

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before June 5, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Mail or deliver written comments to the Manager, Mailing Standards, ATTN: Neil Berger, U.S. Postal Service, 1735 N. Lynn Street, Room 3025, Arlington, VA 22209-6038. Written comments may also be submitted via fax to (703) 292-4058. Copies of all written comments will be available for inspection and photocopying between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Postal Service Headquarters Library, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., 11th Floor North, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Garry A. Rodriguez, (212) 613-8748, New York Rates and Classification Service Center; or Neil Berger, (703) 292-3645, Mailing Standards.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A basic requirement for mailability in Domestic Mail Classification Schedule (DMCS) § 6020 (and *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) § C010.1.1) is that “[a]ll items, other than keys and identification devices, which are 0.25 inch thick or less must be rectangular in shape, at least 3.5 inches in width, and at least 5 inches in length.” Administrative rulings issued by the Postal Service have interpreted and further clarified that the term “rectangular” implies that rectangular mailpieces must have four right-angle corners, four straight and regular edges, and no holes or other voids within their dimensions.

Mailpieces that are ¼ inch thick or thinner typically meet the dimensional standards for “letter-size mail” or “flat-size mail.” These two mail processing categories represent both the vast majority of mailpieces sorted and distributed in mail processing facilities and virtually all mail sorted into cases and delivered by Postal Service carriers.

The requirement that mail must be rectangular within certain dimensions for the typical letter-size or flat-size mailpieces was established to ensure that the Postal Service could efficiently handle and deliver such mail, whether by automated, mechanized, or manual means.

CMM items would differ from other letter-size mail and flat-size mail that is ¼ inch thick or less in two significant aspects. First, CMM items could be nonrectangular or irregular in shape. Second, such mail would be required to bypass all Postal Service handling between the mailer's plant (or point of origin) and the post office delivery unit. CMM items would therefore not be expected or required to be compatible with mechanical or automated processing because their entry profile

was specifically developed so that CMM pieces would bypass mail processing operations designed for fairly standardized, rectangular-shaped mail.

**CMM Verification and Entry**

At the mailer's option, CMM items would have to be presented for postage verification at the origin office under existing plant-verified drop shipment (PVDS) procedures as defined in DMM P950, prepared as Express Mail or Priority Mail drop shipment standards under DMM M072, or taken directly to a destination Postal Service facility with a business mail entry unit as a presorted mailing subject to the requirements in DMM E610.8.0.

Under the PVDS option, current standards for a 200-piece minimum volume would apply only to the entire PVDS mailing job rather than to the quantity for each destination delivery unit (DDU). Normally, the DDU is the facility where the mail would be distributed to and cased for delivery by the corresponding mail carrier or, for noncarrier offices, the facility where the mail is distributed into post office boxes. Transportation to each destination would be either on a vehicle owned or contracted by the mailer, or it would be through the use of existing Express Mail or Priority Mail drop shipment standards in DMM D072.

**CMM Preparation**

Each CMM mailing would be subject to the current minimum volume requirement of 200 pieces for presorted Standard Mail mailpieces only. There would be, however, no minimum volume requirements for packaging or containerization because all mail processing operations would be bypassed.

Packaging of CMM pieces would be required for all types of containers used in order to maintain mailpiece orientation, inhibit movement of the pieces, and ensure stability in transit. At the same time, packaging would help protect the individual mailpieces from damage. The number of pieces in each package and the method of packaging would be at the mailer's discretion, subject to applicable standards for suitable materials and package sizes in DMM M020.

CMM would be required to be prepared in containers as appropriate to the volume of mail destined for the DDU. Equipment such as sleeved letter trays, Express Mail and Priority Mail containers (*i.e.*, Postal Service pouches, sacks, envelopes, and boxes) or envelopes or boxes supplied by the mailer would be permitted as containers. Each mailing presented in

mailer-supplied containers, including those prepared as Express Mail and Priority Mail drop shipment, would be required to be accompanied by sample containers for tare weight calculations. Mailings with more than three different types of containers or mailings consisting of nonidentical-weight pieces would be required to be presented using a manifest mailing system (MMS) under DMM P910 or any other available postage payment system if approved by the Business Mailer Support (BMS) manager, Postal Service Headquarters.

CMM containers would be required to bear the correct container label and be endorsed to the attention of the delivery unit supervisor or postmaster with instructions to “open and distribute” the contents. At the DDU, the CMM pieces would be distributed to mail carriers for casing, and delivery, or in the case of noncarrier offices, to clerks for distribution directly into post office boxes.

At the mailer's option, every piece in a mailing would be permitted to bear the correct carrier route code under DMM M014. If applied, the carrier route code would require the use of CASS-certified software and the current USPS Carrier Route File scheme, hard-copy Carrier Route Files, or another AIS product containing carrier route information, subject to DMM A930 and A950. Carrier route information would also require updating within 90 days before the mailing date.

**CMM Rates**

CMM pieces would be subject to the basic nonletter piece rates, with no destination entry discount, in the Standard Mail Regular and Nonprofit subclasses. Owing to the irregular or nonrectangular shape inherent with CMM pieces, such pieces would also be subject to the residual shape surcharge (RSS). Currently, the RSS is applied only to mailable pieces within the Standard Mail subclasses that are prepared as a parcel or are not within the dimensional standards for either letter-size mail or flat-size mail.

CMM pieces would not be eligible for any destination entry discount, automation rate, or other presort rate. In addition, because CMM pieces would not be handled in mail processing facilities, such pieces would not be eligible for the parcel barcode discount, which currently is available to appropriately barcoded pieces that are also subject to the residual shape surcharge. Special services, as provided in DMM S900, would not be available for CMM pieces.