

# Automated bulk mail is changing

We're making some changes to help improve your ability to access our automated mail products. That's why we're altering the Customer Barcode (CBC) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) automation specification. With these changes in effect, you'll benefit from greater flexibility with the type of mail that can be sent using OCR and CBC.

You'll find a detailed list of the changes to our CBC and OCR specification in this booklet. It also clarifies previously ambiguous areas to give you greater guidance in implementing them.

If you have any queries, please contact your Royal Mail Account Manager or your Royal Mail Customer Operations Manager. Alternatively, you can call 08457 950 950 for further details.

The following products are affected by these changes, which come into effect from **1st August 2007**:

- Mailsort 700
- Mailsort 120 CBC
- Mailsort 120 OCR
- Mailsort Light (maximum item weight 15g)
- Cleanmail OCR
- Cleanmail Plus OCR
- Cleanmail CBC
- Cleanmail Plus CBC
- **mailmedia** 700
- **mailmedia** Clean
- International Bulk Mail

The changes will also apply to future OCR and CBC products.



1. OCR mail pieces can now be landscape or square.
2. The post town need only have the first character in upper case e.g. Birmingham, Milton Keynes, Ross On Wye. Previously, the post town had to be printed wholly in capitals e.g. BIRMINGHAM (this option still exists). We recommend you still put the post town in capitals when dealing with non-automation mail, e.g. Mailsort 1400. However, this is not mandatory.
3. Where the address complies with PAF details, and there is no other text or information on the face of the mail item which could be construed as an address, then:
  - a. The postcode may be preceded by a county on the last line of the address, provided that the space between the county and postcode is one or two characters.
  - b. The post town may be followed by a county on the penultimate line of the address, provided that the space between the post town and county is one or two characters.
  - c. The post town and postcode may be jointly on the last line of the address provided that the post town precedes the postcode and the space between the two elements is a minimum of at least one or two characters.

These requirements have been introduced to help many customers who have difficulties printing each field of data on separate lines. It also assists where addresses are too long to fit in a window on an envelope. The preferred (but non-compulsory) address format is still to have each field on a separate line. Use of the county is not mandatory, but may be useful where a full postcode is not present – for example Newport, Essex or Newport, Gwent. Some customers' IT systems automatically print the county in the address and we would not wish to exclude them from use of the product since its inclusion does not affect our automation performance.

4. We are introducing a more satisfactory test for mail piece flexibility to replace the "S" test. This will enable items such as DVDs to use automation products subject to suitable protection. It should not exclude any mail piece deemed acceptable under the existing specification. New templates to measure this attribute will be available in the coming months. In the meantime, please contact your Royal Mail Customer Operations Manager for further details.
5. Paper colour used must ensure a Print Contrast Ratio of  $\Rightarrow$ 50% for the address block on OCR mail pieces, and  $\Rightarrow$ 40% for the barcode on CBC mail pieces. For both, Reflective Difference  $\Rightarrow$ 30%, Background Reflectance  $\Rightarrow$ 35%. This gives a clearer definition of our requirements and will assist customers when designing mail pieces. Mail pieces that do not comply with these guidelines in the past would have failed the accreditation, but customers would not have been aware of the failure until after we had tested samples.
6. For OCR mail pieces, the insert for a window envelope must ensure that the address block (including recipient's name) falls within the visible area of the window and provides a minimum of 5mm gap between all sides of the address block and the edges of the window. This can be reduced to 2mm, provided there is a further 3mm clear zone on the envelope around the perimeter of the window which contains no print, graphics or patterning. This replaces the single requirement of 5mm clear gap including the edge of the window, making OCR products more accessible to all.

7. For CBC mail pieces with window envelopes, the recipient's name may be tapped out of the window provided that the remainder of the address is fully visible and that it taps back into the window. This replaces the existing requirement for the entire address block, which includes the recipient's name to remain visible at all times. Note the CBC itself must maintain its 2mm clear area throughout the tap test. Again, this makes CBC products more accessible to all.
8. We have now defined a specification for One Piece Mailers where previously none existed. In the past, for example, mail pieces using spot-gluing were excluded. The new specification is:
  - a. CBC specification only.
  - b. There must be at least one fold.
  - c. One-piece mailings must be glued on all sides and on every fold.
  - d. The reference edge of the mail piece must consist of only one edge that can be detected. (The reference edge is the area to the bottom of the mail piece below the address block). In other words, if multiple folds are required, these must be tucked inside so that there is only one detectable edge on the reference edge.
  - e. If an opening flap is present, it may fold either towards the back or front of the envelope. If it folds to the front of the envelope it must not interfere with the tag code zone. The flap must be securely sealed. This flap must fold over and have  $\Rightarrow$ 25mm contact on the mail piece, and must be  $\Rightarrow$ 40mm from the bottom of the mail piece. The same rules apply for applying glue to the flap as applies to the edges.
  - f. The glue must not seep to the outside of the mail piece.
  - g. In order to ensure safe processing and eliminate damage to Royal Mail's automation equipment, one-piece mailers must not use perforated edges or easy tear strips.
  - h. Spot welds must be  $\Rightarrow$ 5mm diameter, with the distance between the two closest edges of the spots  $=<$ 10mm.
  - i. For both spot and continuous welds, the maximum distance from the edge of the mail piece for glue application is 5mm plus or minus 2mm.
  - j. Paper weight  $\geq$ 100gsm.

Full details are available for the "One Piece Mailer" from your Royal Mail Account Manager or your Royal Mail Customer Operations Manager.

9. The 40mm address block exclusion zone from the top of the mailpiece for OCR has now been modified. By exception, the address may encroach into the 40mm clear zone, providing the postcode is a minimum of 50mm from the top of the envelope, and there is nothing else on the envelope that could be construed as an address. This is particularly beneficial for DL sized envelopes where much less restriction on address block position is now available.
10. The list of recommended fonts for OCR has now been augmented by the addition of Letter Gothic, Lucinda Console, Lucinda Sans Typewriter, Monaco and OCR B fonts.

- 11.** The maximum amount of lateral movement of an insert within the envelope should not exceed 20mm. Alternatively, where the overall total mail piece thickness does not exceed 2mm, the maximum allowable insert movement is 30mm. Excessive insert movement within the envelope may cause damage to mail pieces and/or to the automation equipment. This new requirement should ensure mail is processed safely without damaging our automation equipment. Previously, mail pieces not meeting this requirement would have either failed accreditation, or caused problems, including possible damage to either the mail piece or the equipment.
- 12.** No metallic items with the following exceptions; Staples maximum size of 24mm by 6mm. Paper clips maximum size of 23mm length. Again, this requirement should ensure mail is processed safely without damaging our automation equipment, and thereby safeguarding the mail piece.
- 13.** Mail pieces must be rectangular (oblong) or square. All four sides should be straight. The intersection of each side should be 90°. This is a clearer way of ensuring mail pieces are sorted effectively and efficiently by our automation. There is no conflict with 'Pricing in Proportion', since irregular-shaped items that are equal to, or less than 240x165mm, may still be posted as a letter using other products such as Standard Tariff or Mailsort 1400.
- 14.** Perforations and tear-off strips are specifically excluded. This is due to previous adverse experiences with live customer mailings and the associated potential risk. We need to safeguard customer mail and our automation equipment. Previous mailings with perforations have caused problems in both of these areas. Manual products (Mailsort 1400 etc.) will still allow items with tear-off strips and perforations.
- 15.** The position and number of indicia is now defined. Only one indicia is allowed on a mail piece and it must be in the top right hand corner, in an area 75mm (w) x 40mm (h). Incorrectly-positioned indicia may have a negative impact on automation performance.
- 16.** For OCR mail pieces, where the return address is on the front of the envelope, it must be displayed between 75mm - 127mm from the right hand edge and extend no lower than 28mm from the top edge of the envelope. The return address must also be no closer than 12mm to the delivery address. Where the return address is positioned on the reverse side of the envelope, it must be in the 40mm zone from the top of the mail piece, but not in the Royal Mail return mail mark zone which is an area 40mm by 40mm from the top left of the reverse side of the envelope. This gives greater clarity to previous requirements. Incorrectly- positioned return addresses will cause mail pieces to be sent to the return address, thus impacting on automation performance and quality of service. Return addresses printed by postage meters (franking machines) are still acceptable.

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