

## 505 Return Services

### Overview

- [1.0 Business Reply Mail \(BRM\)](#)
- [2.0 Permit, Pre-paid \(Metered\), and Courtesy Reply Mail](#)
- [3.0 USPS Returns Service](#)
- [4.0 Parcel Return Service](#)
- [5.0 Bulk Parcel Return Service](#)

### 1.0 Business Reply Mail (BRM)

#### 1.1 BRM Postage and Fees

##### 1.1.1 Basic BRM

For basic BRM, permit holders are required to pay an annual permit fee as provided under [1.2](#) and a per-piece fee as described under [1.1.7](#) in addition to the applicable Retail First-Class Mail (stamped letters), First-Class Package Service — Retail, or Priority Mail postage for each returned piece. For First-Class Package Service — Retail, Priority Mail BRM pieces exceeding 13 ounces in weight, if the zone cannot be determined from a return address or cancellation, then the permit holder is charged Zone 4 postage based on the weight of the piece. See [Notice 123—Price List](#), for applicable prices and fees.

##### 1.1.2 High-Volume BRM

In addition to the fees and applicable postage required under [1.1.1](#), an annual account maintenance fee under [1.1.9](#) is required for high-volume BRM.

##### 1.1.3 Basic Qualified BRM (QBRM)

For basic qualified BRM, permit holders are required to pay an account maintenance fee as noted under [1.1.8](#), and a per-piece fee as described under [1.1.7](#) in addition to the applicable retail letter or card First-Class Mail (stamped letters) postage for each returned piece. An annual permit fee may also be required under [1.2.3](#) if the BRM permit is not used exclusively for the return of QBRM pieces. Pieces that do not meet the format requirements for QBRM cannot qualify for the QBRM per-piece fees or postage prices and are charged the high-volume BRM per-piece fees and First-Class Mail postage under [1.1.2](#), and are subject to an annual permit fee.

##### 1.1.4 High-Volume Qualified BRM

In addition to the account maintenance, per-piece fees and applicable postage required under [1.1.3](#), a quarterly fee under [1.1.11](#) is required for high-volume QBRM.

##### 1.1.5 Bulk Weight Averaged Nonletter-Size BRM

In addition to an annual permit fee (which will apply under [1.2.3](#) for the return of any flat-size pieces), per-piece fee and the applicable Retail First-Class Mail, First-Class Package Service — Retail, or Priority Mail postage, permit holders participating in bulk weight averaged nonletter-size BRM under [1.8](#) must pay an annual account maintenance fee, and a monthly maintenance fee.



## 505.1.1.6

### **1.1.6 Special Standards for BRM Pieces with an Optical Disc**

A letter-size BRM piece containing one standard optical disc will not be charged a nonmachinable surcharge if the piece meets the standards in [233.2.8](#). A flat-size BRM piece containing one standard optical disc and weighing no more than 2 ounces will be charged postage applicable for a 1-ounce First-Class Mail flat if the piece meets the standards in [233.2.8](#).

### **1.1.7 Per Piece Fees**

Per piece fees listed in [1.1](#) are charged for each piece of returned BRM in addition to the applicable postage. Per piece fees are based on whether the permit holder qualifies as Basic, High-Volume Basic, Basic Qualified, or High-Volume Qualified BRM.

### **1.1.8 Payment Options for Per Piece Fees and Postage**

Basic BRM permit holders may pay per piece fees and postage on returned pieces by cash or check upon delivery, or through a regular postage due account ([604.6.3](#)). High-volume BRM and QBRM permit holders must pay per piece fees and postage on returned pieces through a BRM advance deposit account.

### **1.1.9 Annual Account Maintenance Fee and Advance Deposit Account**

A permit holder may choose to pay an annual account maintenance fee and pay postage through an advance deposit account, to qualify returned BRM pieces for the lower high-volume BRM or QBRM per piece fees. The account maintenance fee must be paid once each 12-month period at each Post Office where a permit holder holds an advance deposit account to receive BRM at a lower price. Payment of the account maintenance fee is based on the anniversary date of the initial payment. The fee may be paid in advance only for the next 12-month period and only during the last 60 days of the current 12-month period. The fee charged is that which is in effect on the date of payment. A separate advance deposit account solely for BRM is not required. An advance deposit account can be used for BRM under these conditions:

- a. For each withdrawal, only one statement is provided for each annual account maintenance fee paid.
- b. If a permit holder distributes BRM with different addresses (including Post Office box numbers) under the same permit number going to the same delivery unit and has only one business reply account, then the BRM is separated by each different address but only one statement is provided and only one annual account maintenance fee is paid.
- c. The permit holder must pay an annual account maintenance fee for each separate statement (accounting) requested. If only one annual account maintenance fee is paid, then the permit holder receives only one statement.
- d. The permit holder must maintain a sufficient balance in the BRM advance deposit account to cover postage and per piece fees for returned mailpieces. The permit holder is notified if funds are insufficient. After three calendar days, if no funds are deposited, then the BRM on hand is charged the basic BRM per piece fee and postage and charges are collected from the permit holder (e.g., in cash) prior to delivery.

- e. BRM addressed to several different firms at the same delivery unit may be delivered to an agent authorized by a valid BRM permit holder. The agent pays one annual account maintenance fee for all the firms represented by the agent in the same delivery unit. If the agent, or any of the firms represented by the agent, wants a separation of charges, then separate (additional) account maintenance fees must be paid.

#### **1.1.10 Renewal of Annual Account Maintenance Fee**

An annual renewal notice is provided to each BRM permit holder with a BRM advance deposit account. The notice and the payment for the next 12 months must be returned by the expiration date to the Post Office that holds the advance deposit account. After the expiration date, if the permit holder has not paid the annual account maintenance fee but still has a valid BRM permit, returned BRM pieces no longer qualify for the high-volume BRM or QBRM per piece fees and are charged the basic BRM per piece fees and applicable postage in [1.1.1](#).

#### **1.1.11 Quarterly Fee for High-Volume QBRM**

Mailers may choose to pay a quarterly fee in addition to the annual account maintenance fee. Payment of the quarterly fee entitles mailers to a lower per piece fee (the high-volume QBRM per piece fee identified in [1.1.4](#)). The quarterly fee and annual account maintenance fee must be paid at each Post Office where mail is returned, and for each separate billing desired. Mailers are eligible for the high-volume QBRM rates and per piece fees only for the time they pay the quarterly fee (i.e., mailers can opt out of the quarterly fee and related high-volume QBRM per piece fees simply by not paying the fee for the next quarter). The quarterly fee cannot be paid or renewed retroactively to receive a lower per piece fee on pieces already paid for and delivered. The quarterly fee can be paid for any three consecutive calendar months.

#### **1.1.12 Payment Period for Quarterly Fee**

The quarterly fee must be paid in advance for at least one but no more than four quarterly periods. A quarterly period begins on either the first day of the month (if a mailer pays on or before the 15th of the month) or the first day of the following month (if a mailer pays after the 15th of the month) and continues for three consecutive calendar months. A mailer who pays the quarterly fee is entitled to the high-volume QBRM per piece fee from the date of payment (rather than the date the quarterly period begins) through the end of the quarterly period. The fee paid is that which is in effect on the date of payment.

## **1.2 Permits**

### **1.2.1 Required**

Any mailer who wants to distribute BRM must apply for and receive a permit. The permit number, city, and state where the permit is held must appear on all pieces of BRM.

### **1.2.2 Application Process**

The mailer may apply for a BRM permit by submitting a completed PS Form 3615 to the Post Office issuing the permit and except under [1.2.3](#) paying the annual permit fee. Customers must provide with the completed PS Form 3615 acceptable primary and secondary forms of identification as specified under



### 505.1.2.3

**608.10.0.** If a completed PS Form 3615 is already on file for the mailer for other permits at that office, then the mailer must submit the annual BRM permit fee, if required under [1.2.3](#), and USPS amends PS Form 3615 by adding the BRM authorization. An advanced deposit account is established for a permit holder's use upon BRM authorization (see [1.1.9](#)).

#### **1.2.3 Annual Permit Fee**

Except for permits used for only BRM parcels and QBRM, a permit fee must be paid once each 12-month period at each Post Office where a BRM permit is held. The fee may be paid in advance only for the next 12 months and only during the last 60 days of the current service period. The fee charged is that which is in effect on the date of payment. For agents authorized by a permit holder to distribute and receive BRM see [1.7](#).

#### **1.2.4 Renewal of Annual Permit Fee**

Except for permits used for only BRM parcels and QBRM, an annual renewal notice is provided to each BRM permit holder by USPS. Permits used for only BRM parcels and QBRM do not expire unless the account is unused for a period of 24 months. The renewal notice and the payment, if applicable, for the next 12 months must be returned by the expiration date to the Post Office that issued the permit. After the expiration date, the returned BRM pieces are treated as follows until the permit fee is paid, the unused permit is reactivated, or a new permit is obtained, as applicable:

- a. Postcards of no obvious value are treated as waste and disposed of at the delivery unit.
- b. Pieces (excluding postcards) with a return address are endorsed "Business Reply Permit Canceled" and are returned to the sender.
- c. Pieces without a return address are endorsed "Business Reply Permit Canceled" and forwarded to the mail recovery center for handling.

#### **1.2.5 Other Post Offices**

A permit holder may distribute BRM through any Post Office for delivery at any Post Office under [1.7](#).

#### **1.2.6 Revocation of a Permit**

USPS may revoke any BRM permit because of format errors or for refusal to pay the applicable permit fees (annual, accounting, quarterly, or monthly), postage, or per piece fees. If the permit was revoked due to format errors, then a former permit holder may obtain a new permit and permit number by completing and submitting a new PS Form 3615, paying the required BRM annual permit fee (if applicable), paying a new annual account maintenance fee (if applicable), and, for the next 2 years, submitting two samples of each BRM format to the appropriate Post Office for approval.

### **1.3 Basic Standards**

#### **1.3.1 Description**

Business Reply Mail (BRM) service enables a permit holder to receive First-Class Mail, First-Class Package Service — Retail, and Priority Mail back from customers. The permit holder guarantees payment of the applicable Retail

First-Class Mail, First-Class Package Service — Retail, or Priority Mail postage, plus a per piece fee, on all returned BRM that includes incomplete or blank BRM cards and envelopes, empty envelopes, and any mailable matter with a BRM label affixed. BRM cards, envelopes, self-mailers, cartons, and labels may be distributed by a BRM permit holder in any quantity for return to any Post Office in the United States and its territories and possessions, including military Post Offices overseas. High-Volume BRM under [1.1.2](#) is a subset of BRM that qualify pieces for a reduced per piece fee. QBRM, under [1.1.3](#), [1.1.4](#), and [1.6](#), is a subset of BRM available for specific automation-compatible letter-size pieces that qualify for an automation postage price and a reduced per piece fee. Domestic BRM may not be distributed to foreign countries. See the *International Mail Manual* for International Business Reply Service (IBRS).

### **1.3.2 Extra Services**

No extra services are permitted with BRM, except for BRM parcels bearing an Intelligent Mail package barcode with imbedded USPS Tracking service.

### **1.3.3 Official Mail**

Authorized users of official (penalty) mail may distribute BRM subject to the additional standards in [703.7.0](#), which supersede any conflicting standards in [1.0](#).

### **1.3.4 Samples**

Prior to printing, permit holders are encouraged, but not required, to submit preproduction samples of BRM to USPS for approval. QBRM pieces require USPS approval ([1.6](#)).

### **1.3.5 Error Notification**

If USPS discovers a BRM format error, the responsible permit holder or authorized agent receives written notification of the error. The permit holder must correct the error and make sure that all future BRM pieces meet appropriate specifications. The repeated distribution of BRM with format errors is grounds for revoking a BRM permit ([1.2.6](#)).

### **1.3.6 Combined Pieces as a Single Item**

Two or more BRM pieces may be mailed as a single piece if the BRM pieces are identically addressed and prepared for mailing in accordance with [201](#). The permit holder is charged postage based on the total weight of the combined piece plus one per piece fee. If the combined pieces become separated, then the permit holder must pay postage and a per piece fee for each individual piece. Combined pieces are not eligible for QBRM postage prices or per piece fees.

### **1.3.7 With Postage Affixed**

BRM with postage affixed is handled the same as other BRM. No effort is made to identify or separate BRM pieces with postage affixed. The amount of affixed postage is not deducted from the postage or per piece fees owed. The permit holder may request a credit or refund for postage affixed to BRM under [604.9.2](#).



505.1.3.8

### **1.3.8 Improper Use of Labels and Misuse of BRM Cards and Envelopes**

Improper use of BRM labels and misuse of BRM cards or envelopes should be handled as follows:

- a. When a BRM label is improperly used, or a BRM card or envelope is misused as a label to return an unsealed item, such as a brick, two-by-four, or similar item, the Postal Service may treat the item as waste to be disposed of at the discretion of the Post Office.
- b. When a BRM card or envelope is misused and affixed to a sealed item, the permit holder will be responsible for payment of the applicable Retail postage and per piece fee.

## **1.4 Mailpiece Characteristics**

### **1.4.1 Paper Weight**

BRM paper envelopes must have a minimum paper basis weight of 50 pounds or equivalent (500 25- by 38-inch sheets). Other pieces (cards and self-mailers) must meet the basis weight requirements in [201.3.0](#).

### **1.4.2 Nonpaper Envelopes**

USPS Engineering must approve nonpaper envelopes for mailability. See [201.3.0](#).

### **1.4.3 Envelope Reflectance**

Envelope material must not have a red fluorescence exceeding 4.0 phosphor meter units.

### **1.4.4 Sealing and Edges**

BRM pieces must be rectangular, with four square corners, and parallel opposite sides, but may have finished corners as described in [201.1.0](#) for letter-sized pieces or [201.4.0](#) for flat-sized pieces. BRM pieces are not mailable if they are sealed with wax, clasps, string, staples, or buttons.

### **1.4.5 Window Envelopes**

The following standards apply to BRM prepared in an open-panel or a covered window envelope:

- a. All window envelopes:
  1. When a mailpiece has a barcode in the address block, the mailpiece must meet the applicable standards in [202.5.1](#) for letters or [202.5.2](#) for flats.
  2. The address showing through the window must be that of the permit holder or an authorized representative.
  3. The facing identification mark (FIM) must be printed on the envelope as specified in [202.8.0](#).
  4. See [601.6.3](#) for required clearances for information showing within a window envelope.

- b. Covered window envelopes:
  - 1. The “No Postage Necessary” imprint, the business reply legend, and the horizontal bars must be printed either directly on the envelope or on the insert appearing through the covered window. The minimum size of the information appearing in the covered window is 2 inches high and 4-1/4 inches long. Horizontal bars may be omitted only on letter-size BRM bearing Intelligent Mail barcodes.
  - 2. The window cover must be of a nontinted clear or transparent material (e.g., cellophane or polystyrene) that permits the barcode and its background, as viewed through the window material, to meet the reflectance standards in [204.1.3](#). The edges of the window cover must be securely glued to the envelope.
- c. Open panel window envelopes:
  - 1. The “No Postage Necessary” imprint, the business reply legend, and the horizontal bars must be printed directly on the envelope. Horizontal bars may be omitted only on letter-size BRM bearing Intelligent Mail barcodes.
  - 2. Other required and optional elements in [1.5](#) may be printed on the insert appearing through the address window.

#### **1.4.6 Self-Mailers and Reusable Mailpieces**

In addition to the standards in [1.4](#) and [1.5](#), self-mailers and reusable mailpieces must meet the standards in [201.3.14](#) and [601.6.4](#) (or [601.6.5](#)). Permit holders must provide instructions to the user for re-folding and sealing (see [601.6.4](#) or [601.6.5](#).) so that upon return the piece meets sealing and folding requirements in [201.3.0](#).

#### **1.4.7 Cards**

Cards must meet the standards in [201.1.2](#). A card exceeding the dimensions in [201.1.2](#) is charged the applicable First-Class Mail letter price.

#### **1.4.8 Labels**

For general use, the minimum size of a BRM label is 2 inches high and 3 inches long. BRM labels are not required to have a FIM or a ZIP+4 barcode, but all other format standards in [1.5](#) must be met. See [1.4.9](#) for labels on letter-size pieces.

#### **1.4.9 Labels for Letter-Size Pieces**

The following standards apply to BRM labels for use on letter-size pieces:

- a. The minimum size of a BRM label is 2-5/8 inches high and 4-1/4 inches long. All format elements, including a FIM, must be printed on the label. Exception: The vertical series of horizontal bars must be at least 3/4-inch high. Horizontal bars may be omitted on BRM letter-size pieces bearing Intelligent Mail barcodes. The back of the label must be coated with a permanent adhesive strong enough to firmly attach the label to an envelope.
- b. The permit holder must provide instructions to the user describing how the label should be applied to a mailpiece and what precautions must be observed when applying the label (see [Exhibit 1.4.9](#)). A pictorial diagram



## 505.1.5

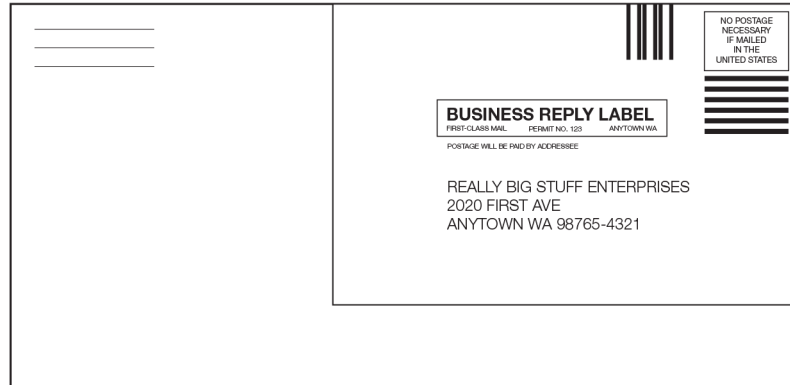
showing proper placement of the label must be included with the instructions. At a minimum, the instructions must include the following directions:

1. Place the label squarely in the upper right corner of the envelope.
  2. Do not write on the envelope or label.
  3. Do not use a window envelope, an envelope that is less than 1 inch higher than the label an envelope that is more than 4-1/2 inches high, or an envelope with any printing other than a return address.
  4. Do not use tape to affix the label.
- c. When the label is affixed to an envelope, the address must be placed within the OCR read area (see [202.2.1](#)).
- d. Pieces with business reply labels cannot qualify for QBRM prices.

### Exhibit 1.4.9 Instructions for Affixing Business Reply Label

How to use your business reply label:

Affix label to upper right corner of envelope. Be sure the label is at the edge of the right corner. Do not use tape. Do not write on the envelope or use an envelope with printing other than a return address.

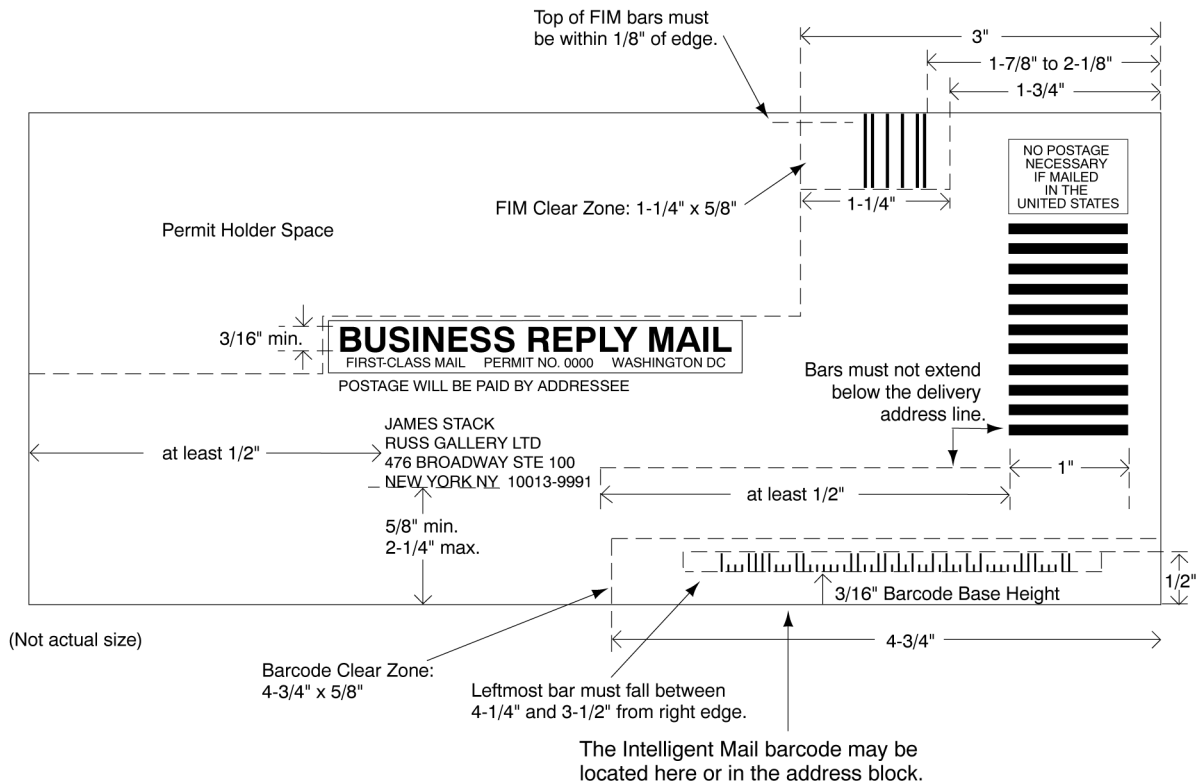


## 1.5 Format Elements

### 1.5.1 General

All pieces of BRM are subject to the format Elements in [1.5](#). The USPS may revoke a BRM permit because of format errors under [1.2.6](#). An Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) is not required, except for QBRM prices; if an IMb is used, it must be printed and placed under [1.5.10](#) and as shown in [Exhibit 1.5.1](#). Pieces of QBRM and bulk weight averaged nonletter-size BRM are subject to additional format standards listed in [1.6](#) and [1.8](#). BRM format elements are shown in [Exhibit 1.5.1](#).

**Exhibit 1.5.1 Business Reply Mail Format**



**1.5.2 Printing and Print Reflectance**

All forms of printing are permissible if legible to the satisfaction of the USPS. Handwriting, typewriting, and hand stamping may not be used to prepare BRM. Printed borders are not permitted on letter-size BRM, but are permitted on envelopes greater than 6-1/8 inches high or 11-1/2 inches long or 1/4 inch thick. All ink colors are acceptable if the piece meets the appropriate reflectance standards in [204.1.3](#).

**1.5.3 "No Postage Necessary" Imprint**

The imprint "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES" must be printed in the upper right corner of the address side of the piece, except as allowed under [601.6.5](#) for reusable mailpieces with outgoing permit imprint indicia. The "NO POSTAGE NECESSARY" imprint must not extend more than 1-3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.

**1.5.4 Business Reply Legend**

The legend "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" or "BUSINESS REPLY LABEL", as appropriate, must appear on all pieces. This legend must appear above the address in capital letters at least 3/16 inch high. At the permit holder's discretion, the business reply legend may be surrounded by a rule or border.



### **1.5.5 Permit Number and Postage Endorsement**

Directly below the business reply legend, the words “FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. [NO., CITY, STATE]” (representing the permit holder's number and Post Office that issued the permit) must appear in capital letters. Directly below that, the endorsement “POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE” must appear in capital letters. At the permit holder's discretion, the permit number and postage endorsement may be surrounded by a rule or border.

### **1.5.6 Delivery Address**

The delivery address on a piece of BRM may not be altered to redirect the mailpiece to any address other than the one preprinted on the piece. The complete address (including the permit holder's name, delivery address, city, state, and USPS assigned BRM ZIP + 4) must be printed directly on the piece, except as allowed under [1.4.5](#) or under item a below, subject to these conditions:

- a. Preprinted labels with only delivery address information (including an Intelligent Mail barcode under [1.5.10](#)) are permitted, but the permit holder's name and other required elements must be printed directly on the BRM piece.
- b. On letter-size pieces, the complete delivery address must appear within the OCR read area (see [202.2.1](#)).
- c. There must be at least a 1/2-inch clearance between the ZIP Code and the horizontal bars.
- d. A unique ZIP Code (i.e., firm ZIP Code) must not be used for BRM unless the ZIP Code has been assigned specifically for BRM (see Form 6805). A unique 4-digit add-on to denote BRM may not be used with a unique 5-digit ZIP Code not specifically assigned to BRM.

### **1.5.7 Horizontal Bars**

A vertical series of horizontal bars parallel to the length of the piece must be printed directly below the imprint “NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES.” The bars must be uniform in length, at least 1 inch long and 1/16 inch to 3/16 inch thick, and evenly spaced. On letter-size nonbarcoded BRM, the bars must not extend below the delivery address line (the line above the line containing the ZIP Code). On barcoded BRM, the bars must not extend lower than 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece. Horizontal bars may be omitted on BRM letter-size and cards bearing Intelligent Mail barcodes.

### **1.5.8 Facing Identification Mark (FIM)**

A FIM must be printed on all letter-size BRM and on business reply labels affixed to letter-size mail (see [1.4.9d](#)). FIM B must be used with BRM without a barcode. FIM C must be used with any BRM printed with a barcode. The FIM must meet the physical standards in [202.8.0](#).

### **1.5.9 Company Logo**

A company logo is permitted:

- a. On nonbarcoded BRM, if it is placed outside the OCR read area (see [202.2.1](#)).

- b. On letter-size barcoded BRM, if it is placed no lower than 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece.
- c. On any piece, if the logo does not interfere with any required format elements.

#### **1.5.10 Additional Standards for Letter-Size and Flat-Size BRM Bearing an IMb**

Except as provided under [1.5.11](#), when an Intelligent Mail barcode is printed on any BRM pieces, it must contain the barcode ID, service type ID, and correct unique ZIP+4 routing code, as specified under [204.1.2](#). The IMb must be placed on the address side of the piece and positioned as part of the delivery address block under [202.5.3](#) or within the barcode clear zone in the lower right corner of the piece if printed directly on the piece.

#### **1.5.11 Mailer ID (MID) Based IMb Option**

A mailer may use a MID based Intelligent Mail barcode on BRM pieces. The MID based IMb must contain the barcode ID, specific service type ID, Mailer ID, serial number, in the tracking code field and a ZIP+4 routing code. Additional information on the MID based Intelligent Mail barcode can be found on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com>. Place the barcode according to [1.5.10](#).

### **1.6 Additional Standards for Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM)**

#### **1.6.1 Description**

Qualified business reply mail (QBRM) is a subset of business reply mail. Permit holders distribute reply pieces that qualify for lower postage prices and per piece fees. In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements below, the authorization to participate in QBRM under [1.6.2](#), and the format standards in [1.5](#), QBRM is First-Class Mail that:

- a. Is a letter weighing two ounces or less or card that is prepared to meet the automation compatibility requirements in [201.3.0](#).
- b. Meets all the Business Reply Mail (BRM) standards in [1.3](#) through [1.8](#).
- c. Has postage and per piece charges deducted from a BRM advance deposit account.
- d. Is authorized to mail at QBRM prices and fees under [1.6.2](#). During the authorization process, a proper ZIP+4 code is assigned to the mailer (under [1.6.2](#)) for each price category of QBRM to be returned under the system (one for card priced pieces, one for letter-size pieces weighing 1 ounce or less, and one for letter-size pieces weighing over 1 ounce up to and including 2 ounces).
- e. Bears the proper ZIP+4 code, assigned by USPS for the appropriate price category, in the address of each piece. The ZIP+4 codes assigned for this program must be used only on the organization's appropriate QBRM pieces.
- f. Bears the correct Intelligent Mail barcode, correctly prepared under [1.5.10](#) or [1.5.11](#) and [204.1.0](#), that corresponds to the unique ZIP+4 code in the address on each piece distributed.



## 505.1.6.2

- g. Bears a properly prepared facing identification mark (FIM) C on each piece distributed (see [202.8.0](#)).

### **1.6.2 Authorization**

To participate in QBRM, a mailer with a valid BRM permit and having paid the annual account maintenance fee, must submit Form 6805 to the Postmaster or manager, Business Mail Entry for the Post Office to which the QBRM pieces are to be returned. USPS assigns to the mailer a proper BRM ZIP+4 Code, as applicable, reviews Form 6805 and preproduction samples provided by the mailer for compliance with relevant standards, and if approved, issues the mailer an authorization via the Form 6805.

## **1.7 BRM Distributed and Received by Agents of a Permit Holder**

### **1.7.1 Description**

Permit holders may give permission to subsidiary offices, agents, or authorized representatives to distribute and receive BRM using a single (corporate) permit number. BRM pieces are distributed by and returned to agents, who pay postage and per piece fees on those returned pieces. Agents may use any type of BRM service meeting the applicable standards in [1.0](#) and under the following additional conditions:

- a. **Permit**—The main permit holder or “corporate” office applies for the permit number and pays the permit fee, if applicable. The agent must present a letter of authorization from the permit holder showing the name, address, and telephone number of the local agent authorized to receive the BRM to the Post Office where the BRM is to be returned. Any time there is a change to the original permit application or the authorization letter, each agent must provide an amended letter of authorization to their local Post Office.
- b. **Annual Permit Fee**—Agents do not pay a separate annual permit fee but must submit evidence (usually a copy of Form 3544) to the local office once each 12-month period to show that the annual permit fee, if applicable, has been paid. This evidence is not required if permit holder has a centralized account processing system (CAPS) account, through which the local Post Office can determine that the permit fee, if applicable, has been paid.
- c. **Postage, Per Piece Fees, and Annual Account Maintenance Fees**—Agents receiving BRM or QBRM are responsible for paying all the postage and per piece fees, and applicable annual account maintenance fees, under [1.1](#) for the type of service received.
- d. **Payment Guarantee**—The permit holder is ultimately responsible for postage and per piece fees for all pieces returned under that permit number. If a local agent refuses or neglects to pay postage or per piece fees on returned pieces, then those pieces are forwarded to the Post Office that issued the original permit for collection of postage and per piece fees from the permit holder. Once forwarded to the permit holder, these pieces cannot qualify for QBRM postage and per piece fees. The permit holder’s refusal to accept and pay the required postage and per piece fees for BRM offered for delivery is grounds for immediate revocation of the BRM permit ([1.5.6](#)).

- e. Format—BRM distributed by agents must meet all required format standards in [1.4](#) and [1.5](#). Authorized representatives distributing BRM on behalf of a permit holder must have the permit holder's name and permit number printed on the BRM and their own names and addresses printed below the permit holder's name, except:
  1. When the agent is a branch of an authorized business.
  2. The permit holder notifies a Post Office that authorized representatives may use the permit holder's permit number without printing the permit holder's name.

## 1.8 Bulk Weight Averaged Nonletter-size BRM

### 1.8.1 Description

Bulk weight averaging is a method of counting, rating, and billing incoming nonletter-size BRM based on principles of mathematical statistics. Probability sampling techniques are used to measure the characteristics of the total BRM volume by examining a fraction of the volume. Statistically valid samples that are drawn from the incoming BRM volume each postal accounting period are used by Post Offices to compute average postage due per pound and average piece count per pound factors. The net bulk weight of mail received is multiplied by these conversion factors to get the estimated volume received and postage and fee amounts.

### 1.8.2 Eligibility

BRM pieces rated by the weight averaging method must:

- a. Meet the basic standards for BRM in [1.0](#).
- b. Not be letter-size ([201.1.0](#)) or card-size ([201.1.2](#)).
- c. Not exceed 5 pounds.

### 1.8.3 Fees and Postage

Permit holders participating in bulk weight averaged nonletter-size BRM must pay the fees and postage under [1.1.5](#).

### 1.8.4 Application Process

A permit holder who wants to use bulk weight averaged BRM for nonletter-size pieces must submit a written request to the Postmaster of the office where the BRM permit is held. The Postmaster forwards this information to the manager, Customer Service Standardization, USPS Headquarters (see [608.8.0](#) for address). The request must include the following information:

- a. Permit holder's name and address.
- b. Name and location of the Post Office at which BRM will be received and a CAPS account number, if available.
- c. Information about the number of pieces expected to be returned over a 24-hour period and a 30-day period, and a breakdown of the weight distribution of those pieces (in nearest ounces or pounds) (e.g., X number of 3-ounce pieces, Y number of 4-ounce pieces, and Z number of 5-ounce pieces).



## 505.1.8.5

- d. Based on the estimated volume in [1.8.4c](#), a 24-hour estimate and a 30-day estimate of postage and per piece fees using the postage and charges listed in [1.1.5](#).
- e. A statement indicating whether the piece volume has seasonal variation and, if applicable, estimates of monthly volumes for a 12-month period.

### **1.8.5 Authorization**

The permit holder's request will be reviewed and approved by the manager, Customer Service Standardization, USPS Headquarters. If the request is approved, then a letter of authorization is sent to the permit holder from the Post Office where the BRM permit is held. The permit holder signs a service agreement and, if necessary, is assigned a Post Office box address.

### **1.8.6 Denial of Authorization**

If the permit holder's request is not approved, then the Post Office sends a written notice, giving reasons for the denial. The permit holder has 15 days following receipt of the notice to file a written appeal of the decision with the postmaster and to furnish further information. If the postmaster still finds that the application should be denied, then the postmaster forwards the file to the manager, Customer Service Standardization, USPS Headquarters, who issues a final written decision to the permit holder.

### **1.8.7 Revoking Authorization**

A Postmaster may terminate authorization for bulk weight averaged BRM by sending written notice to the permit holder, for any of the following reasons:

- a. The permit holder provided incorrect or incomplete information on the request for authorization.
- b. The permit holder's BRM pieces no longer meet the eligibility requirements in [1.0](#).
- c. The USPS finds that bulk weight averaging no longer provides adequate revenue protection.
- d. The permit holder no longer desires to participate in bulk weight averaging.

### **1.8.8 Notice and Appeal**

Termination takes effect 15 days from the permit holder's receipt of the notice unless the permit holder files a written appeal within that period with the postmaster. The postmaster forwards the permit holder's appeal together with all pertinent information to the manager, Customer Service Standardization, USPS Headquarters, who issues a final agency decision to the permit holder. The permit holder may continue to use the bulk weight averaging method until a final decision is made on the appeal.

## 2.0 Permit, Pre-paid (Metered), and Courtesy Reply Mail

### 2.1 Permit Reply Mail

#### 2.1.1 Description

Permit reply mail (PRM) enables a permit imprint permit holder to receive First-Class Mail and Priority Mail back from customers by prepaying postage for reply pieces at the time of mailing. Mailers must distribute PRM pieces as part of the contents of an outgoing First-Class Mail mailing (see [230](#)) only by using a valid permit imprint ([604.5.0](#)) account.

#### 2.1.2 Extra Services

No extra services are permitted with PRM.

#### 2.1.3 Permit Holder Intentions

PRM may not be used for any purpose other than the purpose intended by the permit holder, even when postage is affixed.

#### 2.1.4 Special Standards for PRM Pieces with an Optical Disc

A letter-size PRM piece containing one standard optical disc will not be charged a nonmachinable surcharge if the piece meets the standards in [233.2.8](#). A flat-size PRM piece containing one standard optical disc and weighing no more than 2 ounces will be charged postage applicable for a 1-ounce First-Class Mail letter if the piece meets the standards in [233.2.8](#).

### 2.2 Authorization and Revocation

#### 2.2.1 Authorization

PRM customers must apply for authorization through the district manager of Business Mail Entry at the office where the permit imprint account is held.

#### 2.2.2 Samples

Permit holders must submit preproduction samples of PRM pieces to the Postal Service for approval prior to distribution.

#### 2.2.3 Error Notification

If the Postal Service discovers a PRM format error, the permit holder or authorized agent will receive a written notification of the error. The permit holder must correct the error and ensure that all future PRM pieces meet appropriate specifications. The Postal Service may revoke a PRM authorization if a mailer repeatedly distributes PRM with format errors (see [2.2.4](#)).

#### 2.2.4 Revocation of Authorization

The Postal Service may revoke a PRM authorization because of format errors or misuse. If the authorization is revoked due to format errors, the format errors must be corrected before reauthorization.

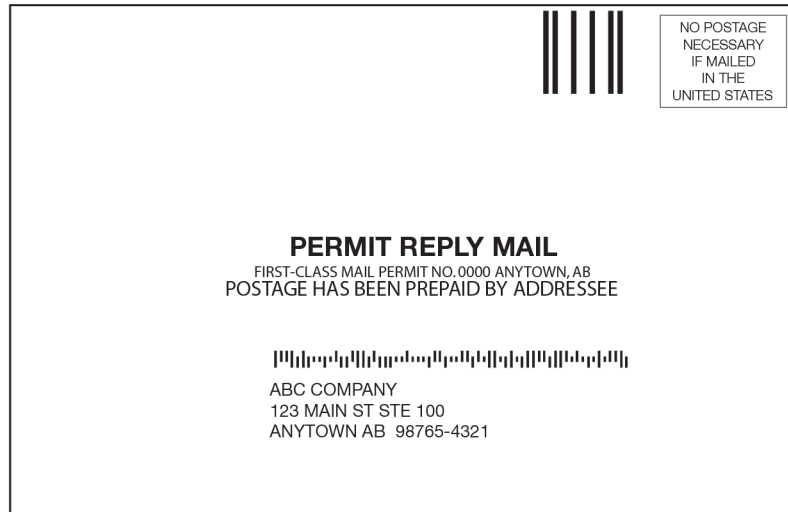


## 2.3 Format Elements

### 2.3.1 General

All pieces of PRM must include the format elements shown in [Exhibit 2.3.1](#).

#### Exhibit 2.3.1 Permit Reply Mail Format Elements



### 2.3.2 Printing and Print Reflectance

All legible forms of printing are permitted. Mailers may not use handwriting, typewriting, or handstamping to prepare PRM.

### 2.3.3 No Postage Necessary Imprint

The imprint, “NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES,” must be printed in the upper right corner of the address side of the piece. The imprint must not extend more than 1-3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.

### 2.3.4 Permit Reply Mail Legend

The legend, “PERMIT REPLY MAIL,” must appear on all pieces. The legend must appear above the address in capital letters at least 3/16 inch high. At the permit holder's discretion, the permit reply mail legend may be surrounded by a rule or border.

### 2.3.5 Permit Number and Postage Endorsement

Directly below the permit reply mail legend, the words, “FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. [NO., CITY, STATE]” (representing the permit holder's number and the Post Office that issued the permit) must appear in capital letters. The permit holder may replace the permit number and the Post Office with a company permit as described in 2.4. Directly below that, the endorsement, “POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY ADDRESSEE,” must appear in capital letters. At the permit holder's discretion, the permit number and postage endorsement may be surrounded by a rule or border.

**2.3.6 Delivery Address**

The complete address (including the permit holder's name, delivery address, city, state, and ZIP+4 Code) must be printed on the piece. The delivery address on a PRM mailpiece may not be altered to redirect it to any address other than the one preprinted on the piece. PRM pieces must bear an Intelligent Mail barcode meeting the standards in [202.5.0](#) and [204.1.0](#).

**2.3.7 Facing Identification Mark**

A facing identification mark (FIM) C must be printed on all letter-size PRM. The FIM C must meet the physical standards in [202.8.0](#).

**2.3.8 Company Logo**

A company logo is permitted on letter-size PRM, provided the logo is placed no lower than 5/8 inch from the bottom edge of the piece and it does not interfere with any required format element.

**2.4 Company Permit Reply Mail Imprint****2.4.1 Definition**

A company permit reply mail imprint is one in which the exact name of the company holding the permit is shown in the permit reply mail indicia in place of the city, state, and permit number.

**2.4.2 Use**

A customer may use a company permit reply mail imprint if, for 1 year from the date of mailing, the permit holder or its agent keeps records of each mailing paid with a company permit reply mail imprint and makes them available for USPS review on request. These records must include the weight of a single piece; the total number of pieces mailed; the total postage; and the dates and Post Offices of mailing. A complete sample mailpiece must be included for each mailing.

**2.4.3 Format**

To create a company permit reply mail imprint, replace the words "PERMIT No. [NO., CITY, STATE]" (representing the permit holder's number and the Post Office that issued the permit), with "PERMIT PAID BY [COMPANY NAME]" (representing the name of the company in the delivery address of the mailpiece) in capital letters.

**2.5 Prepaid (Metered) Reply Mail****2.5.1 Description**

Mailers may use indicia generated by any postage evidencing system (see [604.4.0](#)) to prepay reply postage on Priority Mail Express, on Priority Mail when the price is the same for all zones, on First-Class Mail, and on single-piece price Media Mail and Library Mail under the following conditions.

- a. The postage amount must be sufficient to prepay the full postage due.
- b. Print indicia directly on the mailpiece or on a label, and place indicia under [604.4.3.3](#).
- c. Indicia used to prepay reply postage must not show the date.
- d. Pre-address the mailpiece for return to the authorized user only.



## 505.2.6

- e. Print the words “NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY POSTAGE HAS BEEN PREPAID BY” directly above the address.
- f. Mailers may use FIM A on barcoded letter-size First-Class Mail reply mail except when using PC Postage.
- g. When using PC Postage, mailers must use FIM D for prepaid reply mail when the indicium is printed directly on the mailpiece.
- h. The address side must appear as described in this section and shown in the illustration below. Nothing may be added except a return address, FIM, or barcode.



### 2.6 **Courtesy Reply Mail**

Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) is reply mail other than BRM or MRM enclosed in other mail, with or without prepayment of postage, for return to the address on the reply piece. If postage is required, the customer returning the piece affixes the applicable First-Class Mail postage. Each piece must meet the physical standards in [201.1.0](#) or [201.2.0](#). Mailers may use FIM A on letter-size CRM with a preprinted barcode.

### 2.7 **Enclosed Reply Cards and Envelopes**

Mailers may enclose reply cards or envelopes (i.e. BRM under [1.0](#); Permit Reply Mail under [2.1](#) and [2.4](#), Prepaid (Metered) Reply under [2.5](#), or Courtesy Reply Mail under [2.6](#)), addressed for return to a domestic delivery address, within automation mailings subject to provisions in [201.3.0](#) for enclosures.

## 3.0 USPS Returns Service

### 3.1 Basic Standards

#### 3.1.1 Description

USPS Returns service allows an authorized account holder to pay the postage and fees on single-piece priced commercial Priority Mail, First-Class Package Service — Commercial, or Parcel Select Ground packages returned to the account holder by senders (mailers) via a return label, meeting the standards in 3.1.4, produced by the account holder. Unless otherwise restricted, any mailable matter may be mailed using any of the USPS Returns service options (Priority Mail Return Service, First-Class Package Return Service, and Ground Return Service (Parcel Select Ground)). Any content that constitutes First-Class Mail matter may only be mailed using Priority Mail Return Service. USPS Returns service is subject to the following conditions:

- a. *Availability.* USPS Returns service is available to the account holder for mailing to the account holder's designated address on the USPS Returns label(s).
- b. *Payment Guarantee.* The account holder must guarantee payment of the proper postage and fees, including any fees for Extra Services requested by the account holder, on all packages returned bearing a valid barcoded USPS Returns label produced by the account holder. The account holder must have sufficient funds in his or her associated Electronic Payment Account to pay the postage and fees on an ongoing basis.
- c. *Where Service Is Established.* USPS Returns service accounts may be established at any Post Office in the United States and its territories and possessions or at any overseas U.S. Military Post Office (APO/FPO/DPO). USPS Returns service is not available for returns from any foreign country.

#### 3.1.2 Accounts

USPS Returns service accounts are subject to the following:

- a. *Account Enrollment.* An approved USPS Returns service account may be established by calling the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center at 1-877-672-0007.
- b. *Advance Deposit Account.* The account holder must pay postage and fees through an Enterprise Payment System (EPS) account, accessed through the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) at [gateway.usps.com](http://gateway.usps.com) and agree to the terms and conditions for use of such EPS account as the EPS account holder.
- c. *Mailer Identification Code (MID).* Applicants must request a new MID via the BCG, select the product type of nonmanifested returns, and select the applicable Service Type Codes (STCs) for the desired USPS Returns service products.
- d. *Application Process.* Applicants must have a valid Enterprise Payment Account and be registered in the BCG.



## 505.3.1.3

- e. *Canceled Accounts.* If the account is cancelled by the EPS account holder, USPS Returns service packages bearing the sender's return address are returned to the sender; otherwise, they are treated as dead mail.
- f. *Account Cancellation.* USPS may cancel an account if the EPS account holder refuses to accept and pay postage and fees for USPS Returns service packages, fails to keep sufficient funds in the advance deposit account to cover postage and fees, or distributes return labels that do not meet USPS standards.
- g. *Reapplying After Cancellation.* To receive a new account after a previous USPS Returns service account is canceled, the applicant must re-register in the BCG and obtain a new MID for USPS Returns service use. If not using labels generated by the USPS Application Program Interface (API) at [usps.com/business/web-tools-apis/welcome.htm](https://usps.com/business/web-tools-apis/welcome.htm), or Merchant Return Application (MRA), applicants must submit for approval two samples for each label format to the National Customer Support Center (NCSC). In addition, applicants must provide evidence that the reasons for the account cancellation are corrected, and maintain funds in their advance deposit account sufficient to cover normal returns for at least 2 weeks.
- h. *Using Other Post Offices.* The authorized EPS account holder using USPS Returns service may distribute USPS Returns service labels for return through other Post Office locations.

### 3.1.3 Postage and Prices

Postage and prices are subject to the following:

- a. Postage is calculated based on the weight of the return package and zone associated with the point of origin and delivery ZIP Code subject to the eligibility for commercial prices and fees based on the class of mail under [220](#), [250](#), and [280](#), except that postage for USPS Returns in flat-rate packaging is based on the packaging type used and the associated Universal Product Code (UPC) on the packaging. USPS Returns service packages are charged postage and fees based on the STC embedded in the IMpb and as provided under [3.1.3c](#). If all or part of the IMpb is unreadable, or the package is unable to be priced based on the data collected, postage will be determined by the Postal Service based on historical data, or default data determined at time of enrollment.
- b. Prices for Priority Mail Return Service, First-Class Package Return Service, and Ground Return Service (Parcel Select Ground) packages are charged as follows:
  - 1. Priority Mail Commercial Base prices are available for account holders using Priority Mail Return Service, when all applicable requirements are met.
  - 2. Priority Mail Commercial Plus prices are available for Priority Mail Return Service packages that qualify for Commercial Base prices and for which the account holder has a customer commitment agreement with USPS (see [223.1.3](#)).

3. First-Class Package Service — Commercial prices are available for First-Class Package Return Service packages when all applicable requirements are met.
4. Parcel Select Ground prices are available for Ground Return Service packages when all applicable requirements are met.
- c. The account holder or mailer may obtain extra and additional services as follows:
  1. Insurance is available for USPS Returns service (see [503.4.0](#)). Insurance is not included with the postage for Priority Mail Return service. Insurance is available to the account holder for a fee on packages that have the applicable STC imbedded into the IMpb on the label, and for which the account holder has provided electronic data that supports the value of the merchandise (see [503.4.3.1a](#)). Only the account holder may file a claim (see [609](#)). Mailers mailing a USPS Returns service package may obtain insurance at their own expense at the time of mailing by presenting the labeled USPS Returns package at a Post Office retail unit to obtain the service.
  2. Signature Confirmation is available for USPS Returns service (see [503.8.0](#)). Signature Confirmation is available for a fee to the account holder for packages that have the applicable STC for Signature Confirmation imbedded into the IMpb on the label. Mailers mailing a USPS Returns service package may obtain Signature Confirmation at their own expense at the time of mailing by presenting the labeled USPS Returns service package at a Post Office retail unit to obtain the service.
  3. Certificate of Mailing is available only to mailers at their own expense at the time of mailing by presenting the certificate at a Post Office retail unit to obtain the receipt.
  4. Pickup on Demand Service is available for a fee with USPS Returns service (see [507.7.0](#)).

### 3.1.4 Labels

Distribution and preparation of labels are subject to the following:

- a. *Distribution of Labels*. USPS Returns service labels may be distributed to customers via the following:
  1. As an enclosure with merchandise;
  2. As a separate package (including when requested electronically through the BCG for printing and delivery to the customer by USPS);
  3. As an electronic transmission for customer downloading and printing including through Label Broker, which allows customers to have the pre-paid returns label printed for them at a USPS Retail System Software (RSS) enabled retail location via a Label ID or QR code on a smartphone;



## 505.3.1.4

4. On a piece of paper, or written directly on a package presented to the retail associate); or
  5. Through one of the account holder's designated pickup facilities.
- b. *Label Preparation.* The following provisions apply:
1. USPS Returns service labels must meet the standards in the Parcel Labeling Guide available on the PostalPro website at [postalpro.usps.com/parcellabelingguide](https://postalpro.usps.com/parcellabelingguide).
  2. The label must include an IMpb, accommodate all required information, be legible, and be prepared in accordance with the standards in *Intelligent Mail Package Barcode (IMpb) Implementation Guide*, available on the PostalPro website.
  3. Standard label sizes are 3 inches by 6 inches, 4 inches by 4 inches, or 4 inches by 6 inches, and must be certified by USPS for use prior to distribution.
  4. Except for USPS Returns service labels generated by the USPS API or MRA, all returns labels must have a properly constructed IMpb (C01, C05, N02, or N05, as applicable) approved by the NCSC.
  5. EPS account holders or their agents may distribute approved returns labels and instructions by means specified in 3.1.4b. EPS account holders or their agents must provide written instructions to the label end-user (mailer) as specified in 3.1.4c. Faxed labels will not be accepted. If all applicable content and format standards are met, USPS Returns labels may be produced by any of the following methods:
    - (a) As an impression printed by the EPS account holder directly onto the package to be returned.
    - (b) As a separate label preprinted by the EPS account holder to be affixed by the customer onto the package to be returned. The reverse side of the label must bear an adhesive strong enough to bond the label securely to the package. Labels must be printed and delivered by USPS to the customer when requested electronically by the EPS account holder or its agents through the BCG, or provided as an electronic file created by the EPS account holder for local output and printing by the customer.
    - (c) The electronic file must include instructions that explain how to affix the label securely to the package, and that caution against covering with tape or other material any part of the label where postage and fee information is to be recorded.
- c. *Labeling Instructions.* Written instructions must be provided with the label that, at a minimum, directs the customer to do the following:
1. "If your name and address are not already preprinted in the return address area, print them neatly in that area or attach a return address label there."

2. “Attach the label squarely onto the largest side of the package, centered if possible. Place the label so that it does not fold over to another side. Do not place tape over any barcodes on the label or any part of the label where postage and fee information will be recorded.”
3. “Remove or obliterate any other addresses, barcodes, or price markings on the outside packaging.”
4. “Mail the labeled USPS Returns service package at a Post Office, drop it in a collection box, leave it with your USPS carrier, or schedule a package pickup at *usps.com*.”

### 3.1.5 Noncompliant Labels

USPS Returns service account holders must use USPS-certified labels meeting the standards in 3.1.4. When noncompliant labels, including discontinued labels, are affixed to USPS Returns service packages, the permit holder will be assessed the appropriate USPS Retail Ground price calculated from the package’s initial entry point (first physical scan) in the USPS network to its delivery address.

### 3.1.6 Enter and Deposit

The following standards apply:

- a. The EPS account holder’s customers may mail the USPS Returns service package via the following:
  1. At any Post Office;
  2. At any associated office, station, or branch;
  3. In any collection receptacle (e.g., collection box, lobby package drop unit) except a Priority Mail Express collection box, as permitted by each receptacle’s size limitations (see 3.1.6b for USPS Returns service packages with extra services);
  4. With any rural carrier;
  5. By package pickup;
  6. On business routes during regular mail delivery if prior arrangements are made with the carrier;
  7. As part of a collection run for other mail (special arrangements might be required); or
  8. At any place designated by the postmaster for the receipt of mail.
- b. USPS Returns service packages with extra services must be mailed either with the rural carrier or at the main Post Office or any associated office, station, or branch. Any such packages deposited in collection boxes may be returned to the sender for the extra service to be purchased appropriately, or it will be processed and the sender charged postage and fees based on the STC embedded in the IMpb on the label and as provided under 3.1.3c.

## 3.2 Additional Standards

Additional mailing standards applicable to each service option are as follows:



### 505.4.1

- a. Priority Mail Return service may contain any mailable matter meeting the standards in [201.8.0](#) and [223.2.0](#). APO/FPO/DPO mail is subject to standards in [703.2.0](#) and [703.4.0](#), and Department of State mail is subject to standards in [703.3.0](#). Priority Mail Return service receives expeditious handling and transportation, with service standards in accordance with Priority Mail. Priority Mail Return service mailed under a specific customer agreement is charged postage according to the individual agreement. Commercial Base and Commercial Plus prices are the same as for outbound Priority Mail in [Notice 123—Price List](#).
- b. First-Class Package Return service may contain mailable matter meeting the standards in [201.8.0](#) and [283.2.0](#). First-Class Package Return service handling, transportation, and eligibility of contents are the same as for outbound First-Class Package Service — Commercial parcels under standards in [283](#). First-Class Package Return service packages may not contain documents or personal correspondence, except that such packages may contain invoices, receipts, incidental advertising, and other documents that relate in all substantial respects to merchandise contained in the package.
- c. Ground Return (Parcel Select Ground) service provides ground transportation for parcels containing mailable matter meeting the standards in [201.8.0](#) and [153.3.0](#). Ground Return (Parcel Select Ground) service is required for restricted and hazardous materials mailed using USPS Returns service and as provided in Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*. Ground Return (Parcel Select Ground) service assumes the handling, transportation, and service objectives for delivery of USPS Retail Ground.

## 4.0 Parcel Return Service

### 4.1 Prices and Fees

#### 4.1.1 Permit

The participant must obtain a permit and pay postage at the Post Office where the permit is held through an advance deposit account (see [Notice 123—Price List](#)).

#### 4.1.2 Parcel Return Service Prices

Parcel Return Service prices are based on the price that applies to the weight increment of each addressed piece, and on the designated return facility, RDU or RSCF. The price is charged per pound or fraction thereof; any fraction of a pound is considered a whole pound. For example, if an item weighs 4.225 pounds, the weight increment is 5 pounds. The minimum price per piece is the 1-pound price and these additional standards apply:

- a. Parcel Return Service-Nonmachinable Prices: Parcels exceeding the maximum machinable dimensions in [201.7.5](#) or are considered a nonmachinable parcel under [201.7.7](#) are subject to nonmachinable prices.

- b. Balloon and Oversized Prices: RSCF parcels that weigh less than 20 pounds but measure more than 84 inches in combined length and girth are charged the applicable price for a 20-pound parcel (balloon price). Regardless of weight, any parcel that measures more than 108 inches (but not more than 130 inches) in combined length and girth must pay the oversized price.

#### 4.1.3 Postage

There are two PRS price categories:

- a. Parcel Return Service — RDU. Parcels returned as USPS Retail Ground to, and retrieved in bulk from, a designated delivery unit.
- b. Parcel Return Service — RSCF. Parcels returned as USPS Retail Ground to, and retrieved in bulk from, a designated SCF

[1-9-22]

#### 4.1.4 Nonstandard Fee (Effective April 3, 2022)

Parcel Return Service parcels are not subject to a nonstandard fee.

## 4.2 Basic Standards

### 4.2.1 Description

Parcel Return Service (PRS) applies to parcels that are picked up in bulk by authorized permit holders or their agents. Permit holders guarantee payment of postage for all parcels mailed with a PRS label. By providing an approved PRS label to its customers, the merchant or other party designates the permit holder identified on the label as their agent for receipt of mail bearing that label, and authorizes the USPS to provide that mail to the permit holder or its designee. PRS permit holders also may retrieve parcels at one or more designated return sectional center facilities (RSCFs) or designated return delivery units (RDUs). Payment for parcels returned under PRS is deducted from a separate advance deposit (postage-due) account funded through the Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS). The permit holder must be authorized to use eVS (see [705.2.9](#)).

### 4.2.2 Conditions for Mailing

Parcels may be mailed as PRS when all of the following conditions apply:

- a. Parcels contain eligible matter as described in [153.3.0](#) and [153.4.0](#).
- b. Parcels bear a PRS label that meets the standards in [4.3](#).
- c. Parcels show the permit number.

### 4.2.3 Customer Mailing Options

Returned parcels may be deposited as follows:

- a. At any Post Office, station, or branch.
- b. In any collection receptacle (e.g., collection box, lobby package drop unit) except a Priority Mail Express collection box, as permitted by each receptacle's size limitations.
- c. With any letter carrier.



## 505.4.2.4

- d. As part of a collection run for other mail (special arrangements may be required).
- e. At any place designated by the postmaster for the receipt of mail.
- f. Pickup on Demand service.

### **4.2.4 Application Process**

Companies wishing to participate in PRS must send a request on company letterhead to the director, Business Acceptance Solutions (see [608.8.0](#) for address). The request must contain the following information:

- a. Company name and address.
- b. An individual's contact name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address.
- c. The price category or categories to be used, and the proposed retrieval locations (delivery units and sectional center facilities).
- d. A description of the electronic returns manifesting system to be used to document returns listed by location and price eligibility.

### **4.2.5 Approval**

The director, Business Acceptance Solutions, reviews each request and proceeds as follows:

- a. If the applicant meets the criteria, the director, Business Acceptance Solutions, approves the letter of request and sends an authorization letter outlining the terms and conditions for the program. PRS permit holders must submit the authorization letter and PS Form 3801, *Standing Delivery Order*, to each applicable facility. An acceptable primary form of identification as specified under [608.10.3](#) is required before each pickup.
- b. If the application does not meet the criteria, the director, Business Acceptance Solutions, denies the request and sends the applicant a written notice with the reason for denial.

### **4.2.6 Permit Cancellation**

USPS may cancel a PRS permit for any of the following reasons:

- a. The permit holder fails to pay the required postage and fees for returned parcels.
- b. The permit holder does not maintain adequate available funds to cover postage and fees for returned parcels.
- c. The permit holder does not fulfill the terms and conditions of the PRS permit authorization.
- d. The return labels do not conform to the specifications in [5.4](#).

### **4.2.7 Reapplying After Cancellation**

To receive a new PRS permit after cancellation as specified in [5.1](#), the mailer must:

- a. Submit a letter to the director, Business Acceptance Solutions, requesting a permit and a new agreement.

- b. Provide evidence showing that the reasons for cancellation no longer exist.
- c. Maintain adequate available funds to cover the expected number of returns.

#### 4.2.8 Extra Services and Endorsement

Pieces using PRS may not bear an ancillary service endorsement (see [102.4.0](#) and [507.1.5](#)). See [503](#) for available extra services for PRS.

#### 4.2.9 Pickup Schedule and Location

Permit holders or their agents must set up recurring or standing appointments to retrieve PRS parcels. If the permit holder (or agent) has existing appointments to deliver Parcel Select parcels to destination facilities and those facilities are one of the designated RSCFs or designated RDUs, those appointments can be used for retrieving PRS parcels at the same time. Permit holders or their agents must retrieve parcels on a regular schedule as follows:

- a. From all listed RSCFs, at a minimum of every 24 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and USPS holidays, unless otherwise authorized. The Postal Service maintains a list of active RSCFs and provides permit holders 30-day notice of changes to the list. This list is available on the Facility Access and Shipment Tracking system (FAST) at <https://fast.usps.com/fast/>.
- b. From RDUs, at a minimum of 48 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and USPS holidays, unless otherwise authorized. The USPS maintains a list of active RDUs and provides permit holders 30-day notice of changes to the list. This list is available on the Facility Access and Shipment Tracking system (FAST) at <https://fast.usps.com/fast/>.

#### 4.2.10 Change or Cancel Retrieval Locations

Customers may change or cancel retrieval locations (delivery units and sectional center facilities) as follows:

- a. *Online*. Customers may change or cancel retrieval locations online at the USPS Business Customer Gateway (BCG) at [gateway.usps.com](http://gateway.usps.com).
- b. *Letter*. Customers may change or cancel retrieval locations by sending a request on company letterhead to the director, Business Acceptance Solutions (see [608.8.0](#) for address).

#### 4.2.11 Parcels Endorsed Hold for Pickup

PRS participants must pay the appropriate Parcel Return Service RDU price under [5.3](#) for any unclaimed, refused, undeliverable as addressed, or recalled parcels that are endorsed “Hold For Pickup” (under [507.3.0](#)) and that bear the marking “PARCEL RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED” or “PRS REQUESTED” followed by a unique 569 prefix ZIP Code.

#### 4.2.12 Noncompliant Labels

PRS permit holders must use USPS-certified labels meeting the standards in [4.3](#). When noncompliant labels are affixed to PRS parcels, which travel through the Postal network to the delivery address of the label, the permit holder will be assessed the appropriate USPS Retail Ground price, calculated from the parcel’s entry point in the USPS network to its delivery address. If the parcel’s entry point cannot be determined, then postage will be calculated at zone 4.



## 4.3 Labels

### 4.3.1 Label Preparation

PRS labels must be certified by USPS for use prior to distribution as defined in the service agreement. In addition, permit holders must obtain USPS certification for barcode symbologies. Except for by FAX, any photographic, mechanical, or electronic process or any combination of these processes may be used to produce PRS labels. The background of the label may be any light color that allows the address, barcodes, and other required information to be easily distinguished. If labels are electronically transmitted to customers for their local printing, the permit holder must advise customers of these printing requirements as part of the instructions in [4.3.3](#)

### 4.3.2 Labeling Methods

If all applicable contents and formats are approved (including instructions to the user), permit holders or their agents may distribute a PRS label by any of the methods provided under [3.5.4](#).

### 4.3.3 Labeling Instructions

Regardless of label distribution method, permit holders or their agents must always provide written instructions to the user of the PRS label as provided under [3.5.5](#).

### 4.3.4 Label Format Elements

PRS labels must meet the standards in the Parcel Labeling Guide available on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com>. There is no minimum size for PRS labels; however, the label must be big enough to accommodate all of the label elements and standards in this section. All PRS label elements must be legible. Except where a specific type size is required, elements must be large enough to be legible from a normal reading distance and be separate from other elements on the label.

### 4.3.5 PRS Label Format Examples

The following are PRS label format examples: (Note: The ZIP Code 56999 appears in each example for demonstration purposes only.)

- a. Parcel Return Service label using a separate PRS barcode and postal routing barcode.

JOHN DOE 1258 RETURN LN BETHESDA MD 20817	 ZIP - 56999	NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES 
<b>PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b> ABC RETURNS <span style="float: right;">PERMIT NO. 77999</span>		
<b>USPS PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b>  9202 3912 3456 7806 1500 09		AGENT / CLIENT NAME PARCEL RETURN SERVICE 56999
		<b>X01</b>

b. Parcel Return Service label using a concatenated barcode.

JOHN DOE 1258 RETURN LN BETHESDA MD 20817		NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES 
<b>PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b> ABC RETURNS <span style="float: right;">PERMIT NO. 77999</span>		
<b>ZIP - USPS PARCEL RETURN SERVICE</b>  9202 3912 3456 7806 1500 09		AGENT / CLIENT NAME PARCEL RETURN SERVICE 56999
		<b>X01</b>



## 5.0 Bulk Parcel Return Service

### 5.1 Bulk Parcel Return Service (BPRS) Permit and Fees

#### 5.1.1 Permit and Per Piece Fees

A BPRS permit is required to participate in BPRS; no annual fee is required to obtain a BPRS permit. Each piece returned through BPRS is charged only the per piece fee, not postage, regardless of weight. See [Notice 123—Price List](#) for applicable fees.

#### 5.1.2 Advance Deposit Account

The permit holder must pay BPRS fees through an advance deposit account. A separate advance deposit account for BPRS is not required.

#### 5.1.3 Postage Due Weight Averaging

BPRS mailers may participate in the Postage Due Weight Averaging program described in [705.20.0](#).

### 5.2 Basic Standards

#### 5.2.1 Description

Bulk parcel return service (BPRS) allows mailers of large quantities of USPS Marketing Mail or Parcel Select Lightweight machinable parcels that are either undeliverable-as-addressed or un-opened and refused by addressees to be returned to designated postal facilities. The mailer has the option of picking up all returned parcels from a designated postal facility at a predetermined frequency specified by the USPS or having them delivered by the USPS in a manner and frequency specified by the USPS. For this service, a mailer establishes a BPRS permit and pays a per piece charge for each parcel returned from an advance deposit account.

#### 5.2.2 Availability

A mailer may be authorized to use BPRS when the following conditions apply:

- a. All returned parcels are initially prepared as regular or Nonprofit USPS Marketing Mail, or Parcel Select Lightweight, and are machinable parcels as defined in [201.7.5](#).
- b. At least 10,000 USPS Marketing Mail or Parcel Select Lightweight machinable parcels will be returned to a designated postal facility during a 12-month period.
- c. Parcels are returned to the mailer either because they are undeliverable-as-addressed or because they are un-opened and refused by the addressee.
- d. Parcels bear an approved BPRS label or one of the following BPRS endorsements ([507.2.0](#)) on the outbound mailpiece:  
“Return Service Requested — BPRS”  
“Address Service Requested — BPRS”
- e. Parcels have a return address that is in the delivery area of the Post Office that issued the BPRS permit.

- f. The postal facility designated for returned parcels is located in the United States, its territories or possessions, or is a U.S. military Post Office overseas (APO or FPO).
- g. The mailer has a valid postage due advance deposit account and BPRS permit.
- h. BPRS parcels may be combined with the shipper paid forwarding service ([507.4.2.9](#)).
- i. USPS Marketing Mail or Parcel Select Lightweight parcels that qualify for a Media Mail or Library Mail price under the applicable standards, and that contain the name of the Package Service price in the mailer's ancillary service endorsement ([507.1.5.3d](#)), are not eligible for BPRS.

### 5.2.3 Payment Guarantee

The permit holder guarantees payment of all applicable fees. The Post Office returns BPRS items to the permit holder only when there are sufficient funds in the advance deposit account to pay the fees on returned pieces.

### 5.2.4 Application Process

To obtain a BPRS permit, a mailer must send a written request to the Postmaster at each Post Office where parcels are to be returned that includes the following:

- a. Request for the BPRS permit.
- b. Information pertinent to each requested delivery point that documents either the receipt of, or that there are reasonable grounds to expect, at least 10,000 machinable parcels originally mailed at regular or non-profit USPS Marketing Mail or Parcel Select Lightweight prices during the past, or next, 12 months.
- c. A description of the returned parcels (e.g., piece size and packaging).
- d. A statement of the desired frequency and location of the parcel pickup or delivery point.
- e. Sample documentation that will be used to substantiate the number of parcels returned daily to each location.
- f. If a label will be furnished for returning opened parcels, the labels must be USPS approved, prepared in accordance with [5.4](#), and be accompanied by complete instructions for its use as described in [3.5.5](#).
- g. A written statement agreeing to pay the per piece fee for each returned parcel from a centralized advance deposit account.

### 5.2.5 Authorization

A BPRS mailer will be required to sign a postage due service agreement with each Post Office that issues a permit for the return of BPRS parcels. Upon approval of a mailer's request, the Post Office issues an authorization letter and provides a postage due service agreement with a BPRS permit number. The permit number is used for account administration and is required on BPRS labels under [5.4](#), when used.



## 5.3 Permits

### 5.3.1 Permit Renewal

A Post Office provides BPRS permit holders with annual renewal notices advising that their permits are due to expire. A notice must be returned to the issuing Post Office by the permit expiration date. Written authorization is not necessary for renewal of a permit if there is no change to the authorization on file at the Post Office where the parcels are returned. If a permit holder does not renew a BPRS permit after having been given notice, the USPS will endorse the mail “Bulk Parcel Return Service Canceled” and will charge postage due at the single-piece First-Class Mail or Priority Mail price as appropriate for the weight of the piece. If the single-piece First-Class Mail or Priority Mail price is not paid, the mail is forwarded to the nearest mail recovery center.

### 5.3.2 Permit Cancellation

A BPRS permit may be canceled by the USPS for any of the following reasons:

- a. Failure to meet the minimum volume requirement of 10,000 parcels returned during a 12-month period to each postal facility.
- b. Failure of the mailer to pay the required postage and fees for returned parcels.
- c. Insufficient funds in an advance deposit account to cover postage and fees that are due for returned parcels.
- d. Failure to fulfill the terms and conditions of the BPRS permit authorization.
- e. Failure to conform return labels to the specifications in section [5.4](#).

### 5.3.3 Reapplying After Cancellation

A mailer must do the following to receive a new BPRS permit at the same Post Office where a permit was previously canceled:

- a. Submit a letter to that office requesting a BPRS permit and new agreement.
- b. Provide evidence showing that the reasons for cancellation of the previous permit no longer exist.
- c. Maintain adequate funds in an advance deposit account to cover the number of returns expected over at least a 2-week period.

### 5.3.4 Extra Services

Extra services cannot be added to pieces returned via bulk parcel return service.

## 5.4 Optional BPRS Label

An authorized BPRS permit holder has the option to use a label to identify BPRS parcels for return to a designated postal facility. The label is prepared at the mailer’s expense and must meet all format standards in the Parcel Labeling Guide available on PostalPro at <https://postalpro.usps.com>, including an IMpb meeting the standards in [204.2.0](#).