

433 Prices and Eligibility

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1.0 Prices and Fees for First-Class Mail

1.1 Price Application

Postage is based on the price that applies to the weight (postage) increment of each addressed piece.

1.2 Price Computation for First-Class Mail Parcels

First-Class Mail prices are charged per ounce or fraction thereof; any fraction of an ounce is considered a whole ounce. For example, if a piece weighs 1.2 ounces, the weight (postage) increment is 2 ounces. The minimum postage per addressed piece is that for a piece weighing 1 ounce.

1.3 Commercial Base Parcel Prices

[4-17-11] For prices, see [Notice 123–Price List](#). First-Class Mail presorted parcels are eligible for commercial base prices. Nonpresorted First-Class Mail parcels mailed under the following conditions are eligible for single-piece commercial base parcel prices:

- a. The residual portion of a presorted mailing prepared under [435.4.0](#).
- b. Nonpresorted mailings for which the postage is paid by permit imprint, IBI meter, or PC Postage. Mailings using permit imprints must contain at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds.

1.4 Commercial Plus Prices

[4-17-11] For prices, see [Notice 123–Price List](#). Presorted First-Class Mail machinable parcels weighing over 13 ounces, but less than 16 ounces, are eligible for commercial plus prices. Customers mailing presorted machinable parcels less than 13 ounces may optionally pay commercial plus prices instead of commercial base prices. Permit holders using Merchandise Return Service (MRS) for First-Class Mail machinable parcels are eligible for commercial plus parcel prices if the total of their First-Class Mail MRS and outgoing volume meet the minimum volume commitment. First-Class Mail presorted parcels over 13 ounces that do not meet all the standards for commercial plus prices must bear postage at the applicable Priority Mail prices. Commercial plus prices are available for customers presenting mailings of 500 or more presorted parcels who:

- a. Establish a customer commitment agreement with the Postal Service to mail more than 5000 First-Class Mail machinable parcels at commercial plus prices in a calendar year. Customers may contact their account manager or the manager, Shipping Support (see [608.8.0](#) for address) for additional information.



- b. Pay for postage by using a permit imprint.
- c. Enter a minimum of 500 pieces of mail for each presorted mailing or a minimum of 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail for each single-piece mailing.
- d. Use the Electronic Verification System (eVS) or submit an electronic postage statement with a computerized manifest.

1.5 **Surcharge**

[4-17-11] Unless prepared in 5-digit/scheme sacks or paid at the single-piece prices, presorted parcels are subject to a surcharge if any of the following characteristics apply:

- a. The parcels do not bear a GS1-128 or Intelligent Mail package barcode.
- b. The parcels weigh less than 2 ounces or are irregularly shaped, such as rolls, tubes, and triangles.

1.6 **Presort Mailing Fee**

Presort mailing fee required, per 12-month period, per office of mailing.

1.7 **Computing Postage for First-Class Mail**

Determine single-piece weight and weight (postage) increment for each addressed piece as prescribed in 1.1 and 1.2. For First-Class Mail, affix postage to each piece or, for permit imprint mailings, multiply the number of addressed pieces at each price increment (and in each price category, if applicable) by the corresponding postage price, add the *unrounded* products, and round off the total postage to the nearest whole cent.

1.8 **Determining Single-Piece Weight**

To determine single-piece weight in any mailing of nonidentical-weight pieces, weigh each piece individually. To determine single-piece weight in a mailing of identical-weight pieces, weigh a sample group of at least 10 randomly selected pieces and divide the total sample weight by the number of pieces in the sample. Express all single-piece weights in decimal pounds rounded off to four decimal places.

2.0 Content Standards for First-Class Mail Parcels

2.1 **General**

With the exception of restricted material as described in 601.8.0, any mailable item may be mailed as First-Class Mail.

2.2 **Bills and Statements of Account**

Bills and statements of account must be mailed as First-Class Mail (or Express Mail) and are defined as follows:

- a. Bills and statements of account assert a debt in a definite amount owed by the addressee to the sender or a third party. In addition, bills include a demand for payment; statements of account do not include a demand for payment. The debt does not have to be due immediately but may become due at a later time or on demand. The debt asserted need not be legally collectible or owed.

- b. Bills and statements of account do not need to state the precise amount due if they contain information that would enable the debtor to determine that amount.

2.3 Personal Information

Mail containing personal information must be mailed as First-Class Mail (or Express Mail). Personal information is any information specific to the addressee.

2.4 Handwritten and Typewritten Material

Mail containing handwritten or typewritten material must be mailed as First-Class Mail or Express Mail.

2.5 Matter Not Required to be Mailed as First-Class Mail

Matter eligible for Standard Mail or Package Services prices or authorized as Periodicals is not required to be mailed as First-Class Mail or Express Mail.

2.6 Prohibited Air Transportation

All First-Class Mail is subject to limitations for air transportation. Generally, all mailable matter may be transported by aircraft, unless restricted in [601.10.0, Hazardous Materials](#), Hazardous Materials.

3.0 Basic Standards for First-Class Mail Parcels

3.1 Description of Service

[\[4-17-11\]](#) First-Class Mail receives expeditious handling and transportation. Service objectives for delivery are 1 to 3 days; however, delivery time is not guaranteed.

3.2 Defining Characteristics

3.2.1 Inspection of Contents

First-Class Mail is closed against postal inspection. Federal law and USPS regulations restrict both opening and reviewing the contents of First-Class Mail by anyone other than the addressee.

3.2.2 Forwarding Service

The price of First-Class Mail includes forwarding service to a new address for up to 12 months.

3.2.3 Return Service

The price of First-Class Mail includes return service if the mailpiece is undeliverable.

3.2.4 Extra Services Exclusive to First-Class Mail

First-Class Mail is the only class of mail eligible to receive the following extra services: Registered Mail service and Certified Mail service.

3.2.5 Additional Extra Services

Additional extra services available with First-Class Mail are certificate of mailing service, COD service, Delivery Confirmation service (parcels only), insured mail service (merchandise only), return receipt service, restricted delivery service, Signature Confirmation service (parcels only), and special handling. See information regarding extra services in [503](#).



3.2.6 Hold For Pickup

Under Hold For Pickup service, only First-Class Mail parcels are held at a designated Post Office location for pick up by a specified addressee or designee (see [508.8.0](#)).

3.3 Additional Basic Standards for First-Class Mail

All pieces of presorted First-Class Mail must:

- a. Meet the basic content standards for First-Class Mail in [2.0](#).
- b. Weigh 13 ounces or less.
- c. Meet the applicable standards in [433, Prices and Eligibility](#), [434, Postage Payment and Documentation](#), and [604.7.0, Computing Postage](#).
- d. Be part of a single mailing of at least 500 pieces of Presorted First-Class Mail.
- e. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code and that meets these address quality standards:
 1. The Move Update standard in [3.5](#).
 2. The ZIP Code accuracy standard in [3.6](#).
 3. If an alternative addressing format is used, the additional standards in [602.3.0](#).

3.4 Presort Mailing Fee

A First-Class Mail presort mailing fee must be paid once each 12-month period at each office of mailing by any person or organization entering mailings at automation or Presorted First-Class Mail prices. Payment of one fee allows a mailer to enter mail at all those prices. Persons or organizations paying this fee may enter mail of their clients as well as their own mail. The fee may be paid in advance only for the next 12 months and only during the last 60 days of the current service period. The fee charged is that which is in effect on the date of payment.

3.5 Move Update Standard

3.5.1 Basic Standards

The Move Update standard is a means of reducing the number of mailpieces in a mailing that require forwarding or return by the periodic matching of a mailer's address records with customer-filed change-of-address orders received and maintained by the USPS. For the purposes of this standard, *address* means a specific address associated with a specific occupant name. Addresses subject to the Move Update standard must meet these requirements:

- a. Each address and associated occupant name used on the mailpieces in a mailing must be updated within 95 days before the mailing date, with one of the USPS-approved methods in [3.5.2](#).
- b. Each individual address in the mailing is subject to the Move Update standard.
- c. The Move Update standard is met when an address used on a mailpiece in a mailing at any class of mail is updated with an approved method in [3.5.2](#), and the same address is used in a First-Class Mail mailing within 95 days after the address has been updated.

- d. Except for mail bearing an alternative address format, addresses used on pieces claiming First-Class Mail Presorted prices, regardless of any required surcharge, must meet the Move Update standard.

3.5.2 USPS-Approved Methods

The following methods are authorized for meeting the Move Update standard:

- a. Address Change Service (ACS).
- b. National Change of Address Linkage System (NCOA^{Link}).
- c. Mailer Move Update Process Certification and USPS-approved alternative methods for mailers with legitimate restrictions on incorporating USPS-supplied change-of-address information into their mailing lists. The National Customer Support Center (see [608.8.1](#) for address) administers and approves both Mailer Move Update Process Certification and alternative methods.
- d. Ancillary service endorsements under [507.1.5.3](#), except “Forwarding Service Requested.”

3.5.3 Mailer Certification

The mailer’s signature on the postage statement certifies that the Move Update standard has been met for each address in the corresponding mailing presented to the USPS.

3.5.4 Basis for Move Update Assessment Charges

Mailings are subject to a Move Update assessment charge if more than 30 percent of addresses with a change of address (COA) are not updated, based on the error rate found in USPS sampling at acceptance during Performance-Based Verification. Specifically, mailings for which the sample contains greater than 30 percent failed COAs out of the total COAs are subject to additional postage charges as follows:

- a. The percentage of the mailing paying the charge is based on the percentage of failed pieces above 30 percent.
- b. Each of the assessed pieces is subject to the \$0.07 per piece charge.
- c. As an example, if 40% of COAs in the sample are not updated, then the charge is applied to 10% (=40% - 30%) of the total mailing.
- d. Mailings for which the sample has five or fewer pieces that were not updated for a COA are not subject to the assessment, regardless of the failure percentage.

3.6 ZIP Code Accuracy

3.6.1 Basic Standards

The ZIP Code accuracy standard is a means of ensuring that the 5-digit ZIP Code in the delivery address correctly matches the delivery address information. For the purposes of this standard, *address* means a specific address associated with a specific 5-digit ZIP Code. Addresses used on pieces claiming certain prices that are subject to the ZIP Code accuracy standard must meet these requirements:

- a. Each address and associated 5-digit ZIP Code used on the mailpieces in a mailing must be verified and corrected within 12 months before the mailing date with one of the USPS-approved methods in [3.5.2](#).



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- b. Each individual address in the mailing is subject to the ZIP Code accuracy standard.
- c. If an address used on a mailpiece in a mailing at one class of mail and price is verified and corrected with an approved method, the same address may be used during the following 12 months to meet the ZIP Code accuracy standard required for mailing at any other class of mail and price.
- d. Except for mail bearing a simplified address, addresses used on pieces claiming First-Class Mail Presorted prices, regardless of any required surcharge, must meet the ZIP Code accuracy standard.

3.6.2 USPS-Approved Methods

The following methods are authorized for meeting the ZIP Code accuracy standard:

- a. For computerized lists, Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS)-certified address matching software and current USPS City State Product, within a mailer's computer systems or through an authorized service provider.
- b. For manually maintained lists or small computerized lists, options include the following:
 - 1. Surveys of addressees on mailer's address list inquiring about the accuracy of ZIP Code information.
 - 2. Any mailing list service in [507.7.0](#).
 - 3. An authorized service provider.
 - 4. CASS-certified matching software.
 - 5. USPS Web site www.usps.com.

3.6.3 Mailer Certification

The mailer's signature on the postage statement certifies that the ZIP Code accuracy standard has been met for each address in the corresponding mailing presented to the USPS.

4.0 Price Eligibility for Presorted First-Class Mail Parcels

4.1 5-Digit Price

The 5-digit price applies to presorted parcels in a 5-digit/scheme sack containing at least 10 pounds of parcels.

4.2 3-Digit Price

The 3-digit price applies to presorted parcels in a 3-digit sack containing at least 10 pounds of parcels.

4.3 ADC Price

The ADC price applies to presorted parcels in a 3-digit origin sack (no minimum), and to parcels in an ADC sack containing at least 10 pounds of parcels.



4.4 **Single-Piece Price**

[4-17-11] Single-piece prices apply to presorted parcels in a mixed ADC sack, with no minimum volume requirement. Nonpresorted parcels are also eligible for commercial single-piece parcel prices. See [1.3b](#) for commercial base eligibility and [1.4](#) for commercial plus eligibility.

