302 Elements on the Face of a Mailpiece

Overview

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1.0 All Mailpieces

1.1 Clear Space

A clear space must be available on all mail for the address, postage (permit imprint, postage stamp, or meter stamp), postmarks, and postal endorsements.

1.2 Delivery and Return Address

The delivery address specifies the location to which the USPS is to deliver a mailpiece. Except for mail prepared with detached address labels under 602.4.0, the piece must have the address of the intended recipient, visible and legible, only on the side of the piece bearing postage. (See 602 for additional information regarding addressing.)

1.3 Postage Payment

The mailer is responsible for proper payment of postage. Standards for postage payment are specified for each shape and class of mail.

2.0 Placement and Content of Mail Markings

2.1 First-Class Mail and Standard Mail Markings

2.1.1 Placement

Mailpieces must be marked under the corresponding standards to show the class of service and/or rate paid:

a. Basic Marking. The basic required marking that indicates the class or subclass—“First-Class,” “Presorted Standard” or “PRSRT STD,” or “Nonprofit Organization” (or “Nonprofit Org.” or “Nonprofit”)—must be printed or produced as part of, or directly below or to the left of, the permit imprint indicia, meter stamp or impression, or adhesive or precanceled stamp.

b. Other Markings. The rate-specific markings “AUTO,” “AUTOCR,” “Presorted” (or “PRSRT”); “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”) (First-Class Mail only); and “ECRLOT,” “ECRWSH,” “ECRWSS,” and “Customized MarketMail” (or “CUST MKTMAIL” or “CMM”) (Standard Mail only) may be placed as follows:

1. In the location specified in 2.1.1a.
2. In the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except optional endorsement line information under 708.7.0 or carrier route information under 708.8.0.

3. If preceded by two asterisks (**), the “AUTO,” “AUTOCR,” “PRESORTED” (or “PRSRT”), “CUSTOMIZED MARKETMAIL” (or “CUST MKTMAIL” or “CMM”), or “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”) marking also may be placed on the line directly above or two lines above the address in a mailer keyline or a manifest keyline, or it may be placed above the address and below the postage in an MLOCR ink-jet printed date correction/meter drop shipment line.

c. Additional Requirements for Carrier Route. “AUTOCR,” “ECRLOT,” “ECRWSH,” and “ECRWSS” (Standard Mail only) must appear in their entirety wherever placed, except “ECR” may be placed in the postage area if “LOT,” “WSH,” or “WSS,” as applicable, is placed in the line above or two lines above the address. Pieces not mailed at ECR rates must not bear these markings.

2.1.2 Exceptions to Markings

Exceptions are as follows:

a. Automation Flats: First-Class Mail and Standard Mail flats do not require an “AUTO” marking. First-Class Mail flats not marked “AUTO” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class” markings. Standard Mail flats not marked “AUTO” must bear the appropriate basic marking in 2.1.1a.

b. Manifest Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece. The two-letter rate category code required in the keyline on manifest mailing pieces prepared under 705.2.0 meets the requirement for other rate markings (e.g., on a First-Class piece mailed at automation carrier route rates, the “AC” code may replace the “AUTOCR” marking).

c. MLOCR Prepared Automation Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece. The other “AUTO” marking must be replaced by the appropriate identifier/rate code marking described in 705.5.3.2, *Rate and Postage Marking*, on those pieces that have the marking applied by an MLOCR. This seven-character marking provides a description of the Product Month Designator, MASS/*FASTforward* System Identifier, postage payment method, and the rate of postage affixed for metered and precanceled stamp mail or other postage information for permit imprint mail.

2.2 Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail Markings

2.2.1 Basic Markings

The basic required Package Services subclass marking—“Bound Printed Matter” or “BPM,” “Media Mail,” or “Library Mail”—must be printed on each piece claimed at the respective rate. The basic required marking must be placed in the postage area (i.e., printed or produced as part of, or directly below or to the left of, the permit imprint indicia or meter stamp or impression). Optionally, the basic required marking may be printed on the shipping address label as service indicators composed of a service icon and service banner (see Exhibit 2.2.1, *Package Services Indicator Examples*):

a. The service icon that will identify all Package Services subclasses will be a 1-inch solid black square. If the service icon is used, it must appear in the upper left corner of the shipping label.

b. The service banner must appear directly below the postage payment area and the service icon, and it must extend across the shipping label. If the service banner is used, the appropriate subclass marking (e.g.,"BOUND PRINTED MATTER," "MEDIA MAIL") must be preceded by the text "USPS" and must be printed in minimum 20-point bold sans serif typeface, uppercase letters, centered within the banner, and bordered above and below by minimum 1-point separator lines. There must be a 1/16-inch clearance above and below the text.

Exhibit 2.2.1 Package Services Indicator Examples

2.2.2 Bound Printed Matter Markings

In addition to the basic marking "Bound Printed Matter" or "BPM," each piece of Bound Printed Matter mailed at a presorted or carrier route rate must bear additional rate markings. The additional markings may be placed in the postage area as specified in 2.2.1, *Basic Markings*. Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under 708.7.0 or postal carrier route bundle information under 708.6.0. The additional rate markings are:

a. For Presorted rate mail, the additional required marking is "Presorted" (or "PRSRT"). For presorted flats claiming the barcode discount prepared under 365.7.0, the optional marking "AUTO" may be used in place of "Presorted" (or "PRSRT"). If the "AUTO" marking is not used, the automation rate flats must bear the "Presorted" (or "PRSRT") rate marking.

b. For carrier route rate mail, the additional required marking is "Carrier Route Presort" (or "CAR-RT SORT").

2.2.3 Media Mail Markings

Each piece of Media Mail mailed at a presorted rate must bear the required marking "Presorted" or "PRSRT" in addition to the basic marking "Media Mail." This additional marking may be placed in the postage area as specified in 2.2.1, *Basic Markings*. Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under 708.7.0.

2.2.4 Library Mail Markings

Each piece of Library Mail mailed at a presorted rate must bear the required marking "Presorted" or "PRSRT" in addition to the basic marking "Library Mail." This additional marking may be placed in the postage area as specified in 2.2.1, *Basic Markings*. Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under 708.7.0.

2.3 Enclosures

Enclosures, attachments, and mixed rate mailpieces must be marked under the applicable standards in 703.9.0, *Mixed Classes*, and 705.16.0, *Express Mail Open and Distribute and Priority Mail Open and Distribute*.

2.4 Printing and Designs

Required markings may be printed by a postage meter or other means that ensures a legible marking. A marking may not include or be part of a decorative design or advertisement.

2.5 Marking Hazardous Materials

All mailable hazardous materials must be labeled and/or marked as required in 601.10.0, *Hazardous Materials*.

3.0 Endorsement Placement

3.1 Endorsements for Delivery Instructions and Ancillary Services

The mailer must place the correct endorsement on each mailpiece to provide delivery instructions (retention period under 507.3.4.4, or carrier release under 508.1.2) or to request an ancillary service (forwarding, return, or address correction under 507.1.0), subject to the corresponding standards for use and availability.

3.2 Return Address

When an ancillary service endorsement is used, a domestic return address must be placed in the upper left corner of the address side of the mailpiece or the upper left corner of the addressing area. If the return address is a multiple delivery address, it must show a unit designator (e.g., an apartment number).

3.3 Placement of Endorsements

Placement of the endorsement on the mailpiece is determined as follows:

a. The carrier release endorsement must be placed directly below the return address. If any other endorsement is used, the carrier release endorsement must be separated by the equivalent of one blank line of the type size used.

b. A retention period specified by the mailer must be placed directly above the return address.

c. Any ancillary service endorsement (e.g., Address Service Requested, Forwarding Service Requested, Return Service Requested, Change Service Requested) must be placed in one of these four positions:

1. Directly below the return address.
2. Directly above the delivery address area (which includes the delivery address block and any related nonaddress elements such as a barcode, keyline, or optional endorsement line).
3. Directly to the left of the postage area and below or to the left of any rate marking.
4. Directly below the postage area and below any rate marking.

3.4 Physical Standards for Endorsements

The endorsement, or, if combined, endorsements, must meet these physical standards:

a. The type size of the endorsement must be at least 8 points.

b. The read direction of the endorsement and return address must be the same as the read direction of the delivery address.

c. The color contrast between the endorsement and the mailpiece background must be kept at a reasonable degree. A brilliant colored background or reverse printing is not permitted.

d. A clear space of at least 1/4 inch around (above, below, and both sides) the total area containing the endorsement(s) is required. This 1/4-inch clear space is not required for an endorsement that is applied with a multiline optical character reader (MLOCR) inkjet and placed in the location directly below the postage area and any rate marking if the endorsement is clear and legible.

4.0 Barcode Placement

4.1 General Barcode Placement for Flats

On any flat-size piece claimed at automation rates, the piece may bear one POSTNET barcode under 4.2 or may bear two POSTNET barcodes under 4.3. Other mailer-applied non-POSTNET barcodes may appear on the address side of the piece if the barcode format is not detectable or confusing to automated postal equipment.

4.2 Applying One Barcode

On any flat-size mailpiece claimed at an automation rate, the barcode may be anywhere on the address side as long as it is at least 1/8 inch from any edge of the piece. For UFSM 1000 mailpieces, the preferred location of the barcode is at least

2 inches from the edge of the dimension that is the length for that type of automation piece (the longest edge or, for pieces with a folded or bound edge, the folded or bound edge). The portion of the surface of the piece on which the barcode is printed must meet the barcode dimensions and spacing requirements in 708.4.2.5, and the reflectance standards in 708.4.4. Address block barcodes are subject to the standards in 4.6a. through 4.6e.

4.3 Applying Second Barcode

At the mailer's option, a second POSTNET barcode may be applied to the piece only if the first POSTNET barcode on the piece is an address block barcode prepared under 4.2, that is not CASS-certified. In addition, the second barcode must meet the following requirements:

a. It must be a delivery point barcode (DPBC).

b. The preferred placement is the lower right corner of the mailpiece parallel to and in the same direction as the delivery address.

c. It must be placed at least 1 inch below the return address.

d. The space between the two POSTNET barcodes must be greater than 1 inch.

4.4 5-Digit and ZIP+4 Barcode Permissibility

The ZIP+4 barcode may appear in the address block when printed on an insert that appears through a window or on an address label affixed directly to the piece; or it may appear in the lower right corner either printed directly on the mailpiece or on an insert that appears through a window. An automation rate flat-size piece must not bear a 5-digit barcode.

4.5 DPBC Numeric Equivalent

In delivery point barcoded automation rate mailings only, the numbers corresponding to the POSTNET bars in a correct delivery point barcode (DPBC) may appear in the delivery address. If read from left to right, a correct DPBC numeric equivalent consists of five digits, a hyphen, and seven digits.

4.6 Barcode in Address Block

When the barcode is included as part of the address block:

a. The barcode must be placed in one of these positions:

   1. Above the address line containing the recipient's name.

   2. Below the city, state, and ZIP Code line.

   3. Above or below the keyline information.

   4. Above or below the optional endorsement line.

b. The printing of the barcode is prohibited anywhere between the address line containing the recipient's name and the city, state, and ZIP Code line.

c. The minimum clearance between the barcode and any information line above or below it within the address block must be at least 1/25 inch, and the separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 5/8 inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any adjacent printing must be at least 1/8 inch.

d. If a window envelope is used, the clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing or window edge must be at least 1/8 inch, and the clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom window edges must be at least 1/25 inch. These clearances must be maintained during the insert's range of movement in the envelope. Covers for address block windows are subject to 4.7.

e. If an address label is used, a clear space of at least 1/8 inch must be left between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label, and the clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom edges of the address label must be at least 1/25 inch.

4.7 Window Cover

The window cover must be of a nontinted clear or transparent material (e.g., cellophane or polystyrene) that permits the barcode and its background, as viewed through the window material, to meet the reflectance standards in 708.4.4. The edges of the window cover must be securely glued to the envelope.