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## Automation Addressing

### General Standards

For successful processing and delivery point barcoding by MLOCRs (multiple line optical character readers), the addresses on letter mail should be machine-printed, with a uniform left margin, and formatted in such a way that an MLOCR will be able to recognize the information and find a match in its address files.

A complete address is required so that an MLOCR can delivery point barcode the piece for the most precise point of delivery. In this way, you greatly improve the deliverability of your mailpiece. An MLOCR and the ZIP+4 database are better able to identify the correct delivery address the first time that the mailpiece is processed.

For faster, more accurate processing, include in the delivery address the street designators (for example, BLVD or DR); directionals (for example, NE or SW); the apartment, suite, or room number; and the ZIP+4 code.

MLOCRs can read a combination of uppercase and lowercase characters in addresses. Even though MLOCR enhancements now allow effective reading of punctuation in addresses, it still is suggested that punctuation be omitted when possible.

Whether or not punctuation is included in the address, the ZIP+4 code format is five digits, a hyphen, and four digits (for example, 12345-6789). The code eliminates guesswork about the intended destination.

For automation rates, the Postal Service requires mailers to prepare their mailings with addresses that have been verified and corrected using CASS-certified address matching software or processes. Your local mailpiece design analyst can provide you with more information.

# Mailpiece Clear Zones on Nonbarcoded Mailpieces

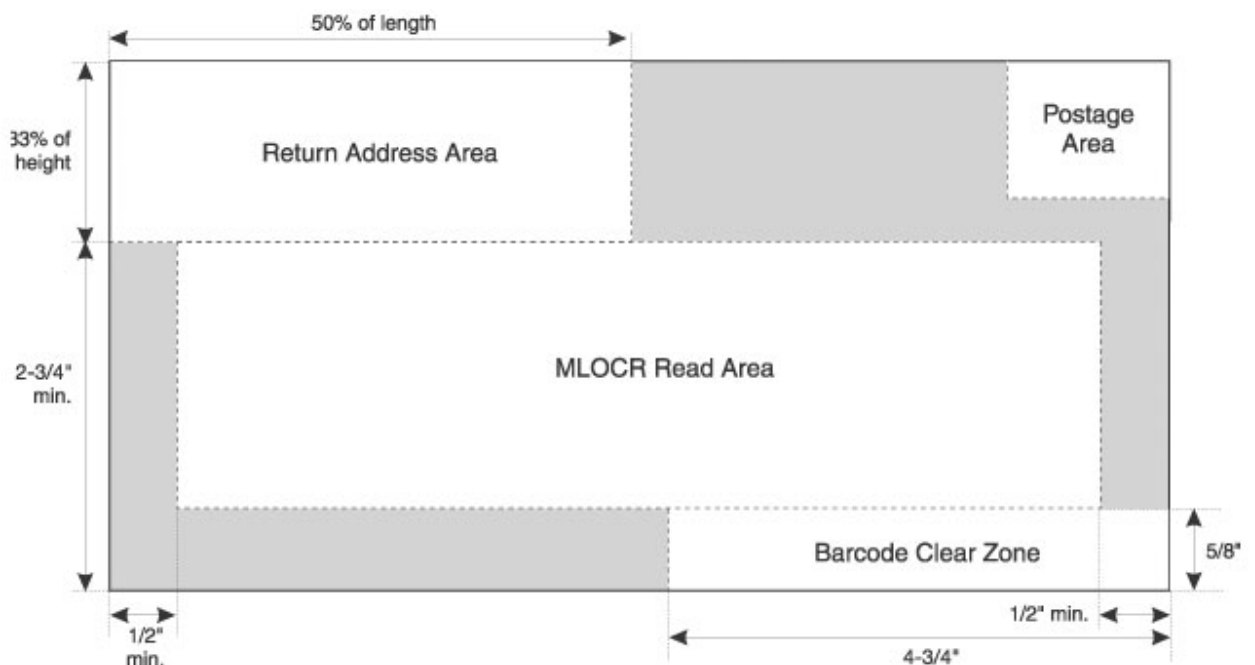
Several places on the address side of a mailpiece are reserved for addressing and related information only. These areas are the MLOCR read area, the barcode clear zone, and the return address area.

## Address Block Location

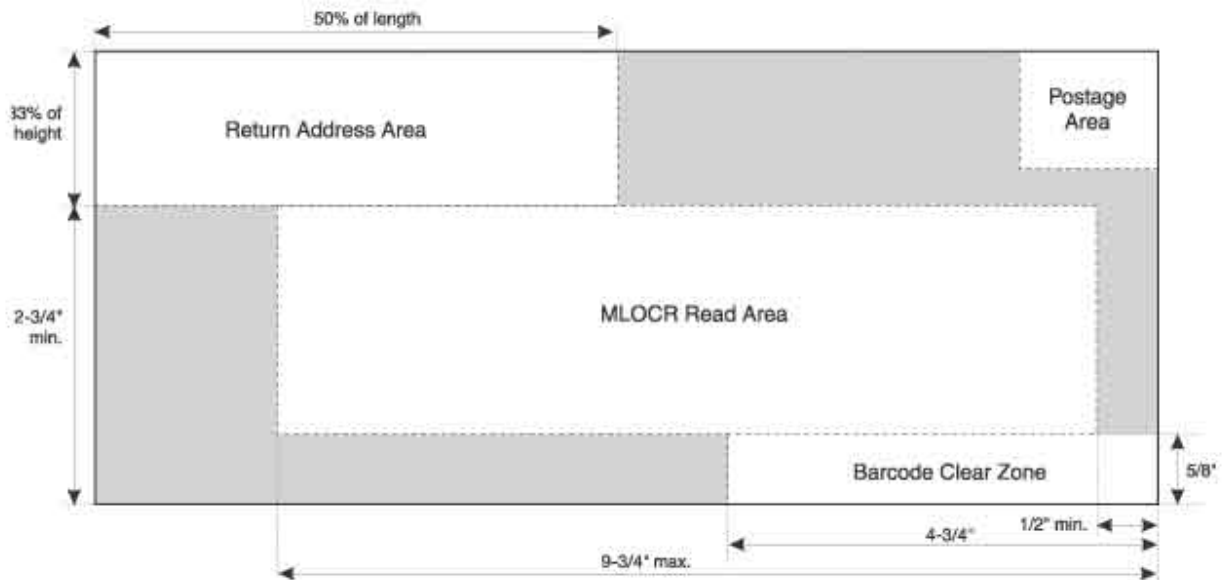
The following shows the area on letter mail where address information should be located to be read by multiline optical character readers (MLOCRs). The automation specifications are as follows:

- The MLOCR read area requires only  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch margins on the left and right sides.
- The entire address (except the optional lines above the recipient line) should appear within an imaginary rectangle that extends from  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch to  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches from the bottom edge of the mailpiece, with  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch margins on the left and right sides. This is the requirement for any letter-size mailpiece.
- For pieces longer than  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches, the address should begin no more than  $9\frac{3}{4}$  inches from the right edge.

## Mailpiece Clear Zones and Free Space (not drawn to scale)



Mailpiece clear zones (unshaded), for pieces up to  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches long



Mailpiece clear zones (unshaded), for pieces more than 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches long

The area available for nonaddress printing increases as the address information is lowered in the MLOCR read area. Positioning the address block near the bottom of the MLOCR read area gives you the most free space for logos, advertising, and other nonaddress printing. If you barcode, even more space is available.

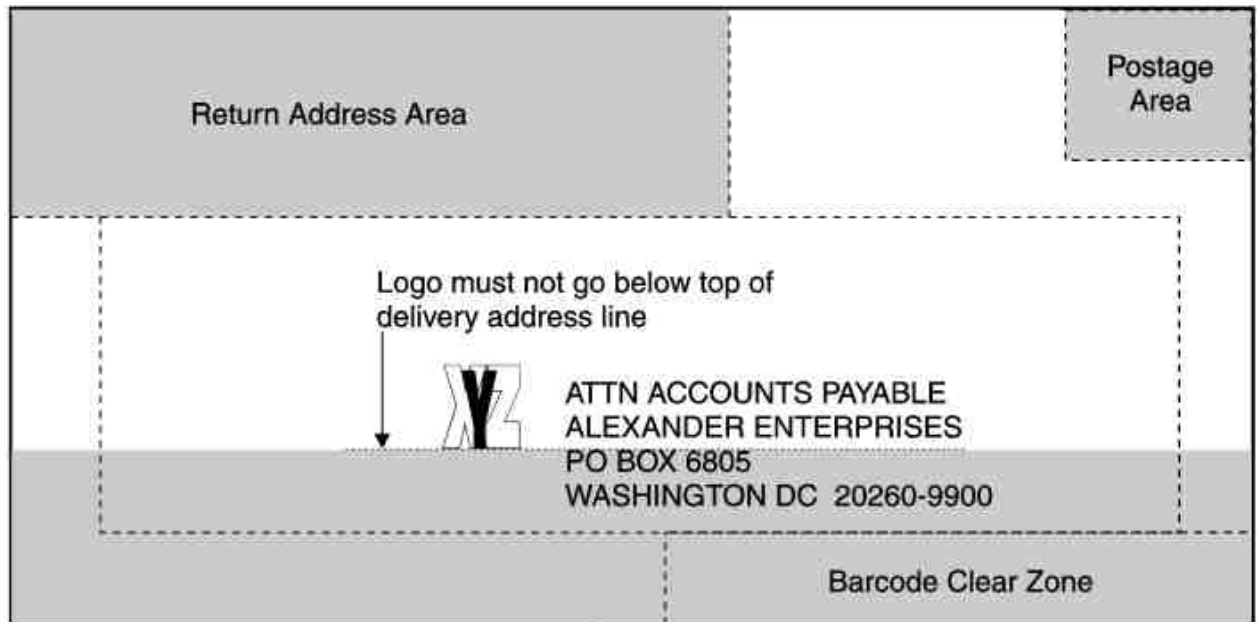
## Nonaddress Printing

Extraneous (nonaddress) printing in the MLOCR read area can confuse MLOCR scanners and prevent them from interpreting the address information correctly. This can cause them to reject the mailpiece.

Nonaddress printing such as company logos, advertising, and die cuts should not be placed within the MLOCR read area. If it is, the lowest point must be *above* the delivery address line. In other words, within the MLOCR read area, you should keep the space on either side of and below the delivery address line clear of all printing.

## **Nonaddress Printing Space (Unshaded Area)**

*(Not drawn to scale)*



### **Return Address**

You should always keep the MLOCR read area clear of return address information.

In addition to being positioned at least  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches above the bottom edge of the mailpiece, the return address should occupy an area in the far upper left corner of the mailpiece no longer than 50 percent of the length of the mailpiece. The return address should be printed in a type size smaller than the type size used in the delivery address.

### **Barcode Clear Zone**

After reading the address, the MLOCR prints the appropriate delivery point barcode in the lower right corner of the mailpiece. To ensure that the barcode is readable by barcode sorters, the barcode clear zone —  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch high by  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long—must be clear of all printing, markings, and colored borders. Certain types of coated paper should be avoided.

# Address Printing Guidelines

## Type Style

Some type faces have serifs, which are short lines that decorate the ends of letter strokes. Because type faces that have no serifs (called "sans serif" faces) are more easily read by MLOCRs, these styles are recommended for printing the delivery address.

## Display Type

Type faces (like Helvetica) with specific characteristics (like Helvetica normal 12 point) are called fonts. As a rule, do not use fonts defined as bold, extended, or condensed. Also, do not use italic, highly stylized, or script-like fonts.

### *Unacceptable Type Styles*

<b>BOLD</b>	<i>Italic</i>
E X T E N D E D	Stylized
CONDENSED	<i>Script</i>

## Reflectance and Print Contrast

### Reflectance

The ability of paper to reflect light is also an important factor for MLOCR recognition. The surface containing the address—whether an envelope, card, label, or insert—should be light enough in color to reflect a sufficient amount of light to the MLOCR's scanner. Although a white background is preferred, pastels and many other light colors are acceptable. Your mailpiece design analyst can provide you with a list of acceptable background colors.

You can check background reflectance with a USPS envelope reflectance meter or its equivalent. A reading of at least 50 percent in the red portion and 45 percent in the green portion of the optical spectrum is desirable.

Paper stocks used for envelopes and cards—as well as inks used for addresses and any other printing on the outside of letter-size mail—should not be fluorescent or phosphorescent. The glow from such paper stocks and inks can cause malfunctions during mail processing.

For window envelopes and labels, the MLOCR works best if the reflectance of the insert or label is about the same as that of the envelope. Some envelope inserts (checks, for example) are printed with a background pattern that can confuse the MLOCR. Designs and printing in the background might appear attractive to the human eye, but they can be mistaken for part of the address information by the MLOCR.

For the greatest contrast and best performance on MLOCRs and BCSs, the address should be printed in black ink on a white background. Several color

combinations are also acceptable if the ink is dark enough and the background is light enough.

Resolve any issues about print, design, and color with your mailpiece design analyst before you produce your mailpiece. We can work with you to design an effective mailpiece and ensure quality processing.