# 202 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. A return address is required in specific circumstances (see 4.2 and 602.1.5 for more information about return addresses). 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 Address Placement

### 2.1 Address Placement Causing Mail to be Nonmailable and Nonmachinable

The location of the delivery address on a letter-size mailpiece determines which dimensions are the length and height of the piece. The *length* is the dimension parallel to the address as read; the *height* is the dimension perpendicular to the length. Consequently, the placement of the address may render a piece nonmailable or nonmachinable. On a letter-size piece, the recommended address placement is within the optical character reader (OCR) read area, which is a space on the address side of the mailpiece defined by these boundaries (see Exhibit 2.1, *OCR Read Area*):

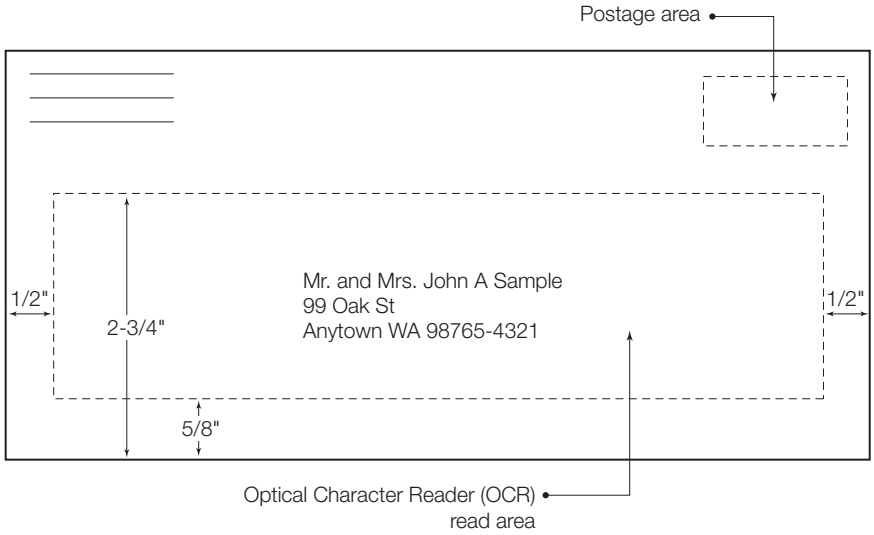
a. Left: 1/2 inch from the left edge of the piece.

b. Right: 1/2 inch from the right edge of the piece.

c. Top: 2-3/4 inches from the bottom edge of the piece.

d. Bottom: 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.

**Exhibit 2.1 OCR Read Area**




## 3.0 Placement and Content of Mail Markings

### 3.1 Enclosures

Enclosures, attachments, and mixed price mailpieces must be marked under the applicable standards in 703.9.0, *Mixed Classes*.

### 3.2 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.

### 3.3 Placement of Mail Markings

Markings must be placed as follows:

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 price-specific markings "AUTO," "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 3.3a.

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 bundle information under 708.6.0.

3. If preceded by two asterisks (**), the "AUTO," "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. Alternatively, the "AUTO," "PRSRT," or "SNGLP" marking may be placed to the left of the barcode clear zone (subject to the standards in 5.0, *Barcode Placement*) on letter-size pieces.

c. Additional Requirements for Carrier Route. "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, as specified in 3.3b. Pieces not mailed at ECR prices must not bear these markings.

### 3.4 Exceptions to Markings

Exceptions are as follows:

a. Automation Letters. First-Class Mail and Standard Mail letters do not require an "AUTO" marking if they bear a DPBC or an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code in the address block or on an insert visible through a window. First-Class Mail letters not marked "AUTO" must bear both the "Presorted" or "PRSRT" and "First-Class" markings. Standard Mail letters not marked "AUTO" must bear the appropriate basic marking in 3.3a.

b. Manifest Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in 3.3a. The two-letter price category code required in the keyline on manifest mailing pieces prepared under 705.2.0, *Manifest Mailing System*, meets the requirement for other price markings.

c. MLOCR Prepared Automation Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in 3.3a. The other "AUTO" marking described in 3.3b must be replaced by the appropriate identifier/price code marking described in 705.5.0, *First-Class Mail or Standard Mail Mailings With Different Payment Methods*, 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 price of postage affixed for metered and precanceled stamp mail or other postage information for permit imprint mail.

### 3.5 Marking Hazardous Materials

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

# 4.0 Placement and Physical Standards for Endorsements

**4.1 Endorsements for Delivery Instructions and Ancillary Services**

The mailer must place the correct endorsement on each mailpiece to provide delivery instructions (retention period under 507.4.4.4 or carrier release under 508.1.2) or to request an ancillary service (forwarding, return, or address correction under 507.1.0, *Treatment of Mail*), subject to the corresponding standards for use and availability.

**4.2 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).

**4.3 Placement of Endorsement**

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 price marking.
4. Directly below the postage area and below any price marking.

**4.4 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 price marking if the endorsement is clear and legible.

## 5.0 Barcode Placement

### 5.1 Barcode Clear Zone

Each letter-size piece in an automation price or an Enhanced Carrier Route price mailing must have a barcode clear zone unless the piece bears a POSTNET or an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code (see 708.4.3) in the address block. The barcode clear zone and all printing and material in the clear zone must meet the reflectance standards in 708.4.4. The barcode clear zone is a rectangular area in the lower right corner of the address side of cards and letter-size pieces defined by these boundaries:

a. Left: 4-3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.

b. Right: right edge of the piece.

c. Top: 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.

d. Bottom: bottom edge of the piece.

### 5.2 General Barcode Placement for Letters

[11-8-07] Automation price letters and letters claimed at an Enhanced Carrier Route saturation or high density price may bear a POSTNET or an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code (see 708.4.0). Mailers must print the barcode either in the address block or in the barcode clear zone, except for pieces that weigh more than 3 ounces which must include the barcode in the address block. See 5.6 when placing barcodes in the address block.

Except as noted in 5.4, *5-Digit Barcode Placement in Clear Zone*, for 5-digit barcodes, if the barcode is printed directly on the mailpiece in the lower right corner, the entire barcode must be within the barcode read area defined by these limits:

a. Horizontally, the leftmost bar must be between 3-1/2 inches and 4-1/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.

b. Vertically, the barcode must be within the area between 3/16 inch and 7/16 inch from the bottom edge of the piece; the bottom of the bars must be 1/4 inch ±1/16 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.

### 5.3 5-Digit and ZIP+4 Barcode Permissibility

An automation price letter-size piece may not bear a 5-digit or ZIP+4 barcode in the lower right corner (barcode clear zone). The piece may bear a 5-digit or ZIP+4 barcode in the address block only if a POSTNET or an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code appears in the lower right corner. 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.

**5.4 5-Digit Barcode Placement in Clear Zone**

Any 5-digit barcode must be located as specified in 5.3, except that, if placed in the barcode clear zone, the leftmost bar of the barcode must be between 4-1/8 and 4-1/4 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece.

**5.5 DPBC Numeric Equivalent**

In delivery point barcoded automation price 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.

**5.6 Barcode in Address Block**

[11-8-07] 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 0.040 (1/25) inch for POSTNET barcodes or 0.028 inch for Intelligent Mail barcodes. The separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 0.625 (5/8) inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any adjacent printing must be at least 0.125 (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 0.125 (1/8) inch. The clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom window edges must be at least 0.040 (1/25) inch for POSTNET barcodes or 0.028 inch for Intelligent Mail barcodes. These clearances must be maintained during the insert's range of movement in the envelope. Address block windows on heavy letter mail (as defined in 5.2, *General Barcode Placement for Letters*) *must* be covered; such windows *may* be covered on other mail. Covers for address block windows are subject to 5.10.

e. If an address label is used, a clear space of at least 0.125 (1/8) inch must be left between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label. The clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom edges of the address label must be at least 0.040 inch for POSTNET barcodes or 0.028 inch for Intelligent Mail barcodes.

f. The rightmost bar must be at least 1/2 inch from the right edge of the mailpiece, and the leftmost bar must be less than 10-1/2 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece and at least 1/2 inch from the left edge of the mailpiece;

the top of each bar must be less than 4 inches from the bottom edge of the mailpiece; and the bottom line of the address block, including the barcode, must be at least 5/8 inch from the bottom of the mailpiece.

**5.7 Barcode on Insert**

[11-8-07] If the barcode is printed on an insert to appear through a window in the lower right corner of an envelope:

a. The envelope and window must meet the physical standards in 5.8 through 5.10 in *Barcode Placement*.

b. The entire barcode must be within the barcode clear zone (but need not be completely within the barcode read area).

c. When the insert showing through the window is moved to any of its limits inside the envelope, the entire barcode must remain within the barcode clear zone. In addition, a clear space must be maintained that is at least 0.125 (1/8) inch between the barcode and the left and right edges of the window, at least 0.1875 (3/16) inch between the barcode and the bottom edge of the mailpiece, and at least 0.040 (1/25) inch between the barcode and the top edge of the window for POSTNET barcodes or 0.028 inch for Intelligent Mail barcodes.

**5.8 Edges of Barcode Window**

The edges of the barcode window must meet these criteria:

a. Left: at least 4-3/4 inches from the right edge of the envelope.

b. Right: at least 1/4 inch from the right edge of the envelope.

c. Top: at least 5/8 inch from the bottom of the envelope.

d. Bottom: form part of the bottom edge of the envelope.

**5.9 Window Construction**

A barcode window must extend fully to the bottom edge of the envelope, must be of wraparound construction, and must be covered subject to 5.10.

**5.10 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.