

Are you working on designing a mail piece? We have put together some basic information regarding size, paper and address location to ensure your piece meets US Postal Service regulations. It is always suggested that once you have come up with a proof, fax it to Mail Service at 491-5012 for review, as we can often spot issues and work with you to resolve them before it is too late! If you have questions when reviewing this information, call Korina or Andrea at 491-6709 or 491-6142 and we will be happy to assist you!

Letter Mail Dimensions

Dimension	Minimum	Maximum
Height	3 1/2"	6 1/8"
Length*	5"	11 1/2"
Thickness	0.007"	1/4"

*The length is the same direction as the delivery address

The following standards also apply to letter-size mail:

- Letter-size mail length is the dimension that parallels the delivery address.
- The top and bottom of the mail piece also parallel the delivery address.
- Letter-size mail must be at least 0.009 inch thick if it is more than 4 ¼ inches high or more than 6 inches long.
- The aspect ratio (length of the mail piece divided by height) must be between 1.3 and 2.5 inclusive.
- Cards that measure more than 4 ¼ inches high, 6 inches long, or 0.016 inch thick are charged postage at the First-Class Mail letter rates.

Folded Self-Mailers

The required minimum basis weight of paper for folded self-mailers varies with the construction of the mail pieces as follows:

With one tab or wafer seal: folded edge at bottom of mail piece, tab or wafer seal in middle of top edge of mail piece.

Single folded sheet, sealed with one tab or wafer seal, minimum basis weight: 28 pounds (17 by 22 inches by 500 sheets) or 70 pounds (25 by 38 inches by 500 sheets). Two or more sheets, sealed with one tab or wafer seal, minimum basis weight: 24 pounds (17 by 22 inches by 500 sheets) or 60 pounds (25 by 38 inches by 500 sheets).

With two tabs or wafer seals: minimum basis weight 20 pounds (17 by 22 inches by 500 sheets) if folded edge is at top or bottom of the mail piece. Tabs or wafer seals must be placed within 1 inch of the right and left edges of mail piece (see reverse).

US Postal Service equipment works best if mail pieces are printed on white or light-colored paper with the fold at the bottom. Dark and fluorescent papers are unacceptable, as are papers with dark fibers. Mail pieces printed with halftone screens should be checked by Mail Service prior to using. Avoid using textured paper, as the texture adversely affects print quality by causing broken characters or smudges. Slick, glossy stock is not recommended as these items smear easily and can be rejected by the US Postal Service. If you must use a coated stock, please request a Matte or Dull, such as LX Velvet or LX Gloss.

Cards

Thickness, stiffness, and tear strength are the most important compatibility characteristics for cards. The minimum thickness is 0.007 inch. The minimum required basis weight for card stock is 75 pounds, with none less than 71.25 pounds (measured weight of 500 25-by-38-inch sheets). The grain of cards should be oriented parallel to the long dimension of the card. Long-grain cards are less likely to jam postal automated equipment than are cards with the grain parallel to the short dimension of the card. Cards larger than 4 ¼ inches by 6 inches should be produced from stock with a higher basis weight, using one of the following recommended papers:

80-pound vellum bristol (weight of 500 22 ½ -by-28 ½ -inch sheets).

90-pound index (weight of 500 25 ½ -by-30 ½ -inch sheets).

120-pound offset (weight of 500 25-by-38-inch sheets).

100-pound tag (weight of 500 24-by-36-inch sheets).

When preparing postcards with perforations, it is recommended that the perf-to-bridge ratio be 1:1. A typical perforation is from 0.1 inch to 0.2 inch. Vertical perforations in the center area of the card are not recommended. It is imperative that all cards be printed on the same weight of paper and be cut to identical size.

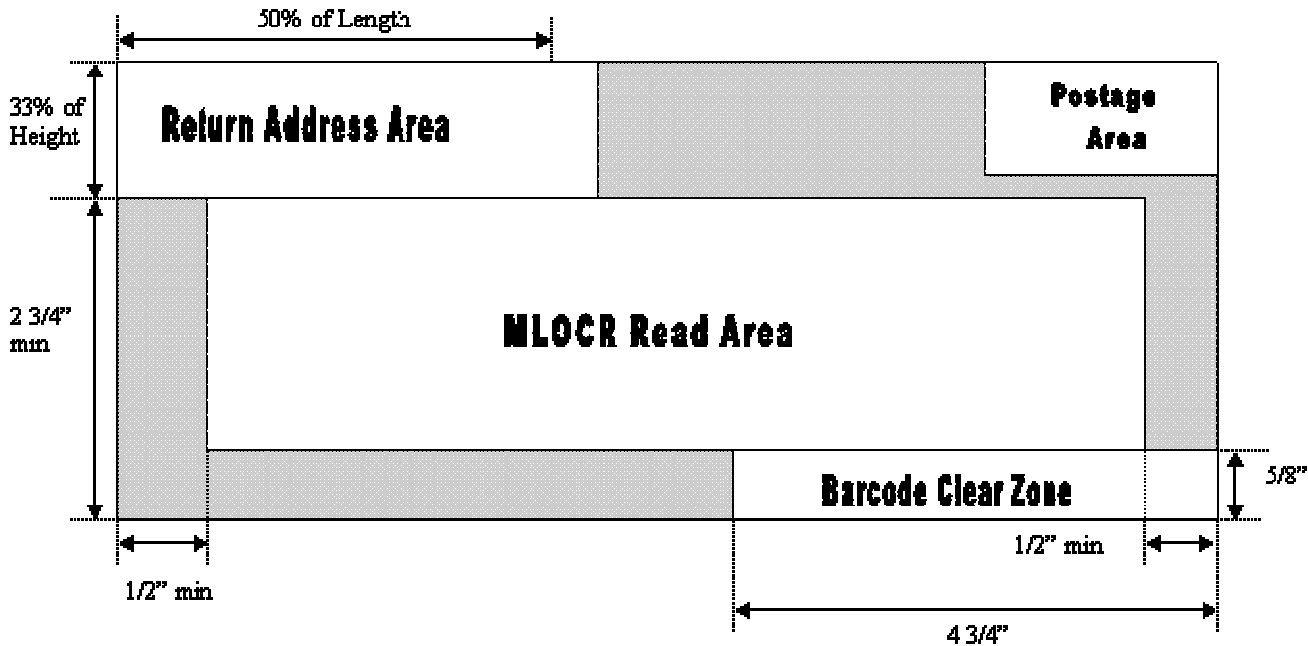
Mail Piece Clear Zones & Addressing

Several places on the address side of a mail piece are reserved for addressing and related information only. These areas are the MLOCR read area, the barcode clear zone, and the return address area. Mail pieces addressed by Addressing Service must have a minimum clear space of 4 inches wide by 2 inches high to accommodate the postnet barcode and 4 address lines.

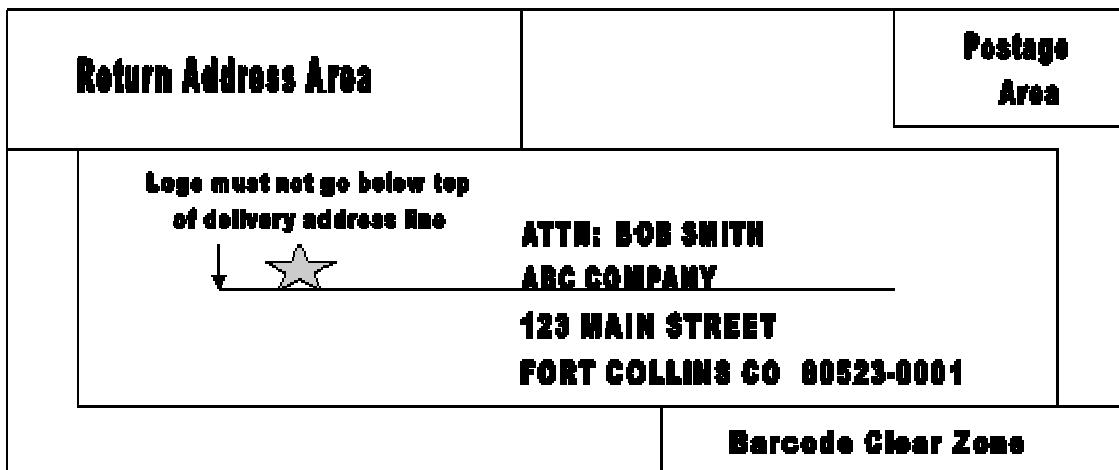
The entire address (except the optional lines above the recipient line) should appear within an imaginary rectangle that extends from 5/8 inch to 2 3/4 inches from the bottom edge of the mail piece, with 1/2 -inch margins on the left and right sides. This is the requirement for any letter-size mail piece. For pieces longer than 10 1/2 inches, the address should begin no more than 9 3/4 inches from the right edge.

The area available for non-address printing increases as the address information is lowered in the MLOCR read area. Positioning the address block near the bottom of the MLOCR read area gives you the most free space for logos, advertising, and other non-address printing. If you barcode, even more space is available.

Mail piece clear zones (unshaded), for pieces up to 10 1/2 inches long



Extraneous (non-address) printing in the MLOCR read area can confuse MLOCR scanners and prevent them from interpreting the address information correctly. This can cause them to reject the mail piece. Non-address printing such as company logos, advertising, and die cuts should not be placed within the MLOCR read area. If it is, the lowest point must be above the delivery address line. In other words, within the MLOCR read area, you should keep the space on either side of and below the delivery address line clear of all printing.



Because type faces that have no serifs (called “sans serif” faces) are more easily read by MLOCRs, these styles are recommended for printing the delivery address. As a rule, do not use fonts defined as bold, extended, or condensed. Also, do not use italic, highly stylized, or script-like fonts. The recommended type size is 10 to 12 points for maximum MLOCR recognition.