

Mailers. Companion



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2001

Understanding Confirmation Services

The Postal Service's confirmation services are valuable to mailers who need to know when and to whom their mailing was delivered. Use these descriptions to help you decide which services are best for you:

Delivery Confirmation™

This low-cost service provides the date and time of delivery (attempted delivery, forwards and returns) for Priority Mail, Package Services and, as of January 7, 2001, Standard Mail parcels.

Customers can check the Internet or call a toll-free number to "confirm" the information. The service began in March 1999.

Signature Confirmation™

This new, enhanced proof of delivery service provides all the benefits of Delivery Confirmation — and more. Along with delivery information, the recipient's name and signature are captured and stored by the Postal Service.

Customers can request that a copy of the signed delivery record be faxed or mailed to them by calling a toll-free number or by making the request via the Internet.

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Postal Service Puts Its Signature On Confirmation of Delivery

Signature Confirmation Service Adds Value to Delivery Options

What is a signature worth? A lot when it tells you who accepted your delivery. Signature Confirmation, the Postal Service's new proof of delivery service, is now available for Priority Mail and Package Services, giving customers all the advantages of Delivery Confirmation — and more!

Now customers can get signature proof of delivery upon request, as well as quick and easy access to enhanced delivery information. Along with delivery information, the recipient's signature is captured and stored electronically by the Postal Service.

By visiting the Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com or calling a toll-free number, you can request that a copy of the signed delivery record be mailed or faxed to you. The response letter contains an actual image of the recipient's signature, along with the delivery date, time and destination.



With Signature Confirmation's enhanced delivery information, you also get the recipient's data-entered first initial and last name when you access delivery information on the Internet or receive it in an electronic file. Thus, you get another level of security and peace of mind by knowing who signed for your package.

As with Delivery Confirmation, there is a retail option and an electronic option. Signature Confirmation must be purchased at the time of mailing. The retail rate is \$1.75 for both Priority Mail and Package Services. Retail customers will use PS Form 153, the hot-pink Signature Confirmation label.

There also is an electronic option available for only \$1.25 for customers who can send and receive information electronically. They can opt to use postal printed labels or print their own black-and-white barcoded labels. In addition, Signature Confirmation service can be combined with our Insured, Registered, Special Handling and COD special services.

Publication 91, *Confirmation Services Technical Guide*, contains complete information on the electronic option. To view it, visit the Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com and enter the keyword, "Pub 91." More general and retail information also is available when you type in the keyword, "Signature Confirmation."

— Beth Fluto, Expedited/Package Services, Information Systems

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Fewer Global Categories Means Easier Decisions for Customers

If mailing internationally has presented you with headaches when you tried to decide what services you needed, fret no more.

The Postal Service has delivered a timely remedy with the recent restructuring of its international services.

As a result, customers now have simple choices when they mail their international letters and packages.

Instead of a content-based system, which charged the customer based on what was inside the mailpiece, the system has changed to reflect speed-based pricing.

"Traditionally, we classified international mail by content — with over a dozen ways to send a four-pound package," explained International Business Vice President James P. Wade.

"Simplified product offerings now make it easier for everybody — our customers and our employees."

Outbound international postal products and services represent about \$1.4 billion in annual USPS revenue.

The rate adjustments reflect changes in foreign delivery charges (terminal dues) that were adopted by the Universal Postal Union and became effective January 1.

The simplified structure has resulted in five levels of international service — Global Express Guaranteed (GXG), Global Express Mail (GEM),

Global Priority Mail (GPM), Global Airmail (Letter-post and Parcel Post) and Global Economy, which provides surface service (Letter-post and Parcel Post).

According to Wade, these product offerings are easy to understand, which will help mailers more easily choose the right service.

For instance, Global Airmail has only two subcategories: Letter-post and Parcel Post. Other distinctions, such as small packets, printed matter, sheet music and books will be incorporated into the Letter-post service.

And the half-ounce rate is eliminated for Letter-post, making the starting weight the same as domestic — one ounce.

For customers who used printed matter rates for books, sheet music and related merchandise samples, the M-Bag option is now offered with no minimum weight restrictions. (An M-Bag is a single mail bag which can hold up to 66 pounds and can be sent to one addressee only.)

The Global Economy Letter-post rate begins at one pound and the Parcel Post rate begins at five pounds.

These starting rates reflect the costs attributed to Economy service that would price Economy rates above



Global Airmail at the lower weight levels.

Two outdated and rarely used special services have also been eliminated: Special Delivery and Special Handling.

For commercial services, International Surface Air Lift (ISAL) is now available to Canada, replacing the current VALUEPOST/CANADA service.

The number of rate groups for ISAL increase from four to eight and include a separate rate group for Canada.

Under the speed-based classification system, all ISAL and International Priority Airmail (IPA) items are classified as Letter-post and must conform to those size and weight limits.

Items in excess of four pounds are not mailable as Letter-post. However, printed matter items weighing more than 4 pounds are mailable as M-Bags, subject to a minimum 11-pound charge.

In addition, the number of rate groups for IPA will expand from five to eight.

Customers can learn more about the international rate structure by visiting the Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com.

Service	Guaranteed Delivery Date	Tracking	Insurance Included	Expedited Handling
Global Express Guaranteed™*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Express Mail™		✓	✓	✓
Global Priority Mail™				✓
Global Airmail™				

Global Express Guaranteed™*

Date-certain delivery gets your shipments overseas on the specified date or we will refund the full amount of your postage.* Service available to over 200 countries and territories. Ship up to 70 lbs.

Global Express Mail™

Ship to over 180 countries and territories. Ship up to 70 lbs.

Global Priority Mail®

Available to over 50 countries and territories. Ship up to 4 lbs.

Global Airmail™

Delivery to almost anywhere in the world. Letter-post rates start at 1 oz. and go up to 4 lbs. (includes letters, letter packages, small packets, books and printed matter). Parcel Post® rates start at 1 lb. and go up to 70 lbs.

Global Economy™ (surface)

When speed isn't a concern, get affordable shipping to almost anywhere in the world. Letter-post rates start at 1 lb. and go up to 4 lbs. (includes letters, letter packages, small packets, books and printed matter). Parcel Post® rates start at 5 lbs. and go up to 70 lbs.

Visit www.usps.com for more information on global shipping services

* Some restrictions apply. See retail associate at participating locations for complete list of countries and guarantee details.

Understanding Confirmation Services

— continued from cover

Customers also can view the recipient's first initial and last name on the Internet or in their electronic file. This service was made available in February.



Signature Capture

The Postal Service's internal process for capturing, storing and retrieving delivery records, converting system from hard copy to an electronic format. Implemented July 2000, it is used for all signature items.

Confirmation Services Retail Option

This is available at all post offices, stations, branches and contract units. Customers use a form that has a barcoded label and a detachable mailing receipt. Retail customers can access delivery information by calling a toll-free number or making an inquiry through the Internet.

Electronic Option

This is for certified customers who establish an electronic link with the Postal Service to send and receive acceptance and delivery information data. They can use postal printed labels or print their own black-and-white barcoded labels.

Delivery Confirmation Fees

Retail option is \$0.40 for Priority Mail and \$0.50 for Package Services.

For electronic option customers there is no charge for Priority Mail and there is a fee of \$0.12 (reduced from \$0.25) for Package Services and Standard Mail.

Signature Confirmation Fees

Retail option is \$1.75 for both Priority Mail and Package Services. Electronic option is \$1.25 for both Priority Mail and Package Services.

— Beth Fluto,
Expedited/Package Services,
Information Systems

Postal Service Web Site Provides Busy Mailers Convenient Shopping And Shipping Solutions

Managers of mailing operations often are so busy taking care of company mailings that they don't have time to buy stamps for their personal use.

If this scenario sounds a little too familiar to you, then cybershopping is a great solution.

The Postal Store at www.usps.com brings the speed and convenience of secure online shopping to customers seeking to buy postage and other postal products.

Mailers too busy to visit their local post office can browse the virtual aisles for stamps and philatelic items, phonecards, stamp-theme stationery and USPS Pro Cycling Team gear.



This service is not only convenient, but it is free. The supplies are sent at no additional charge.

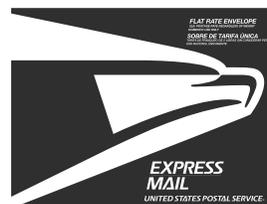
For customers who regularly use Priority Mail but don't have postage meters, Priority Mail 10 Packs are a great solution.

Available by calling 1-800-THE-USPS, ext.

1323, the packs are priced at \$39.50 (the cost of postage). Customers will receive 10 Flat Rate Priority Mail envelopes ready for mailing.

The Flat Rate allows you to ship a package of any weight for just \$3.95 (provided the shipment doesn't expand the envelope beyond its normal design).

If your priority is e-commerce, visit www.usps.com and enter the keyword "web tool kit" for more information.



Free shipping tubes, envelopes and boxes for Express Mail and other USPS products can be ordered online.

The Web site's secure shopping cart function features immediate calculation of shipping and handling charges and credit card processing. Orders are processed within 24 hours, and delivery is made within 3 to 5 days ... by Priority Mail, of course.

Ordering Shipping Supplies Online

Customers can order Priority Mail, Express Mail, Global Priority Mail and Global Express Guaranteed shipping supplies at www.usps.com; enter the keyword "supplies."



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Anita Bizzotto
Vice President
Pricing & Product Design

Connie Totten-Oldham
Manager
Pricing & Classification Implementation

Bill Halstead
Gloria Cundiff
Editors

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Improved Process For Identifying Mail Irregularities Provides Mailers Better Feedback On Problems

When mail arrives at postal facilities in poor condition such as broken bundles, loose in sacks, or on poorly constructed pallets, the results can be costly for the Postal Service and mailers.

For the Postal Service, the problems can ultimately lead to delivery delays caused by extra handling requirements for improperly prepared mail.

For mailers, costs associated with the increased handling can be reflected in rates. And if service performance is less than optimal, the mailing industry is faced with dissatisfied customers.

For many years, postal managers have been required to report mail irregularities to mailers as a means to help identify preparation processes that are leading to the problems.

And to ensure that its systems are not contributing to bundle breakage and other damage to mail while in transit, the Postal Service has been examining its operating environment in recent years.

With the problems impacting costs and service performance expectations for both the Postal Service and the mailing industry, the Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) has become intimately involved in developing solutions.

MTAC work groups have been examining factors contributing to bundle breakage and the condition of poorly sacked, trayed and palletized mail when it arrives at destination facilities.

The groups also have focused on improving the process of alerting mailers to mail preparation problems.

One solution has been the redesign of the Postal Service's Form 3749, *Mail Irregularity Report*. The new version is a "user-friendly," 5.5" x 8" two-part form.

In addition to bundle breakage, the revised form will be used to report serious quality issues such as unreadable barcodes, carrier route out of sequence and mislabeled trays.



New condensed forms (opposite page) used by postal employees to report mail irregularities are a result of efforts to streamline the reporting process and provide better feedback to mailers.

To ensure that there is proper followup, procedures also have been revised to include a Form 3749-D to report the disposition of the mail irregularity report.

Here's how the process works: When a postal employee identifies an irregularity, a Form 3749 is completed describing the nature of the problem and is returned to the office of mailing.

The office originating the Form 3749 will maintain a file including any supporting information on the nature of the irregularity, such as photocopies of the mailpiece and labels.

When the irregularity report is received by the post office of mailing or known office of publication for Periodicals, a Form 3749-D will be completed to summarize the investigation and resolution of the issue. A copy of the Form 3749-D will be returned to the originator of the irregularity report.

If the identified irregularity is traceable to mail preparation, the mailer will be notified and the appropriate Business Mail Entry Units (BMEUs) will be alerted to monitor future mailings presented by the mailer.

During the revamping of the process, focus groups commented that feedback to the originator of the Form 3749 is essential.

The Postal Service has responded by requiring the responsible postal managers to record information regarding the investigation and resolution of the irregularity in a "mailer quality folder" and to respond to the originator through the Form 3749-D.

It also is suggested that the "mailer quality folders" be maintained in Business Mail Entry Units or Quality Improvement offices. This new process began this month and instructions to postal managers were published in *Postal Bulletin 22043* (2/8/01).

Mailing industry organizations have reported they are encouraged that the Postal Service is taking steps to streamline the reporting process and building accountability in the system.

Postal managers are equally as encouraged and expect the new process to result in a more effective system for alerting mailers and originating units to problems affecting mail quality.

—*Business Mail Acceptance, Marketing Technology and Channel Mgt.*

United States Postal Service
Mail Irregularity Report

No.

Instructions: 1 - Print firmly. 2 - Keep top copy at originating office/plant. 3 - Enter address on the back of the card and mail.

Name and Title of Originator		Office/Plant Address (No., street, city, state, ZIP + 4)	
Work Location/Tour		Phone Number (Include area code)	Date
Name and Address of Mailer (No., street, city, state, ZIP + 4)		Name and Address of Mail Preparer, if Known (No., street, city, state, ZIP + 4)	

Class of Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Express Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Standard Mail <input type="checkbox"/> First-Class <input type="checkbox"/> Periodicals <input type="checkbox"/> Package Services	Quantities Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces <input type="checkbox"/> Trays <input type="checkbox"/> Pallets <input type="checkbox"/> Bundles <input type="checkbox"/> Sacks <input type="checkbox"/> Pounds Total Received _____ Total Sampled _____	Description of Error(s) To finalize the Mail Irregularity Report process, complete and return Form 3749-D, <i>Disposition of Mail Irregularity Report</i> , to the originator.
Processing Category <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular Parcel <input type="checkbox"/> Outside Parcel (NMO) <input type="checkbox"/> Flat (Nonletter) <input type="checkbox"/> Machinable Parcel (NMO)	Method of Postage Payment <input type="checkbox"/> Permit Imprint Permit No., City, State or Company Name <input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive Stamp <input type="checkbox"/> Precanceled Stamp <input type="checkbox"/> Meter/Meter Tape Postage Meter No., City, State, ZIP Code <input type="checkbox"/> Franked/Official Mail	

PS Form **3749**, November, 2000

United States Postal Service
Disposition of Mail Irregularity Report

Instructions: 1 - Print firmly. 2 - Keep top copy at originating office/plant. 3 - Enter address on the back of the card and mail.

Name and Title of Originator		Date	No.
Office/Plant Address (No., street, city, state, ZIP + 4)			
Name of Person Contacted		Title of Person Contacted	
Date and Time of Contact		Contact Made by: <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interview <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Written Notification	
Corrective Instructions and/or Action Issued			
Additional Information/Comments			
Printed Name		Title	
Signature		Date	Telephone No.

PS Form **3749-D**, November 2000

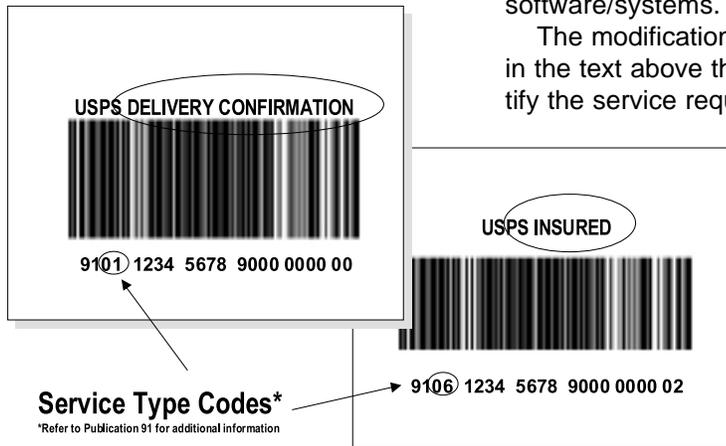
Smarter Barcodes Allow Combination Of Special Services on Single Label

The U.S. Postal Service has just made it easier for shippers who print their own black-and-white labels to purchase insurance — alone or combined with Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation services.

Until now, mailers were required to apply individual labels and/or barcodes for each additional special service requested, which caused size and space problems and added labor costs for manually applying multiple labels. Customers asked for a fix.

“The need to make special service barcodes carry more information was obvious,” noted Julie Rios, manager, Information Systems, Expedited/Package Services.

The answer? An integrated barcoding solution that combines services into a single barcode — as



well as barcoding for insurance service alone.

Now, shippers can print the barcode directly on their shipping label and eliminate the need for additional insurance labels.

Customers will find that the new barcoding option, like Signature Confirmation, easily merges with current Delivery Confirmation software/systems.

The modifications include changes in the text above the barcode to identify the service requested and in the service-type code in the barcode.

Complete information is in Publication 91, *Confirmation Services Technical Guide*. The most current version is on the Postal Service

Web site at www.usps.com; enter the keyword “Pub 91.”

— Beth Fluto,
Expedited/Package Services,
Information Systems

Space Makes Sense In ACS Key Line Of Mailing Labels

Notice anything different about your address label on *Mailer's Companion*? Look closely at the ACS key line, that line of numbers directly above your name. There's something new there — a blank space after every four characters.

This change benefits both mailers and the Postal Service. USPS employees won't have to key 16-character strings of numbers. Mailers get improved turnaround times.

Instead of a long string of numbers with no breaks: #1234567890123456#, the ACS key line now looks like this — #1234 5678 9012 3456#.

“The spaces between the groups of four numbers will help improve the speed and accuracy of keying efforts by our Computerized Forwarding System staff,” explained Jim Wilson, Manager, Move Update Programs.

“This will improve readability, and human memory generally is more efficient when dealing with shorter chunks of data.”

DMM News: Using Optional Endorsement Lines for Carrier Route Periodicals

As of January 7, 2001, all basic carrier route rate Periodicals must be in line-of-travel sequence.

To implement this change, *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) M013.1.1 was revised to show a new optional endorsement line for packages of basic carrier route

Periodicals. An electronic version of the *DMM* is posted on the Postal Explorer Web site at <http://pe.usps.gov>.

Questions about carrier route Periodicals or optional endorsement lines should be directed to the district manager of business mail entry.

Correct format for optional endorsement lines (excerpted from the chart in *DMM* M013.1.1)

Sortation Level	OEL Example
Carrier Route — Periodicals	
Basic	* * * CAR-RT LOT * * C-001
High density	* * * CAR-RT WSH * * C-001
Saturation	* * * CAR-RT WSS * * C-001

— Mail Preparation & Standards,
Pricing and Product Design

There is precedent for making the change. Look at your credit card(s). Notice the numbers are in small groups, with spaces separating them. The same concept applies to your Social Security card number and your telephone number.

The Postal Service expects to make this spacing a requirement for ACS mailers in the future, Wilson said. He said, there should be at least three spaces per 16 characters. Why not get stated early?

— Address Change Service
Department, Memphis

One-Pound Rate Added to Priority Mail Service

New Classification Means Significant Savings for Documents and Lower-Weight Parcels

Priority Mail service has always been a great value for mailers who need delivery of documents and parcels in two to three days.

And with a new rate of \$3.50 for items weighing one pound or less, the service is even more appealing to mailers who were once (prior to this January's rate implementation) required to pay a minimum two-pound rate regardless of the weight of the mailpiece.

The value, however, doesn't end with the new one-pound rate. The Postal Service still offers the Priority Mail Flat Rate — allowing mailers to ship a package of any weight (provided the shipment does not expand the Flat Rate cardboard envelope beyond its normal design) for the two-pound rate of just \$3.95.

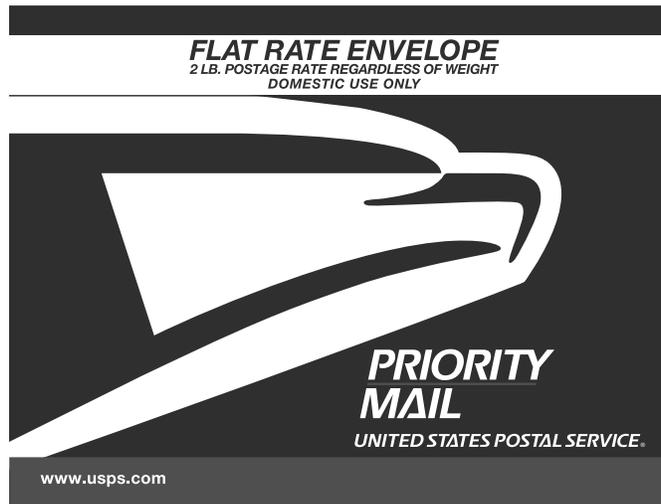
Free Priority Mail shipping supplies, including “documailer” cardboard envelopes, flexible Tyvek® envelopes, tubes and boxes, add yet another valuable service offering related to Priority Mail.

It's important that mailers who want to take advantage of the new one-pound rate use the proper packaging.

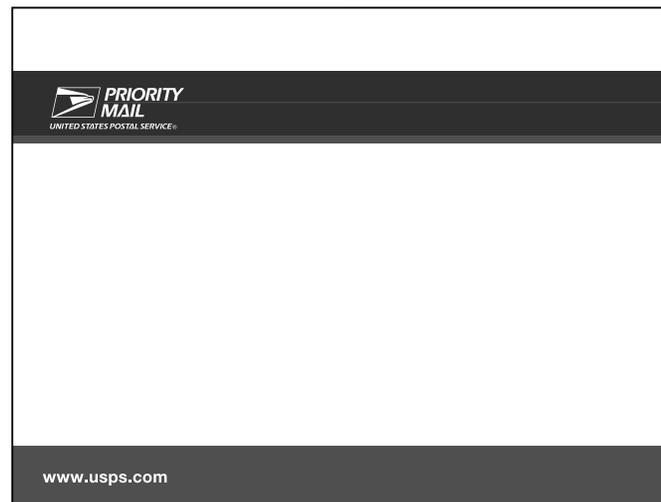
The supplies can be shipped to mailers through requests via a toll-free telephone number or through the Internet (*see story on page 3*).

The Postal Service saw the new rate as an opportunity to enhance the service and offer an even more competitively priced expedited offering to mailers.

When ordering supplies and mailing items using the Priority Mail service, it's important that mailers who want to take advantage of the new one-pound rate use the proper packaging. Any mail shipped in Priority Mail Flat Rate



Using the Flat Rate cardboard envelope allows mailers to ship a package of any weight for the two-pound rate, provided the shipment does not expand the envelope beyond its normal design. Two-pound postage of \$3.95 must be applied when using this envelope.



To take advantage of the new \$3.50 one-pound Priority Mail rate, mailers must use the new weight-rated Priority Mail cardboard “documailer” envelope, other Priority Mail weight-rated packaging, or their own packaging that indicates that the package is Priority Mail. The item must weigh one pound or less.

envelopes must have the \$3.95 two-pound postage applied.

Weight-rated packaging such as the Tyvek® Priority Mail envelope and the new weight-rated Priority Mail cardboard “documailer” can be used to receive the one-pound rate.

Other benefits still offered by using Priority Mail include no extra charge for Saturday and residential delivery, options for adding Delivery and Signature Confirmation and a pickup fee of just \$10.25 per stop — regardless of the number of pieces being mailed.

Priority Mail Competitive Price Facts

\$3.95 Flat Rate for items of any weight using the Flat Rate envelope.

Unzoned rates starting at:

\$3.50 for up to 1 lb.

And going up to:

\$3.95 for up to 2 lbs.

\$5.15 for up to 3 lbs.

\$6.35 for up to 4 lbs.

\$7.55 for up to 5 lbs.

Delivery includes anyplace in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, other U.S. points offshore and military addresses (APOs/FPOs).

Request Today!

Mailing Made Easy

The Domestic Mail Manual

Automation

KEEP in touch with the latest mailing developments —use this request form to have Mailers Companion delivered right to your mailbox. (Or bookmark www.usps.gov/business/mrc.htm on the Internet.)

Rate Case Updates

Request Form 

You can get this form to us in one of three ways:

- Email it to mncsc@email.usps.gov
- Fax it to (901) 681-4542
- Mail it to:

MAILERS COMPANION
DATA ENTRY
US POSTAL SERVICE
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001

- Subscribe
- Change Address Information*
- Cancel Subscription

X _____
Name

Title

Company Name

Delivery Address

City State ZIP+4

* Clip and enclose a complete address block from the back of your *Companion* — or enclose at least the long number at the top (such as "#00001465156#").

MAILERS COMPANION
DATA ENTRY
US POSTAL SERVICE
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001

PSRT SID
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
USPS
PERMIT NO. G-10

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED