



DataMark Mailing Services, Inc.
6700 Dixie Hwy LL
Florence, KY 41042

Phone: 859-283-9333
Web: www.DataMarkMailing.com

Reply Mail

Basic Information

If your business receives most of its orders and payments by mail, your business depends financially on its incoming mail. Orders and payments are usually a response to a mailing to customers, which is why these responses are called reply mail.

Naturally, you want to get as many responses as you can, as quickly as you can. And the Postal Service wants to help you do just that. By using special reply mail formats and features, you can increase responses and receive them sooner.

Choosing Reply Mail Type

Basic Types

There are two basic types of reply mail—business reply mail (BRM) and courtesy reply mail (CRM)—and several specialized varieties. Although BRM and CRM are similar, there is a significant difference.

Business Reply Mail

Business reply mail (BRM) requires that postage be paid by you (the sender) if your customer (the respondent) mails the reply back to you. BRM is appropriate when your customer needs a little extra inducement to reply—in other words, the response or its timing is not assured. This type of reply mail is frequently used by direct marketers seeking orders, researchers pursuing questionnaire responses, or magazine publishers soliciting subscriptions.

The extra inducement is provided because your customer does not need to affix the return postage, does not have to supply a postcard or envelope, and does not need to put an address on the mailpiece. The exhibit shows a standard BRM piece in postcard and envelope formats.

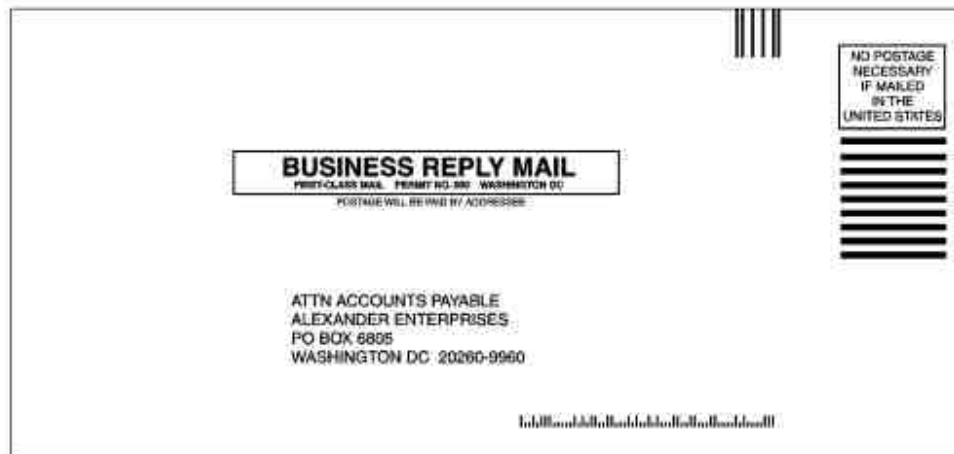
Courtesy Reply Mail

Courtesy reply mail (CRM) requires your customer (the respondent) to affix the postage before mailing the reply back to you (the sender). CRM is appropriate when the response is more or less assured, such as for billings.

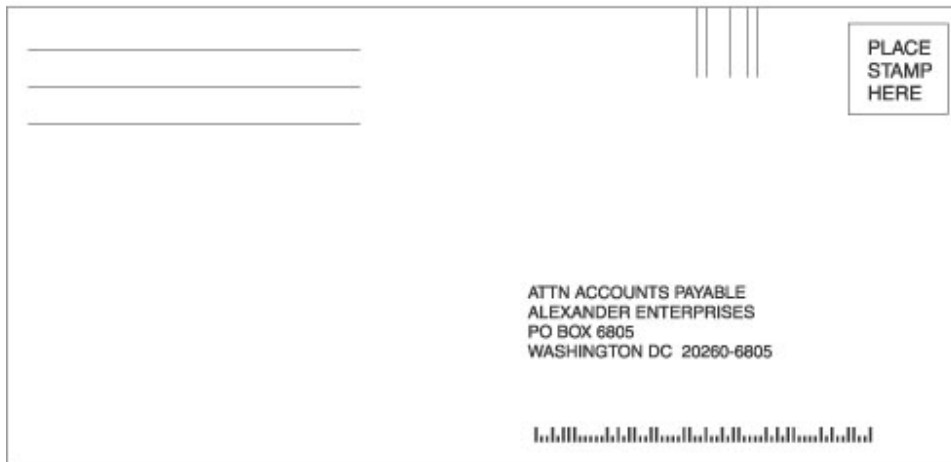
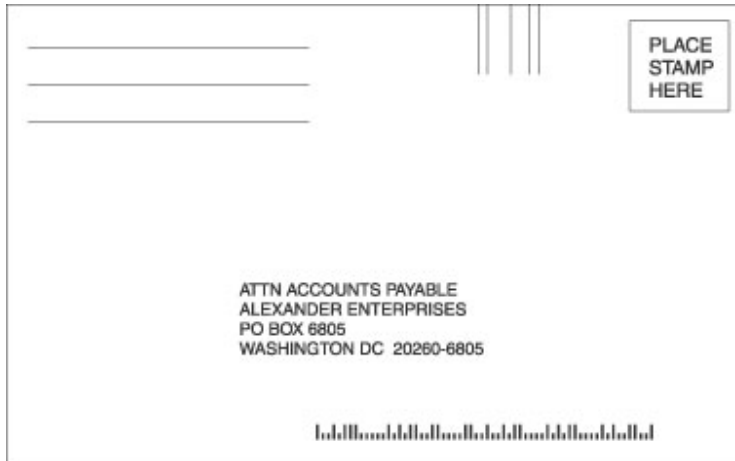
Although the customer usually pays the return postage, the preaddressed postcard or envelope add convenience and ensures addressing accuracy. The following shows a standard CRM piece in postcard and envelope formats.

BRM Postcard and Envelope

(not drawn to scale)



CRM Postcard and Envelope
(not drawn to scale)



Benefiting From Reply Mail

Reply mail offers two major advantages: faster response and more accurate delivery.

The easier you make it for your customer to respond, the quicker the return will come. A preaddressed (and perhaps postage-paid) envelope containing the customer's order or check is easy to mail. Customers have positive attitudes about creditors, marketers, and fund-raisers who show foresight and consideration by providing reply mail cards, envelopes, or labels.

With BRM and CRM, your address is preprinted. This is especially important when you want payments and inquiries directed to an address that is different from your usual mailing address.

Because there is no chance that your customer can misaddress the mail to you, you eliminate potential misdeliveries. By using POSTNET barcodes on the

envelopes you make sure that your reply mail benefits fully from USPS automated sorting equipment.

Meeting General Requirements

This publication shows you how to design envelopes or cards for letter-size reply mail.

All BRM customers must have unique ZIP+4 codes specific to BRM. Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) customers must have unique ZIP+4 codes for each category of BRM piece (such as postcard, 1-ounce letter, or 2-ounce letter).

Selecting Facing Identification Marks

Description

The facing identification mark (FIM) is a pattern of vertical bars printed in the upper right portion of a mailpiece, to the left of the postage area. A FIM pattern is essentially a nine-bit code consisting of bars and no-bar placeholders. The presence of a bar can be considered a binary "1" (one); the absence of a bar, a binary "0" (zero).

The FIM patterns currently used translate into these binary codes:

- FIM A: 110010011.
- FIM B: 101101101.
- FIM C: 110101011.
- FIM D: 111010111.

Purpose

The FIM uses a code that tells automated processing equipment some of what it needs to know to do its job. The FIM allows automatic facing (orientation) of the mail for cancellation (postmarking). The FIM also identifies reply mail that bears a preprinted barcode. Barcoded mail is then routed directly to a high-speed barcode sorter, bypassing slower manual sorting or optical character reader (OCR) processing.

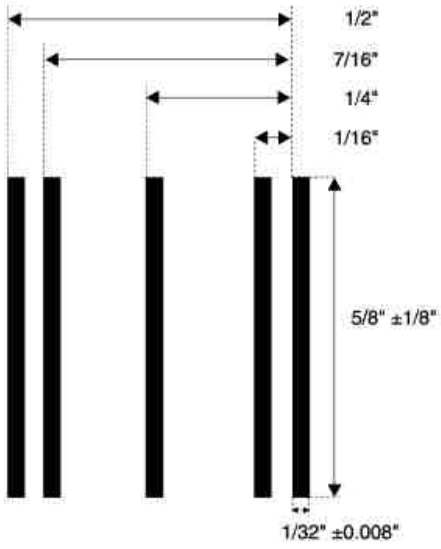
Use

Determine which FIM to use as follows:

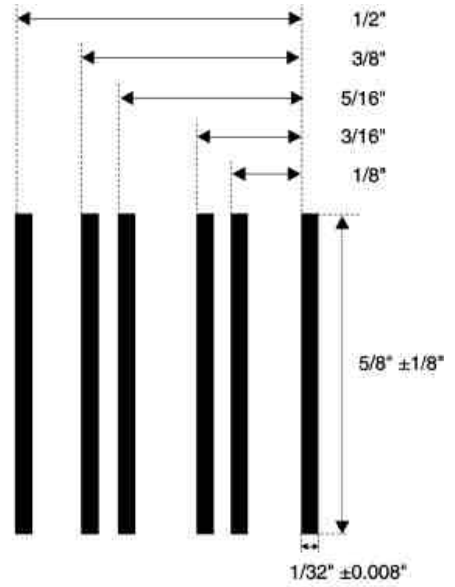
- FIM A is used for CRM and MRM with a preprinted barcode.
- FIM B is used for BRM without a preprinted BRM ZIP+4 barcode.
- FIM C is used for BRM with a preprinted BRM ZIP+4 barcode.
- FIM D is used only with information based indicia (IBI) postage.

FIMs A, B, C, and D
 (not drawn to scale)

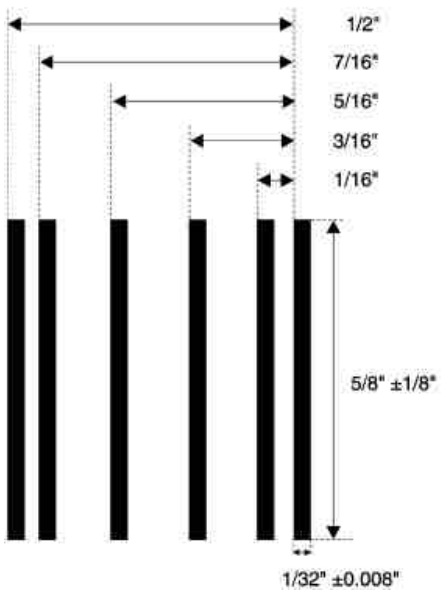
A



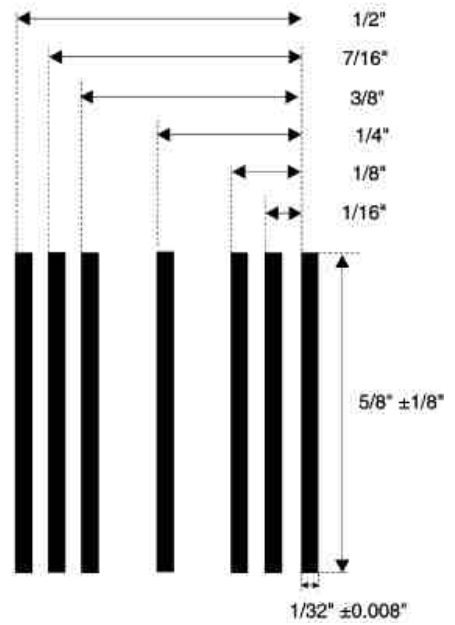
B



C



D



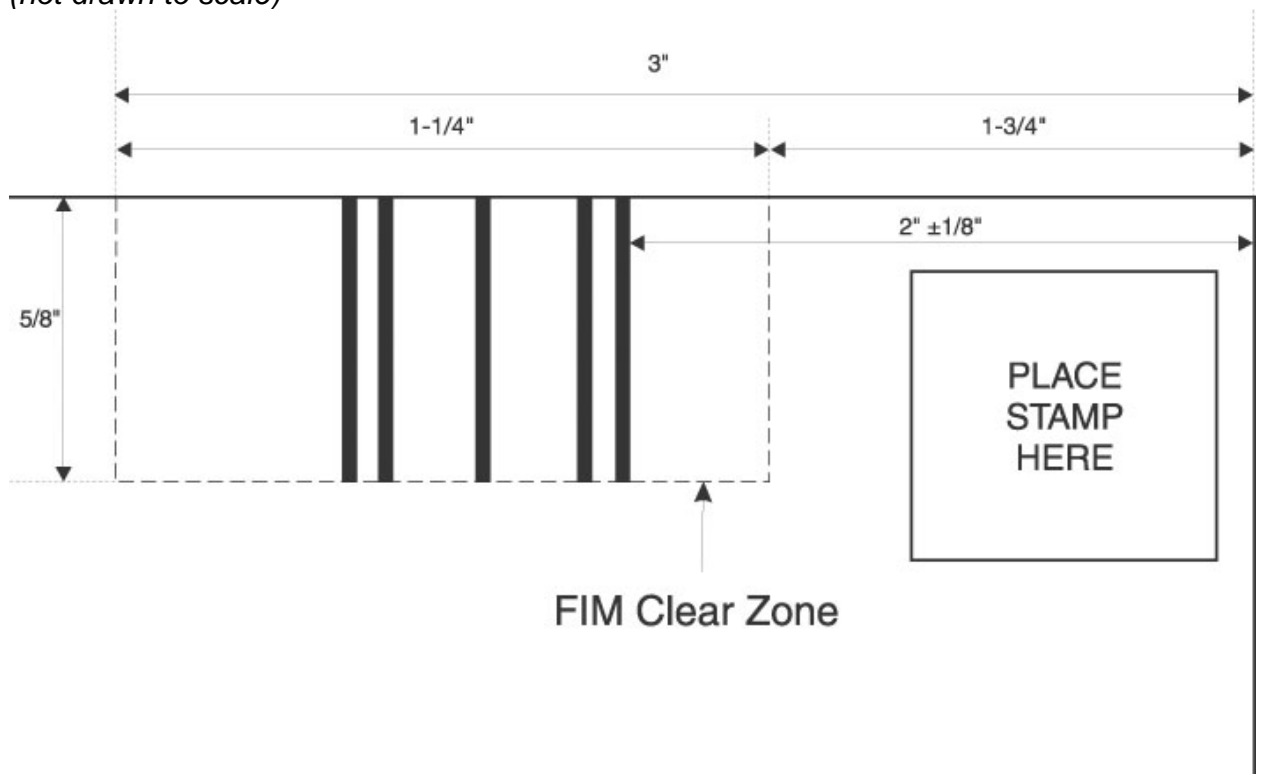
FIM Standards

Make sure the FIM meets the following standards:

- The FIM clear zone must contain no printing other than the FIM pattern. Below shows the configuration of the clear zone and the correct location of the FIM.
- The rightmost bar of the FIM must be 2 inches $\pm 1/8$ inch from the right edge of each mailpiece.
- The FIM bars must be $5/8$ inch high $\pm 1/8$ inch and $1/32$ inch wide ± 0.008 inch.
- The tops of the FIM bars must be no lower than $1/8$ inch from the top edge of each mailpiece. They may extend over the top edge to the flap.
- The bottoms of the FIM bars should touch the bottom edge of the FIM clear zone but must not be more than $1/8$ inch above or below that edge.

FIM Location

(not drawn to scale)



Avoiding Sorting Errors

Although preparing reply mail properly can benefit you and the Postal Service, errors can negate those benefits. For example, printing the wrong barcode on a reply piece can direct your mail to the wrong post office. A wrong barcode delays delivery of your mail and adds extra processing steps for the Postal Service.

Even though barcodes representing different delivery points can look nearly identical, the correct barcode is essential. The barcode used for regular mail delivery is different from the barcode used for BRM.

It's also easy to confuse different FIM patterns. So before you format and print reply mail, be sure that the barcode and FIM are correct for that use.

It is also important that you position the barcode and FIM properly on reply pieces if automated processing is to succeed. If part of the barcode lies outside the read area, the barcode might not be scanned accurately. In such cases, your mail is rejected by the BCS and must be sorted by hand or by slower machines.

Mailpiece design analysts are assigned to business mail entry units (BMEUs) throughout the country to help you design your reply mail. To make sure that your piece achieves the best quality, provide samples of your BRM or CRM pieces to an MDA early in the design process, allowing time for changes before printing.