



345 Mail Preparation

Overview

- [1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation](#)
- [2.0 Bundles](#)
- [3.0 Sacks and Trays](#)
- [4.0 Sack and Tray Labels](#)
- [5.0 Preparing Nonautomation Flats](#)
- [6.0 Preparing Enhanced Carrier Route Flats](#)
- [7.0 Preparing Automation Flats](#)

1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation

1.1 Definition of Presort Process

Presort is the process by which a mailer prepares mail so that it is sorted to at least the finest extent required by the standards for the price claimed. Generally, presort is performed sequentially, from the lowest (finest) level to the highest level, to those destinations specified by standard and is completed at each level before the next level is prepared. Under standards for bundle reallocation for Standard Mail flats on pallets (see [705.8.0](#)), mail will not necessarily be placed on the lowest (finest) level pallets (bundle reallocation is optional, but, if performed, must be done for the complete mailing job). Not all presort levels are applicable in all situations.

1.2 Definition of Mailings

Mailings are defined as:

- a. A mailing is a group of pieces within the same class of mail and the same processing category that may be sorted together and/or presented under a single minimum volume mailing requirement under the applicable standards. Generally, types of mail that follow different flows through the postal processing system (e.g., automation, nonautomation carrier route, and other nonautomation) and mail for each separate class and subclass must be prepared as a separate mailing. Other specific standards may define whether separate mailings may be combined, palletized, reported, or deposited together.
- b. Except as provided in [343.3.6, Residual Volume Requirement](#), the types of Standard Mail listed below may not be part of the same mailing.
 1. Automation Enhanced Carrier Route and any other type of mail.
 2. Automation price and any other type of mail.
 3. Enhanced Carrier Route and any other type of mail.
 4. Enhanced Carrier Route letter price pieces and Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter price pieces.
 5. Presorted price mail and any other type of mail.
 6. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces.



7. Except as provided by standard, Regular mail may not be in the same mailing as Nonprofit mail, and Enhanced Carrier Route mail may not be in the same mailing as Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route mail.
8. Customized MarketMail and any other type of mail.

1.3 Terms for Presort Levels

Terms used for presort levels are defined as follows:

- a. *Carrier route*: all pieces for delivery to the same city route, rural route, highway contract route, Post Office box section, or general delivery unit.
- b. *5-digit*: the delivery address on all pieces includes the same 5-digit ZIP Code.
- c. *5-digit scheme (bundles and sacks) for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in 301.3.0*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces is one of the 5-digit ZIP Code areas processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in [L007](#).
- d. *5-digit scheme carrier routes (pallets and sacks) for Standard Mail flats*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces in carrier route bundles is one of the 5-digit ZIP Codes processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in [L001](#).
- e. *Merged 5-digit sacks*: the carrier route bundles and/or automation price 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles in a sack are all for a 5-digit ZIP Code that has an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route price bundles with automation price 5-digit bundles and Presorted price 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.
- f. *Merged 5-digit pallet*: contains carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation price 5-digit bundles and/or presorted price 5-digit bundles).
- g. *Merged 5-digit scheme sack*: the 5-digit ZIP Codes on pieces in carrier route bundles and/or automation price 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles in a sack are all for 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in [L001](#), and the automation price 5-digit bundles and/or the Presorted price 5-digit bundles also are for 5-digit ZIP Codes that have an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles with automation price 5-digit bundles and Presorted price 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.
- h. *Merged 5-digit scheme pallet*: contains carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation price 5-digit bundles and/or presorted price 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in [L001](#).
- i. *5-digit metro pallets for Standard Mail flats*: the 5-digit ZIP Codes on pieces in carrier route, automation price, and presorted price bundles are all destined for the same mail processing facility listed in [L006](#).
- j. *3-digit*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with the same three digits (see [L002](#), Column A).



- k. *3-digit scheme bundles for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in 301.3.0*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address begins with one of the 3-digit prefixes processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in [L008](#).
- l. *Origin/entry 3-digit(s)*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 3-digit prefixes processed at the sectional center facility (SCF) in whose service area the mail is verified/entered. Separation is optional for each such 3-digit area.
- m. *SCF*: the separation includes pieces for two or more 3-digit areas served by the same sectional center facility (SCF) (see [L005](#)), *except that*, where required or permitted by standard, mail for a single 3-digit area may be prepared in an SCF separation when no mail for other 3-digit ZIP Code areas is available. For pallets, the SCF sort may include mail for a single 3-digit ZIP Code area.
- n. *Origin/optional entry SCF*: the separation includes bundles for one or more 3-digit areas served by the same sectional center facility (SCF) (see [L002](#), Column C, or [L005](#)) in whose service area the mail is verified/entered. Subject to standard, this separation is required regardless of the volume of mail.
- o. *ADC*: all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same area distribution center (ADC) (see [L004](#)).
- p. *ASF/BMC*: all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same auxiliary service facility (ASF) or bulk mail center (BMC) (see [L601](#), [L602](#), or [L605](#)).
- q. *Mixed ADC*: the pieces are for delivery in the service area of more than one ADC.
- r. *Residual pieces/bundles/sacks*: contain material remaining after completion of a presort sequence. Residual mail lacks the volume set by standard to require or allow preparation to a particular destination, and usually does not qualify for a presort price.

1.4 Preparation Definitions and Instructions

[7-3-08] For purposes of preparing mail:

- a. *Pieces* refers to individually addressed mailpieces.
- b. A *full* letter tray is one in which faced, upright pieces fill the length of the tray between 85% and 100% full.
- c. A *less-than-full* letter tray is one that contains mail for the same destination regardless of quantity or whether a full tray was previously prepared for that destination. Less-than-full trays may be prepared only if permitted by the standards for the price claimed.
- d. An *overflow* letter tray is a less-than-full tray that contains all pieces remaining after preparation of full trays for the same destination. Overflow trays may be prepared only if permitted by the standards for the price claimed.
- e. A *full* sack is defined in the standards for the class and price claimed.



- f. *A 5-digit scheme sort for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in 301.3.0 yields 5-digit scheme bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Codes identified in L007 and 5-digit bundles for other ZIP Codes. When standards require 5-digit/scheme sort, mailers must prepare all possible 5-digit scheme bundles and sacks of flats, then prepare all possible 5-digit bundles and sacks. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume, with no further separation required. Bundles prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered 5-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. Bundles must be labeled using an optional endorsement line (OEL) under 708.7.0 or with a red “5 SCH” bundle label. Bundles are placed in appropriate containers using the OEL “label to” 5-digit ZIP Code or using L007 column B.*
- g. *A 5-digit scheme carrier routes sort for Enhanced Carrier Route price Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks or as bundles on pallets yields a 5-digit scheme carrier routes sack or pallet for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in L001 and 5-digit carrier routes sacks or pallets for other areas. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum sack or pallet volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Sacks or pallets prepared for a 5-digit scheme carrier routes destination that contain carrier route bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit areas are still considered to be sorted to 5-digit scheme carrier routes and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme carrier routes sort is required for carrier route bundles of Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail flats. Preparation of 5-digit scheme carrier routes sacks or pallets must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations.*
- h. *A 5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets yields 5-digit scheme pallets containing automation price and nonautomation price 5-digit bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in L001 and yields 5-digit pallets containing automation price and nonautomation price 5-digit bundles for other areas. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum pallet volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Pallets prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain 5-digit bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit areas are still considered to be sorted to the 5-digit scheme and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme sort is required for Standard Mail flats. The 5-digit scheme sort may not be used for other mail prepared on pallets, except for 5-digit bundles of Standard Mail irregular parcels that are part of a mailing job that is prepared in part as palletized flats at automation prices. Preparation of 5-digit scheme pallets must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations.*
- i. *A merged 5-digit sort for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks yields merged 5-digit sacks that contain carrier route bundles and/or automation price 5-digit bundles, and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles that are all for a 5-digit ZIP Code that has an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles, automation price 5-digit bundles, and Presorted price 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit*



sack or pallet. The merged 5-digit sort is optional for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks. Sacks prepared for a merged 5-digit destination that contain only a single price level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation price 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted price 5-digit bundle(s)) or that contain only two price levels of bundle(s) are still considered to be merged 5-digit sorted and are labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit sacks is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit ZIP Code destinations with an “A” or “C” indicator in the Carrier Route Indicators field in the City State Product that allows combining carrier route bundles, automation price 5-digit bundles, and Presorted price 5-digit bundles in the same 5-digit container.

- j. *A merged 5-digit sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets* yields merged 5-digit pallets that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation price 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles). The merged 5-digit sort is optional for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks under [705.10.0](#). Sacks or pallets prepared for a merged 5-digit destination that contain only a single price level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation price 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted price 5-digit bundle(s)) or only two price levels of bundle(s) are still considered to be merged 5-digit sorted and must be labeled accordingly.
- k. *A merged 5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared in sacks under [705.10.0](#)* yields merged 5-digit scheme sacks that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation price 5-digit bundles and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in [L001](#). Sacks prepared for a merged 5-digit scheme destination that contain only a single price level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation price 5-digit bundle(s) or only presorted price 5-digit bundle(s)), or only two price levels of bundle(s), or bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered to be merged 5-digit scheme sorted and must be labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit scheme sacks is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations in [L001](#).
- l. *A merged 5-digit scheme sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets under [705.8.0](#), [705.10.0](#), [705.12.0](#), or [705.13.0](#)* yields merged 5-digit scheme pallets that contain carrier route bundles and noncarrier route 5-digit bundles (automation price and/or Presorted price 5-digit bundles) for those 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of a single scheme as shown in [L001](#). Pallets prepared for a merged 5-digit scheme destination that contain only a single price level of bundle(s) (only carrier route bundle(s) or only automation price 5-digit bundle(s) or only Presorted price 5-digit bundle(s)), or only two price levels of bundle(s), or bundles for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered to be merged 5-digit scheme sorted and must be labeled accordingly. If preparation of merged 5-digit scheme pallets is performed, it must be done for all 5-digit scheme destinations in [L001](#).
- m. *A 5-digit metro sort for Standard Mail flats prepared as bundles on pallets* yields 5-digit metro pallets that contain carrier route and/or noncarrier route 5-digit and 3-digit bundles (automation price and/or presorted bundles) for the 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in [L006](#). The ZIP Codes in [L006](#) are treated as a single presort



destination, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. The 5-digit metro sort is optional and need not be done for all possible destinations in [L006](#).

- n. A 3-digit scheme sort for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in [301.3.0](#) yields 3-digit scheme bundles for those 3-digit ZIP Codes identified in [L008](#). When standards require 3-digit/scheme sort, mailers must prepare all possible 3-digit scheme bundles of flats, then prepare all possible 3-digit bundles. The 3-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume, with no further separation by 3-digit ZIP Code required. Bundles prepared for a 3-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 3-digit ZIP Codes are still considered 3-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. Bundles must be labeled using an optional endorsement line (OEL) under [708.7.0](#) or with a green “3 SCH” bundle label. Bundles are placed in appropriate containers using the OEL “label to” 3-digit ZIP Code or using [L008](#) column B.
- o. An *origin 3-digit* (or *origin 3-digit scheme*) tray contains all mail (regardless of quantity) for a 3-digit ZIP Code (or 3-digit scheme) area processed by the SCF in whose service area the mail is verified. A separate tray may be prepared for each 3-digit ZIP Code (or 3-digit scheme) area.
- p. The *required at [quantity]* instruction (e.g., “required at 10 pieces”) means that the particular unit *must* be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Bundles and containers may contain more than the specified *required at* quantity up to the applicable maximum physical size. Subject to applicable price eligibility standards, smaller quantities may be prepared only if permitted. Where specified by standard, required preparation applies only if the mailer chooses to qualify for the corresponding price.
- q. The *optional at [quantity]* instruction means that the particular unit *may* be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Bundles or containers may contain more than the specified *optional at* quantity up to the applicable maximum physical size. Smaller quantities may be prepared only if permitted by applicable price eligibility standards. Standards for quantities with which preparation is optional are often followed by standards for larger quantities with which preparation is required.
- r. *Entry [facility]* (or *origin [facility]*) refers to the USPS mail processing facility (e.g., “entry BMC”) that serves the Post Office at which the mail is entered by the mailer. If the Post Office where the mail is entered is not the one serving the mailer’s location (e.g., for plant-verified drop shipment), the Post Office of entry determines the *entry* facility. *Entry SCF* includes both single-3-digit and multi-3-digit SCFs. *Entry BMC* includes subordinate ASFs unless otherwise specified.
- s. A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit. Bundle preparation is described in [2.0](#).



- t. A “logical” presort destination represents the total number of pieces that are eligible for a specific presort level based on the required sortation, but which might not be contained in a single bundle or in a single container (sack or pallet) due to applicable preparation requirements or the size of the individual pieces. For example, there may be 42 mailpieces for ZIP Code 43112 forming a Standard Mail “logical” 5-digit bundle, and they are prepared in three physical 5-digit bundles because of the applicable weight and height restrictions on bundles. For pallets, 2,800 pounds of mail may be destined to an SCF destination, and these would form the “logical” SCF pallet, but the mail is placed on two physical SCF pallets each weighing 1,400 pounds because of the 2,200 pound maximum pallet weight requirement.
- u. *Cobundling* is an alternate preparation method available under [705.11.0](#) for Standard Mail that allows the combining of flat-size automation price and Presorted price pieces within the same bundle under the single minimum bundle size requirement. Regardless of the class of mail, pieces may not be combined in more than one physical bundle for each logical presort destination unless presented using an approved manifest mailing system under [705.2.0](#).

1.5 Optional Containerization

[11-6-08] Mailers may prepare pallets or other USPS-approved containers as described in [705.8.10.2](#) or according to local customer/supplier agreements.

2.0 Bundles

2.1 Definition of a Bundle

Mailers assemble pieces available for different presort destinations into groups. A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit.

2.2 Address Visibility

Mailers preparing presort bundles must ensure that the delivery address information on the top mailpiece in each bundle is visible and readable by the naked eye. Mailers using strapping that might cover the address can avoid obstructing visibility by using clear, smooth strapping tightly secured around the bundle. Mailers using barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle labels, optional endorsement lines, carrier route information lines, or carrier route facing slips also must ensure that the information in these presort designations is visible and readable by the naked eye. This standard does not apply to the following:

- a. Customized MarketMail.
- b. Bundles placed in or on 5-digit or 5-digit scheme ([L001](#)) sacks or pallets.
- c. Bundles placed in carrier route and 5-digit carrier routes sacks.
- d. Bundles of mailpieces at carrier route prices entered at a destination delivery unit (DDU).
- e. Bundles of Standard Mail flat-size pieces prepared in letter trays under [3.4](#).



2.3 Arranging Pieces in a Bundle (“Facing”)

Except as noted in 2.4, all pieces in a bundle must be “faced” (arranged with the addresses in the same read direction), with an address visible on the top piece.

2.4 Preparing Bundles of Pieces of Nonuniform Thickness (“Counterstacking”)

Bundles of flats and other pieces of nonuniform thickness may be prepared by counter-stacking under these conditions:

- a. Counter-stacking should be used only to create bundles of more uniform thickness that are more likely to maintain their integrity during transportation and processing.
- b. Counter-stacking is appropriate for saddle-stitched mailpieces and pieces where one edge is thicker than other edges or one corner is thicker than other corners.
- c. When counter-stacking, pieces must all have addresses facing up and be divided into no more than four approximately equal groups, with each group rotated 180 degrees from the preceding and succeeding group(s); prepare as few groups as possible to create a bundle of uniform thickness.
- d. Counter-stacked groups within a bundle should be as thick as possible, generally at least 1 inch thick.
- e. When pieces are nonuniform in thickness because they are thicker in the center instead of along an edge or corner, counter-stacking will generally not result in a bundle of uniform thickness (i.e., a football-shaped bundle would be created). Instead of counter-stacking such pieces, limit the height (thickness) of the bundle to 3 to 6 inches to ensure the bundle will stay together during normal transit and handling.

2.5 Securing Bundles

Bundles must withstand normal transit and handling without breaking and without causing injury to USPS employees or damage to USPS equipment.

Mailers must meet the following standards when preparing and securing bundles:

- a. Secure bundles with banding, shrinkwrap, or shrinkwrap supplemented with one or more bands. *Banding* includes plastic bands, rubber bands, twine, string, and similar material. Mailers must meet the following standards when banding bundles:
 1. Do not place any bands closer than 1 inch from any bundle edge.
 2. When using twine or string to band bundles, secure the knot(s) so the twine or string does not come loose during transit and processing.
 3. Do not use wire or metal banding.
 4. Do not use any loose banding.
- b. When using only banding to secure bundles, apply banding under the following additional requirements:
 1. Use at least one band to encircle the length of the bundle and use at least one band to encircle the girth of the bundle.



2. Use tension sufficient to tighten and depress the edges of the bundle so that pieces do not slip out of the banding during transit and processing.

2.6 Preparing Bundles in Sacks

In addition to the standards in 2.5, mailers must prepare and secure bundles placed in sacks as follows:

- a. The maximum weight for all bundles is 20 pounds.
- b. Measure bundles at the lowest (thinnest) point to determine the bundle height.
- c. Except under 6.5 for multi-carrier routes bundles, a bundle that exceeds the maximum prescribed height by less than the thickness of a single piece meets the standard (for example, if a piece is 0.75 (3/4) of an inch thick, 11 pieces may be secured in a bundle 8.25 inches high, even though the maximum bundle height is 8 inches).
- d. Bundles of pieces with covers of “coated stock” (for example, magazines or catalogs with glossy covers) that are not individually enclosed in an envelope or mailing wrapper are subject to these conditions:
 1. Bundles secured with rubber bands, twine, string, or only shrinkwrap must not exceed 3 inches in height.
 2. Bundles secured with shrinkwrap plus one or two plastic straps, or with at least two plastic straps, one around the length and one around the girth, must not exceed 6 inches in height.
- e. Bundles of pieces with outer surfaces of “uncoated stock” are subject to these conditions:
 1. Bundles must not exceed 8 inches in height (recommended maximum height is 6 inches).
 2. “Uncoated stock” refers to pieces with outer surfaces composed of material other than paper (such as plastic, cloth, or fiberboard) and also refers to pieces with coated covers that are individually enclosed in a cover or mailing wrapper of uncoated stock, such as an envelope or polybag.

2.7 Additional Standards for Unsacked Bundles Entered at DDU Facilities

Mailers may enter unsacked, nonpalletized bundles of flat-size pieces at destination delivery units (DDUs) if all the following conditions are met:

- a. The maximum weight for a single bundle is 40 pounds; the maximum number of bundles per carrier route is one bundle for each 10 pounds (or increment) of mail for that route, as follows:
 1. Mailers must make the fewest number of bundles possible, up to the 40-pound maximum, while maintaining bundle integrity. To determine the maximum number of bundles allowable for a route, divide the total weight of mail for that route by 10 and round up to the next whole number. For example, if there are 34 pounds of mail for a carrier route, the maximum number of bundles for that route is four ($34 \div 10 = 3.4 = 4$ bundles).



2. Mailers may balance the weight of the bundles across the maximum number of allowable bundles for a route. For example, if there are 36 pounds of mail for a carrier route, the maximum number of bundles for that route is four ($36 \div 10 = 3.6 = 4$ bundles), which may be in four 9-pound bundles.
- b. Mailers must prepare bundles to comply with standards in [2.1](#) through [2.5](#) and [2.8](#) through [2.13](#).
- c. Mailers must enter bundles at DDUs according to standards in [346.5.0](#).

2.8 Exception to Bundle Preparation—Full Single-Sort-Level Trays

When mailers prepare flats in letter trays under [3.4](#), mailers need not prepare bundles when placing mail in a full tray if none of the mail in that tray would have been more finely sorted if bundled. For example, the content of a full ADC tray need not be bundled if it would have all been prepared in ADC bundles to the same destination.

2.9 Pieces With Simplified Address

For mail prepared with a simplified address, all pieces for the same Post Office must be prepared in bundles of 50 when possible. If bundles of other quantities are prepared, the actual number of pieces must be shown on the facing slip attached to show distribution desired (e.g., rural route, city route, Post Office boxholder). Bundles must be secure and stable subject to specific weight limits in [705.8.0](#) if placed on pallets, and specific weight and height limits in [2.6](#) if placed in sacks.

2.10 Bundles With Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

An individual bundle may be prepared with fewer than the minimum number of pieces required by the standards for the price claimed without loss of price eligibility under either of these conditions:

- a. A greater number of pieces would exceed the maximum physical size for a bundle and the total number of pieces for that presort destination meets the minimum volume standard (e.g., 30 pieces are available to meet a 10-piece minimum, but a bundle of eight pieces is 6 inches thick).
- b. The pieces constitute the “last bundle” for a presort destination and previously prepared bundles met the applicable minimum volume standard (e.g., 505 pieces prepared in 10 50-piece bundles and one five-piece bundle).

2.11 Labeling Bundles

[7-3-08] Unless excepted by standard, the presort level of each bundle (other than carrier route bundles) must be identified either with an optional endorsement line under [708.7.0](#) or with a barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle label. On flat-size mail, the label may be placed anywhere on the address side of the top piece in the bundle. Barcoded pressure-sensitive bundle labels must not obscure the delivery address block. Banding or shrinkwrap must not obscure any bundle label. The following colors and presort characters apply to bundle labels:

- a. Five-digit scheme presort level, red Label 5 SCH.
- b. Five-digit presort level, red Label 5.
- c. Three-digit scheme presort level, green Label 3 SCH.



- d. Three-digit presort level, green Label 3.
- e. ADC presort level, pink Label A.
- f. Mixed ADC presort level, tan Label X.

2.12 Use of Carrier Route Information Lines

Bundles for individual carrier routes, rural routes, highway contract routes, Post Office box sections, or general delivery units must be prepared with facing slips under [2.0](#), optional endorsement lines under [708.7.0](#), or carrier route information lines under [708.6.0](#). These standards apply to Enhanced Carrier Route Standard mailings. Carrier route information lines may be on all pieces in a mailing, regardless of presort level.

2.13 Facing Slips—All Carrier Route Mail

All facing slips used on carrier route bundles must show this information:

- a. Line 1: Destination city, two-letter state abbreviation, and 5-digit ZIP Code.
- b. Line 2: Content (as appropriate to the class), followed by carrier route type and route number (e.g., “STD FLTS CR R 012”).
- c. Line 3: City and two-letter state abbreviation of the origin Post Office.

3.0 Sacks and Trays

3.1 Standard Containers

Mailings must be prepared in sacks except when permitted to be prepared in letter trays under [3.4](#) and under other applicable standards in this section. Containers for Customized MarketMail are specified in [705.1.0](#). The following additional standards apply:

- a. Palletized mail is also subject to [705.8.0](#).
- b. A postmaster may authorize nonpostal containers for a small-volume presorted mailing if the mailing weighs no more than 20 pounds, consists primarily of mail or bundles of mail for local ZIP Codes, and requires no USPS transportation for processing.

3.2 Sack Preparation

All sack preparation is subject to these standards:

- a. Each sack must bear the correct sack label.
- b. The weight of a sack and its content must not exceed 70 pounds.

3.3 Tray Sizes

These approximate measurements define the letter tray sizes that apply to all Standard Mail preparation standards:

- a. 2-foot managed mail (MM) trays: 21 inches long by 10 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 4-5/8 inches high.
- b. 1-foot MM trays: 10-1/4 inches long by 10 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 4-5/8 inches high.



- c. 2-foot extended MM (EMM) trays: 21-3/4 inches long by 11-1/2 inches wide (inside bottom dimensions) by 6-1/8 inches high.

3.4 Preparing Flats in Letter Trays

Standard Mail flat-size pieces may be prepared in letter trays instead of sacks only if the following standards are met:

- a. At least 90% of the mailing job must be claimed at automation prices or Enhanced Carrier Route prices. No more than 10% of the mailing job may be claimed at Presorted prices. The following minimum volumes for Standard Mail must be met:
 - 1. For the portion claimed at automation nonletter prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. For any portion of the job claimed at Presorted prices, no separate minimum is required.
 - 2. For any portion claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met.
- b. Automation price pieces must meet the applicable flat-size dimensions in [301.3.0](#). Presorted and Enhanced Carrier Route pieces must meet the flat-size dimensions in [301.1.0](#).
- c. The pieces must fit completely within the dimensions for height and the bottom (floor) dimensions for length and width specified in [3.3, Tray Sizes](#), for a managed mail (MM) letter tray or an extended managed mail (EMM) letter tray. If a single row of pieces is placed in a tray, all pieces must be upright, faced toward the end of the tray (the short dimension), and perpendicular to the length of the tray. If two rows of pieces are placed in a tray, the rows must be parallel to each other and to the length of the tray and all pieces must be upright, faced toward the end of the tray, and perpendicular to the length of the tray. Other applicable standards in [245.3.3, Letter Tray Preparation](#), must also be met.
- d. Trays must bear tray-size labels that meet all applicable physical and barcode standards under [4.9](#), with Line 1 and Line 2 information as required for flat-size mail in sacks. Each label must contain a barcode as specified in [708.6.3.3](#) and the content identifier number required in [Exhibit 708.6.2](#) for the same type of flat-size mail prepared in sacks.
- e. All mail prepared under [5.0, Preparing Nonautomation Flats](#), [6.0, Preparing Enhanced Carrier Route Flats](#), or [7.0, Preparing Automation Flats](#), must be bundled except for full 5-digit trays and full carrier route trays. The exception to bundling in [2.8, Exception to Bundle Preparation—Full Single-Sort-Level Trays](#), may be used for other sort levels. All mail prepared under [705.9.0, Combining Bundles of Automation and Nonautomation Flats in Trays and Sacks](#), must be bundled.
- f. All mail in the mailing job must be trayed. Sacking is not permitted except when the required minimum pallet load in [705.8.5.3](#) cannot be met.



- g. All trays must be palletized under [705.8.10.3](#), except for mail prepared in trays for Priority Mail or Express Mail drop shipment or for mail prepared and claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route destination delivery unit prices. Trays of letter-size pieces must not be placed onto pallets with trays of flat-size pieces. Pallet labels must identify the mail as flat-size pieces.
- h. All other applicable standards in [5.0, Preparing Nonautomation Flats](#), [6.0, Preparing Enhanced Carrier Route Flats](#), [7.0, Preparing Automation Flats](#), or [705.9.0](#) must be met, including required preparation sequence and use of sack minimums as tray minimums.

3.5 Tray Sleevling and Strapping

Each letter tray must be sleeved using USPS-provided sleeves. Except under [3.6](#), each sleeved letter tray must then be secured with one plastic strap placed tightly around the length of the tray without crushing the tray or sleeve.

3.6 Strapping Exception

Strapping is not required for any letter tray placed on a 5-digit, 3-digit, or SCF pallet secured with stretchwrap. In addition, if the processing and distribution manager gives a written waiver, strapping is not required for any mixed ADC letter tray or for any letter tray that originates and destines in the same SCF (mail processing plant) service area.

3.7 Origin/Entry 3-Digit Sacks

After all finer sort levels are prepared, an origin/entry 3-digit sacks must be prepared to contain any remaining mail for each 3-digit area serviced by the SCF serving the Post Office where the mail is verified (origin), and may be prepared for each 3-digit area served by the SCF/plant where mail is entered (if that is different from the SCF/plant serving the Post Office where the mail is verified—e.g., a PVDS deposit site). In all cases, only one less-than-full sack may be prepared for each 3-digit area.

4.0 Sack and Tray Labels

4.1 Basic Standards

[10-9-08] Sack and tray labels are subject to the following:

- a. Use 1-inch labels for sacks with metal 1-inch label holders/closures.
- b. Use 2-inch labels for sacks with 2-inch label holder pockets.
- c. Use 2-inch labels for sacks with dual plastic label holders/closures. One-inch labels may be used but are not recommended.
- d. Use 2-inch labels for trays.
- e. Illegible labels are not acceptable. Machine-printed labels (available from the USPS) ensure legibility. Legible hand-printed labels are acceptable.
- f. Container labels for automation price mailings are subject to [4.9](#) and [708.6.0](#).
- g. Intelligent Mail tray labels, used on sacks or trays, are subject to the standards in [708.6.5, Intelligent Mail Tray Labels](#), and to the specifications posted at <http://ribbs.usps.gov>.



4.2 **Line 1 (Destination Line)**

Line 1 (destination line) must meet these standards:

- a. *Placement.* Line 1 must be the first visible line on the label. It must be completely visible and legible when placed in the label holder. This visibility is ensured if the top of this line is no less than 1/8 (0.125) inch below the top of the label when the label is cut and prepared.
- b. *Information.* Line 1 must contain only the information specified by standard, including the appropriate destination facility prefix (e.g., "ADC"). Two zeros may follow the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix required by labeling standards (e.g., 223 as 22300).
- c. *Overseas Military Mail.* On 5-digit sacks and trays for overseas military destinations, Line 1 shows, from left to right, "APO" or "FPO," followed by "AE" (for ZIP Codes within the ZIP Code prefix range 090-098), "AA" (for ZIP Codes within the 3-digit ZIP Code prefix 340), or "AP" (for ZIP Codes within the ZIP Code prefix range 962-966), followed by the destination 5-digit ZIP Code of the mail in the sack or tray.

4.3 **Line 2 (Content Line)**

Line 2 (content line) must meet these standards:

- a. *Placement:* Line 2 must be the second visible line on the label. This line must show the class and processing category of the mail in the sack or tray and other information as specified by standards.



- b. *Codes:* The codes shown below must be used as appropriate on Line 2 of sack and tray labels.

CONTENT TYPE	CODE
Barcoded	BC
Barcoded and Nonbarcoded	BC/NBC
Carrier Route	C (type of route)
Carrier Routes	CR-RT or CR-RTS
Digit	D
Flats	FLTS
General Delivery Unit	G
Highway Contract Route	H
Mixed	MXD
Nonbarcoded	NON BC (sacks) NBC (pallets and cotrayed or cosacked mail under 705.9.0)
Post Office Box Section	B
Rural Route	R
Scheme	SCH
Standard Mail	STD
Working	WKG

4.4 Line 3 (Office of Mailing or Mailer Information Line)

Line 3 (office of mailing or mailer information line) must be the bottom line of required information and must show either the city and state of the entry Post Office or the mailer's name and the city and state of the mailer's location. It is recommended that the mailer's name also appear with the city and state of the entry Post Office.

4.5 Abbreviations for Lines 1 and 3

Lines 1 and 3 may contain abbreviated information if such abbreviations are those in the USPS City State Product.

4.6 Placement of Extraneous Information

Extraneous information is not permitted on the destination and content lines. It may be placed away from required lines, subject to these conditions:

- It may be placed above Line 1 in not more than 0.083 inch high type (6-point type).
- It may appear to the right of required Line 3 information but it must not consist of numerals that resemble a ZIP Code or 3-digit ZIP Code prefix.
- It must not appear between Lines 1 and 2 (a blank line is permitted), but may appear between Lines 2 and 3 if it does not consist of numerals that resemble a ZIP Code or 3-digit ZIP Code prefix.
- It may appear below Line 3.



- e. A mailer code assigned by the USPS or such words as “Mailer,” “From” (or “FR”), or “Entered at” may appear before the required information on Line 3.

4.7 Sack Label

4.7.1 Physical Characteristics of a Sack Label

A sack label must meet these specifications:

- a. Color: white or manila.
- b. Weight: 70-pound or heavier stock (required for mailings of automation-compatible flats, optional for others).
- c. Length (parallel to printing): 3.250 inches minimum; 3.515 inches maximum.
- d. Height (perpendicular to printing):
 - 1. For 1-inch labels: 0.937 inch minimum; 0.980 inch maximum.
 - 2. For 2-inch labels: 1.860 inches minimum; 2.015 inches maximum.

4.7.2 Additional Standards for Barcoded Sack Labels

In addition to 4.7.1, barcoded sack labels must meet the standards in [4.9](#) and [708.6.3](#) (for 2-inch labels) or [345.6.3](#) (for 1-inch labels).

4.8 Tray Labels

4.8.1 Physical Characteristics of a Tray Label

A tray label must meet these specifications:

- a. Color: white or manila.
- b. Weight: minimum 70-pound stock (500 sheets, 24 by 36 inches).
- c. Height (perpendicular to printing): 1.860 inches minimum; 2.015 inches maximum.
- d. Length (parallel to printing): 3.250 inches minimum; 3.515 inches maximum.
- e. Thickness: 0.005 inch minimum.

4.8.2 Additional Standards for Barcoded Tray Labels

In addition to [4.8.1](#), barcoded tray labels must meet the standards in [708.6.0](#).

4.8.3 Placement of a Tray Label

A tray label must be securely placed in an adhesive-backed label holder that is affixed to the specific location designated on the tray. Where no specific location is indicated the label must be securely placed in an adhesive-backed label holder that is affixed horizontally to the top left corner of one end of the tray. Do not use tape. Insert labels completely into the label holder to ensure that they do not fall out during processing. Do not insert labels upside down.

4.9 Use of Barcoded Sack and Tray Labels

[\[5-11-09\]](#) [Exhibit 4.9](#) shows the types of mail requiring barcoded sack or tray labels. Barcoded labels must meet these general standards:

- a. Mailers must use the appropriate size label as described in 4.1.
- b. Mailer-produced barcoded labels must meet the standards in 708.6.0.



- c. All information on barcoded labels must be machine-printed. Do not make alterations (such as handwritten changes) to preprinted barcoded labels.
- d. Mailers must insert a barcoded label completely into the label holder on the sack or tray to prevent its loss during transport and processing.
- e. Intelligent Mail tray labels must be used on all trays and sacks for mailings entered under the full-service Intelligent Mail automation option.

Exhibit 4.9 Required Barcoded Container Labels

PRICE OR TYPE	PROCESSING CATEGORY
Standard Mail	
Automation price	Flat-size
Cobundled and cosacked under 705.9.0 through 705.13.0	Flat-size
Automation, Presorted, and Enhanced Carrier Route in letter trays under 345.3.0	Flat-size
Automation and Presorted in letter trays cotrayed under 705.9.0 using 345.3.0 option	Flat-size

5.0 Preparing Nonautomation Flats

5.1 Basic Standards

[8-14-08] All mailings and all pieces in each mailing at Regular Standard Mail and Nonprofit Standard Mail nonautomation prices are subject to specific preparation standards in [5.2](#) through [5.9](#) and to these general standards (automation price mailings must be prepared under [7.0](#)):

- a. All pieces must be in the flat-size processing category.
- b. All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in [1.0](#) through [4.0](#) and the following:
 - 1. All regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must be marked under [302.3.0, Placement and Content of Mail Markings](#). Regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must not be marked “ECRL0T,” “ECRWSH,” “ECRWSS,” “AUTO,” or “Single-Piece” (or “SNGLP”).
 - 2. Unless excepted by standard, all pieces must be in the flat-size processing category and must be prepared in sacks or on pallets. Certain flat-size pieces may be prepared in letter trays under [3.0, Sacks and Trays](#).
- c. All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in [5.0](#) or the palletization standards in [705.8.0](#). Flat-size pieces may be prepared under [705.9.0](#) through [705.13.0](#) in [Advanced Preparation and Special Postage Payment Systems](#).
- d. Sortation determines price eligibility as specified in [343.5.0](#).



5.2 Required Bundling

Except as provided in [5.4, Loose Packing](#), bundling is required before sacking. A bundle must be prepared when the quantity of addressed pieces for a required presort level reaches the required minimum bundle size in [5.3, Bundling and Labeling](#). Smaller volumes are not permitted except for mixed ADC bundles.

5.3 Bundling and Labeling

[7-3-08] Mailings consisting entirely of pieces meeting the automation-compatibility criteria in [301.3.0](#) must be prepared in 5-digit scheme bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Codes identified in [L007](#) and in 3-digit scheme bundles for those 3-digit ZIP Codes identified in [L008](#). Preparation sequence, bundle size, and labeling:

- a. 5-digit scheme (required for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in [301.3.0](#)), see definition in [1.4f](#):
 1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 SCH, or OEL.
 2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 SCH, or OEL.
- b. 5-digit (required), see definition in [1.4f](#):
 1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.
 2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.
- c. 3-digit scheme (required for flats meeting the automation-compatibility standards in [301.3.0](#)), see definition in [1.4n](#); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 SCH, or OEL.
- d. 3-digit (required), see definition in [1.4n](#); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 or OEL.
- e. ADC (required); 10-piece minimum; pink Label A or OEL.
- f. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; tan Label X or OEL.

5.4 Loose Packing

District managers may authorize loose packing of unbundled pieces to fill Number 3 sacks if no pieces in a sack would be more finely sorted if bundled. Pieces must be faced and packed to remain oriented in transit. The total weight of sacks containing such pieces may not exceed 70 pounds. Requests for loose packing must be made in advance through the Post Office of mailing.

5.5 Required Sacking or Traying

Except as provided in [5.6](#), a sack, or a letter tray under [3.0](#), must be prepared when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first, subject to these conditions:

- a. For identical-weight pieces, mailers must apply these methods:
 1. Pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum.

2. Pieces weighing more than 1.92 ounces must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.
- b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must apply either one of these methods:
 1. The minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing is used. The net weight of the mailing is divided by the number of pieces, and the resulting average single-piece weight is used to determine whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies.
 2. The actual piece count or mail weight for each sack is used, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows for each sack the number of pieces and the total weight.
- c. The accompanying postage statement must indicate whether the 125-piece minimum, the 15-pound minimum, or both minimums are applied.

5.6 Drop Shipment

A mailer using Priority Mail or Express Mail to drop ship Standard Mail flat-size pieces may prepare sacks containing fewer than 125 pieces or less than 15 pounds of mail.

5.7 Sacking and Labeling

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

- a. 5-digit/scheme (required); scheme sort required, only for pieces meeting the automation-compatibility criteria in [301.3.0](#), see definition in [1.4f](#); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: For 5-digit scheme sacks use [L007](#), Column B. For 5-digit sacks, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code destination on pieces. (See [4.3](#) for overseas military mail).
 2. Line 2: For 5-digit scheme sacks, "STD FLT 5D SCH NON BC." For 5-digit sacks, "STD FLTS 5D NON BC."
- b. 3-digit (required); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L002](#), Column A.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D NON BC."
- c. Origin/entry 3-digits(s) (optional); one-bundle minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L002](#), Column A.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D NON BC."
- d. ADC (required); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L004](#), Column B.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS ADC NON BC."
- e. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: Use [L009](#), Column B.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS NON BC WKG."



5.8 Cotraining and Cobundling Flats With Automation Mail

The following standards apply:

- a. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing, an automation mailing, and a nonautomation mailing, then it must be prepared under one of the following options: 1) the carrier route mailing must be prepared under [6.0](#) and the automation and nonautomation mailings must be prepared under [705.9.0](#), *Combining Bundles of Automation and Nonautomation Flats in Trays and Sacks*; or 2) all three mailings in the mailing job must be prepared under [705.10.0](#), *Merging Bundles of Flats in Sacks and Pallets Using the City State Product*.
- b. If the mailing job contains an automation mailing and a nonautomation mailing, then it must be prepared under the cosacking standards in [705.9.0](#).
- c. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing and a nonautomation mailing, then it must be separately sacked under [5.0](#) and [6.0](#) or prepared using the merged sacking option in [705.10.0](#).
- d. If the mailing job contains a carrier route mailing and an automation mailing, then it must be separately sacked under [6.0](#) and [7.0](#) or prepared using the merged sacking option in [705.10.0](#).
- e. Nonautomation pieces may be cobundled with automation pieces under the standards in [705.11.0](#).

5.9 Merged Containerization of Carrier Route, Automation, and Nonautomation Flats

Under the optional preparation in [705.10.0](#), nonautomation 5-digit bundles prepared under [5.2](#) through [5.8](#) are cosacked with carrier route bundles prepared under [6.0](#) and with automation 5-digit bundles prepared under [7.0](#) in merged 5-digit scheme sacks and merged 5-digit sacks. Under the optional preparation in [705.10.0](#), [705.12.0](#), or [705.13.0](#), nonautomation 5-digit bundles are copalletized with carrier route bundles prepared under [6.0](#) and with automation 5-digit bundles prepared under [7.0](#) on merged 5-digit scheme pallets and merged 5-digit pallets. See [5.8a](#) for information on when preparation under [705.10.0](#) may be required.

6.0 Preparing Enhanced Carrier Route Flats

6.1 Basic Standards

[8-14-08] All mailings and all pieces in each mailing at Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail and Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail nonautomation prices are subject to specific preparation standards in [6.2](#) through [6.7](#) and to these general standards:

- a. All pieces must meet the standards for basic eligibility in [343.2.0](#) through [343.4.0](#) and specific eligibility in [343.6.0](#). Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail must meet the additional eligibility standards in [703.1.0](#).
- b. All pieces must be in the flat-size processing category.
- c. All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in [2.0](#) through [4.0](#) and [302](#), and the following:



1. All regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route pieces must be marked under [302.3.0, Placement and Content of Mail Markings](#). All pieces must also be marked “ECRLOT” for basic price, “ECRWSH” for high density price, or “ECRWSS” for saturation price.
 2. Generally, flat-size pieces must be in sacks or in bundles on pallets. Certain flat-size pieces may be in letter trays under [3.4](#). When entering flat-size pieces at DDUs, mailers may prepare and transport unsacked, nonpalletized bundles according to standards in [2.7](#).
 3. Pieces must be sequenced according to [6.9](#).
 4. Pieces with a simplified address format must meet the standards in [602.3.0, Use of Alternative Addressing](#).
- d. All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in [6.0](#) or the palletization standards in [705.8.0](#). Flat-size pieces may be prepared under [705.9.0](#) through [705.13.0 in Advanced Preparation and Special Postage Payment Systems](#).
- e. Sortation determines price eligibility as specified in [343.5.0](#).

6.2 Residual Pieces

Pieces not sorted as a carrier route mailing must be prepared as a separate mailing at Standard Mail automation or Presorted prices or at single-piece First-Class Mail or Priority Mail prices.

6.3 Carrier Route Bundle Preparation

Prepare carrier route bundles of flat-size mail as follows:

- a. Mailers must prepare only carrier route bundles. Carrier route bundles are not required in full carrier route trays.
- b. Except under [6.4](#), carrier route bundles must contain at least 10 pieces.
- c. The method of labeling a carrier route bundle is based on the following sack or tray levels:
 1. Carrier route tray or sack: No bundle labeling is required.
 2. 5-digit scheme or 5-digit carrier routes tray or sacks: Bundles must have a facing slip unless the pieces in the bundle have a carrier information line or an optional endorsement line (OEL).

6.4 Bundles, Trays, and Sacks With Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

As a general exception to [6.2](#) through [6.7](#), a mailer may prepare a bundle, tray, or sack with fewer than the minimum number of pieces required for a carrier route when they are claiming the saturation price for the contents and meet the applicable density standard.

6.5 Multi Carrier Routes Bundle

A mailer may combine individual eligible bundles of Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route basic price mail into a multi carrier routes bundle of the same 5-digit ZIP Code under these conditions:



345.6.6

- a. Individual carrier route bundles cannot exceed 1 inch (except for a multi carrier routes bundle under [6.5b](#)) and must be secured with two bands, one around the length and one around the girth.
- b. A multi carrier routes bundle can contain one individual bundle that exceeds 1 inch to serve as an anchor.
- c. The multi carrier routes bundle must meet the standards in [2.3](#) through [2.6](#).
- d. The multi carrier routes bundle must be secured with at least two bands, one around the length and one around the girth; or with shrinkwrap; or with shrinkwrap plus one or more bands.
- e. The multi carrier routes bundle must be labeled with an optional endorsement line (OEL). The top bundle must contain the carrier route information for the individual bundle preceded by the endorsement "Multi" and two asterisks (e.g., *****Multi**C-001).
- f. A multi carrier routes bundle that exceeds the maximum heights in [2.6](#) by less than the thickness of an individual carrier route bundle (e.g., 1 inch or less) meets the standards.

6.6 Required Sack Minimums

When sacking is required, mailers must prepare a sack when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first. The following conditions apply:

- a. For identical-weight pieces, a single-piece weight of 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) results in 125 pieces weighing 15 pounds. Identical-weight pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum; those that weigh more must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.
- b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must either use the minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing (divide the net weight of the mailing by the number of pieces; the resulting average single-piece weight determines whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies) or sack by the actual piece count or mail weight for each sack, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows (specifically for each sack) the number of pieces and their total weight.
- c. Mailers must note on the accompanying postage statement whether they applied the 125-piece ("PCS") or 15-pound ("WT") threshold or the method in [6.6b, Required Sack Minimums](#) ("BOTH").
- d. Sacks with fewer than 125 pieces or less than 15 pounds of pieces may be prepared to a carrier route when the saturation price is claimed for the contents and the applicable density standard is met.

6.7 Sack Preparation

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

- a. Carrier route: required (minimum of 125 pieces/15 pounds).
 - 1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see [4.2](#) for overseas military mail).



2. Line 2: “STD FLTS ECRWSS” or “STD FLTS ECRWSH” or “STD FLTS ECRLOT” as applicable, followed by the route type and number.
- b. 5-digit scheme carrier routes: required (no minimum).
 1. Line 1: use [L001](#), column B.
 2. Line 2: “STD FLTS CR-RTS SCH.”
- c. 5-digit carrier routes: required (no minimum).
 1. Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see [4.2](#) for overseas military mail).
 2. Line 2: “STD FLTS CR-RTS.”

6.8 Merged Containerization of Carrier Route, Automation, and Presorted Price Flats

Under the optional preparation in [705.10.0](#), carrier route price bundles are cosacked with Presorted price 5-digit bundles prepared under [5.0](#) and with automation price 5-digit bundles prepared under [7.0](#) in merged 5-digit scheme sacks and merged 5-digit sacks. Under the optional preparation in [705.10.0](#), [705.12.0](#), or [705.13.0](#), carrier route price bundles prepared under [6.3](#) and [6.3](#) are copalletized with Presorted price 5-digit bundles prepared under [5.0](#) and with automation price 5-digit bundles prepared under [7.0](#) on merged 5-digit scheme pallets and merged 5-digit pallets. Presorted price pieces may be cobundled with automation price pieces under [705.11.0](#).

6.9 Delivery Sequence Standards

6.9.1 Basic Standards

Mailpieces for which a walk-sequence discount is claimed must be organized in the delivery sequence determined by the USPS and prepared as a carrier route mailing under [6.0](#) and the standards below. Pieces prepared with a simplified address must also meet the corresponding standards.

6.9.2 Missing Addresses

Some mailpieces cannot be sequenced because an exact match for a name or address cannot be obtained. These pieces may be included in a sequenced mailing only if they are placed behind or after the sequenced mail. Arrange these pieces:

- a. Alphabetically by complete street name, then either in ascending order by ZIP+4 code sector segments or numerically in ascending order by primary address.
- b. Numerically for numbered streets, then either in ascending order by ZIP+4 code sector segments or numerically in ascending order by primary address.

6.9.3 Updating Walk Sequence Information—General

Walk-sequence price pieces prepared with other than a simplified address format under [6.9.4](#) must be sequenced using USPS data from one of the following sources, issued within 90 days before the mailing date:

- a. The Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS) file.
- b. The Delivery Sequence File, Second Generation (DSF²).



- c. Delivery sequence information from USPS address sequencing services, as requested by the customer.

6.9.4 Updating Walk Sequence Information for Simplified Addressing

Walk-sequence price pieces prepared with a simplified address must be based on delivery stop information obtained within 90 days before the mailing date, either from the Delivery Statistics File or from the postmaster of the destination office.

6.9.5 Out-of-Date Walk Sequence Information

Mailings prepared with out-of-date walk-sequencing information are not eligible for walk-sequence prices.

6.9.6 Updating Line-of-Travel Sequence Information

Unless the mail is prepared in carrier walk sequence, line-of-travel (LOT) sequence is required for mailings at Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route basic prices. LOT sequence is not an exact walk sequence but a sequence of ZIP+4 codes arranged in the order that the route is served by a carrier. (First the ZIP+4 groups are sequenced, then the addresses within each are identified as being in ascending or descending order.) The USPS eLOT product provides a list of the ZIP+4 codes each carrier route serves, identifies the order in which they are delivered, and provides an indicator specifying whether the addresses that share the same ZIP+4 code must be sorted in ascending or descending order. When a range of ZIP+4 codes on the same carrier route are assigned the same sequence number, the addresses bearing those ZIP+4 codes must be arranged in ascending ZIP+4 code order before the sequence number is assigned. LOT information must be updated within 90 days before the date of mailing.

6.10 Delivery Sequence Documentation

6.10.1 Basic Standards

The postage statement must be annotated in the “Carrier Route Sequencing Date” block on page 1. The mailer must annotate the postage statement to show the earliest (oldest) date of the method used to obtain sequencing information for the mailing. The mailer’s signature on the postage statement certifies that this standard has been met when the corresponding mail is presented to the USPS. The mailer must maintain documentation to substantiate compliance with the standards for carrier route sequencing. Unless submitted with each corresponding mailing, the mailer must be able to provide the USPS with documentation (if requested) of accurate sequencing or delivery statistics for each carrier route to which pieces are mailed. Acceptable forms of documentation are:

- a. The invoice showing that the addresses came from CDS.
- b. DSF² invoice or documentation.
- c. Copies of the delivery unit summaries that served as the mailer’s bills for address sequencing service charges.
- d. Evidence of receipt of information from postmasters for simplified address mailings (see [509.1.0, Address Information System Products](#)).
- e. Form 3553 showing the date of the eLOT product used, or the date from the USPS Qualification report produced by presort software.



6.10.2 High Density

For each carrier route to which high density price mail is addressed, the mailer must document the total number of addressed pieces to the route.

6.10.3 Saturation Density—Simplified Address Mail

For each carrier route to which mail with a simplified address is sent at the saturation price, the mailer must be able to document that the mailing meets the applicable density standard. This documentation must show the total number of active possible deliveries and the total number to which mailpieces in the mailing are being addressed, by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route. It must be submitted with each applicable mailing.

6.10.4 Saturation Density—Other Mail

For each carrier route to which mail without a simplified address is sent at the saturation price, the mailer must be able to document that the mailing meets the applicable density standards. This documentation must show either the total number of active possible *residential* deliveries and the number and percentage to which mailpieces are addressed, or the total number of *all* active possible deliveries and the number and percentage to which mailpieces are addressed, depending on whether qualification is based on the 90% or 75% criterion, respectively. The documentation must be listed by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route. It must be submitted with each applicable mailing.

6.10.5 Both Prices

If a mailing contains pieces qualifying for both walk-sequence prices, the documentation required by 6.10.2, *High Density*, and either 6.10.3, *Saturation Density—Simplified Address Mail*, or 6.10.4, *Saturation Density—Other Mail*, may be combined. Entries for pieces at the high density price must be so annotated on the documentation. For the entire mailing, a summary of the total number of pieces at each price must be provided. This documentation must be submitted with each applicable mailing.

6.10.6 Carrier Route Price

If a mailing includes high density and saturation price and basic carrier route price pieces, in addition to the applicable information required by 6.10.2 through 6.10.5 in *Delivery Sequence Documentation*, the documentation for the basic carrier route price mail must show, by 5-digit ZIP Code and, within each, by carrier route, the total number of addressed pieces at each price for each carrier route to which pieces are addressed. Pieces qualifying for the basic carrier route price must be so annotated. For the entire mailing, a summary by 5-digit ZIP Code of the total number of pieces at each price must be provided. This documentation must be submitted with each applicable mailing to meet the documentation standard for the carrier route price.



7.0 Preparing Automation Flats

7.1 Basic Standards

Flat-size automation Standard Mail must be prepared under [7.0](#) and the eligibility standards for the price claimed. Trays and sacks must bear the appropriate barcoded container labels under [4.9](#).

7.2 Mailings

All pieces in a mailing must meet the standards in [301.3.0, *Physical Standards for Automation Flats*](#), and be sorted together to the finest extent required. Standard Mail mailings may include pieces prepared at automation 3/5 and basic prices. The definitions of a mailing and permissible combinations are in [1.2](#).

7.3 Marking

All Standard Mail automation pieces must be marked under [302](#). Pieces claimed at an automation price must bear the appropriate class marking and, except as provided in [302.3.0](#), “AUTO.” Pieces not claimed at an automation price must not bear “AUTO” unless single-piece postage is affixed or the corrective single-piece marking “Single-Piece” or “SNGLP” is applied.

7.4 Standard Mail Bundle Preparation

7.4.1 Bundling and Labeling

[7-3-08] Preparation sequence, bundle size, and labeling:

- a. 5-digit scheme (required); see definition in [1.4f](#):
 1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 SCH or OEL.
 2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 SCH or OEL.
- b. 5-digit presort (required); see definition in [1.4f](#):
 1. For mailings containing only pieces weighing 5 ounces (0.3125 pound) or less: 15-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.
 2. For mailings containing any pieces weighing more than 5 ounces (0.3125 pound): 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 or OEL.
- c. 3-digit scheme (required); see definition in [1.4n](#); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 SCH or OEL.
- d. 3-digit presort (required); see definition in [1.4n](#); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 or OEL.
- e. ADC (required); 10-piece minimum; pink Label A or OEL.
- f. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; tan Label X or OEL.

7.4.2 Required Sacking

A sack, or a letter tray under [3.0](#), must be prepared when the quantity of mail for a required presort destination reaches either 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces, whichever occurs first, subject to these conditions:



- a. For identical-weight pieces, a single-piece weight of 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) results in 125 pieces weighing 15 pounds. Identical-weight pieces weighing 1.92 ounces (0.12 pound) or less must be prepared using the 125-piece minimum; those that weigh more must be prepared using the 15-pound minimum.
- b. For nonidentical-weight pieces, mailers must either use the minimum that applies to the average piece weight for the entire mailing (divide the net weight of the mailing by the number of pieces; the resulting average single-piece weight determines whether the 125-piece or 15-pound minimum applies) or sack by the actual piece count or mail weight for each sack, if documentation can be provided with the mailing that shows (specifically for each sack) the number of pieces and their total weight.
- c. Mailers must note on the accompanying postage statement whether they applied the 125-piece ("PCS") or 15-pound ("WT") threshold or the method in [7.4.2b](#) ("BOTH").

7.4.3 Sacking and Labeling

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

- a. 5-digit/scheme (required); see definition in [1.4f](#); 125-piece or 15-pound minimum, labeling:
 1. Line 1: For 5-digit scheme sacks use [L007](#), Column B. For 5-digit sacks use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see [4.3](#) for overseas military mail).
 2. Line 2: For 5-digit scheme sacks, "STD FLTS 5D SCH BC." For 5-digit sacks, "STD FLTS 5D BC."
- b. 3-digit (required); 125-piece/15-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L002](#), Column A.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D BC."
- c. Origin 3-digit(s) (required) and entry 3-digit(s) (optional); one-bundle minimum (for origin and entry); labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L002](#), Column A.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS 3D BC."
- d. ADC (required); 125-piece/15-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L004](#), Column B.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS ADC BC."
- e. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: Use [L009](#), Column B.
 2. Line 2: "STD FLTS BC WKG."



7.5 Scheme Bundle Preparation

Pieces meeting the automation compatibility criteria in [301.3.0](#) may be prepared in 5-digit scheme bundles for those 5-digit ZIP Code combinations identified in [L007](#) and in 3-digit scheme bundles for those 3-digit ZIP Code combinations identified in [L008](#). These bundles must meet the additional standards in [1.4f](#).

7.6 Merged Containerization With Presorted and Carrier Route Flats

When the conditions and preparation standards in [705.10.0](#), [705.12.0](#), or [705.13.0](#) are met, 5-digit bundles of Presorted, automation, and carrier route price mail that are part of the same mailing job may be combined on merged 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets and merged 5-digit sacks or pallets. Bundles that are cosacked or copalletized must be part of the same mailing job and mail class. Automation price pieces may be cobundled with nonautomation price pieces under [705.11.0](#).

7.7 Exception—Automation and Nonautomation Pieces on Pallets

When the physical dimensions of mailpieces in a Standard Mail mailing meet the definition of both a letter-size piece under [201.1.1.1](#) and an automation flat-size piece under [301.3.0](#), the entire job may be prepared, merged, and palletized under [705.9.0](#) through [705.11.0](#), [705.12.0](#), and [705.13.0](#) if the applicable standards are met. The nonautomation portion is all paid at nonautomation flat-size prices for Standard Mail. Mailing jobs prepared entirely in sacks and claiming this exception must be cobundled under [705.11.0](#). As an alternative to [705.9.0](#) through [705.11.0](#), [705.12.0](#), and [705.13.0](#), if a portion of the job is prepared as palletized automation flats, the nonautomation portion may be prepared as palletized flats at nonautomation flat-size prices and at Enhanced Carrier Route flat-size prices. The nonautomation pieces that cannot be placed on BMC or finer level pallets may be prepared as flats in sacks and paid at the appropriate nonautomation flat-size prices. As provided in [343.5.0](#), the following minimum volumes for Standard Mail must be met for this alternative to [705.9.0](#) through [705.11.0](#), [705.12.0](#), and [705.13.0](#):

- a. For the portion claimed at automation flat-size prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met. For any portion of the job claimed at nonautomation prices, no separate minimum is required.
- b. For any portion claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route flat-size prices, a separate 200-piece minimum must be met.