

# Designing Mail for Success



## Agenda:

This presentation covers the technical specifications for designing the following forms of mail:

- **Postcards (First-Class Cards)**
- **Letters**
- **Flats**

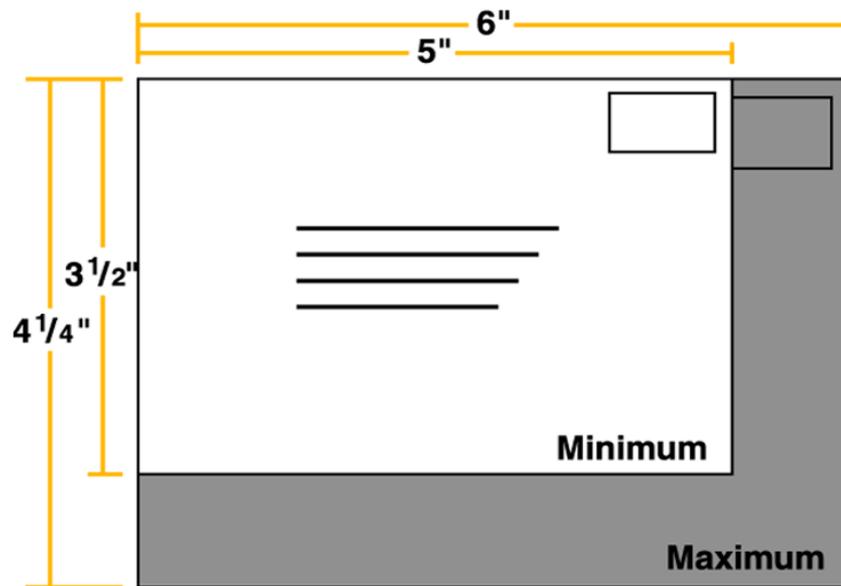
## Objectives

- Create mailpieces that perform well in the Postal automated mail stream.
- To reduce the risk of additional postage being charged at the point of acceptance.



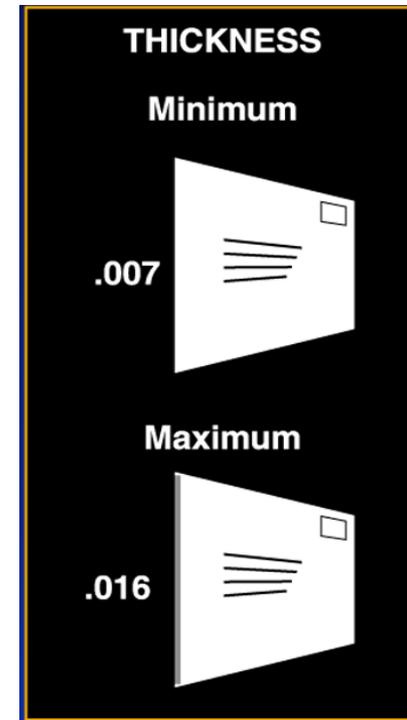
# Postcards

# Postcards - Dimensions

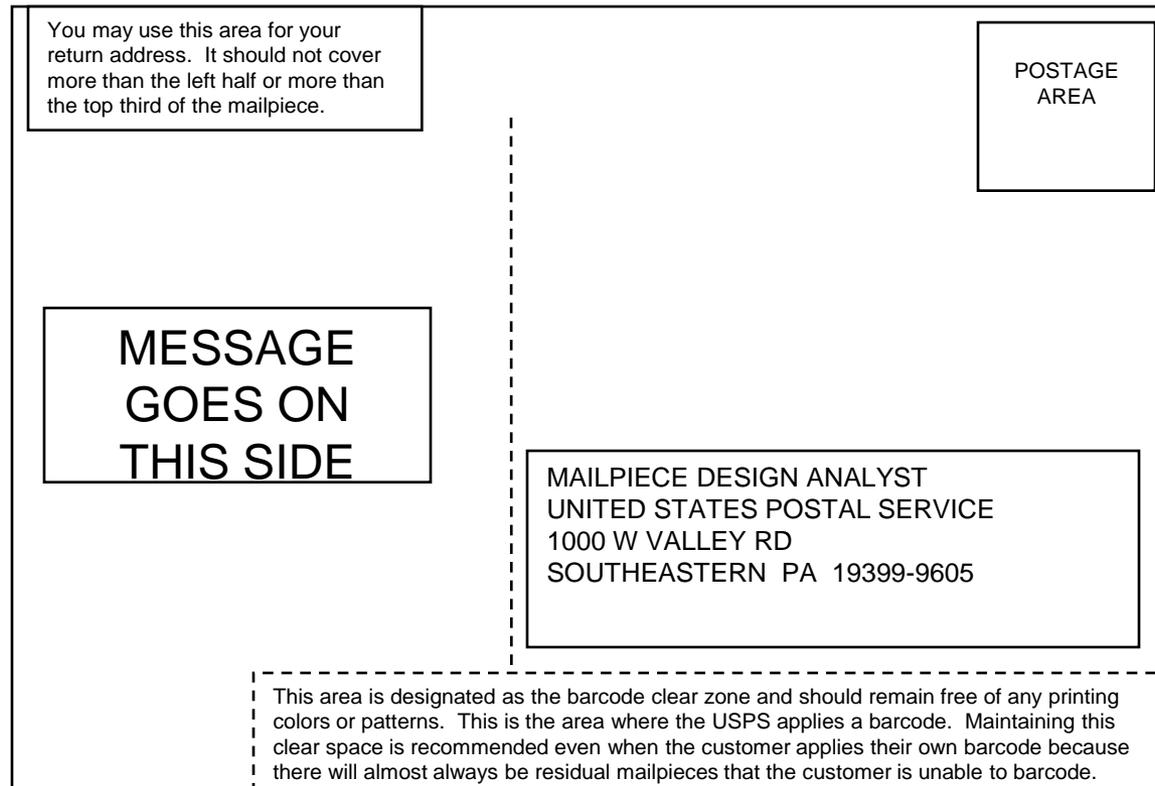


Corner Radius Maximum 1/8"

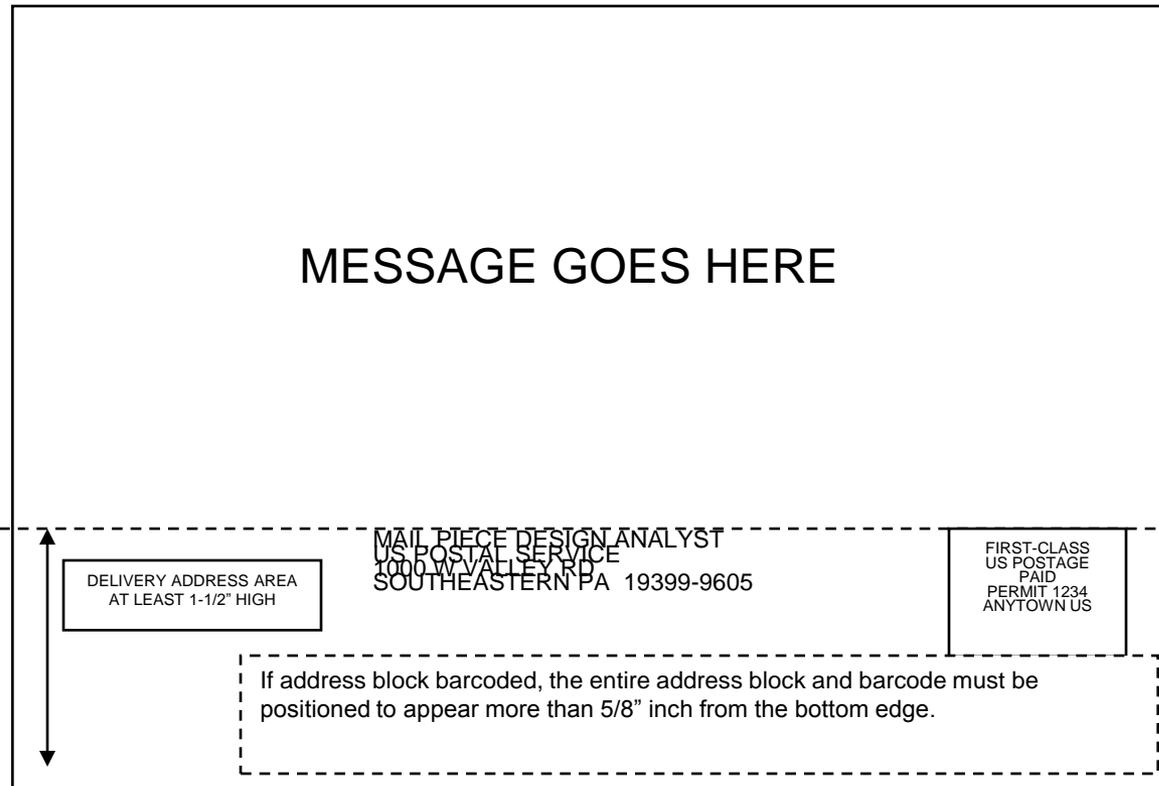
Graphic at 100%  
Place mailpiece against  
template to test accuracy



# Postcards – Vertically Divided



# Postcards - Horizontally Divided



## Other Considerations:

- **Perforations or Tearing Guides**
- **Aspect Ratio (*For “Auto” Eligibility*)**
- **Double Cards**
- **Barcode Placement and Readability Standards**



# Letters

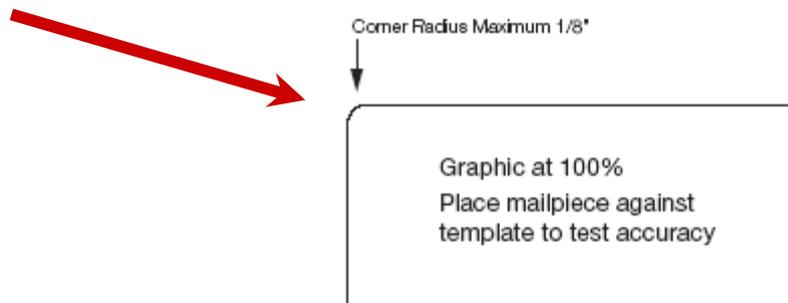
## Shape Matters

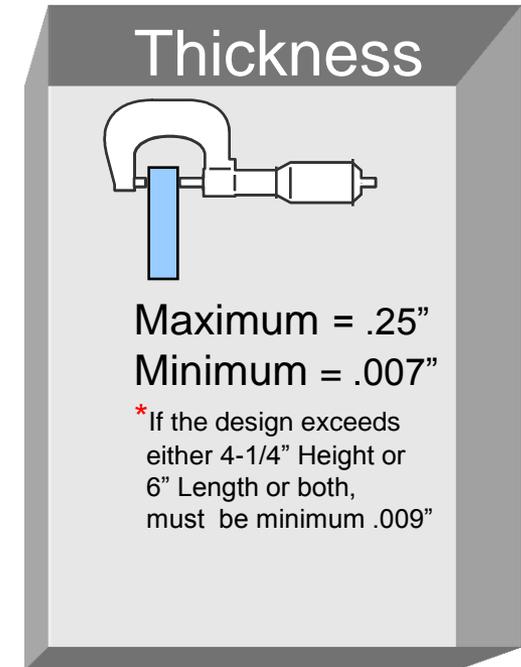
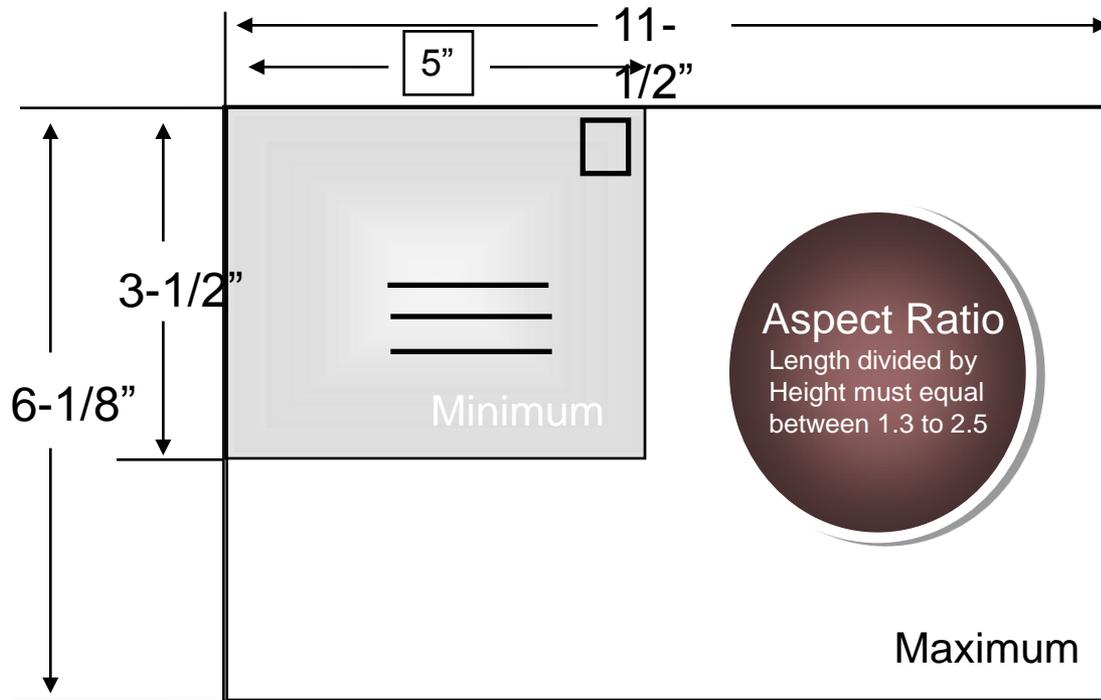
Letters must be rectangular, with four square corners and parallel opposite sides



*Exception:*

*Letter-size pieces made of card stock may have “Finished Corners” that do not exceed a maximum radius of .125 inch (1/8” inch)*





Maximum Weight  
for  
Machinable Envelopes  
Letters



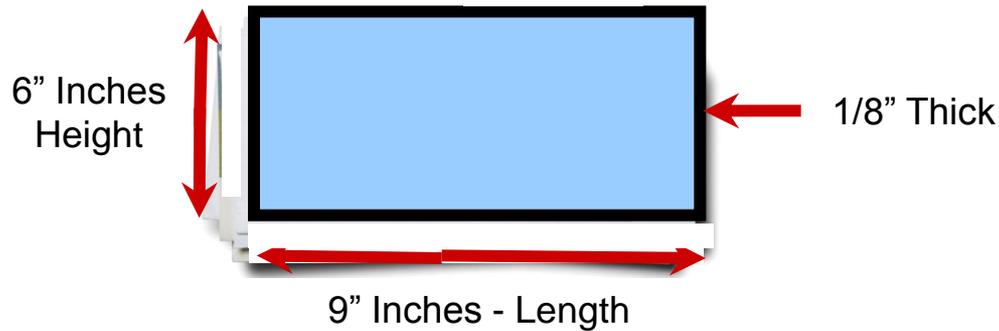
Maximum Weight  
for  
Automation Letters



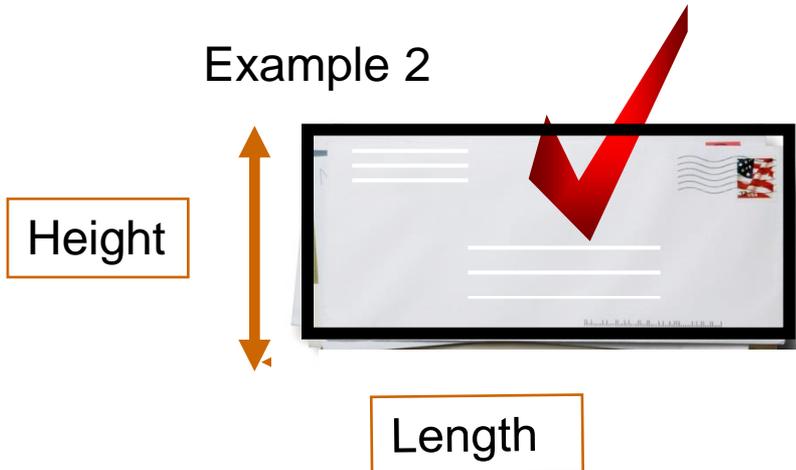
*\*Heavy letter mail weighing more than 3 ounces must have a barcode in the address block and be prepared in a sealed envelope*

# Address Orientation

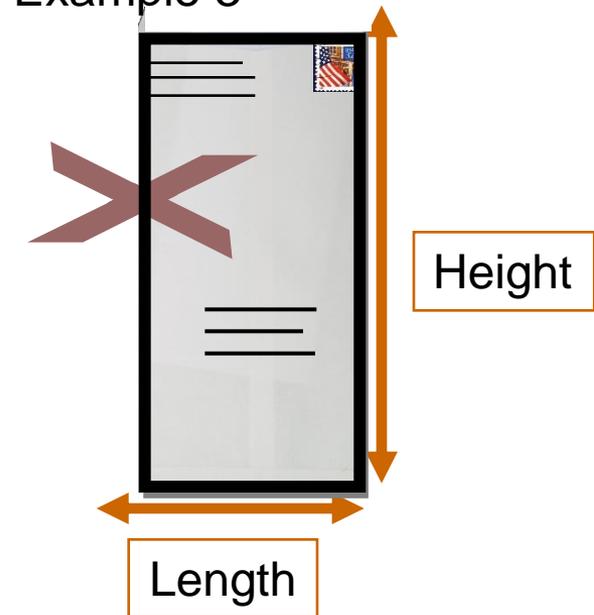
Example 1



Example 2

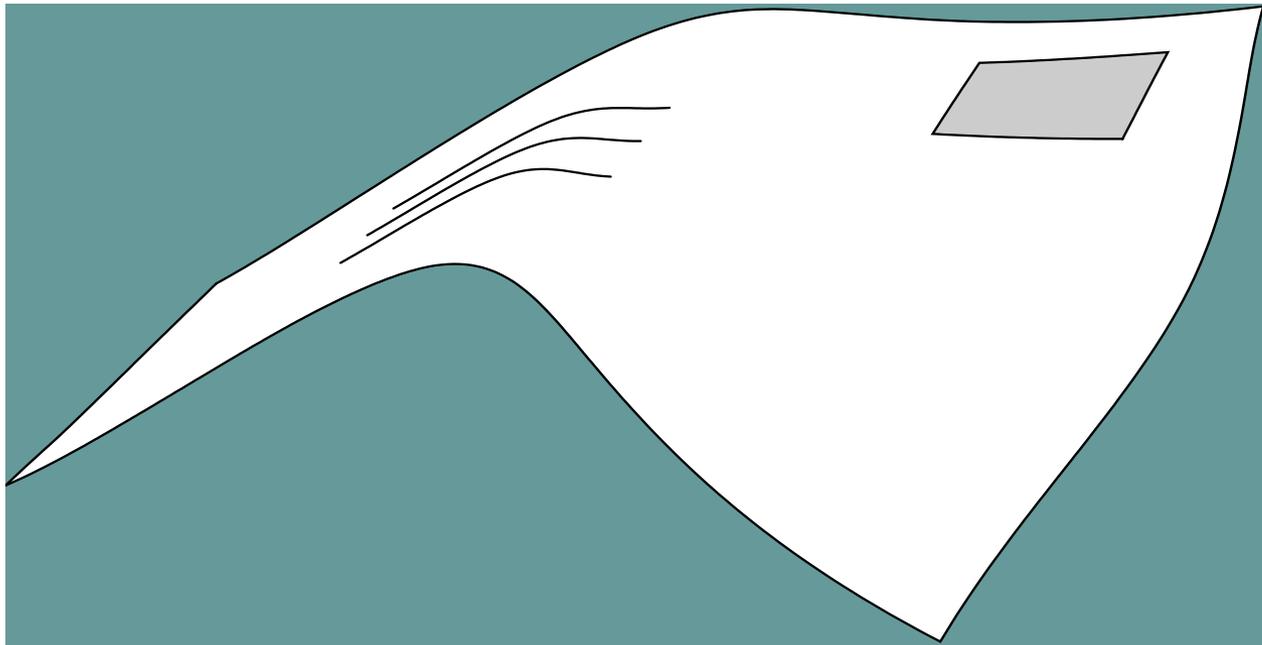


Example 3



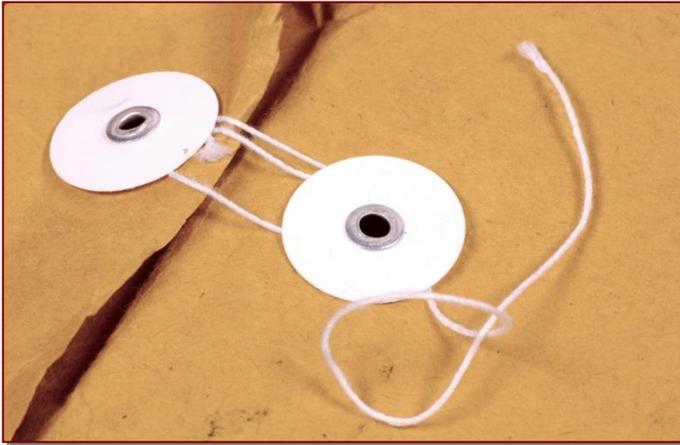
## Flexibility

- Avoid Creating Rigid Mail
  - *Your letter or card design must bend easily when subjected to a transport belt tension of 40 pounds around an 11-inch diameter turn*



## Avoid Closures or Odd Shaped Items

- Clasps, strings, buttons, or similar closure devices or . . . . Contains items such as pens, pencils, or loose keys or coins that cause the thickness of the mailpiece to be uneven



## Avoid Plastic

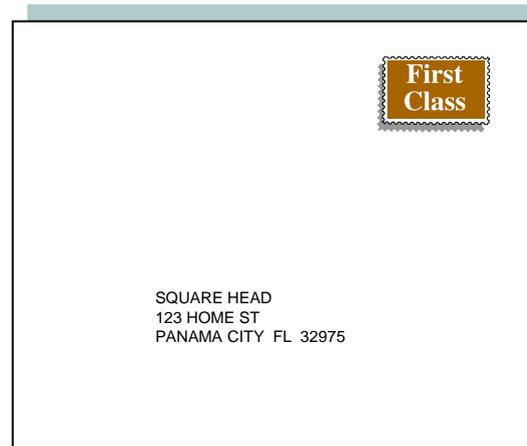
- Poly-bagged, polywrapped or enclosed in any plastic material



*Translucent envelopes are considered to be plastic.*

## Aspect Ratio

1/8 inch  
thick



$6 \div 6 = 1$

Height 6 inches

Length 6 inches

The result of the length of a design being divided by it's height must fall between 1.3 to 2.5 (inclusive).



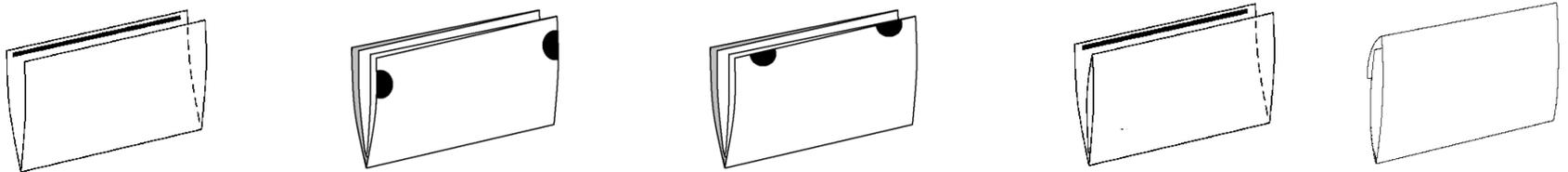
## Folded Self-Mailer (FSM) – Basic Design

- Dimensions
  - Height – 3.5” to 6” max
  - Length – 5” to 10.5” max
  
- Weight – up to 3oz
  
- Paper basis weight - Book grade (Text, Offset)
  - Basic Folded Self-Mailer design
    - 70lb min for 1oz mailpiece; 80lb over 1oz up to 3oz
  - Optional elements added
    - basis weight ranges from 80lb to 120lb
    - basis weight increases when piece weight is over 1oz
  - Newsprint paper allowed on quarter-fold design only
    - 55lb min newsprint paper which correlates to 60lb Book wgt
    - 1.5 inch tabs required

## Folded Self-Mailer (FSM) – Basic Design

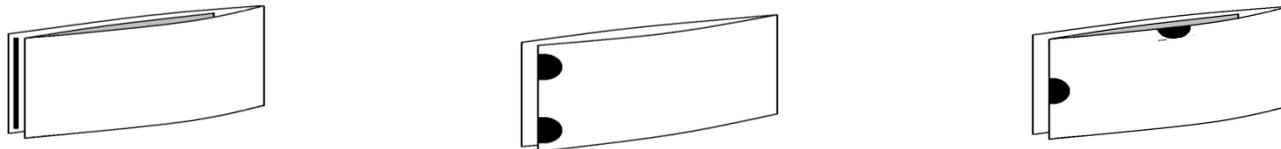
- Fold style / orientation – address side view

Horizontal - final fold at bottom edge to non-address side



Vertical - final fold on lead edge to non-address side

Oblong is a common name for this fold style



**These are only representative illustrations of potential designs.**

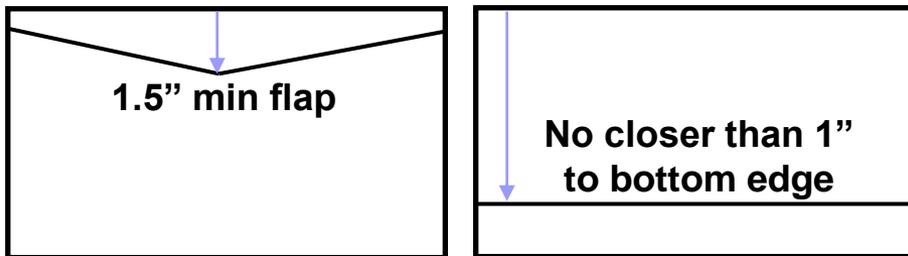
## Folded Self-Mailer (FSM) – Basic Design

- Panels - formed when a sheet(s) of paper are folded
  - Each folded section of a sheet is a separate panel
  - FSMs have (2) minimum, (12) maximum panels
    - Exception: Qtr-fold using newsprint paper - 8 min, 24 max panels
  - Both sides of panel count as one and the same panel
  - Equal - nearly equal size; varied fold styles with panels of differing sizes, short panels covered by full-size panel(s)
  - Internal partial panels count toward # panels allowed
  - Final fold panel creates non-address side of mailpiece by folding from bottom to top, or lead to trail edge

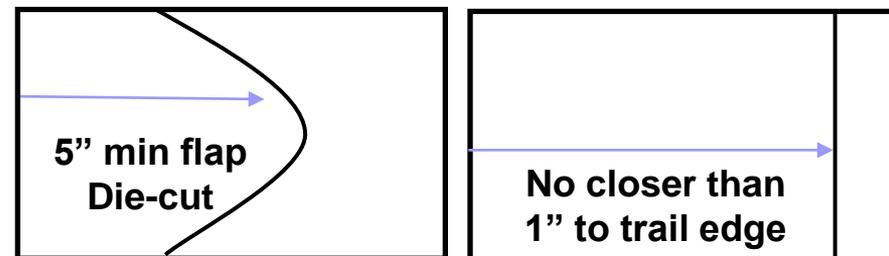
## Folded Self-Mailer (FSM) – Basic Design

- **Flap - used for closure of mailpiece on non-address side**
  - **Horizontal fold letter, external flap is final fold from top edge**
  - **Vertical fold letter, external flap must be final fold from lead edge**
  - **Die-cut shape external flaps allowed**
    - **glue line seal along the contour of the edge recommended**
    - **glue spots / elongated glue lines or tabs must sufficiently seal the flap to the non-address side panel**

### *Horizontal fold*



### *Vertical fold*



## Folded Self-Mailer (FSM) – Basic Design

- Closure method - Glue (adhesive or cohesive)



### Continuous glue line

1/8" W to within 1/4" of each edge  
weight

### Glue Spots

3-4 spots based on weight

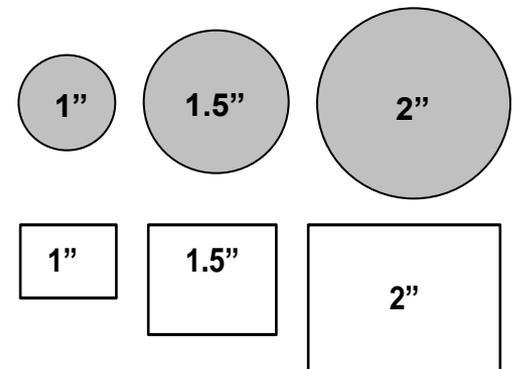
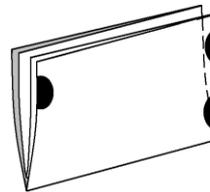
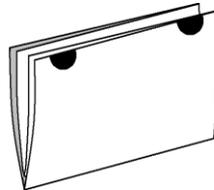
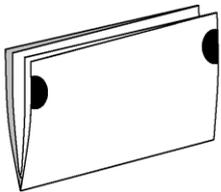
### Elongated Glue Lines

3-4 lines based on weight

- Closure method - Tabs (2 or 3 based on mailpiece design)

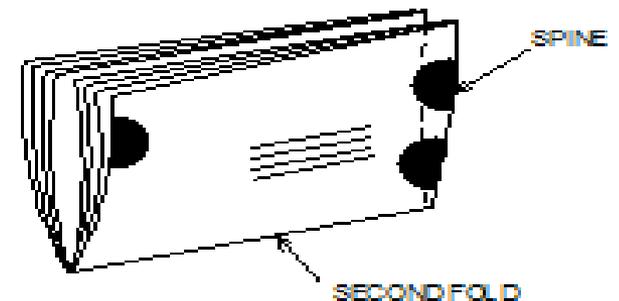
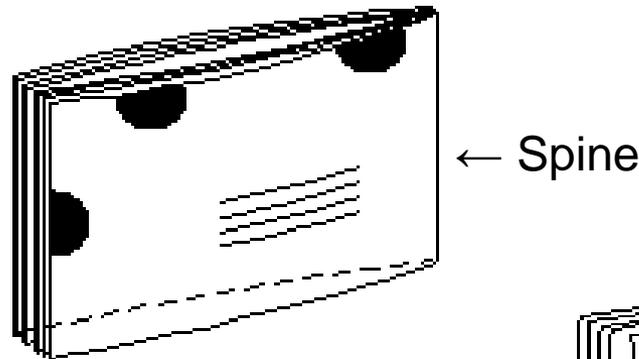
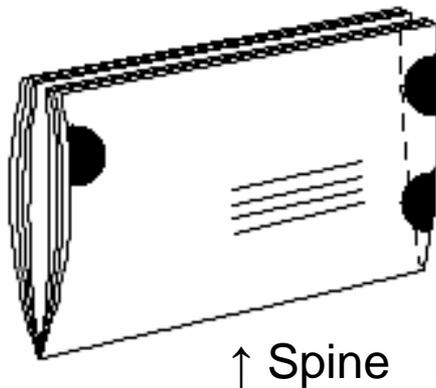
- Placed either at Top or Lead / Trail

- within 1" from adjacent edge(s)
- lower lead edge tab 1/2" from bottom



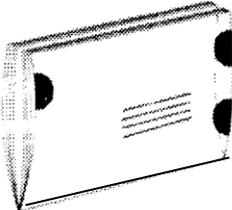
## Booklet Type

- Booklets may be designed with the spine or final fold at the bottom or on the leading edge.



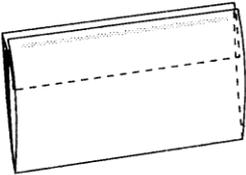
## Simple-Spine Booklet: DMM 201.3.16.5

- Spine on bottom (longer) edge
- Place two tabs on leading edge and one on trailing edge:
  - **Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from bottom edge**
  - **Position upper tabs 1 inch from top edge**
- May use 50-pound – 5” to 9” ; 60-pound paper recommended
- *Must* use 60-pound on pieces over 9” up to 10.5” long

	Spine or fold on the bottom (longer) edge	5” to 9” long	50-pound	Three 1.5” non-perforated tabs	Two tabs on leading edge; one tab on trailing edge. Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from the bottom edge. Position upper tabs 1 inch from the top edge.
		Over 9”, up to 10.5” long	60-pound		

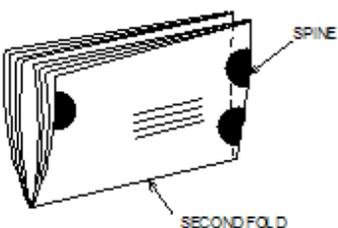
## Perfect Bound Booklet

- Spine on bottom (longer) edge; non-perforated inner flap on top (upper edge)
- Perfect bound or saddle stitched with a continuous glue line along flap preferred, minimum 1" glue spots acceptable if placed within  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of right and left edges:
- *Must* use 80-pound paper

	<p>Spine on bottom (longer) edge, non-perforated inner flap on top (upper) edge</p>	<p>5" to 9.5" long</p>	<p>80-pound</p>	<p>Continuous glue line or glue spots</p>	<p>Perfect bound or saddle stitched with a continuous glue line along flap preferred, minimum 1 inch glue spots acceptable if placed within <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> inch of right and left edges.</p>
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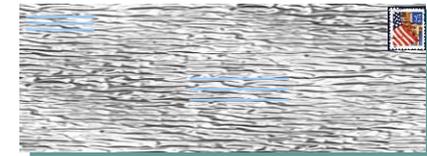
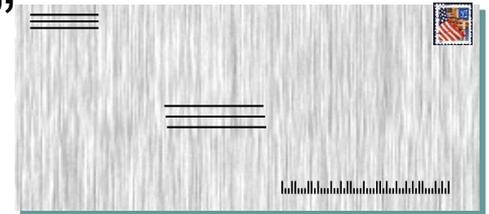
## Folded Booklet (“Quarter-Fold”) Exhibit DMM 201.3.16.8

- Final fold on bottom (longer) edge; spine folded on leading edge
- Place two tabs on leading edge and one on trailing edge:
  - Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from bottom edge
  - Position upper tabs 1 inch from top edge
- May use 40-pound; 50-pound paper recommended

 <p>The diagram shows a perspective view of a folded booklet. A label 'SPINE' points to the top edge where the pages are bound. A label 'SECOND FOLD' points to the bottom edge of the booklet.</p>	<p>Final fold on the bottom (longer) edge, with the folded spine on the leading or trailing (shorter) edge</p>	<p>5” to 10.5” long</p>	<p>40-pound</p>	<p>Three 1.5” non-perforated tabs</p>	<p>Folded Booklet Two tabs on leading edge; one tab on trailing edge. Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from the bottom edge. Position upper tabs 1 inch from the top edge.</p>
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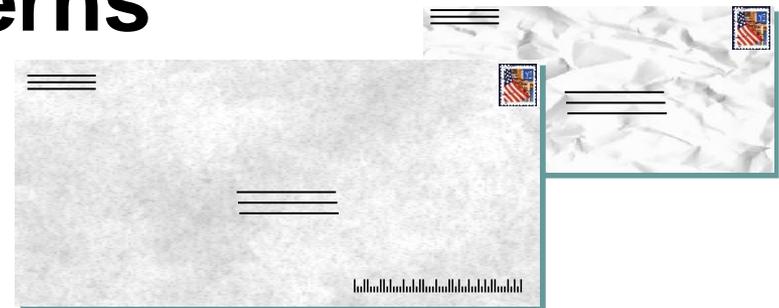
## ● Avoid These Types of Stock

- Glossy
- Porous – Barcodes will “Bleed”
  - Newsprint, Textured Stock,
  - Uncoated Corrugated Mailers
- Thin paper stocks
  - Image bleed thru from inserts or other pages



## ● Background Concerns

- Recycled Paper
- “Security Paper”
- Patterns



“White” or light pastel colors work best for the background and “Black” ink works best for print color



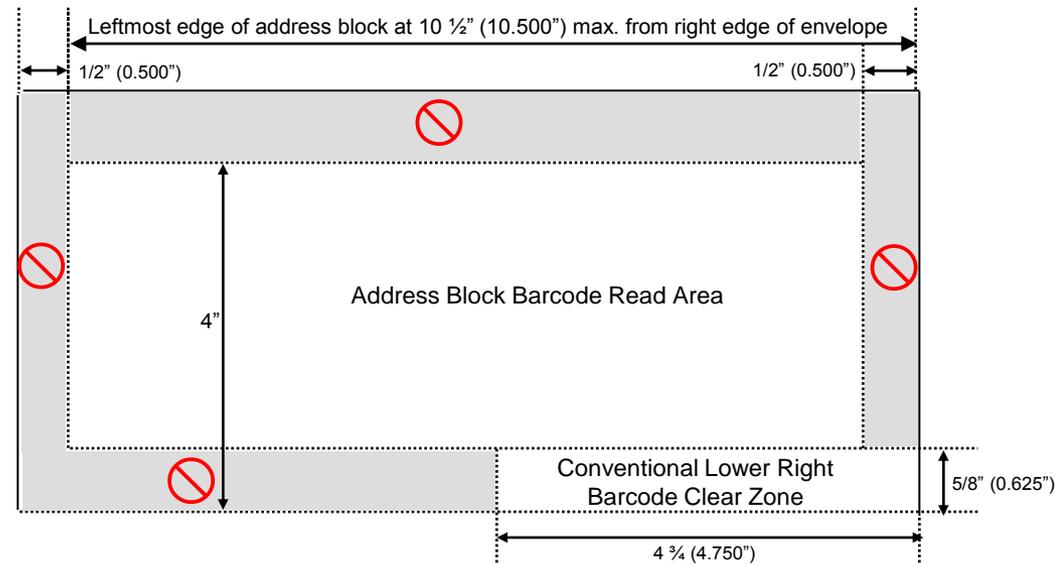
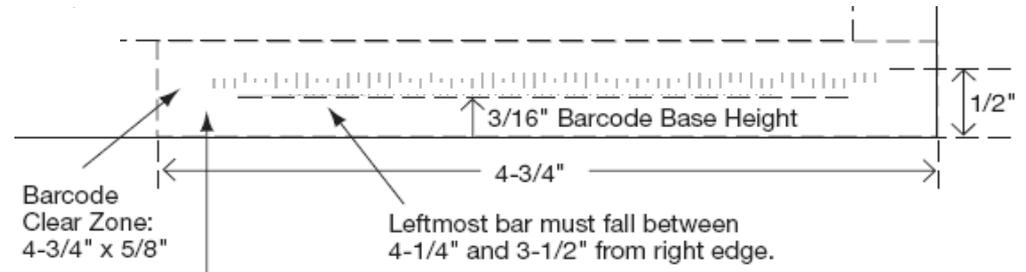
*\*While other background and print color combinations are possible, consult with your local MDA for specific guidance*

- **Barcode Clear Zone**

- 5/8" from bottom
- 4-3/4" from right

- **Address Block**

- Barcode above or below address
- Within 4" from bottom
- 1/2" clearance right and left
- 5/8" from bottom
- Separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must < 5/8"
- Leftmost bar < 10-1/2" from right edge of piece





# Flats

## Dimensional Standards - Automation

Maximum weight  
First-Class  
13 oz.  
Periodicals  
20 oz.  
Standard < 16oz.  
Bound  
Printed  
Matter 20 oz.

Height

12 "  
max.

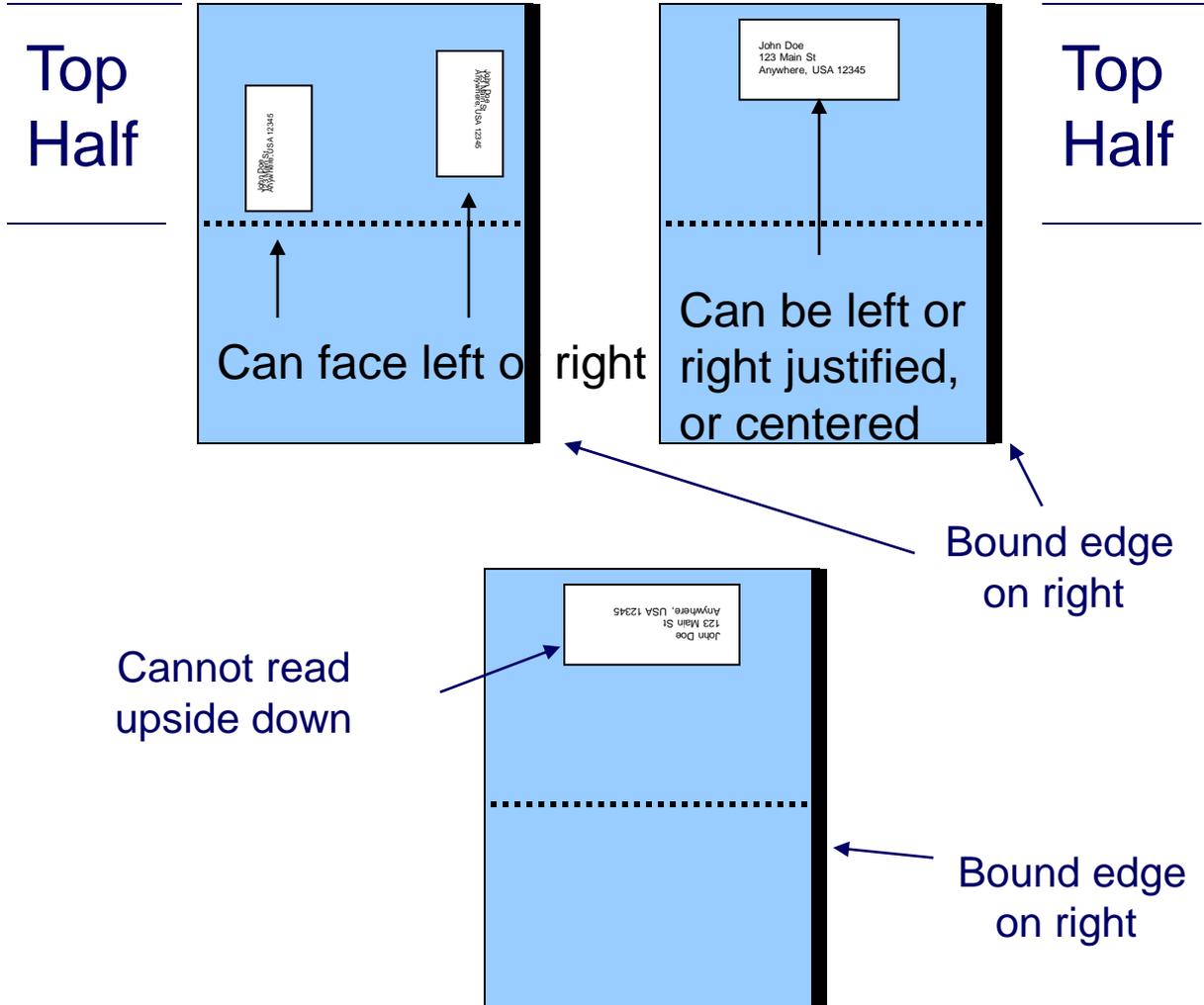
*Thickness*  
.009" minimum  
3/4" maximum

5" min.

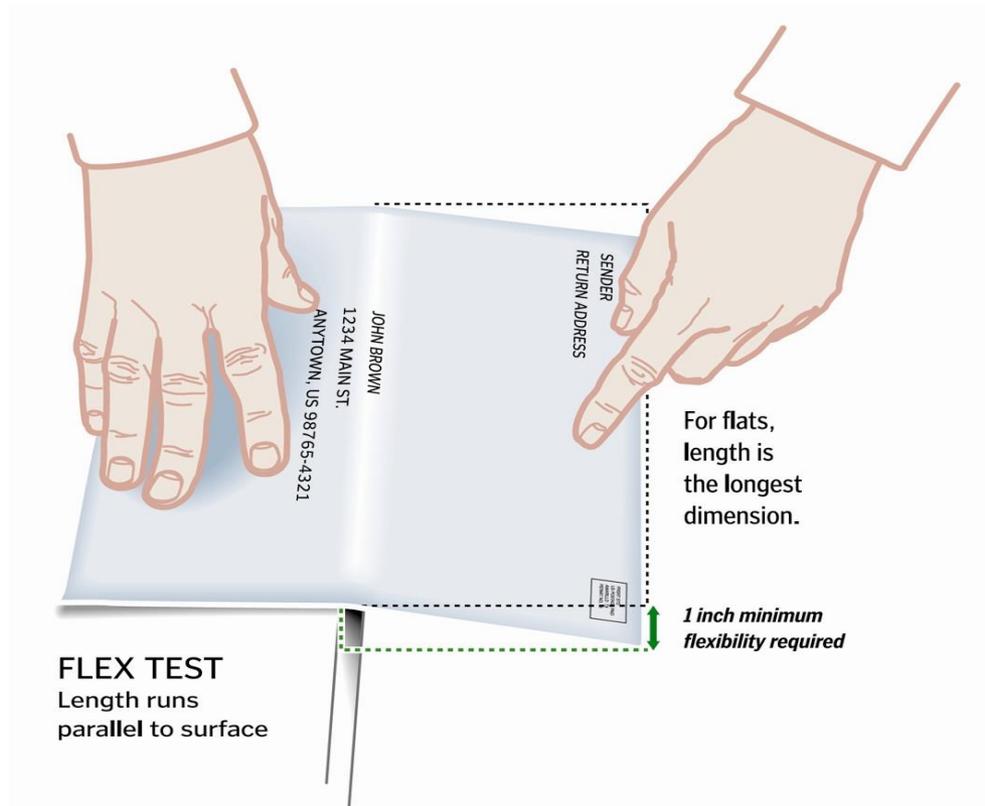
6" min.

15" max.

Length



# Flexibility



# Deflection

Exhibit 1.6a Deflection Test—Pieces 10 Inches or Longer

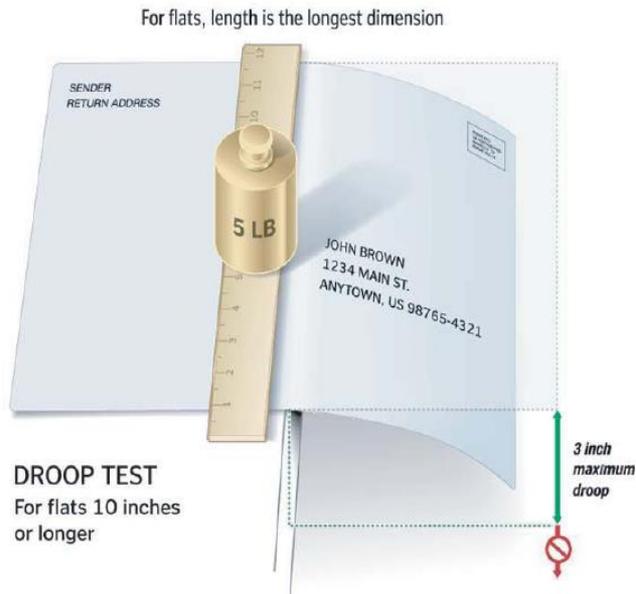
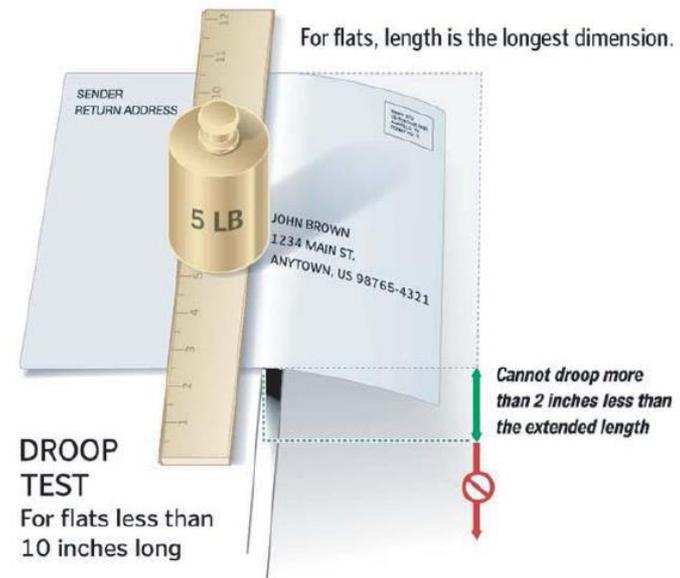
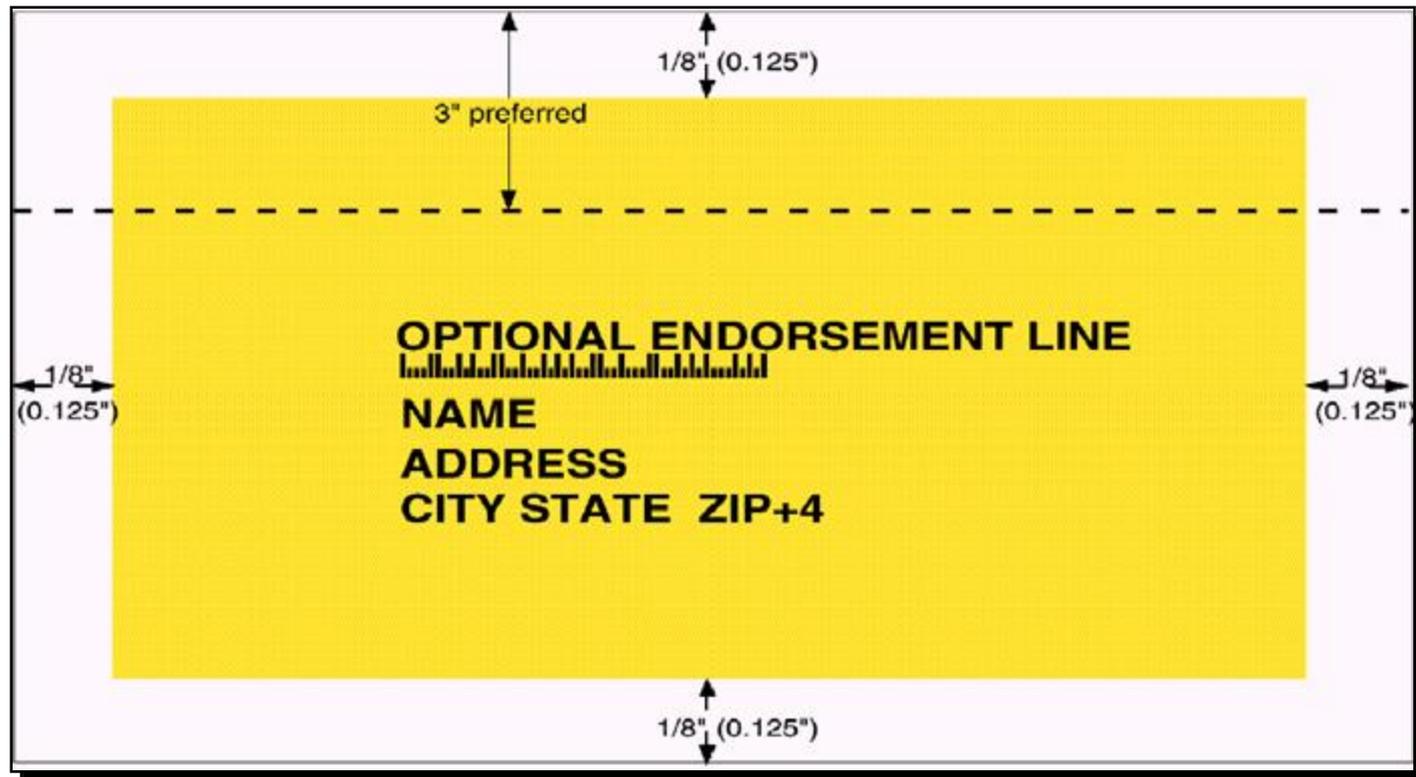


Exhibit 1.6b Deflection Test—For Pieces Less Than 10 Inches Long





## Other Considerations:

- **Uniform Thickness**
- **Polywrap Coverings**

## Resources:

### POSTAL EXPLORER (<http://pe.usps.gov>)

- Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)
  - *Section 201 – Cards/Letters*
  - *Section 301 – Flats*
- DMM Advisory (*Pending Changes & Clarifications*)
  - *Receive e-mail alerts (send request to [dmmadvisory@usps.com](mailto:dmmadvisory@usps.com) & type Subscribe on the “RE” line*

### RIBBS (<http://ribbs.usps.gov>)

- Intelligent Mail Services
- Address Quality Products
- MOVE Update



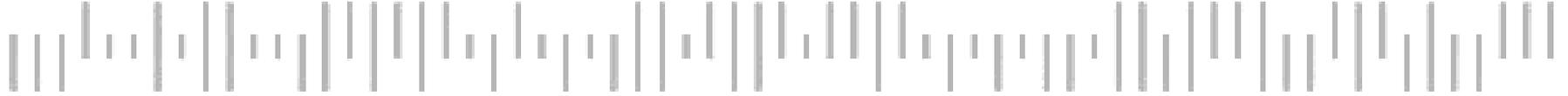
## MDA Helpdesk

### Contact Information

**Phone: 855-593-6093**

**email: [MDA@USPS.GOV](mailto:MDA@USPS.GOV)**

**Operation Hours: MONDAY – FRIDAY, 7am – 5pm CST**



# Questions

