455 Mail Preparation

Overview

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1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation

1.1 Basic Standards

All mailings at Parcel Select prices are subject to these general standards:

a. Each mailing must meet the applicable standards in 401, 402, 453, 455, and 456.

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

1.2 Definition of Presort Process

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

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

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

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, *Preparing Destination SCF (DSCF) Parcel Select*. 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

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

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, *Manifest Mailing System*, or 705.4.0, *Alternate Mailing System*; 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

Each piece in a Parcel Select mailing must bear a price marking. Markings must appear in either the postage area described in 402.2.5.1, 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 "Parcel 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. Barcoded Nonpresort - "Parcel Select Barcoded" or "Parcel Select BC".

2.0 Sacks

2.1 Maximum Weight

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 contents must not exceed 70 pounds.

3.0 Sack Labels

3.1 Basic Standards

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.

3.2 Physical Characteristics of a Sack Label

A sack label must meet these specifications:

a. Color: white or manila.

b. Length (parallel to printing): 3.250 inches minimum; 3.375 inches maximum.

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.

3.3 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 sacks and trays 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 sack.

3.4 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 processing category of the mail in the sack or tray and other information as specified by standards.

b. *Codes:* The codes shown below must be used as appropriate on Line 2 of sack labels.

CONTENT TYPE	CODE
Carrier Route	C (type of route)
Carrier Routes	CR-RT or CR-RTS
Digit	D
General Delivery Unit	G
Highway Contract Route	H
Irregular Parcels	IRREG
Machinable	MACH
Mixed	MXD
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
Rural Route	R
Scheme	SCH
Working	WKG

3.5 Line 3 (Origin 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) (see for eVS labeling information). 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.

3.6 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 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.

4.0 Preparing Destination Entry Parcel Select

4.1 Preparing Destination Delivery Unit (DDU) Parcel Select

4.1.1 Definition

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

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 453.3.1.1.

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

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 3.3c. for overseas military mail); Line c. “PSVC PARCELS 5D.”

4.2 Preparing Destination SCF (DSCF) Parcel Select

4.2.1 Definition

A destination sectional center facility (DSCF) includes all facilities listed under L005.

4.2.2 Basic Standards

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

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 3.3 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

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 456.2.16, *Acceptance at Designated SCF-USPS Benefit*.

4.3.2 Basic Standards

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. Machinable parcels must bear a barcode under 708.5.0 for the ZIP Code of the delivery address. Nonbarcoded machinable parcels are eligible only for Parcel Post prices.

d. Except as provided in Exhibit 453.3.1.3, *DNDC Prices*, pieces deposited at each NDC or ASF must be addressed for delivery within the ZIP Code range of that facility.

e. Pieces must be within a ZIP Code eligible for DNDC prices under Exhibit 453.3.1.3 and, if sacked or palletized, must be prepared according to 4.0, *Preparing Destination Entry Parcel Select*, and 705.8.0, *Preparing Pallets*. Mail meeting the additional criteria in 456.2.15 or 456.2.16 may be deposited at an SCF.

4.3.3 Sacking and Labeling

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

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

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 Barcoded Machinable Parcels

6.1 Definition

Parcel Select machinable parcels (401.1.5) that bear a barcode under 708.5.0 for the ZIP Code of the delivery address.

6.2 Basic Standards

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 barcoded nonpresorted parcels when postage is paid using USPS-approved PC Postage which does not require a minimum volume.

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

6.3 Sacking and Labeling

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, *Commingled Zones* .

6.3.1 Sack Preparation

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 3.3c. 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. Exhibit 453.3.1.3 determines DNDC price eligibility.

d. NDC: required (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use L601, Column B. Exhibit 453.3.1.3 determines DNDC price eligibility.

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

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.”

455.6.3.2