

255 Mail Preparation

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1.0 General Information for Mail Preparation

1.1 Basic Standards

1.1.1 General

All mailings at Parcel Select prices are subject to these general standards:

- a. Each mailing must meet the applicable standards in [201](#), [202](#), [253](#), [255](#), and [256](#).
- b. All pieces that are palletized must be prepared under [705.8.0](#).

1.1.2 USPS Connect Local

USPS Connect Local pieces include no sorting requirements.

1.2 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 for the price claimed. Generally, presort is performed sequentially, from the lowest (finest) level to the highest level, to 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.

1.3 Definition of Mailings

A mailing is a group of pieces within the same class of mail and, within the same processing category that may be sorted together and/or presented under a single minimum volume mailing.

1.4 Terms for Presort Level

Terms used for presort levels are defined as follows:

- a. *5-digit*: the delivery address on all pieces includes the same 5-digit ZIP Code.
- b. *5-digit scheme (pallets and sacks)*: the ZIP Code in the delivery address on all pieces begins with one of the 5-digit ZIP Code zones processed by the USPS as a single scheme, as shown in [L606](#).
- c. *SCF*: the separation includes pieces for two or more 3-digit areas served by the same sectional center facility (SCF) (see [L051](#)).



- d. *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](#)).
[\[4-1-24\]](#)

1.5 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. A *5-digit scheme* sort for parcels yields 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets for those 5-digit ZIP Codes listed in [L606](#), and 5-digit sacks or pallets for other ZIP Codes. The 5-digit ZIP Codes in each scheme are treated as a single presort destination subject to a single minimum volume (if required), with no further separation by 5-digit ZIP Code required. Sacks or pallets prepared for a 5-digit scheme destination that contain pieces for only one of the schemed 5-digit ZIP Codes are still considered 5-digit scheme sorted and are labeled accordingly. The 5-digit scheme sort is always optional, including when 5-digit sortation is required for price eligibility. The 5-digit scheme sort need not be used for all possible 5-digit scheme sorts.
- d. The *required at* [quantity] instruction (e.g., “required at 7 pieces”) means that the particular unit must be prepared for the corresponding presort level whenever the specified quantity of mail is reached or exceeded. 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.
- e. 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. 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.
- f. *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.

- g. An *overflow sack* for Parcel Select DSCF mail is a 5-digit scheme or 5-digit sack prepared with fewer than seven pieces after all other sacks for that same 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code area are prepared with seven or more pieces per sack as required by 4.2. If all of the mail is sacked under 4.0, only one overflow sack is permitted for each 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code. If a mailing is prepared on pallets, remaining pieces of Parcel Select mail may be prepared in one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit overflow sacks only after one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallets are prepared to meet the minimum pallet requirement specified in 705.8.0. Pieces in overflow sacks qualify for the Parcel Select DSCF prices.
- h. An overflow pallet in a Parcel Select DSCF mailing is a 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallet containing pieces that remain after one or more 5-digit scheme or 5-digit pallets have been prepared to meet the minimum pallet requirement specified in 705.8.0. Only one overflow pallet per 5-digit scheme or 5-digit ZIP Code area is permitted for Parcel Select DSCF mail palletized under 705.8.0. Pieces on overflow pallets qualify for the DNDC rates
- i. A “logical” presort destination represents the total number of pieces that are eligible for a specific presort level based on the required sortation, but which might not be contained in a single bundle or in a single container (sack or pallet) due to applicable preparation requirements or the size of the individual pieces.

1.6 Parcel Select Markings

Each piece in a Parcel Select mailing must bear a price marking under 202.3.7.2. Markings must appear in either the postage area described in 202.3.7.1, or in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone (when no other information appears on that line).

2.0 Sacks

See 203.6.0 for sack standards.

3.0 Sack Labels

Sack labels are subject to the standards in 203.6.0.

4.0 Preparing Destination Entry Parcel Select

4.1 Preparing Destination Delivery Unit (DDU) Parcel Select

4.1.1 Definition

A destination delivery unit (DDU) is a facility that delivers to the addresses appearing on the deposited pieces in a destination entry Parcel Select mailing. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available at the USPS FAST Web site: <https://fast.usps.com> to determine the location of a 5-digit delivery facility. Use L606 only for mailings prepared using the optional 5-digit scheme sort.



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4.1.2 Basic Standards

Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

- a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.
- b. Pieces must be entered by the mailer at the postal facility where the carrier delivers the parcels (delivery unit) as defined in 253.4.1.1.
- c. If the delivery unit serves more than one 5-digit ZIP Code, the pieces must be separated by 5-digit ZIP Code when unloaded, unless prepared as optional 5-digit scheme sacks or pallets. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available at the USPS FAST Web site: <https://fast.usps.com> to determine the location of the delivery unit, whether it serves more than one 5-digit ZIP Code, and whether it can handle pallets.

4.1.3 Sacking and Labeling

There are no minimum sacking or pallet preparation standards. DDU pieces may be bedloaded, sacked, placed directly on pallets, or placed in pallet boxes on pallets. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces may be combined in the same sack or on the same pallet (including pallet boxes on pallets).

Sacked mail must be labeled as follows:

- a. 5-digit scheme: Line 1, L606; Line 2, "PSVC PARCELS 5D SCH."
- b. [4-1-24] 5-digit: Line 1, city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see 203.5.11 for overseas military mail); Line 2. "PSVC PARCELS 5D."

4.2 Preparing Destination Hub (DHub) Parcel Select**4.2.1 Definition**

A destination Hub (DHub) includes all facilities in L014.

4.2.2 Basic Standards

Pieces must meet the applicable standards in 4.0 and the following criteria:

- a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.
- b. DHub pieces must be for the same Hub area under L014.
- c. Sorted to optional 5-digit scheme destinations under L606, Column B, 5-digit destinations, either in sacks or directly on pallets or in pallet boxes. Mailers must enter the pieces at the designated Hub, under L014 that serves the 5-digit ZIP Code destinations of the pieces. The DHub price is not available for palletized mail for facilities that are unable to handle palletized mailings. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available at the USPS FAST website (<https://fast.usps.com>) to determine if the facility serving the 5-digit destination can handle pallets.

4.2.3 Sacking and Labeling

Sacking requirements for DHub entry include the following:

- a. Only 5-digit scheme and 5-digit sacks are permitted.
- b. Each 5-digit scheme and 5-digit sack must contain a minimum of seven pieces. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces may be combined in the same sack to meet this requirement. One overflow sack per 5-digit ZIP Code is permitted (no piece minimum).

- c. 5-digit scheme sack labeling:
 - 1. Line 1: Use [L606](#), Column B;
 - 2. Line 2: Use “PSVC PARCELS 5D SCH.”
- d. 5-digit sack labeling:
 - 1. Line 1: Use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail. (See [203.5.11](#) for overseas military mail.)
 - 2. Line 2: Use “PSVC PARCELS 5D.”

4.3 Preparing Destination SCF (DSCF) Parcel Select

4.3.1 Definition

A destination sectional center facility (DSCF) includes all facilities in [L051](#). Mailers may be redirected to deposit DSCF mail at another USPS-designated facility.

4.3.2 Basic Standards

Pieces must meet the applicable standards in [4.0](#) and the following criteria:

- a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.
- b. DSCF pieces must be for the same SCF area under [L051](#).
- c. Sorted to optional 5-digit scheme destinations under [L606](#), Column B, 5-digit destinations, or SCF for machinable parcels under [L051](#), either in sacks or directly on pallets or in pallet boxes. Mailers must enter the pieces at the designated SCF, under [L051](#), that serves the 5-digit ZIP Code destinations of the pieces. The DSCF price is not available for palletized mail for facilities that are unable to handle palletized mailings. Refer to the Drop Shipment Product available at the USPS FAST Web Site <https://fast.usps.com> to determine if the facility serving the 5-digit destination can handle pallets.
- d. Any remaining nonmachinable parcels (as defined in [201.8.5.2](#)) sorted to 3-digit ZIP Code prefixes in [L002](#), Column C. Machinable parcels may not be sorted to the 3-digit level.

4.3.3 Sacking and Labeling

Sacking requirements for DSCF entry:

- a. Only 5-digit scheme, 5-digit, and SCF sacks are permitted.
- b. Each 5-digit scheme and 5-digit sack must contain a minimum of seven pieces. Machinable and nonmachinable pieces may be combined in the same sack to meet this requirement. One overflow sack per 5-digit ZIP Code is permitted (no piece minimum).
- c. 5-digit scheme sack labeling: Line 1, use [L606](#), Column B; for Line 2, “PSVC PARCELS 5D SCH.”
- d. 5-digit sack labeling: Line 1, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail (see [203.5.11](#) for overseas military mail); for Line 2, “PSVC PARCELS 5D.”



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- e. Each SCF sack must contain a minimum of seven pieces. One overflow sack per SCF is permitted (no piece minimum).
- f. SCF sack labeling: Line 1, use [L051](#); for Line 2, "PSVC PARCELS SCF."
- g. 3-digit nonmachinable sack labeling: Line 1, use [L051](#); for Line 2, "PSVC IRREG 3D."
- h. See [705.8.0](#) for the option to place 5-digit scheme and 5-digit DSCF sacks, SCF sacks, and 3-digit nonmachinable sacks on an SCF pallet.

4.4 Preparing Destination NDC (DNDC) Parcel Select

4.4.1 Definition

A destination network distribution center (DNDC) includes all network distribution centers (NDCs) and auxiliary service facilities (ASFs) under [L601](#) and [L602](#), and designated sectional center facilities (SCFs) under [256.2.17](#).

4.4.2 Basic Standards

Pieces must meet the applicable standards in [4.0](#) and the following criteria:

- a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces.
- b. Pieces must be part of a Parcel Select mailing that is deposited at a NDC or ASF under [L601](#) or [L602](#).
- c. Except as provided in [L601](#) and [L602](#), pieces deposited at each NDC or ASF must be addressed for delivery within the ZIP Code range of that facility.
- d. Pieces must be within a ZIP Code eligible for DNDC prices as noted in [L601](#) and [L602](#) and, if sacked or palletized, must be prepared according to [4.0](#), and [705.8.0](#). Mail meeting the additional criteria in [256.2.16](#) or [256.2.17](#) may be deposited at an SCF.

4.4.3 Sacking and Labeling

DNDC mailing (if not bedloaded), must be prepared as follows:

- a. DNDC machinable parcels must be sacked under [5.0](#) or prepared on pallets under [705.8.0](#).
- b. [\[1-21-24\]](#) DNDC nonmachinable parcels that each weigh 35 pounds or less must be sacked under [5.0](#), if the parcels do not contain perishables and the size of the parcels allows a sack to hold at least two pieces. DNDC nonmachinable parcels that cannot be sacked in this manner or that weigh more than 35 pounds must be transported as outside (unsacked) pieces. If authorized in advance by the USPS, DNDC nonmachinable parcels may be palletized.

5.0 Preparing Machinable Parcels

5.1 Definition

Parcel Select machinable parcels must meet the physical standards in [201.7.5](#).

5.2 Basic Standards

Pieces must meet the applicable standards in [4.0](#) and the following criteria:

- a. Must be part of a mailing of at least 50 Parcel Select pieces, except there is no minimum volume for nonpresorted parcels when postage is paid using PC Postage.
- b. Each piece must be machinable and bear a barcode.

5.3 Sacking and Labeling

5.3.1 General

Sacking is not required, however mailers may opt to prepare Parcel Select machinable parcels in sacks under [2.0](#) or on pallets under [705.8.0](#).

5.3.2 Sack Preparation

Sack size, preparation sequence, and Line 1 labeling:

- a. 5-digit scheme: optional (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use [L606](#), Column B.
- b. 5-digit: required (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use city, state and 5-digit ZIP Code destination of pieces (see [3.0](#) for military mail).
- c. SCF: optional (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use [L051](#).
- d. ASF: optional; allowed only for mail deposited at an ASF to claim the DNDC price (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use [L602](#), Column B.
- e. NDC: required (minimum of 10 pieces or 20 pounds); for Line 1, use [L601](#), Column B.

5.3.3 Sack Line 2

Line 2:

- a. 5-digit scheme: "PSVC MACH 5D SCHEME" or "PSVC MACH 5D SCH."
- b. 5-digit: "PSVC MACH 5D."
- c. SCF: "PSVC MACH SCF."
- d. ASF: "PSVC MACH ASF."
- e. NDC: "PSVC MACH NDC."

[1-21-24]

6.0 Preparing USPS Connect Local

6.1 USPS Connect Local Flat Rate Packaging Provided by USPS

USPS Connect Local Flat Rate packaging provided by USPS must be used only for USPS Connect Local mailings.

6.2 Sealing USPS Connect Local Flat Rate Packaging

The container flaps must close within the normal folds in a sealed USPS Connect Local Flat Rate bag or box. Tape may be applied to the flaps and seams to reinforce the container, provided that the container's design is not enlarged by opening the sides and the container is not reconstructed in any way.



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Commercial Mail: Parcel Select Mail Preparation

255.6.2



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Commercial Mail: Parcel Select Mail Preparation

255.6.2

