

National Zone Charts Matrix Technical Guide

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OVERVIEW

The National Zone Charts Matrix was developed to assist mailers in applying the proper postage rates to a mail piece. Postage rates for zoned mail are based on mail piece weight and the distance the mail piece travels using these zone assignments. The matrix is used to determine the distance that a mailpiece travels based on the ZIP Code where the mailpiece enters the mailstream (origination) and the ZIP Code™ that will deliver the mailpiece to the addressee (destination). The origination and destination of a mailpiece is referred to as "ZIP™ pairing". Zones are designated as "local" or 1 through 9. Please be advised that the matrix does not include postage rate information. Current postage rate charts for all classes of mail are located on-line at <http://www.usps.com/prices/welcome.htm>.

The Zone Charts are **not** "map based" as a time zone would be defined. The USPS® zones are radial, measuring from the 3-Digit ZIP origination point of the mailpiece, to the destination. The same destination could be zoned differently when mailed from different origination points. An example would be as shown below.

A 5lb. package originating in Memphis, TN that is destined to Los Angeles, CA, using the ZIP pairing of 381 to 900, is Zone 7. However, the same 5lb. package originating in Las Vegas, NV to the same destination of Los Angeles, CA, using the ZIP pairing of 891 to 900 would be Zone 3.

The National Zone Charts Matrix contains information provided by U. S. geological survey files of established latitude and longitude coordinates of USPS 3-Digit ZIP services areas, known as the sectional center facilities, or SCFs. The matrix includes a list of these SCF coordinates. Distances are computed using the coordinates of the Sectional Center Facility (SCF) servicing the origination ZIP Code and the coordinates of the SCF servicing the destination ZIP Code.

The SCF serves as the processing and distribution center for post offices in a designated geographic area defined by the first three digits of the ZIP Codes of those offices. Distances are computed using the coordinates of the Sectional Center Facility (SCF) servicing the origination ZIP Code and the coordinates of the SCF servicing the destination ZIP Code. Labeling List L005 contained on-line via Postal Explorer®, located at <http://pe.usps.com/text/labelinglists/L005.htm#1102681>, provides a listing of 3-Digit ZIP Code prefixes sorted at the SCF level. An annual subscription to the Labeling Lists data files is available for purchase through the National Customer Support Center, NCSC. An order can be found at <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=labelinglists>.

Actual Zone Charts can be found on-line free of charge via USPS.COM® at <http://postcalc.usps.gov/Zonecharts/>.

DEFINING A ZONE

Local Zone

The local zone applies to mail deposited at any post office for delivery to any address within the delivery area of that post office. Check with your local post office for specific details regarding the ZIP Codes that qualify for local zone in your area. The National Zone Charts Matrix does **not** contain local zone information since local zones are at the 5-Digit ZIP Code level.

Non-Local Zone

Non-local zones are defined numerically as follows.

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Distance</u>
1	Non-local zones within a 50 mile radius of the point of origination
2	51 to 150 mile radius
3	151 to 300 mile radius
4	301 to 600 mile radius
5	601 to 1000 mile radius
6	1001 to 1400 mile radius
7	1401 to 1800 mile radius
8	1801 miles and over
9*	ZIP Codes Assigned For Exceptional Network Circumstances **

* Except for Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express mailed TO Zone 9 ZIP Codes, Zone 9 prices will be the same as Zone 8 prices

** Shipping between the 3-Digit ZIP Codes 967, 968 or 969 does not apply

MAIL CLASSES REQUIRING ZONE CHARTS

Shown below is a list of mail classes that require a current zone chart and the associated mail class rate chart to determine accurate postage for the mailpiece.

- **Bound Printed Matter**
- **Critical Mail**
 - Commercial Plus – USPS®-produced packaging only
- **Express Mail®**
- **Parcel Post® - Retail Parcels**
- **Parcel Return Service**
- **Parcel Select**
- **Parcel Select - Destination Entry**
 - Commercial Parcels - Machinable and Non-Machinable
- **Parcel Select - NDC Presort**
 - Commercial Parcels
- **Parcel Select - ONDC Presort**
 - Commercial Parcels
- **Periodicals Mail**
- **Priority Mail®**
 - Commercial Base – Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
 - Commercial Plus – Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
 - Commercial Plus – CUBIC – Large Envelopes (flats) and Parcels
 - Retail Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
 - Regional Rate Boxes – Commercial Base and Commercial Plus

MATRIX FILE GENERAL INFORMATION

The matrix file contains only active 3-Digit ZIP Codes.

File Name = Format2.txt

File Format = ASCII text file

Approximate File Size = 2MB

Record Length = 2003

First Record Of File = Effective Date

MATRIX FILE STRUCTURE

<u>Description</u>	<u>Start Position</u>	<u>End Position</u>	<u>Field Length</u>	<u>Acceptable</u>
Originating ZIP Code™	1	3	3	Numeric
Zone to Destination: ZIP™ 001	4	4	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 001	5	5	1	* e b or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 002	6	6	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 002	7	7	1	* e b or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 003	8	8	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 003	9	9	1	* e b or space

This format continues for each 3-Digit ZIP to the end of the matrix file.

Zone to Destination: ZIP 969	1940	1940	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 969	1941	1941	1	* e b or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 998	1998	1998	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 998	1999	1999	1	* e b or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 999	2000	2000	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 999	2001	2001	1	* e b or space
Carriage Return Line Feed	2002	2003	2	

* = NDC Entry Discount indicator

e = 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception indicator – check Exceptions File

b = Both 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception and NDC Entry Discount indicator – check Exceptions File

EXCEPTION FILE GENERAL INFORMATION

The exception file contains both active and inactive 3-Digit ZIP Codes.

File Name = exception.txt

File Format = ASCII text file

Approximate File Size = 1KB

Record Length = 31

First Record Of File = Effective Date Format MMDDYYYY

EXCEPTIONS FILE STRUCTURE

<u>Description</u>	<u>Start Position</u>	<u>End Position</u>	<u>Field Length</u>	<u>Acceptable</u>
Origin ZIP Code™ Range START	1	5	5	3 or 5 Numeric
Origin ZIP Code™ Range END	6	10	5	3 or 5 Numeric
Dest ZIP Code Range START	11	15	5	3 or 5 Numeric
Dest ZIP Code Range END	16	20	5	3 or 5 Numeric
Zone	21	22	2	Numeric (leading zero)
Filler	23	30	8	Alpha/Numeric/Space
Carriage Return	31	31	1	

For additional information regarding Zone Chart Exceptions, see the ReadMe file located in the Zone Chart Product.

ORDER FORM INFORMATION

The *National Zone Charts Matrix & Labeling Lists Product Order Form* [PS Form 8184] can be found on the RIBBS® web site located at <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=zonecharts>. Or, call 800-238-3150 to request a copy via fax or email.

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