

Understanding Your Mail Piece Shape

This guide is designed to provide you with the steps that you must follow to determine the correct shape of domestic mail.

Step #1: Determine the physical dimensions of the mail piece with the longest side as the length and the shortest side as the height. **DO NOT** use the address to determine the length of the mailpiece.

Physical characteristics, not physical appearance, determine the mail processing category.

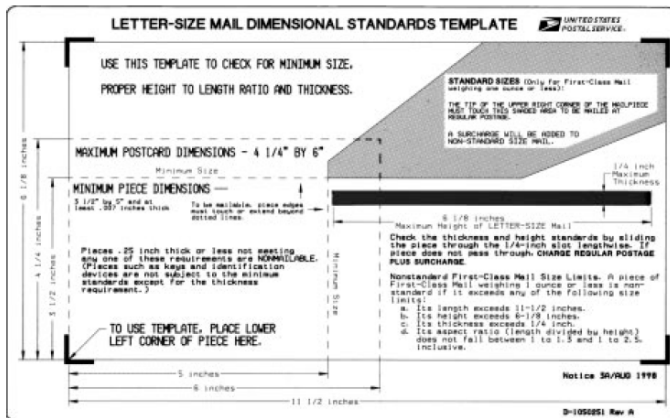
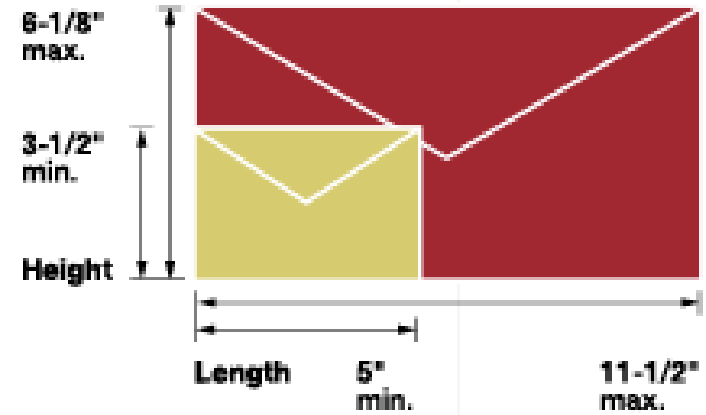


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Letters

The longest physical side of the mailpiece must be at least 5 inches long and not more than 11 1/2 inches long. Once again, the address cannot be used to determine the length of the mailpiece.

The height or the shorter dimension of the mailpiece must be at least 3 1/2 inches high and not more than 6 1/8 inches high.



A letter cannot exceed 1/4" thick. The letter must pass through the slot in the "Letter Size Mail Dimensional Standards Template" without distorting the template.

Letters must be rectangular in shape – a square is a rectangle.



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Nonmachinable Characteristics

These are the **ONLY** instances where the nonmachinable surcharge can be assessed

- **Aspect Ratio <1.3 or >2.5** (too square or too long and narrow)
See instructions on the back of the Letter Size Mail Dimensional Standards Template
- **Enclosed in plastic** (polywrapped, laminated)
- **Has clasps, strings, buttons or similar closure devices** (staples and covered clasps are okay)
- **Contains odd shaped items** - pens, keys, coins, etc. if the odd shaped items do not cause the envelope to exceed 1/4" thick. Odd shaped items must be sandwiched in the contents of the mailpiece to be mailable.
- **Too rigid** – PLEASE NOTE: CDs and DVDs are flexible enough to be mailed in letter and flat size mail without a surcharge as long as the disk is not in a rigid jewel case. Use the flexibility of a credit card as an easy example on what is flexible enough to go without a surcharge.

continued



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Nonmachinable Characteristics

These are the **ONLY** instances where the nonmachinable surcharge can be assessed

- If the letter is more than 4.25”x6” and the thickness is less than .009”. If you suspect that the paper is too thin, please contact your Mailpiece Design Analyst for guidance.
 - If the letter size piece has delivery address parallel with shorter dimension (Note: The edge parallel to the delivery address must be at least 5” long to be mailable)
 - Folded self-mailer with final folded edge perpendicular to the address and is not secured according to DMM 201.3*
- Applies to discount rate mail only**
- Is a booklet-type piece and the spine is either the shorter dimension or is at the top, unless sealed according to DMM 201.3*

Applies to discount rate mail only



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If the mailpiece exceeds any one of these dimensional characteristics, it is not a letter. You must proceed to the next category to determine shape and rate eligibility.

Remember: Address orientation does not determine mail processing categories.

