



203 Basic Postage Statement, Documentation, and Preparation Standards

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1.0 Postage Statements

1.1 Completing Postage Statements

Unless manifested using eVS under [705.2.9](#), any mailing claiming a discount and all permit imprint mailings must be accompanied by a postage statement completed and signed by the mailer (in duplicate if the mailer wants a receipted copy). A change made to any postage statement requires the mailer (agent) to correct the postage statement accordingly and document the correction.

1.2 Reporting Multiple Mailings on One Statement

Each group of pieces prepared as a separate mailing must be presented with a postage statement using the correct USPS form for the particular class, price, and postage payment method. A mailer may report more than one mailing from a single job on the same postage statement if the mailings are presented at the same time for verification, the pieces are in the same processing category, each mailing separately meets all applicable eligibility standards, and the number of pieces in each mailing is separately reported on the postage statement.

1.3 Facsimile Postage Statements

Facsimile postage statements must contain data and elements in locations as close as possible to where they appear on the USPS form. Data fields that do not pertain to information and prices claimed in the mailing and other extraneous information that appears on the USPS form do not have to be included. Facsimiles must include all other information pertaining to the mailing, including the class of mail (or subclass as appropriate), postage payment method (e.g., permit imprint), and four-digit form number (hyphen and suffix optional). All parts, and line numbers within each part, must reflect those on the USPS form. In some cases, this can include fields from multiple USPS forms onto a single facsimile. Most importantly, the facsimile must fully and exactly reproduce the “Certification” and “USPS Use Only” fields that appear on the USPS form. A facsimile postage statement produced by software certified by the USPS Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) or Manifest Analysis and Certification (MAC) program is considered a USPS-approved form for these standards. Others forms may be approved by the entry office postmaster. Periodicals mailers authorized centralized postage payment (CPP) procedures receive approval from the PCSC.



2.0 Documentation

2.1 Basic Documentation Standards

Generally, documentation is required from a mailer when a mailing is presented to the USPS. Supporting documentation (see [708.1.0](#)) of postage is required for each mailing except for eVS mailings under [705.2.9](#), or unless the correct price is affixed to each piece or each piece is of identical weight and the pieces are separated by price and when applicable zone (including separation by In-County and Outside-County prices and destination entry for Periodicals) when presented for acceptance. Unless full postage is affixed, documentation presented with the postage statement must show the computation of the additional postage due for pieces not bearing full postage at the applicable price. Documentation describes the preparation, price levels, and content of the mailing; details the volume and postage data; and, by comparison with the actual mailing it describes, supports the claims contained on the postage statement accompanying the mailing and allows the USPS to verify its accuracy. Documentation must be submitted when specified for the price claimed or postage payment method used.

2.2 Documentation Standards for Automation Mailings

A complete postage statement must accompany each mailing. Each mailing also must be accompanied by presort and price documentation produced by PAVE-certified or MAC-certified software or by standardized documentation. Exception: For mailings of fewer than 10,000 pieces, presort and price documentation is not required if postage at the correct price is affixed to each piece or if each piece is of identical weight and the pieces are separated by price when presented for acceptance. Mailers may use a single postage statement and a single documentation report for all price levels in a single mailing. Mailings prepared under the value added refund procedures or as combined mailings must meet additional standardized documentation requirements under [604.9.0](#), and [705](#).

2.3 Documentation Submission—Full-Service Automation Option

Mailers entering pieces under the full-service automation option must electronically submit postage statements and mailing documentation, including qualification and container reports, to the PostalOne! system as described in [705.23.4.4](#).

2.4 Preparing Documentation

As provided by standard, documentation may be presented in abbreviated form or on computer-readable media. Required documentation must be presented with every mailing unless, by standard, it may be provided to support multiple mailings or mailings that are part of the same job or cycle.

2.5 Multiple Standards

If multiple documentation standards apply to the same mailing, only one set of documentation is necessary if it provides enough information to meet all applicable standards. Redundant or duplicate documentation is not required simply to meet individual standards.

2.6 Standard Format for Documentation

Documentation must be produced by software certified under the Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE) program or the Manifest Analysis and Certification (MAC) program, appropriate for the accompanying class of mail and price claimed,



or the documentation must be prepared as standardized documentation. Standardized documentation contains the elements described in 708.1.0, as applicable. Documentation produced by PAVE-certified or MAC-certified software is considered standardized documentation.

2.7 Providing Additional Information

The postmaster of the office of mailing may require additional information if the documentation submitted does not allow the corresponding mailing to be verified. Failure to provide information is sufficient reason for the USPS to refuse a mailing. The mailer may appeal any determination to the PCSC under [607.2.0](#).

3.0 Bundles

3.1 Definition of a Bundle

Mailers assemble pieces available for different presort destinations into groups. A bundle is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit. The term bundle does not apply to pieces grouped loose in trays.

3.2 Arranging Pieces in a Bundle (“Facing”)

Except as noted in [3.7](#), all pieces in a bundle must be “faced” (arranged with the addresses in the same read direction), with an address visible on the top piece.

3.3 Preparing Bundles of Letters

Cards and letter-size pieces are subject to these bundling standards:

- a. The maximum thickness for bundles of carrier route mail is 4 inches. The maximum thickness for other bundles is 6 inches.
- b. Mailings consisting entirely of card-size pieces (i.e., pieces not larger than 6 by 4-1/4 by 0.016 inches) must always be prepared in bundles.
- c. Bundles must be prepared for: mail in all less-than-full trays, mail in 3-digit carrier routes trays, nonmachinable letters, and nonbarcoded Periodicals letters.
- d. For mailings consisting entirely of card-size pieces and mail in less-than-full trays, mailers must secure bundles with rubber bands, elastic strapping, flat plastic strapping, or string. Elastic strapping must be approved by USPS Engineering.
- e. Bundles of automation or machinable letters are not required to have an optional endorsement line or a bundle label when placed into a correctly labeled tray.
- f. Bundles up to 1 inch thick must be secured with appropriate banding placed once around the girth (narrow dimension). Bundles over 1 inch thick must be secured with at least two bands, one around the length and one around the girth.



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3.4 Exception to Bundle Preparation—Full Trays

In mailings not entirely of card-size pieces, mailers need not prepare bundles when placing mail in a full tray (when applicable for the class and shape of mail) when none of the mail in that tray would have been more finely sorted if bundled. For example, mail in a full ADC tray need not be bundled if it would have all been prepared in ADC bundles to the same destination.

3.5 Securing Bundles of Flats

Bundles must be able to withstand normal transit and handling without breakage or injury to USPS employees, and are subject to the following requirements:

- a. 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.
- b. When one band is used, it must be placed tightly around the girth (narrow dimension).
- c. Bundles over 1 inch high must be secured with at least two bands or with shrinkwrap. When double banding is used to secure bundles, 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.
- d. Banding tension must be sufficient to tighten and depress the edges of the bundle. Loose banding is not allowed.
- e. 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.
- f. Bundles on pallets must be secure and stable, and are subject to [3.9](#) and the specific weight limits in [705.8.0](#).

3.6 Address Visibility for Flats and Parcels

Mailers preparing presort bundles of flats or parcels must ensure that the delivery address information, barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle labels, optional endorsement lines, carrier route information lines, or carrier route facing slips on the top mailpiece in each bundle are visible and remain readable by the naked eye. Mailers can avoid obstructing visibility by using clear, smooth strapping tightly secured around the bundle. Clear strapping with a transparency rated = 52% when tested using ASTM D1746 - 09, Standard Test Method for Transparency of Plastic Sheeting, methods meet readability needs. This standard does not apply to the following:

- a. Customized MarketMail.
- b. Bundles placed in or on 5-digit or 5-digit scheme ([L001](#)) sacks or pallets.
- c. Bundles placed in carrier route and 5-digit carrier routes sacks.
- d. Bundles of mailpieces at carrier route prices entered at a destination delivery unit (DDU).
- e. Bundles of Standard Mail flats prepared in letter trays.



3.7 Counterstacking Flats or Parcels in Bundles

Bundles of pieces of saddle-stitched pieces and pieces with one edge or corner thicker than the others 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. All pieces must 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.
- c. When pieces are nonuniform in thickness because they are thicker in the center instead of along an edge or corner, counter-stacking is not likely to result in a bundle of uniform thickness. Instead of counter-stacking such pieces, limit the height of the bundle to 3 to 6 inches to ensure the bundle will stay together during normal transit and handling.

3.8 Preparing Bundles in Sacks

In addition to the standards in 3.5 through 3.7, mailers must prepare bundles placed in sacks as follows:

- a. The maximum weight for all bundles is 20 pounds.
- b. Measure bundles at the lowest point to determine the bundle height.
- c. Except for multi-carrier routes bundles, a bundle that exceeds the maximum height by less than the thickness of a single piece meets the standard.
- d. Bundles of pieces with covers of “coated stock” (glossy covers) that are not individually enclosed in an envelope or mailing wrapper are subject to these conditions:
 1. Bundles secured with rubber bands, twine, string, or only shrinkwrap must not exceed 3 inches in height.
 2. Bundles secured with shrinkwrap plus plastic straps, or with at least two plastic straps, must not exceed 6 inches in height.
- e. Bundles of pieces with covers of “uncoated stock” are subject to these conditions:
 1. Bundles must not exceed 8 inches in height (recommended maximum height is 6 inches).
 2. “Uncoated stock” refers to nonglossy paper covers and also to pieces with coated covers that are individually enclosed in an envelope, polybag, or mailing wrapper of uncoated stock.

3.9 Preparing Bundles on Pallets

In addition to general bundling standards in 3.1, bundles on pallets must meet the following standards:



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- a. Bundles must be secured with appropriate banding, shrinkwrap, or shrinkwrap supplemented by one or more bands. Banding includes plastic bands (recommended), rubber bands, and twine or similar material.
- b. If only banding is used, banding material must be applied at least once around the length and once around the girth; wire and metal strapping are prohibited. Use tension sufficient to tighten and depress the edges of the bundle so that pieces do not slip out of the banding during transit and processing.

3.10 Additional Standards for Unsacked Bundles Entered at DDU Facilities

Mailers may enter unsacked, nonpalletized bundles of Standard Mail or Bound Printed Matter (BPM) flats or irregular parcels (BPM only) at destination delivery units (DDUs) if all the following conditions are met:

- a. The maximum weight for a bundle is 40 pounds; the maximum number of bundles per carrier route is one bundle for each 10 pounds (or increment) of mail for that route, as follows:
 1. Mailers must make the fewest number of bundles possible, up to the 40-pound maximum, while maintaining bundle integrity. To determine the maximum number of bundles for a route, divide the total weight of mail for that route by 10 and round up to the next whole number.
 2. Mailers may balance the weight of the bundles across the maximum number of bundles. For example, if there are 36 pounds of mail for a carrier route, the maximum number of bundles for that route is four, which may be in four 9-pound bundles.
- b. Mailers must enter bundles at DDUs according to the appropriate deposit and entry standards (for example, [246](#) for Standard Mail flats).

3.11 Pieces with Simplified Address

For mail prepared with a simplified address, pieces 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. Bundles must be secure and stable subject to weight limits in [705.8.0](#) if placed on pallets, and weight and height limits in [3.8](#) if placed in sacks.

3.12 Bundles with Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

A bundle may be prepared with fewer than the minimum number of pieces required without loss of price 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.
- b. The pieces constitute the “last bundle” for a presort destination and previously prepared bundles met the minimum volume standard.

3.13 Labeling Bundles

Unless excepted by standard, the presort level of each bundle must be identified either with an optional endorsement line under [708.7.0](#) or with a barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle label. On letter-size mail, place the bundle label in the lower left corner of the address side of the top piece in the bundle. On flat-size mail,



place the label 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 characters apply to bundle labels as applicable (not all presort levels apply to all classes of mail):

- a. Firm (Periodicals use only), blue Label F.
- b. 5-digit scheme presort level, red Label 5 SCH.
- c. 5-digit presort level, red Label 5.
- d. 3-digit scheme presort level, green Label 3 SCH.
- e. 3-digit presort level, green Label 3.
- f. ADC presort level, pink Label A.
- g. Origin mixed ADC presort level, tan Label X.
- h. Mixed ADC presort level, tan Label X.

3.14 Identifying Carrier Route Information

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 [3.15](#), optional endorsement lines under [708.7.0](#), or carrier route information lines under [708.6.0](#). These standards apply to Carrier Route Periodicals, Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail, and Carrier Route Bound Printed Matter mailings.

3.15 Facing Slips—Carrier Route Bundles

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.

4.0 Letter and Flat Trays

4.1 General Standards

Letter-size mailings must be prepared in letter trays with sleeves. First-Class Mail flat-size mailings must be prepared in flat trays with green lids under [235.7.0](#) and [235.7.0](#), unless prepared in extended managed mail (EMM) trays under [4.7](#). Periodicals flat-size mailings may be prepared in flat trays with green lids under [207.22.7](#) and [207.25.5](#).

- 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.



4.2 Tray Sizes

These approximate measurements define the USPS-provided tray sizes that apply to all letter-size mail preparation standards and the USPS-provided flat tray size that applies to First-Class Mail flats preparation:

- 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.
- d. Flat tray. Inside bottom dimensions: 14-3/4 inches long by 10-3/4 inches wide. Height: 8 inches to bottom of handhold, 11-1/4 inches to top of tray.

4.3 Letter Tray Preparation

[1-25-15] Letter trays are prepared as follows:

- a. Subject to availability of equipment, standard 2-foot MM trays must be used for all letter-size mail, except that EMM trays must be used when available for letter-size mail that exceeds the inside dimensions of MM trays defined in 4.2. When using EMM trays, the 1-foot MM tray may be used in order to minimize the number of letter trays. When EMM trays are not available for those larger pieces, they must be placed in MM trays, angled back, or placed upright perpendicular to the length of the tray in row(s) to preserve their orientation.
- b. Pieces must be “faced” (oriented with all addresses in the same direction with the postage area in the upper right).
- c. Each tray must be filled before filling the next tray, with the contents in multiple trays relatively balanced. When preparing full trays, mailers must fill all possible 2-foot trays first; if there is mail remaining for the presort destination, mailers must use a combination of 1-foot and 2-foot trays that results in the fewest trays for that presort level. As an alternative, if there is mail remaining, mailers may move those pieces to the next higher presort level when the minimum piece quantity has been reached at the next tray level (e.g., 150 pieces) and the standards in 235.6.6 are met.
- d. For presort destinations that do not require full trays, pieces are placed in a less-than-full tray.
- e. Mailers must use as few trays as possible without jeopardizing price eligibility. For instance, a mailer will never have two 1-foot trays to a single destination; instead, that mail must be placed in a single 2-foot tray. A 1-foot tray is prepared only if it is a full tray with no overflow; or if there is less than 1 foot of mail for that destination; or if the overflow from a full 2-foot tray is less than 1 foot of mail.
- f. Each tray must bear the correct tray label.
- g. Each tray must be sleeved and strapped under 4.4, and 4.5.



- h. If a mailing is prepared using an MLOCR/barcode sorter and is submitted with standardized documentation, then pieces do not have to be grouped by 3-digit ZIP Code prefix (or by 3-digit scheme, if applicable) in AADC trays, or by AADC in mixed AADC trays.

4.4 Letter Tray Sleevling and Strapping

Letter trays are secured using USPS-provided sleeves. 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.

4.5 Letter Tray Strapping Exception

Strapping is not required for any letter tray placed on a 5-digit, 3-digit, or SCF pallet secured with stretchwrap. If the processing and distribution manager gives a written waiver, strapping is not required for any mixed AADC letter tray of First-Class Mail or for any letter tray that originates and destines in the same SCF (mail processing plant) service area.

4.6 Use of Flat Trays

4.6.1 General

Flat tray sizes are as follows:

- a. Inside bottom dimensions: 14-3/4 inches long by 10-3/4 inches wide.
- b. Height: 8 inches to bottom of handhold, 11-1/4 inches to top of tray.

4.6.2 Preparation for Flats in Flat Trays

All flat tray preparation is subject to these standards:

- a. Addresses on all pieces must face upward in the same direction.
- b. Pieces must be placed in trays to maintain their orientation. Once the required minimum volume is reached to allow or require preparation of a tray, additional pieces must be placed in the same tray up to its capacity to minimize the number of trays used. When possible, pieces must be placed in two or more stacks to optimize tray use, but mail must not overfill the tray to inhibit adequate closure or covering of the content.
- c. The weight of a tray and its content must not exceed 70 pounds.
- d. Each tray must bear the correct tray label.
- e. Each tray must be covered (with the green side of the lid facing up). Each covered flat tray must then be secured with two straps placed tightly around the width of the tray (the shorter dimension).
- f. For automation price mailings prepared under the optional tray-based preparation rules in [235.8.0](#), one less-than-full overflow tray may be prepared for a presort destination when the total number of pieces for that destination meets the minimum for preparation of the tray level, and when one or more full trays for that destination are also prepared.
- g. For automation price mailings prepared under the optional tray-based preparation rules in [235.8.0](#), if the total number of pieces for a presort destination meets or exceeds the minimum number of pieces required to



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prepare a tray for that destination, but the total volume does not physically fill a single tray, then the mail for that presort destination may be prepared in a less-than-full tray.

- h. Pieces prepared as automation flats under the tray-based preparation option in [235.8.0](#) do not have to be grouped by 3-digit ZIP Code prefix in ADC trays or by ADC in mixed ADC trays if the mailing is prepared using an MLOCR/barcode sorter and standardized documentation is submitted.
- i. When pieces in a Periodicals mailing remain after one or more full trays are prepared for a 5-digit scheme, 5-digit, 3-digit, SCF, or ADC destination, an additional tray to the destination must be prepared if the remaining pieces reach the required volume. If the remaining volume is below the required minimum, the pieces must be moved to the next tray level that meets the minimum volume.

4.7 Preparation for First-Class Mail Flats in EMM Letter Trays

Mailers may prepare First-Class Mail flat-size pieces in EMM letter trays instead of flat trays if the following standards are met:

- a. The pieces must fit completely within the dimensions for height, length, and width specified in [4.2c](#) for an extended managed mail (EMM) letter tray. All pieces must be upright, faced toward the end of the tray (the short dimension), and perpendicular to the length of the tray.
- b. Trays must bear tray-size labels that meet all applicable physical and barcode standards under [235.8.0](#), with Line 1 and Line 2 information as required for flat-size mail in flat trays. Each label must contain a barcode as specified in [708.6.3.3](#) and the content identifier number required in [Exhibit 708.6.2.1](#) for the same type of flat-size mail prepared in flat trays.
- c. All mail must be prepared under [235.8.0](#), and must not be prepared in bundles, except pieces in less-than-full trays must be bundled. Mailers using this option are not eligible to prepare their mail under [705.9.0](#).
- d. All other applicable standards in [235.8.0](#), must be met, including required preparation sequence and use of tray minimums.

4.8 Preparation for Standard Mail 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 prices or Enhanced Carrier Route prices. No more than 10% of the mailing job may be claimed at Presorted prices. The following minimum volumes for Standard Mail must be met:
 - 1. For the portion claimed at automation nonletter prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. For any portion of the job claimed at Presorted prices, no separate minimum is required.
 - 2. For any portion claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met.



- b. Automation price pieces must meet the applicable flat-size dimensions in [201.6.0](#). Presorted and Enhanced Carrier Route pieces must meet the flat-size dimensions in [201.4.0](#).
- c. The pieces must fit completely within the dimensions for height and the bottom (floor) dimensions for length and width specified in [4.2](#) 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 [245.3.0](#), must also be met.
- d. Trays must bear tray-size labels that meet all applicable physical and barcode standards under [4.17](#), with Line 1 and Line 2 information as required for flat-size mail in sacks. Each label must contain a barcode as specified in [708.6.3.3](#) and the content identifier number required in [Exhibit 708.6.2.1](#) for the same type of flat-size mail prepared in sacks.
- e. All mail prepared under [245.8.0](#), [245.9.0](#), or [245.10.0](#), must be bundled except for full 5-digit trays and full carrier route trays. The exception to bundling in [203.3.4](#), may be used for other sort levels. All mail prepared under [705.9.0](#), 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 [705.8.10.3](#), except for mail prepared in trays for Priority Mail or Priority Mail Express drop shipment or for mail prepared and claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route destination delivery unit prices. 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 [245.8.0](#), [245.9.0](#), [245.10.0](#), or [705.9.0](#) must be met, including required preparation sequence and use of sack minimums as tray minimums.

4.9 Tray Labels

Tray labels are subject to these basic standards:

- a. Use 2-inch labels.
- b. Illegible labels are not acceptable. Machine-printed labels (available from the USPS) ensure legibility. Legible hand-printed labels are acceptable.
- c. Tray labels for automation price mailings are subject to [4.17](#), and [708.6.0](#).
- d. Intelligent Mail tray labels are subject to the standards in [708.6.3](#), and to the specifications posted at <http://ribbs.usps.gov>.

4.10 Physical Characteristics of a Tray Label

A tray label must meet these specifications:

- a. Color: white or manila (pink for Periodicals).



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- 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.

4.11 **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 trays and sacks 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 tray.

4.12 **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 tray and other information as specified by standards.
- b. Codes: The codes shown below must be used as appropriate on Line 2 of tray, sack, and pallet 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
First-Class Mail	FCM
First-Class Package Service	
Flats	FLTS
General Delivery Unit	G
Highway Contract Route	H
Irregular Parcels	IRREG
Letters	LTR or LTRS
Machinable	MACH
Marketing Parcels	MKTG
Mixed	MXD
Mixed Machinable and Irregular Parcels	MACH & IRREG
Nonmachinable	MAN or MANUAL
Nonbarcoded	NON BC (sacks) NBC (pallets and cotrayed or cosacked mail under 705.9.0)
Package Services	PSVC
Parcels	PARCELS
Post Office Box Section	B
Periodicals	PER
Periodicals	NEWS*
Rural Route	R
Scheme	SCH
Standard Mail	STD
Working	WKG

* "News" if published weekly or more often or if authorized newspaper treatment as of March 1, 1984.

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

Line 3 (origin line showing office of mailing or mailer information) must be the bottom line of required information unless the sack contains mail manifested using the Electronic Verification System (eVS) under [705.2.9](#). Line 3 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. As an alternative to adding a fourth line for eVS mailings as required by [4.6](#), "eVS" may appear as the first element on Line 3.



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4.14 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.

4.15 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.

4.16 Placement of 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. When 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.

4.17 Barcoded Tray and Sack Labels

Barcoded tray labels must be used for automation-price letter-size mailings, automation-price flat-size mailings, and flat-sized mailings cobundled and cotrayed under [705.9.0](#) through [705.13.0](#). Barcoded labels must meet these general standards:

- a. Use the appropriate size label as described in [4.10](#) and [5.2](#).
- b. Mailer-produced barcoded labels must meet the standards in [708.6.0](#) and to the specifications posted at <http://ribbs.usps.gov>.
- c. All information on barcoded labels must be machine-printed. Alterations to preprinted barcoded labels (e.g., handwritten changes) may not be made.
- d. Mailers must insert barcoded labels completely into the label holder on the tray or sack to prevent their loss during transport and processing.
- e. Intelligent Mail Tray labels must be used on all trays and sacks for mailings entered under the full-service automation option (see [705.23.0](#)).

**Exhibit 4.17 Required Barcoded Container Labels**

PRICE OR TYPE	PROCESSING CATEGORY
Standard Mail	
Automation price	Letter-size
Enhanced Carrier Route	Letter-size (barcoded labels not required for letter-size pieces with simplified addresses or paid at nonletter prices)
Automation	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 245.3.0	Flat-size
Automation and Presorted in letter trays cotrayed under 705.9.0 using 245.3.0 option	Flat-size

5.0 Sacks**5.1 General Standards**

Applicable mailings must be prepared in sacks, except for Product Samples, which may be in cartons, sacks, or bundles directly on pallets. Also, see [602.4.0](#) when Product Samples are mailed with DALs. 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 Sack Labels

Sack labels are subject to the following:

- a. Use 1-inch labels for sacks with metal 1-inch label holders/closures.
- b. Use 2-inch labels for sacks with 2-inch label holder pockets.
- c. Use 2-inch labels for sacks with dual plastic label holders/closures. One-inch labels may be used but are not recommended.
- d. Illegible labels are not acceptable. Machine-printed labels (available from the USPS) ensure legibility. Legible hand-printed labels are acceptable.

For sack label line standards see [4.12](#) through [4.16](#).



203.5.4

5.4 **Electronic Verification System**

All sacks containing parcels prepared and identified using the Electronic Verification System (eVS) under [705.2.9](#) must show “eVS” (or the alternatives “EVS” or “E-VS”) directly below Line 3 using the same size and lettering used for Line 3. As an option, “eVS” may be placed as the first element on Line 3.

5.5 **Physical Characteristics of a Sack Label**

A sack label must meet these specifications:

- a. Color: white or manila (pink for periodicals).
- 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; 3.515 inches maximum.
- d. Height (perpendicular to printing):
 1. For 1-inch labels: 0.937 inch minimum; 0.980 inch maximum.
 2. For 2-inch labels: 1.860 inches minimum; 2.015 inches maximum.

5.6 **Additional Standards for Barcoded Sack Labels**

5.6.1 **General**

In addition to [5.3](#), barcoded sack labels must meet the standards in [4.17](#), [708.6.2](#), and [708.6.3](#).

5.6.2 **Additional Standards for Automation-Compatible Flats**

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

- a. The text 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 a line without interfering with the “quiet zone.”
- b. The minimum acceptable height for the destinating ZIP Code is 0.111 inch.
- c. The minimum acceptable character height for all other information on Lines 1, 2, and 3 is 0.083 inch.