

# **USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ indicia PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS**

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# USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ indicia PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

## I. BACKGROUND AND PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Postal Service worked with the mailing industry to identify, develop and define win-win marketing opportunities which will improve mail performance. The development of the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia (PPI) is one such initiative; to create an opportunity for organization to use the permit indicia space of the mailpiece as prime real estate for branding and advertising their offerings. PPI provides organizations the creativity and flexibility to customize the permit indicia space of First-Class Mail® letters and postcards and USPS Marketing Mail™ letters and postcards by adding business-related images such as their corporate logo, brand image or trademark (color images only). PPI is designed to improve the mailpiece's visibility and impact as a marketing tool.

## II. PRODUCT PARAMETERS

<b>Discount Amount:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Eligible Mail:</b>	Automation First-Class Mail® letters and postcards with Full-Service IMb™  Automation USPS Marketing Mail™ letters and postcards with Full-Service IMb™
<b>Ineligible Mail:</b>	First-Class Mail® paying single piece price First-Class Mail® and USPS Marketing Mail™ flats Periodicals (includes Pending Periodicals mail) Bound Printed Matter Media Mail All Parcels
<b>Pricing:</b>	First-Class Mail® letters and postcards – 1¢ fee per mailpiece (plus applicable postage)  USPS Marketing Mail™ letters and postcards – 2¢ fee per mailpiece (plus applicable postage)

## III. REGISTRATION AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

### Application Process:

**Step 1:** The organization goes to <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm> to review the guidelines and required elements and to complete the online registration process.

**Step 2:** Once registered, the organization will receive a link to complete the online PPI application, (PS Form 3615-A), which requires organizations permit indicia # and other information. The organization then submits the signed copy of the PS Form 3615-A to [picturepermit@usps.com](mailto:picturepermit@usps.com).

**Step 3:** When the PPI Program Office (PO) confirms the application has been approved, the organization will need to submit a PDF copy of the addressed mailpiece (showing envelope/card dimensions, IMb, clear zone and proposed Picture Permit design) to: [picturepermit@usps.com](mailto:picturepermit@usps.com).

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## Step 4: Engineering Evaluation Process

### 4.1 (Option 1) Engineering Evaluation Requirements

Letter Mail conforming to DMM 604.5.4, USPS Picture Permit™ indicia, shall undergo the standard engineering evaluation process which takes approximately 45 business days. Organizations shall provide 500 production samples which will replicate what will be printed and inducted into the live mailstream. In addition to the Full-Service Intelligent Mail barcode, each sample mailpiece must include a complete and valid destination address. Do not use the same address for all mailpieces; the 500 samples must contain a variety of valid addresses.

### 4.2 (Option 2) Engineering Evaluation Requirements\*

Letter Mail conforming to DMM 604.5.4, USPS Picture Permit™ indicia, and all of the following restrictions, may be subject to Option 2 engineering evaluation period of approximately 10 business days. After approval for alternative engineering evaluation, organizations shall provide 50 production samples or samples of sufficient quality to accurately represent the mailpiece including complete address, Keyline and Full Service IMb information printed on each sample (DMM 708.4.3). Letter Mail not conforming to all of these requirements shall undergo the standard engineering evaluation process.

- Color image shall not contain embedded text or numbers.
- Color image shall not have a drop shadow on any edge.
- PPII area (including .50" left and bottom clear zone) to be on white background (no reverse print).
- PPII shall be positioned in upper right-hand corner with "clear zones" as shown in Fig. B.
- Overall width of longest text line shall not be less than width of image as shown in Fig. C.
- All mail class text to conform to the approved template provided by USPS.
- No disk mailers, reusable envelopes, perforated folded self-mailers, windowed envelopes.
- Does not exhibit any of the non-machinable criteria listed in DMM 101.1.2.

\*For more details please review the Picture Permit Technical Requirements document.

*Please mail samples to:*

U.S. Postal Service  
Attn: USPS Picture Permit™ indicia Program Office  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, RM 5538  
Washington, DC 20260-5538

USPS® Engineering will then test the designed mailpieces. If the proposed PPI passes these tests, the PO will request a mailing schedule, including dates and volumes.

## IV. MAILING SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

**Documentation/Postage Statement:** Mailings must be submitted electronically via mail.dat, or mail.xml. Mailings that are prepared and entered by an entity other than the mail owner must indicate the owner's

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identity in the electronic documentation ("eDoc"). The eDoc must identify the mail owner and mail preparer in the By/For fields by Customer Registration ID (CRID).

Participating mailers will be required to affirmatively claim this product in the Extra Services section, Line S17, on the postage statement.

**Postage Payment Method:** Postage must be paid using a Permit Imprint.

**Combined and Commingled Mailings:** The following instructions are provided for mail owners using a Mail Service Provider to submit Picture Permit mail within a Combined mailing. Mailer must comply with all requirements for participation in the USPS Picture Permit™ indicia program including but not limited to the following:

1. Complete USPS Picture Permit™ indicia Program Requirements and obtain PO authorization.
2. Pay all applicable permit and annual fees.
3. Mailing must be submitted through eDoc (Mail.dat or Mail.xml).
4. Mail Owner and Mailing Agent must be identified in the eDoc.
5. A separate postage statement must be submitted for each Picture Permit mail owner. All pieces represented on the individual postage statement must be 100% Picture Permit.
6. Mailpieces must be entered as part of a full-service automation mailing within an authorized First-Class Mail® or USPS Marketing Mail™ Combined Mailing.
  - a. Picture Permit pieces must be part of a Full-Service mailing.
    - i. Basic service automation pieces may be included and qualify for payment of the Picture Permit fee within the Combined mailing.
    - ii. Pieces subject to the Picture Permit fee must be properly identified in the eDoc to reflect the total count in the Extra Services section of the postage statement.
  - a. Non-Automation price (machinable or presort) mailpieces may be submitted and qualify for payment of the Picture Permit fee under the following conditions:
    - Machinable/presort mailing is presented as a combined mailing and supported by electronic documentation and separate postage statement by client.

*OR*

    - Machinable/presort mailing is presented as a separate identical weight presort mailing for just the Picture Permit pieces.
    - Single-piece Picture Permit pieces may qualify for payment of the Picture Permit fee when prepared and presented in groups of 100 by ounce increment.
7. Picture Permit piece counts will be verified in conjunction with the Mail Piece Count Verification performed at time of acceptance.
8. Mail owner must be listed on Customer Mail Report.

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9. Mail Service Provider must submit upon request a report by Picture Permit client showing the total number of pieces by qualifying ZIP CODE.

## V. GENERAL PERMIT IMPRINT REQUIREMENTS

A mailer may be authorized to mail material without affixing postage when payment is made at the time of mailing from a permit imprint advance deposit account established with USPS. This payment method may be used for postage. Each mailpiece sent under this payment method must bear a permit imprint indicia showing that postage is paid.

A mailer may obtain a permit to use a permit imprint indicia and pay postage by submitting the Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile, PS Form 3615, <http://about.usps.com/forms/ps3615.pdf>, and the applicable fee to the Post Office where mailings are made. There is no other fee for the use of a permit imprint indicia as long as the permit remains active, but other fees (e.g., an annual presort mailing fee) may be due depending on the class of mail to be prepared. For additional information on permit imprint requirements, see the link below:

<http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/604.htm#wp1080814>.

## VI. INTELLIGENT MAIL BARCODE REQUIREMENTS (IMb)

All mailpieces in the mailing must bear a Picture Permit indicia and the mailing must meet all the requirements of the *Full Service mailing* standards as provided in DMM 705.24. Mailings that do not qualify as Full Service cannot contain a USPS Picture Permit™ indicia. For additional information on Full Service IMb requirements, see the link below:

[http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail\\_guides/documents/tech\\_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf](http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf).

**Reflectance:** A background reflectance of at least 50% in the red portion and 45% in the green portion of the optical spectrum.

**Print Reflectance Difference:** A print reflectance difference (PRD) of at least 30% in the red and green portions of the optical spectrum is required between the background material of the mailpiece and the barcode, when measured with a USPS or USPS-licensed envelope reflectance meter. (PRD equals the reflectance of the background minus the reflectance of the ink.) The text used within the indicia area must meet Print Reflectance Difference (PRD) requirements defined in DMM section 708.4.4:

<http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/708.htm#wp1352817>.

**Opacity:** The material on which the barcode appears must have enough opacity to prevent printing from “showing through” to the extent that it interferes with postal equipment that reads the barcode. The print contrast ratio (PCR) of print (other than the barcode) that shows through the barcode clear zone or the barcode area in the address block must not exceed 15% when measured in the red and green portions of the optical spectrum.

Additional information on the Intelligent Mail barcode requirements can be found at:

[http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail\\_guides/documents/tech\\_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf](http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf).

## VII. USPS PICTURE PERMIT™ indicia DESIGN

Indicia design and placement, including PPI color images, are defined in DMM 604.5 at:

<http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/604.htm#wp1080814>. Mailing standards have been added to the DMM for USPS Picture Permit™ indicia to allow color images in the indicia. The PPI shall include the following:

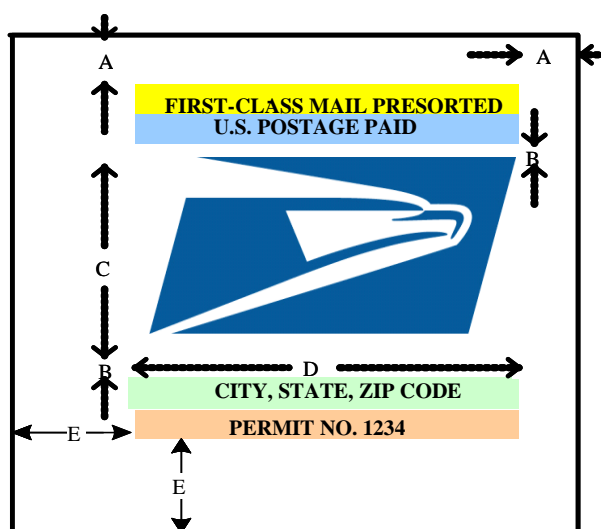
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- MAIL CLASS (in ALL CAPS)
- U. S. POSTAGE PAID
- CITY, STATE (ZIP CODE optional)
- PERMIT NO.

OR

- MAIL CLASS (in ALL CAPS)
- U. S. POSTAGE PAID

COMPANY NAME [Use of a Company Permit Imprint format has specific requirements and must bear a complete domestic return address; see DMM 604.5.3.9)



*This is a sample only. The image is not to scale.*

**Mail Class:** see DMM 604.5 for more details

Example:

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PRSRT

**Clearance Dimensions:**

A: 1/4" (0.25") Minimum

B: 5/32" ± 1/32" (0.156" ± 0.031")

**Image Dimensions:**

Height (C): 0.84" to 1.00"

Width (D): 1.31" to 1.50"

Clear Zone (E): 0.500"

**Imprint (Image + Text Area) Dimensions:**

Height: 1.625" to 2.00"

Width: 1.31" to 1.50"

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**Image Type:** Only “Color Images” are permitted

**Full Service Intelligent Mail Barcode:** Each mailpiece must bear an Full Service Intelligent Mail barcode and comply with the applicable standards for Full Service IMb mailings.

**NOTES:**

- Black and white images are NOT ACCEPTABLE
- Highlighted colors in the exhibit above are shown for illustration only
- Text within imprint area must be a minimum of size 8 pt and must be OCR readable fonts

## VIII. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

For further technical information, please refer to the Postal Service Mail.dat Technical Specification on RIBBS at:  
[https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail\\_guides/documents/tech\\_guides/datspec/PostaloneMaildatTechSpec.pdf](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/datspec/PostaloneMaildatTechSpec.pdf).

## IX. PROGRAM OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: [picturepermit@usps.com](mailto:picturepermit@usps.com)

Mail: U.S. Postal Service  
Attn: USPS Picture Permit™ indicia Program Office  
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, RM 5538  
Washington, DC 20260-5538

Information and resources will also be posted online at: <https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm>.