Commercial - First-Class Mail Automation Letters and Postcards

Related QSGs

201b, Using Tabs, Wafer Seals, and Glue Strips
602a, First-Class Mail Move Update

Physical Standards (201)

Maximum weight: 3.5 ounces.

Heavy letter mail weighing more than 3 ounces must have a barcode in the address block and be prepared in a sealed envelope in 201.3.6.

For an overview of the physical standards for commercial letters and cards, see Quick Service Guide 201.

Prices and Fees (233.1.0)

For a complete listing of commercial First-Class Mail prices, see Notice 123–Price List.

Annual presort mailing fee applies.

Content (233.2.0)

First-Class Mail is required for personal correspondence, handwritten or typewritten material, and bills or statements of account. It also may be used for any mailable item including advertisements and lightweight merchandise.

Eligibility Standards (233.5.0)

Mailings of 500 or more addressed pieces, 100% delivery point or Intelligent Mail barcoded, sorted, and marked as described below. All pieces must be automation-compatible (201.3.0). Pieces mailed at card prices and pieces mailed at letter prices must meet separate 500-piece minimums unless prepared as a combined mailing (235.6.2).

Each piece must also include a complete delivery address with correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code.

For address standards, see 233.5.6. For barcode standards see 204.1.0. For CASS/MASS standards see 602.9.0.

Addresses on all pieces must be updated within 95 days before mailing through a USPS-approved address update method (e.g., ACS, NCOA^{Link}, or the appropriate ancillary service endorsement except Forwarding Service Requested, under 507.1.5). For an overview of the Move Update standards, see Quick Service Guide 602a.

Addresses must be matched using a CASS/MASS-certified process, within 120 days before mailing.

All letter-size reply cards and envelopes (Business Reply Mail, Courtesy Reply Mail, and metered reply mail) provided as enclosures must meet the standards in 201.3.17.

Mailers can apply Repositionable Notes. See 202.7.0.

Postage Payment and Documentation (234)

Precanceled stamp (604.3.0), meter (604.4.0), or permit imprint (604.5.0).

Additional standards apply to mailings of nonidentical-weight pieces.

Documentation:

- Postage statement: PS Form 3600-FCM.
- PS Form 3553 must be retained for 1 year (602.9.5.2).
- Supporting documentation: required unless the mailing consists of less than 10,000 pieces and the correct price is affixed to each piece or unless each piece is of identical weight and separated by price when presented for acceptance; documentation generated by PAVE-certified software (or printed in standardized format).

Mail Preparation (235)

Mark each piece: “First-Class Mail,” and “AUTO” in the postage area. For optional marking location, see 202.3.0. Pieces bearing a delivery point Intelligent Mail barcode in the address block or on an insert visible through a window do not require the additional “AUTO” marking. Pieces not marked “AUTO” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class Mail” markings. For price markings applied by MLOCRs, see 202.3.10. Pieces not claimed at an automation price must not be marked “AUTO” unless single-piece postage is affixed or a corrective single-piece price marking is applied under 235.5.1.2.

When preparing full trays, mailers must fill all possible 2-foot trays first. If mail remains for the presort destination, mailers must use a combination of 1-foot and 2-foot trays that result in the fewest total number of trays for that presort level.

Barcoded tray labels required (235.4.0).

Trays sleeved and strapped (235.3.0). See 235.3.0 for exceptions to strapping for mixed trays and mailings that originate and destinate in delivery area of same SCF.

230c Commercial - First-Class Mail Automation Letters and Postcards

Quick Service Guide

Enter and Deposit (236) Mailing entered at an acceptance point designated by USPS.

Traying Sequence (235.6.0)

5-Digit/Scheme[1]

Trays: Optional, but required for 5-digit price. 150-piece minimum to same 5-digit/scheme destination; bundling not permitted except for card-sized pieces; only one overflow tray permitted per destination.[2]

Barcoded Labels: Line 1: For 5-digit scheme trays, use destination in L012. For 5-digit trays, use city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code on mail.

Price: 5-Digit

SCF

Trays: Optional, but required for 3-digit price; 150 pieces to same SCF; bundling not permitted; group pieces by 3-digit zip code; only one overflow tray permitted per destination.[2]

Exception: No minimum for origin entry SCF.

Barcoded Labels: For Line 1, use L005, Column B for destination facility.

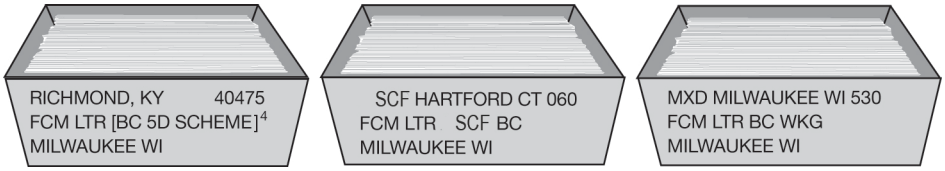
Price: 3-digit[3]

Mixed

Trays: required (no minimum); group pieces by SCF when overflow pieces from SCF trays are placed in mixed trays.

Barcoded Labels: For Line 1, use “MXD WKG”

Price: Mixed



Bundling is required for mailings entirely of card-size pieces less than 7 inches long and for pieces in overflow and less-than-full trays. The maximum thickness for a bundle is 6 inches.

1. For the 5-digit price, prepare all possible 5-digit scheme trays; then prepare all possible 5-digit trays.
2. Instead of preparing overflow trays with fewer than 150 pieces, mailers may include these pieces in an existing qualified tray of at least 150 or more pieces at the next tray level. The price is based on the overflow tray that would have been made (i.e., pieces placed in a SCF tray in lieu of 5-digit overflow trays are eligible for the 5-digit price). Pieces placed in the next tray level must be grouped by destination and placed in the front or back of the tray. This option may be used selectively for 3-digit/scheme and SCF ZIP Codes. The overflow option does not apply to 3-digit origin trays.
3. 3-digit price for any SCF tray for the origin SCF area containing fewer than 150 pieces.
4. Use “5D BC” on 5-digit trays. On 5-digit scheme trays, use “BC 5D SCHEME.”