

202 Elements on the Face of a Mailpiece

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1.0 All Mailpieces

1.1 Clear Space

A clear space must be available on all mail for the address, postage (permit imprint, postage stamp, or meter stamp), postmarks, and postal endorsements.

1.2 Delivery and Return Address

The delivery address specifies the location to which the USPS is to deliver a mailpiece. Except for mail prepared with detached address labels under [602.4.0](#), the piece must have the address of the intended recipient, visible and legible, only on the side of the piece bearing postage. A return address is required in specific circumstances (see [4.2](#) and [602.1.5](#) for more information about return addresses). See [602](#) for additional information regarding addressing.)

1.3 Postage Payment

The mailer is responsible for proper payment of postage. Standards for postage payment are specified for each shape and class of mail.

2.0 Address Placement

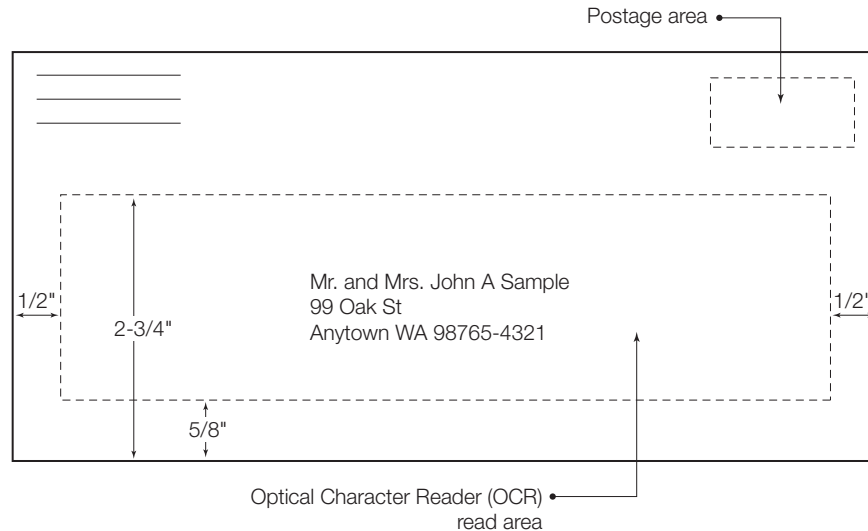
2.1 Address Placement Causing Mail to be Nonmailable and Nonmachinable

The location of the delivery address on a letter-size mailpiece determines which dimensions are the length and height of the piece. The *length* is the dimension parallel to the address as read; the *height* is the dimension perpendicular to the length. Consequently, the placement of the address may render a piece nonmailable or nonmachinable. See [601.6.4](#) for addressing standards when a window envelope is used. On a letter-size piece, the recommended address placement is within the optical character reader (OCR) read area, which is a space on the address side of the mailpiece defined by these boundaries (see [Exhibit 2.1, OCR Read Area](#)):

- a. Left: 1/2 inch from the left edge of the piece.
- b. Right: 1/2 inch from the right edge of the piece.
- c. Top: 2-3/4 inches from the bottom edge of the piece.
- d. Bottom: 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.



Exhibit 2.1 OCR Read Area



3.0 Placement and Content of Mail Markings

3.1 Enclosures

Enclosures, attachments, and mixed price mailpieces must be marked under the applicable standards in [703.9.0, *Mixed Classes*](#).

3.2 Printing and Designs

Required markings may be printed by a postage meter or other means that ensures a legible marking. A marking may not include or be part of a decorative design or advertisement.

3.3 Express Mail, Priority Mail, and Critical Mail Markings

Express Mail pieces must be marked "Express Mail," by using a mailing label according to [215.2.1](#). Priority Mail pieces must have the basic price marking of "Priority Mail" printed in a prominent location on the address side; see more options in [102.3.1](#). Critical Mail letters (see [223](#)) have the marking "Critical Mail" preprinted on the USPS-produced packaging. Critical Mail letters with permit imprint postage must have "Critical Mail" as the class of mail in the indicia (under [604.5.0](#)) when a class of mail is printed. In addition, except for pieces paid using an Express Mail Corporate Account, permit imprint, Express Mail and Priority Mail pieces claiming Commercial Base or Commercial Plus prices also must bear the appropriate commercial price marking, printed on the piece or produced as part of the meter imprint or PC Postage indicia. Place the commercial price marking directly above, directly below, or to the left of the postage. Markings are as follows:

- a. "Commercial Base Price" "Commercial Base Pricing" or "ComBasPrice"

- b. “Commercial Plus Price” “Commercial Plus Pricing” or “ComPlsPrice”

3.4 Placement of First-Class Mail and Standard Mail Markings

Markings must be placed as follows:

- a. Basic Marking. The basic required marking that indicates the class or subclass which must be printed or produced as part of; directly below; or to the left of the permit imprint, meter imprint, or stamp as follows:
 - 1. “First-Class”
 - 2. “Standard” or “STD”
 - 3. “Presorted Standard” or “PRSRT STD”
 - 4. “Nonprofit Organization,” “Nonprofit Org.,” or “Nonprofit”
- b. Other Markings. The price-specific markings “AUTO,” “Presorted” (or “PRSRT”); “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”) (First-Class Mail only); and “ECRLot,” “ECRWSH,” “ECRWSS,” and “Customized MarketMail” (or “CUST MKTMAIL” or “CMM”) (Standard Mail only) may be placed as follows:
 - 1. In the location specified in [3.4a](#).
 - 2. In the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except optional endorsement line information under [708.7.0](#) or carrier route bundle information under [708.6.0](#).
 - 3. If preceded by two asterisks (**), the “AUTO,” “PRESORTED” (or “PRSRT”), “CUSTOMIZED MARKETMAIL” (or “CUST MKTMAIL” or “CMM”), or “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”) marking also may be placed on the line directly above or two lines above the address in a mailer keyline or a manifest keyline, or it may be placed above the address and below the postage in an MLOCR ink-jet printed date correction/meter drop shipment line. Alternatively, the “AUTO,” “PRSRT,” or “SNGLP” marking may be placed to the left of the barcode clear zone (subject to the standards in [5.0, Barcode Placement](#)) on letter-size pieces.
- c. Additional Requirements for Carrier Route. “ECRLot,” “ECRWSH,” and “ECRWSS” (Standard Mail only) must appear in their entirety wherever placed, except “ECR” may be placed in the postage area if “LOT,” “WSH,” or “WSS,” as applicable, is placed in the line above or two lines above the address, as specified in [3.4b](#). Pieces not mailed at ECR prices must not bear these markings.

3.5 Exceptions to Markings

Exceptions are as follows:

- a. [\[1-27-13\]](#) Automation letters. Automation letters do not require an “AUTO” marking if they bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code in the address block or on an insert visible through a window. First-Class Mail letters not marked “AUTO” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class” markings. Standard Mail letters not marked “AUTO” must bear the appropriate basic marking in [3.4a](#).



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- b. Manifest Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in [3.4a](#). The two-letter price category code, printed in the keyline on manifest mailing system pieces using batch processing under [705.2.0, Manifest Mailing System](#), meets the requirement for other price markings when those pieces are part of a manifest mailing or another automation mailing. If a single-piece marking (“SP”) has been applied to pieces that subsequently become part of a presorted or automation mailing, the “SP” marking must be marked out and replaced with a “Presorted” or “PRSRT” marking.
- c. MLOCR Prepared Automation Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in [3.4a](#). The other “AUTO” marking described in [3.4b](#) must be replaced by the appropriate identifier/price code marking described in [705.5.0, First-Class Mail or Standard Mail Mailings With Different Payment Methods](#), on those pieces that have the marking applied by an MLOCR. This seven-character marking provides a description of the Product Month Designator, MASS/FASTforward System Identifier, postage payment method, and the price of postage affixed for metered and precanceled stamp mail or other postage information for permit imprint mail.

3.6 Marking Hazardous Materials

All mailable hazardous materials must be labeled and/or marked as required in [601.10.0](#).

4.0 Placement and Physical Standards for Endorsements

4.1 Endorsements for Delivery Instructions and Ancillary Services

The mailer must place the correct endorsement on each mailpiece to provide delivery instructions (retention period under [507.4.4.4](#)) or to request an ancillary service (see [507.1.0](#)).

4.2 Return Address

When a printed ancillary service endorsement is used, or a request is embedded within an Intelligent Mail barcode, a domestic return address must be placed in the upper left corner of the address side of the mailpiece or the upper left corner of the addressing area. If the return address is a multiple delivery address, it must show a unit designator (e.g., an apartment number).

4.3 Placement of Endorsement

Placement of the endorsement on the mailpiece is determined as follows:

- a. A retention period specified by the mailer must be placed directly above the return address.
- b. Any ancillary service endorsement (e.g., Address Service Requested, Forwarding Service Requested, Return Service Requested, Change Service Requested) must be placed in one of these four positions:
 - 1. Directly below the return address.

2. Directly above the delivery address area (which includes the delivery address block and any related nonaddress elements such as a barcode, keyline, or optional endorsement line).
3. Directly to the left of the postage area and below or to the left of any price marking.
4. Directly below the postage area and below any price marking.

4.4 Physical Standards for Endorsements

The endorsement or, if combined, endorsements must meet these physical standards:

- a. The type size of the endorsement must be at least 8 points.
- b. The read direction of the endorsement and return address must be the same as the read direction of the delivery address.
- c. The color contrast between the endorsement and the mailpiece background must be kept at a reasonable degree. A brilliant colored background or reverse printing is not permitted.
- d. A clear space of at least 1/4 inch around (above, below, and both sides) the total area containing the endorsement(s) is required. This 1/4-inch clear space is not required for an endorsement that is applied with a multiline optical character reader (MLOCR) inkjet and placed in the location directly below the postage area and any price marking if the endorsement is clear and legible.

5.0 Barcode Placement

5.1 Barcode Clear Zone

[1-27-13] Each reference to letter or letter-size piece in 5.0 includes both letters and postcards. Each letter-size piece in an automation price or an Enhanced Carrier Route mailing at automation letter prices must have a barcode clear zone unless the piece bears an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code (see 708.4.3) in the address block. The barcode clear zone and all printing and material in the clear zone must meet the reflectance standards in 708.4.4. The barcode clear zone is a rectangular area in the lower right corner of the address side of cards and letter-size pieces defined by these boundaries:

- a. Left: 4-3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.
- b. Right: right edge of the piece.
- c. Top: 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.
- d. Bottom: bottom edge of the piece.

5.2 General Barcode Placement for Letters

[1-27-13] Each automation price letter and each letter claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route automation saturation or high density letter prices must bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a correct delivery point routing code. A nonautomation letter may bear an Intelligent Mail barcode or a POSTNET barcode, under 708.4.0. Mailers



must print the barcode either in the address block or in the barcode clear zone, except for pieces that weigh more than 3 ounces which must include the barcode in the address block. See [5.6](#) when placing barcodes in the address block.

5.3 Barcode on a Mailpiece

Except as noted for 5-digit barcodes in [5.5, 5-Digit Barcode Placement in Clear Zone](#), if the barcode is printed directly on the mailpiece in the lower right corner, the entire barcode must be within the barcode read area defined by these limits:

- a. Horizontally, the leftmost bar must be between 3-1/2 inches and 4-1/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.
- b. Vertically, the barcode must be within the area between 3/16 inch and 1/2 inch, both measured from the bottom edge of the piece.

5.4 Additional Barcode Permissibility

[1-27-13] An automation letter or a letter claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route saturation or high density automation letter prices may not bear a POSTNET barcode or a 5-digit or ZIP+4 Intelligent Mail barcode in the lower right corner (barcode clear zone). The piece may bear a POSTNET barcode or an additional Intelligent Mail barcode in the address block only if a qualifying Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code appears in the lower right corner. The ZIP+4 barcode may appear in the address block when printed on an insert that appears through a window or on an address label affixed directly to the piece; or it may appear in the lower right corner either printed directly on the mailpiece or on an insert that appears through a window.

5.5 5-Digit Barcode Placement in Clear Zone

Any 5-digit barcode must be located as specified in [5.4](#), except that, if placed in the barcode clear zone, the leftmost bar of the barcode must be between 4-1/8 and 4-1/4 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece.

5.6 Barcode in Address Block

[1-27-13] When the barcode is included as part of the address block:

- a. The barcode must be placed in one of these positions:
 1. Above the address line containing the recipient's name.
 2. Below the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
 3. Above or below the keyline information.
 4. Above or below the optional endorsement line.
- b. The printing of the barcode is prohibited anywhere between the address line containing the recipient's name and the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
- c. The minimum clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and any information line above or below it within the address block must be at least 0.028 inch. The separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 0.625 (5/8) inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any adjacent printing must be at least 0.125 (1/8) inch.

- d. If a window envelope is used, the clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing or window edge must be at least 0.125 (1/8) inch. The clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and the top and bottom window edges must be at least 0.028 inch. These clearances must be maintained during the insert's range of movement in the envelope. Address block windows on heavy letter mail must be covered. Covers for address block windows are subject to 5.10.
- e. If an address label is used, a clear space of at least 0.125 (1/8) inch must be left between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label. The clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and the top and bottom edges of the address label must be at least 0.028 inch.
- f. The rightmost bar must be at least 1/2 inch from the right edge of the mailpiece, and the leftmost bar must be less than 10-1/2 inches from the right edge of the mailpiece and at least 1/2 inch from the left edge of the mailpiece; the top of each bar must be less than 4 inches from the bottom edge of the mailpiece; and the bottom line of the address block, including the barcode, must be at least 5/8 inch from the bottom of the mailpiece.

5.7 Barcode on Insert in Barcode Window

[1-27-13] If the barcode is printed on an insert to appear through a barcode window in the lower right corner of an envelope:

- a. The envelope and window must meet the physical standards in 5.9 through 5.10.
- b. The entire barcode must be within the barcode clear zone (but need not be completely within the barcode read area).
- c. When the insert showing through the window is moved to any of its limits inside the envelope, the entire barcode must remain within the barcode clear zone. In addition, a clear space must be maintained that is at least 0.125 (1/8) inch between the barcode and the left and right edges of the window, at least 0.1875 (3/16) inch between the barcode and the bottom edge of the mailpiece, and at least 0.028 inch between the barcode and the top edge of the window.

5.8 Edges of Barcode Window

The edges of the barcode window must meet these criteria:

- a. Left: at least 4-3/4 inches from the right edge of the envelope.
- b. Right: at least 1/4 inch from the right edge of the envelope.
- c. Top: at least 5/8 inch from the bottom of the envelope.
- d. Bottom: form part of the bottom edge of the envelope.

5.9 Window Construction

A barcode window must extend fully to the bottom edge of the envelope, must be of wraparound construction, and must be covered subject to 5.10.



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5.10 Window Cover

The window cover must be of a nontinted clear or transparent material (e.g., cellophane or polystyrene) that permits the barcode and its background, as viewed through the window material, to meet the reflectance standards in [708.4.4](#). The edges of the window cover must be securely glued to the envelope.