

New Standards for Letter-Sized Booklets

AGENCY: Postal Service™.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service adopts new *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) to reflect changes to the construction and sealing of letter-sized booklets mailed at automation, presorted machinable or carrier route letter prices. We also adopt a definition of booklets and clarify weight standards for letter-sized mail.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 8, 2009.

Changes for Booklets

General

This final rule includes the new required DMM standards for design, preparation, and sealing of machinable and automation letter-size booklets. We also describe in this final rule, recommended upgrades to the new requirements. We base these recommendations on observations of a wide variety of booklets tested and observed over the past several years. Following these recommendations will minimize mailpiece damage and maximize the efficient processing of booklets.

Definition

Booklets consist of bound sheets or pages. Binding methods that are compatible with machinable processing include perfect binding, permanent fastening with at least two staples in the manufacturing fold (saddle stitched), pressed glue, or another binding method that creates a nearly uniformly thick mailpiece. Spiral bindings are not machinable so booklets prepared with spiral bindings do not qualify for automation prices. Large booklets may be folded to letter-size for mailing if the final mailpiece remains uniform in thickness.

Physical Characteristics

The maximum height for all machinable and automation booklets is six inches and the maximum length can vary between 9 and 10-1/2 inches, depending on the booklet design. The minimum thickness for booklets is 0.009 inch and the maximum thickness is 0.25 inch regardless of size. Thickness is measured at the spine of the mailpiece.

The current maximum weight of 3 ounces has not changed and is applicable to all mailpieces prepared without envelopes. However, to improve machinability we recommend reducing the length of 3-ounce booklets to a final trim size of 9 inches.

Cover stock requirements vary with 40-pound minimum basis weight for folded booklet designs and 60- or 70-pound minimum basis weight for pieces longer than 9 inches. Lighter-weight paper tends to be easily damaged in processing equipment. The use of paper that is 10 pounds heavier than the

required minimum basis weight is recommended for better processing performance. We strongly recommend using a minimum of 70-pound paper as cover stock on mailpiece designs that approach maximum booklet dimensions. References to paper weights are for book-grade paper unless otherwise specified. A paper grade conversion table is included in DMM Exhibit 201.3.2 for reference.

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 are nonmachinable.

Tabs used to seal booklets must not have perforations. Generally, booklets need three 1-1/2 inch tabs as closures. For larger or heavier booklets, we recommend 2-inch paper tabs. Glue spots or a continuous glue line may be used to seal some booklet designs.

Booklets that do not comply with the new standards will not be eligible for machinable or automation letter prices. Nonmachinable booklets will be assessed a surcharge (for First-Class Mail®), pay nonmachinable prices (for Standard Mail®), or pay nonbarcoded prices (for Periodicals).

Exhibit 3.2 Paper Basis Weight Conversion Table

| NOTE: 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 |

[Revise heading and introductory text of renumbered 3.3 as follows:]

3.3 Dimensions and Shape

Each machinable or automation letter-sized piece must be rectangular (see 1.1.1) and must meet the following standards (see 3.15 for booklets):

3.15.3 Physical Standards for Booklets

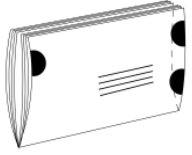
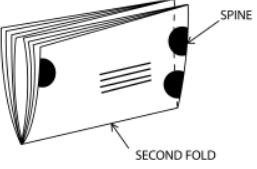
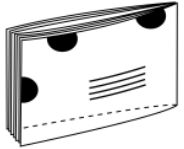
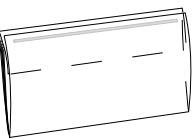
Booklets must be:

- a. Height: not more than 6 inches or less than 3.5 inches high.
- b. Length: not more than 10.5 inches or less than 5 inches long. See Exhibit 3.15.4 for some booklet designs with shorter maximum lengths.
- c. Thickness: not more than 0.25 inch or less than 0.009 inch thick.
- d. Weight: not more than 3 ounces.
- e. Aspect ratio: within 1.3 to 2.5 (see 201.3.1).

3.15.4 Booklet Design and Sealing

Booklets may be designed with the spine or final fold at the bottom or on the leading edge. See Exhibit 3.15.4 for design and sealing standards.

Exhibit 3.15.4 Booklet Design

| If the spine or final fold is... | And the length is... | The cover stock must be at least... | Mailables 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> <p>Over 9", up to 10.5" long</p> | <p>50-pound</p> <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> <p>Over 9", up to 10.5" long</p> | <p>60-pound</p> <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> |