

433 Rates and Eligibility

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1.0 Rates and Fees for First-Class Mail

1.1 Rate Application

Postage is based on the rate that applies to the weight (postage) increment of each addressed piece. [P013.2.1]

1.2 Rate Computation for First-Class Parcels

First-Class rates are charged per ounce or fraction thereof; any fraction of an ounce is considered a whole ounce. For example, if a piece weighs 1.2 ounces, the weight (postage) increment is 2 ounces. The minimum postage per addressed piece is that for a piece weighing 1 ounce. [P013.2.3]

1.3 Nonautomation Presorted Rates

Parcels; A nonmachinable surcharge might apply to pieces 1 ounce or less.

| Weight Not Over (ounces) ¹ | Presorted |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 ² | \$0.352 |
| 2 | 0.577 |
| 3 | 0.761 |
| 4 | 0.986 |
| 5 | 1.211 |
| 6 | 1.436 |
| 7 | 1.661 |
| 8 | 1.886 |
| 9 | 2.111 |
| 10 | 2.336 |
| 11 | 2.561 |
| 12 | 2.786 |
| 13 | 3.011 |

1. For each additional ounce, postage includes \$0.225 for presorted rates. The rates include a \$0.041 discount for presorted parcels weighing more than 2 ounces.

2. Parcels weighing 1 oz. or less are subject to nonmachinable surcharge of \$0.055 per piece.

[R100.9.1]

1.4 Nonmachinable Surcharge

The surcharge per piece for Presorted rate mail is \$0.055. [R100.12.0]



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1.5 **Presort Mailing Fee**

Presort mailing fee, per 12-month period, per office of mailing: \$150.00. [R100.13.1]

1.6 **Computing Postage for First-Class Mail**

Determine single-piece weight and weight (postage) increment for each addressed piece as prescribed in 1.1 and 1.2. For First-Class Mail, affix postage to each piece or, for permit imprint mailings, multiply the number of addressed pieces at each rate increment (and in each rate category, if applicable) by the corresponding postage rate, add the *unrounded* products, and round off the total postage to the nearest whole cent. [P013.6.0]

1.7 **Determining Single-Piece Weight**

To determine single-piece weight in any mailing of nonidentical-weight pieces, weigh each piece individually. To determine single-piece weight in a mailing of identical-weight pieces, weigh a sample group of at least 10 randomly selected pieces and divide the total sample weight by the number of pieces in the sample. Express all single-piece weights in decimal pounds rounded off to four decimal places. [P013.1.3]

2.0 Content Standards for First-Class Mail Parcels

2.1 **General**

All mailable matter may be sent as First-Class Mail, except Customized MarketMail under 705.1.0 or other matter prohibited by the respective standards. [E110.1.1]

2.2 **Written or Typewritten Matter**

Matter wholly or partially in handwriting or typewriting must be mailed as First-Class Mail or Express Mail, except authorized additions to Periodicals, Standard Mail, and Package Services and written or typewritten matter in Library Mail and Media Mail, as permitted by the corresponding standards. [E110.1.2]

2.3 **Correspondence**

Matter that has the character of actual and personal correspondence must be mailed as First-Class Mail or Express Mail. [E110.1.4]

2.4 **Bills and Statements of Account**

Bills and statements of account must be mailed as First-Class Mail or Express Mail according to these definitions:

- a. A *bill* is a request for payment of a definite sum of money claimed to be owing by the addressee to the sender or a third party. The mere assertion of a debt in a definite sum combined with a demand for payment is sufficient to make the message a bill.
- b. A *statement of account* is the assertion of a debt in a definite amount owed by the addressee to the sender or a third party but does not necessarily contain a request or a demand for payment. The amount may be immediately due or may become due after a certain time or on demand or billing at a later date.

- c. A bill or statement of account must present enough details of a debt to inform the debtor of the amount the debtor must pay to acquit himself or herself of the debt. Neither a bill nor a statement of account need state the precise amount if the bill or statement contains enough information to enable the debtor to determine the exact amount of the claim asserted.
- d. A bill or statement of account does not lose that character just because the amount claimed is not, in fact, owing or may not be legally collectible. [E110.1.5]

2.5 Examples of First-Class Mail

These are examples of material that must be mailed at First-Class Mail or Express Mail rates:

- a. Handwritten or typewritten matter, including identical copies prepared by automatic typewriter and manifold or carbon copies of this matter. Handwritten or typewritten matter does not include all matter produced by computers, but computer-prepared material is subject to First-Class postage if it has the character of actual and personal correspondence.
- b. Autograph albums containing writing.
- c. Notebooks or blank books containing written or typewritten entries or stenographic or shorthand notes.
- d. Blank printed forms filled out in writing, such as notices, certificates, and checks, either canceled or uncanceled.
- e. Printed price lists containing written figures changing individual items.
- f. Printed cards or letters bearing a written date, where the date is not the date of the card but gives information about when something is to occur or has occurred.
- g. Any matter marked "Postcard" or "Double Postcard." [E110.1.6]

2.6 Postal Inspection

Matter closed against postal inspection includes First-Class Mail and Express Mail. The USPS may open mail other than First-Class Mail or Express Mail to determine whether the proper rate of postage is paid. Material wrapped or packaged so that it cannot be examined easily or examined without destruction or serious damage is closed against postal inspection and is charged the appropriate First-Class Mail or Express Mail rate. [E110.1.3]

2.7 Prohibited Air Transportation

All First-Class Mail is subject to limitations for air transportation. Generally, all mailable matter may be transported by aircraft, unless restricted in [601.10.0, Hazardous Materials](#). [E110.2.0]

3.0 Eligibility Standards for First-Class Mail Parcels

3.1 Basic Standards for First-Class Mail

All pieces of First-Class Mail must:

- a. Meet the basic standards for First-Class Mail in [2.0](#).



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- b. Weigh 13 ounces or less.
- c. Meet the applicable standards in [433, Rates and Eligibility](#), [434, Postage Payment and Documentation](#), and [604.8.0, Computing Postage](#).
- d. Be part of a single mailing of at least 500 pieces of Presorted First-Class Mail.
- e. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code and that meets these address quality standards:
 1. The Move Update standard in [3.4](#).
 2. The ZIP Code accuracy standard in [3.5](#).
 3. If an alternative addressing format is used, the additional standards in [602.3.0](#). [E130.1.1 and E130.3.1]

3.2 Nonmachinable Surcharge for Parcel-Size Pieces

Parcels that weigh 1 ounce or less are subject to the nonmachinable surcharge if:

- a. The piece is greater than 1/4 inch thick, or
- b. The length is more than 11-1/2 inches or the height is more than 6-1/8 inches. [C100.4.0]

3.3 Presort Mailing Fee

A First-Class Mail presort mailing fee must be paid once each 12-month period at each office of mailing by any person or organization entering mailings at automation or Presorted First-Class Mail rates. Payment of one fee allows a mailer to enter mail at all those rates. Persons or organizations paying this fee may enter mail of their clients as well as their own mail. The fee may be paid in advance only for the next 12 months and only during the last 60 days of the current service period. The fee charged is that which is in effect on the date of payment. [E110.4.1]

3.4 Move Update Standards

3.4.1 Basic Standards

The Move Update standard is a means of reducing the number of mailpieces in a mailing that require forwarding or return by the periodic matching of a mailer's address records with customer-filed change-of-address orders received and maintained by the USPS. For the purposes of this standard, *address* means a specific address associated with a specific occupant name. Addresses subject to the Move Update standard must meet these requirements:

- a. Each address and associated occupant name used on the mailpieces in a mailing must be updated within 185 days before the mailing date, with one of the USPS-approved methods in [3.4.2](#).
- b. Each individual address in the mailing is subject to the Move Update standard.
- c. If an address used on a mailpiece in a mailing at one class of mail and rate is updated with an approved method (e.g., Address Change Service), the same address may be used during the following 185 days and meets the Move Update standard. [A030.1.1]

- d. Except for mail bearing an alternative address format, addresses used on pieces claiming First-Class Mail Presorted rates, regardless of any required surcharge, must meet the Move Update standard. [A030.1.2]

3.4.2 USPS-Approved Methods

The following methods are authorized for meeting the Move Update standard:

- a. Address Change Service (ACS).
- b. [02-03-05] National Change of Address Linkage System (NCOA^{Link}).
- c. Mailer Move Update Process Certification and USPS-approved alternative methods for mailers with legitimate restrictions on incorporating USPS-supplied change-of-address information into their mailing lists. The National Customer Support Center (see 608.8.1 for address) administers and approves both Mailer Move Update Process Certification and alternative methods.
- d. Ancillary service endorsements except “Forwarding Service Requested.” [A030.1.4]

3.4.3 Mailer Certification

The mailer’s signature on the postage statement certifies that the Move Update standard has been met for each address in the corresponding mailing presented to the USPS. [A030.1.5]

3.5 ZIP Code Accuracy

3.5.1 Basic Standards

The ZIP Code accuracy standard is a means of ensuring that the 5-digit ZIP Code in the delivery address correctly matches the delivery address information. For the purposes of this standard, *address* means a specific address associated with a specific 5-digit ZIP Code. Addresses used on pieces claiming certain rates that are subject to the ZIP Code accuracy standard must meet these requirements:

- a. Each address and associated 5-digit ZIP Code used on the mailpieces in a mailing must be verified and corrected within 12 months before the mailing date with one of the USPS-approved methods in 3.4.2.
- b. Each individual address in the mailing is subject to the ZIP Code accuracy standard.
- c. If an address used on a mailpiece in a mailing at one class of mail and rate is verified and corrected with an approved method, the same address may be used during the following 12 months to meet the ZIP Code accuracy standard required for mailing at any other class of mail and rate. [A030.2.1]
- d. Except for mail bearing a simplified address, addresses used on pieces claiming First-Class Mail Presorted rates, regardless of any required surcharge, must meet the ZIP Code accuracy standard. [A030.2.2 and A030.2.3]

3.5.2 USPS-Approved Methods

The following methods are authorized for meeting the ZIP Code accuracy standard:

- a. For computerized lists, Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS)-certified address matching software and current USPS City State Product, within a mailer’s computer systems or through an authorized service provider.



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- b. For manually maintained lists or small computerized lists, options include the following:
 1. Current USPS Publication 65, *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*.
 2. Surveys of addressees on mailer's address list inquiring about the accuracy of ZIP Code information.
 3. Any mailing list service in [507.6.0](#).
 4. An authorized service provider.
 5. CASS-certified matching software.
 6. USPS Web site www.usps.com. [A030.2.4]

3.5.3 Mailer Certification

The mailer's signature on the postage statement certifies that the ZIP Code accuracy standard has been met for each address in the corresponding mailing presented to the USPS. [A030.2.5]