

## USPS Picture Permit™ indicia

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### General Program Information

The United States Postal Service® introduced USPS Picture Permit Imprint™ indicia program in June 2012. This service is available for Full-Service Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb) mailings of automation First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail® letters and postcards.

- **What is USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

USPS Picture Permit™ indicia (PPI) provides organizations the opportunity to include their corporate logo, brand images, or trademarks in the permit indicia space of First-Class Mail® Full-Service Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb) automation letters and postcards, and all Standard Mail® Full-Service IMb letters and postcards. The addition of images to the permit imprint indicia has the potential of increasing open rates and enhancing the value of the mail.

- **Why does the U.S. Postal Service® offer USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

The U.S. Postal Service responded to requests from organizations to use their corporate logos, brand images or trademarks in the permit indicia space and to improve the open rates of their mailpieces. In creating USPS Picture Permit™ indicia, the U.S. Postal Service® has developed guidelines and requirements for the use of organizations' proprietary images in the permit indicia space of the mailpiece.

- **How will my company benefit from using USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

PPI could boost the visual impact and open rate of your mailpiece, which will improve the effectiveness of the overall mailing.

- **Who may apply for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

Organizations that plan to use a new or existing mailing permit to send First-Class Mail Full-Service IMb automation letters and postcards or Standard Mail Full-Service IMb letters and postcards

- **How do I apply?**

Follow the instructions provided on: <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm>

## Requirements

- **What are the requirements for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

The requirements for PPI are the following:

- Commercial Presort Permit Imprint
- Automation First-Class Mail letters and postcards
- Automation Standard Mail letters and postcards
- Full-Service IMb mailing
- Customized portions of the proposed indicia design **must be in color**, e.g., your corporate logo, brand images and trademarks.
- Required elements of the indicia must be in black, e.g., class of mail, U.S. Postage Paid, permit number, etc.

- **What mail is eligible for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

The following types of mail are eligible for PPI:

- First-Class Mail Full-Service IMb Automation letters and postcards
- Standard Mail Full-Service IMb Automation letters and postcards

- **What are the required elements for the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia space?**

The required elements for the PPI space are the following:

- Mail Class (in all caps)
- U. S. Postage Paid
- Permit Number
- City and State (ZIP Code™ optional)
- Company Name – May be used in lieu of Permit Number, City, and State if specific requirements per Sect. 604.5.3.9 of the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) are met.

PPI is an enhancement for the indicia space; it does not replace the basic indicia elements. All existing permit indicia markings are still required, including the mail class, U.S. Postage Paid, City, State, and Permit Number or the company name in lieu of city, state, and permit number when using a company permit imprint as per Sect. 604.5.3.9 of the DMM.

- **Is use of the Full-Service IMb required for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia mailings?**

Yes, Full -Service IMb is required.

- **Why do the images in the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia need to be in color?**

Black and white images did not perform to satisfaction in operational tests; therefore color images and logos are required.

- **Who is responsible for the image in the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia space?**

The mail owner has the responsibility for the image in the PPI space. Images are not provided or endorsed by the Postal Service.

- **Is there a fee to use USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

Yes, there is a fee to use PPI

- The fee for First-Class Mail Automation letters and postcards is one cent (1¢) per mailpiece (plus applicable postage)

- The fee for Standard Mail Automation letters and postcards is two cents (2¢) per mailpiece (plus applicable postage)

### **USPS Picture Permit™ indicia Authorization Process**

- **What is the authorization process for Picture Permit?**

**Step 1:** The organization goes to: <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm> to review the guidelines, required elements and to complete the online registration.

**Step 2:** Once registered, the organization will receive a link to complete the online PPI application, PS Form 3615-A which requires your organizations permit indicia # and other information. Submit the signed PS Form 3615-A to [picturepermit@usps.com](mailto:picturepermit@usps.com).

**Step 3:** The Program Office (PO) will confirm the application has been approved via email. The organization will then need to submit a PDF copy of an addressed mailpiece showing envelope/postcard dimensions, IMb, clear zone and proposed Picture Permit design to: [picturepermit@usps.com](mailto:picturepermit@usps.com).

### **Evaluation Process**

#### **Step 4.1 (Option 1) Engineering Evaluation Requirements**

Letter Mail conforming to DMM 604.5.4, USPS Picture Permit™ indicia (PPI), shall undergo the standard engineering evaluation process which takes approximately 45 business days. Organizations shall provide 500 production samples which will replicate what will be printed and inducted into the live mailstream. In addition to the Full-Service Intelligent Mail barcode, each sample mailpiece must include a complete and valid destination address. Do not use the same address for all mailpieces; the 500 samples must contain a variety of valid addresses.

#### **Step 4.2 (Option 2) Engineering Evaluation Requirements\***

Letter Mail conforming to DMM 604.5.4, USPS Picture Permit™ indicia (PPI), and all of the following restrictions, may be subject to Option 2 engineering evaluation period of approximately 10 business days. After approval for alternative engineering evaluation, organizations shall provide 50 production samples or samples of sufficient quality to accurately represent the mailpiece including complete address, keyline and Full Service IMb information printed on each sample (DMM 708.4.3). Letter Mail not conforming to all of these requirements shall undergo the standard engineering evaluation process.

- **Color image shall not contain embedded text or numbers.**
- Color image shall not have a drop shadow on any edge.
- PPII area (including .50" left and bottom clear zone) to be on white background (no reverse print).
- PPII shall be positioned in upper right-hand corner with "clear zones" as shown in Fig. B
- Overall width of longest text line shall not be less than width of image as shown in Fig. C
- All mail class text to conform to the approved template provided by USPS.
- No disk mailers, reusable envelopes, perforated folded self-mailers, windowed envelopes.

- Does not exhibit any of the non-machinable criteria listed in DMM 101.1.2.

\*For more details please review the Picture permit Technical Requirements document

*Please mail samples to:*

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE  
ATTN: USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ **indicia**  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW, RM 5538  
WASHINGTON, DC 20260-5538

USPS® Engineering will then test the designed mailpieces. If the proposed PPI passes these tests, the PO will request a mailing schedule, including dates and volumes

- **Where may I find more information about USPS Picture Permit™ **indicia** online?**

Additional PPI information (listed below) can be found at  
<https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm>

- Program Overview
  - Fact Sheet
  - FAQs
  - USPS Picture Permit™ **indicia** Product Requirements
  - USPS Picture Permit™ **indicia** Technical Requirements
  - Registration Link
  - PPI Program Office (PO) email address
- **How will I know if my application is approved?**

The PPI PO will email your organization with authorization to move to the next step.

- **How do I contact the Picture Permit Program Office?**

By Mail: UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®  
ATTN: USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ **indicia**  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA, SW ROOM 5538  
WASHINGTON, DC 20260-5538

By Email: [picturepermit@usps.gov](mailto:picturepermit@usps.gov)

### **Commingling of Mail**

- **Can mail be commingled for USPS Picture Permit™ **indicia**?**

Yes, mail can be commingled for PPI.

- **Does the commingled mailing need to be entered as part of a Full-Service automation mailing?**

Yes, the commingled mailing needs to be entered as part of a Full-Service automation mailing.

- **Are mailings consisting of only Intelligent Mail basic price pieces (i.e. no Intelligent Mail Full-Service pieces) eligible for USPS Picture Permit™ **indicia** pricing?**

No, only Intelligent Mail Full-Service pieces are eligible for PPI pricing.

- **Can Full-Service and Basic Service automation pieces be included and qualify for payment of the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia fee within the combined mailing?**

Yes, Full-Service and Basic Service automation pieces may be included and qualify for payment of the PPI fee within the combined mailing.

- **Can Non-Automation mailpieces be submitted and qualify for payment of the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia fees?**

Yes, non-automation mailpieces can be submitted and qualify for payment of the Picture Permit fees provided:

- Machinable (presort) mailing are presented as a combined mailing and supported by electronic documentation and separate postage statement by client.
- Or machinable (presort) mailing may be presented as a separate identical weight presort mailing for just the PPI pieces.
- Single-piece PPI pieces may qualify for payment of the PPI fee when prepared and presented in groups of 100 by ounce increment.

- **How are the commingled mailings submitted?**

The commingled mailings are submitted on eDoc (Mail.dat or Mail.xml) and the Mail Owner and Mailing Agent must be identified in the eDoc.

- **Is the mail owner required to be listed on the Customer Mail Report?**

Yes, the mail owner is required to be listed on the Customer Mail Report.

- **Does a separate postage statement need to be submitted for each USPS Picture Permit™ indicia mail owner?**

Yes, a separate postage statement needs to be submitted for each PPI mail owner.

- **Do all of the mailpieces represented on the individual postage statement need to be 100% USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

Yes, all of the mailpieces represented on the individual postage statement need to be 100% PPI.

- **Will USPS Picture Permit™ indicia piece counts be verified in conjunction with the Mail Piece Count Verification performed at time of acceptance?**

Yes, PPI piece counts will be verified in conjunction with the Mail Piece Count Verification performed at time of acceptance.

## **Mail Service Providers**

- **Can a Mail Service Provider (MSP) apply for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia authorization on behalf of their clients?**

Yes, MSPs may apply for the PPI as long as they have written authorization from the mail owner. However, the mail owner remains responsible for the images appearing on the PPI space.

## **Permit Imprint**

- **Is a mailing permit required to participate in USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

Yes, a new *or* existing mailing permit is required to participate.

- **Can I customize my existing permit with images?**

Yes, your existing permit imprint indicia may be modified as long as you complete the 4 step authorization process as outlined on the web site.

- **How do I obtain a mailing permit to participate in USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

Complete *PS Form 3615, Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile*, and submit it to the Post Office™ where your mailings will be entered.

## **Sample Mailpieces**

### **What information is required on the sample mailpieces?**

The information that is required on the sample mailpieces are:

- Complete and valid destination address. Do not use the same address for all samples – must contain a variety of valid addresses.
- Picture Permit Imprint Indicia
- Full-Service Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb)

### **Why are a variety of valid addresses needed on sample pieces?**

In order to test return-to-sender and undeliverable-as-addressed automation capabilities, a variety of valid addresses are needed. Without a complete and valid address, all pieces are rejected and therefore cannot be appropriately tested.

### **Where do I submit the sample mailpieces for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia?**

You submit the samples to the program office at the following address:

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®  
ATTN: USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ indicia  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA, SW ROOM 5538  
WASHINGTON, DC 20260-5538

### **Additional Information:**

For additional information on PPI, please go to: <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm> or email questions to [picturepermit@usps.gov](mailto:picturepermit@usps.gov).