

285 Mail Preparation

Overview

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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. Not all presort levels are applicable in all situations.

1.2 Definition of Mailings

A “mailing” is defined as 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 must be prepared as a separate mailing.

1.3 Terms for Presort Levels

Terms used for presort levels are defined as follows:

- a. *5-digit scheme for First-Class Package Service parcels*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 5-digit ZIP Code ranges processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in [L606](#).
- b. *5-digit*: the delivery address on all pieces includes the same 5-digit ZIP Code.
- c. *3-digit*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with the same three digits (see [L002](#), Column A).
- d. *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 regardless of the volume of mail.
- e. *ADC*: all pieces are addressed for delivery in the service area of the same area distribution center (ADC) (see [L004](#)).
- f. *Mixed [ADC]*: the pieces are for delivery in the service area of more than one ADC.



1.4 Preparation Definitions and Instructions

For purposes of preparing mail:

- a. *Pieces* refers to individually addressed mailpieces. This definition also applies when *pieces* is used in eligibility standards. Quantities indicated for optional or required sortations always refer to pieces unless specifically excepted.
- b. A *full sack* is defined in the standards for the class and price claimed.
- c. An *origin/entry 3-digit sack* contains all mail (regardless of quantity) for a 3-digit ZIP Code area processed by the SCF in whose service area the mail is verified/entered.
- d. The *required quantity* (for example, “required at 10 pieces”) means that the unit must be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. Smaller quantities may be prepared only if permitted by the standards for each price.
- e. *Entry [facility]* (or *origin [facility]*) refers to the USPS mail processing facility 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, the Post Office of entry determines the *entry facility*. *Entry SCF* includes both single-3-digit and multi-3-digit SCFs.
- f. A “*logical presort destination*” represents the total number of pieces in a mailing that are eligible for a specific presort level based on the required sortation, but which might not be contained in a single container (sack or pallet) due to applicable preparation requirements or the size of the individual pieces.

2.0 Sacks

See [203.5.0](#) for sack preparation standards.

3.0 Sack Labels

Sack labels are subject to the standards in [203.5.0](#).

4.0 Preparing Parcels

4.1 Basic Standards

Each Presorted First-Class Package Service mailing must contain a minimum of 500 pieces of mail, be prepared in USPS-approved sacks, and each parcel marked “Presorted” (or “PRSRT”) and “First-Class Package.” All parcels must be sorted together and prepared under [4.3](#) and [4.4](#).

4.2 Single-Piece Mailing

Single-piece (nonpresorted) First-Class Package Service may be presented as a separate mailing or with a presorted mailing and reported on the same postage statement as follows:

- a. The single-piece mail must be physically separated from other pieces.

- b. The single-piece mail must bear no presorted price marking, or must be marked with the correction marking: “Single-Piece” or “SNGLP” under [202.3.6](#).

4.3 Bundling

Bundling is not permitted.

4.4 Sacking and Labeling

Preparation sequence, sack size, and labeling:

- a. 5-digit/scheme optional, but required for 5-digit price (see definition in [1.3a](#)); 10-pound minimum, labeling:
 1. Line 1: For 5-digit scheme sacks use [L606](#), Column B. For 5-digit sacks use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see [203.4.11](#) for overseas military mail).
 2. Line 2: For 5-digit scheme sacks, “FC PARCELS 5D SCH.” For 5-digit sacks, “FC PARCELS 5D.”
- b. 3-digit optional, but required for 3-digit price; 10-pound minimum, except for optional origin/entry 3-digit(s); labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L002](#), Column A.
 2. Line 2: “FC PARCELS 3D.”
- c. ADC (required); 10-pound minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: [L004](#), Column B.
 2. Line 2: “FC PARCELS ADC.”
- d. Mixed ADC (required); no minimum; labeling:
 1. Line 1: Use [L201](#); for mail originating in ZIP Code areas in Column A, use “MXD” followed by city, state, and 3-digit ZIP Code prefix in Column C (use “MXD” instead of “OMX” in the destination line and ignore Column B).
 2. Line 2: “FC PARCELS WKG.”



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