

# Direct Mail Checklist: Design & Preparation

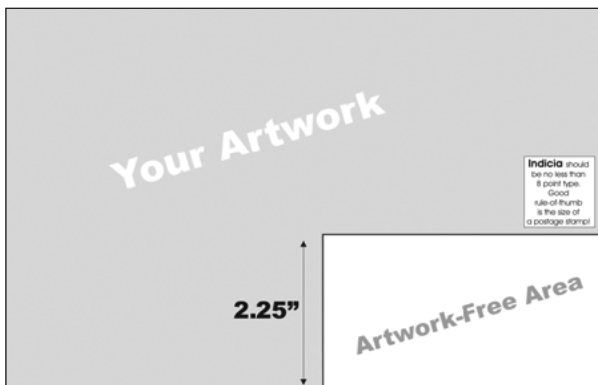
## Design Checklist

### Mail Piece Design:

- Ensure aspect ratio is more than 1.3 and less than 2.5 (ratio is determined by dividing the length of a piece by the height) and a letter size piece must be rectangular and horizontal/landscape in design (a flat can be either vertical/portrait or horizontal/landscape).
- Postcards claiming first-class postcard rates must be smaller than 4.25" x 6" and be printed on material that is .007" thick (commonly known as 7 pt stock).
- Postcards larger than 4.25" x 6" are considered letters in First-Class (Standard Mail does not have a postcard category and treats all postcards as letters).
- Postcards larger than 4.25" x 6" are required to be printed on a minimum of .009" thick (commonly known as 9 pt stock).
- Some classes of mail have specific rules and requirements:
  - First-Class Mail requires a return address and ancillary endorsement (if no ancillary endorsement is present, Return Service Requested is assumed).
  - Non-profit mail requires a return address somewhere on or in the mail piece.
  - Standard and Non-profit mail that use an ancillary endorsement will require First-Class postage to be paid for any returned mail.
- Wafer Seals/Tabs have various rules. Best plan is to have all folded edges at the right and bottom and tabs at the top.
- Booklets have special design requirements and sizes.
- Flats have special addressing requirements for Standard mail. First-Class Presort and First-class single piece are currently exempt (but may eventually need to meet these requirements).

### Paper and Other Design Elements:

- 7 point stock for small postcards and 9 point stock for larger postcards.
- Visibly recycled and dark colored paper may not be automation compatible. This includes Astrobright colors.
- Coatings and varnish should be avoided on the addressing area.



## Addressing Checklist

### Address Block:

- Minimum font size is 8 pt. type (any readable font)
  - Rule of Thumb: an area of 2" high x 4" wide is recommended to fit all of the barcode and address information without having other text/graphics in this area. Best practice would be to plan 2.25" x 4" from the bottom right of the mailpiece (incorporates next checklist items).
- Must be no higher than 2.75" from the bottom edge and lower than 0.625" from the bottom edge of the piece.
- At least .5" on the right and left to edge of piece or .125" from any graphical elements.
- The address block area is free from coatings or varnish.
- Also recommended that no text be placed in the bottom 0.625" as the post office may use this area to apply additional barcodes and stickers.
- In a window envelope, a minimum of .125" space around the entire address area must be maintained (do the "tap" test!).
- For most efficient handling sequence, package, and container numbers and breakmark should be printed in the address block.

### Barcode:

- Barcode should have at least .5" of space between the last bar and the leading edge of the piece (right edge).
- Barcode should have at least .125" of space between any graphical element and the first bar of the barcode.
- Should be generated using the ZIP+4, delivery point and check digit for POSTNET barcodes.
- Recommended barcode width is 22 bars per inch.

### Indicia:

- Contains correct class/rate
- Contains the words US Postage PAID
- Contains permit number
- Contains mailing city and state

### CASS/DPV, NCOA & Presorting:

- CASS Certification/DPV is required for all automation postal discounts.
- National Change of Address (NCOA) processing is required for all postal discounts.
- Presorting requires a sample of 10 to be weighed and the thickness measured (measure this at the thickest part of the pieces—i.e. the stitches or thickest folds)



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