

**Related QSGs** [440a, Standard Mail Machinable Parcels](#)  
[450, Parcel Select](#)  
[460, Bound Printed Matter Irregular and Machinable Parcels](#)

**Physical Standards (401)** Minimum weight: 6 ounces except under [401.1.5.2](#).  
Standard Mail: maximum weight is less than 16 ounces.  
Bound Printed Matter: maximum weight is 15 pounds.  
Parcel Select: maximum weight is 35 pounds (25 pounds for books and other printed matter).  
Dimensions: 6 to 34 inches long, 3 to 17 inches high, and 1/4 to 17 inches thick. Parcels 1/4 inch thick must be at least 3-1/2 inches high and 6 inches long.  
For an overview of the physical standards for commercial parcels, see [Quick Service Guide 401](#).

**Eligibility Standards** Parcels are nonmachinable if they meet any of the criteria in [401.2.5](#).  
Commercial parcels (except for Standard Mail parcels) mailed at a presorted or destination entry price must include a unique Intelligent Mail package barcode (IMpb) or extra services barcode, including a postal routing code. On January 7, 2013, an Intelligent Mail package barcode will be required for all commercial mailpieces that include a tracking or extra services barcode and on all parcels (except Standard Mail parcels) claiming presort or destination entry pricing.  
Package Services barcodes may be combined with Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation and insurance barcode.  
Standard Mail barcodes may be combined with electronic Delivery Confirmation and insurance.  
Standard Mail and Package Services barcodes must be prepared with the address and barcode placed squarely onto the largest surface area of the parcel except when the shape and contents require specific orientation for stability during processing. The barcode should be placed immediately adjacent to the delivery address and no closer than 1/2 inch from the edge of the parcel.

**Acceptable Container (601.3.0)** Use sturdy materials to withstand handling.  
Size must be adequate to contain items and provide space for cushioning material:  

- Paperboard boxes for easy and average loads up to 10 pounds.
- Metal-stayed paperboard boxes for easy and average loads up to 20 pounds.
- Soft goods in paper or plastic bags and enveloped printed matter up to 5 pounds.
- Books and other printed matter in boxes; lighter weight items in other materials as indicated in [601.3.0](#) or [601.7.0](#).
- Avoid waxed or oiled materials, exterior foam boxes, and unsecurely packaged articles.
- Solid corrugated fiberboard boxes as shown below.

**Cushioning (601.4.0)** Cushioning absorbs shock and vibration of handling. Combinations of cushioning materials are most effective. Cushion items separately.

**Closure and Sealing (601.4.0)**  

- Except for pressure-sensitive filament tape, tapes used for closure and reinforcement must be at least 2 inches wide. Avoid twine, cord, rope, cellophane tape, and masking tape.
- Paper tape must be at least 60-pound basis weight.
- Adhesive (glue, paste, thermal plastic, etc.) must be serviceable from -20°F to 160°F.
- Staples and steel stitching acceptable if spaced less than 5 inches apart for easy loads, less than 2-1/2 inches for difficult loads.

**Mail Preparation** Barcodes:  
First-Class Package Service: A surcharge applies for parcels with the following characteristics:  

- Unless prepared in 5-digit/scheme containers, presorted parcels weighing less than 2 ounces or that are irregularly shaped, such as rolls, tubes, and triangles.
- Nonpresorted parcels (except those paid with PC Postage) without a unique Intelligent Mail package barcode or extra services barcode, including a postal routing code. Effective January 7, 2013, nonpresorted parcels must include a unique Intelligent Mail package barcode with a postal routing code to avoid a surcharge.

Standard Mail parcels: Unless prepared in a carrier route or 5-digit/scheme containers, Standard Mail parcels are subject to a surcharge if:  

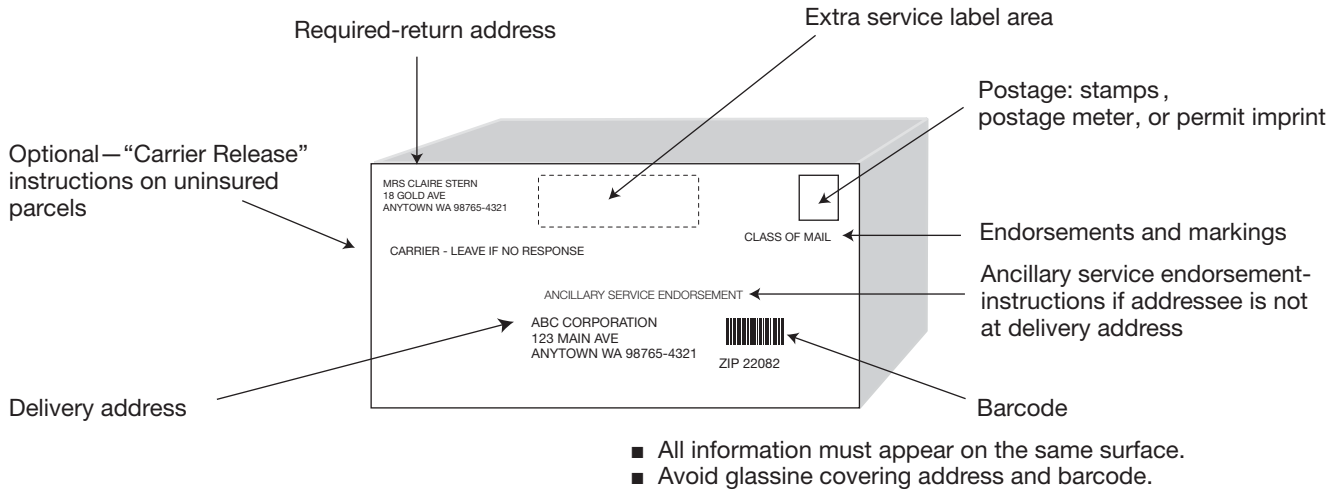
- Machinable parcels do not bear a GS1-128 routing barcode or Intelligent Mail package barcode, (IMpb).
- Irregular parcels do not bear a GS1-128 routing, POSTNET barcode, or IMpb.

Parcels must be prepared and marked under applicable standards for machinable parcel preparation:  

- Presorted Standard Mail ([445.5.0](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 440a](#).
- Parcel Select ([455](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 450](#).
- Bound Printed Matter ([465](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 460](#).
- Presorted Media Mail and Library Mail ([475](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 470](#).

For pallet preparation, see [705.8.0](#).  
For combined mailings of Standard Mail and Package Services parcels, see [705.6.0](#).

### Physical Standards for Automation-Compatible Parcels



### Packaging and Sealing

#### Container (see page one for details):

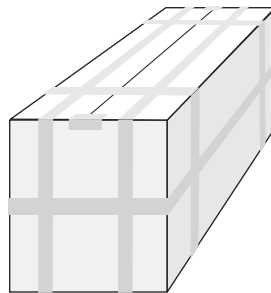
- Sturdy paperboard or fiberboard boxes.
- Plastic or paper bags up to 5 pounds.
- Enveloped printed matter up to 5 pounds.
- Avoid waxed or oiled materials, exterior foam boxes.

#### Cushioning:

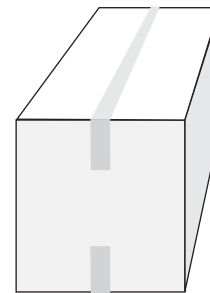
- Cushion items separately.
- Combine materials for most effectiveness. Cushioning materials: foamed plastics, corrugated fiberboard, loose-fill material, and shredded newspapers.

#### Sealing (see page one for details):

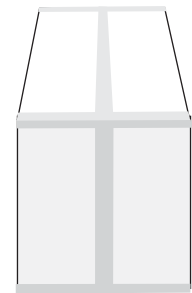
- Pressure-sensitive reinforced tape.
- Reinforced paper tape.
- Staples or steel stitching.
- Adhesive.
- Avoid twine, cord, rope, cellophane tape, and masking



Pressure-sensitive filament tape



Reinforced kraft paper tape



Kraft paper tape