

DELIVERY ADDRESS PLACEMENT AND FORMATTING FOR FSS PROCESSING

What is FSS processing? The Postal Service is implementing the Flats Sequencing System (FSS) to fully automate the processing and delivery sequencing of flat-size mail. Today, flats are mechanically sorted only to the 9-digit ZIP Code or carrier-route level, and later manually sorted into delivery sequence by carriers.

FSS can sort flats into delivery sequence, increasing efficiency by reducing carriers' time manually sorting mail and allowing them to begin delivering mail earlier in the day.

Effective March 29, 2009, we will require new delivery address placement standards for Periodicals, Standard Mail, Bound Printed Matter (BPM), Library Mail and Media Mail flat-size mailpieces prepared and mailed at automation, presorted and carrier route prices. Customers must place the delivery address in the upper portion (defined below) of Periodicals, Standard Mail, BPM, Library Mail and Media Mail flats. Additionally, new formatting standards will apply to all flats not mailed at retail (single-piece) prices, including First-Class Mail.

Flat-size mail generally consists of catalogs, envelopes, large cards, magazines and newspapers that exceed one or more of the dimensions for letter-size mail but that do not exceed 15 inches long, 12 inches high, 3/4-inch thick. Automation flats can have a minimum length of 6 inches, and a minimum height of 5 inches. See *Quick Service Guide 301* and *Quick Service Guide 301a* at pe.usps.com.

The new standards create consistent addressing for flat-size pieces and increase efficiency in flats processing and delivery operations. Clear, readable delivery addresses ensure accurate sorting, delivery and redirection when needed and allow us to process and deliver mail as quickly as possible.

Similar technology boosted postal efficiencies in processing and delivering letter-size mail in the 1990s. We can significantly increase efficiency and reduce delivery costs for flats with FSS technology. FSS can sequence flats at a rate of approximately 16,500 pieces per hour.

Address Placement

The "top half" of the flat-size mailpiece is the portion where the delivery address is placed. The postage (except for most Periodicals) must appear to the right or upper right, and the return address (if used) must appear to the upper left of the delivery address (see illustration at right).

Mailers may place the delivery address parallel or perpendicular to the top edge, but not upside down as read in relation to the top edge. We encourage mailers to place the address as close to the top edge as possible (while still maintaining a 1/8-inch clearance from the edge). The "top edge" of the flat is defined as follows:

- For enveloped or polywrapped flats, and all saturation flats, the top edge is either of the shorter dimensions.
- For flats that are not enclosed — that is consist of three open edges and a single bound edge (or final folded edge), the top edge is the upper edge when the bound edge is vertical and on the right side.



A good example of address and postage placement is your copy of MailPro. The bound edge is to the right as you read your address.

Address Formatting

Mailers must address all automation, presorted and carrier route flats using a minimum 8-point type (0.080-inch high) or, if the mailpiece also bears a delivery point (POSTNET) barcode or Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB) with a delivery point routing code, a

minimum of 6-point type (0.065-inch high) when using all capital letters. “Sans-serif” fonts are preferred, but not required. In addition, for all automation flats, the characters in the address must not overlap, the delivery address lines must not touch or overlap, and each address element may be separated by no more than five blank character spaces.

As we transition to the new addressing standards, mailers should also take advantage of the IMB to save space within the address block. For example, the IMB can include imbedded tracking and routing information that currently requires human-readable address correction service (ACS) codes and mailer keyline information.

We also reduced the amount of clear space required under the IMB to 0.028-inch. Again, using *MailPro* as an example, with the July/August 2007 issue *MailPro* began using the IMB, which permitted us to eliminate printing an ancillary service endorsement, as well as our ACS code and mailer keyline information in the delivery address area.

The IMB will be required on all mailpieces claiming automation prices in March 2010. Mailers can find more information in the article, *Intelligent Mail Barcodes*, on page 10 of this issue of *MailPro*.

“Flats aren’t just a mail processing category – they’re the anchor of the mailbox. The new Flats Sequencing System is almost four times as productive as the delivery sequencing operations in place today.”

*— Postmaster General
John Potter*

Customers can access technical specifications for the IMB at ribbs.usps.gov/onecodesolution.

These new standards will enable FSS to process flats in delivery sequence at high speeds and output the pieces in vertical bundles that are ready for carrier delivery. The new delivery address placement criteria will take advantage of the vertical bundle output and significantly reduce the time carriers spend orienting mailpieces to read the address – whether the mail is held, pulled from a mailbag or removed from a tray. The new standards for minimum type size and line spacing will ensure carriers can read the addresses and delineate individual delivery stops. With more

than a quarter million carriers delivering mail six days a week, there are substantial opportunities to gain efficiency.

Additional Information and Assistance

See the complete final rule, including future *Domestic Mail Manual* revisions that appeared in the *May 7 Federal Register* at pe.usps.com, click *Federal Register Notices*.

Mailers needing guidance on specific mailpiece designs are encouraged to work with their local Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA). To locate the MDA near you, go to pe.usps.com and click *Postal Locator*, then *Mailpiece Design Analyst*. ■

