

# Standard Mail Flats

## Who Should Read This Fact Sheet?

Business mailers who are sending flat-size Standard Mail (such as large envelopes, catalogs, and circulars). To use the Standard Mail prices, you must send at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail at a time, prepared and sorted according to Postal Service guidelines.

## What Are The New Address Requirements?

The new requirements affect address characteristics (how the address looks) and address placement (where the address is located).

- Mailers must address each piece using a minimum of 8-point type. Each character must be at least 0.080 inch high.
- If the mailpiece bears a POSTNET or Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code, mailers may use 6-point type in all capital letters. Each character must be at least 0.065 inch high.
- On all automation pieces, the characters in the address must not overlap, the address lines must not touch or overlap, and each address element may be separated by no more than five blank character spaces. (A blank character space can equal the width of the widest letter used in the type.)
- Mailers must place the delivery address in the “top half” of the mailpiece.

## How Do I Determine The Top Half Of The Mailpiece?

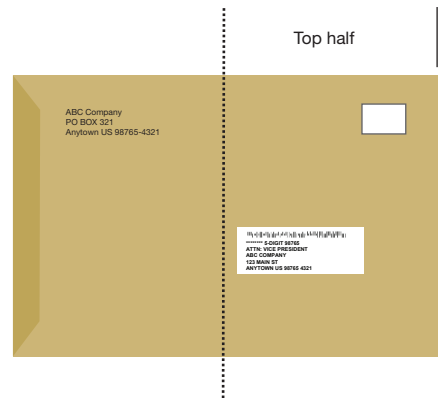
There are several options. For enveloped or polywrapped pieces, and all saturation Carrier Route pieces, the “top” of the mailpiece is either of the shorter edges. For pieces that are not enclosed in envelopes or polywrap, the “top” is the upper edge when the bound edge (or the final fold) is vertical and on the right side of the piece.

Once you choose a top edge, measure halfway down the piece, and that’s the top half. Your address (recipient lines, delivery address lines, and city/state/ZIP Code line) must be entirely within the top half. If you have a shorter mailpiece, the address can run into the bottom half if you place it within an inch of the top edge.

You can place the delivery address on the front or the back of the mailpiece, but it must be on the same side as the postage. The address may be parallel or perpendicular to the top edge, but not upside-down as read in relation to the top edge. A perpendicular address can face to the left or the right.



Catalog addressed on back cover. “Top” is the upper edge when the spine is on the right.



Large envelope. “Top” is the left or right edge as viewed in this horizontal orientation. The “top half” could be either the left or right half.

## Where Do I Place My Postage And Return Address?

Place them in relation to the delivery address as it is read, just like you do today. The postage should appear to the right or upper right of the delivery address, and the return address should appear to the upper left of the delivery address. The very best place for the return address is at least 1 inch above and 1 inch to the left of the delivery address.

If your delivery address won't allow enough room for the postage and return address, move it to another position within the top half. Remember, there are multiple options.

## When Do These Changes Take Effect?

Mailings must comply no later than March 29, 2009.

## Why Are These Changes Needed?

Clear, legible addresses ensure accurate sorting, redirection, and delivery; enable high-speed processing; and minimize service delays. Consistent address placement is needed to take advantage of new flats processing technology and will significantly increase efficiency, which helps keep postage prices affordable.

## What Happens If My Mail Doesn't Comply?

Your mail must meet the published standards to qualify for Standard Mail prices, including the new address requirements. If the standards are not met, you may pay additional postage or correct and re-enter your mail.

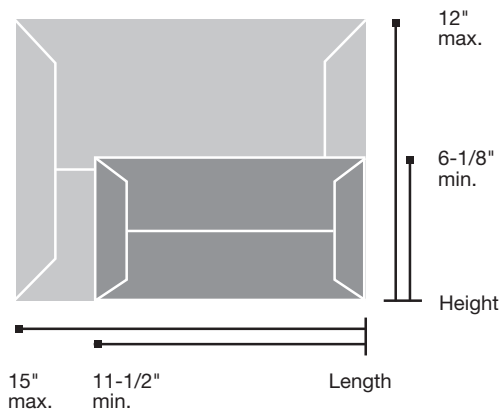
## Where Can I Find More Information?

You can access the May 7 *Federal Register* notice on Postal Explorer at [pe.usps.com](http://pe.usps.com). Click on "Federal Register" in the left frame, and scroll down to the entry titled, "New Address Requirements for Automation, Presorted, and Carrier Route Flat-Size Mail."

If you have questions about a particular mailpiece, your local Mailpiece Design Analyst can help. To find an Analyst, enter your ZIP Code in the lookup tool on Postal Explorer (click on "Postal Locator" in the left frame, then "Mailpiece Design Analyst").

The *Domestic Mail Manual* also is available on Postal Explorer and provides all of the mailing standards and pricing options for Standard Mail flats. We will add the new address requirements to *Domestic Mail Manual* chapter 302 when they take effect in March 2009.

### Flats Dimensions



	Minimum*	Maximum
<b>Length</b>	<b>11-1/2 inches</b>	<b>15 inches</b>
<b>Height</b>	<b>6-1/8 inches</b>	<b>12 inches</b>
<b>Thickness</b>	<b>1/4 inch</b>	<b>3/4 inch</b>

\* Nonautomation flats exceed at least one of these dimensions. Automation flats must be at least 5 inches high and 6 inches long. For flats, length is the longest dimension.