255 Mail Preparation

Overview

1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation
2.0 Sacks
3.0 Sack Labels
4.0 Preparing Destination Entry Parcel Select
5.0 Preparing NDC Presort and ONDC Presort Parcel Select
6.0 Preparing Machinable Parcels
7.0 Preparing Parcel Select Lightweight

1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation

1.1 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] All mailings at Parcel Select prices are subject to these general standards:

a. Each mailing must meet the applicable standards in 201, 202, 253, 255, and 256.

b. All pieces that are palletized must be prepared under 705.8.0.

1.2 Definition of Presort Process

[6-2-14] Presort is the process by which a mailer prepares mail so that it is sorted to at least the finest extent required for the price claimed. Generally, presort is performed sequentially, from the lowest (finest) level to the highest level, to destinations specified by standard and is completed at each level before the next level is prepared. Not all presort levels are applicable in all situations.

1.3 Definition of Mailings

[6-2-14] A mailing is a group of pieces within the same class of mail and, within the same processing category that may be sorted together and/or presented under a single minimum volume mailing.

1.4 Terms for Presort Level

[6-2-14] Terms used for presort levels are defined as follows:

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

b. *5-digit scheme (pallets and sacks)*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 5-digit ZIP Code zones processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in L606.

c. *ASF/NDC*: all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same auxiliary service facility (ASF) or network distribution center (NDC) (see L601, L602, or L605).

d. *Mixed [NDC, etc.]*: the pieces are for delivery in the service area of more than one NDC, etc.

1.5 Preparation Definitions and Instructions

[6-2-14] 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 sack* is defined in the standards for the class and price claimed.

c. A *5-digit scheme* sort for parcels yields 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in L606, and 5-digit sacks or pallets for other ZIP Codes. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume (if required), with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Sacks or pallets 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 always optional, including when 5-digit sortation is required for price eligibility. The 5-digit scheme sort need not be used for all possible 5-digit scheme sorts.

d. The *required at* [quantity] instruction (e.g., “required at 7 pieces”) means that the particular unit must be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Containers may contain more than the specified required at quantity up to the applicable maximum physical size. Subject to applicable price 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 price.

e. 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. 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 price eligibility standards. Standards for quantities with which preparation is optional are often followed by standards for larger quantities with which preparation is required.

f. *Entry [facility] (or origin [facility])* refers to the USPS mail processing facility (e.g., “entry NDC”) 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 NDC includes subordinate ASFs unless otherwise specified.

g. An *overflow sack* for Parcel Select DSCF mail is a 5-digit scheme or 5-digit sack prepared with fewer than seven pieces after all other sacks for that same 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code area are prepared with seven or more pieces per sack as required by 4.2. If all of the mail is sacked under 4.0, only one overflow sack is permitted for each 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code. If a mailing is prepared on pallets, remaining pieces of Parcel Select mail may be prepared in one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit overflow sacks only after one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallets are prepared to meet the minimum pallet requirement specified in 705.8.0. Pieces in overflow sacks qualify for the Parcel Select DSCF prices.

h. An overflow pallet in a Parcel Select DSCF mailing is a 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallet containing pieces that remain after one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallets have been prepared to meet the minimum pallet requirement specified in 705.8.0. Only one overflow pallet per 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code area is permitted for Parcel Select DSCF mail palletized under 705.8.0. Pieces on overflow pallets qualify for the DNDC rates

i. 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 (sack or pallet) due to applicable preparation requirements or the size of the individual pieces.

1.6 Separation

[6-2-14] Except for mail entered at DSCF or DDU prices (which are not zoned prices), Parcel Select pieces must be separated by zones when presented for acceptance unless either the correct postage is affixed to each piece or the mailing is prepared under 1.7, or the mailing is presented under a special postage payment system under 705.2.0, *Manifest Mailing System*, 705.3.0, *Optional Procedure Mailing System*, or 705.4.0, *Alternate Mailing System*. If DSCF sacks prepared under 4.2.3 are included in the same mailing as DSCF pallets prepared under 705.8.20.1e., then at the time of acceptance the mailer must separate the sacks that are overflow from palletized mail from those sacks that were prepared under the provisions of 4.2.

1.7 Commingled Zones

[6-2-14] Zoned Parcel Select pieces need not be separated by zones when presented for verification, other than as individual pieces or with full correct postage affixed to each piece, subject to this section. Nonidentical-weight pieces not bearing the full correct postage may not be commingled unless authorized by the BMS manager. The mail must be prepared and documented under either of the following:

a. 705.2.0, or 705.4.0; or

b. All of these conditions:

1. A unique number is assigned to each sack/pallet in the mailing and printed on a separate line at the top of the sack/pallet label (above the Line 1 information).

2. A detailed list accompanies each mailing or mailing segment, sequenced numerically by the numbers assigned to sacks/pallets in the mailing, that shows the Post Office where the mail is to be entered (entry Post Office), a unique identifier for the mailing or mailing segment that also appears on the corresponding postage statement(s), the name and address of the mailer, the permit number (if applicable), the date of mailing, individual line entries for each sack/pallet, and the total number of pieces to each zone and in the entire mailing or mailing segment. Line entries for sacks/pallets containing mail for only one zone must show the sack/pallet number, the sortation level, the zone for which the mail is destined, and the total number of pieces for the sack/pallet. Entries for sacks/pallets containing mail for more than one zone must also show (by zone) the number of pieces to each 3-digit ZIP Code area and the total number of pieces for

that zone for the sack/pallet. Mailings are not accepted if there are discrepancies between the information in the detailed listing or on the postage statement and the results of USPS random verification of piece counts and postage.

1.8 Parcel Select Markings

[6-2-14] Each piece in a Parcel Select mailing must bear a price marking. Markings must appear in either the postage area described in 202.3.7, or in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone (when no other information appears on that line). The "Standard Post" marking is not allowed on any Parcel Select mailpiece. The following product markings are required:

a. Destination Entry — "Parcel Select".

b. NDC Presort — "Parcel Select NDC Presort" or "Parcel Select NDC PRSRT"

c. ONDC Presort — "Parcel Select ONDC Presort" or "Parcel Select ONDC PRSRT".

d. Nonpresort — "Parcel Select Nonpresort" or "Parcel Select NPS".

e. Lightweight — "Parcel Select Lightweight" or "PS Lightweight".

2.0 Sacks

[6-2-14] See 203.5.0 for sack standards.

3.0 Sack Labels

[6-2-14] Sack labels are subject to the standards in 203.5.0.

4.0 Preparing Destination Entry Parcel Select

4.1 Preparing Destination Delivery Unit (DDU) Parcel Select

4.1.1 Definition

[6-2-14] A destination delivery unit (DDU) is a facility that delivers to the addresses appearing on the deposited pieces in a destination entry Parcel Select mailing. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product maintained by the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) (see 608.8.1 for address) to determine the location of a 5-digit delivery facility. Use L606 only for mailings prepared using the optional 5-digit scheme sort.

4.1.2 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.

b. Pieces must be entered by the mailer at the postal facility where the carrier delivers the parcels (delivery unit) as defined in 253.4.1.1.

c. If the delivery unit serves more than one 5-digit ZIP Code, the pieces must be separated by 5-digit ZIP Code when unloaded, unless prepared as optional 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available from the National Customer Support Center (see 608.8.1) to determine the location of the delivery unit, whether it serves more than one 5-digit ZIP Code, and whether it can handle pallets.

4.1.3 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] There are no minimum sacking or pallet preparation standards. DDU pieces may be bedloaded, sacked, placed directly on pallets, or placed in pallet boxes on pallets. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces may be combined in the same sack or on the same pallet (including pallet boxes on pallets).
Sacked mail must be labeled as follows:

a. 5-digit scheme: Line 1, L606; Line 2, "PSVC PARCELS 5D SCH."

b. 5-digit: Line 1, city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 203.4.11 for overseas military mail); Line c. "PSVC PARCELS 5D."

4.2 Preparing Destination SCF (DSCF) Parcel Select

4.2.1 Definition

[6-2-14] A destination sectional center facility (DSCF) includes all facilities in L005. Mailers may be redirected to deposit DSCF mail at another USPS-designated facility.

4.2.2 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.

b. DSCF pieces must be for the same SCF area under L005.

c. Sorted to optional 5-digit scheme destinations under L606, Column B, and 5-digit destinations, either in sacks or directly on pallets or in pallet boxes. Mailers must enter the pieces at the designated SCF, under L605, that serves the 5-digit ZIP Code destinations of the pieces. The DSCF price is not available for palletized mail for facilities that are unable to handle palletized mailings. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available from the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) (see 608.8.1) to determine if the facility serving the 5-digit destination can handle pallets.

d. Any remaining nonmachinable parcels (as defined in 401.2.5.2) sorted to 3-digit ZIP Code prefixes in L002, Column C. Machinable parcels may not be sorted to the 3-digit level.

4.2.3 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] Sacking requirements for DSCF entry:

a. Only 5-digit scheme and 5-digit sacks are permitted.

b. Each 5-digit scheme and 5-digit sack must contain a minimum of seven pieces. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces may be combined in the same sack to meet this requirement. One overflow sack per 5-digit ZIP Code is permitted (no piece minimum).

c. 5-digit scheme sack labeling: Line 1, use L606, Column B; for Line 2, "PSVC PARCELS 5D SCH."

d. 5-digit sack labeling: Line 1, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 203.4.11 for overseas military mail); for Line 2, "PSVC PARCELS 5D."

e. 3-digit nonmachinable sack labeling: Line 1, use L002, Column A; for Line 2, "PSVC IRREG 3D."

f. See 705.8.0 for option to place 5-digit scheme and 5-digit DSCF sacks and 3-digit nonmachinable sacks on an SCF pallet.

4.3 Preparing Destination NDC (DNDC) Parcel Select

4.3.1 Definition

[6-2-14] A destination network distribution center (DNDC) includes all network distribution centers (NDCs) and auxiliary service facilities (ASFs) under L601 and L602, and designated sectional center facilities (SCFs) under 256.2.17.

4.3.2 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.

b. Pieces must be part of a Parcel Select mailing that is deposited at a NDC or ASF under L601 or L602.

c. Except as provided in L601 and L602, pieces deposited at each NDC or ASF must be addressed for delivery within the ZIP Code range of that facility.

d. Pieces must be within a ZIP Code eligible for DNDC prices as noted in L601 and L602 and, if sacked or palletized, must be prepared according to 4.0, and 705.8.0. Mail meeting the additional criteria in 256.2.16 or 256.2.17 may be deposited at an SCF.

4.3.3 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] DNDC mailing (if not bedloaded), must be prepared as follows:

a. DNDC machinable parcels must be sacked under 6.0 or prepared on pallets under 705.8.0.

b. DNDC nonmachinable parcels that each weigh 35 pounds or less must be sacked under 6.0, if the parcels do not contain perishables and the size of the parcels allows a sack to hold at least two pieces. DNDC nonmachinable parcels that cannot be sacked in this manner or that weigh more than 35 pounds must be transported as outside (unsacked) pieces. If authorized in advance by the USPS, DNDC nonmachinable parcels may be palletized.

5.0 Preparing NDC Presort and ONDC Presort Parcel Select

5.1 Definitions

[6-2-14] The following definitions apply:

a. NDC Presort - are pieces sorted to NDC destinations using L601 if machinable and or NDC/ASF destinations using L605 if nonmachinable, entered at any facility (other than a NDC) that accepts bulk mail.

b. ONDC Presort - are piece sorted to NDC destinations using L601 if machinable or NDC/ASF destinations using L605 if nonmachinable, entered at a NDC listed in L601

5.2 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.

b. Machinable pieces must be placed in pallet boxes on pallets, and nonmachinable pieces must be placed directly on pallets under 705.8.0.

6.0 Preparing Machinable Parcels

6.1 Definition

[6-2-14] Parcel Select machinable parcels must meet the physical standards in 201.7.5.

6.2 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces, except there is no minimum volume for nonpresorted parcels when postage is paid using PC Postage.

b. Each piece must be machinable and bear a barcode.

6.3 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] Sacking is not required, however mailers may opt to prepare Parcel Select machinable parcels in sacks under 2.0 or on pallets under 705.8.0. Pieces must be separated by zones when presented to the USPS unless either the correct postage is affixed to each piece or the mailing is prepared under 1.7 .

6.3.1 Sack Preparation

[6-2-14] Sack size, preparation sequence, and Line 1 labeling:

a. 5-digit scheme: optional (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use L606, Column B.

b. 5-digit: required (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use city, state and 5-digit ZIP Code destination of pieces (see 3.0. for military mail).

c. ASF: optional; allowed only for mail deposited at an ASF to claim the DNDC price (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use L602, Column B.

d. NDC: required (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use L601, Column B.

e. Mixed NDC: required (no minimum); for Line 1, use “MXD” followed by the L601, Column B information for the NDC serving the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix of the entry Post Office.

6.3.2 Sack Line 2

[6-2-14] Line 2:

a. 5-digit scheme: “PSVC MACH 5D SCHEME” or “PSVC MACH 5D SCH.”

b. 5-digit: “PSVC MACH 5D.”

c. ASF: “PSVC MACH ASF.”

d. NDC: “PSVC MACH NDC.”

e. Mixed NDC: “PSVC MACH WKG.”

7.0 Preparing Parcel Select Lightweight

7.1 Basic Standards

[6-2-14] All mailings and all pieces in each mailing at Parcel Select Lightweight machinable and irregular prices are subject to the specific preparation standards in 7.2 and 7.3, and to these general standards:

a. All pieces must meet the standards for basic eligibility in 253.4.4.1.

b. Pieces in each mailing must be all machinable parcels or all irregular parcels as defined in 201.7.0 , unless prepared under 7.2.1.

c. All mailings must meet the applicable general preparation standards in 1.0 through 4.0, and labeling standards in 708.6.0.

d. All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in 7.0 or the palletization standards in 705.8.0.

e. Sortation determines price eligibility under in 253.4.4.2 through 253.4.4.4.

7.2 Preparing Machinable Parcels

7.2.1 Sacking

[6-2-14] Mailers may prepare 5-digit sacks only for parcels that will be dropshipped to a DNDC (or ASF when claiming DNDC prices), DSCF, or DDU. Mailers may prepare ASF or NDC sacks only for parcels that will be dropshipped to a DNDC (or ASF when claiming DNDC prices). There is no minimum for parcels prepared in 5-digit/scheme sacks entered at a DDU. Mailers choosing to combine the preparation of irregular parcels with machinable parcels placed in 5-digit/scheme sacks must prepare those sacks under 7.2.2a.

7.2.2 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

a. *5-digit/scheme* (optional, but required for 5-digit price), see definition in 1.4.; allowed only for mail deposited at DNDC (or ASF when claiming DNDC prices), DSCF, or DDU. Sacks must contain a 10-pound minimum except at DDU entry which has no minimum; labeling:

   1. Line 1: For 5-digit scheme sacks, use L606, Column B. For 5-digit sacks, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code destination on pieces (see 203.4.11 for overseas military mail).

2. Line 2: For 5-digit scheme sacks, "PSLW MACH 5D SCH." For 5-digit sacks, "PSLW MACH 5D."

b. *ASF* (optional), allowed only for mail deposited at an ASF to claim DNDC price; 10-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L602, Column B.
2. Line 2: "PSLW MACH ASF."

c. *NDC*, allowed only for mail deposited at a DNDC to claim the NDC price; 10-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L601, Column B.
2. Line 2: "PSLW MACH NDC."

d. *Origin NDC* (required); no minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L601, Column B.
2. Line 2: "PSLW MACH NDC."

e. *Mixed NDC* (required); no minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: "MXD" followed by L601, Column B information for NDC serving 3-digit ZIP Code prefix of entry Post Office.
2. Line 2: "PSLW MACH WKG."

7.3 Preparing Irregular Parcels

7.3.1 Sacking

[6-2-14] Mailers may prepare 5-digit sacks only for parcels that will be dropshipped to a DNDC (or ASF when claiming DNDC prices), DSCF, or DDU. See 7.3.3 for restrictions on SCF, ASF, and NDC sacks. Mailers must prepare a sack when the quantities of mail for a required presort destination reaches 10 pounds of pieces. There is no minimum for parcels prepared in 5-digit/scheme sacks entered at a DDU. Mailers combining irregular parcels with machinable parcels in 5-digit/scheme sacks must prepare those sacks under 7.2.2a. Mailers may not prepare sacks containing irregular and machinable parcels to other presort levels.

7.3.2 Drop Shipment

[6-2-14] A mailer using Priority Mail or Priority Mail Express Open and Distribute to dropship Parcel Select Lightweight irregular parcels may prepare sacks containing fewer than 125 pieces or less than 15 pounds of mail.

7.3.3 Sacking and Labeling

[6-2-14] Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

a. 5-digit/scheme (optional, but required for 5-digit price), see definition in 1.4; allowed only for mail deposited at DNDC (or ASF when claiming DNDC prices), DSCF, or DDU. Sacks must contain a 10-pound minimum except at DDU entry which has no minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: For 5-digit scheme sacks, use L606, Column B. For 5-digit sacks, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code destination on pieces (see 203.4.11 for overseas military mail).

2. Line 2: For 5-digit scheme sacks, “PSLW IRREG 5D SCH.” For 5-digit sacks, “PSLW IRREG 5D.”

b. SCF, allowed only for mail deposited at a DSCF or a DNDC to claim SCF price; 10-pound minimum; labeling:

1. For Line 1, L002, Column C.
2. For Line 2, “PSLW IRREG SCF.”

c. ASF (optional), allowed only for mail deposited at an ASF to claim DNDC price; 10-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L602, Column B.
2. Line 2: “PSLW IRREG ASF.”

d. NDC, allowed only for mail deposited at a DNDC to claim the NDC price; 10-pound minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L601, Column B.
2. Line 2: “PSLW IRREG NDC.”

e. Origin NDC (required); no minimum; labeling:

1. Line 1: L601, Column B.
2. Line 2: “PSLW IRREG NDC.”

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

1. Line 1: “MXD” followed by L601, Column B information for NDC serving 3-digit ZIP Code prefix of entry Post Office.
2. Line 2: “PSLW IRREG WKG.”