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TO: City of Milwaukee Mail Room Customers  
From: City Mail Room Staff  
Date: August 1, 2019  
Subject: U.S. Mail Standards

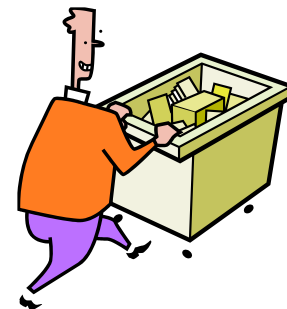
Below you will find a few of the best practices for proper preparation of your mail before bringing it down to the City Mail Room, as well as a summary of USPS terminology, standards and guidelines.

Following the USPS mail regulations ensures that your mail will run smoothly on all equipment (presort vendor & at the post office) and that you are getting the best price on the mail you send out through the City's Mail Room. Improper mail preparation may result in higher fees and loss of discounted mail.

Please share with all staff who prepare mailings to ensure that USPS standards and the updates included in this document are understood by all interested parties.

Thank you,

City Mail Room Staff





## **U.S. MAIL PREPARATION**

### **Before Bringing Down Your Mail to the Mail Room, Check It To Guarantee that:**

- **Never** **handwrite** the address. If at all possible, use machine applied characters. Handwritten envelopes are charged at a rate above pre-sort.
- All **large flat sized** envelopes **must be sealed** (the machine does not do it)
- Do not tuck the flaps inside the envelopes.
- Refrain from buying large flat envelopes with metal clasp closures (they will not run through a postage machine and result in a high postage rate applied).
- The mailing address must be completely visible in the window of the envelope. No other characters may be visible. If the address isn't completely visible in the window, you will have to make adjustments. A non-standard fold will also fix this, but please be aware paper **cannot be sticking out of the top of the envelope**.
- Make sure the contents of your envelope are completely pushed into the envelope **and not** sticking up beyond the crease of the flap.
- If you have over-stuffed your envelope and the flap does not fold flat and easy, seal the envelope with tape or use a larger envelope. (You will see below that overstuffed envelopes cost more to mail)
- Use of glossy paper for envelopes and postcards cause the ink from the mail meter machine to smear, therefore, it is advised that you use only matte paper stock or put a sticker in the corner of the envelope where postage is to be applied to prevent smearing.
- See the picture on page 8 of acceptable colors for postcards and envelopes. Due to the reflective ink and the electronic eye that reads the envelopes, only the indicated colors will pass.



## **MAIL ROOM PROCEDURES**

- Each bundle of envelopes or tray of mail brought down must contain your mail code.
- Create separate bundles for different classes of mail (postcard, letter, flat, international, parcel, certified) as well as sealed and un-sealed envelopes and place a mail code on each. Mail being sent out of the United States is to be separated and marked with a tag or sticky note that says "International" so proper postage can be applied.

**Personal mail and packages are never permitted to be received nor sent out through the City Mail room. Drop personal stamped mail in the mail chutes next to the elevators in the Municipal Building or City Hall Rotunda drop box.**



# UNITED STATES POST OFFICE (USPS) MAIL REGULATIONS & TERMINOLOGY



(As published in the Domestic Mail Manual  
[https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm) or  
<https://pe.usps.com/Archive/PDF/DMMArchive20070717/ mailingstandards.pdf> and Mail Design Professional Participant Guide Course 10017726 dated July 2013)

Mailability- conforming to minimum & maximum size standards.  
In order for a piece to be mailable, it must be:

1. Rectangular in shape
2. At least 3 1/2" in height
3. At least 5" in length (parallel to address- orientation matters)
4. At least .007" thick (single piece of paper folded at least once)

Non-mailable- means that the piece, as designed, is prohibited from the mailstream. No fee, surcharge or additional postage can make a non-mailable item mailable.

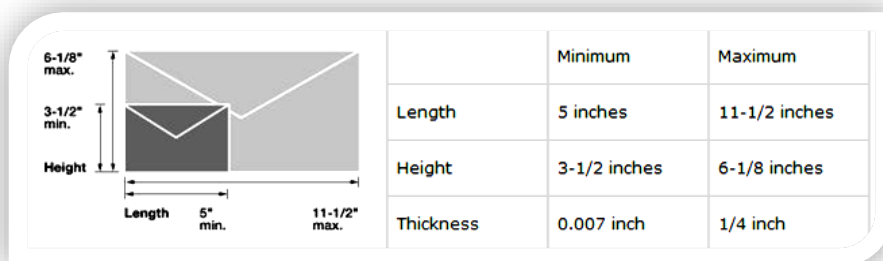
Non-machineable Characteristics - a surcharge will be applied when envelopes are not able to be processed through mail equipment at any level. This occurs when envelopes contain items that cause an uneven thickness:

- Non-paper, items not affixed to the contents within a mail piece & shift positions in the envelope
- Non paper items inserted into an envelope must be thinner than a nickel.
- Pins, pens, pencils, keys, coins, **black binder clips** etc.

## MAIL CATEGORIES

(As published in the Mail Design Professional Participant Guide Course 10017726 dated July 2013)

1. Letters- If an envelope exceeds 1/4" thickness, it cannot be classified as a letter and will become a flat (higher rate of postage). This happens when too many sheets of pages are tri-folded and put into a standard #10 envelope. It's better practice to use a 6x9 envelope.

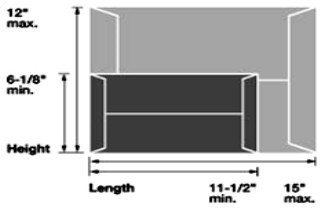


2. Postcards Postcards larger than 4 ¼" are charged at letter prices



	Minimum	Maximum
Length	5 inches	6 inches
Height	3-1/2 inches	4-1/4 inches
Thickness	0.007 inch	0.016 inch

3. Flats (Large Envelopes) Maximum weight is 13 oz. Mailers must place the delivery address parallel or perpendicular to the top edge on the front or the back of the mailpiece and within the top half of the mailpiece



	Minimum*	Maximum
Length	11-1/2 inches	15 inches
Height	6-1/8 inches	12 inches
Thickness	1/4 inch	3/4 inch

\* Flats exceed at least one of these dimensions



**Prohibitions:** Envelopes containing metal closure clasps, strings, buttons, staples, or other protrusions are prohibited because they damage the postal processing equipment. Your mail will be charged at parcel rates.

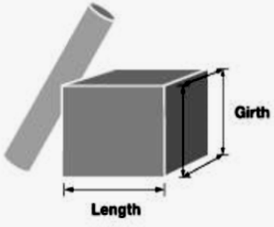
**Flexibility and Deflection:** flat-size pieces must meet flexibility criteria and deflection criteria- All other flats not meeting deflection standards are subject to parcel rate prices. In the USPS Domestic Mail Manual, see Exhibit 101.2.3 Flexibility Test—All Flats and Exhibit 301.2.5 Maximum Deflection for Flat-

Size Mailpieces (p.23 & p.272 <https://pe.usps.com/Archive/PDF/DMMArchive20070717/MailingStandards.pdf>)

**Uniform thickness:** the contents must be uniformly thick so that any bumps, protrusions, or irregularities do not cause more than ¼ inch variance in thickness. Example of this non-uniformity could be the use of **black binder clips** or the **unequal folding of large paper** to fit the envelope. Flats that do not have uniform thickness within ¼ inch become a parcel.

The purpose of conforming to flexibility, deflection and proper addressing is so the piece runs flawlessly on the Flat Sequencing System (at the post office) and so the mail carrier can read the address as they carry it in their arms without having to shift the envelope or have it droop over their arm.

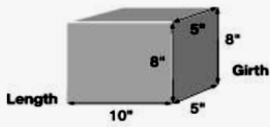
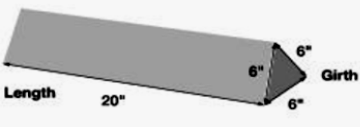
4. Parcels The Postal Service classifies parcels as machinable parcels, irregular parcels, or outside parcels.

Parcel Dimensions		
	Length	The longest side of the parcel.
	Girth	Measurement around the thickest part.
	Length plus girth	Cannot exceed 108 inches (Parcel Select cannot exceed 130 inches).

### Measuring Length Plus Girth

For parcels, length is the measurement of the longest dimension and girth is the distance around the thickest part (perpendicular to the length).

Except for Standard Post and Parcel Select, no mailpiece may measure more than 108 inches in length and girth combined. Standard Post and Parcel Select pieces measuring over 108 inches but not more than 130 inches in combined length and girth are available at the applicable oversized price (453.1.0).

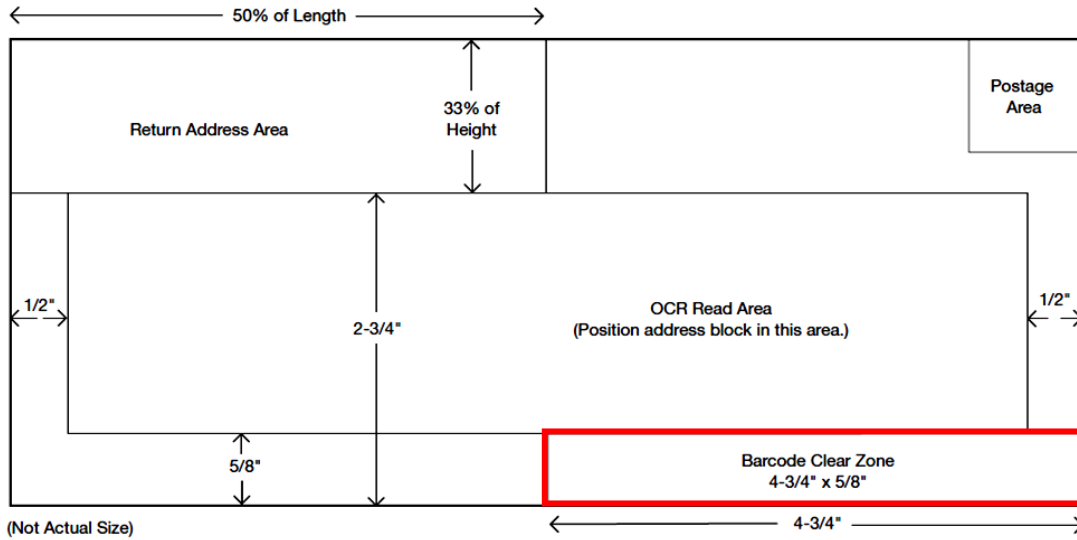
	
Length = 10 inches Girth (8 + 5 + 8 + 5) = 26 inches Length + girth = 36 inches	Length = 20 inches Girth (6 + 6 + 6) = 18 inches Length + girth = 38 inches

## Addressing Standards

The following guidelines for addressing a mailpiece are in USPS Publication 28, *Postal Addressing Standards*: <http://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/welcome.htm>

- Use a minimum of 8-point type, simple sans serif font.
- Type or machine-print in dark ink on a light background with a uniform left margin.
- Left-justify every line in the address block.
- Use two-letter state abbreviations.
- Use one space between city and state, two spaces between state and ZIP+4 code.
- Use appropriate ZIP+4 code (if unknown, use 5-digit ZIP Code).

The placement of the “send to” address on an envelope is important for the optical eye on postal equipment obtain a clear read of the information. Below are the dimensions of where the envelope should be clear of writing.



If you must handwrite an address, do not write in the barcode clear zone indicated in red above. This results in a loss of discounted postage as it will need to be sent at full price.

## Return Address is required on

- Official government mail
- Address Correction Service mail
- Mail of any class with ancillary service request
- Matter bearing company permit imprints

The **name of the sender** is not required in the return address unless specifically prescribed in the DMM.

## Exceptional Address “Current Resident”

*(As published in the Mail Design Professional Participant Guide Course 10017726 dated July 2013)*

Mail bearing an exceptional address format is always delivered as addressed and may not be forwarded.

Only if the address is incorrect or incomplete, or if the mail cannot be delivered for another reason, will it be treated as undeliverable.

Accepted Exceptional Addresses are: Postal Customer, Occupant, Householder or Resident

## Ancillary Endorsements

*(As published in the Mail Design Professional Participant Guide Course 10017726 dated July 2013)*

1. **Change Service Requested-** mail piece disposed of by USPS- no forward or return. New address notification provided, price list online
2. **Return Service Requested** – No forwarding, only return. New address provided

3. **Address Service Requested** – 1<sup>st</sup> year forwarded at no charge, after 13 months: returned. New separate address notification provided.
4. **Forwarding Service Requested** – forward & return with no charge for 1<sup>st</sup> year. New address provided only with return. After 13 months, mail is returned with new address
5. **Temp-Return Service Requested** – piece returned with new address. If temp change of address, piece forwarded; no separate notice of temporary change of address provided.
6. **Electronic Service Requested**- see Domestic Mail Manual for more information.

If there is no ancillary endorsement- piece will be treated the same as "Forward Service Requested"

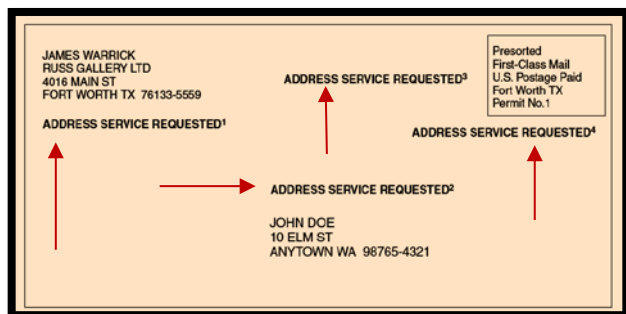
### Placement of Ancillary Endorsements

- Immediately below the return address
- Immediately above the delivery address
- Immediately to the left of the postage area
- Immediately below the postage area

Endorsements must be at least 8 point font, written

in the same direction as the return & delivery

addresses, color contrast at a reasonable degree, a clear space of at least ¼" around the total area.



## Business Reply Mail

The piece must conform to a specific format to qualify as BRM. If preparing a mailing for Business reply mail, please refer to the Post Office's "Quick Service Guides" <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/381> and <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/1626>. When designing a BRM mailpiece or label, mailers must consult with their local Post Office or use the online Reply Mail Artwork-Generating Tool available via <https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin>. Customers can contact the MDA Customer Service Help Desk for help or questions by dialing 855-593-6093 or by sending a request via email to [MDA@usps.gov](mailto:MDA@usps.gov).

## Folded Self Mailers

Because of the variety of folded self mailers that can be designed, please consult with the USPS quick service guide located at: <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/4314>

- Common Fold Methods are Bi-Fold, Tri-Fold, and Quarter Fold
- The dimensions are **minimum** 3.5" (height) by 5" (length) and **maximum** 6" (height) by 10.5" (length)
- The maximum weight of the piece is 3 oz.
  - Closure methods are glue strips, glue dots or tabs (non-perforated). See the Domestic Mail Manual for placement of the tabs depending on the type of fold on your piece. <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/4313> slide 11

# X" ACCEPTABLE ASTROBRIGHT COLORS FOR ENVELOPES AND POST CARDS

Chart Provided and Approved by United Mailing as of March 22, 2013

				Astrobrights®				
				COVER	104			
●	○	⊕		●	Electron Green™	NO		
●	○		X	●	Corona Yellow™			
●	○		X	●	Neutron White™			
●	○			●	Atomic Red™			
				T COVER	Astrobrights®			
80	85	90		60	95	90		
○	○	●	⊕	○	○	●	Stardust White™	NO
●	○			○	○		Lift-Off Lemon™	X
○	○	●		○	○		Solar Yellow™	X
○	○	●	⊕	○	○		Sunburst Yellow™	X
●	○		⊕	○	○		Galaxy Gold™	X
○	○			○	○		Cosmic Orange™	X
●	○		⊕	○	○		Orbit Orange™	NO
○	○			○	○		Rocket Red™	X
○	○	●	⊕	○	○		Re-Entry Red™	
○	○			○	○		Plasma Pink™	X
○	○			○	○		Pulsar Pink™	X
●	○			○	○		Fireball Fuchsia™	NO
○	○		⊕	○	○		Planetary Purple™	NO
●	○			○	○		Venus Violet™	NO
○	○	●	⊕	○	○		Lunar Blue™	NO
●	○		⊕	○	○		Celestial Blue®	NO
○	○		⊕	○	○		Terrestrial Teal™	NO
○	○			○	○		Vulcan Green™	X
○	○	●		○	○		Terra Green™	X
●	○		⊕	○	○		Marban Green™	X
○	○			○	○		Gemini Green™	NO
●	○		⊕	○	○		Gamma Green™	NO