the bundle size minimum number of pieces in 7.5.1. When the total number of AFSM 100 or UFSM 1000 pieces for a specific presort destination (e.g., the 5-digit ZIP Code 12345) meets or exceeds the applicable minimum bundle size, the pieces for that presort destination must be prepared into a bundle or bundles labeled to that presort destination under the standards for the rate claimed.

c. The physical size of each bundle for each specific presort destination may contain the exact bundle minimum, more pieces than the bundle minimum, or fewer pieces than the bundle minimum, depending on the size of the pieces in the mailing or the total quantity of the pieces to that destination. Rate eligibility is not affected when a physical bundle contains fewer pieces than the minimum bundle size for the above reasons, provided the total number of AFSM 100 pieces physically bundled for that presort destination or the total number of UFSM 1000 pieces physically bundled for that presort destination meets or exceeds the rate eligibility bundle minimum under 343.7.0. [M820.1.5]

7.5 Standard Mail Bundle Preparation

7.5.1 Bundling and Labeling

Preparation sequence, bundle size, and labeling:

a. 5-digit scheme (optional):

1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; optional endorsement line (OEL) required.
2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; OEL required.

b. 5-digit (required):

1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less and measuring 3/4 inch thick or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.
2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or measuring more than 3/4 inch thick: 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.

c. 3-digit scheme (optional); 10-piece minimum; OEL required.

d. 3-digit (required); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 or OEL.

e. ADC (required); 10-piece minimum; pink Label A or OEL.

f. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; tan Label X or OEL. [M820.5.1]

7.5.2 AFSM 100 and UFSM 1000 Bundling

Mailers may combine AFSM 100 bundles and UFSM 1000 bundles in the same sack. [M820.1.7]

7.5.3 Required Sacking

A sack, or a letter tray under 3.0, must be prepared when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first, subject to these conditions:

a. For identical-weight pieces, a single-piece weight of 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) results in 125 pieces weighing 15 pounds. Identical-weight pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum; those that weigh more must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.

b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must either use the minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing (divide the net weight of the mailing by the number of pieces; the resulting average single-piece weight determines whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies) or sack by the actual piece count or mail weight for each sack, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows (specifically for each sack) the number of pieces and their total weight.

c. Mailers must note on the accompanying postage statement whether they applied the 125-piece ("PCS") or 15-pound ("WT") threshold or the method in 7.5.3b ("BOTH"). [M820.5.2]

7.5.4 Sacking and Labeling

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

a. 5-digit scheme (required containing 5-digit scheme bundles only); 125-piece/15-pound minimum, labeling:

   1. Line 1: L007, Column B.
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 5D SCH BC."

b. 5-digit (required); 125-piece/15-pound minimum; labeling:

   1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.2 for overseas military mail).
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 5D BC."

c. 3-digit (required); 125-piece/15-pound minimum; labeling:

   1. Line 1: L002, Column A.
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D BC."

d. Origin 3-digit(s) (required) and entry 3-digit(s) (optional); one-bundle minimum (for origin and entry); labeling:

   1. Line 1: L002, Column A.
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D BC."

e. ADC (required); 125-piece/15-pound minimum; labeling:

   1. Line 1: L004, Column B.
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS ADC BC."

f. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:

   1. [03-17-05] [02-03-05] Line 1: Use L009, Column B, effective May 15, 2005. Until then, use either L009, Column B, or L011, Column B or L010, Column B, as applicable.
   2. Line 2: "STD FLTS BC WKG." [M820.5.3]

7.6 Scheme Bundle Preparation

Pieces meeting the AFSM 100 compatibility criteria in 301.3.3 may be prepared in 5-digit scheme bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Code combinations identified in L007 and in 3-digit scheme bundles for those 3-digit ZIP Code combinations identified in L008. These bundles must meet the additional standards in 1.4f. [M820.1.6]

7.7 Cotraying, Cosacking, and Cobundling With Presorted Rate Mail

The following standards apply to Standard Mail (except as provided in 7.9, *Exception—Automation and Nonautomation Pieces on Pallets*):

a. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing, an automation rate mailing, and a Presorted rate mailing, then it must be prepared under one of the following options: 1) the carrier route mailing must be prepared under 6.0, *Preparation for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats*, and the automation rate and Presorted rate mailings must be prepared under 705.9.0; or 2) all three mailings in the mailing job must be prepared under 705.10.0, *Preparation for Merged Containerization of Bundles of Flats Using City State Product*.

b. If the mailing job contains only an automation rate mailing and a Presorted rate mailing and both mailings are reported on the same postage statement, then the mailing job must be prepared under the cosacking standards in 705.9.0, *Preparation for Cotraying and Cosacking Bundles of Automation and Presorted Flats*. Automation rate pieces may be cobundled with Presorted rate pieces under the standards in 705.11.0, *Preparation of Cobundled Automation Rate and Presorted Rate Flats*.

c. If the mailing job contains only a carrier route mailing and an automation rate mailing, then it must be separately sacked under 6.0, *Preparation for Enhanced Carrier Route Flats*, and 7.0, *Preparation for Automation Rate Flats*, or prepared using the merged sack option under 705.10.0, *Preparation for Merged Containerization of Bundles of Flats Using City State Product*. [M820.1.10]

7.8 Merged Containerization With Presorted and Carrier Route Flats

When the conditions and preparation standards in 705.10.0, 705.12.0, or 705.13.0 are met, 5-digit bundles of Presorted, automation, and carrier route rate mail that are part of the same mailing job may be combined on merged 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets and merged 5-digit sacks or pallets. Bundles that are cosacked or copalletized must be part of the same mailing job and mail class. Automation rate pieces may be cobundled with Presorted rate pieces under 705.11.0. [M820.1.11]

7.9 Exception—Automation and Nonautomation Pieces on Pallets

When the physical dimensions of mailpieces in a Standard Mail mailing meet the definition of both a letter-size piece under 201.1.1.1 and an automation flat-size piece under 301.3.0, the entire job may be prepared, merged, and palletized under 705.9.0 through 705.11.0, 705.12.0, and 705.13.0 if the applicable standards are met. The nonautomation portion is all paid at nonautomation nonletter rates for Standard Mail. Mailing jobs prepared entirely in sacks and claiming this exception must be cobundled under 705.11.0. As an alternative to 705.9.0 through 705.11.0, 705.12.0, and 705.13.0, if a portion of the job is prepared as palletized automation flats, the nonautomation portion may be prepared as palletized flats at Presorted nonletter rates and at Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter rates. The nonautomation rate pieces that cannot be placed on BMC or finer level pallets may be prepared as flats in sacks and paid at the appropriate nonautomation nonletter rates. As provided in 343.5.0, the following minimum volumes for Standard Mail must be met for this alternative to 705.9.0 through 705.11.0, 705.12.0, and 705.13.0:

a. For the portion claimed at automation nonletter rates, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. For any portion of the job claimed at Presorted rates, no separate minimum is required.

b. For any portion claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter rates, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. [M820.1.8]