

Mandatory address location, type changes set March 29, 2009, for newspapers and shoppers

Mandatory delivery address label location on Periodicals and Standard Mail “flats” like newspapers and shoppers go into effect March 29, 2009, to meet the demands of new Flats Sequencing Systems (FSS) being deployed by the U.S. Postal Service.

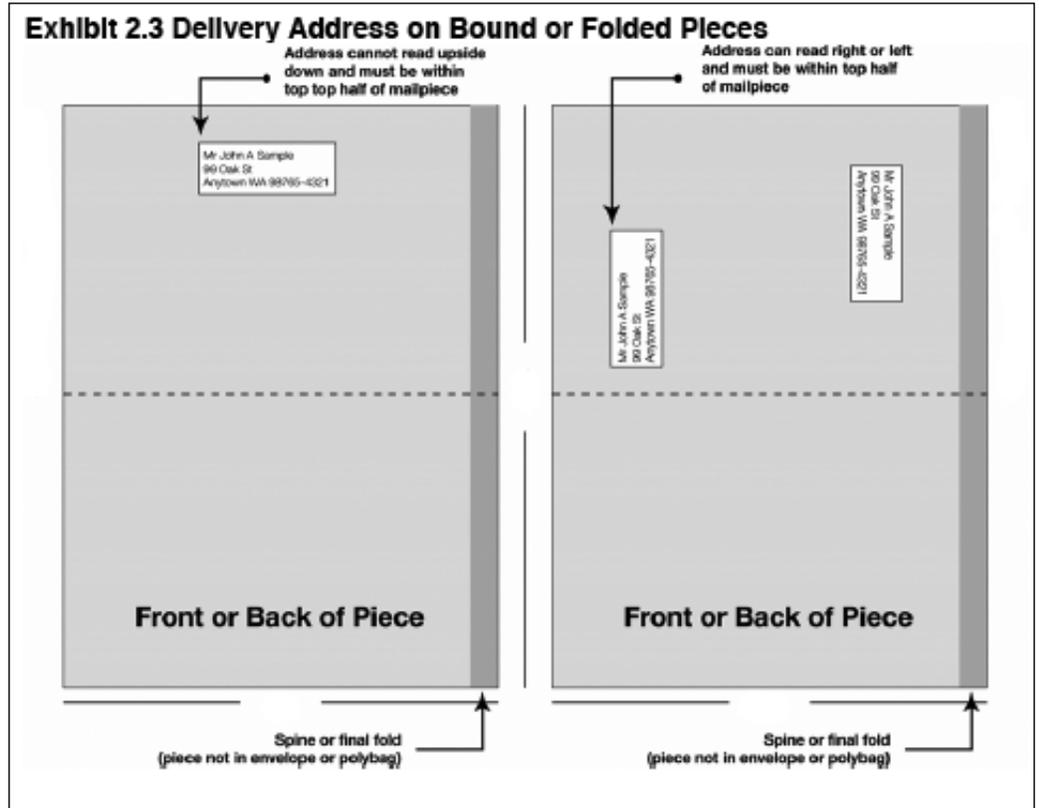
The standards allow carriers to read addresses quickly on “flat” mail like newspapers, magazines, and large envelopes when sorted vertically for carriers by FSS machines.

The new standards are fairly liberal, although they may require some adjustment for publishers, who have never had mandatory address location requirements to deal with before. The National Newspaper Association helped shape the rules through involvement in postal work groups. The final standards were unveiled in my May 2008, column, and are presented in edited form here as one last reminder:

Though most newspapers will not be run on FSS machines in their area, some small portion could end up being mailed into an area where FSS machines are operating.

ADDRESS LOCATION RULES

The delivery address must be in the vertical “upper portion” of all Periodicals and Standard Mail. “The address may be placed either parallel or perpendicular to the top edge, but **not upside down** as read in relation to the top edge.” The new standards define “upper portion” as the top half of a



The USPS is initiating new address label placement regulations. The delivery address must be in the upper portion of all Periodicals and Standard Mail. The address may be placed either parallel or perpendicular to the top edge, but **not upside down** as read in relation to the top edge. The new standards define upper portion as the top half of a mailpiece.

newspaper on either **front or back**.

For newspapers, the “top” is “the upper edge of the mailpiece *when the bound or final folded edge is vertical and on the right side of the piece.*” This would apply equally to broadsheets and tabloids. (See graphics with this column to help understand this.)

One exception: For carrier route (or Enhanced Carrier Route) Saturation pieces, the “top” of the mailpiece is either of the shorter edges. In plain language, either end of Saturation mail, either Periodicals or Standard, can be considered the top. But with other mail, the top is with the final fold to the right.

Mailers are encouraged to place the address as close to the top edge as possible. The address must also be at least one-eighth-inch from any edge.

Many newspapers already comply with the new address location standards. Those who are not have until March 29 to shift address label or inkjet location.

TYPE REQUIREMENTS

Addresses must be printed in a minimum 8-point type size. However, if the address label contains an 11-digit POSTNET or Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) with a delivery point routing code (the last two digits

after the now-required 9-digit barcode), a minimum of 6-point type in all capital letters is allowed. All CAPS type and a sans serif font are preferred.

Because newspapers *should* place automation barcodes on their mail, it is nice to have the option to print type ranging from 6-8 point as needed. It is unwise to reduce the point size any more than absolutely necessary to fit a typical one-inch label, however.

“In addition, for all automation price pieces, the characters in the address must not overlap, the address lines must not touch or overlap, and each address element may be separated by no more than five blank spaces,” the rules state.

As a practical matter, all address labels in a mailing will have to meet these standards. Most newspaper software programs I am familiar with meet these standards, without letters touching or lines overlapping, and no big gaps between the city and state, or state and ZIP code. But if your program does not meet these standards, point the problem out to your software vendor to make sure it is compliant by March 29, 2009. The type rules are a software vendor or printer issue.



Quarter-folded newspaper. “Top” is upper edge when the final fold is on the right.

ENVELOPED MAIL

For mailers of large Automation and Presorted First-Class envelopes, it should be noted that the same standards apply. Addresses will no longer be centered as typical on large envelopes.

The Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) on the top line of a label (a series of asterisks followed by the sortation of the piece—3-digit XXX, etc.), is being shortened to allow mailers to place information such as customer identification numbers to the left end of the OEL.

The new address standards do not change existing options for indicia placement on permit mail. Address

location changes should not require moving indicia. For mail with indicia, the delivery address *must* be on the side indicating postage paid.

NNA stands ready to help answer questions and clarify the requirements.

MAY 2009 RATE CHANGES ANNOUNCED THIS MONTH

USPS is expected to announce as early as Feb. 10 new prices effective in May. Under the postal reform act of 2006, increases at the class level are limited to consumer price index, which was 3.8 percent for 2008. In-county is measured at covering 94.5 percent of its costs,

while outside-county is only 82.9 percent. However, no variance from the 3.8 percent average is expected. Watch next month's column for details.

NNA is also supporting Congressional legislation that would reduce USPS costs for prepaying retiree health benefits under the reform bill, which will help USPS and all mailers in the long run in this difficult economy. © Max Heath 2009

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