BUSINESS MAIL 101

Basics of Discounted Mail
Agenda

- Discounted mail prices and classes of mail
- How to qualify for discounted mail prices
- Resources to help you prepare your mail
- How to design a mailpiece
- How to obtain an address list
- Choosing the best postage payment method
Types of Mail

First-Class Mail®

- Maximum of 13 ounces
- Bill or credit card
- Handwritten letter (max. 3.5 oz.)
- Invoice or statement of account
- Personal correspondence
- Presorted and automation rates available
- Estimated delivery 1-3 days
Types of Mail

**Standard Mail™**

- Advertisement
- Catalogs or newsletters
- Circulars or flyers
- Small parcels
- Nonprofit rates available
- Presorted and automation rates available
- Estimated delivery 3 to 10 days
- Less than 16 ounces
What is Commercial Mail?

- Larger quantities of mail prepared for mailing at reduced commercial prices of postage

- Primarily consists of First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail™ but is available for other classes of mail

*Note: US Postal Service ® uses “Discounted” and “Presorted” interchangeably.*
Is Discounted Mail Right For You?

Discounted (Commercial) mail prices

- Less than retail single piece prices
- Offered to mailers who presort their mail
- Or perform work normally done by U.S. Postal Service®

This is called “worksharing”
Bottom line – YOU SAVE MONEY!
Advantages of Discounted Mail

- “Discounted Mail” prices are significantly lower than single-piece

- Can accommodate a variety of business needs

- The more you send the more you save
How To Mail At Discounted Rates

- Obtain mailing permit
- Pay annual mailing fee
- Pay postage with precanceled stamps, meter, or permit imprint
- Consider size, shape, and weight
- Ensure accurate addresses
- Presort mailpieces (sort by ZIP Code™)
- Mail at Post Office where you hold permit
Mailing Permit

- Authorization to use a certain postage payment method for commercial mailings
- No application fee to mail with precanceled stamps or meter
- $225 One time application fee for permit imprint
- $225 annual presort mailing fee

** Fees Subject to change
Mailing Permit

- Remember, a permit is “permission to mail” at discounted prices
- Inactive accounts are based on the last mailing or last fee payment in a 24 month period
- Each Permit Imprint mailing must have a min. of 50 lbs. or 200 pieces
Minimum Quantities for a Discounted Mailing

- 500 pieces for First-Class Mail®
- 200 pieces (or 50 pounds of mail) for Standard Mail™
- 300 pieces for Presorted or Carrier Route Bound Printed Matter
- 300 pieces for Presorted Library Mail
- 300 pieces for Presorted Media Mail
$225 paid via cash or check at the Post Office

Centralized Account Payment System (CAPS)- electronic transfer of funds

No special form to fill out

Provides permission to mail a certain class of mail from a certain postal facility for 365 days
Must pay an annual mailing fee at every post office where you intend to mail

Pay when you bring in first mailing

Fee good for 365 days
Precanceled Stamps

Special stamps available in specific denominations for Presorted First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail™

*Note: only one (1) pre-canceled stamp may be affixed to each mailpiece.
Precanceled Stamps

Available in four denominations:

- 25¢ for Presorted First-Class Mail®
- 15¢ for Presorted First-Class Cards
- 10¢ for Regular Standard Mail™
- 5¢ for Nonprofit Standard Mail
Postage Meter

- Prints postage directly on mailpiece (or meter tape)
- Meter size varies by need
Postage meters are only available from authorized providers. Vendors set service and leasing fees.

Data-Pac Mailing Systems Corp
Ascom Hasler
Neopost
Pitney Bowes
FP Mailing Solutions
Methods of Postage Payment

**Permit Imprint**

- Most popular and convenient way to pay postage
- Postage information printed in upper right corner of mailpiece
- Postage block = "indicia"
Methods of Postage Payment

Permit Imprint

- Set up postage account at Post Office
- Postage deducted from account
- All mailpieces must be same weight
Permit Imprint

- Simple and convenient
- May use rubber stamp to imprint
- No need to buy postage in advance
Size and Shape

- The Postal Service separates mail into four shape categories:
  - cards
  - letters
  - large envelopes and "flats"
  - parcels

- Different rates and preparation standards depending on the shape

- Questions directed to Business Mail Entry staff or a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA)
# Physical Standards for Cards

## Card Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>5 inches</td>
<td>6 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>3-1/2 inches</td>
<td>4-1/4 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness</td>
<td>0.007 inch</td>
<td>0.016 inch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Card Dimensions Diagram]
## Physical Standards for Letters

### Letter Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>5 inches</td>
<td>11-1/2 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>3-1/2 inches</td>
<td>6-1/8 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness</td>
<td>0.007 inch</td>
<td>1/4 inch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram of letter dimensions]
Physical Standards For Flats

- All flats must be flexible, uniformly thick, and rectangular in shape.
Additional Physical Standards For Flats

For flats, length is the longest dimension.

Flex Test, Flats 10” or longer that contain a rigid insert perpendicular to surface.
Physical Standards For Flats

For flats, length is the longest dimension

Flex Test, Length runs parallel to surface

1” minimum flexibility required
Physical Standards For Flats

For flats, length is the longest dimension

Flex Test, Flats less than 10” that contain a rigid insert; perpendicular to surface

1” minimum flexibility required
## Standards for Automation Flats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum / Maximum Thickness</th>
<th>Minimum / Maximum Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Class</strong></td>
<td>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</td>
<td>13 Ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard</strong></td>
<td>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</td>
<td>Up to 16 Ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Periodicals, Bound Printed Matter</strong></td>
<td>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</td>
<td>20 Ounces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical Standards for Machinable Parcels

Machinable Parcels: Minimum weight: 6 ounces (3.5 ounces for small lightweight parcels)
Maximum weight: 25 pounds (35 pounds for Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service, except books and other printed matter which cannot exceed 25 lbs.)
Physical Standards For Irregular Parcels

- Rolls & tubes
- Unwrapped, paper-wrapped, or sleeve-wrapped
- Articles enclosed in envelopes
Physical Standards: Outside Parcels

Exceeds any of the maximum dimensions for machinable parcels:

- cartons containing more than 24 oz. of liquids in one or more glass containers
- cartons containing 1 gallon or more of liquid in metal or plastic containers
Categories of Mail

- Machinable
- Nonmachinable
- Automation
Barcodes

- Series of long and short bars that represent numbers
- Represent ZIP Code™, ZIP+4®, and delivery addresses
- Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMB)
Automation Priced Mail

- 100% barcoded and prepared for high-speed mail processing
- Prices available for letters, cards, flats (large envelopes), and parcels
Address Accuracy

- Obtain address list
- Check the addresses for accuracy
Address Accuracy

Keys to a successful mailing

- Know your audience
- Get your message delivered
- Use a great mailing list
Address Lists

- USPS® does not sell address lists

- USPS has products and services that help mailers check, standardize their addresses, and keep their lists up-to-date
Address Lists

- You can buy or rent a mailing list
  - Yellow Pages under "lists", "mailing lists" or "mailing services"
  - On-line search for list providers in your area
Why bother checking the accuracy of your address list?

- 17% of Americans move annually
- 44 Million people move yearly
- 1 out of every 6 families move yearly
- Address lists bought/rented must be checked to ensure they are correct
Address Accuracy

- For Presorted Standard Mail™ and First-Class Mail® rates, ZIP Codes™ MUST be checked for accuracy within the last 12 months of mailing date.

- When you complete and sign a postage statement you certify your mailing qualifies for the rates claimed.
Address Accuracy

Address Quality Choices

- Use [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) to check the ZIP Codes™

- Process your address list through CASS-certified software
  - CASS improves the accuracy of carrier route, five-digitZIP®, ZIP + 4®, and delivery point codes that appear on mailpieces

- Address List Correction Service
Address Quality Choices

- NCOALink
  - Updates addresses with change-of-address information filed with the Post Office
Address Quality Choices

- Move Update required for all presorted First-Class & Standard mailings
- Within 95 days of the date of mailing
- NCOA Link includes Move Update
Prepping Your Mail

- Supplies
- Presorting your letter mail
- Prepare containers (trays/sacks)
- Prepare postage statement
- Drop off your business mail
Supplies

The Postal Service supplies the following items for free:

- Trays
- Tray "sleeves" or lids
- Bundle labels
- Container labels
- Labeling lists – online DMM
- Quick Service Guides -- online
- Postage statement – online

*Note: Strapping material is required but not provided by USPS
Presorting Your Letter Mail

- Grouping by ZIP Code™
- For assistance, contact presort bureau and/or letter shop
Containers of Letter Mail

- Trays must be sleeved and strapped
- Affix correct label to each tray
- Secure each tray with a single strap around its length
Postage Statement

- Documents the number of pieces in your mailing and the postage you're paying

- Includes spaces for your company name and permit number

- All unshaded sections must be completed by mailer
Mail Preparation

Where to Drop Your Business Mail

- You must take your mailing to the office where you hold your mailing permit.

- Local Post Office
  https://tools.usps.com/go/POLocatorAction.action

- Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)
  Locate a BMEU
  https://ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm

*Note: You **MUST NOT** give presorted or permit imprint mail to a letter carrier or deposit in a collection box
What to Take to the Post Office

- Signed and dated postage statement(s)
- Supporting documentation
- Check or cash to cover additional postage
- A check for your annual mailing fee

*Note: A meter strip may be affixed to postage statement to pay for the additional postage*
What Happens at the Post Office

- Eligibility of contents
- Markings and endorsements
- Sortation
- Postage payment
Checklist

- Decide on a class of mail
- Create your mailpiece
- Obtain an address list
- Check the accuracy of your address list
- Address your mail
- Choose a postage payment method
- Obtain a mailing permit
- Pay an annual mailing fee
- Pick up supplies
- Sort your mail
Resources

- Mailpiece Design Analysts (MDAs)

- Quick Service Guides (QSG)

- Postal Explorer

- MailPro
District Resources

- Mailing Requirements Office
- Business Mail Entry Manager
- Mailing Standards Specialist
- Supervisor, Business Mail Entry
- Business Mail Technicians (BMT)
Additional Resources

- [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)
- [Domestic Mail Manual(DMM) Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service®](http://pe.usps.com)
- DMM located at [http://pe.usps.com](http://pe.usps.com)
Questions?