

# Mailing Guide

Physical Qualifications  
for Automated Mail



**55%**

of Americans read a newspaper.

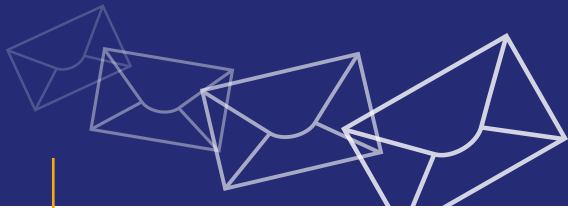
**95%**

have telephones.

**98%**

have television sets.

But *everybody's* got a mailbox.



## Introduction

There are endless booklets and manuals provided by the United States Postal Service (USPS) on every subject concerning data, mail design, procedures and requirements. The USPS also offers over 70 postal products and services.

DynaGraphic Printing's goal is to help you sort out which rules, regulations, products and services help you the most, without transferring all those precious automated postal savings to the production side of your budget.

The Postal Service gives discounts to those who automate their mailings. To qualify for such savings, the United States Postal Service (USPS) demands certain requirements. While many of these requirements will be handled by the mail house, there are some things that businesses should understand before designing their mail-piece.

DynaGraphic Printing continues to explore ways to improve the processing and delivery of mail in a timely, cost-effective manner. We hope you find this Mailing Guide a useful tool in your everyday production.

Please feel free to visit our website at [www.printatdgp.com](http://www.printatdgp.com) or call us at **775-786-2041** for more information.

# 25%

73 million or **25%** of the U.S. population ordered merchandise or services by mail.<sup>1</sup>

## Mail Categories

### First Class?

- Bill
- Handwritten letter
- Invoice
- Personal correspondence

### Standard Presort? (formerly known as Bulk Rate Mail)

- Advertisement
- Catalog
- Circular
- Newsletter

### Letter Size?

	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
Length:	5"	11.5"
Height:	3.5"	6.125"
Thickness:	.007"	.25"

*Max Weight for First Class is 3.5oz, Std Auto is 3.5oz, Std Non-Auto is 3.3oz.*

*Pieces larger than 4.5" x 6" must be at least*

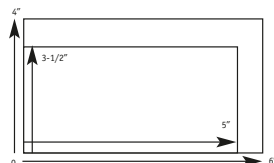
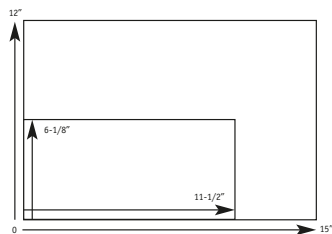
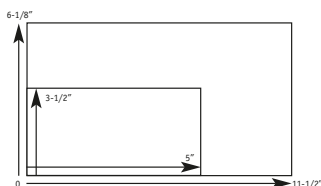
*.009" in thickness.*

### Flat Size?

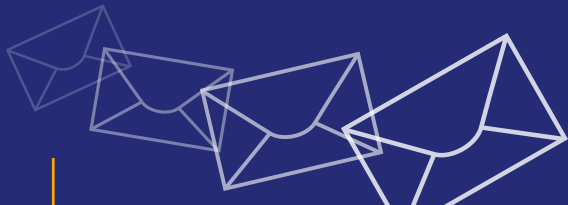
	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
Length:	11.5"	15"
Height:	6.125"	12"
Thickness:	.009"	.75"

### Postcard?

	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
Length:	5"	6"
Height:	3.5"	4.25"
Thickness:	.007"	.016"



Pieces that exceed Flat Max Dimensions are considered “Packages” or “Parcels”. In order to create the most cost-effective mailing campaign, these regulations should be considered before design completion.



## Aspect Ratio

When designing a mail piece, to ensure automation compatibility, the mail piece must be within the proper aspect ratio. To get the aspect ratio, divide the length of the mail piece by the height of the mail piece. (For example, a postcard 5½" long by 3½" high has an aspect ratio of 1.57.) The aspect ratio must be between 1.3 and 2.5. Anything below 1.3 or above 2.5 will be subject to a non-machinable surcharge.

## DynaGraphic Printing Permit Imprints

The permits should be no smaller than ½" wide and ½" tall unless it is printed directly on the address label. Fonts should be no smaller than 4 points. There must be a ⅜" clearance area surrounding the indicia.

FIRST-CLASS  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Reno, NV  
Permit No. 379

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
Reno, NV  
Permit No. 379

PRSRT STD  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Reno, NV  
Permit No. 379

NON-PROFIT  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Reno, NV  
Permit No. 379

# 45%

45% of companies in the U.S. make their lists available for rental—providing significant marketing opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

## Presort Levels

### **5-digit:**

The delivery address on all pieces of 150 or more includes the same 5-digit ZIP code.

### **3-digit:**

The ZIP code in the delivery address on all pieces of 150 or more begins with the same three digits.

### **AADC/ADC:**

All pieces of 150 or more are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same area distribution center (ADC) or automated area distribution center (AADC).

### **Mixed AADC:**

All the remaining pieces for delivery which were not eligible for the above presort levels.

## List Formats

DynaGraphic Printing is able to accept various data formats, including:

- comma delimited
- tab delimited
- fixed length
- Excel
- dbase
- Microsoft Access
- ...and more!

Data should be consistent in its format. We prefer to receive *one* data file per job, however multiple lists can be merged for additional fees.

## Postage Cost & Automation Savings

Letter Size Mail – First Class						
	Retail	Automation				Non-Auto
Weight	Rate	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit	Presorted
= or <1 oz.	0.41	0.360	0.341	0.334	0.312	.373
= or <2 oz.	0.58	0.485	0.466	0.459	0.437	.543
= or <3 oz.	0.75	0.610	0.591	0.584	0.562	.713

Letter Size Mail – Standard					
	Non-Auto/Machinable	Automation			
Weight	Mixed AADC	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit
= or <3.3 oz.	0.255	0.252	0.238	0.233	0.218
SCF	N/A	N/A	.196	.191	.176

Letter Size Mail – Nonprofit					
	Non-Auto/Machinable	Automation			
Weight	Mixed AADC	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit
= or <3.3 oz.	0.164	0.161	0.147	0.142	0.127
SCF	N/A	N/A	.105	.100	.085

Flat Size Mail – First Class					
	Non-Auto	Automation			
Weight	Presorted	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit
= or <1 oz.	0.699	0.686	0.567	0.484	0.383
= or <2 oz.	0.869	0.856	0.737	0.654	0.553
= or <3 oz.	1.039	1.026	0.907	0.824	0.723

Flat Size Mail – Standard									
		Non-Automation				Automation			
Weight	Entry Discount	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit
= or <3.3 oz.	None	.515	0.461	0.427	.363	.477	.424	.392	.335
	DSCF	n/a	.419	.385	.321	n/a	.382	.350	.293

Flat Size Mail – Nonprofit									
		Non-Automation				Automation			
Weight	Entry Discount	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit
= or <3.3 oz.	None	.389	.335	.301	.237	.354	.301	.269	.212
	DSCF	n/a	.293	.259	.195	n/a	.259	.227	.170

First Class Postcards						
	Retail	Automation				Non-Auto
Weight	Rate	Mixed AADC	AADC	3-Digit	5-Digit	Presorted
= or <1 oz.	0.26	0.220	0.208	0.204	0.191	0.241

Depending on the level of presort, multiple discounts are available.

09/07

# 44%

44% of companies nationwide are using Direct Mail to drive Web traffic versus 10% using broadcast advertising.<sup>3</sup>

## First Class Mail-piece Requirements

**Minimum Weight:** None.

**Maximum Weight:** 13 ounces (over 13 ounces, First Class Mail becomes Priority Mail).

**Minimum Quantity to Mail at Discounted Rates:** 500 pieces.

All First Class Mail letters, depending on the shape or irregular characteristics, may be subject to a nonmachinable surcharge.

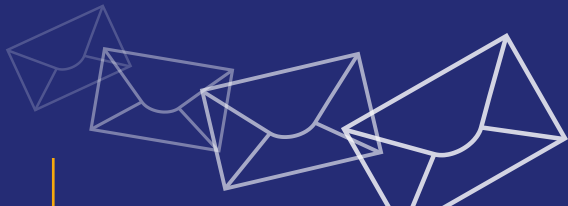
All mailable matter can be mailed as First Class Mail. Some things **MUST** be mailed as First Class Mail (or Priority Mail), including:

- Handwritten or typewritten material
- Bills, statements of account or invoices, credit cards
- Personal correspondence, personalized business correspondence
- All matter sealed or otherwise closed against inspection.

First Class Mail includes:

- cards
- letters
- flats
- packages or parcels that weigh 13 ounces or less

Retail rates, presorted non-auto rates and automation rates are available.



## **First Class Mail-piece Requirements** *continued*

If getting your mail there fast is your top priority, use First Class Mail. First Class Mail postage rates are the same regardless of how far the mail travels. That's a great deal! First Class Mail postage includes forwarding and return services. You can enhance the service, security, and convenience of First Class Mail by adding special services such as registered mail and certified mail. These services are available for a small fee.

Many beginning mailers use First Class Mail cards and letters because, if you mail at single-piece rates, there's no special payment method, no mailing permit, and no extra time to presort the mail. You simply put a stamp on it and drop it in the collection box. Simple and quick.

## **Move Update**

For all first class mail, addresses must be updated within 180 days prior to the mailing date by an approved address update method such as Address Change Service (ACS), National Change of Address (NCOA) verification, FASTforward, OR the appropriate ancillary service endorsement.

16% of Americans changed addresses between 1991-2000.<sup>4</sup>

## Ancillary Endorsements

Ancillary endorsements are used by mailers to request an addressee's new address and to provide the USPS with instructions on how to handle UAA (undeliverable-as-addressed) pieces. There are four types of endorsements, which are the same for all classes of mail. However, the treatment and cost differ by class of mail.

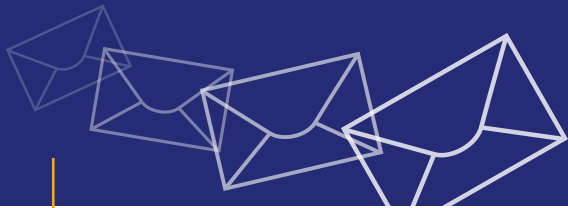
The endorsement must be placed in one of these four positions:

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

JAMES WARRICK RUSS GALLERY LTD 4016 MAIN ST FORT WORTH TX 76133-5559	ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED <sup>3</sup>	Presorted First-Class Mail U.S. Postage Paid Fort Worth TX Permit No.1
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED <sup>1</sup>		ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED <sup>4</sup>
	ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED <sup>2</sup>	
	JOHN DOE 10 ELM ST ANYTOWN NY 12345-6789	

Endorsement details for First Class mail:

- Address Service Requested** – Forwarding and return. Separate COA (Change Of Address) notification provided. Fees applicable.
- Return Service Requested** – No forwarding, only return. COA notification provided or reason of non-delivery. No fees.
- Change Service Requested** – No forwarding or return. COA notification provided. Fees applicable.
- Forwarding Service Requested** – Forwarded or returned, no fees. If no COA, returned with reason for non-delivery. With COA on file, the first 12 months mail forwarded without notification. Following first year, piece returned with COA. After 18 months, piece is returned without reason.



## Standard Presort Mail-piece Requirements

**Minimum Weight:** None.

**Maximum Weight:** 15.9999 ounces (less than 1 pound).

**Minimum Quantity:** 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail.

Standard Mail is mail matter not required to be mailed as First Class Mail or Periodicals. Lower nonprofit rates are available for Standard Mail but require specific authorization.

Mailers use Standard Mail to send:

- Printed matter, flyers, circulars, advertising.
- Newsletters, bulletins, and catalogs.
- Small parcels.

All Presorted Standard Mail rates are mailed in bulk. There are no single-piece Standard Mail rates. In Standard Mail, there are rates for letters and flats/nonletters. Unlike First Class Mail, there is no Standard Mail card rate (cards are mailed as letters). Standard Mail parcels (for instance, a small merchandise sample) are charged a residual shape surcharge.

Certain special services can be used with Standard Mail parcels: electronic delivery confirmation, bulk insurance, and return receipt for merchandise. Standard Mail is not forwarded or returned unless you request it with an ancillary service endorsement and may result in additional fees or postage. For beginning mailers, Standard Mail is often the best choice because postage rates are very low.



# Wafer Seals and Glue Placement

In order to claim automation discount rates for your mailing, self-mailers must be tabbed or secured. Piece design also reflects automation compatibility. Below is a sample of self-mailers and booklets and where tabs should be placed.

Instead of tabs or wafer seals, approved glue may also be used.



### Specifications for Automation-Compatible Letter-Size Mailpieces

#### Double Postcard

Tabs 1 (middle)  
 Folded Edge Top or Bottom  
 Sheets Single  
 Basis Weight 75 lb.



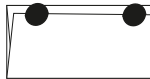
#### Folded Self-Mailer (Invitation Fok)

Tab Address Label  
 Folds Top and Bottom  
 Sheets Multiple  
 Basis Weight 20 lb.



#### Folded Self-Mailer

Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)  
 Folded Edge Top or Bottom  
 Sheets Single  
 Basis Weight 20 lb.



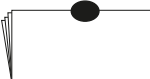
#### Folded Self-Mailer (Continuous Glue Strip)

Open Edge Top  
 Folded Edge Bottom  
 Sheets Single  
 Basis Weight 20 lb.



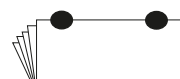
#### Folded Self-Mailer

Tabs 1 (middle)  
 Folded Edge Bottom  
 Sheets Multiple  
 Basis Weight 24 lb.



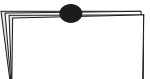
#### Booklet

Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)  
 Spine Bottom  
 Sheets Multiple with Cover  
 Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)



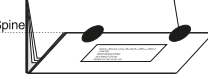
#### Folded Self-Mailer

Tabs 1 (middle)  
 Folded Edge Bottom  
 Sheets Single  
 Basis Weight 28 lb.



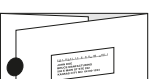
#### Folded Booklet

Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)  
 Spine Top  
 Folded Edge Bottom  
 Sheets Multiple with Cover  
 Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)



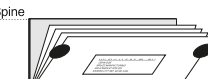
#### Folded Self-Mailer<sup>1</sup>

Tabs 1 (middle)  
 Folded Edge Right  
 Sheets Single  
 Basis Weight 75 lb.



#### Folded Booklet

Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from top edge)  
 Spine Top  
 Folded Edge Bottom  
 Sheets Multiple with Cover  
 Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)



1. Pieces 7 inches or longer must be sealed on the top and bottom; the middle tab is optional (C810.8).

An 8-1/2 x 11 inch sheet of 20, 24, or 28 pound paper folded once to 8-1/2 x 5-1/2 inches does not meet the minimum thickness of 0.009 inch for an automation-compatible letter.

Americans spend **\$528 billion** annually  
in response to Direct Mail advertising.<sup>5</sup>

## MERLIN (Mail Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument)

Many people are wondering what Merlin is and what does it do to our mail.

Put simply, Merlin has improved efficiency and accuracy in identifying mail-piece design compliance, with the result being faster mail processing, improved delivery times and postal rates. MERLIN replaces a manual system with an automated system.

If your mailings have been meeting with USPS regulations, nothing will happen to your mail. If you have been less than vigilant in complying with regulations that allow your mailing to receive special discounts, there is a good chance that your mailing will be assessed a higher postal rate due to loss of discount.

What does MERLIN check for?

- Mail-piece width, length, & aspect ratio
- Weight
- Thickness
- Barcode readability
- Print contrast
- Presort accuracy
- Address accuracy
- Tray labels accuracy
- Piece count accuracy
- Meter identification and date
- First class short paid meter

All mailings of 10,000 and over are automatically checked. Mailings under 10,000 are randomly checked at a rate of 1 out of 6.

**Our professionals at DynaGraphic Printing can assure 100% accuracy  
in your mailing to provide you with the best possible discount.**

## Helpful Websites

### The United States Postal Service

[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

### MERLIN

[www.usps.com/merlin](http://www.usps.com/merlin)

### Postal Explorer

[pe.usps.gov](http://pe.usps.gov)

### Business Mail 101

[www.usps.com/businessmail101/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/businessmail101/welcome.htm)

### Nonprofit Mail (Publication 417)

[pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub417/Pub417.pdf](http://pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub417/Pub417.pdf)

### Mail-piece Design

[pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr\\_intro\\_all.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr_intro_all.htm)

### Designing Letter and Reply Mail (Publication 25)

[pe.usps.gov/text/Pub25/Pub25.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/text/Pub25/Pub25.htm)

### Designing Flat Mail (Publication 63)

[pe.usps.gov/text/Pub63/Pub63.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/text/Pub63/Pub63.htm)

### Mail-piece Design Analyst

[pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr\\_mda\\_intro.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr_mda_intro.htm)

*Mail-piece Design Analysts (MDA) are postal employees specially trained to answer your questions regarding mail-piece design. These employees provide advice and issue rulings regarding acceptability for automated rates. MDAs provide technical assistance on mail-piece design to envelope manufacturers, printers, advertising agencies, and graphic designers. Go to this webpage and use the Lookup service to find your local Mail-piece Design Analyst.*

### USPS Decision Tree

[www.usps.com/businessmail101/decisiontree/](http://www.usps.com/businessmail101/decisiontree/)

### Publications, Quick Service Guides, & Templates

[pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr\\_addl\\_all.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/mpdesign/mpdfr_addl_all.htm)

### ZIP Code lookup

[zip4.usps.com/zip4](http://zip4.usps.com/zip4)

*Useful to determine whether an address has a valid delivery.*

#### Sources:

- 1 The DMA Statistical Fact Book 2001: Direct Mail/Buying Habits
- 2 The DMA Statistical Fact Book 2001: Lists/Databases/Trends
- 3 The DMA Statistical Fact Book 2001: Interactive Media/Trends
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 1991 to 2000
- 5 USPS – Direct Mail By the Numbers

Neither DynaGraphic Printing nor the U.S. Postal Service is responsible for the current accuracy of the information presented in this booklet. For the most up-to-date information, go to the U.S. Postal Service website at [www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov) or consult with your local Postal Business Center.



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