Addressing

Overview

The delivery address specifies where the USPS is to deliver a mailpiece. The address must be legible and complete on the side of the mailpiece that bears the postage.

General Information

Placement and location: see 202.2.0 for letters, cards, and flats.

The placement of the address can determine mailability of the mailpiece and/or price and eligibility. For Periodicals, USPS Marketing Mail, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail flat-size pieces mailed at automation, presorted, or carrier route prices, the address must:

- Be placed in the upper portion of the flat (upper portion is defined as the top half of the mailpiece).
- May be placed parallel to the top edge, but not upside down.
- May be placed perpendicular to the top—near or at the open or bound edge.
- Place the address as close to the top edge as possible, while maintaining a 1/8-inch clearance from every edge.

Complete Addresses (602.1.4)

The address must include:

- Intended recipients name or other designation.
- Delivery address (including street number and name (predirectional, suffix, and postdirectional as appropriate), post office box number, rural or highway contract route and box number), and secondary descriptor and number (e.g., suite or apartment number, floor) if needed.
- City and state.
- ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code where required.

The address on automation price mail must be sufficiently complete to enable matching the current USPS ZIP+4 File when using current CASS-certified address matching software (602.9.0). Standardized address elements are not required.

Return Address (602.1.5)

A return address tells the USPS where the sender wants the mail returned if it is undeliverable.

A return address is required on certain types of mail. Preferred return address placement is the upper left portion of the mailpiece or the upper left part of the address area—on the side of the piece bearing postage. Mail qualifying for Nonprofit USPS Marketing Mail prices must have the name and return address of the authorized nonprofit organization either on the outside of the mailpiece or in a prominent location on the material being mailed (inside the mailpiece) (703.1.5).

Alternative Addressing Formats (602.3.0)

Simplified addressing: The simplified address format, “Postal Customer” (see 602.3.2.1a. for optional formats), may be used when general distribution is requested to each boxholder or family on a rural route or highway contract route at any post office or to each Post Office boxholder at a Post Office without city carrier service. The simplified address format, "Postal Customer" (see 602.3.2.1b. for optional formats), may also be used for USPS Marketing Mail, Periodicals, and Bound Printed Matter flat-size mailpieces (including USPS Marketing Mail pieces allowed as flats under 602.3.2.1c.), and USPS Marketing Mail and Periodicals nonstandard parcels intended for distribution to a city route or to Post Office boxes in offices with city carrier service. Government agencies may also use simplified addressing for official matter being sent to all stops on rural or city carrier routes and Post Office boxholders at all Post Offices.

Occupant addressing: This format (“Occupant”) may be used to with a complete delivery address on mail intended for selective distribution.

Exceptional addressing: This format (“Or Current Resident”) may be used in addition to the addressee's name; it indicates that mailpiece should be delivered to the current resident if addressee has moved. Exceptional addressing may not be used on certain types of mail.

Addressing Guidelines

The following guidelines for addressing a mailpiece are in USPS Publication 28, *Postal Addressing Standards*:

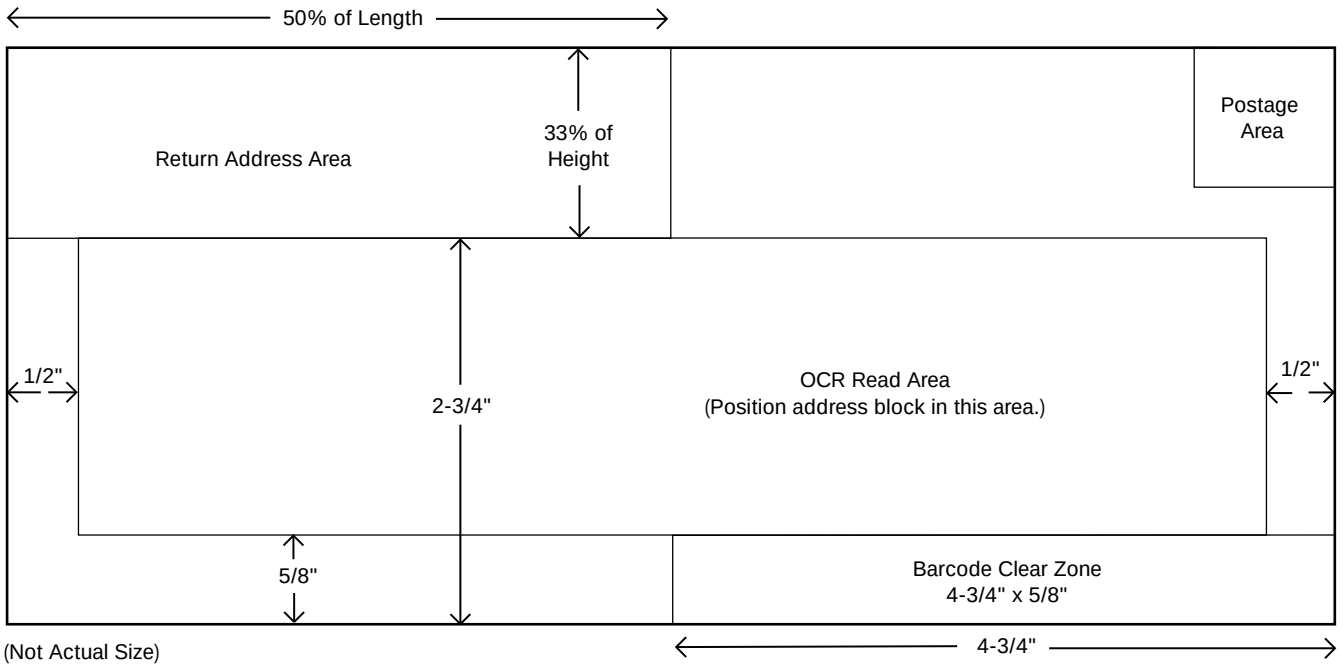
- Use simple sans serif type with uniform stroke thickness.
- Type or machine-print in dark ink on a light background with a uniform left margin.
- Left-justify every line in the address block.
- Use two-letter state abbreviations.
- Use one space between city and state, two spaces between state and ZIP+4 code.

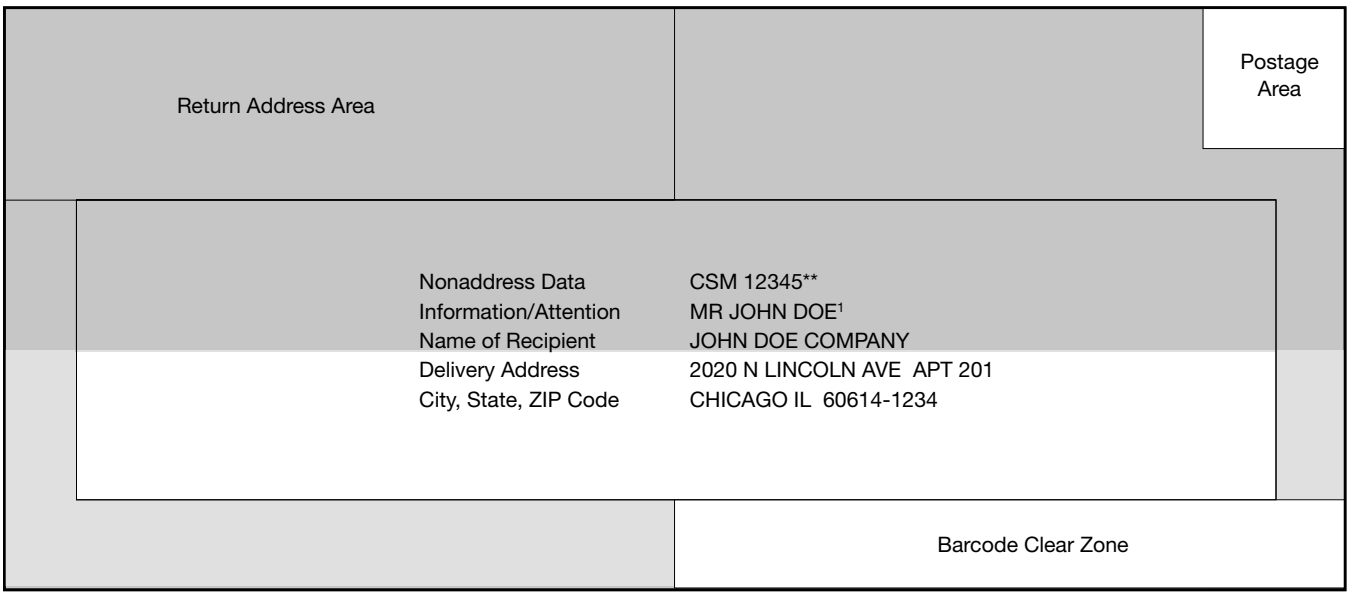
- Use appropriate ZIP+4 code (if unknown, use 5-digit ZIP Code).
- A minimum of 8-point type, or if Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code, a minimum of 6-point type is acceptable if printed in all capital letters.

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Additional Resources:

Pub. 28, Postal Addressing Standards





1. For MLOCR *FASTforward* users, the name of the recipient must appear in the OCR read area.

Dark shaded area indicates “free space” for nonaddress printing.

Light shaded area indicates preferred clear zone to enhance readability.