
CHAPTER 4. GUIDELINES FOR USE OF STANDARDIZED
GOVERNMENT MAILING PIECES

- 4-1. General Requirements. To provide for faster processing of mail and for more efficient operations, many of the larger Post Offices are installing mechanical sorting machines that use Optical Character Readers (OCR) to read and sort letter size mail by ZIP Codes. Mail can be processed through the high speed sorting machines only when addresses are properly placed in the address area on white, light blue and light green mail pieces and read by the OCRs. Mail pieces that are not properly addressed can cause delays in the mechanical sorting process because the OCRs may have difficulty in locating the ZIP Code.
- 4-2. Postage and Fees Paid Indicia.
- a. Postage Indicia. The "Postage and Fees Paid HUD 401" indicia and U.S. Postal Service special permits, as required, permit the dispatch of Departmental official mail of all classes and the use of special mail services. Under this system no postage is affixed to individual pieces of Departmental official mail. The Department must, however, reimburse the U.S. Postal Service for all mail dispatched.
 - b. Dispatch of Official Mail. All official mail shall be dispatched in Government envelopes or wrappers, imprinted with the words "Postage and Fees Paid - HUD-401" and "Official Business, Penalty For Private Use, \$300."
 - c. Private Use of Postage and Fees Paid Indicia. Departmental employees shall not use the "Postage and Fees Paid HUD-401" indicia for their private use. The penalty for the unlawful use of the "Postage and Fees Paid" indicia is provided in 18 United States Code 1719: (NOTE: The mailing of a job applications within HUD or to other Federal agencies is a personal expense).

"Whoever makes use of any official envelope, label or endorsement authorized by law, to avoid the payment of postage or registry fee on their private letter, packet, package, or other matter in the mail, shall be fined not more than \$300."

4-3. Use of Postage and Fees Paid Envelopes, Post Cards, Address Labels, Wrappers, and Other Imprinted Indicia.

- a. Official Standard Size Mailing Indicia. The "Postage and Fees Paid HUD-401" indicia shall be used only for official mailings made by Departmental employees which pertain exclusively to official business of the United States Government. This indicia shall be printed in the upper right corner of the address side of the mailing piece. The HUD-401 identification code is used by the U.S. Postal Service to monitor HUD mailings. The HUD-401 code shall be included on all mailing pieces, EXCEPT those mailed by Printer-Mailer/Mailer Contractors under contract to the Department, and they will be licensed through the use of an authorized permit imprint approved by the Mail Management Officer, ASB. An area of not less than 1-3/4 by 3 inches is reserved in the upper right corner of the mailing piece for the standard size indicium shown below. No other markings may appear in this area except borders extending no farther than 1/4 inch from the envelope's edge.

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*   GRAPHICS   MATERIAL   IN   ORIGINAL   DOCUMENT   OMITTED   *  
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- b. Official Minimum Size Mailing Indicia. The postal emblem may be reduced in size to not less than 5/8 by 5/8 inch and the indicium area to not less than 1 by 2 inches as shown below.

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*   GRAPHICS   MATERIAL   IN   ORIGINAL   DOCUMENT   OMITTED   *  
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4-4. Return Address. The return address (corner card) shall be placed in the upper left corner of the mailing piece. The return address shall include and in the following order: "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT," component organization, originator's stamped, typed or printed correspondence code, City, State, ZIP Code, "OFFICIAL BUSINESS, PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300." Example:

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*   GRAPHICS MATERIAL IN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT OMITTED             *  
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4-5. Letter Size Envelopes.

- a. White. Letter size white envelopes up to and including 6-1/8 by 11-1/2 inches shall include the postage indicia and corner card printed in black ink. An exception to this requirement will be made only when an unusual mailing justifies a heavy weight envelope that cannot be procured in white.
- b. Kraft. Letter size heavy weight kraft envelopes may be procured only when the need is justified in writing and when address labels are used with those envelopes. Address labels are required on kraft letter size envelopes because the U.S. Postal Service Optical Character Readers cannot read the ZIP Code on envelopes this dark in color. Letter size kraft envelopes in stock shall be used until the stock is exhausted. HUD may continue to use kraft envelopes that are over 6-1/8 by 11-1/2 inches but do not exceed 12 by 15 inches.

4-6. Address Labels. Authorized 3-1/2 by 5 inch printed address labels shall be white with the postage indicia and corner card printed in black ink for use on packages and large kraft envelopes as indicated above. Do not use a franked mailing label on preprinted mailing pieces with corner card and the HUD-401 indicia.

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*   GRAPHICS MATERIAL IN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT OMITTED             *  
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4-7. Post Cards.

- a. Color. Post cards are privately printed mailing cards used to transmit brief messages. The paper or card stock for post cards may be of any light color which provides a legible background for addresses and post marks. When printing the eagle symbol postage indicia and corner card, black ink on a white background is preferred, but other color combinations may be used. Brilliant colors must not be used. (See 4-6 above) A double post card consists of two attached post cards, one of which may be detached by the receiver and returned by mail as a reply. Postage on each card is paid at the First-Class card rate. However, postage is not paid on the reply card until it is detached and mailed as a reply. When a double post card is required, the reply card must be constructed using the Business Reply Mail technique as shown in Appendix 3 for envelopes when it has been decided that paying the return postage will be most advantageous to the Department.
- b. Thickness. Post cards shall not be smaller than 5 by 3-1/2 inches, nor larger than 6 by 4-1/4 inches. Post cards shall have a minimum thickness of .007 of an inch and a maximum thickness not exceeding .0095 of an inch. Cut-out post cards printed in HUD publications shall be of the same construction, weight, and color as prescribed for post cards and shall be constructed using the Business Reply Mail technique if the Department decides that it will be most advantageous to pay the return postage cost, otherwise, an area in the upper right corner of the mailing piece should show "Affix Postage Stamp Here."

4-8. Government Checks. Optical character readers cannot read the ZIP Code printed on Government checks. For the present, Government checks are exempt from the requirements for mechanized processing of letter size mail provided the checks are presorted by ZIP Code, faced and tied. When an address insert covers the check in the envelope window, the address insert must be white, and the address format must comply with the requirements for letter size mail.

4-9. Self-Mailers. Self-mailers may include any item transmitted through the postal system (except parcels) which does not have an envelope, cover or wrapper. A self-mailer can be a folded post card, a single sheet, or a number of sheets fastened together. A reasonable degree of color contrast must be maintained between the postage indicia and address, and background of the mailing piece. Black ink on a white background is preferred but other color combinations may be used. Brilliant colors are not permitted. Letter size self-mailers must have an address area the same as is required for letter size envelopes.

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- 4-10. Reproduction of the Postage Indicia for Self-Mailers by Headquarters and Field Offices. The postage indicia and return address shall be reproduced on self-mailers during the reproduction of the material to be mailed. Offices that do not have equipment to reproduce the eagle symbol on self-mailers may use the "POSTAGE AND FEES PAID, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT HUD-401" postage indicia. The use of self-mailers for such items as acquired property lists, circulars, contract solicitations, etc., will result in some time and material savings.
- 4-11. Punch Cards. Most punch cards are .007 inch thick, and they should not be used as self-mailers because they do not meet the minimum thickness requirement of .009 inch for cards exceeding 4-1/4 inches in height and/or 6 inches in length. This card must be mailed in an envelope. The standard .007 inch thick punched cards that are used in obtaining information from the public must be mailed in an envelope. Punch cards of .009 inch thickness are available and may be used as self-mailers.
- 4-12. Authorized Printing on Letter Size Mail Pieces. The general rule is that the address side of letter size mail, including self-mailers, will contain no printing other than the mailing indicia, corner card, FIM marking and address of the recipient. The following exceptions are made to this general rule:
- a. A message (such as instructions to Postmaster) may be printed on the left one-fourth of the mail piece provided that it appears to the left of the address and no lower than 5/8 inches from the bottom of the mailing piece. (See Appendix 1).
 - b. A printed border is allowed provided it does not interfere with the FIM marking (the top of which must be within 1/8 inch of envelope edge, and may extend to the edge) on the mailing piece.
 - c. A single line of print is permissible to the right of the address if it is more than .6 inch to the right of the address line opposite it.
- 4-13. Special Emblems and Code Marks. All special emblems, and all magnetic, optical scanner, or other coding marks for either side of the mailing piece must be approved by the Mail Management Officer, ASB, who will obtain technical guidance and testing service from the U.S. Postal Service. Modern sophisticated OCR equipment utilized by the U.S. Postal Service dictates that only items that are absolutely essential to expedite mail be placed on mailing pieces.
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- 4-14. Address Read Zone for Letter Size Mail Pieces. The address read zone is a rectangular area 2-1/2 by 8 inches, parallel to the long edge of the mailing piece, beginning 1 inch from the left edge of the mailing piece and extending 8 inches to the right (or to the right edge of the mailing piece, if it is less than 9 inches long) and beginning 1/2 inch above the bottom of the mailing piece, and extending up for 2-1/2 inches. The high-speed optical character readers require an address read zone for all letter size mail up to and including 6-1/8 by 11-1/2 inches so that the ZIP Code can be located and read. The address must be placed in the address read zone, which is indicated by the broken lines shown on the envelopes in Appendix 2. On small mail pieces the address read zone will overlap areas reserved for the postage indicia and corner card. This is permitted.
- 4-15. Clear Areas for Large Mail Pieces. An address read zone is not required for mail pieces over 6-1/8 by 11-1/2 inches because these items are hand sorted. The Department policy is to restrict printing on the large envelopes to the mailing indicia, corner card, and address of the recipient as prescribed for letter size mail. The address shall be placed parallel to the long edge and approximately in the center of the envelope. On printed self-mailers, such as magazines, a clear rectangular space of not less than 3 by 4-1/4 inches shall be reserved for the mailing indicia, corner card and address.
- 4-16. Window Envelopes. When window envelopes are used, the window itself may extend into the area to the left of the address read zone, but the address appearing in the window must be entirely within the read zone. Window envelope inserts and addresses must be matched and of such dimensions that a 1/4 inch clear space appears between the left, right, and bottom window edges and the address on the insert, when the insert moves to its full limits inside the envelope. No other printing may show through the window unless it appears above the address or 5/8 inch to the left of the address.
- 4-17. Forms Used with Window Envelopes. The address area on forms used with window envelopes must be placed in the address read zone to match window of the envelope being utilized. When stocks of forms are replenished, the forms shall be redesigned to place the address space in the read zone of the envelope intended for use, if other than original window envelope will be used.
- 4-18. Address Format. (See Chapter 9, HUD Handbook 2221.1 Departmental Correspondence Handbook.)
- a. Placement. Position the address for the appropriate mailing piece as specified in above referenced handbook.

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- b. **Block Style and Spacing.** Use block style format for all addresses with all lines having a uniform left margin. Do not allow more than six typewriter spaces between items in any line of the address. Computer, addressing machine, printed or typewritten addresses will be black or blue-black and of any common type font. Italic and artistic fonts are not to be used. Character pitch shall be from 7 to 14 characters per inch with a height of .08 to .20 inch. Line spacing shall be from 3 to 6 lines per inch.
- c. **Street Address, City, State, and ZIP Code.** The street address, Post Office box number, or rural route and box number shall be shown on the next to the bottom line of the address. The bottom line is for the City, State and ZIP Code. Use two spaces between the State and the ZIP Code. Addresses shown in Department issuances and publications shall follow the format described in this Handbook.
- d. **Examples of Prescribed Address Formats.**

Lincoln National Bank
417 Walnut Street,
PO Box 823
Springfield, IL 62702

If applicable, use either a street address or a box number. If the incoming correspondence uses both a street address and a box number, both may be used on the reply. Be sure to put them in the same order as shown on the incoming correspondence. The U.S. Postal Service will deliver the reply to the address shown on the line immediately above the bottom line. (In the example on the right, delivery would be made to the PO box.) The ZIP Code must be the correct one for the delivery address.

Mr. George M. Howard
Box 2, Potomac Station
Cincinnati, OH 45205

If a box number and a Post Office station name or number are used, the box number must appear first.

Miss Mary K. Titus
R.R. 2, Box 12
Greenwood, WV 26360

If a letter is for delivery, the route number must precede the box number.

Mr. Robert C. Jones
600 Vernon Street, Apt. 2
Indianapolis, IN 86002

If an apartment, room, suite or other unit number is used, it should appear after the street address and on the same line. If it is impracticable to enter such an item on the same line, it may appear in the line above the street address, but never to the left or below.

Mr. Eugene H. Mitchell
Cleo Springs, OK 73729

If a letter is going to a small town or village without a street address, rural route or a box number, a two line address is permissible.

Home Builders Association
Attention: Mr. V. E. Black
2300 Franklin Street
Chicago, IL 22330

When an attention line is used, it should be placed immediately below the addressee's name.

77K9752
The King Trucking Company
Attention: Mr. Leonardo King
240 National Drive
Tupelo, MS 98271

Subscription codes, accounting numbers, mailing list codes, etc., shall be placed on the first line to the extreme left of the mailing label. Codes of 5 or 6 digits should not be used because they may be confused with the ZIP Code when mail is hand sorted.

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Law School Library
718 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

When feasible, use the organization name rather than the name of an individual for mailing lists and pre-printed envelopes. This eliminates the need to change address plates and printing new envelopes and labels because of a name change.

4-19. Special Services. Special services, such as priority mail, special delivery, registered, certified, etc., must be stamped or otherwise indicated on the address side of the envelope or parcel. (See Appendix 2). More costly special service will not be used when a cheaper service will provide the same protection. For example, the fee for certified mail is one-fourth as much as for registered mail and provides the protection of a receipt for important mail of a nonnegotiable character.

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- 4-20. Addressograph and Computer Printed Impressions. Addressograph and computer printed impressions must be placed on the letter size envelopes within five degrees of parallel to the long edge of the mail piece. This is approximately 1/4 inch for each 3 inches of print. Use black or blue-black ink for these impressions or labels. Computer ribbons that make purple impressions are not acceptable because these impressions cannot be read by the optical character readers.
- 4-21. Rubber Stamped Addresses. Rubber stamp impressions are permissible provided they conform to all other provisions pertaining to address format, alignment and spacing requirements. Use only black ink for rubber stamp addresses.
- 4-22. Location of Address on Larger than Letter Size Mail. For mail pieces larger than 6-1/8 by 11-1/2 inches, enter the address parallel to the long edge and approximately in the center of the mail piece when practicable.
- 4-23. Self-Addressed Enclosed Envelopes. When a self-addressed envelope is to be enclosed in outgoing mail, to either a Federal establishment or the private sector and when the Department will pay the return postage cost, use a Number 10 (4-1/8" x 9-1/2") or a Number 9 (3-7/8" x 8-7/8") Business Reply Envelope. After August 1980 the "POSTAGE AND FEES PAID HUD-401" indicium is authorized for outgoing mail only by Departmental employees. Furthermore, furnishing Business Reply envelopes to bidders, contractors or to enable agencies, institutions or others to forward reports and information which they are required to submit by legislation is prohibited. (See Appendix 3).
- 4-24. Final Preparation for Mailing.
- a. Removal of Air. Press all envelopes flat before sealing to remove as much air as possible.
 - b. Sealing. Make sure each envelope is sealed securely. A major cause of sorter machine jams is unsealed flaps on otherwise ideal mail pieces.
 - c. Thick Letter Size Envelopes. Enter "Non-Machineable" above the address on any letter size envelope that is more than 1/4 inch thick.
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