

Make your mail machinable and readable...

Optical character readers (OCRs) and barcodes sorters (BCSs) increase the speed, efficiency, and accuracy of processing your mail while keeping postal operating costs down. These computerized mail processing machines are located in post offices across the nation and are programmed to “read” and sort up to 36,000 pieces of mail per hour. That’s 10 pieces every second. But if your mail isn’t technically compatible, you’ll miss the related benefits.

So what type of mail is considered technically compatible? “Machinable” mail is the right size and shape to speed with ease through the equipment. “Readable” mail is quickly and accurately read, coded, and sorted by the equipment.

Processing Equipment

The OCR

Each piece of mail passes by the computer’s scanner for a quick read of the delivery address. Then the OCR’s printer sprays on a delivery point barcode for that address. Next, the mailpiece zooms on to one of the OCR’s sorting channels reserved for the proper delivery area. From there, the barcoded mail is fed to BCSs for fast final separations — right down to the letter carriers who deliver it.

The OCR is easily confused by sloppy handwriting, highly stylized characters, extraneous printing, and incorrectly placed address information.

The Barcode Sorter

As the barcode on your mailpiece shoots past the scanner, it is quickly read and sent to the appropriate channel for delivery.

Automation Requirements

Size

Make sure that your letter mail is the proper size. Mailpieces smaller than the dimensions below are not mailable. Letter mail larger than the dimensions is mailable but must bypass the OCR and be processed through slower and less efficient manual methods.

Dimensions	Minimum	Maximum
Height	3 1/2"	6 1/8"
Length	5"	11 1/2"
Thickness	.007"	1/4" *

* Card stock thickness should not exceed .0095".

Address Location

The OCR looks for the address within a rectangular space on each mailpiece, called the **OCR read area**. All lines of the address should fall within the OCR read area for the best results. No portion of the return address should appear in the OCR read area.

Address Lines

Keep address lines in the same order as shown in the illustration below. Make sure the address is as complete as possible, including all apartment or suite numbers and proper delivery designations such as RD, ST, NW, and S.

Address Characters

Capitalize everything, using plain block letters or a sans serif typeface such as Helvetica. Omit all punctuation, except the hyphen in the ZIP+4 code. Use abbreviations whenever possible.

Spacing

The OCR must see a clear vertical space between each character and each word or it won’t know where one ends and the next begins. It also needs a clear horizontal space between each line of the address. Clear spaces between words should be at least equal to the width of one full-size character, like a capital “M.”

Barcode Clear Area

The barcode clear area must remain free of all printing, markings, or colored borders and allow for a clean display of the barcode.

Non-Address Information

Extraneous printing such as advertising copy or company logos should be positioned above the delivery address line. The space below and on either side of the delivery address line should be clear of all printing and markings not actually part of the address.

Foreign Addresses

Foreign mailings should have the country name, printed in capital letters, as the only information on the bottom line. The postal zone, if any, should be included with the city. For example:

MR THOMAS CLARK
117 RUSSELL DRIVE
LONDON W1P6HQ
ENGLAND

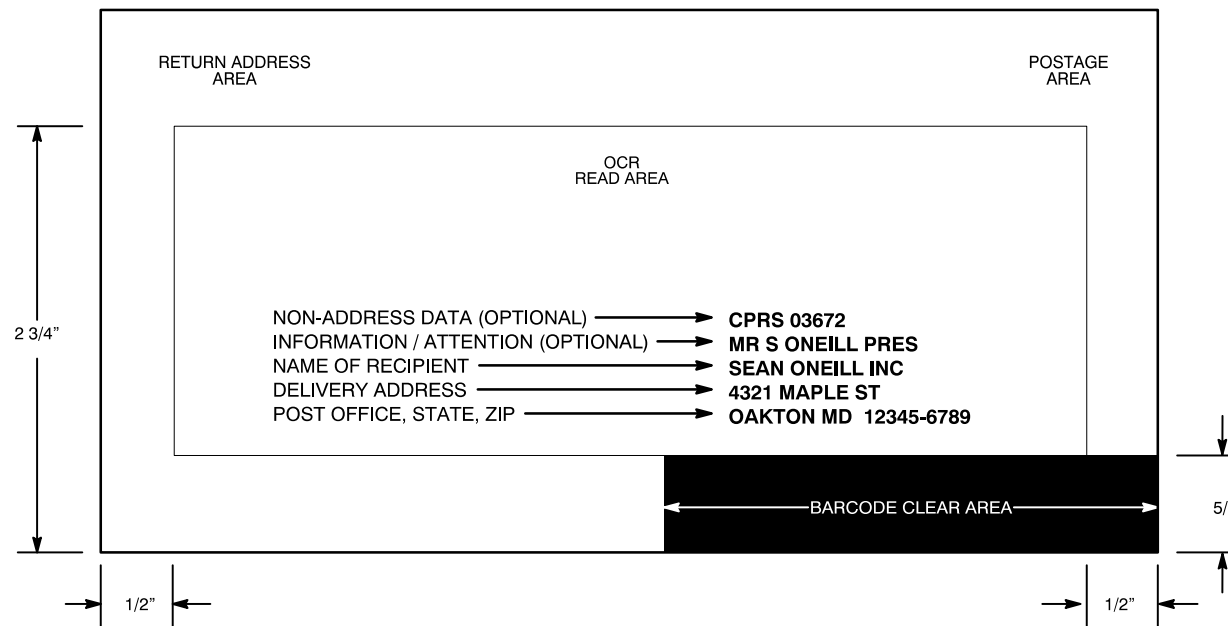
Window Envelopes

The entire address must always be visible through window envelopes. If part of the address is hidden, the OCR rejects the envelope and sends it off for manual processing.

Print Quality and Color

The OCR performs best with black ink on a white background. Although certain color combinations are acceptable, it cannot read the address if there is not enough contrast between the ink and paper. Keep the ink as dark as possible and the background as light as possible.

If you have any questions concerning your mail and our computerized processing equipment, please contact the nearest Postal Business Center. They will be glad to help.



State/Territory Abbreviations

Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
American Samoa	AS	Nevada	NV
Arizona	AZ	New Hampshire	NH
Arkansas	AR	New Jersey	NJ
California	CA	New Mexico	NM
Colorado	CO	New York	NY
Connecticut	CT	North Carolina	NC
Delaware	DE	North Dakota	ND
District of Columbia	DC	Northern Mariana Is.	MP
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK
Guam	GU	Oregon	OR
Hawaii	HI	Palau	PW
Idaho	ID	Pennsylvania	PA
Illinois	IL	Puerto Rico	PR
Indiana	IN	Rhode Island	RI
Iowa	IA	South Carolina	SC
Kansas	KS	South Dakota	SD
Kentucky	KY	Tennessee	TN
Louisiana	LA	Texas	TX
Maine	ME	Utah	UT
Marshall Islands	MH	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Virgin Islands	VI
Michigan	MI	Washington	WA
Minnesota	MN	West Virginia	WV
Mississippi	MS	Wisconsin	WI
Missouri	MO	Wyoming	WY

Locator and Directional Abbreviations

Avenue	AVE	Lake	LK
Boulevard	BLVD	Lane	LN
Court	CT	Mountain	MTN
Center	CTR	Parkway	PKY
Drive	DR	Place	PL
Expressway	EXPY	Road	RD
Heights	HTS	Station	STA
Highway	HWY	Street	ST
Island	IS	Turnpike	TPKE
Junction	JCT	Valley	VLY
Apartment	APT	North	N
Building	BLDG	East	E
Floor	FL	South	S
Suite	STE	West	W
Unit	UNIT	Northeast	NE
Room	RM	Southeast	SE
Department	DEPT	Northwest	NW
		Southwest	SW



Addressing for Success

The Right Way...

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROOK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**

Common Addressing Problems...

Not Enough Contrast

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROOK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**

Serif Type Font — Not All Capital Letters

Mr James Jones
4417 Brook St NE
Washington DC 20019-4649

Script Type Font Used

*Mr James Jones
4417 Brook St NE
Washington DC 20019-4649*

Characters Touch

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROCK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**

Address Not Visible Through Window

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROOK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**

Logo Below Delivery Address Line

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROOK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**



Address Slants

**MR JAMES JONES
4417 BROOK ST NE
WASHINGTON DC 20019-4649**

Information Below Delivery Address Line

Mr James Jones
4417 Brook St NE
Washington DC 20019-4649
Attn: R JONES