



# 201 Physical Standards

**Overview**

- 1.0 Physical Standards for Machinable Letters and Cards
- 2.0 Physical Standards for Nonmachinable Letters
- 3.0 Physical Standards for Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards

## 1.0 Physical Standards for Machinable Letters and Cards

### 1.1 Physical Standards for Machinable Letters

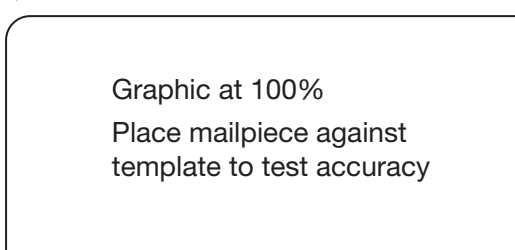
#### 1.1.1 Dimensional Standards for Letters

Machinable letter-size mail is:

- a. Not less than 5 inches long, 3-1/2 inches high, and 0.007-inch thick.
  1. 0.007 inch thick if no more than 4-1/4 inches high and 6 inches long; or
  2. 0.009 inch thick if more than 4-1/4 inches high or 6 inches long, or both.
- b. Not more than 11-1/2 inches long, or more than 6-1/8 inches high, or greater than 1/4-inch thick.
- c. Rectangular, with four square corners and parallel opposite sides. Letter-size, card-type mailpieces made of cardstock may have finished corners that do not exceed a radius of 0.125 inch (1/8 inch). See [Exhibit 1.1.1e](#).
- d. Within an aspect ratio (length divided by height) of 1.3 to 2.5, inclusive. See [601.1.4](#).
- e. Subject to additional dimensional restrictions in 3.0, depending on mailpiece design.

#### Exhibit 1.1.1e Maximum Corner Radius for Letter-Size, Card-Type Mailpieces

Corner Radius Maximum 1/8"



#### 1.1.2 Weight Standards for Machinable Letters

The maximum weight for Presorted First-Class Mail machinable letters is 3.3 ounces (0.2063 pound). The maximum weight for Standard Mail machinable letters is 3.3 ounces (0.2063 pound).



#### **1.1.3 All Machinable Letters**

[9-8-09] All machinable letters must meet the additional standards for automation-compatible letters in [3.0](#).

### **1.2 Physical Standards for Cards Claimed at Card Prices**

#### **1.2.1 Dimensional Standards for Cards**

Each card (each stamped card or postcard or each half of a double stamped card or postcard) claimed at a card price must be:

- a. Not less than 3-1/2 inches high, 5 inches long, and 0.007 inch thick.
- b. Not more than 4-1/4 inches high, or more than 6 inches long, or greater than 0.016 inch thick.
- c. Rectangular, with four square corners and parallel opposite sides. Card-size pieces meeting the standards in 1.2.1 may have finished corners that do not exceed a radius of 0.125 inch (1/8 inch). See [Exhibit 1.1.1e](#).

#### **1.2.2 Other Cards**

A card that does not meet the applicable standards in [1.2](#) must not bear the words "Postcard" or "Double Postcard."

#### **1.2.3 Paper or Cardstock**

A card must be of uniform thickness and made of unfolded and uncreased paper or cardstock of approximately the quality and weight of a stamped card (i.e., a card available from the USPS). A card must be formed either of one piece of paper or cardstock or of two pieces of paper permanently and uniformly bonded together. The stock used for a card may be of any color or surface that permits the legible printing of the address, postmark, and any required markings.

#### **1.2.4 Acceptable Attachments**

A card may bear an attachment that is:

- a. A paper label, such as a wafer seal or decal affixed with permanent adhesive to the back side of the card, or within the message area on the address side (see [1.2.6](#)), or to the left of the address block.
- b. A label affixed with permanent adhesive for showing the delivery or return address.
- c. A small reusable seal or decal prepared with pressure-sensitive and nonremovable adhesive that is intended to be removed from the first half of a double card and applied to the reply half.

#### **1.2.5 Unacceptable Attachment**

A card may not bear an attachment that is:

- a. Other than paper.
- b. Not totally adhered to the card surface.
- c. An encumbrance to postal processing.



### 1.2.6 Address Side of Cards

The address side of a card is the side bearing the delivery address and postage. The address side may be formatted to contain a message area. Cards that do not contain a message area on the address side are subject to the applicable standards for the price claimed. For the purposes of 1.2, miscellaneous graphics or printing, such as symbols, logos, or characters, that appear on the address side of cards not containing a message area are generally acceptable provided the items are not intended to convey a message. Cards claimed at the Presorted or automation card prices that contain a message area on the address side must be divided vertically or horizontally and meet the following additional standards, as applicable:

- a. Vertically divided cards.
  1. The address side of the card must be divided into a right portion and a left portion, with or without a vertical rule. The left portion is the message area.
  2. The delivery address, postage, and any USPS marking or endorsement must appear in the right portion. The right portion must be at least 2-1/8 inches wide (measured from the right edge of the card, top to bottom inclusive).
  3. For cards claimed at the Presorted price, nondelivery address information may extend into the right portion only above the address block and if the information is shaded or surrounded by a border that has at least 1/8 inch clearance between the delivery address block and the border. Mailers may choose not to shade or border the nondelivery address information if there is at least 1/8 inch of clear space around the delivery address block.
  4. For cards claimed at the automation price, the standards for automation-compatible mail in 3.0, *Physical Standards for Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards*, and 202.5.0, *Barcode Placement*, must be met.
- b. Horizontally divided cards.
  1. The address side of the card must be divided into an upper portion and a lower portion, with or without a horizontal rule. The portion of the address side that does not contain the delivery address is the message area.
  2. The delivery address, postage, and any USPS marking or endorsement must appear within the portion containing the delivery address. As an alternative, when the delivery address appears within the lower portion, it is permissible for the postage, return address, and any USPS marking or endorsement to appear in the upper portion. The portion bearing the delivery address must be at least 1-1/2 inches high (measured from the top or bottom edge of the card, as applicable, right edge to left edge inclusive).
  3. For cards claimed at the Presorted price, nondelivery address information may extend into the portion containing the delivery address only if it appears above the address block and if the information is shaded or surrounded by a border that has at least 1/8 inch clearance between the



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delivery address block and the border. Mailers may choose not to shade or border the nondelivery address information if there is at least 1/8 inch of clear space around the delivery address block.

4. For cards claimed at the automation price, the standards for automation-compatible mail in [3.0, \*Physical Standards for Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards\*](#), and [202.5.0, \*Barcode Placement\*](#), must be met.

#### **1.2.7 Tearing Guides**

A card may have perforations or tearing guides if they do not eliminate or interfere with any address element, postage, marking, or endorsement and do not impair the physical integrity of the card.

#### **1.2.8 Double Cards**

A double card (a double stamped card or double postcard) consists of two attached cards, one of which is designed to be detached by the recipient and returned by mail as a single card. Double cards are subject to these standards:

- a. The reply half of a double card must be used for reply only and may not be used to convey a message to the original addressee or to send statements of account. The reply half may be formatted for response purposes (e.g., contain blocks for completion by the addressee).
- b. A double card must be folded before mailing and prepared so that the address on the reply half is on the inside when the double card is originally mailed. The address side of the reply half may be prepared as business reply mail, courtesy reply mail, meter reply mail, or as a merchandise return service label.
- c. Plain stickers, seals, or a single wire stitch (staple) may be used to fasten the open edge at the top or bottom once the card is folded if affixed so that the inner surfaces of the cards can be readily examined. Fasteners must be affixed according to the applicable preparation requirements for the price claimed. Any sealing on the left and right sides of the cards, no matter the sealing process used, is not permitted.
- d. The first half of a double card must be detached when the reply half is mailed for return.

#### **1.2.9 Enclosures in Double Cards**

Enclosures in double postcards are prohibited at card prices.

## 2.0 Physical Standards for Nonmachinable Letters

### **2.1 Criteria for Nonmachinable Letters**

A letter-size piece is nonmachinable if it has an exterior surface that is not made of paper or if it does not meet the standards in [3.0](#). Windows in envelopes made of paper do not make mailpieces nonmachinable. Attachments do not render mailpieces nonmachinable if allowed by eligibility standards according to the class of mail and if not prohibited in [3.0](#). In addition, a letter-size piece is nonmachinable if



it weighs more than 3.3 ounces (up to 3.5 ounces) unless it has a barcode and is eligible for and claims automation letter prices or Standard Mail Carrier Route letter prices.

**2.2 Additional Criteria for First-Class Mail Nonmachinable Letters**

Letter-size pieces (except cards) that meet one or more of the nonmachinable characteristics in 2.1 are subject to the nonmachinable surcharge (see 233.1.4). All letter-size pieces over 3.5 ounces are prepared as letters and charged the flat-size prices.

**2.3 Additional Criteria for Standard Mail Nonmachinable Letters**

The nonmachinable prices in 243.1.5 apply to Standard Mail letter-size pieces that weigh 3.3 ounces or less and have one or more of the nonmachinable characteristics in 2.1. Mailers must prepare all nonmachinable letters as described in 245.5.0, and pay nonautomation flats prices for pieces over 3.3 ounces.

**2.4 Additional Criteria for Periodicals Nonmachinable Letters**

The nonbarcoded letter prices in 707. apply to Periodicals letter-size pieces that have one or more of the nonmachinable characteristics in 2.1.

**3.0 Physical Standards for Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards**

**3.1 Basic Standards for Automation Letters and Cards**

[9-8-09] Letters and cards claimed at any machinable, automation, or Standard Mail carrier route price, must meet the standards in 3.0. Unless prepared as a folded self-mailer, booklet, or postcard under 3.14 through 3.16, each machinable or automation letter must be a sealed envelope (the preferred method) or, if unenveloped, must be sealed or glued completely along all four sides.

**3.2 Paper Weight**

[9-8-09] Mailpieces should be constructed from high tear strength paper stock. All references in 3.0 to paper basis weight are for book-grade paper unless otherwise stated. The conversion table in Exhibit 3.2 provides a paper basis weight cross-reference.



### Exhibit 3.2 Paper Basis Weight Conversion Table

**NOTE:**

Paper basis weight is based on the weight of 500 sheets of:

- 25 x 38 inch sheets of book-grade paper,
- 17 x 22 inch bond-grade paper,
- 20 x 26 inch sheets of cover-grade paper,
- 24 x 36 inch sheets of newsprint.

For example, if 500 sheets of book-grade paper weigh 39 pounds, the paper is considered 39-pound book paper.

Book Wt.	Bond Wt.	Cover Wt.	Newsprint Wt.
39	15	21	35
40	16	22	36
50	20	27	45
55	22	30	50
60	24	33	55
70	28	40	64
75	30	41	68
80	31	44	73
90	36	50	82
100	40	56	91
110	44	60	100
128	50	70	116

### 3.3 Dimensions and Shape

[9-8-09] Each machinable or automation letter-sized piece must be rectangular (see 1.1.1) and must meet the following standards (see 3.15 for booklets):

- a. For height, no more than 6-1/8 or less than 3-1/2 inches high.
- b. For length, no more than 11-1/2 or less than 5 inches long.
- c. For thickness, no more than 0.25 or less than
  1. 0.007 inch thick if no more than 4-1/4 inches high and 6 inches long; or
  2. 0.009 inch thick if more than 4-1/4 inches high or 6 inches long, or both.

### 3.4 Standards for Letter-Size Pieces Containing Discs (CDs or DVDs)

#### 3.4.1 Basic Standards for Discs in Letter-Size Mailpieces

Letter-size mailpieces containing a single disc and meeting the general standards in 3.0 and the specific standards in 3.3 are considered automation-compatible.

Mailpieces with one enclosed disc not meeting these standards must be tested and approved for automation-compatibility.

#### 3.4.2 Disc Size and Placement

Position the disc symmetrically at the vertical centerline and as near to the top edge of the mailpiece as is practical. Secure the disc to prevent it from shifting more than 1/2 inch in any direction. The maximum disc size is:

- a. 120 mm (4.7 inches) in diameter.



- b. 2 mm (0.08 inch) in thickness.

### **3.4.3 Dimensions and Shape Standards for Automation-Compatible Enveloped Letters Containing Discs**

Each enveloped letter must meet the basic standards for machinable letters in [1.0](#) and have the following characteristics:

- a. Height, not more than 6 inches or less than 5.5 inches high.
- b. Length, not more than 9.75 inches or less than 7.25 inches long.
- c. Thickness, not more than 0.25 inch or less than 0.009 inch thick.
- d. Weight, not more than 3 ounces.
- e. A piece up to 8 inches long must be made of paper with a minimum 70-pound basis weight or equivalent.
- f. A piece over 8 inches long (up to 9.75 inches long) must be made of paper with a minimum 80-pound basis weight or equivalent.
- g. Discs in mailpieces made of the minimum basis weight paper must be inserted into a protective sleeve.

### **3.4.4 Dimensions and Shape Standards for Automation-Compatible Folded Self-Mailers Containing Discs**

Each folded self-mailer must meet the basic standards for machinable letters in [1.0](#) and have the following characteristics:

- a. Height, not more than 6 inches or less than 5.5 inches high.
- b. Length, not more than 9.75 inches or less than 7.25 inches long.
- c. Thickness, not more than 0.25 inch or less than 0.009 inch thick.
- d. Weight, not more than 3 ounces.
- e. Be prepared from paper stock meeting the industry standard for a basis weight of 75 pounds or greater, with none less than 71.25 pounds (measured weight for 500 25- by 38-inch sheets). The stock must be free from groundwood unless coated with a substance adding to the stock's ability to resist an applied bending force.
- f. Any folds or perforations in the mailpiece must be parallel to the address.
- g. Must meet the tabbing requirements for pieces prepared with folds or perforations parallel to the address provided in [3.14](#).

### **3.4.5 Unacceptable Characteristics for Automation-Compatible Letter-Size Pieces with Discs**

Discs in letter-sized envelopes and folded self-mailers may not be enclosed in:

- a. Packaging such as plastic "clamshells," plastic "jewel cases," or inflexible cardboard sleeves.
- b. Window envelopes.

## **3.5 Maximum Weight, Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards**

[\[9-8-09\]](#) The following maximum weight limits apply:



### 201.3.6

- a. Booklets and folded self-mailers - 3 ounces.
- b. Machinable enveloped letters and cards - 3.3 ounces.
- c. Automation enveloped letters and cards - 3.5 ounces (see [3.6](#) for pieces over 3 ounces.)

#### **3.6 Heavy Letter Mail (over 3 ounces)**

**9-8-09]** Heavy letter mail (letter-size pieces over 3 ounces) must be prepared in a sealed envelope, may not contain stiff enclosures, and must have an 11-digit delivery point POSTNET or an Intelligent Mail barcode with a routing code in the address block (see [202.5.0](#)).

#### **3.7 Aspect Ratio**

The aspect ratio (length of the mailpiece divided by height) must be between 1.3 and 2.5, inclusive. Length and height are defined in [601.1.4](#).

#### **3.8 Wraps and Closures**

An automation-compatible mailpiece may not be polywrapped, polybagged, or shrinkwrapped; have clasps, strings, buttons, or similar closure devices; or have protrusions that might impede or damage the mail or mail processing equipment.

#### **3.9 Staples and Saddle Stitching**

Staples or saddle stitching may be used only on booklet-type mailpieces to join the bound edge (spine). Inserted staples or stitching must parallel the bound edge, seat tightly and securely, and have no protrusions that might impede or damage the mail or mail processing equipment.

#### **3.10 Rigid and Odd-Shaped Items**

Rigid items (e.g., pens, pencils, keys, bottle caps) are prohibited within mailpieces. Reasonably flexible items (e.g., credit cards) are permitted. Subject to [3.12](#), *Flexibility Standards for Automation Letters*, odd-shaped items (e.g., coins and tokens) are permitted if firmly affixed to and wrapped within the contents of the mailpiece and envelope to streamline the shape of the mailpiece for automated processing.

#### **3.11 Tabs, Tape, and Glue**

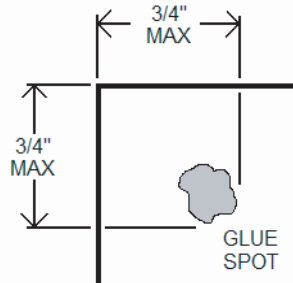
**[4-5-10] [9-8-09]** Tabs on booklets must be at least 1-1/2 inches in width and must not contain perforations. The tab placement standards in [3.15](#) are subject to 1/4-inch variance in either direction. Tabs may be made of opaque paper, translucent paper, vinyl or plastic. Cellophane tape may also be used as a closure. The following standards also apply:

- a. Translucent paper tabs should be made of paper with a minimum of 40-pound basis weight.
- b. Opaque paper tabs should be made of a minimum of 60-pound basis weight paper with a tear strength of at least 56 grams of force in the machine direction (MD) and 60 grams of force in the cross direction (CD).
- c. When a barcode clear zone is required under [202.5.1](#), tabs in the barcode clear zone must have a paper face meeting the standards for background reflectance and, if the barcode is not preprinted by the mailer, the standards for acceptance of water-based ink.



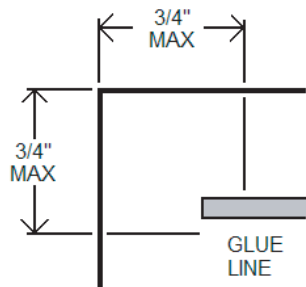
- d. Vinyl tabs and cellophane tape closures are not acceptable within the barcode clear zone.
- e. Tabs must be tight against the edge of the mailpiece. A maximum 1/16-inch overhang is recommended.
- f. Glue spots may be used in lieu of tabs (as indicated in [Exhibit 3.15.5](#) through [Exhibit 3.15.8](#)) and must be placed within 3/4 inch of the open edges (see [Exhibit 3.11f](#)).

**Exhibit 3.11f Glue Spot Placement**



- g. Continuous glue lines may be used as cover-to-cover seals for specific designs. When using glue as a sealing method, it must be placed along the entire length of the open edge and end no more than 3/4-inch from the open ends (see [Exhibit 3.11g](#)) unless standards require use of a continuous 1/2-inch wide glue line under [3.11h](#).

**Exhibit 3.11g Glue Line Placement**



- h. Continuous, 1/2-inch wide, glue lines must be placed along the entire length of the open edge and end within 1/16-inch of the open ends. The selvage along the open edge must not exceed 1/16 inch. Glue lines must be created with a permanent adhesive that is not tacky when dry.



201.3.12

### 3.12 Flexibility Standards for Automation Letters

#### 3.12.1 Machinability

To ensure transport through automated mail processing machines, a mailpiece and its contents must bend easily when subjected to a transport belt tension of 40 pounds around an 11-inch-diameter drum.

#### 3.12.2 USPS Services for Flexibility Testing

A mailer wanting to have mailpieces tested for flexibility must submit at least 50 sample pieces and a written request to USPS Engineering at least 6 weeks before the mailing date. The request must describe mailpiece contents and construction, number of pieces being produced, and preparation level (e.g., presort). Engineering advises the mailer by letter of its findings. If the mailpiece is approved, the letter includes a unique number identifying the piece tested and serves as evidence that the piece meets the relevant standards. A copy of the letter must be attached to each postage statement submitted for mailings of the approved piece. If requested by the USPS, the mailer must show that pieces presented for mailing are the same as those tested and approved.

### 3.13 Labels, Stickers, and Release Cards Affixed to the Outside of Letter-Size Mailpieces

#### 3.13.1 Use

[11-29-09] A label, sticker, or release card may be placed on a letter-sized mailpiece that is eligible for automation letter prices, including barcoded carrier route letters meeting automation standards. Release cards may not be affixed to pieces mailed at First-Class Mail card prices; see 1.2 for other restrictions on attachments to cards. A Standard Mail letter with a label, sticker or release card must meet additional standards in 243.2.5. These attachments may be:

- a. A label or sticker less than 0.007 inch thick, other than repositionable notes affixed under 705.21.0, as follows:
  1. A permanent label or sticker (designed not to be removed or relocated) affixed directly to the outside of the mailpiece with permanent adhesive.
  2. A relocatable label to be placed on the outside of a reply piece, when affixed under 3.13.2 or 3.13.3.
- b. A release card, at least 0.007 inch and no more than 0.012 inch thick, secured to a letter with a liner or backing under 3.13.4.
- c. On pieces mailed at First-Class Mail, Periodicals, or Standard Mail prices, only if permitted by the applicable content and eligibility standards.

#### 3.13.2 Pressure-Sensitive Label

Any pressure-sensitive label or sticker affixed directly to a mailpiece before mailing must have a minimum peel adhesion to stainless steel of 8 ounces/inch. This standard does not apply to pressure-sensitive labels provided by the USPS to label bundles to sortation levels.



### 3.13.3 “Sandwich” Label

A face stock/liner label (“sandwich” label) is a two-part unit with a face stock (top label) attached to a liner (bottom label) affixed to the mailpiece. The face stock must have a peel adhesion value of at least 2 ounces/inch with respect to the liner label and at least 8 ounces/inch when reapplied to stainless steel.

### 3.13.4 Letter-Size Piece with Attached Release Card

[11-29-09] Mailings of letter-size mailpieces with a release card attached to the outside of each piece must include 8 pieces, as part of the mailing, addressed to “USPS Engineering—Letter Mail Technology” with the attention line: “Release Card Sample”, using the street address in 608.8.1. A letter-size mailpiece, with an attached release card, must have the following characteristics:

- a. Be between 4 and 6 inches high (inclusive) *and* between 8 and 9-1/2 inches long (inclusive).
- b. No address element, including any address block barcode, may be closer than 1-1/2 inch to the right edge of the mailpiece.
- c. The surface smoothness of all letter-size pieces must be at least 190 Sheffield Units.
- d. Enveloped letters must be made of paper with a minimum 60-pound book grade paper and have a maximum thickness of 1/8 (0.125) inch. Window envelopes must have only one closed panel address window, no larger than 1-1/2 x 4-1/4 inches.
- e. Card-type letters, not mailed at card prices, have a maximum thickness of 0.025 inch as mailed.
- f. All letter-size pieces other than enveloped letters and card-type pieces (such as folded self-mailers and booklets) have a maximum thickness of 0.10 inch as mailed.
- g. Content insert shift must be no more than 5/8 inch horizontally and no more than 1/4 inch vertically.
- h. Release cards must meet the standards in 3.13.5.

### 3.13.5 Standards for Release Cards

A release card, at least 0.007 inch thick and no more than 0.012 inch thick, attached to a letter-size mailpiece must:

- a. Be rectangular, but allowed with finished corners having a radius of at least 1/8 inch up to 1/2 inch.
- b. Be between 2 and 2-1/2 inches (inclusive) high, and between 3 and 3-1/2 inches (inclusive) long. A card may be affixed with either edge parallel to the length of the mailpiece.
- c. Be affixed by machine to ensure adequate adhesion. Manually affixed attachments are not allowed.



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- d. Be affixed, on either side, 1 inch (+/- 1/8 inch) from the bottom of the mailpiece and must not interfere with readability of the address, barcode, or postage information. The right edge of a card affixed to the back of the mailpiece must be placed between 5 and 6 inches from the leading edge of the mailpiece.
- e. Be affixed to a liner (backing) and meet the following adhesion standards:
  - 1. Adhesive used to affix the backing to the mailpiece must have a peel adhesion of at least 2 pounds/inch to stainless steel with a 20 minute dwell time, at 300"/minute at 90 degrees per ASTM test D3330F.
  - 2. Adhesive used to attach the release card to the backing must have a peel adhesion of at least 1.5 ounces/inch to stainless steel with a 30 minute conditioning time, at 300"/minute at 90 degrees per ASTM test D3330F.

### 3.14 **Folded Self-Mailers**

Except as noted in [3.14c](#), a folded self-mailer must be prepared with the folded edge parallel to the longest dimension and the address of the mailpiece. Based on the number of tabs used, these additional standards apply:

- a. With one tab or wafer seal, the folded edge must be at the bottom of the self-mailer. The tab or wafer seal must be placed in the middle of the top edge of the piece. If formed of a single folded sheet, the self-mailer must be prepared from paper with a minimum basis weight of 28 pounds (measured weight for 500 17- by 22-inch sheets) or 70 pounds (measured weight for 500 25- by 38-inch sheets). If formed of multiple folded sheets, the self-mailer must be prepared from paper with a minimum basis weight of 24 pounds (measured weight for 500 17- by 22-inch sheets) or 60 pounds (measured weight for 500 25- by 38-inch sheets).
- b. With two tabs or wafer seals, the folded edge may be at the top or bottom of the self-mailer. The two tabs or wafer seals must be placed on the open edge, opposite the folded edge. One tab or wafer seal must be placed within 1 inch of the left edge of the piece; the other, within 1 inch of the right edge of the piece. See [Exhibit 3.14b](#). The whole tab need not be placed within 1 inch of the edge. The tabs must not obscure the FIM, postage, or required address information. The folded self-mailer must be prepared from paper with a minimum basis weight of 20 pounds (measured weight for 500 17- by 22-inch sheets).



### Exhibit 3.14b Sealing the Top Edge With Fold at the Bottom



- c. In specifically identified formats, a self-mailer may have the final fold on the right side (leading edge) of the piece. The left edge (trailing edge) and other open edges must be secured with at least one tab or a glue line. The number of tabs required is determined by the final trim size and paper basis weight of the piece. If the piece is 7 inches long or more, the piece must be sealed on the top and the bottom. In all cases, additional tabs, seals, or glue spots or glue lines may be used. Newsprint paper is acceptable if the basis weight of the paper meets the minimum standards in [3.14a](#) and the piece is certified by the USPS mailpiece design analyst to be acceptable for automated processing.

## 3.15 Booklets

### 3.15.1 Definition

**[9-8-09]** Booklets must have a bound edge. Sheets that are fastened with at least two staples in the manufacturing fold (saddle stitched), perfect bound, pressed-glued, or joined together by another binding method that produces an end where pages are attached together are considered booklets. Booklets are open on three sides before sealing, similar in design to a book. In general, booklets must be uniformly thick. Large bound booklets that are folded for mailing qualify for automation and machinable prices if the final mailpiece remains nearly uniform in thickness.

### 3.15.2 Paper

**[9-8-09]** Booklet covers generally must be made with a minimum paper basis weight of 60-pounds or equivalent. Minimum basis weights are higher for some designs (see [3.15.4](#)).

### 3.15.3 Physical Standards for Booklets

**[9-8-09]** Booklets must be:

- Height: not more than 6 inches or less than 3.5 inches high.
- Length: not more than 10.5 inches or less than 5 inches long. See [Exhibit 3.15.5](#) through [Exhibit 3.15.8](#) for some booklet designs with shorter maximum lengths.
- Thickness: not more than 0.25 inch or less than 0.009 inch thick.



201.3.15.4

- d. Weight: not more than 3 ounces.
- e. Aspect ratio: within 1.3 to 2.5 (see [3.1](#)).

### **3.15.4 General Booklet Design and Sealing**

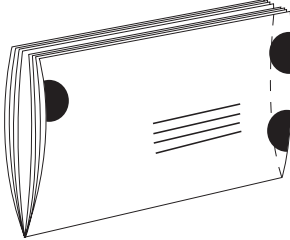
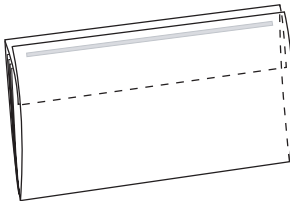
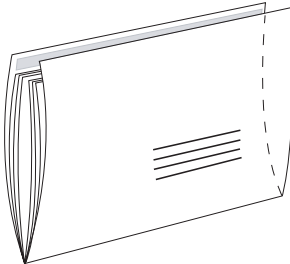
[\[4-5-10\]](#) [\[10-5-09\]](#) [\[9-8-09\]](#) The position of the final fold and intermediate fold (or spine) for letter-sized booklets varies according to the specific design of the mailpiece. Open edges can be sealed with tabs, glue lines, or glue spots. Except for the simple spine wallet-style design with a height of 4 inches and a maximum length of 8 inches; tabs used as seals on the leading edge of small booklets less than 5 inches high, may be placed closer to the top and bottom edges than shown in [Exhibit 3.15.5](#) through [Exhibit 3.15.8](#) and may overlap in some cases. See [Exhibit 3.15.5](#) through [Exhibit 3.15.8](#) for design and sealing standards by type of design.



**3.15.5 Simple Spine**

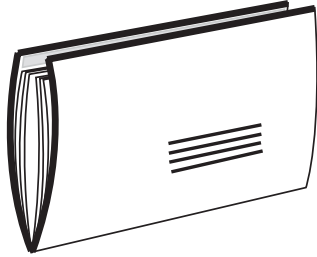
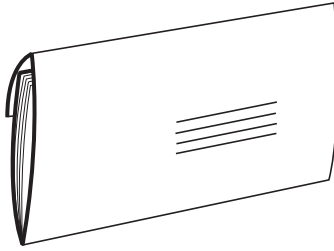
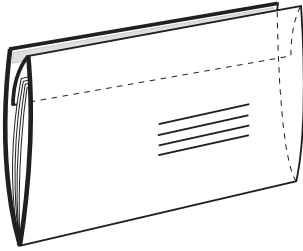
[4-5-10] The spine forms the bottom edge of the mailpiece. The length or method used to seal the booklet determines the weight of the paper forming the cover. Unless otherwise noted, the cover must be at least 70-pound paper.

**Exhibit 3.15.5 Simple Spine Booklets**

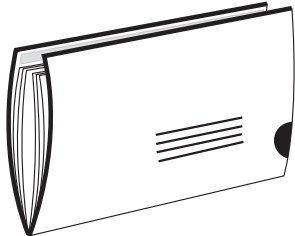
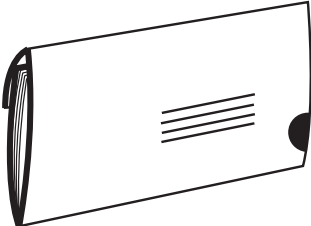
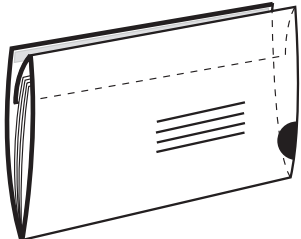
<b>SIMPLE SPINE BOOKLETS</b> Maximum weight—3 ounces Maximum height—6 inches Maximum length—9.5 inches unless noted Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a>	
<p>Basic</p> 	<p>Cover:                      5" to 9" long at least 50-pound paper                      Over 9" up to 10.5" at least 60-pound paper</p> <p>Place one tab on the leading and trailing edge within 1" from the top; position one tab on the lower leading edge 0.5" from the bottom. Use nonperforated 1.5" tabs.</p>
<p>Internal Flap</p> 	<p>Cover:                      Minimum 80-pound paper</p> <p>Extended front folded over enclosed pages to create a nonperforated inner flap. Flap sealed inside of back cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line along flap as described in 3.11g (preferred), or 1-inch glue spots as described in <a href="#">3.11f</a>.</p>
<p>Cover-to-Cover</p> 	<p>Cover:                      Minimum 80-pound paper</p> <p>Cover extends no more than 5/8 inch beyond inner pages.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line along extended cover as described in 3.11g (preferred), or with 1-inch glue spots as described in <a href="#">3.11f</a>.</p>



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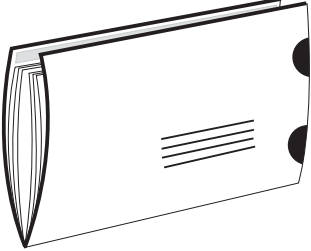
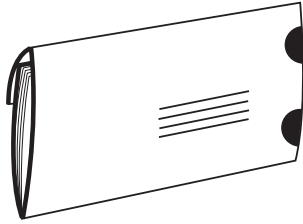
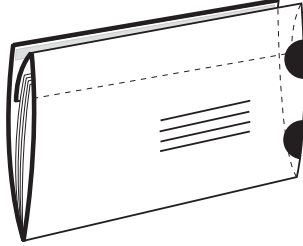
<b>LIGHTWEIGHT SIMPLE SPINE BOOKLETS</b> Maximum weight—0.8 ounce Maximum height—6 inches Maximum length—10.5 inches Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a>	
<p>Cover-to-Cover</p> 	<p>Cover extends no more than 5/8 inch beyond inner pages.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in <a href="#">3.11h</a>.</p>
<p>External Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over all pages on the back to create a flap.</p> <p>Flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge. May be longer, but cannot be closer than 1-inch from bottom edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the outside of the nonaddressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in <a href="#">3.11h</a>.</p>
<p>Internal Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over internal pages to create an inside flap.</p> <p>Flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the inside of the nonaddressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in <a href="#">3.11h</a>.</p>



<b>MID-WEIGHT SIMPLE SPINE BOOKLETS</b> Weight—over 0.8 ounce up to 1.6 ounces Maximum height—6 inches Maximum length—10.5 inches Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a>	
<p>Cover-to-Cover</p> 	<p>Cover extends no more than 5/8 inch beyond inner pages.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h, and one nonperforated tab 0.5 inch from the bottom leading edge. Minimum tab size: 1.5 inches.</p>
<p>External Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over all pages on the back to create a flap.</p> <p>Flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge. May be longer, but cannot be closer than 1-inch from bottom edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the outside of the nonaddressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h, and one nonperforated tab 0.5 inch from the bottom leading edge. Minimum tab size: 1.5 inches.</p>
<p>Internal Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over internal pages to create a flap.</p> <p>Flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the inside of the non-addressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h, and one nonperforated tab 0.5 inch from the bottom leading edge. Minimum tab size: 1.5 inches.</p>



201.3.15.5

<b>HEAVY WEIGHT SIMPLE SPINE BOOKLETS</b>	
<p>Weight—over 1.6 ounces up to 3 ounces            Maximum height—6 inches            Maximum length—10.5 inches            Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless otherwise noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a></p>	
<p>Cover-to-Cover</p> 	<p>Cover extends no more than 5/8 inch beyond inner pages.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h and two 1.5" nonperforated tabs. One tab placed on the leading edge 0.5 inches from bottom and one tab placed 1-inch from top leading edge.</p>
<p>External Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over all pages on the back to create a flap.</p> <p>Flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge. May be longer, but cannot be closer than 1 inch from bottom edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the outside of the nonaddressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h and two 1.5" nonperforated tabs. One tab placed on the leading edge 0.5 inches from bottom and one tab placed 1-inch from top leading edge.</p>
<p>Internal Flap</p> 	<p>Addressed side of the cover extends over internal pages to create a flap.</p> <p>Minimum flap length: at least 1.5" wide when measured down from the top edge.</p> <p>Flap attaches to the inside of the non-addressed side of the cover.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h and two 1.5" nonperforated tabs. One tab placed on the leading edge 0.5 inches from bottom and one tab placed 1-inch from top leading edge.</p>



**3.15.6 Wallet Style Booklets**

[4-5-10] A spine forms the bottom edge. Wallet style booklets must be from 5.2 inches to 8 inches long, 4 inches high; can weigh up to 2.5 ounces; and must be sealed with nonperforated tabs. Tab size and placement are dictated by the weight of the booklet.

**Exhibit 3.15.6 Wallet Style Booklets**

<p><b>WALLET STYLE BOOKLETS</b>                  Maximum weight—2.5 ounces                  Height—4 inches                  Maximum length—5.2 to 8 inches                  Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless otherwise noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a></p>	
	<p>Cover:                  Entire booklet 60-pound paper, <b>OR</b>                  Cover 70-pound paper, inner pages 50-pound paper.</p> <p>Booklets up to 2 ounces: sealed with 1.5" nonperforated tabs placed 1-1/4" from bottom leading and trailing edge.                  Over 2 ounces: use 2" nonperforated tabs placed 3/4" from bottom leading and trailing edge.</p> <p>±1/8" vertical tolerance for tab placement in both cases.</p>

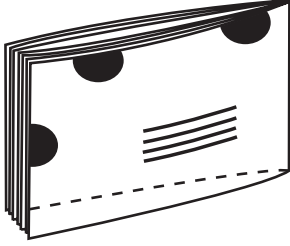
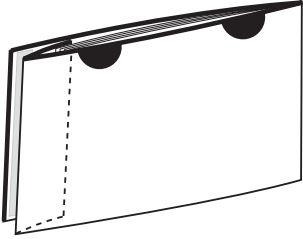


201.3.15.7

### 3.15.7 Oblong Booklets

[4-5-10] Oblong booklets have a spine on the leading (shorter) edge.

#### Exhibit 3.15.7 Oblong Booklets

<b>OBLONG BOOKLETS</b> Maximum weight—3 ounces Maximum height—6 inches Maximum length—10.5 inches Cover paper weight—minimum 70-pound paper unless otherwise noted: see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a>	
<p>All Tab</p> 	<p>Cover: 5" to 9" long: 60-pound paper Over 9" up to 10.5": 70-pound paper</p> <p>Place two 1.5" nonperforated tabs on the top edge and one tab on trailing edge. Position top tabs 1-inch from left and right edges. Position one 1.5" nonperforated tab in the middle of the trailing edge.</p>
<p>Internal Flap</p> 	<p>Cover: 5" to 9" long 60-pound paper Over 9" up to 10.5" 70-pound paper</p> <p>The front <b>OR</b> back cover sheet is extended on the trailing edge and folded over the non-recessed internal pages. The flap is sealed inside the opposite cover sheet with glue. Extended front and back covers are not allowed with glue line seals.</p> <p>Seal with a continuous glue line as described in 3.11h. Place two 1.5" nonperforated tabs on the top edge 1-inch from the leading and trailing edges.</p>



**3.15.8 Folded Booklets**

[4-5-10] Folded booklets are large mailpieces that are bound and then folded to letter-size. The final fold must be the bottom (longer) edge. The folded spine should be the leading edge, however, if necessary, the spine may be prepared as the trailing edge. The spine on the trailing edge configuration is not recommended. The cover is at least 40-pound paper. Folded booklets must be sealed with nonperforated 1.5" tabs.

**Exhibit 3.15.8 Folded Booklets**

<p><b>FOLDED BOOKLETS</b>                  Maximum weight—3 ounces                  Maximum height—6 inches                  Maximum length—10.5 inches unless noted                  Cover paper weight—minimum 40-pound paper see <a href="#">Exhibit 3.2</a></p>	
<p>The diagram shows a perspective view of a folded booklet. It is a rectangular block with a central spine. An arrow points to the spine with the label 'SPINE'. Another arrow points to a fold line on the front cover with the label 'SECOND FOLD'. The booklet is shown with several pages visible on the left side.</p>	<p>Two 1.5" nonperforated tabs on leading edge and one tab on trailing edge. Position upper tabs within 1-inch from the top edge. Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from the bottom edge.</p>

**3.16 Postcard**

Any postcard must be prepared from paper stock meeting the industry standard for a basis weight of 75 pounds or greater, with none less than 71.25 pounds (measured weight for 500 25- by 38-inch sheets). The stock must be free from groundwood unless coated with a substance adding to the stock's ability to resist an applied bending force. A double postcard not prepared with all edges sealed must have the folded edge at the top or bottom, and the open edge parallel to the address must be secured with one tab (or other permitted closure) in the middle of the length. Pieces claimed at First-Class Mail automation card prices also must meet the standards in 1.2.

**3.17 Enclosed Reply Cards and Envelopes**

**3.17.1 Basic Standard**

All letter-size reply cards and envelopes (business reply mail (BRM), courtesy reply mail (CRM), and meter reply mail (MRM)) provided as enclosures in automation First-Class Mail, Periodicals, and Standard Mail and addressed for return to a domestic delivery address must meet the applicable standards for automation-compatible mail in 3.0. The mailer's signature on the postage statement certifies that this standard, and the standards listed below, have been met when the corresponding mail is presented to the USPS:

- a. Each reply piece must include the appropriate facing identification mark (FIM) under 708.9.0, *Facing Identification Mark (FIM)*.



201.3.17.2

- b. Each BRM piece must bear the correct BRM ZIP+4 barcode; each MRM and CRM piece must bear the correct barcode for the delivery address, subject to [202.5.0, Barcode Placement](#).
- c. Each BRM piece must meet any applicable standard under [507.9.0](#); each MRM piece must meet any applicable standard under [604.4.0, Postage Meters and PC Postage Products \("Postage Evidencing Systems"\)](#); and each CRM piece as defined in [3.17.2](#) must meet the standards of this section.

### **3.17.2 Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM)**

For these standards, courtesy reply mail (CRM) is reply mail other than BRM or MRM enclosed in other mail, with or without prepayment of postage, for return to the address on the reply piece. If postage is required, the customer returning the piece affixes the applicable First-Class Mail postage. Each piece must meet the physical standards in [1.0](#) or [2.0](#). CRM has no additional required design standards unless enclosed in automation mail.