



New Standards for Letter-Size Booklets

BACKGROUND

On April 7, 2009, the USPS posted a Federal Register notice announcing final mailing standards for letter-size booklets mailed at machinable and automation prices. The changes impact the construction and sealing of letter-sized booklets mailed at automation, presorted machinable or carrier route letter prices.

Note, current standards for folded self-mailers will remain in effect. However, mailers can expect new recommendations relative to self-mailers later this year.

WHY THIS IMPORTANT

While the requirements do not go into effect until September 8, 2009, it is critical that you, our valued customers, are informed of these changes so that you can take the necessary steps to ensure that your mailings will be eligible for machinable and automation letter-size prices. This is especially important if you've been accustomed to using software, such as our SmartMailer™ or AddressRight® Pro software solutions, to automate your mailings today!

Here is what is at stake. Letter-size booklets that do not comply with the new standards will be considered nonmachinable and assessed at higher postage prices:

- Nonmachinable surcharge - First-Class Mail® booklets
- Nonmachinable prices - Standard Mail® booklets
- Nonbarcoded prices – Periodicals

For example, postage for qualifying booklets mailed at Standard Mail letter-size automation prices sorted to the AADC level will be \$0.253. Whereas, postage for booklets that do not meet the new regulations will be \$0.491. That is a 94 percent increase in postage costs!

DETAILS

Definition

Booklets consist of *bound* sheets or pages.

Binding

Binding methods must create a nearly uniformly thick mailpiece. Approved methods include:

- Perfect binding
- Permanent fastening with at least two staples in the manufacturing fold (saddle stitched)
- Pressed glue

Large booklets may be folded to letter-size for mailing if the final mailpiece remains uniform in thickness. The bottom edge of booklets must be a bound edge or fold unless the mailpiece is prepared as an oblong booklet. Oblong booklets must be prepared with a spine on the leading edge.

Booklets with a spine on the trailing edge or those prepared with spiral bindings are nonmachinable!

Size

- Maximum height - 6 inches*
- Maximum length - can vary between 9 and 10-1/2 inches* depending on design; it is recommended that booklets weighing 3 ounces be no greater than 9 inches in length
* Note – this is smaller than letter-size mailpieces in envelopes!
- Minimum thickness - 0.009 inch
- Maximum thickness - 0.25 inch regardless of size (thickness is measured at the spine of the mailpiece)
- Maximum weight - 3 ounces (this has not changed)

Cover Stock Requirements

- 40-pound minimum* basis weight for folded booklet designs
- 60- or 70-pound minimum* basis weight for pieces longer than 9 inches

*The use of paper that is 10 pounds heavier than the required minimum basis weight is recommended. Using a minimum of a 70-pound cover stock paper on booklets that approach maximum booklet dimensions is also recommended.

References to paper weights are for book-grade paper unless otherwise noted by the USPS.

Paper Basis Weight Conversion Table

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

Sealing and Booklet Design*

- Tabs may not be perforated
- Three 1-1/2 inch tabs are required in most cases; for larger or heavier booklets, 2-inch paper tabs are recommended
- Non-perforated plastic, vinyl, translucent paper or opaque paper tabs are acceptable
- Glue spots or a continuous glue line may be used to seal some booklet designs

*Please see the Domestic Mail Manual, section 200 for more information.


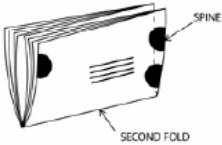
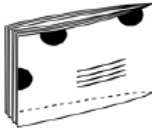
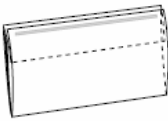
If the spine or final fold is...	And the length is...	The cover stock must be at least...	Mailers must seal the piece with...	And place the tabs in these locations...
 <p>Spine or fold on the bottom (longer) edge</p>	<p>5" to 9" long</p> <hr/> <p>Over 9", up to 10.5" long</p>	<p>50-pound</p> <hr/> <p>60-pound</p>	<p>Three 1.5" non-perforated tabs</p>	<p>Two tabs on leading edge; one tab on trailing edge. Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from the bottom edge. Position upper tabs 1 inch from the top edge.</p>
 <p>Final fold on the bottom (longer) edge, with the folded spine on the leading or trailing (shorter) edge</p>	<p>5" to 10.5" long</p>	<p>40-pound</p>	<p>Three 1.5" non-perforated tabs</p>	<p>Folded Booklet Two tabs on leading edge; one tab on trailing edge. Position lower leading tab 0.5 inch from the bottom edge. Position upper tabs 1 inch from the top edge.</p>
 <p>Spine on the leading (shorter) edge</p>	<p>5" to 9" long</p> <hr/> <p>Over 9", up to 10.5" long</p>	<p>60-pound</p> <hr/> <p>70-pound</p>	<p>Three 1.5" non-perforated tabs</p>	<p>Two tabs on top edge; one tab on trailing edge. Position top tabs 1 inch from left and right edge. Position trailing tab in the middle.</p>
 <p>Spine on bottom (longer) edge, non-perforated inner flap on top (upper) edge</p>	<p>5" to 9.5" long</p>	<p>80-pound</p>	<p>Continuous glue line or glue spots</p>	<p>Perfect bound or saddle stitched with a continuous glue line along flap preferred, minimum 1 inch glue spots acceptable if placed within 3/4 inch of right and left edges.</p>

Illustration source: Federal Register 39 CFR Part 111.

SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES:

Because three 1-1/2 inch tabs are required for most designs, and for larger or heavier booklets, 2-inch paper tabs are recommended, tabbers that can meet these regulations are *very limited*. It should also be noted that in many cases, to meet these new regulations, double, if not triple passes to apply the tabs may be necessary.

Many of you might also have an abundance of booklets, i.e., already designed and printed. These may unfortunately be larger than the new maximum dimensions outlined in the Federal Register.

So that you can mail your booklets at automation prices rather than nonmachinable prices, consider an inserting solution that will efficiently and cost-effectively insert your booklets into letter-size envelopes. Letter-size envelopes can measure up to and including 6 1/8 inches by 11 1/2 inches and weigh no more than 3.5 ounces! That is more "size" and more "weight" than booklet standards! Further, you can use the envelope designer feature of our SmartMailer™ or AddressRight® Pro software to create an intriguing message line that will encourage your recipients to open and read the enclosed booklet!

Moving forward, through education and a partnership with Pitney Bowes, you can make a positive difference within your business or organization by recommending design strategies and solutions that will enable your mailings to qualify for the lower, automation-rate prices!

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