WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUCCESS

Dear Customer,

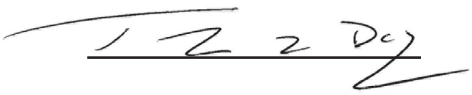
As technology evolves, processes that were unimaginable become routine. Such is the case with the automated processing and sorting of flat-size mail such as magazines, newspapers, catalogs, large envelopes, and brochures. The Postal Service is taking full advantage of new technology with the deployment of nearly 1,000 automated flat-sorting machines throughout the country. The goals of this large investment are to control costs and improve service to our customers.

In order to fully leverage this capability and achieve our goals, the Postal Service has identified a critical need which is the topic of this brochure — ***AUTOMATION READABILITY***. The need for delivery information on flats to be read by mail processing equipment quickly and accurately has never been more important.

The specifications contained in this brochure are the product of a joint working group of industry and Postal Service professionals. These experts worked together to identify the key elements necessary to achieve 100% automation readability of address and barcode information on flat-size mail. In recommending these guidelines, the joint work group also considered the capabilities of the mailing industry, so these specifications could be implemented today, given current mailing industry technology and best practices.

These specifications are being issued as guidelines to allow our customers time to incorporate them into their mailpiece designs and processes over time. Due to their importance, some of these specifications may eventually become requirements.

We ask that you please review these guidelines carefully and attempt to adopt them where possible. Working together, we have the opportunity to help hold postal costs steady and improve service through the automated sorting of flat-size mail.



Nicholas F. Barranca
Vice President, Product Development

Thomas G. Day
Vice President, Engineering

GUIDELINES for OPTIMIZING READABILITY of FLAT-SIZE MAIL

New Postal Service automation equipment is capable of processing flat-size mail at a rate of over 17,000 pieces per hour! This high speed processing not only helps to hold down postal operating costs and, consequently, postage rates, it also enables consistency in on-time mail delivery. High readability of barcode and address information is a critical component of automation success. Please follow the recommendations in this booklet for accurate and efficient processing of your flat-size mail. These guidelines are intended to enhance, but not replace, standards found in the *Domestic Mail Manual*.

ADDRESS BLOCK LOCATION

- The delivery address should be at least 1 inch lower and 1 inch to the right of the return address, assuming both addresses read in the same direction. On a flat-size mailpiece, in a landscape orientation, the delivery address should be separated as much as possible from the return address.
- The delivery address block must be clearly separated from any extraneous text and graphics. Provide a minimum clear area of 3/8 inch (1/2 inch is recommended) in each direction around the address block.
- Avoid skew (keep tilt less than 5 degrees off the horizontal or vertical axis).
- To facilitate Postal Service delivery operations, the preferred delivery address block location for flat-size mail with a portrait orientation is in the upper right-hand quadrant of the mailpiece adjacent to the bound edge. This is particularly true for mail without a return address. When the orientation of the piece is landscape, the delivery address should appear in the lower right-hand quadrant.
- Refer to diagrams on pages 5–8 for preferred address placement.

  - Flat Envelope — Landscape: Diagram #1
  - Flat Envelope — Portrait: Diagram #2
  - Standard Mail With Bound Edge: Diagram #3
  - Periodicals: Diagram #4

DELIVERY ADDRESS FORMAT

- The delivery address should be 3 or 4 lines, excluding the Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) and/or the Address Change Service (ACS) participant code (keyline).

  ATTN: POSTAL CUSTOMER
  ABC COMPANY
  123 MAIN STREET
  ANYTOWN US 98765-4321

- Additional information may appear on the lines above the address block (e.g., account number, OEL, ACS participant code).

  #BXBJDCK ********5-DIGIT 98765
  #JSN0069TWK2874#

- Print city, state, and ZIP Code on the same line.
- Print delivery address information on the line immediately above the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
- Print the attention line above the company name.
- Left justify the address block information.
- Use uniform font size and spacing throughout. Address characters should not touch. Uppercase and lowercase, as well as all caps, are acceptable.
- Use 10- to 12-point OCR readable font. Avoid script and narrow fonts. (See listing of some preferred fonts on page 5. For a complete listing, contact your local Mailpiece Design Analyst.)
- Place the POSTNET barcode (11-digit preferred) below the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
- PLANET Code® barcodes, if used, should be placed above or below the OEL and/or ACS participant code.
- Print black ink against a light background.
- Address block should be clear of graphics and extraneous information.
- Label and envelope material should be opaque so that text or graphics inside the mailpiece cannot be detected by processing equipment. Text and graphics must not show through the address.
- Use printers that do not leave voids within characters (i.e., avoid the use of dot matrix printers).
- Use Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certified software to standardize address formats (see Publication 28, *Postal Addressing Standards*). Use CASS-certified 9- and 11-digit ZIP Code addressing information.

BARCODE APPLICATION

- Place the POSTNET barcode below the delivery address.
- The left bar of the POSTNET barcode and/or the PLANET Code® barcode should be left justified (in line with the destination address block).
- Barcodes should have a 1/8 inch minimum separation from the city, state, and ZIP Code line.
- Leave a clear space of 1/8 inch to both the left and right of barcodes.
- Use an 11-digit POSTNET barcode to ensure the highest accuracy.
- If a 9- or 11-digit barcode is not known, print an accurate 5-digit barcode.
- Do not place a POSTNET barcode in the return address area.
- Do not pad ZIP Codes or POSTNET barcodes with zeros or nines (e.g., 76011-0000).

ADHESIVE LABELS

- Apply address labels on the outside of polywrapped items (smooth side, not seam side), if possible.
- If the delivery address is inside the polywrap covering, then the polywrap material must be clear (free from haze) and wrinkle free over the address.
- Place address labels uniformly, avoiding skew (keep tilt less than 5 degrees).
- Recommend not using adhesive labels for the delivery address with a customer logo and printed return address. If used, the delivery address should be at least 1 inch to the right of and 1 inch below the return address.

EXTRANEOUS INFORMATION

- Keep advertising, logos, and other information clear of the delivery address area.
- Two different return addresses may not be used on any mailpiece (see *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) A010.5.2).
- Recommend not printing store location addresses on the same side as the delivery address. If used, center justify store addresses to avoid confusion with the delivery address.

Arlington Location ***1 Main Street*** ***Arlington Texas***	***Cincinnati Location*** ***2 West Street*** ***Cincinnati Ohio***

LISTING OF PREFERRED FONTS

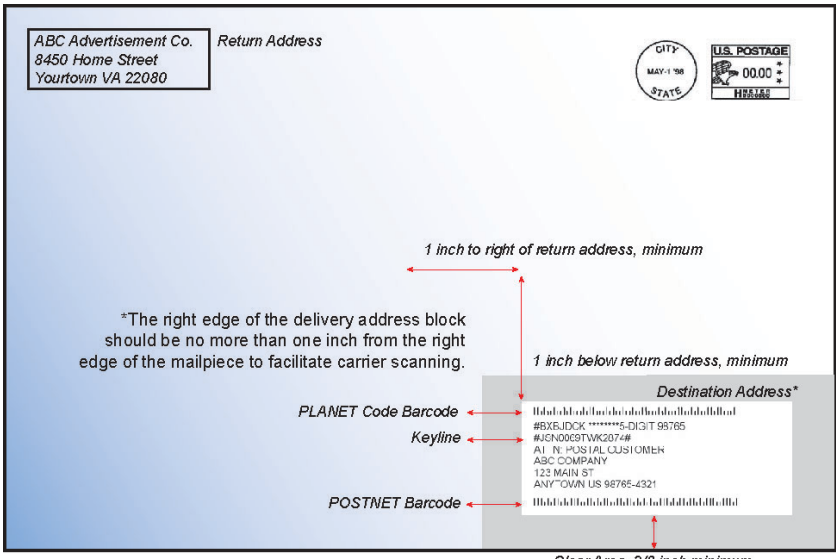
- The Optical Character Reader (OCR) is designed to read a wide variety of fonts.
- Use 10- to 12-point font size and avoid narrow type and script fonts.
- The following Microsoft Windows® fonts read very well (for a complete listing contact your local Mailpiece Design Analyst):

ARIAL BLACK
COPPERPLATE
COURIER
COURIER NEW
HELVETICA
LUCIDA FAX
LUCIDA SANS
OCR-A
OCR-B MT
SF SANS SERIF
TAHOMA

FLAT MAIL ADDRESSING DIAGRAM

PREFERRED ADDRESS PLACEMENT FLAT ENVELOPE — ANY CLASS

#1

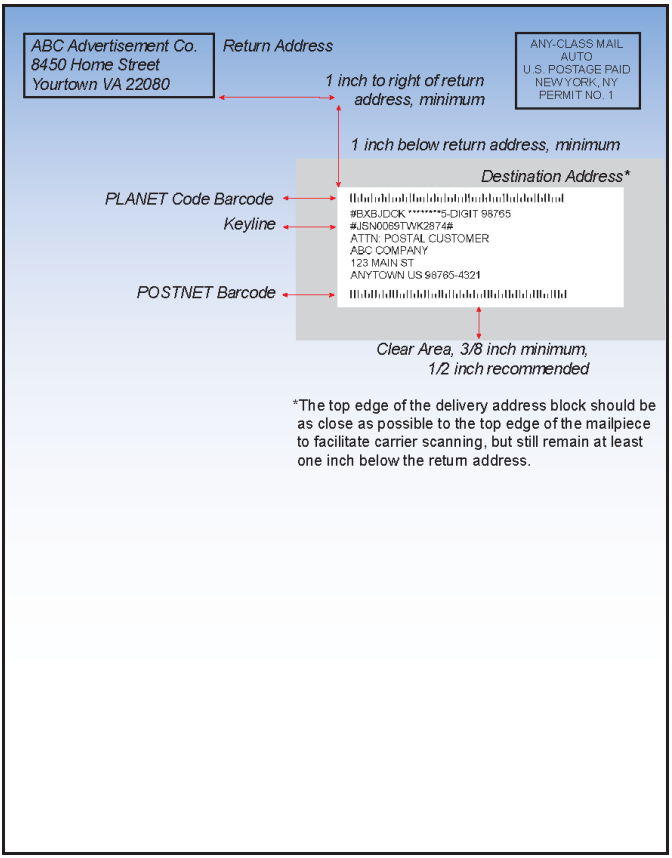


ORIENTATION: LANDSCAPE

FLAT MAIL
ADDRESSING DIAGRAM

PREFERRED ADDRESS PLACEMENT
FLAT ENVELOPE — ANY CLASS

#2

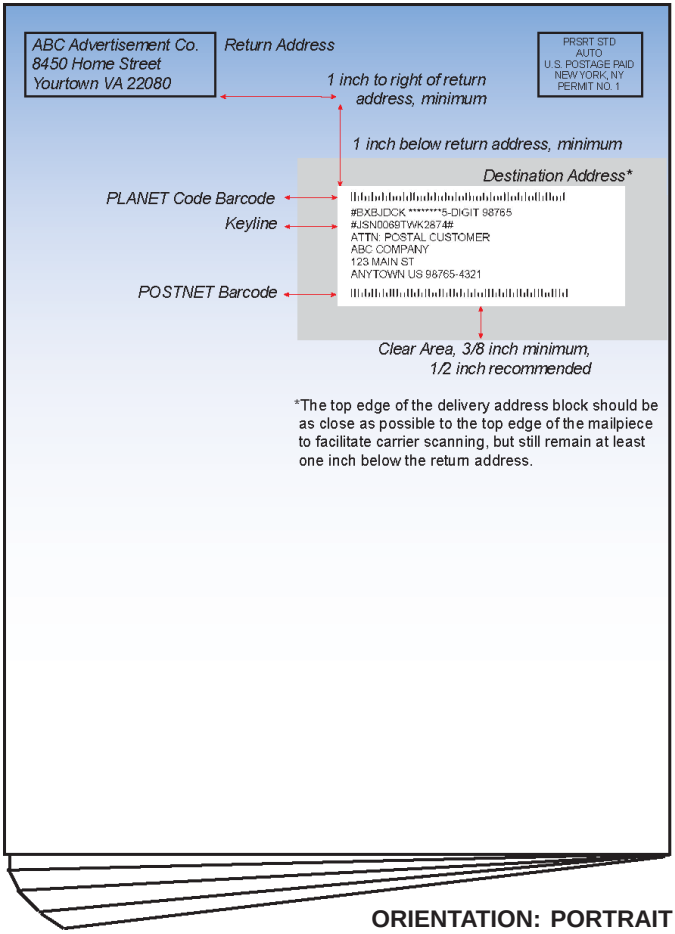


ORIENTATION: PORTRAIT

FLAT MAIL ADDRESSING DIAGRAM

PREFERRED ADDRESS PLACEMENT
STANDARD MAIL WITH BOUND EDGE

#3

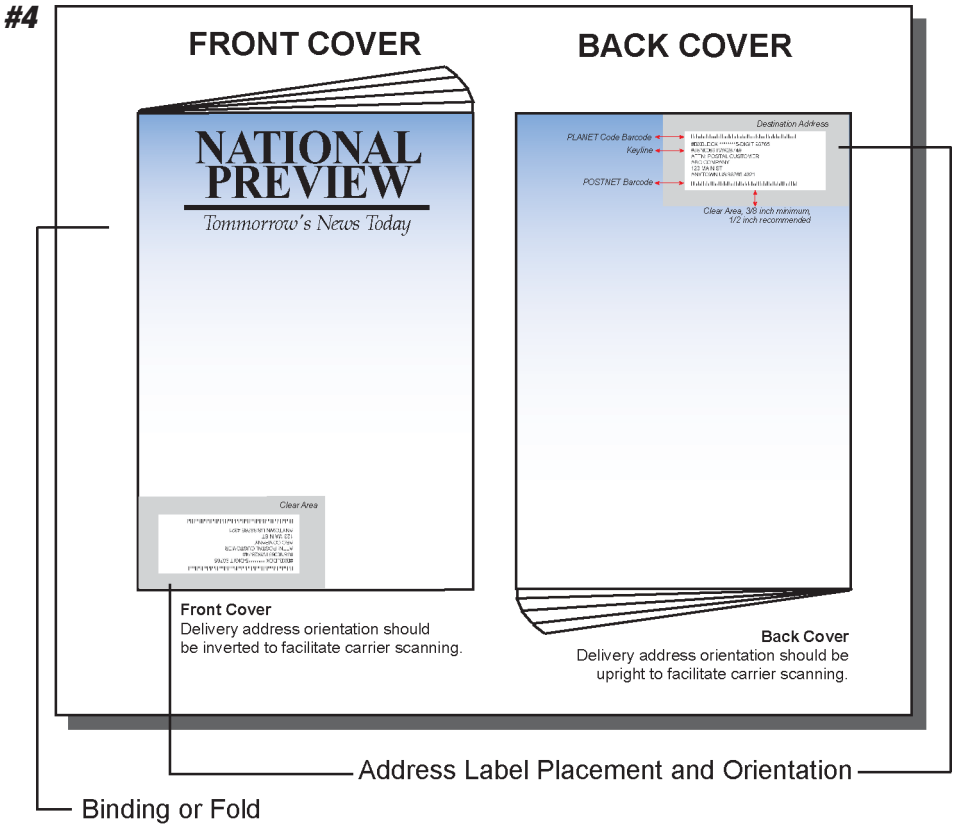


ORIENTATION: PORTRAIT

FLAT MAIL
ADDRESSING DIAGRAM

PREFERRED ADDRESS PLACEMENT
PERIODICALS

#4



NOTE: Address label placement would be the same for flat-size mailpiece with a final fold.