

# Multi- Periodicals Mailpieces in PostalOne

## DMM Reference:

### 707.27.0 Combining Multiple Editions or Publications

#### 27.1 Description

Mailers may prepare Periodicals publications as a combined mailing by merging copies or bundles of copies to achieve the finest presort level possible or to reduce the total Outside-County postage. Each publication in a combined mailing must be authorized (or pending authorization) to mail at Periodicals prices. Mailers may use the following methods:

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b. Mailers may place **two or more copies of different Periodicals publications (more than one title), and/or multiple editions of the same publication in the same mailing wrapper** or firm bundle and present it as one addressed piece to a single addressee to reduce the per piece charge.

The language highlighted in red above describes a single mailpiece, typically polybagged, that contains two or more separate Periodicals publications. Though the mail.dat specification is flexible enough to communicate multiple Periodicals components in a single MPU (mailpiece unit), PostalOne does not currently interpret the information correctly and produce separate 3541s according to 707.27.7c. In brief, the rules require pound postage to be properly computed for each title, and piece charges to be claimed on the statement with the higher advertising percentage. Bundle and container charges are not discussed in this section, but presumably could appear on either 3541 or be apportioned, as with comail.

## What PostalOne does now:

At last check, a mail.dat file could be produced so as to create multiple 3541s in PostalOne as expected. However, two problems surfaced:

1. PostalOne blends the advertising percentage of the two components so that each 3541 shows a blended (wrong!) value, resulting in inaccurate pound postage computation for each title. Note that this problem did not occur until a validation was added that required use of the Ad Percent Basis field.
2. PostalOne shows piece, bundle, and container charges on each 3541, instead of applying DMM rules to display them on only one statement.

## Impact:

Since PostalOne does not compute postage properly, mailers using this presentation have been prevented from using Full-Service, and also from participating in comail (since comail pools involve presorts including other Full-Service mailers, therefore requiring electronic documentation for all participants). In the future, the unavailability of electronic submission could also put automation discounts in jeopardy.

## Solutions:

When this issue was raised in the past, a year or two ago, the determination was made that the programming cost to correct it properly was prohibitive, especially given the fact that this preparation is infrequently used.

**Option 1:** present the mailing as firm bundles rather than complex mailpieces

This suggestion has been made frequently, but is not satisfactory for the following reasons:

- Creating a mail.dat with this approach to submit to PostalOne would require a presort that allowed firm bundling at two copies. In a larger comail mailing, this would mean that all titles would be subject to firm bundling at two copies, which would violate current specification, slow down the equipment and produce unsatisfactory small bundles.
- With the firm bundle approach, the polybagged units (that would look a lot like a magazine with an enclosure in a polybag) would be considered bundles, meaning that they would not be bundled together as they would be if treated as mailpieces. A pallet stacked with these loose polybagged units would not be stable to transport or efficient for the USPS to process. Sacked mail would be particularly subject to damage.
- Postage for this preparation would be higher due to separate bundle charges for each polybagged unit.
- Claiming a Full-Service discount for firm bundles is problematic in PostalOne and some presort software.

**Option 2:** develop a short-term workaround until a permanent solution can be developed

- Enhance PostalOne by modifying the current validation that forces the advertising percentages to be blended. Add code to recognize multiple publication numbers, and to calculate advertising percentages separately for each publication.
- Form a task team to develop a well-documented workaround for submitting these jobs to PostalOne. Requirements already state that "The mailer must annotate on, or attach to, each postage statement, the title and issue date of each publication or edition and indicate that the copies were prepared as part of a combined mailing under [27.1b](#)." (707.27.7c). Development of a form to use, incorporating the applicable rules, would support consistent and accurate handling (which would be a considerable improvement over current practices). The process would need to include an adjustment after postage finalization to remove the piece, bundle, and container charges from all but one of the 3541s involved.
- Ideally, the notification/instruction document could be developed in Excel so as to enforce the rules (as USPS-maintained spreadsheets enforce inkjet reorder calculations). Copies could be supplied to the participating publishers to document their postage outcome.

Downsides to Option 2 would be necessity of DMU clerk involvement (problematic for Seamless) and necessity of maintaining enough funds in all accounts to facilitate finalization.