

USPS AUTOMATION COMPATABILITY

LEAP DAY 2008

The U.S. Postal Service has spent millions of dollars to automate its mail-sorting services. Automation reduces the need for postal employees to handle the mail. Scanners now read addresses, route mail through sophisticated sorting machines and create bundles of ZIP-sorted mail for letter carriers.

Automation compatibility is something all mailers and print buyers should be aware of as they design and create direct-mail pieces.

When a brochure is mailed in an envelope, mail sorting is easy, as the printed piece is enclosed and protected. Many mailers, however, want to avoid the cost of envelopes and the time it takes to stuff them. Hence the evolution of the "self-mailer."



Wafer-Sealing/Tabbing

Self-mailers have addresses sprayed directly on or printed address labels affixed to them. In addition to addressing, mailers must often apply wafer seals or "tabs." This ensures the mail piece has no pages flopping open that will jam up the postal service's sorting equipment. How many seals and where they are placed depend on the brochure's folding or binding format. The diagrams below show how to wafer seal first-class and bulk mail pieces so they become automation-compatible for the USPS.



become automation-compatible for the USPS.

Folded self-mailers weighing less than 3.3 oz.

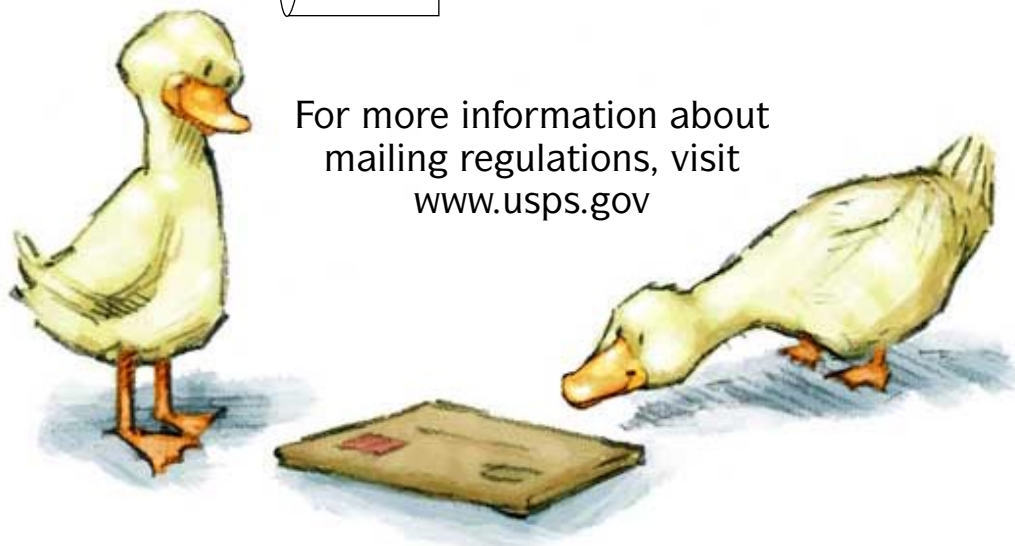
- Single sheet folded once
- Single sheet folded multiple times ...
- Multiple sheets folded once
- Accordion-folded sheet
- Right-side-fold single sheet (less than 7 inches)
- Right-side-fold single sheet (7 inches or more)
- Invitation-fold



Bound self-mailers weighing less than 3.3 oz.

- Bottom-bound booklet
- Right-side-bound booklet

Always design a self-mailer so the final folded or bound edge is on the bottom or at the right side as you view the address panel.



For more information about mailing regulations, visit www.usps.gov

Pondering a direct-mail piece for your organization?

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