

Confirm Approved

Beginning September 22, a three-tiered, flexible pricing structure for flat- and letter-mail tracking will enable senders or recipients to follow their mail to delivery.

Confirm® is a new service using unique mailer-applied barcodes called PLANET Codes. These barcodes, along with the appropriate delivery address POSTNET barcodes, enable a participating mailer to identify where and when outgoing automation-compatible mail and incoming automation-compatible reply mail are scanned in various postal operations. This service combines barcode technology with the electronic infrastructure of automated Postal Service processing equipment to record and transmit data for successfully scanned pieces prepared according to Confirm specifications.

The Postal Service will offer Confirm in a three-tiered subscription format, designated as “Silver,” “Gold,” and “Platinum” as follows:

- The Silver subscription level, with a \$2,000 fee and a term of three consecutive months, entitles the subscriber to one identification code and up to 15 million scans during the term of subscription.
- The Gold subscription level, with a \$4,500 fee and a term of 12 consecutive months, entitles the subscriber to one identification code and up to 50 million scans during the term of the subscription.

- The Platinum subscription level, with a \$10,000 fee and a term of 12 consecutive months, entitles the subscriber to three identification codes and an unlimited number of scans during the term of the subscription.

Silver, Gold, and Platinum level subscribers can license additional identification codes for \$500 for three-month intervals or until the expiration of the associated subscription, whichever occurs first. Silver and Gold level subscribers also can license additional scans at any time before the expiration of the associated subscription: Silver in blocks of 2 million scans at \$500, and Gold in blocks of 6 million scans for \$750.

A Gold level subscription can also be upgraded to a Platinum level subscription any time before the expiration of the Gold subscription with the payment of the difference in the subscription fees. Upgrading from Gold to Platinum does not extend the term of the initial subscription.

Vice President for Product Development Nicholas Barranca said, “Confirm not only responds to customer demand but it is an important element of our Transformation Plan to secure the future of affordable mail service to every American. Confirm’s innovative new pricing structure — subscription service rather than per-use charges — represents real value for customers and real value for the Postal Service.”

For mailers interested in using Confirm as part of their business process, the USPS has several sources for exploring the various uses of this technology-based service. USPS account representatives or account managers are available to help, or mailers can obtain information and assistance from the National Customer Support Center at 1-800-238-3150.

The USPS also maintains up-to-date information, applications, and forms on its special Web site <http://www.planetcodes.com>.

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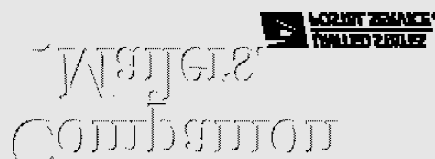
Postal Explorer Web Site Honored



The Postal Explorer Web site won an Award of Excellence in the APEX 2002 Awards competition.

APEX is an international competition that recognizes outstanding publications and Web sites. Awards are based on design, content, and overall communications effectiveness.

Postal Explorer provides updated, searchable versions of the DMM, *Quick Service Guides*, and many other publications. It links to the postage rate calculators, Business Mail 101, and other mailing tools and can answer many mailing questions. Access Postal Explorer at <http://pe.usps.gov>.



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Notice New Issue of the Domestic Mail Manual Available

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) Issue 57, dated 6-30-02, has arrived. This issue includes all of the rate and classification changes resulting from the R2001-1 rate case effective on June 30, 2002.

The complete DMM, with monthly updates, is available on the Postal Explorer Web site, <http://pe.usps.gov>. Employees and customers are encouraged to use this free Web site to find answers to their mailing questions. The DMM, *Quick Service Guides*, and many other publications are fully searchable and can be viewed, downloaded, or printed. The DMM on Postal Explorer is always the most up-to-date version available.

Customers who wish to order a printed copy of the DMM can do so only through the Government Printing Office. Employees can give customers

a copy of the order form that appears in the front of the printed book, or customers can place a phone order by calling 202-512-1800. The subscription fee is set by the Government Printing Office (currently \$42). Customers cannot order the DMM through the Postal Service.

DMM Issue 57 is also included in the Postal Explorer CD-ROM release 14.0. Customers may purchase the Postal Explorer CD-ROM using the order form on the Postal Explorer Web site (click on "About Postal Explorer"). The CD-ROM includes the new DMM and other publications, plus the domestic and international rate calculators. The cost is \$20.

— Mail Preparation and Standards

Domestic Mail Manual

DMM

The following announcements, reminders, and revisions to the *Domestic Mail Manual* will be incorporated into the printed version of DMM 58 and into the monthly update of the online DMM available via Postal Explorer at <http://pe.usps.gov>.

DMM Revision

New 5-Digit Minimum for Standard Mail Flats

Effective September 5, 2002, portions of DMM Module M are revised to allow mailers to select a number from 10 to 17 as the minimum number of pieces at which 5-digit packages are prepared in a Standard Mail job of flat-size pieces (DMM C050.3.0) that are not more than 3/4-inch thick. Currently mailers must prepare 5-digit packages whenever there are 10 or more pieces to a 5-digit ZIP Code destination. Anyone wanting to prepare 10-piece packages could continue to do so.

Under these new standards, mailers can select a minimum number of pieces greater than 10 at which 5-digit packages of automation rate and Presorted rate Standard Mail flat-size pieces not more than 3/4-inch thick, including co-packaged pieces (DMM M950), are prepared within a mailing job. Mailers must use a consistent minimum for 5-digit packages throughout a mailing job. The minimum may not be set higher than 17 pieces, which means that whenever there are 17 or more pieces to a 5-digit ZIP Code destination those pieces must be prepared in 5-digit packages.

The preparation standards for other package levels and for containers are unchanged and mailers must continue to prepare 3-digit and ADC packages whenever there are 10 or more pieces to those destinations. It is expected that pieces now prepared in 5-digit packages using the current 10-piece minimum will move either to an existing 3-digit package or be consolidated into fewer new 3-digit

packages when a higher minimum of 11 to 17 pieces is selected. In either case, the overall number of packages prepared by mailers and processed by the Postal Service should decrease. For example, a 4-ounce catalog prepared in four 5-digit packages for the same 3-digit destination that each contain 10 pieces could be combined in one new 3-digit package (that weighs less than 20 pounds) under the new standards if the minimum 5-digit package size is set at 17.

Any movement of pieces from 5-digit packages to 3-digit packages that results from this new option will not impact postage paid by mailers or Postal Service revenues because Standard Mail flats are eligible for the 3/5 presort rates whether prepared in 5-digit or 3-digit packages. Pieces moving from small 5-digit packages to larger 3-digit packages would not be subject to any additional postage, and mailers are encouraged to set their 5-digit package minimum at 17 pieces to prepare fewer packages. However, anyone wanting to use the current 10-piece package minimum, or to set the minimum between 10 and 17, could do so.

Mailers are reminded that the 3/5 Presorted rate for Standard Mail flats is applicable to 5-digit or 3-digit packages prepared in 5-digit or 3-digit sacks containing a minimum of 125 pieces or 15 pounds of pieces or placed on any level pallet. Automation rates are always based on the package presort level, and the 3/5

automation rate applies to any pieces in 5-digit and 3-digit packages.

It is possible that the selection of a higher 5-digit package minimum may improve the presort level of some pieces that would otherwise fall to a lower package level after all 5-digit packages are prepared. For example, after all 5-digit packages are prepared using the current 10-piece package minimum, less than 10 pieces may remain for the 3-digit destination and the remaining pieces would be prepared in an ADC or mixed ADC package and be subject to the basic rate. When combined with pieces from one or more small 5-digit packages to the same 3-digit destination, these pieces could move to a 3-digit package and be subject to the 3/5 rates.

It is expected that this optional change should help to reduce overall Postal Service processing costs as well as mailer production costs and that it should not have a negative impact on service for pieces that move from 5-digit to 3-digit packages. It is also expected that the net gain from reduced package handlings using a minimum higher than 10 pieces for 5-digit packages will be greatest for pieces that weigh 6 ounces or less, and somewhat less for heavier pieces. This is because fewer 3-digit packages will be created when lighter-weight pieces from multiple 5-digit packages are merged at the 3-digit level. For this reason, it is suggested that mailers use a 5-digit package minimum

continued on page 4

somewhat lower than 17 pieces (i.e., 15 pieces) for mailings of pieces weighing over 6 ounces (.375 lb.).

In order to reduce the overall number of Postal Service package handlings and the costs associated with unnecessary additional handlings, mailers are encouraged to create packages as large as possible (e.g., up to 20 pounds) within applicable packaging standards related to package integrity. As with any change of this type, the impact on specific mailings will vary based on mail characteristics such as piece weight and presort density.

The expected benefits of this change are based, in large part, on productivities and piece processing efficiencies of the AFSM 100, which can process pieces up to ¾-inch thick. Pieces greater than ¾-inch thick may be processed on the FSM 1000, on the small parcel and bundle sorter (SPBS), or manually, all at lower productivities than if processed on the AFSM 100.

Furthermore, very little incoming secondary processing of pieces to carrier routes occurs on FSM 1000s, and it is more desirable to have mail prepared in 5-digit packages that can be sent directly to the delivery office for distribution to carrier routes. For this reason, the optional higher minimums are limited to flat-size pieces likely to receive AFSM 100 processing and mailers must continue to use the current 10-piece minimum when preparing 5-digit packages of automation rate flat-size pieces greater than ¾-inch thick.

Although mailers who want to select a higher 5-digit package minimum than 10 pieces will not be required to use Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE)-certified software, PAVE tests are available for presort software vendors who will support this option.

The Postal Service is interested in receiving feedback about the volume shift in specific mailings from mailers

who change their minimum package size. The following information may be sent to Cheryl Beller, Product Redesign, US Postal Service, Room 4039, 1735 N Lynn St, Arlington, VA 22209-6360 (email address: cbeller1@email.usps.gov): total number of pieces in mailing; mailpiece weight; number of pieces prepared in 5-digit packages and the number of 5-digit packages; number of pieces prepared in 3-digit packages and the number of 3-digit packages; and the maximum package parameter (weight or number of pieces). If the maximum package size setting reflects a total package weight lower than 20 pounds, please indicate the maximum package height that correlates to the maximum package size. The number of pieces and number of packages (5-digit and 3-digit) should be shown using both the current 10-piece minimum and the new minimum selected for presort (from 11 to 17).

— Product Redesign

DMM Revision

Refunds and Exchanges for Metered Postage

Effective July 11, 2002, DMM P014, Refunds and Exchanges, is revised to clarify the refund policy for unused postage evidencing system indicia on mailpieces or labels. Changes are as follows:

- Acceptable documentation to prove that the person or entity submitting the refund request is the licensee for the system includes a copy of the lease, rental agreement, or contract.
- When metered postage has been affixed to a mailpiece, the customer must submit the entire envelope or wrapper on which the meter stamp is printed or a label bearing a meter stamp is attached, with the refund request.
- When customers submit loose indicia that are not affixed to a mailpiece for refund, the indicia must

not be stapled together or attached to any paper or other medium.

- When a request for a refund is denied, the manager of Postage Technology Management will process an appeal only if the meter indicia contain a date and the original meter indicia are submitted with the appeal, and the appeal is submitted within 30 days of the original decision. The customer must process any appeal of a decision on metered postage lacking a date through the postmaster to the rates and classification service center (RCSC).

In addition, we deleted text that duplicated policies stated in P014.2.5, Refunds for Metered Postage. We also clarified and amended the procedures in P014.3.1, Unused Postage Value in Postage Evidencing Systems, for

handling postage meters and postage evidencing systems that are withdrawn from service. The customer must process the return through their system provider.

When a system is damaged by fire, flood, or similar disaster, it may be missing and not available for return. In such cases, the licensee may be required to provide a statement on the cause of the damage and to attest that the lost postage has not been reimbursed by insurance, or otherwise, and that the licensee will not seek such reimbursement. As additional clarification, we added that the Postal Service will not refund the postage value remaining on a postage meter or postage evidencing system when the system is withdrawn for faulty operation caused by the customer.

— Postage Technology Management

DMM Revision

Palletized Automation Flats With Nonautomation Pieces

Effective August 8, 2002, DMM M610.1.4 and M620.1.3 are removed and DMM M820.1.7 is revised to eliminate the mandatory traying and other letter-size preparation requirements for nonautomation rate Standard Mail mailpieces in a mailing job that includes a palletized automation rate mailing of flat-size pieces when the nonautomation rate portion exceeds 10 percent of the mailing job. The dimensions of the pieces in such a mailing job meet the physical dimensions and characteristics of letter-size mail under DMM C050 and, at the same time, automation flat-size mail under DMM C820.

DMM M820.1.7 is also revised to extend this same preparation exception for palletized mail to Periodicals mailpieces that meet the physical dimensions and

characteristics of both letter-size mail and automation flat-size mail. DMM M820.1.9 is revised to indicate that mail qualifying for the exception under DMM M820.1.7 is not required to be prepared under DMM M820.1.9. The revision to this long-standing exception allows mailers to prepare Standard Mail or Periodicals mailings with one production process that generates a single mailstream of flats prepared on pallets. Prior to this revision, mailers exceeding the 10 percent maximum permitted for the nonautomation portion in such a mailing job had to use two production processes that resulted in two separate mailstreams — one consisting of packaged flat-size mail, the other consisting of trayed letter-size mail.

Qualified mailers, usually using PAVE-certified or MAC-certified

software, may prefer the preparation standards in DMM M900 for creating merged pallets, and specifically DMM M950 for creating co-packaged pieces to achieve even greater production efficiencies. Mailers sacking such jobs must use DMM M910.

As a point of reference, Standard Mail jobs of Presorted and automation flat-size mailpieces reported on the same postage statement must be co-sacked under DMM M910 (see *Postal Bulletin* 22052, 6-14-01). For co-packaging, the Presorted pieces require 5-digit barcodes (see *Postal Bulletin* 22064, 11-29-01). Pieces without a 5-digit barcode must continue to be prepared as separate mailings, or they may be co-sacked under DMM M910. Co-sacking under this option does not require PAVE-certified or MAC-certified software.

— Mail Preparation and Standards

DMM Revision

Delivery Confirmation and Signature Confirmation Labels

Effective July 11, 2002, DMM S918 and S919 are revised to change the listing of available mail classes on front of PS Forms 152 and 153 in Exhibits 2.1a. Existing label stock will be depleted.

We are also changing DMM S918.4.0 and S918.5.0 to revise the title of PS Form 3152 to *Confirmation Services Certification* and to add new language for the preparation and submission of this form.

Mailers are no longer required to submit PS Form 3152 with each mailing presented at a business mail entry unit (BMEU) or detached mail

unit (DMU) for which they want either Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation services. PS Form 3152 must accompany the first Confirmation Services mailing presented by the mailer. The form must be retained in the BMEU/DMU as authorization for the mailer to use electronic Confirmation Services. The BMEU/DMU employee should note in the "Comments" section of the PERMIT system that the mailer has been approved for electronic Confirmation Services (the electronic confirmation services postage fees).

— Product Information Requirements

Mailers Companion is available online at www.usps.com/mailerscompanion.

DMM Revision

Barcode Requirements for Delivery Confirmation and Signature Confirmation Services

Effective June 27, 2002, DMM C850 is revised to amend the barcode requirements for Delivery Confirmation and Signature Confirmation labels. The word "ZIP" must be added to these labels no later than December 31, 2002. "ZIP" is used as an internal identifier when the barcode is incorrect and must be marked out.

— Product Information Requirements

Understanding Automated Flats Specifications

During the past several years, the USPS has made significant technological improvements to the automation of flat mail processing. Automated processing of flat mail not only provides improved service to mailers but results in cost savings by converting flat mail processing from a labor-intensive manual/mechanized environment to a more efficient automated mode. Automated processing has already yielded considerable savings to the Postal Service and it is expected to be the mainstay of flats processing for some years to come.

In April 2002, the USPS completed deployment of 534 Automated Flat Sorting Machines (AFSM 100s). The AFSM 100 is vastly superior to previous USPS flat sorting machines, with optical character reader (OCR) and barcode reader (BCR) functionality, three automatic feeders with throughput rates capable of more than 17,000 pieces per hour, and 120 individual sort separations.

Testing has been conducted on the AFSM 100 to define acceptable physical mailpiece characteristics and polywrap characteristics. The new AFSM 100 criteria became effective on June 30, 2002, replacing the old FSM 881 standards (see DMM C820.2.). Data from these tests shows that the majority of the standards for physical dimensions — height, length, and thickness — developed for flats processed on the old FSM 881 still apply to flats processed on the AFSM 100. On the basis of these findings, the Postal Service set the size requirements to qualify for AFSM 100 automation rates for flats:

- Minimum: 5 inches high, 6 inches long, 0.0009 inch thick.

- Maximum: 12 inches high, 15 inches long, 0.75 inch thick.

The length and height are not determined by the orientation of the delivery address. For an AFSM 100 mailpiece prepared as a single sheet or in an envelope, full-length wrapper, or full-length sleeve, the length is the longest dimension. For a piece prepared with a bound, folded, or closed edge (e.g., a newspaper, folded envelope, tabloid, or catalog), the length is the dimension parallel to the bound, folded, or closed edge. The height (vertical dimension) is the dimension perpendicular to the length. If the piece is folded more than once or is bound and then folded, the length of the piece is based on the final fold.

This is opposite to how the height and length was determined under the old FSM 881 standards. Under the old FSM 881 standards, the height was the dimension parallel to the bound, folded, or closed edge. Consequently, the new specifications in effect now allow for an additional 3 inches on the bound or folded edge and 3 inches less on the edge perpendicular to the bound or folded edge.

Under the old FSM 881 standards, many broad sheet newspapers did not qualify for the automation rates because their height (final fold) exceeded 12 inches. To meet the height and length standards, the newspaper had to be quarter folded. Under the AFSM 100 standards, many newspapers can meet the height and length requirements, because the final fold is the length — up to 15 inches. It is still recommended that all newspapers be prepared as quarter-folds.

Another change that has impacted pieces with a final fold is the address

placement. An AFSM 100 flat-size piece with a final fold must be designed so that the address is in view when the final folded edge is at the *bottom* of the piece and any intermediate bound or folded edge is to the *right*. This requires some customers, especially newspaper style mailpieces, to redesign the address location on their publications.

The information compiled during the testing of the AFSM 100 concluded that the seven polywrap standards for the FSM 881 would continue to be required for polywrap pieces. Plus new property number 8, known as “blocking” will be added. Blocking is simply the property that prevents polywrapped pieces from sticking together.

Mailpieces prepared according to the AFSM 100 standards must continue to meet the rigidity, flexibility, and turning ability criteria that was used for the FSM 881. The Flat Mail Machinability Tester can continue to be used to verify these requirements.

The USPS is also upgrading the FSM 1000 with automatic feeders to continue efforts to improve flat mail processing. The FSM 1000 handles a wider range of flats than the AFSM 100, but it has a lower productivity so it is limited to flats that cannot be processed on the AFSM 100. Since the AFSM 100 processes mail much faster — more than twice as fast — as the FSM 1000, the physical criteria are more stringent. There are several differences in the standards for physical dimensions — height, length, and thickness — and address placement between the AFSM 100 and the FSM 1000.




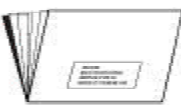



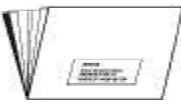

— Mail Preparation and Standards

Nonmachinable Surcharge Decision Table Folded Self-Mailers and Booklets

Effective June 30, 2002

Following are definitions to assist in determining if the nonmachinable surcharge applies:

- **Booklet:** A letter-size mailpiece consisting of multiple pages permanently bound along one edge or spine using staples, glue, stitching, or other permanent fastening and open on the other three edges.
- **Folded Self-Mailer:** A letter-size mailpiece designed to be mailed without an envelope and consisting of one or more sheets of paper that are folded at least once. Multiple sheets may be loose and nested inside one another or may be stapled in the corner.
- **Final Fold:** When a mailpiece is folded more than once into its final mailing format the final fold is the outermost fold and is usually the last fold.

Mailpiece design examples: All examples meet letter-size standards and are not entered at ECR or automation rates.	Booklet	Folded Self-Mailer	Surcharge Required
Single Sheet Final fold at bottom parallel to address. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Single Sheet or Multiple Sheets Final fold on leading edge, perpendicular to address. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES <small>Unless prepared according to DMM C810.7.2.</small>
Single Sheet or Multiple Sheets Final fold on trailing edge, perpendicular to address. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES
Multiple Sheets Final fold at bottom parallel to address. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Multiple Sheets Final fold at top parallel to address. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Multiple Folds Final fold at bottom. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Multiple Sheets Cover permanently bound on leading or trailing edge. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		YES
Multiple Sheets Cover permanently bound at bottom parallel to address. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		NO
Multiple Sheets Cover permanently bound at top parallel to address. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		YES

Note:

- The nonmachinable surcharge applies to First-Class Mail single-piece and Presorted letters 1 ounce or less and Standard Mail Presorted rate letter-size pieces (including cards) that weigh 3.3 ounces or less.

Ask Dr. Barcode

Q. I went to the Post Office today to mail some packages. One of them was a book weighing 12 oz. and in a large envelope. I have always used Media Mail service for this type of package. Today I was told that when the rates changed the rules on Media Mail also changed, and the package now has to be at least 3/4" thick. I ended up mailing it at First-Class Mail rates. Was I misinformed?

A. Yes, you were misinformed. Flats containing qualifying material continue to be eligible for Media Mail rates.

Only if you were adding Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation would your package need to be a parcel.

For the purposes of adding Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation, a Package Services parcel is defined as any piece that:

- (1) Has an address side with enough surface area to fit the delivery address, return address, postage, markings and endorsements, and special service label; and,
- (2) Is in a box or, if not in a box, is more than 3/4-inch thick at its thickest point.

Dr. Barcode



Send questions regarding mail preparation, standards, or regulations to "Ask Dr. Barcode" via email to jnagla@email.usps.gov or fax to 703-292-3876. The good doctor will select one or two of the most challenging questions for publication.

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* 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 "1234 5678 9012 3456").

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