



## Commercial Letters and Cards Postal Regulations

The Postal Service classifies letters and cards into one of three categories: Machinable, nonmachinable, and automation. For the purposes of determining mailability or machinability, the length is the dimension parallel to the address as read.

Letter Dimensions			
		Minimum	Maximum
	Length	5 inches	11-1/2 inches
	Height	3-1/2 inches	6-1/8 inches
Thickness	0.007 inch	1/4 inch	

Card Dimensions			
		Minimum	Maximum
	Length	5 inches	6 inches
	Height	3-1/2 inches	4-1/4 inches
Thickness	0.007 inch	0.016 inch	

### Machinable Letters and Cards

If you prepare your letters and cards so that they have an accurate address and can be processed on Postal Service equipment, your mail is "machinable" and eligible for "presort" rates. Machinable mail pieces must meet specific standards, including size, shape, and weight.

**Maximum weight:** First-Class Mail, machinable letters and Standard Mail machinable letters: 3.3 ounces, Periodicals letters: 3.5 ounces.

Machinable letters must not meet any of the nonmachinable characteristics.

#### Dimensions:

- Minimum: 5 in. long, 3-1/2 in. high, and 0.007 in. thick.
- Maximum for First-Class Mail card rates: 6 in. long, 4-1/4 in. high, and 0.016 in. thick.
- Maximum for letters and other cards: 11-1/2 in. long, 6-1/8 in. high, and 1/4 in. thick.
- Rectangular, with four square corners and parallel opposite sides. Letter-size, card-type mail pieces made of cardstock may have finished corners that do not exceed a radius of 1/8 in.



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### Nonmachinable Letters

**Maximum weight:** First-Class Mail and Periodicals nonmachinable letters 3.5 ounces; Standard Mail nonmachinable letters; 3.3 ounces.

- Presorted First-Class Mail letters are subject to a \$0.20 nonmachinable surcharge if they meet any of the characteristics. The nonmachinable characteristics do not apply to pieces mailed at card rates.
- Standard Mail letters that weigh 3.3 ounces or less and have one or more of the nonmachinable characteristics are subject to the nonmachinable letter rates.
- Standard Mail letters that weigh more than 3.3 ounces and are prepared as nonmachinable letters are mailable at Not Flat-Machinable rates.

**Dimensions:** See machinable letters and cards above.

Examples of a nonmachinable letter include:

- It is more than 4-1/4 in. high or more than 6 in. long and is less than 0.009 in. thick.
- It has clasps, strings, buttons, or similar closure devices.
- It is too rigid.
- It has a delivery address parallel to the shorter side of the mail piece.
- It contains items such as pens, pencils, or keys that create an uneven thickness.
- It has an aspect ratio (length divided by height) of less than 1.3 or more than 2.5 (a square envelope has an aspect ratio of 1, making it nonmachinable).

Additional restrictions apply to self-mailers and booklets.

### Automation Letters and Cards

If your letter-size mail piece is machinable and displays the correct delivery point barcode or Intelligent Mail barcode, you may qualify for lower, "automation" rates. A letter or card meets automation standards and qualifies for automation rates if it meets the specific addressing, barcoding, and design standards.

#### Maximum weight:

- First-Class Mail automation letters: 3.5 ounces.
- Periodicals automation letters: 3.5 ounces.
- Standard Mail automation letters and Enhanced Carrier Route letters: 3.5 ounces.

Shape: Rectangular. Aspect ratio (length divided by height): 1.3 to 2.5.

#### Dimensions:

- Maximum for First-Class Mail card rates: 4-1/4 in. high, 6 in. long, and 0.016 in. thick.
- Maximum for letters and other cards: 6-1/8 in. high, 11-1/2 in. long, and 1/4 in. thick.
- Minimum: 3-1/2 in. high, 5 in. long, and either 0.007 in. thick if not more than 4-1/4 in. high and 6 in. long; or 0.009 in. thick if more than 4-1/4 in. high or 6 in. long, or both.

Length is the dimension parallel to the address as read.

All letter-size reply cards and envelopes (business reply, courtesy reply, and meter reply mail) provided as enclosures must meet the physical standards for automation letters and cards.