



LOWERING YOUR POSTAGE JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT EASIER!

Want to get the lowest postage costs? Silly question – doesn't everyone! Well the good news is that it is easy to do. With a little preplanning, you can keep your costs the lowest possible for your list by: 1) Keeping your mailing list up to date and accurate and 2) designing your mail to fit the US Postal Service (USPS) rules for automation.

Keeping a mailing list the way the USPS wants it can be a daunting task, but PostMark has some tools that will help. PostMark maintains a database of all valid addresses in the US. The USPS updates the database monthly and PostMark has software that will standardize addresses to USPS standards as well match against the database for information like the ZIP+4. PostMark would be happy to return your updated list to you for your software to use for updating its records. If your software doesn't have the update capabilities, PostMark can send you a list of those records that could not be automatically matched to the USPS database. An additional option is to have your list sent off for National Change of Address processing. While not required now, a little later this year, the USPS will require NCOA (or some other options) to get any postage discounts. With a little paperwork and a day or two extra, PostMark can have a list updated with new addresses.

Meeting the USPS rules for automation is actually easier. If you design your mail piece follow these rules:

- Be rectangular and between 3.5" and 6 1/8" in height and 5" and 11 1/2" in length
- The length divided by height is between 1.3 and 2.5 (Aspect Ratio)
- Maintain a thickness between .007 and .25 inches
- No heavier than 3.5 oz.
- Be moderately flexible without bulges or parts that move/shift

If these rules are followed you will have an automation compatible mail piece. Leave good room for an address and barcode (1 1/2 x 4 inches) at least 5/8 inches from any edge and no more than 4 inches from the bottom and you are set to go.

While the USPS always has the final say about the rules, feel free to share your design and list with PostMark prior to spending money on printing. We can help you get your list updated, duplicates eliminated, and make comments on the impact of your design on postage and deliverability.



Deployment of the Flats Sequencing System begins in 2008.

New Technology Leads to Improvements for the USPS

According to Postmaster General John Potter, and a recent edition of MailPro, two new innovations of technology are on the verge of being implemented by the USPS. One of the ideas is a Flats Sequencing System. This piece (seen in the picture to the left) will make the sorting process of flats comparable to what it currently is for letters. This process will provide greater ease and value to us here at Postmark as well. Also, the USPS will be implementing an Intelligent Mail barcode, (formerly known as the 4-state barcode) which is a 65-bar USPS barcode used to sort letter and flat sized mail. This will allow clients to track their mail from beginning-to-end. Beginning in 2009, the Intelligent Mail Barcode will be required to qualify for automation discounts. If you have any questions about these technological advances made by the Post Office contact us here at Postmark, and we will be able to help.

Save a Bunch of Money on Your Postage Rates by Mailing Postcards Instead of Letters!

Over the last several weeks many of our clients have inquired about receiving postcard rates from the USPS. So, here are a couple of guidelines to follow if you are looking to receive the postcard rates. First of all, there is not a standard or non-profit rate for postcards, only first class. However, the presorted first class rate for postcards is approximately the same as it would be to mail a letter sized mail piece at standard rate. Depending on the list, a presorted first class postcard would cost about \$0.22/piece. For this price you would get the benefits of first class mail. The next thing that you must consider is the size. In order to receive these rates your card must fall between the dimensions of 3.5x5 and 4.25x6. If the piece does not fall within these dimensions, it will not qualify as a postcard. Also, in order to get the presorted rates, the mailing must be of at least 500 records. If not, the postcard size piece can go at a single piece postcard rate, which is \$0.26/piece.

There is also another classification that a card could fall under, a "double postcard." A double postcard consists of a self-mailer, folded to meet the size specifications of a postcard, and tabbed. The only catch to this class is that one of the panels must contain a Business Reply Card (BRC). The rates for double postcards are the same as regular postcards.

The next time you have a question about postcards, feel free to contact your representative at Postmark, and we will be happy to provide you with the answers.

New Addressing Standards for the USPS

Even those these standards have not yet been adopted, the USPS will begin to mandate addressing standards for automated letters and flats in late 2008. In October 2007, the USPS proposed to require that the address for letter sized mail be a minimum size of eight point type and that the lines and characters do not touch or overlap. The purpose of this change is to improve the ability of the high speed processing equipment and of letter carriers to read the address. The changes will apply to both letter and flat sized mail. The USPS high-speed mail processing equipment relies on optical character readers, which require standardized, high quality addresses for efficient processing. The requirement for larger type in the address block means that endorsement lines and other vital information will be more difficult to fit into the address block. So, the USPS is researching ways to shorten endorsements and to reduce the amount of clear space that will be needed for the Intelligent Mail Barcode

DID YOU KNOW?

All first class mail weighing more than 13 ounces must be sent as priority mail.

Email Addresses for Postmark, Inc.

Getting Connected

General email for lists –
GreatService@PostMark.ws

Rhonda Cathey,
VP Operations –
RCathey@Postmark.ws

Jon Bowman,
VP Business Development –
JBowman@PostMark.ws

Denard Williams,
Sales Representative –
DWilliams@Postmark.ws

Sherry Hanna,
Customer Service
Representative –
SHanna@PostMark.ws

James Cooke,
Customer Service
Representative –
JCooke@PostMark.ws

www.postmark.ws