



POSTAL NEWS

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POSTAL SERVICE SEEKS ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PROPOSED MAILING STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Postal Service is seeking additional comments on plans to revise its mailing standards to encourage mail preparation that is compatible with improved Postal Service processing capabilities. This is the second opportunity to comment on and make suggestions for the proposed mailing standards, which have been revised as a result of comments and suggestions made during the previous comment period.

The new standards, scheduled to accompany the proposed price adjustments in May, give customers more choices in terms of shape, sorting, packaging and containers that encourage more efficient mail preparation.

Highlights of the revised mailing standards include the following:

Relaxed Standards for Automation Flats

- Relaxed Flexibility Test – administered by pressing 1 inch from the edge of the piece instead of 1 inch from the edge of the table. This new test is more forgiving of flats with rigid inserts. Typical bound publications and catalogs do not need to be tested when they are not in a box and do not contain rigid inserts.
- Relaxed/Clarified Definition of Uniform Thickness – allow a variation of up to one-quarter inch in thickness, not counting selvage.
- Relaxed Deflection Test – allow pieces to droop to within 1 inch of length, up to a maximum of 4 inches, instead of 4 inches for pieces greater than 10 inches long and 2 inches for pieces less than 10 inches long.

Relaxed Standards and New Payment Option for Periodicals Container Charge

- Proposed to waive the container charge for direct carrier route, 5-digit carrier routes, and 5-digit containers of mixed Outside-County and In-County pieces.

- Proposed a new option to pay the container charge by prorating it across multiple titles in a combined mailing if documentation is submitted through Mail.dat.

Relaxed Standards and Easier Preparation for Letters

- Allowed mailers to apply the no-overflow tray option selectively at the 3-digit and Automated Area Distribution Center (AADC) tray levels.
- Extended the “no bundling” standards to all automated carrier route letters, not just the letters we sorted in delivery point sequence.

Comments on the proposal are being accepted through Jan. 31, 2007. Send written comments to the Manager of Mailing Standards, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L’Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3436, Washington, DC 20260-3436. The complete *Federal Register* notice on the revised proposal is available at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frcont07.html.

In February 2007, the Postal Service will publish an additional *Federal Register* notice incorporating comments from this proposal. The updated notice will provide a comprehensive view of the final proposal at least a month before the Postal Service Governors vote on the adjusted prices to ensure mailers have adequate time to prepare for the new standards and prices.

Since 1775, the United States Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency that visits more than 146 million homes and businesses every day, the Postal Service is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. It receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$72 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 213 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 10 million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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