245   Mail Preparation

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.

1.2   Definition of Mailings

Mailings are defined as:

a.   General. 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, enhanced carrier route) 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.   Standard Mail. Except as provided in 243.3.6, the types of Standard Mail listed below may not be part of the same mailing.

  1.   Automation price and any other type of mail.

  2.   Enhanced Carrier Route and any other type of mail.

  3.   Enhanced Carrier Route letter price pieces and Enhanced Carrier Route nonletter price pieces.

  4.   Presorted price mail and any other type of mail.

  5.   Machinable and nonmachinable pieces.

  6.   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.

  7.   Customized MarketMail and any other type of mail.

1.3   Terms for Presort Levels

[3-3-14] 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 (trays) for automation letters:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces is one of the 5-digit ZIP Code areas processed by the USPS as one scheme, as shown in labeling list L012.

d. *3-digit:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with the same three digits (see L002, Column A).

e. *3-digit scheme:* the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 3-digit prefixes processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in L003.

f. *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.

g. *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.

h. *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.

i. *ADC/AADC:* all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same area distribution center (ADC) or automated area distribution center (AADC) (see L004 or L801).

j. *ASF/NDC:* all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same auxiliary service facility (ASF) or network distribution center (NDC) (see L601, L602, or L605).

k. *Mixed [ADC or AADC]:* the pieces are for delivery in the service area of more than one ADC or AADC.

l. *Residual pieces/bundles:* 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

[3-3-14] 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 *5-digit scheme sort for automation letters* yields 5-digit scheme trays for 5-digit ZIP Codes identified in labeling list L012 and 5-digit trays for other areas. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as one presort destination subject to a minimum volume, with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Trays prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are considered 5-digit scheme sorted. When standards require 5-digit/scheme sort, mailers must prepare all possible 5-digit scheme trays, then prepare all possible 5-digit trays.

f. *A 3-digit scheme sort* yields 3-digit scheme trays for those 3-digit ZIP Code prefixes listed in L003 and 3-digit trays for other areas. The 3-digit ZIP Code prefixes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum tray volume, with no further separation by 3-digit prefix required. Trays prepared for a 3-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 3-digit areas are still considered 3-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. When standards require 3-digit/scheme sort, mailers must prepare all possible 3-digit scheme trays, then prepare all possible 3-digit trays.

g. 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.

h. 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.

i. 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.

j.   *Entry [facility]* (or *origin [facility]*) refers to the USPS mail processing facility (e.g., "entry NDC") 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 NDC* includes subordinate ASFs unless otherwise specified.

k.   The *group pieces* instruction means the pieces are to be sorted together but not secured into a bundle.

l.   A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces secured together as a unit. Bundle preparation is described in 2.0.

m.   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 (tray 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 restrictions on bundles.

2.0   Bundles

2.1   General

A *bundle* is a group of addressed pieces, for a presort destination, secured together as a unit. See 601.2.0 for bundling standards.

3.0   Letter Trays

3.1   Standard Containers

Mailings must be prepared in letter trays with sleeves. Containers for Customized MarketMail are specified in 705.1.4. 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   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.

3.3   Letter Tray Preparation

Letter trays are prepared as follows:

a.   Subject to availability of equipment, standard managed mail (MM) trays must be used for all letter-size mail, except that extended managed mail (EMM) trays must be used when available for letter-size mail that exceeds the inside dimensions of MM trays defined in 3.2. When EMM trays are not available for those larger pieces, they must be placed in MM trays, angled back, or placed upright perpendicular to the length of the tray in row(s) to preserve their orientation.

b.   Pieces must be "faced" (oriented with all addresses in the same direction with the postage area in the upper right).

c.   Each tray prepared must be filled before filling the next tray, with the contents in multiple trays relatively balanced. When preparing full trays, mailers must fill all possible 2-foot trays first; if there is mail remaining for the presort destination, mailers must use a combination of 1-foot and 2-foot trays that results in the fewest total number of trays for that presort level. As an alternative, if there is mail remaining, mailers may move those pieces to the next higher presort level when the minimum piece quantity has been reached at the next tray level (e.g., 150 pieces) and the standards in 7.5 are met.

d.   For presort destinations that do not require full trays, pieces are placed in a less-than-full tray.

e.   Mailers must use as few trays as possible without jeopardizing price eligibility. For instance, a mailer will never have two 1-foot trays to a single destination; instead, that mail must be placed in a single 2-foot tray. A 1-foot tray is prepared only if it is a full tray with no overflow; or if there is less than 1 foot of mail for that destination; or if the overflow from a full 2-foot tray is less than 1 foot of mail.

f.   Each tray must bear the correct tray label.

g.   Each tray must be sleeved and strapped under 3.4 and 3.5.

h.   If a mailing is prepared using an MLOCR/barcode sorter and is submitted with standardized documentation, then pieces do *not* have to be grouped by 3-digit ZIP Code prefix (or by 3-digit scheme, if applicable) in AADC trays, or by AADC in mixed AADC trays.

3.4   Tray Sleeving and Strapping

Each letter tray must be sleeved using USPS-provided sleeves. Except under 3.5, 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.

3.5   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 letter tray that originates and destinates in the same SCF (mail processing plant) service area.

3.6   Origin/Entry 3-Digit/Scheme Trays

After all finer sort levels are prepared, an origin/entry 3-digit tray (or, if applicable, origin/entry 3-digit scheme tray) must be prepared to contain any remaining mail for each 3-digit (or 3-digit scheme) area serviced by the SCF serving the Post Office where the mail is verified (origin), and may be prepared for each 3-digit (or 3-digit scheme) 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 tray may be prepared for each 3-digit (or 3-digit scheme) area.

4.0   Tray Labels

4.1   Basic Standards

Tray labels are subject to these basic standards:

a.   Use 2-inch labels.

b.   Illegible labels are not acceptable. Machine-printed labels (available from the USPS) ensure legibility. Legible hand-printed labels are acceptable.

c.   Tray labels for automation price mailings are subject to 4.9.1, and 708.6.0.

d.   Intelligent Mail tray labels are subject to the standards in 708.6.3, and to the specifications posted at http://ribbs.usps.gov.

4.2   Physical Characteristics of Tray Labels

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.

4.3   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 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 tray.

4.4 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 tray and other information as specified by standards.

b. *Codes:* The codes shown below must be used as appropriate on Line 2 of tray and pallet 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
General Delivery Unit	G
Highway Contract Route	H
Letters	LTR or LTRS
Machinable	MACH
Mixed	MXD
Nonmachinable	MAN or MANUAL
Nonbarcoded	NON BC (sacks) NBC (pallets and cotrayed or cosacked mail under 705.9.0)
Post Office Box Section	B
Rural Route	R
Standard Mail	STD
Working	WKG

4.5 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.

4.6   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.

4.7   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:

a.   It may be placed above Line 1 in not more than 0.083 inch high type (6-point type).

b.   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.

c.   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.

d.   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.

4.8   Placement of 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   Barcoded Tray Labels

4.9.1   Basic Standards for Barcoded Tray Labels

Exhibit 4.9.1 shows the types of mail requiring barcoded tray labels. Barcoded labels must meet these general standards:

a.   Use 2-inch labels.

b.   Mailer-produced barcoded labels must meet the standards in 708.6.0.

c.   All information on barcoded labels must be machine-printed. Alterations to preprinted barcoded labels (e.g., handwritten changes) may not be made.

d.   Barcoded labels must be inserted completely into the label holder on the tray to prevent their loss during transport and processing.

e.   Intelligent Mail tray labels must be used with mailings entered under the full-service Intelligent Mail automation option (see 705.23.0).

Exhibit 4.9.1 Required Barcoded Container Labels

PRICE OR TYPE	PROCESSING CATEGORY
Standard Mail	
Automation price	Letter-size
Enhanced Carrier Route	Letter-size (barcoded labels not required for letter-size pieces with simplified addresses or paid at nonletter prices)

5.0   Preparing Nonautomation Letters

5.1   Basic Standards

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 5.0 and to these general standards (automation price mailings must be prepared under 7.0):

a.   All pieces must meet the eligibility standards in 243.2.0 through 243.5.0. Nonprofit Standard Mail must meet the additional eligibility standards in 703.1.0.

b.   All pieces in each mailing must be in the letter-size processing category. Unless excepted by standard, letter-size pieces must be prepared in letter trays.

c.   All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in 202.

d.   All pieces in the mailing must meet the specific sortation and preparation standards in 5.0.

e.   Sortation determines price eligibility as specified in 243.5.0.

5.2   Marking

All regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must be marked under 202.3.0. Regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail pieces must not be marked "ECRLOT," "ECRWSH," "ECRWSS," "AUTO," or "Single-Piece" (or "SNGLP").

5.3   Machinable Preparation

5.3.1 Machinable Bundling

Machinable pieces are not bundled, except for the following (see 601.2.0):

a.   Card-size pieces.

b.   All pieces in a less-than-full mixed AADC tray.

5.3.2 Traying and Labeling

Instead of preparing overflow AADC trays with fewer than 150 pieces, mailers may include these pieces in mixed AADC trays when a tray of 150 or more pieces can be made. Mailers must note these trays on standardized documentation (see 708.1.2). Pieces that are placed in the next tray level must be grouped by destination and placed in the front or back of that tray. Preparation sequence, tray size, and labeling:

a.   Origin/entry 3-digit (optional, no minimum); labeling:

1.   Line 1: L002, Column A.

    2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 3D MACH."

b.   AADC (optional, but required for AADC price); 150-piece minimum (overflow allowed); group pieces by AADC when overflow pieces from AADC trays are placed in mixed AADC trays; labeling:

    1.   Line 1: L801, Column B.

    2.   Line 2: "STD LTR AADC MACH."

c.   Mixed AADC (required); no minimum; labeling:

    1.   Line 1: L011, Column B. Use L010, Column B, if entered at an ASF or NDC or for mail placed on an ASF, NDC, or SCF pallet under the option in 705.8.10.3.

    2.   Line 2: "STD LTR MACH WKG."

5.4 Nonmachinable Preparation

5.4.1 Nonmachinable Bundling

Except as provided in 601.2.4, bundling is required before traying. A bundle must be prepared when the quantity of addressed pieces for a required presort level reaches a minimum of 10 pieces. Smaller volumes are not permitted except for mixed ADC bundles. Preparation sequence, bundle size, and labeling:

a.   5-digit (required); 10-piece minimum; red Label 5 or optional endorsement line (OEL); labeling not required for pieces in full 5-digit trays.

b.   3-digit (required); 10-piece minimum; green Label 3 or OEL.

c.   ADC (required); 10-piece minimum; pink Label A or OEL.

d.   Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; tan Label X or OEL.

5.4.2 Traying and Labeling

When all full trays for a destination have been prepared, mailers may include a group of 10 or more overflow pieces for that destination in a qualified tray at either of the next two tray levels. For example, overflow pieces for a 5-digit destination may be placed into an existing correct 3-digit tray; if a 3-digit tray that includes the 5-digit destination does not exist, the overflow pieces may be placed into the correct existing ADC tray. Bundle the overflow pieces separately with the correct presort bundle label or OEL; the pieces will still qualify for the 5-digit price. Mailers must note these trays on standardized documentation (see 708.1.2). Preparation sequence, tray size, and labeling:

a.   5-digit (required); 150-piece minimum; labeling

    1.   Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.0, for overseas military mail).

    2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 5D MANUAL."

b.   3-digit (required); 150-piece minimum (mailers may prepare 3-digit origin/entry trays with as few as 10 pieces per tray); labeling:

    1.   Line 1: L002, Column A.

    2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 3D MANUAL."

    c.   ADC (required); 150-piece minimum; labeling:

        1.   Line 1: L004, Column B.

        2.   Line 2: "STD LTR ADC MANUAL."

    d.   Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:

        1.   Line 1: L011, Column B. Use L010, Column B, if entered at an ASF or NDC or for mail placed on an ASF, NDC, or SCF pallet under the option in 705.8.10.3.

        2.   Line 2: "STD LTR MANUAL WKG."

5.5 Residual Pieces

Mailers entering Standard Mail residual pieces that do not qualify for Standard Mail prices, and paying the First-Class Mail prices (but prepared "as is" under 244.5.0), must prepare these pieces in separate trays from the automation and presort pieces. Mailers must label the trays under 708.6.0 using CIN code 560 on residual trays. Label trays as follows:

    a.   Line 1: Use L011, Column B.

    b.   Line 2: Use the human-readable content line corresponding to content identifier number 560 (see Exhibit 708.6.2.4).

    c.   Line 3: Office of mailing or mailer information.

6.0 Preparing Enhanced Carrier Route Letters

6.1 Basic Standards

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 6.0 and to these general standards:

    a.   All pieces must meet the standards for basic eligibility in 243.2.0 through 243.4.0 and specific eligibility in 243.6.0. Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail must meet the additional eligibility standards in 703.1.0.

    b.   All pieces in each mailing must be in the letter-size processing category. Unless excepted by standard, letter-size pieces must be prepared in letter trays.

    c.   All pieces must meet the applicable general preparation standards in 2.0 through 4.0 and 202, and the following:

        1.   Pieces must be sequenced according to 6.8.

        2.   Pieces with a simplified address format must meet the standards in 602.3.0.

    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.

    e.   Sortation determines price eligibility as specified in 243.6.0.

6.2   Marking

All regular and Nonprofit Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route pieces must be marked under 202.3.0. All pieces must also be marked "ECRLOT" for basic price, "ECRWSH" for high density or high density plus price, or "ECRWSS" for saturation price. Pieces in carrier route mailings under 6.7 must bear carrier route information lines under 708.8.0.

6.3   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.

6.4   Carrier Route Bundle Preparation

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

a.   Mailers must prepare only carrier route bundles, except under 6.7. Carrier route bundles are not permitted in full carrier route trays, except for card-size pieces.

b.   Except under 601.2.12 or 6.5, carrier route bundles must contain at least 10 pieces.

c.   The method of labeling a carrier route bundle is based on the following tray levels:

1.   Carrier route tray: No bundle labeling is required.

2.   5-digit or 3-digit carrier routes tray: Bundles must have a facing slip unless the pieces in the bundle have a carrier information line or an optional endorsement line (OEL).

6.5   Bundles and Trays With Fewer Than the Minimum Number of Pieces Required

As a general exception to 6.4, a mailer may prepare a bundle with fewer than 10 pieces and a less-than-full carrier route tray when they are claiming the saturation price for the contents and the applicable density standard is met.

6.6   General Traying and Labeling

For all ECR letters over 3 ounces and all ECR letters that are not automation-compatible or delivery-point barcoded, prepare trays as explained below. Also prepare trays as explained below when a mailing contains some pieces over 3 ounces and some pieces up to 3 ounces. Pieces with simplified addresses must be prepared in separate trays from pieces with other forms of addressing. For ECR automation-compatible letters that are delivery-point barcoded and weigh up to 3 ounces, prepare trays under 6.7. Preparation sequence, tray size, and labeling:

a.   Carrier route: required; full trays only, no overflow.

1.   Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.0, for overseas military mail).

2.   Line 2: for saturation, "STD LTR MACH WSS," followed by route type and number; for high-density or high density plus, "STD LTR MACH WSH," followed by route type and number; for basic, "STD LTR MACH LOT," followed by route type and number.

    b.   5-digit carrier routes: required if full tray, optional with minimum one 10-piece bundle.

        1.   Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.0, for overseas military mail).

        2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 5D CR-RT MACH."

    c.   3-digit carrier routes: optional with minimum one 10-piece bundle for each of two or more 5-digit areas.

        1.   Line 1: city, state, and 3-digit ZIP Code prefix shown in L002, Column A, that corresponds to 3-digit ZIP Code prefix on mail.

        2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 3D CR-RT MACH."

    d.   For trays containing barcoded automation-compatible letter-size pieces over 3 ounces or nonmachinable letter-size pieces, use these Line 2 label designations in place of "MACH":

        1.   Trays containing barcoded, automation-compatible pieces over 3 ounces: "BC."

        2.   Trays containing nonmachinable pieces: "MAN."

        3.   Trays containing simplified address pieces: "MAN."

6.7   Traying and Labeling for Automation-Compatible ECR Letters

Mailers must make full carrier route and 5-digit carrier routes trays, when possible, for automation-compatible, delivery-point barcoded ECR letters that weigh up to 3 ounces. Except for card-size pieces, pieces must not be bundled. Group pieces together by carrier route in 5-digit and 3-digit carrier routes trays. If pieces for one carrier route do not result in a full tray, mailers must combine pieces from at least two routes to make full 5-digit carrier routes trays, grouping pieces together by carrier route. If pieces for multiple carrier routes do not result in a full 5-digit tray, mailers must combine pieces from at least two 5-digit ZIP Codes to make 3-digit carrier routes trays, grouping pieces together by carrier route. If pieces fill more than one tray but do not fill an additional tray, mailers must place excess pieces in a tray at the next sortation level. Preparation sequence, tray size, and labeling:

    a.   Carrier route: required; full trays only, no overflow.

        1.   Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.0 for overseas military mail).

        2.   Line 2: for saturation, "STD LTR BC WSS," followed by route type and number; for high-density, "STD LTR BC WSH," followed by route type and number; for basic, "STD LTR BC LOT," followed by route type and number.

    b.   5-digit carrier routes: required; no overflow, no bundling.

        1.   Line 1: city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 4.0 for overseas military mail).

        2.   Line 2: "STD LTR 5D CR-RT BC."

    c.   3-digit carrier routes: required; bundling required in less-than-full trays.

1. Line 1: city, state, and 3-digit ZIP Code prefix shown in L002, Column A, that corresponds to 3-digit ZIP Code prefix on mail.

2. Line 2: "STD LTR 3D CR-RT BC."

6.8 Delivery Sequence Standards

6.8.1 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 6.1 through 6.7 and the standards below. Pieces prepared with a simplified address must also meet the corresponding standards.

6.8.2 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.

6.8.3 Updating Walk Sequence Information—General

Walk-sequence price pieces prepared with other than a simplified address format under 6.8.4 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 (DSF) or Delivery Sequence File, Second Generation (DSF^2).

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

6.8.4 Updating Delivery Statistics Information for Simplified Addressing

Mailpieces 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, in accordance with 509.1.1, or from the postmaster of the destination office (when authorized under 509.1.5).

6.8.5 Out-of-Date Walk Sequence Information

Mailings prepared with out-of-date walk-sequencing or delivery statistics information are not eligible for prices requiring walk-sequence preparation.

6.8.6 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.

6.9 Delivery Sequence Documentation

6.9.1 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. DSF[2] 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).

e. Form 3553 showing the date of the eLOT product used, or the date from the USPS Qualification report produced by presort software.

6.9.2 High Density and High Density Plus

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

6.9.3 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.

6.9.4 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.

6.9.5   Both Prices
If a mailing contains pieces qualifying for more than one walk-sequence price, the documentation required by 6.9.2, 6.9.3, or 6.9.4 may be combined. Entries for pieces at the high density or high density plus prices 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 mailing.

6.9.6   Carrier Route Price
If a mailing includes walk-sequence price and basic carrier route price pieces, in addition to the information required by 6.9.2 through 6.9.5, 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 mailing.

7.0   Preparing Automation Letters

7.1   Basic Standards
Letter-size automation price Standard Mail must be prepared under 7.0 and the eligibility standards for the price claimed. Trays must bear barcoded tray labels under 4.9.

7.2   Mailings
All pieces in a mailing must meet the standards in 201.1.0, and 201.3.0, and must be sorted together to the finest extent required for the price claimed. The definitions of a mailing and permissible combinations are in 1.0.

7.3   Marking
All Standard Mail automation price pieces must be marked under 202.3.0. Pieces claimed at an automation price must bear the appropriate class marking and "AUTO," except as provided in 202.3.0. Pieces not claimed at an automation price must not bear "AUTO" unless First-Class Mail single-piece price postage is affixed or a corrective single-piece price marking ("Single-Piece" or "SNGLP") is applied.

7.4   General Preparation
Grouping, bundling, and labeling are not generally required or permitted, except bundling is required in any mailing consisting entirely of card-size pieces and for pieces in overflow and less-than-full trays, and grouping is required under 7.5.

7.5   Tray Preparation
[3-3-14] Instead of preparing overflow trays with fewer than 150 pieces, mailers may include these pieces in an existing qualified tray of at least 150 or more pieces at the next tray level. (For example, if a mailer has 30 overflow 5-digit pieces for ZIP Code

20260, these pieces may be added to an existing qualified 3-digit tray for the correct destination (ZIP Code prefix 202) and the overflow 5-digit pieces will still qualify for the 5-digit price). Mailers must note these trays on standardized documentation (see 708.1.2). Pieces that are placed in the next tray level must be grouped by destination and placed in the front or back of that tray. Mailers may use this option selectively for 3-digit and AADC ZIP Codes. This option does not apply to origin/entry 3-digit/scheme trays. Preparation sequence, tray size, and Line 1 labeling:

a. 5-digit/scheme: optional, but required for 5-digit price (150-piece minimum); overflow allowed. Make 5-digit scheme trays first, then 5-digit trays; see 1.4e. For Line 1, label as follows:

    1. For 5-digit scheme trays, use destination shown in labeling list L012.

    2. For 5-digit trays, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code destination on pieces (see 4.0 for overseas military mail).

b. 3-digit/scheme: optional, but required for 3-digit price (150-piece minimum except no minimum for origin or entry 3-digit/scheme); overflow allowed. Make 3-digit scheme trays first, then 3-digit trays; see 1.4f. For Line 1, use L002, Column B.

c. AADC: optional, but required for AADC price (150-piece minimum); overflow allowed; group pieces by 3-digit (or 3-digit scheme) ZIP Code prefix when overflow pieces from 3-digit/scheme trays are placed in AADC trays. For Line 1, use L801, Column B.

d. Mixed AADC: required (no minimum); group pieces by AADC when overflow pieces from AADC trays are placed in mixed AADC trays. For Line 1 labeling: use L011, Column B. Use L010, Column B if entered at an ASF or NDC or for mail placed on an ASF, NDC, or SCF pallet under the option in 705.8.10.3.

7.6 Tray Line 2

Line 2: "STD LTR" and:

a. 5-digit scheme: "BC 5D SCHEME."

b. 5-digit: "5D BC."

c. 3-digit scheme: "BC 3D SCHEME" and, if applicable, as shown in L002, Column B, followed by the letter "A," "B," or "C."

d. 3-digit: "3D BC."

e. AADC: "AADC BC."

f. Mixed AADC: "BC WKG."

7.7 Presentation

Upon presentation of letter-size automation price Standard Mail mailings to USPS for verification, mailers must present all mixed AADC trays together, and such trays must either be adjacent to one another or side by side, and must be placed as the top layer(s) on any given container.

245.7.7