NEW ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS

Standard Mail Flats

Who Should Read This Fact Sheet?

Business mailers who are sending flat-size Standard Mail (such as large envelopes, catalogs, and circulars). To use the Standard Mail prices, you must send at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail at a time, prepared and sorted according to Postal Service guidelines.

What Are The New Address Requirements?

The new requirements affect address characteristics (how the address looks) and address placement (where the address is located).

- Mailers must address each piece using a minimum of 8-point type. Each character must be at least 0.080 inch high.
- If the mailpiece bears a POSTNET or Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code, mailers may use 6-point type in all capital letters. Each character must be at least 0.065 inch high.
- On all automation pieces, the characters in the address must not overlap, the address lines must not touch or overlap, and each address element may be separated by no more than five blank character spaces. (A blank character space can equal the width of the widest letter used in the type.)
- Mailers must place the delivery address in the "top half" of the mailpiece.

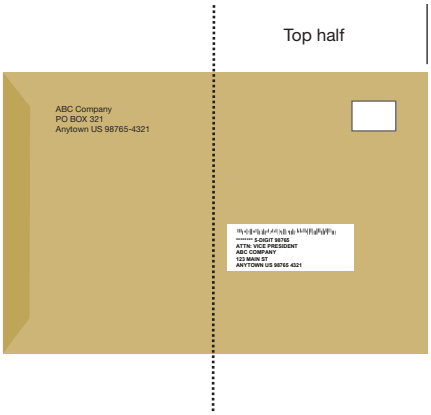
How Do I Determine The Top Half Of The Mailpiece?

There are several options. For enveloped or polywrapped pieces, and all saturation Carrier Route pieces, the "top" of the mailpiece is either of the shorter edges. For pieces that are not enclosed in envelopes or polywrap, the "top" is the upper edge when the bound edge (or the final fold) is vertical and on the right side of the piece.

Once you choose a top edge, measure halfway down the piece, and that's the top half. Your address (recipient lines, delivery address lines, and city/state/ZIP Code line) must be entirely within the top half. If you have a shorter mailpiece, the address can run into the bottom half if you place it within an inch of the top edge.

You can place the delivery address on the front or the back of the mailpiece, but it must be on the same side as the postage. The address may be parallel or perpendicular to the top edge, but not upside-down as read in relation to the top edge. A perpendicular address can face to the left or the right.

Catalog addressed on back cover. "Top" is the upper edge when the spine is on the right.



Large envelope. "Top" is the left or right edge as viewed in this horizontal orientation. The "top half" could be either the left or right half.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

NEW ADDRESS REQUIREMENTS

Where Do I Place My Postage And Return Address?

Place them in relation to the delivery address as it is read, just like you do today. The postage should appear to the right or upper right of the delivery address, and the return address should appear to the upper left of the delivery address. The very best place for the return address is at least 1 inch above and 1 inch to the left of the delivery address.

If your delivery address won't allow enough room for the postage and return address, move it to another position within the top half. Remember, there are multiple options.

When Do These Changes Take Effect?

Mailings must comply no later than March 29, 2009.

Why Are These Changes Needed?

Clear, legible addresses ensure accurate sorting, redirection, and delivery; enable high-speed processing; and minimize service delays. Consistent address placement is needed to take advantage of new flats processing technology and will significantly increase efficiency, which helps keep postage prices affordable.

What Happens If My Mail Doesn't Comply?

Your mail must meet the published standards to qualify for Standard Mail prices, including the new address requirements. If the standards are not met, you may pay additional postage or correct and re-enter your mail.

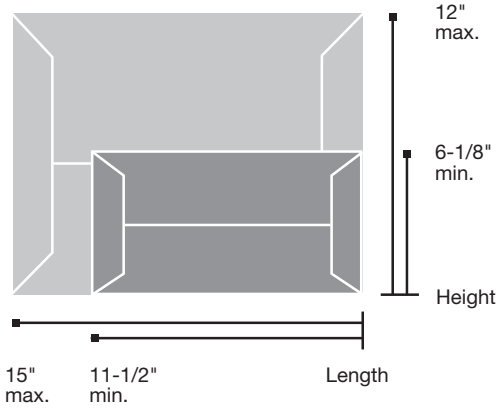
Where Can I Find More Information?

You can access the May 7 *Federal Register* notice on Postal Explorer at pe.usps.com. Click on "Federal Register" in the left frame, and scroll down to the entry titled, "New Address Requirements for Automation, Presorted, and Carrier Route Flat-Size Mail."

If you have questions about a particular mailpiece, your local Mailpiece Design Analyst can help. To find an Analyst, enter your ZIP Code in the lookup tool on Postal Explorer (click on "Postal Locator" in the left frame, then "Mailpiece Design Analyst").

The *Domestic Mail Manual* also is available on Postal Explorer and provides all of the mailing standards and pricing options for Standard Mail flats. We will add the new address requirements to *Domestic Mail Manual* chapter 302 when they take effect in March 2009.

Flats Dimensions

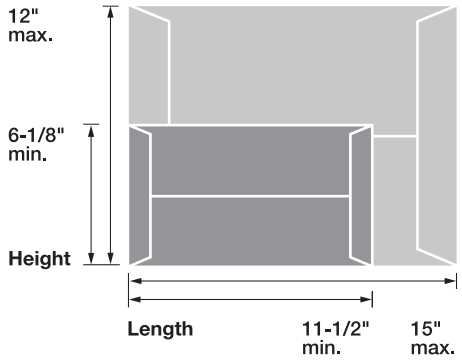


	Minimum*	Maximum
Length	11-1/2 inches	15 inches
Height	6-1/8 inches	12 inches
Thickness	1/4 inch	3/4 inch

** Nonautomation flats exceed at least one of these dimensions. Automation flats must be at least 5 inches high and 6 inches long. For flats, length is the longest dimension.*

Overview

Flat Dimensions



	Minimum*	Maximum
Length	11-1/2 inches	15 inches
Height	6-1/8 inches	12 inches
Thickness	1/4 inch	3/4 inch

* Flats exceed at least one of these dimensions

For physical standards of automation flats, see Quick Service Guide 301a.

In addition to shape, the Postal Service classifies mailpieces by the way they are prepared. These classifications are based on how efficiently your mailpieces can be processed on Postal Service equipment. The Postal Service classifies commercial flats as either nonautomation or automation flats or machinable and nonmachinable for Periodicals.

A flat meets automation standards and qualifies for automation prices if it meets the specific addressing, barcoding, and design standards. Automation flats must have a POSTNET or Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code.

Dimensions, Shape, Flexibility, and Uniform Thickness (301.1.0)

Dimensions:
- Minimum: more than 11-1/2 inches long, or more than 6-1/8 inches high, or more than 1/4 inch thick.
- Maximum: 15 inches long, 12 inches high, and 3/4 inch thick.

The length of a flat-size mailpiece is the longest dimension. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length.

Shape: rectangular, with four square corners, or with finished corners that do not excced a radius of 0.125 inch (1/8 inch).

Flexibility: flat-size piece must meet flexibility criteria in 301.1.3.

Uniform thickness: the contents must be uniformly thick so that any bumps, protrusions, or irregularities do not cause more than 1/4 inch variance in thickness (301.1.4). When determining variance in thickness, exclude the outer edges of a mailpiece (1 inch from each edge) when the contents do not extend to the edges.

Mailpieces that do not meet the standards for flexibility in 301.1.3, or for uniform thickness in 301.1.4, must pay applicable prices as follows:
- First-Class Mail—parcel prices.
- Standard Mail—Not Flat-Machinable or parcel prices.
- Bound Printed Matter—parcel prices.

Presorted Nonautomation Flats (301.2.0)

Maximum weight:
- First-Class Mail: 13 ounces.
- Standard Mail: less than 16 ounces.
- Bound Printed Matter: 15 pounds.

Automation Flats (301.3.0)

Flats may qualify for the automation discount based on the physical standards in 301.3.0.

See Quick Service Guide 301a, Designing Flats for Automated Processing, for an overview.

Standard Mail Not Flat-Machinable Pieces (401.2.4)

For Standard Mail Not Flat-Machinable pieces, see Quick Service Guide 401.

Commercial Flats
Designing Flats for Automated Processing

301a
Quick Service Guide

Related QSGs
301, Physical Standards for Discount Flats
330b, First-Class Mail Automation Flats
340b, Standard Mail Automation Flats
360, Bound Printed Matter Flats
707g, Periodicals Barcoded (Automation) Flats

Overview
Flat-size pieces meeting the applicable automation standards in 301.3.0 are entitled to automation or Periodicals machinable prices. Size, weight, thickness, polywrap, and flexibility standards vary for the class of mail. For eligibility and preparation standards for specific price options, see the appropriate Quick Service Guide above.

Physical Standards (301.3.0)
Shape: rectangular, with four square corners, or with finished corners that do not exceed a radius of 0.125 inch (1/8 inch).

Dimensions:
- Minimum height is 5 inches. Maximum height is 12 inches.
- Minimum length is 6 inches. Maximum length is 15 inches.
- For bound or folded pieces, the edge perpendicular to the bound edge or folded edge may not exceed 12 inches.
- Minimum thickness is 0.009 inch. Maximum thickness is 0.75 inch.

The length of a flat-size mailpiece is the longest dimension. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length (301.1.2).

Maximum weight:
- First-Class Mail: 13 ounces.
- Periodicals: 20 ounces for pieces prepared under 301.3.0.
- Standard Mail: less than 16 ounces.
- Bound Printed Matter: 20 ounces.

Uniform thickness: The contents must be uniformly thick so that any bumps, protrusions, or irregularities do not cause more than 1/4 inch variance in thickness. The mailpiece must have a smooth and regular shape and be free of creases, folds, tears, or other irregularities (301.3.6).

Flexibility and deflection: automation flats must meet the flexibility standards in 301.1.3 and deflection standards in 301.3.2.3.

Polywrap films and similar coverings must meet the standards in 301.1.5. A list of approved polywrap and polywrap manufacturers is available on ribbs.usps.gov. The wrap direction must be around the longer axis of the mailpiece, with the seam parallel to that axis. The longer axis is always parallel to the length of the mailpiece. The preferred seam placement is on the nonaddressed side of the mailpiece.

Prohibitions: Clasps, strings, buttons, or other protrusions; also staples, unless properly used as a binding method (301.3.6).

Delivery Address (302.1.0)
Flats must have the address of the intended recipient, visible and legible, only on the side of the piece bearing postage. (Periodicals do not display postage and the address may appear on either side.) Use at least 8-point type for addresses on flats prepared without delivery point barcodes. A sans-serif font printed in all capital letters is preferred. The individual characters in the address cannot overlap. The individual lines in the address cannot touch or overlap. A minimum 0.028-inch clear space between lines is preferred. Mailers preparing flats with POSTNET or Intelligent Mail barcode delivery point routing codes may print addresses in all capital letters and a minimum of 6-point type.

Address Placement (302.2.0)
On all Periodicals, Standard Mail, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail flats mailed at presorted, automation, or carrier route prices, mailers must place the delivery address parallel or perpendicular to the top edge on the front or the back of the mailpiece and within the top half of the mailpiece. If there is a bound or folded edge, the address as read must be within the top half when the bound or folded edge is to the right. It cannot be upside down as read in relation to the top edge.

If the address is placed on a mailing wrapper, the address must be on a flat side, not on a fold. If a polybag is used, the address must not appear on a component that rotates within the bag and must remain visible throughout the addressed component's range of motion. See 707.3.3.10 for addresses prepared on Periodicals label carriers.

Barcodes (302.5.0)
Barcodes must be at least 1/8 inch from any edge of the address side.

Address block barcodes must be in one of these four positions:
- Above the address line containing the recipient's name.
- Below the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
- Above or below the keyline information.
- Above or below the optional endorsement line.

The surface the barcode is printed on must meet the reflectance standards in 708.4.4.

The minimum clearance between the barcode and any information line above or below it within the address block must be at least 0.040 (1/25) inch for POSTNET barcode or 0.028 inch for an Intelligent Mail barcode. The separation between the barcode and the top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 0.625 (5/8) inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing must be at least 0.125 (1/8 inch).

Window Envelope Barcode Placement:

- 0.125 (1/8) inch—minimum clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing or window edge.
- 0.040 (1/25) inch—minimum clearance between POSTNET barcode and top and bottom edges of window.
- 0.028 inch—minimum clearance between Intelligent Mail barcode and top and bottom edges of window.

For envelope window, a clear space must be maintained when insert is moved to its full limits in each direction within envelope (202.5.0).

Address Label Barcode Placement:

- 0.125 (1/8) inch—minimum clearance between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label.
- 0.040 (1/25) inch—minimum clearance between POSTNET barcode and top and bottom edges of address label.
- 0.028 inch—minimum clearance between Intelligent Mail barcode and top and bottom edges of address label.

First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, Bound Printed Matter, and Periodicals (301.3.0)

Length

Minimum: 6 inches
Maximum: 15 inches

Height

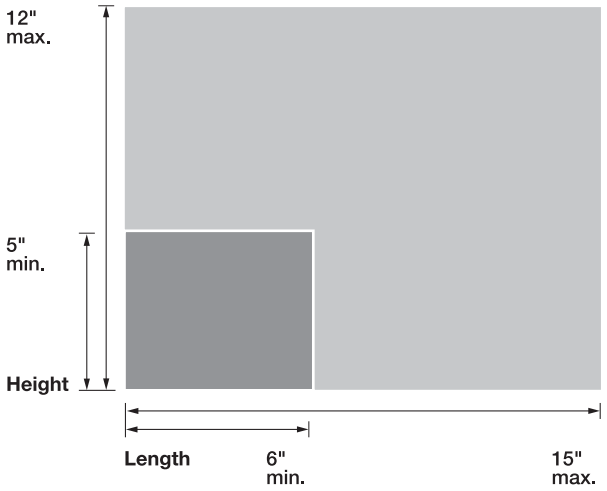
Minimum: 5 inches
Maximum: 12 inches

Thickness

Minimum: 0.009 inch
Maximum: 3/4 inch

Maximum Weight

- First-Class Mail cannot weigh more than 13 ounces.
- Standard Mail must weigh less than 16 ounces.
- Periodicals and Bound Printed Matter cannot weigh more than 20 ounces.



Flexibility

Must meet flexibility standards in 301.1.3 and deflection standards in 301.3.2.3.

Polywrapped Pieces

Must meet all six properties in Exhibit 301.1.5.1.
If an address label is used on the outside of the polywrapped piece, the haze property is not required. Polywrap seam must be parallel to longest dimension.
The preferred seam placement is on the nonaddressed side of the mailpiece. If seam is on the addressed side, it must not cover the delivery address, barcode, postage area, or any required markings.

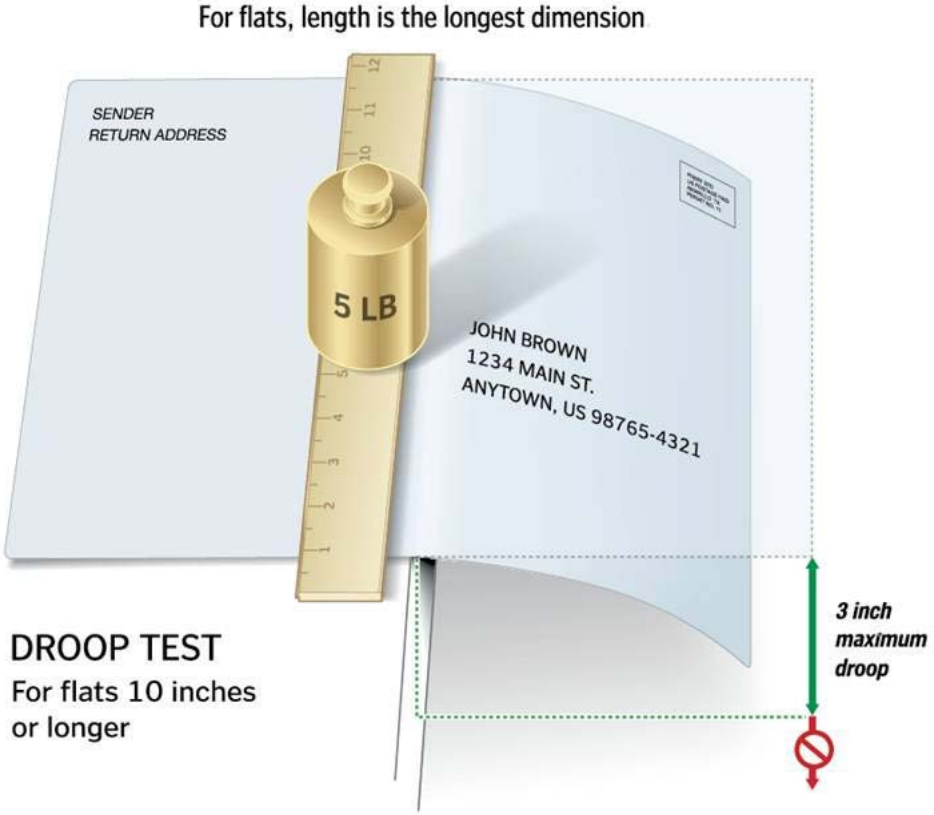
Flat-Size Booklet-Type Mailpieces (301.3.6.3)

The contents of the mailpiece prepared in sleeves or other wrappers must be sufficiently secure in the sleeve or wrapper to stay in place during processing. If material bearing the delivery information or barcode for the mailpiece is enclosed in a partial wrapper, that wrapper must be sufficiently secure to prevent the contents from shifting and obscuring the delivery address or barcode.

a. For pieces 10 inches or longer (see Exhibit 1.5a):

1. Place the piece on a flat, straight-edge surface with the length perpendicular to the edge of the surface and extend the piece 5 inches off the edge of the surface. Test square-shaped bound flats by placing the bound edge parallel to the edge.
2. Place a flat 12-inch ruler (or other similar flat object 12 inches or longer) on top of the mailpiece with the length parallel to the edge of the surface and as close to the edge as possible so that the 5-pound weight (see 1.6a3) does not extend past the edge.
3. Place a certified 5-pound weight on the center of the ruler to hold the piece in place.
4. Determine the vertical deflection in inches.
5. Turn the piece around 180 degrees and repeat the process.
6. The piece is mailable as a flat if it does not droop more than 3 inches vertically at either end.

Exhibit 1.6a Deflection for Pieces 10 inches or Longer



b. For pieces less than 10 inches long (see Exhibit 1.6b):

1. Place the piece on a flat, straight-edge surface with the length perpendicular to the edge of the surface and extend the piece one-half of its length off the edge of the surface. Test square-shaped bound flats by placing the bound edge parallel to the edge.
2. Place a flat 12-inch ruler (or other similar flat object 12 inches or longer) on top of the mailpiece with the length parallel to the edge of the surface and as close to the edge as possible so that the 5-pound weight (see 1.6b3) does not extend past the edge.
3. Place a certified 5-pound weight on the center of the ruler to hold the piece in place.
4. Determine the vertical deflection in inches.
5. Turn the piece around 180 degrees and repeat the process.
6. The piece is mailable as a flat if it does not droop more than 2 inches less than the extended length at either end. For example, a piece 8 inches long would be extended 4 inches horizontally off a flat surface. It must not droop more than 2 inches vertically at either end.

Exhibit 1.6b Deflection for Pieces Less Than 10 inches Long