

SALES & SERVICES ASSOCIATE ACADEMY

Module 5: Mailability



Objectives

- Name the five mail processing categories.
- Determine the processing category of a mailpiece by using the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM[®]) and Notice 3-S, *First-Class Mail Shape-Based Pricing Template*.
- Determine if a mailpiece is mailable or nonmachinable.

Mailability

- If an unmailable item is accepted, it could cause damage to postal equipment, injure employees, and damage the mailpiece.
- Proper determination of mailability not only effects revenue but is an important part of customer service.
- Mailpieces not meeting minimum criteria, or exceeding certain maximums, are nonmailable.
- Nonmailable means that the piece, as designed, is prohibited from the mailstream.
- No fee, surcharge, or additional postage can make a nonmailable item mailable.



Processing Category

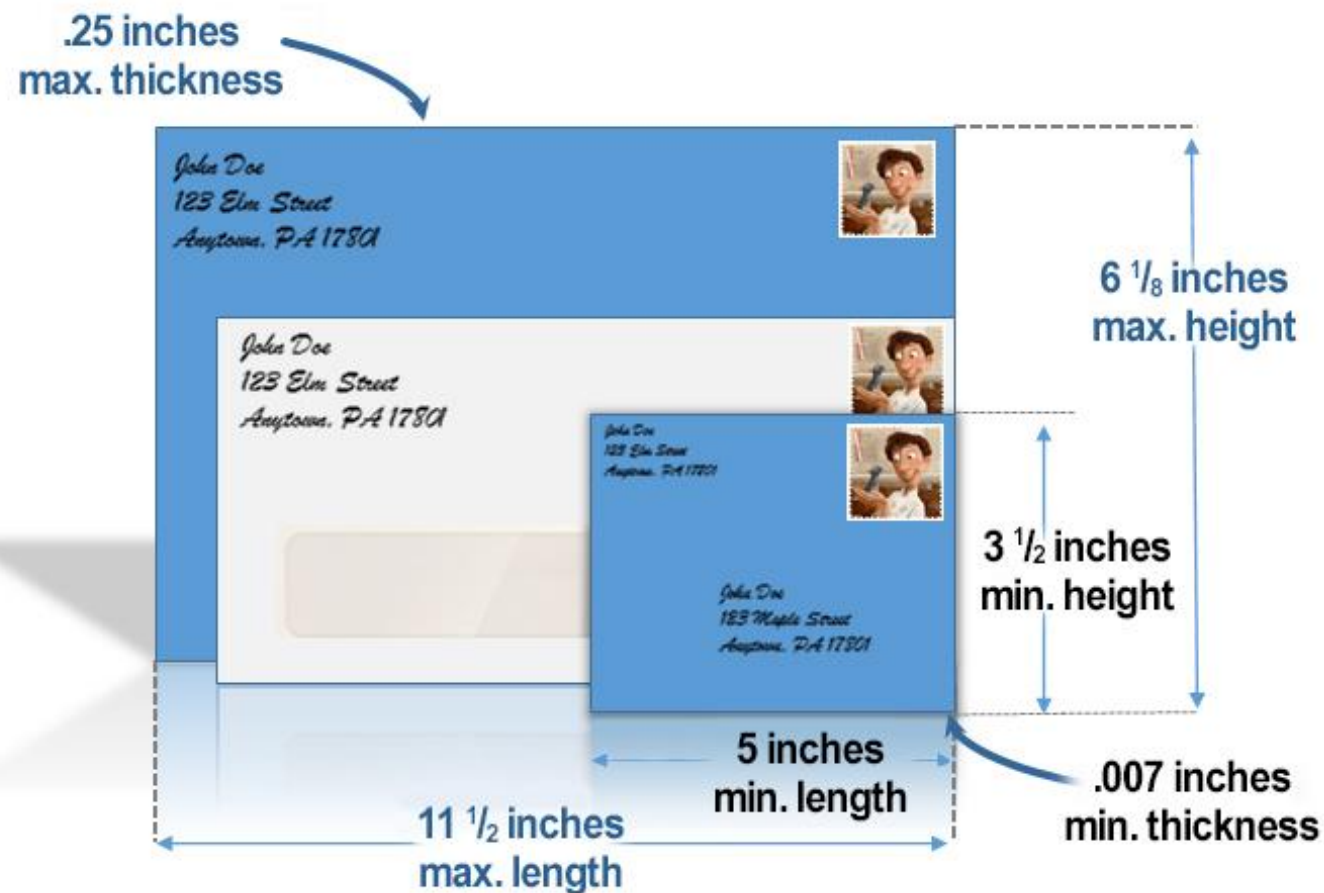
- Processing category determines price.
- Ensure customer is charged correctly to avoid overcharge or postage due.
- Processing category based strictly on physical dimensions and characteristics, regardless of address orientation [Note: Except for flat-rate packaging, Priority Mail Express® and Priority Mail® mailpieces are priced solely by weight, dimensions, and zone (including surcharges)].
- All mailpieces are separated into one of these categories (for Retail Operations):
 - 1st Class Letters (machinable or non-machinable) (excludes PME & PM).
 - 1st Class Flats (excludes PME & PM).
 - Parcel (machinable, irregular, or nonmachinable parcel – no separate pricing in Retail).

Letter-Size Dimensions

	Minimum	Maximum
Height	3.5 inches	6 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches
Length	5 inches	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Thickness	.007 inch	.25 inches
Weight	n/a	3.5 ounces

All letters must be rectangular.

All items must meet minimum letter dimensions to be mailable.

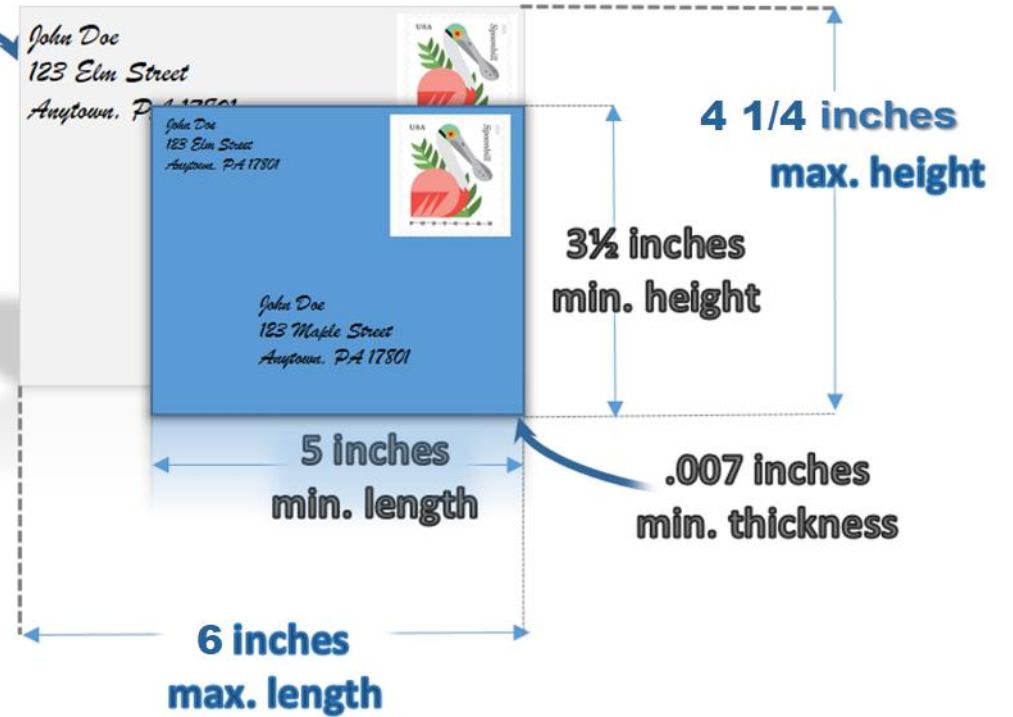


Postcards

	Minimum	Maximum
Height	3.5 inches	4.25 inches
Length	5 inches	6 inches
Thickness	.007 inch	.016 inches

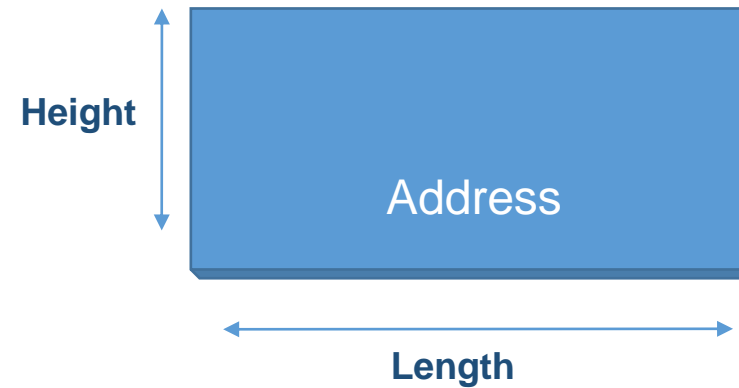
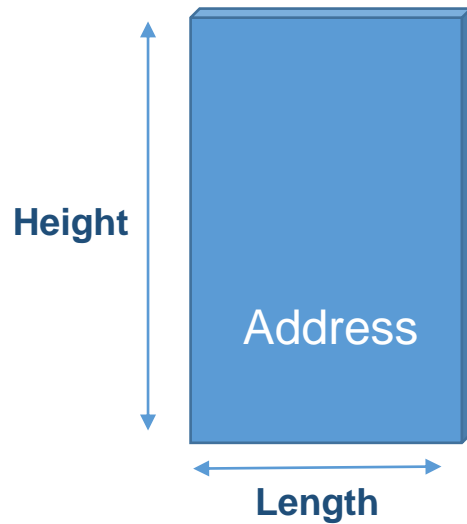
All postcards must be rectangular.

**.016 inches
max. thickness**



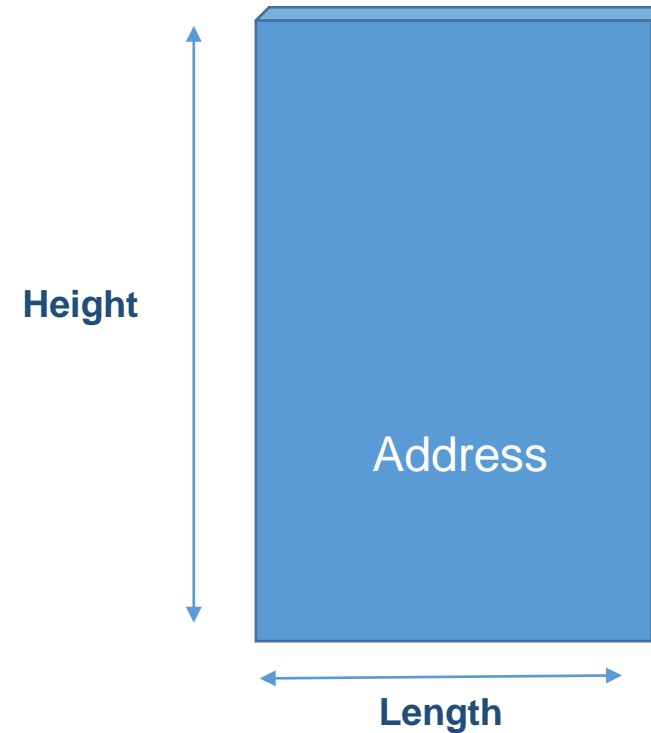
Determine Length

- Pieces $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick or less:
 - Orientation of address determines length and height dimensions for mailability/machinability.
- Length is dimension parallel to address (only for letters).



Nonmachinable Surcharge – FCM Letters

- Address placement determines length and height.
- Excluded from automation.



Nonmachinable Characteristics

- Aspect Ratio.
- Enclosed in plastic.
- Clasp, strings, buttons or similar closure devices.
- Uneven thickness.
- Over 4.25 x 6 inches and not .009 inches thick.
- Rigid.
- Delivery address parallel to shorter dimension.
- Does not meet tabbing requirements.

- Nonmachinable surcharge.
- FCM letters.
- 3.5 ounces or less.

Aspect Ratio

Length ÷ height must be between 1.3 and 2.5.

1/8 inch thick



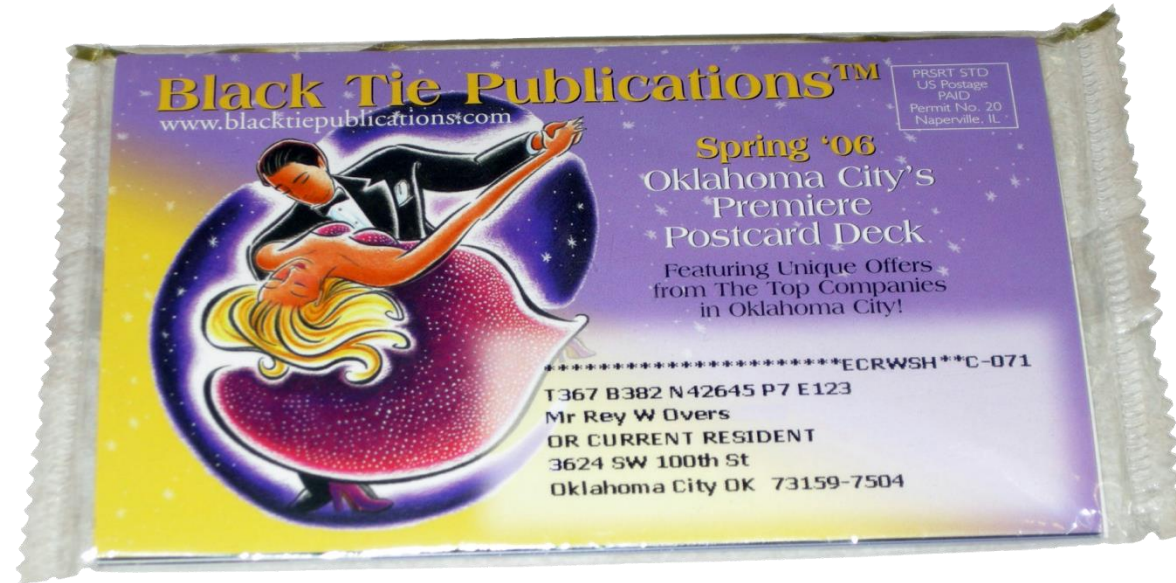
6 ÷ 6 = 1
Out of aspect Ratio.

Height
6 inches.

Length 6 inches.

Polybag or Plastic

- Polybagged, polywrapped, enclosed in any plastic material.
- Exterior surface not paper.



Closure Devices

Clasps, stings, buttons, or similar closure devices.



Uneven Thickness

- Contain items like pens, pencils, keys, or coins that cause the thickness to be uneven.
- Loose keys, coins, or similar objects not affixed to contents.



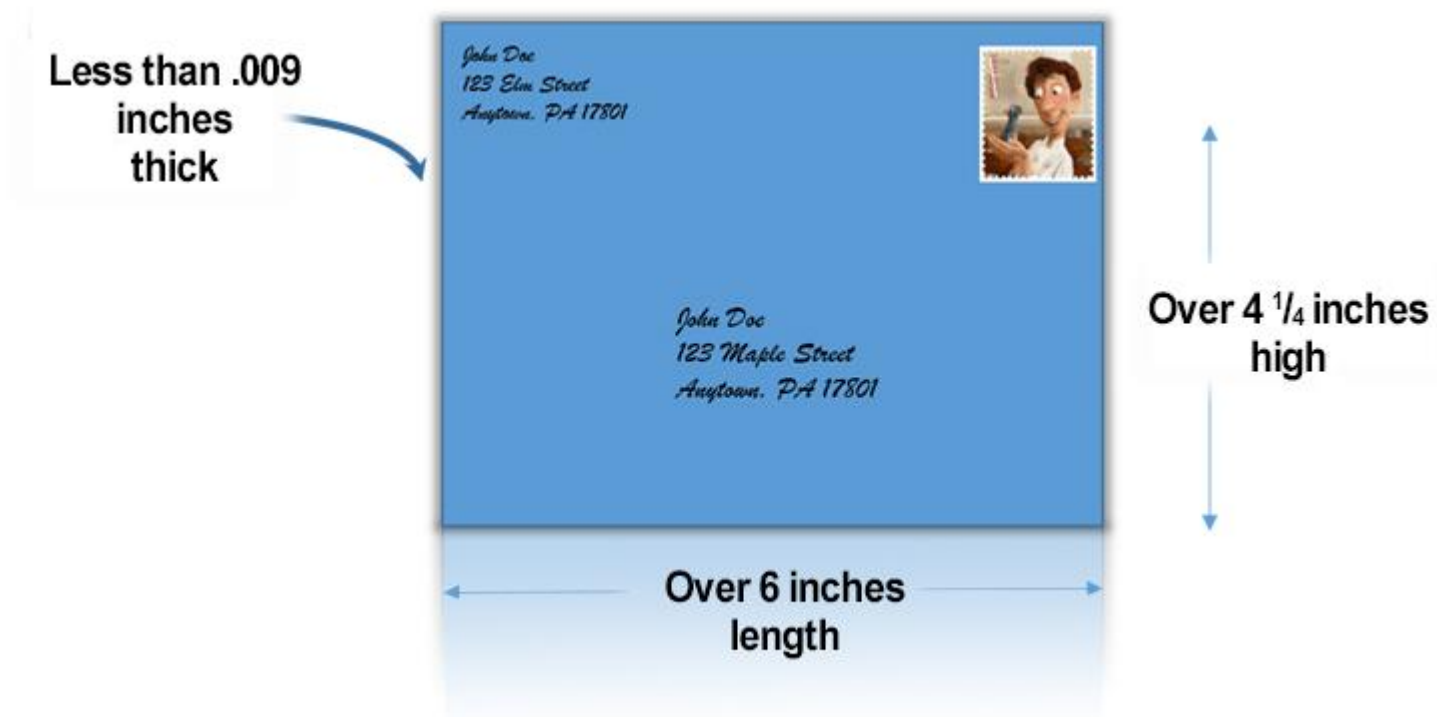
Rigid

Too rigid and does not bend easily.



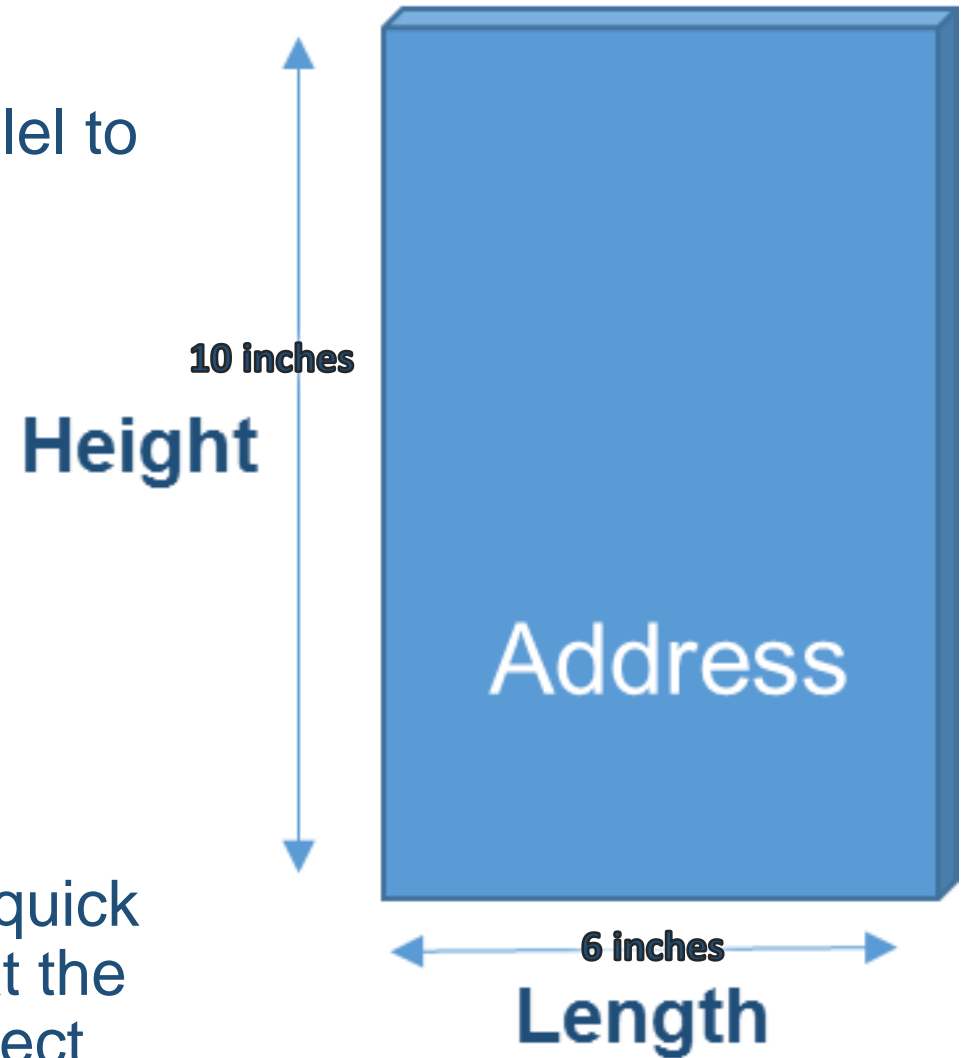
Thickness

Over 4 ¼” high or 6” long and less than .009” thick.



Addressed Along Shortest Dimension

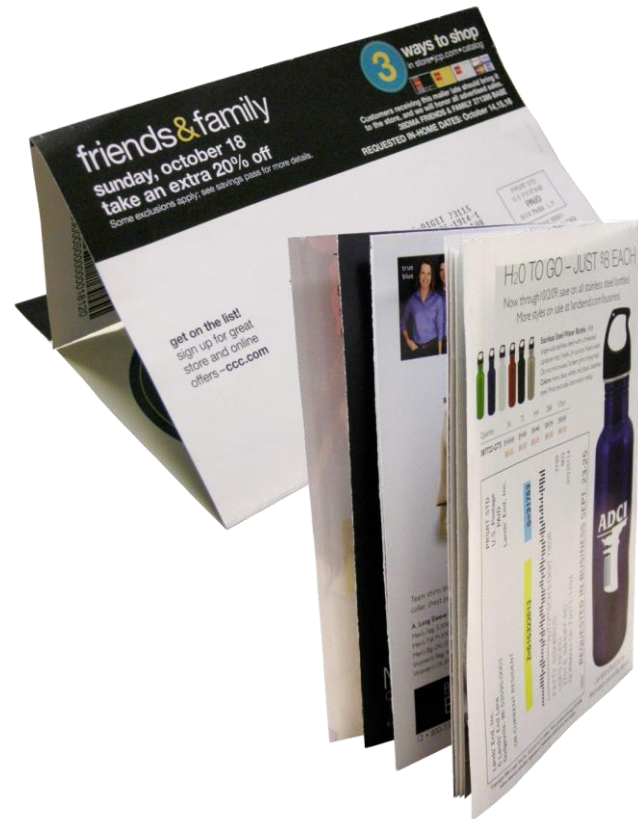
Delivery address parallel to shorter dimension.



Note: This is simply a quick visual confirmation that the mailpiece fails the Aspect Ratio test.

Folded Self-Mailer

Folded self-mailer or booklet not tabbed per DMM®.



Placement of Tabs and Wafer Seals

Specifications for Automation-Compatible Letter-Size Mailpieces

<p>Double Postcard</p> <p>Tabs 1 (middle)</p> <p>Folded Edge Top or Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 75 lb.</p>		<p>Folded Self-Mailer (Invitation Fold)</p> <p>Tab Address Label</p> <p>Folds Top and Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Multiple or Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb.</p>	
<p>Folded Self-Mailer</p> <p>Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)</p> <p>Folded Edge Top or Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb.</p>		<p>Folded Self-Mailer (Continuous Glue Strip)</p> <p>Open Edge Top</p> <p>Folded Edge Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb.</p>	
<p>Folded Self-Mailer</p> <p>Tabs 1 (middle)</p> <p>Folded Edge Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Multiple</p> <p>Basis Weight 24 lb.</p>		<p>Booklet</p> <p>Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)</p> <p>Spine Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Multiple with Cover</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)</p>	
<p>Folded Self-Mailer</p> <p>Tabs 1 (middle)</p> <p>Folded Edge Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 28 lb.</p>		<p>Folded Booklet</p> <p>Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from edges)</p> <p>Spine Top</p> <p>Folded Edge Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Multiple with Cover</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)</p>	
<p>Folded Self-Mailer¹</p> <p>Tabs 1 (middle)</p> <p>Folded Edge Right</p> <p>Sheets Single</p> <p>Basis Weight 75 lb.</p>		<p>Folded Booklet</p> <p>Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from top edge)</p> <p>Spine Top</p> <p>Folded Edge Bottom</p> <p>Sheets Multiple with Cover</p> <p>Basis Weight 20 lb. (Cover)</p>	
<p>1. Pieces 7 inches or longer must be sealed on the top and bottom; the middle tab is optional</p>		<p>Booklet</p> <p>Tabs 2 (start ≤ 1 inch from top and bottom edges)</p> <p>Spine Right (open edge left)</p> <p>Sheets Multiple with Cover</p> <p>Basis Weight 24 lb. (Cover)</p>	

Flat Dimensions

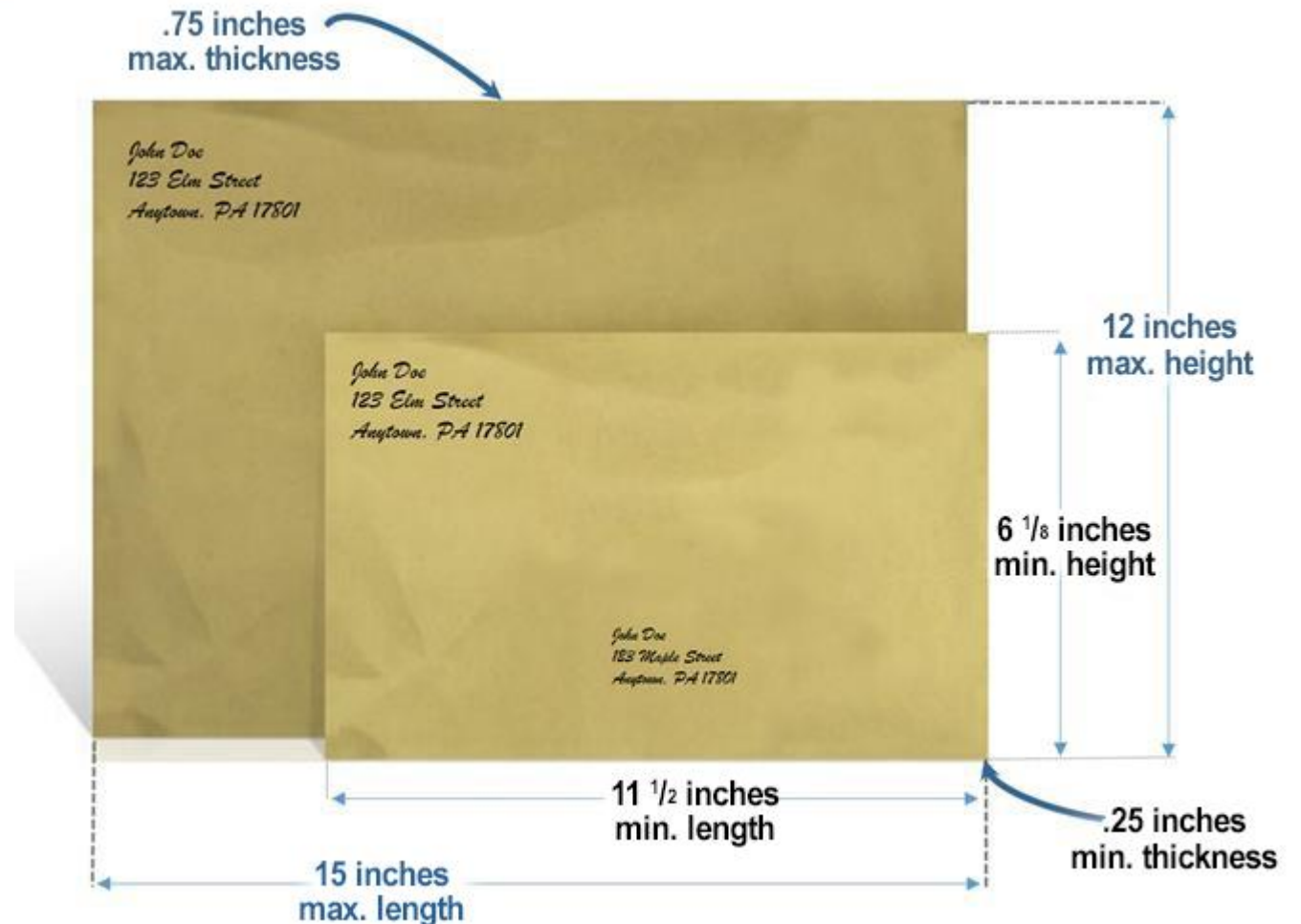
	Minimum	Maximum
Height	6.125 inches	12 inches
Length	11.5 inches	15 inches
Thickness	.25 inch	.75 inches

**Flats must be flexible,
uniformly thick, and rectangular**

Includes letter-sized pieces over 3.5 ounces.

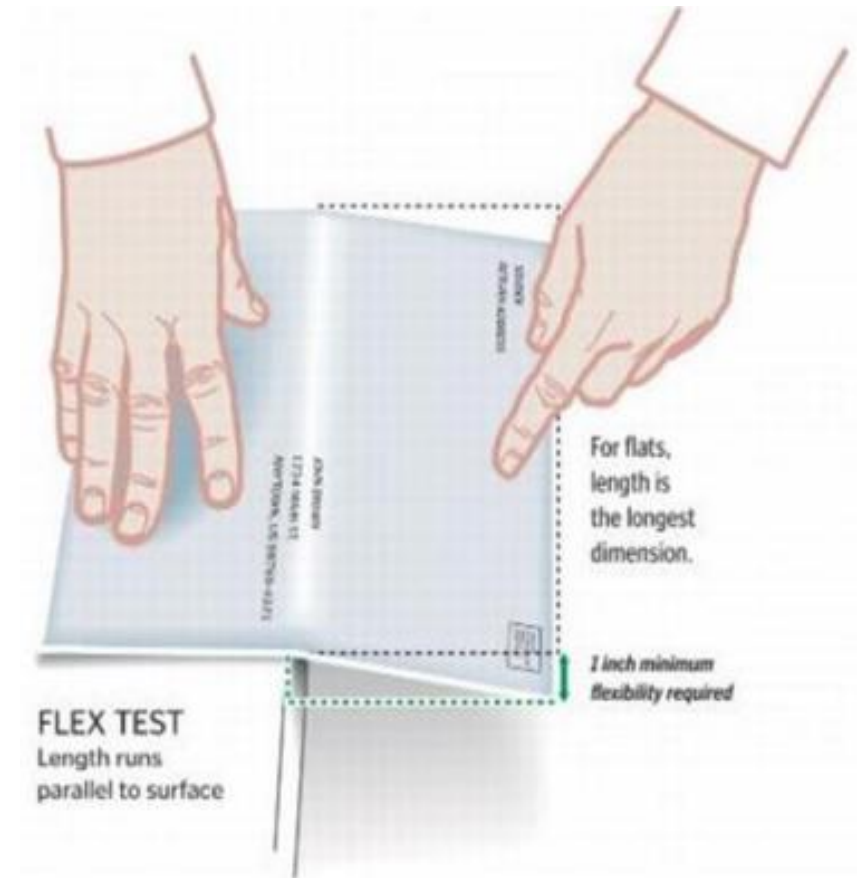
Flat-sized pieces that do not meet these standards are charged parcel prices.

A flat is a mailpiece that exceeds at least ONE maximum letter-size dimension, or maximum weight of a letter (3.5 ounces).



Flats – Flexibility (Exhibit 4.3a)

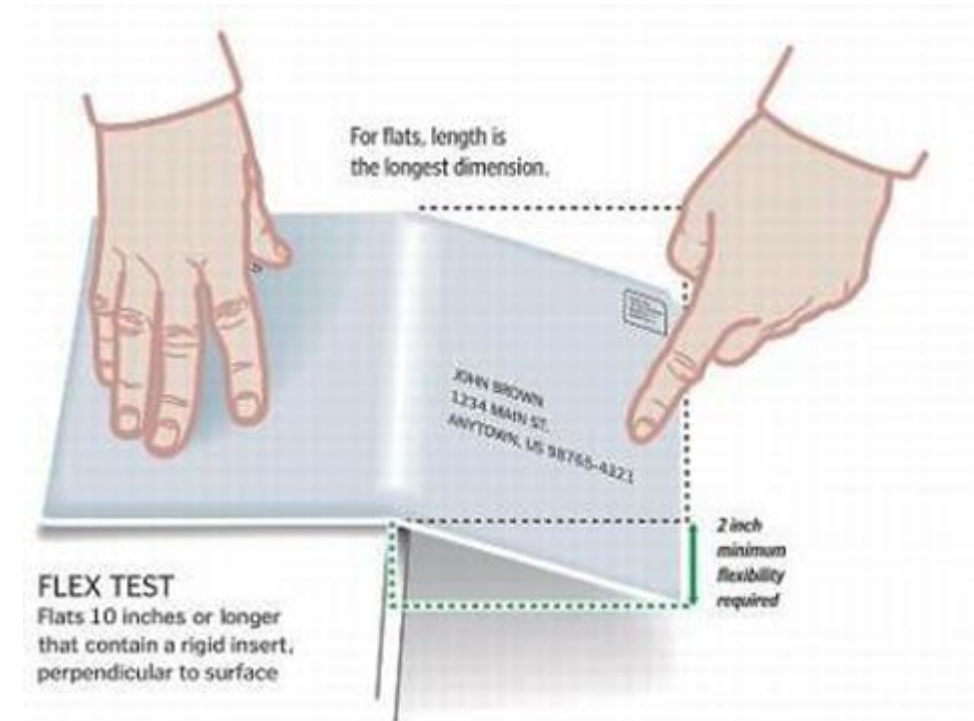
1. Place piece with length parallel to edge of a flat surface and extend piece halfway off the surface.
2. Press down on at a point 1 inch from the outer edge, in center of piece's length, exerting steady pressure.
3. Piece is not flexible if it cannot bend at least 1 inch vertically without being damaged.
4. Piece is flexible if it can bend at least 1 inch vertically without being damaged and it does not contain a rigid insert. No further testing is necessary.
5. Test the piece according to DMM 201.4.3 section 4.3b or 4.3c. If it can bend at least 1 inch vertically without being damaged and it contains a rigid insert.



Flats – Flexibility (Exhibit 4.3b)

Flats 10 inches or longer that pass the test in 4.3a and contain a rigid insert:

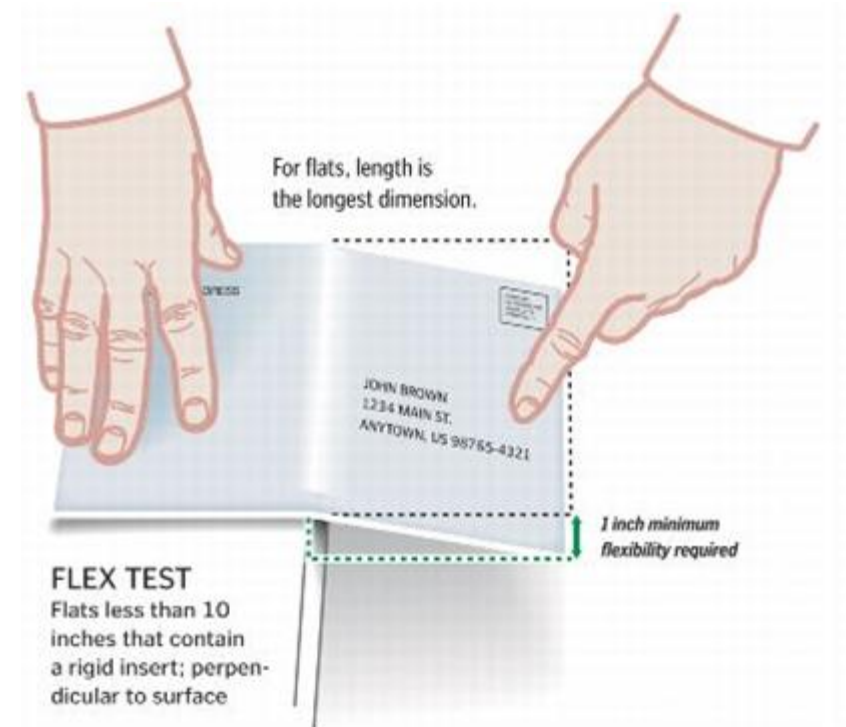
1. Place the piece with the length perpendicular to the edge of a flat surface and extend the piece 5 inches off the surface.
2. Press down on the piece at a point 1 inch from the outer edge, in the center of the piece's width, exerting steady pressure.
3. Turn the piece around and repeat steps 1 and 2. The piece is flexible if both ends can bend at least 2 inches vertically without being damaged.



Flats – Flexibility (Exhibit 4.3c)

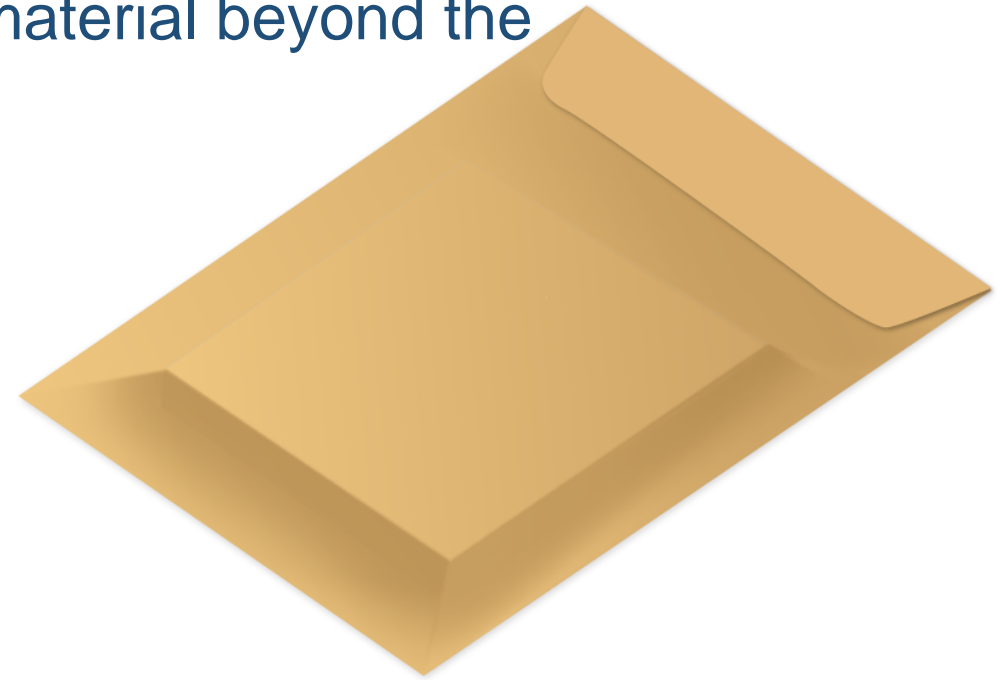
Flats less than 10 inches long that pass the test in 4.3a and contain a rigid insert:

1. Place the piece with the length perpendicular to the edge of a flat surface and extend the piece one-half of its length off the surface.
2. Press down on the piece at a point 1 inch from the outer edge, in the center of the piece's width, exerting steady pressure.
3. Turn the piece around and repeat steps 1 and 2. The piece is flexible if both ends can bend at least 1 inch vertically without being damaged.



Flats – Uniform Thickness

- Any bumps, protrusions, or other irregularities cannot cause more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch variance in thickness.
- Do not consider the selvage (the overhang of material beyond the content) when measuring.
- Contents significantly smaller than envelope, wrapper, or sleeve, must be secured to prevent shifting of more than two inches within mailpiece.



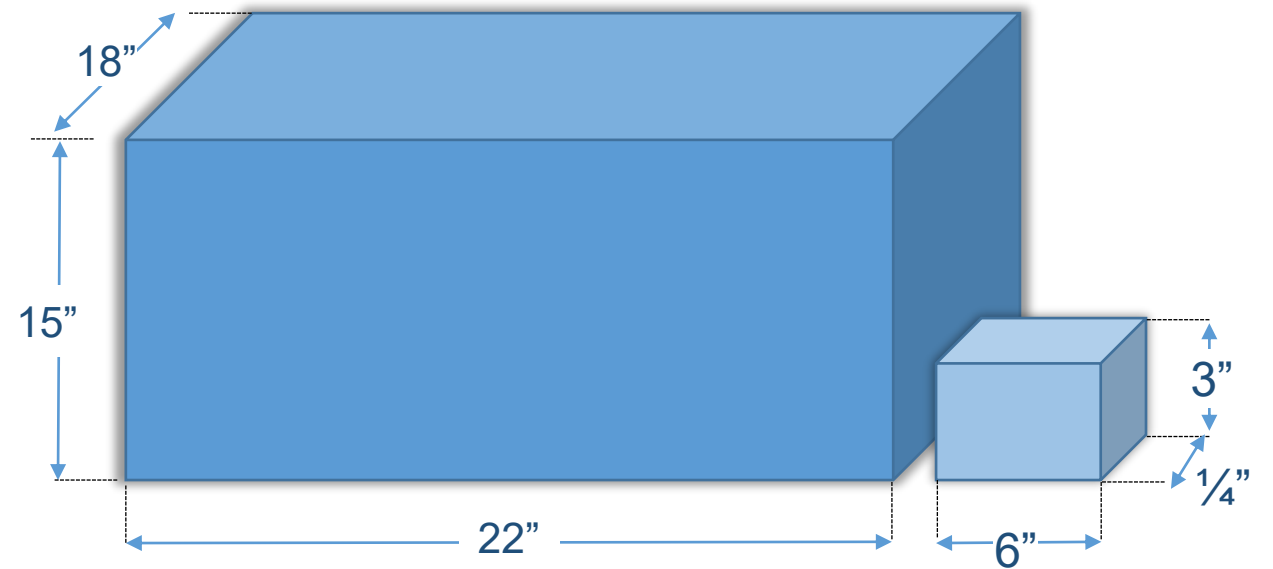
Parcels

- There are three types of parcels:
 - Machinable.
 - Irregular.
 - Nonmachinable.
- Type does not affect price, only how it is processed.
- No item can weigh more than 70 pounds or measure over 108 inches in combined length and girth (Exception for USPS Ground Advantage - Retail[®] 130”).



Machinable Parcel Dimensions

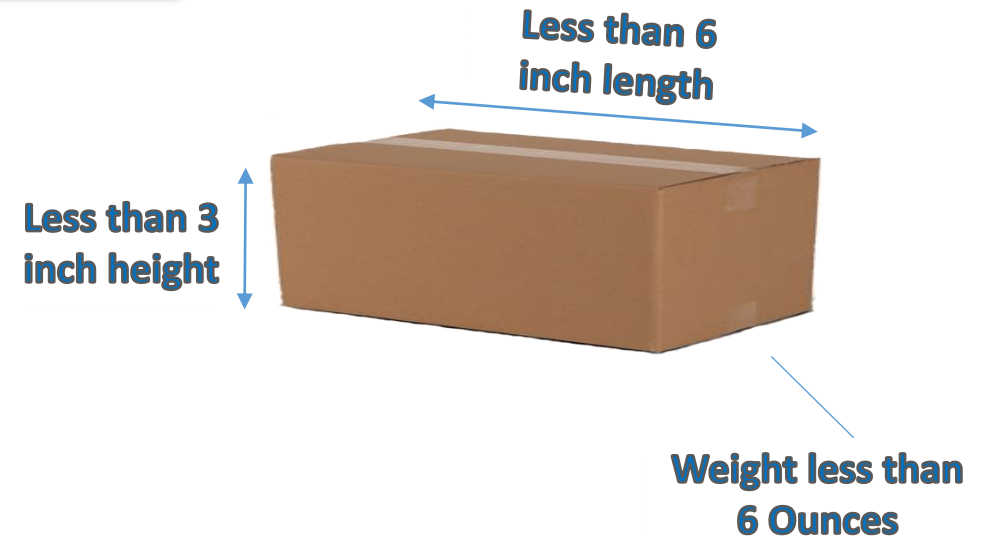
	Minimum	Maximum
Height	3 inches	18 inches
Length	6 inches	22 inches
Thickness	¼ inch	15 inches
Weight	6 ounces	25 pounds



Irregular Parcels

Includes parcels with any one of the following:

- Length less than 6 inches.
- Height less than 3 inches.
- Weight less than 6 ounces.



Nonmachinable Parcels

Includes parcels with any one of the following:

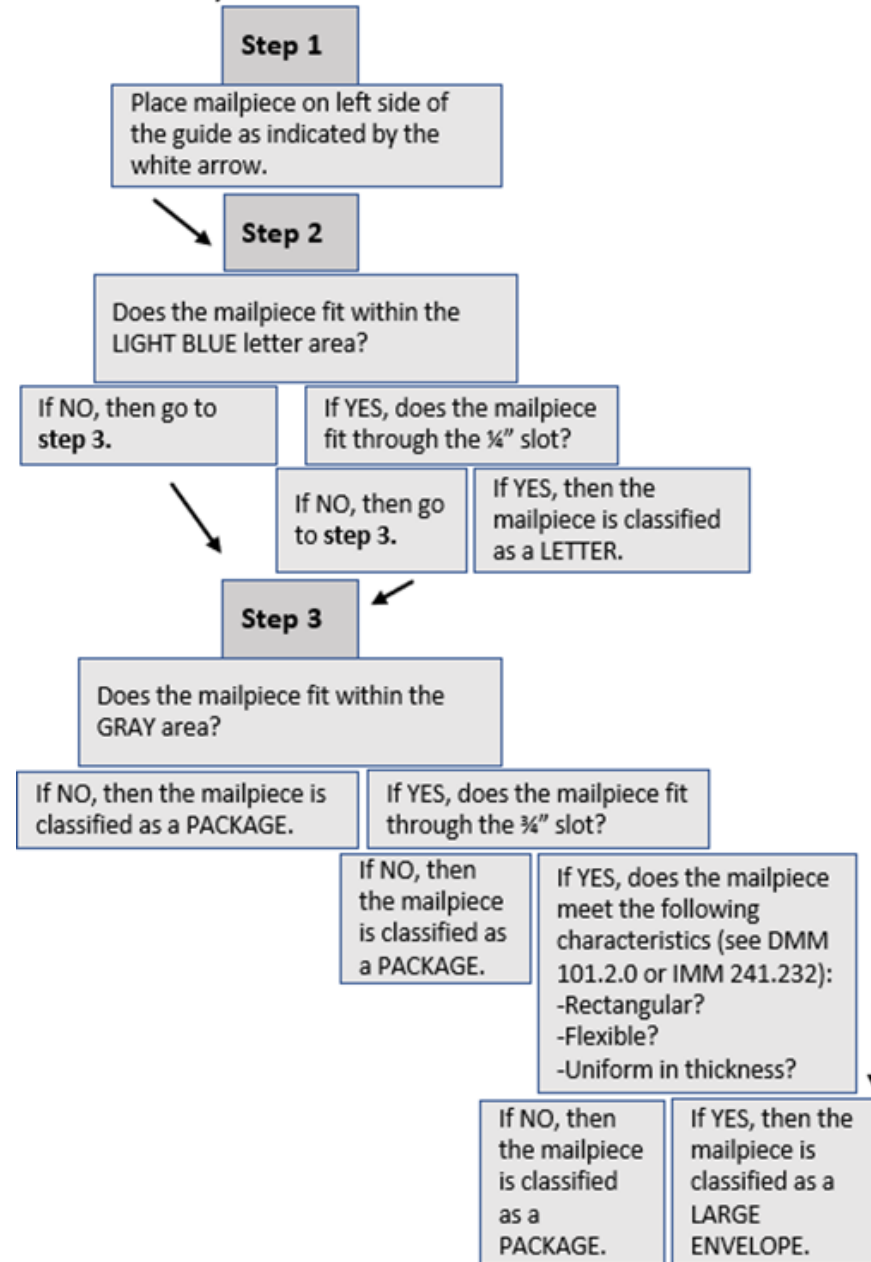
- Height more than 18 inches.
- Width more than 15 inches.
- Length more than 22 inches.
- Weight more than 25 lbs./15 lbs. High density.

- Parcel Select/Parcel Return Service may weigh up to 35 pounds.
- Contain over 24 ounces of liquid in glass, or one gallon or more in metal or plastic.
- Cans, paints, rolls, and tubes over 26 inches.
- Metal-band strapped, metal, and wood boxes.
- Articles not in containers, i.e., tires.
- Harmful matter.
- Parcel category alone does not affect postage unless the size makes it eligible for a surcharge.



Mail Processing Flowchart

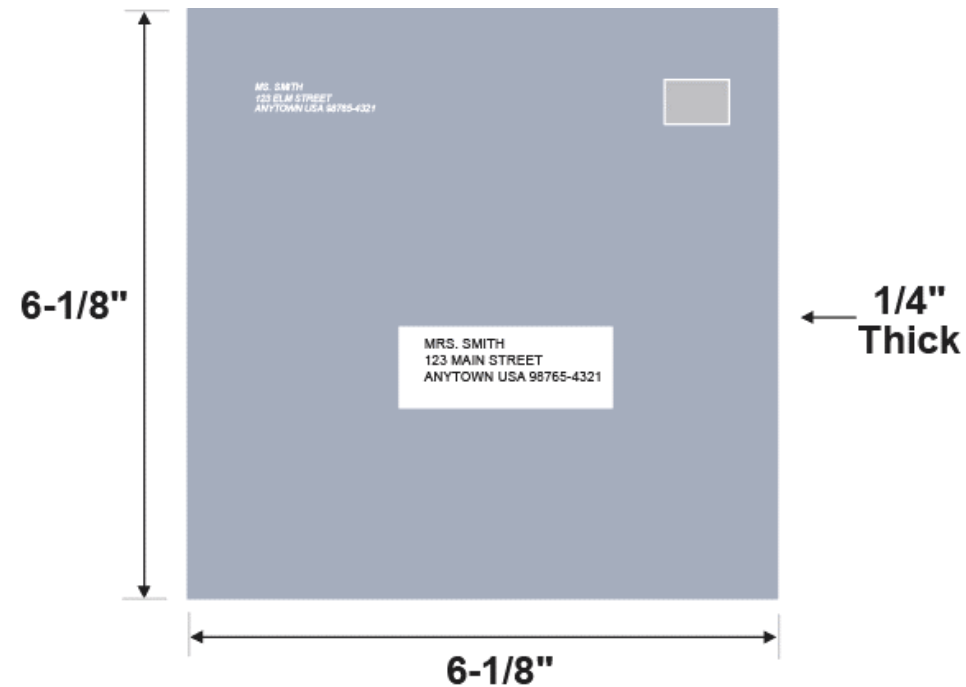
First-Class Mail Shape-Based Classification Flowchart, for use with Notice 3-S



What is it?

Square, uniformly thick, slightly flexible musical greeting card that measures:

- 6-1/8"
- 6-1/8"
- 1/4" thick
- Weight 1.5 oz.



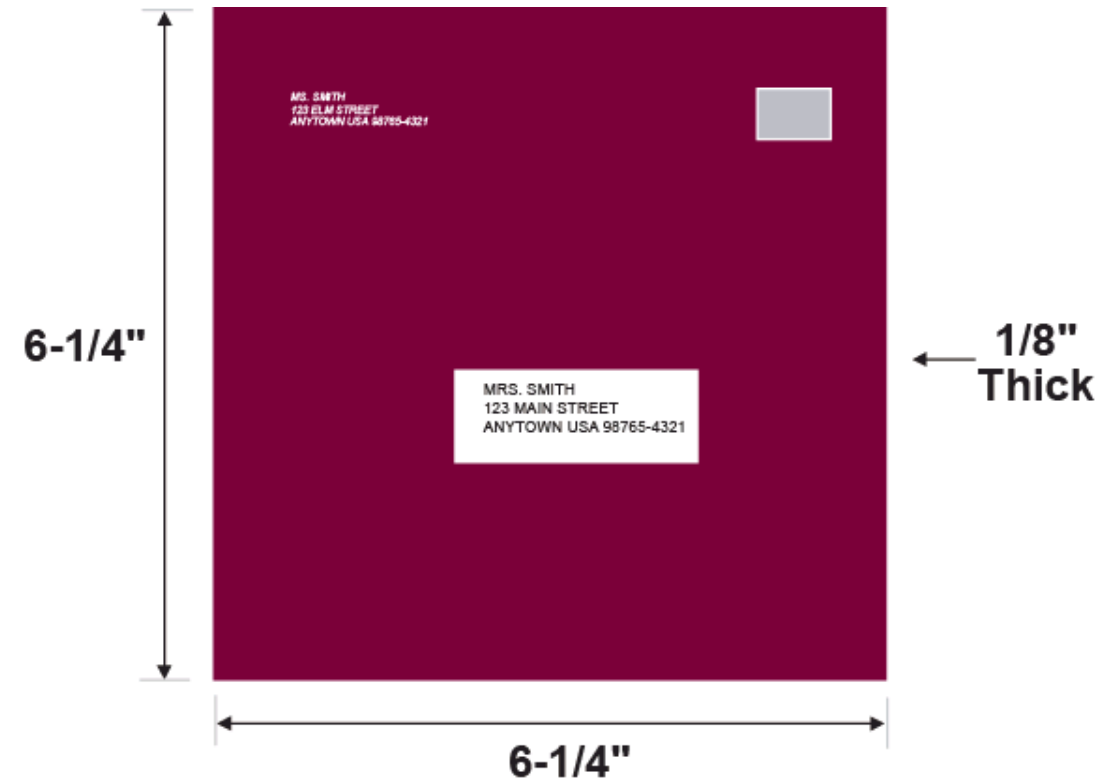
Answer: Nonmachinable Letter

This example would pay the 2-ounce letter price plus the nonmachinable surcharge.

What is it?

Square, uniformly thick, slightly flexible greeting card that measures:

- 6-1/4"
- 6-1/4"
- 1/8" thick
- Weight 2 oz.



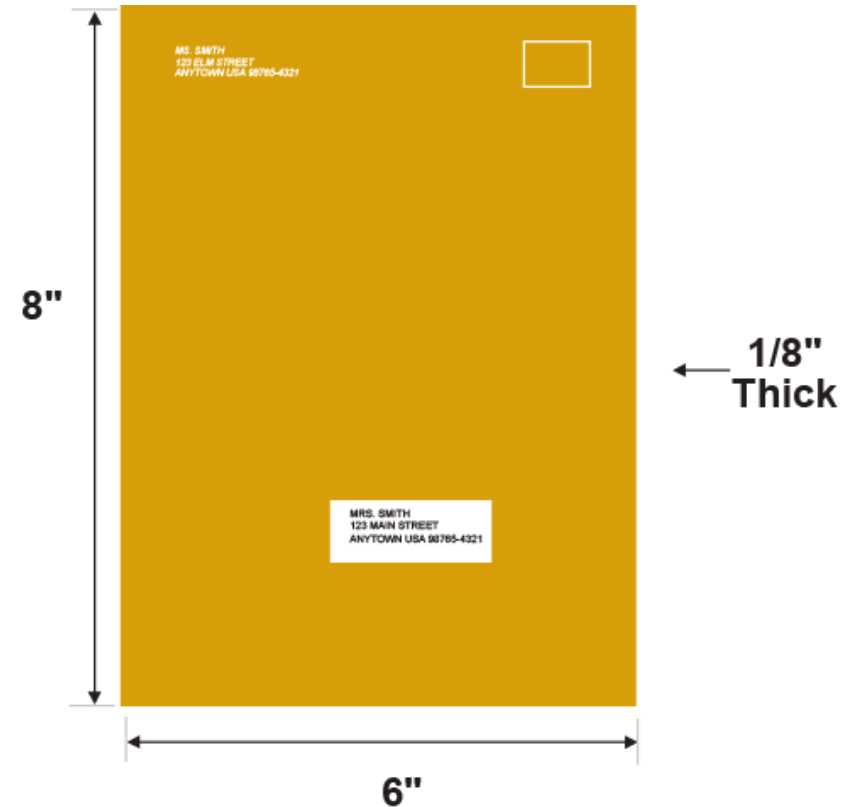
Answer: Flat

This example would pay the 2-ounce flat price.

What is it?

Uniformly thick envelope with the address parallel to the shorter dimension that measures:

- 6"
- 8"
- 1/8" thick
- Weight 2 oz.



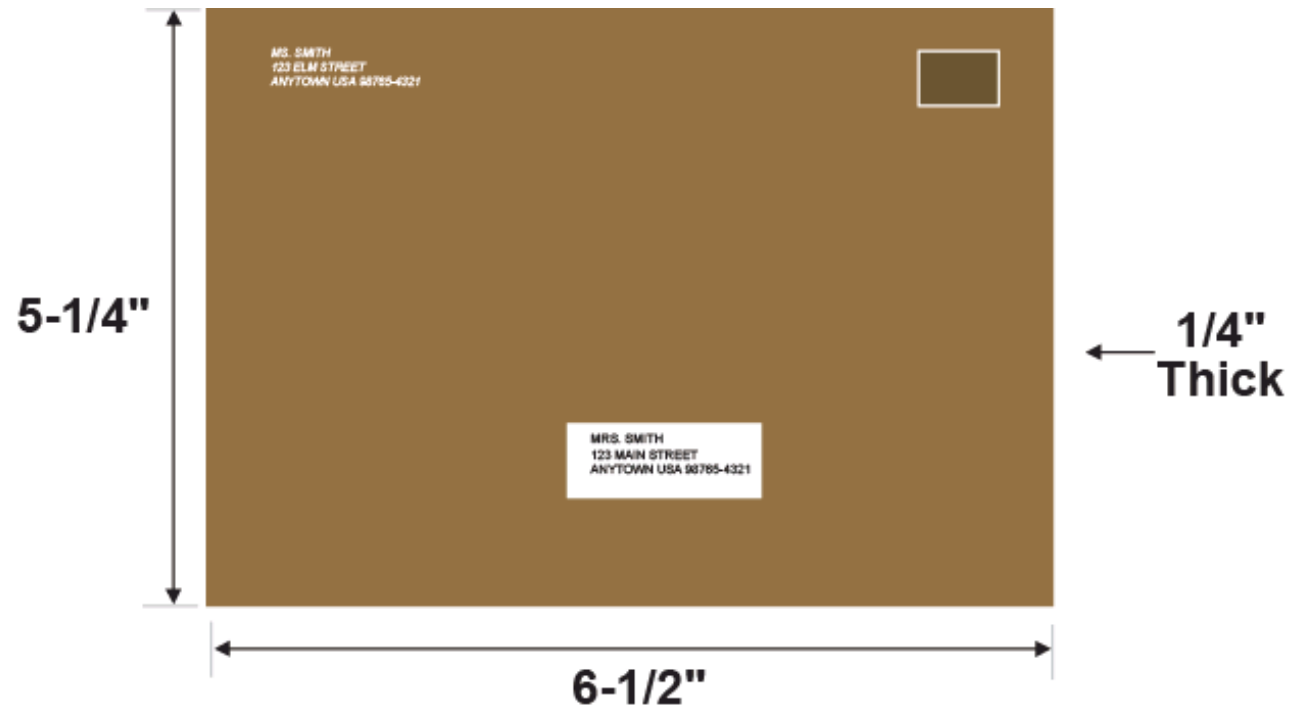
Answer: Nonmachinable Letter

This example would pay the 2-ounce letter price plus the nonmachinable surcharge.

What is it?

Rigid item that measures:

- 6-1/2"
- 5-1/4"
- 1/4" thick
- Weight 3.5 oz.



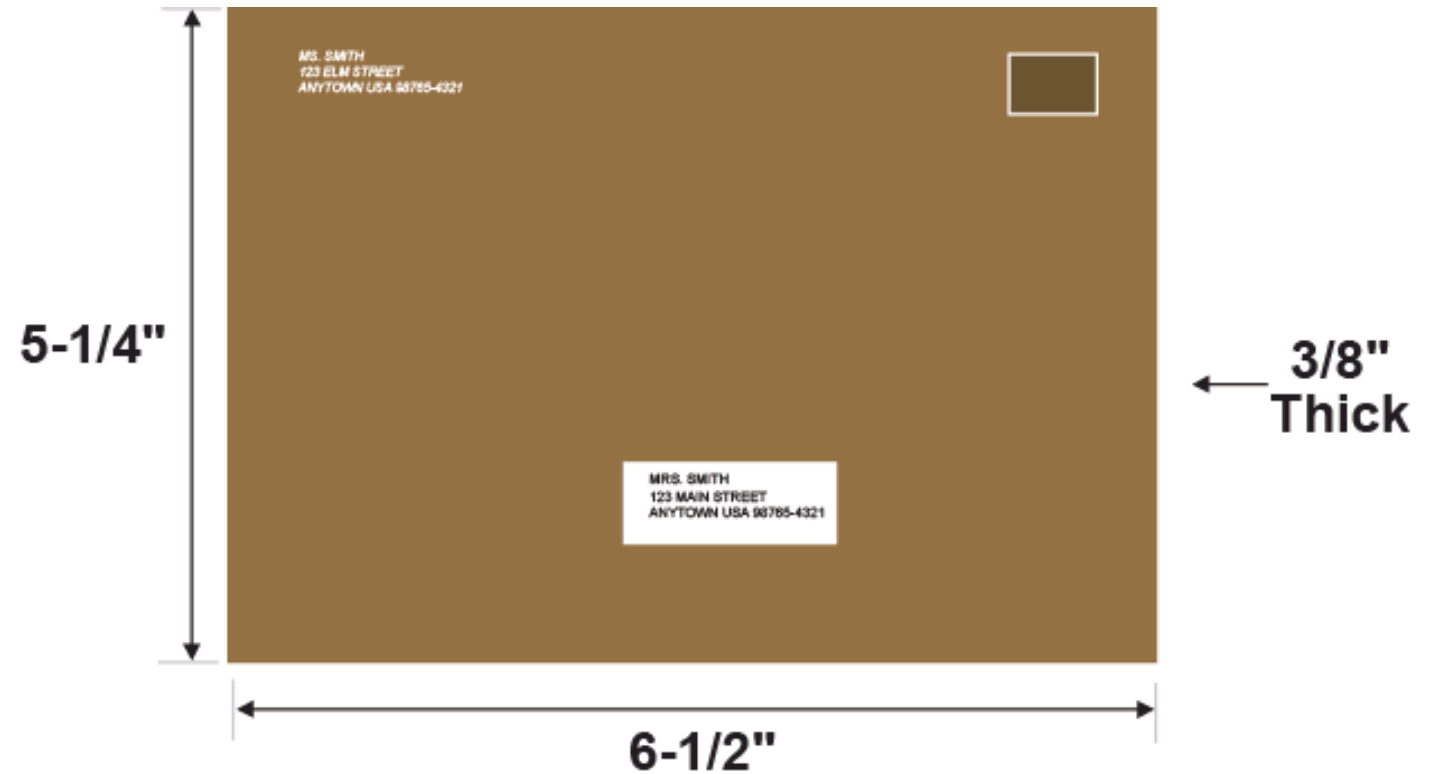
Answer: Nonmachinable Letter

This example would pay the 3.5-ounce letter price plus the nonmachinable surcharge.

What is it?

Rigid box that measures:

- 6-1/2"
- 5-1/4"
- 3/8" thick
- Weight 3.5 oz.



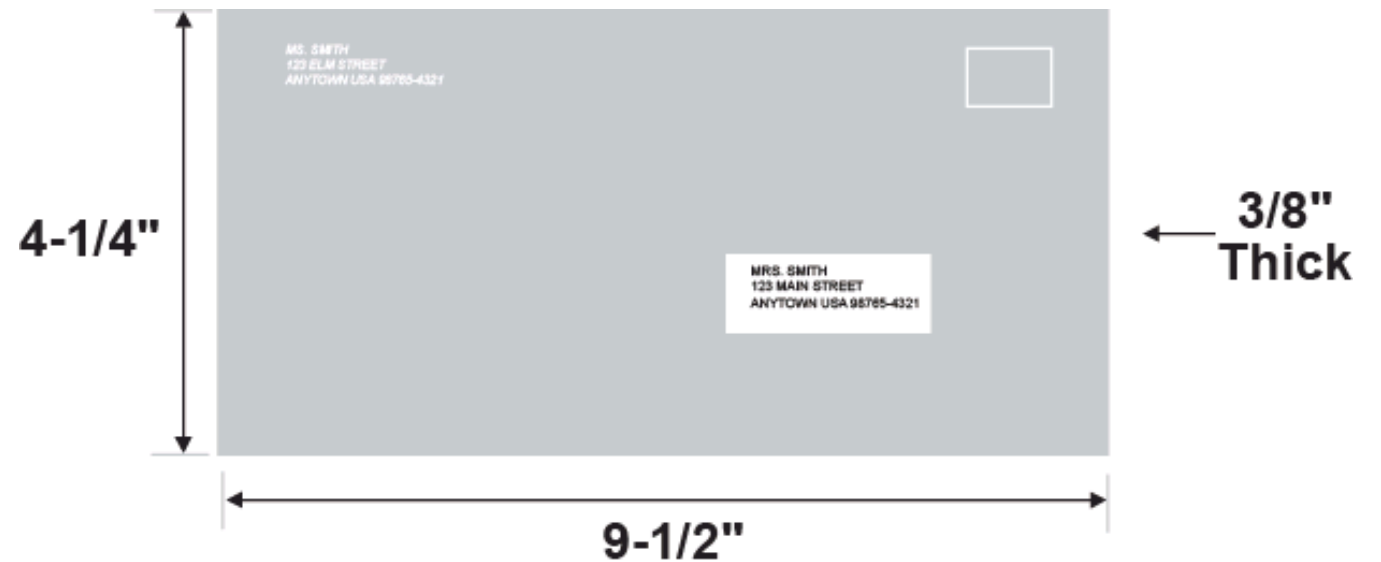
Answer: Parcel

This example would pay the 4-ounce parcel price.

What is it?

Flexible envelope that measures:

- 9-1/2"
- 4-1/4"
- 3/8" thick
- Weight 3 oz.



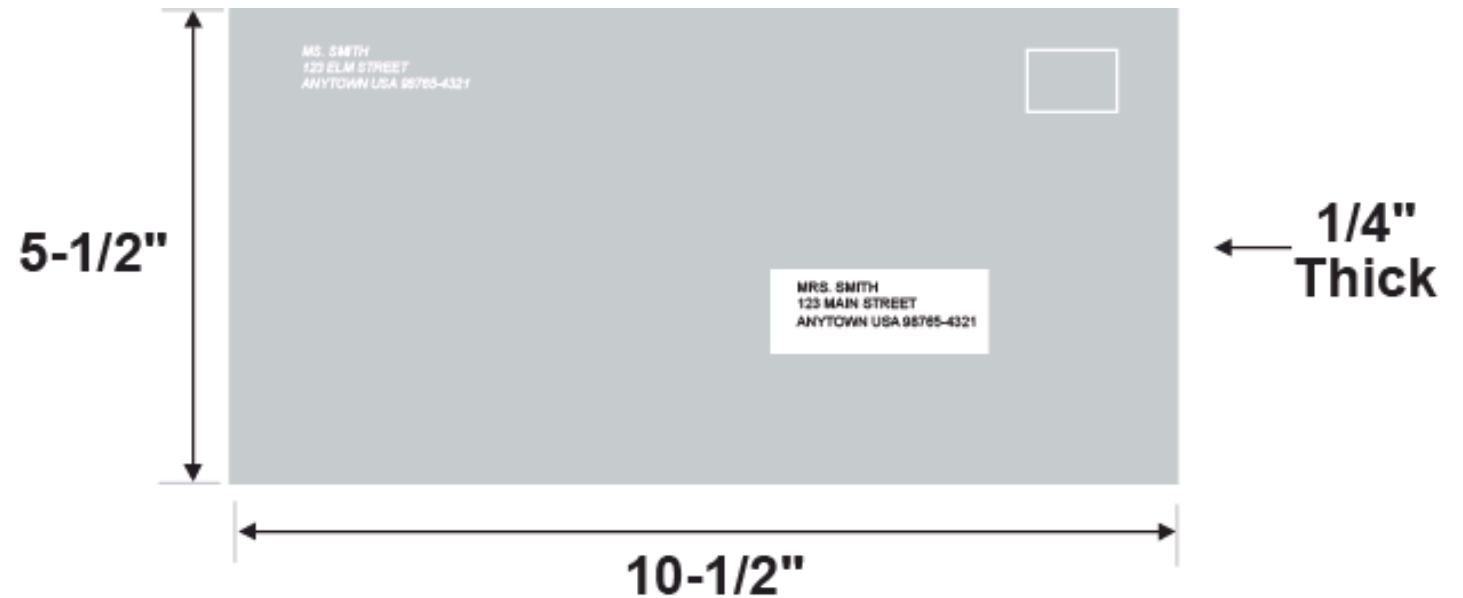
Answer: Flat

This example would pay the 3-ounce flat price.

What is it?

Flexible envelope that measures:

- 10-1/2"
- 5-1/2"
- 1/4" thick
- Weight 4 oz.



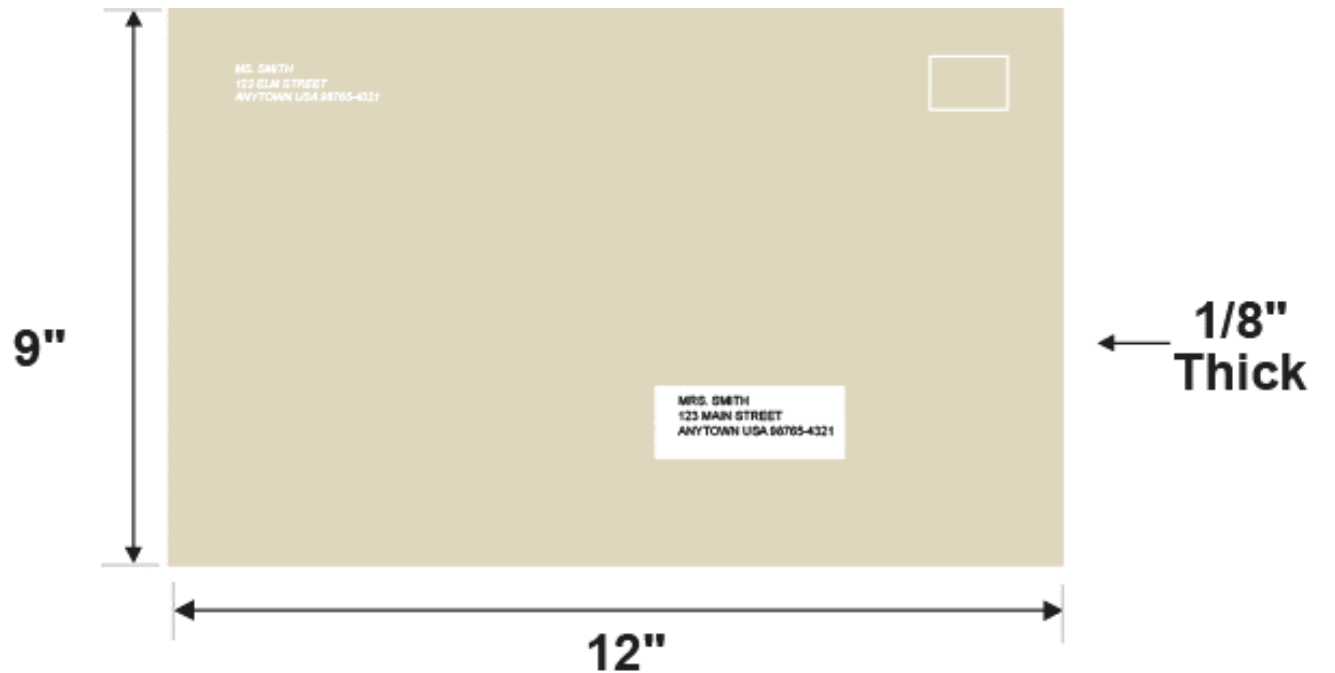
Answer: Flat

This example would pay the 4-ounce flat price.

What is it?

Rigid large envelope that measures:

- 12"
- 9"
- 1/8" thick
- Weight 5 oz.



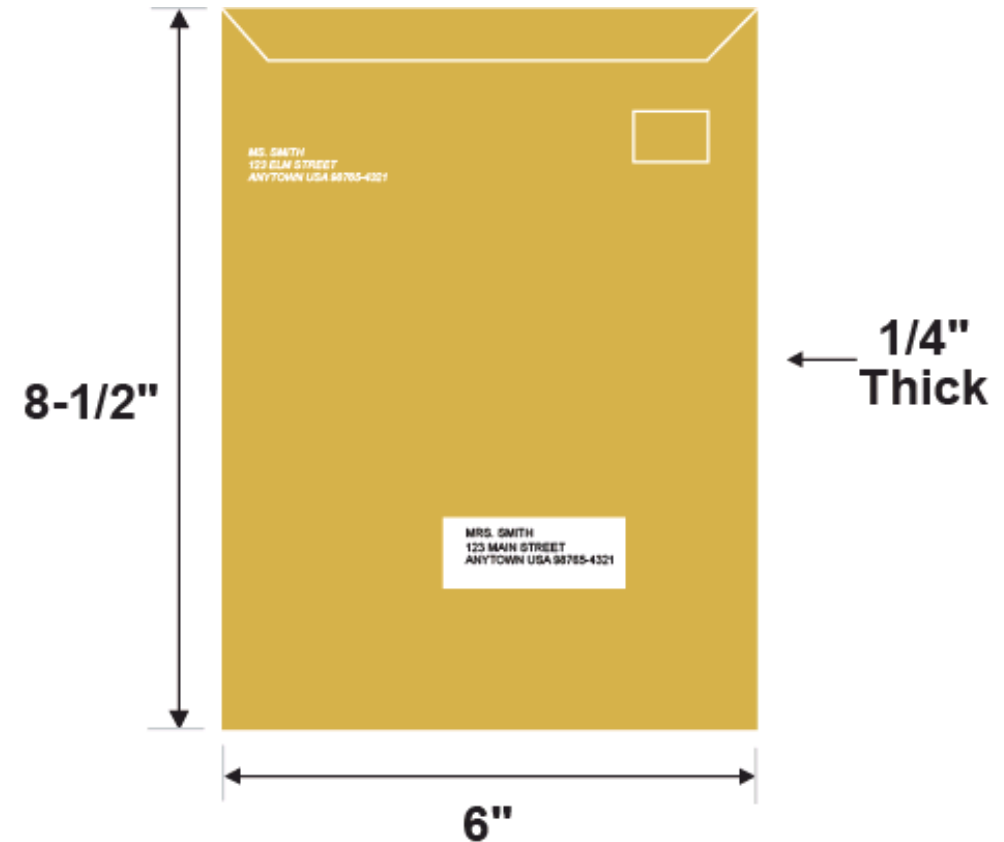
Answer: Parcel

This example would pay the 5-ounce parcel price.

What is it?

Flexible padded mailer that measures:

- 6"
- 8-1/2"
- 1/4" thick
- Weight 3 oz.



Answer: Nonmachinable Letter

This example would pay the 3-ounce letter price plus the nonmachinable surcharge.

Mailability Exercise

- Use the Mailpiece Processing Category Kit to complete the worksheet.
- Work in table teams to review samples in the kit. Take approximately 20 minutes to review each sample and record your findings. Upon completing the round, review the information and ask any pertinent questions.
- Use Notice 3-S and complete Mailability and Processing Category Exercise Worksheet on the next page.
- Determine the processing category, mailability, and if a letter, any nonmachinable characteristics.



Activity- Mailpiece Kits

Hands-On Mail Processing Category Identification Exercise Worksheet									
Directions	Using the concepts learned in class, determine the following for each mailpiece:				Is it <u>Mailable</u> ?				
					What is the <u>Processing Category</u> ?				
					Is the mailpiece subject to the <u>Nonmachinable surcharge</u> ?				
Mailpiece	Mailpiece Dimensions			Is it Mailable?	Processing Category?	Is mailpiece subject to Nonmachinable surcharge?			
	Height	Length	Thickness	Yes or No		Weight	Nonmachinable criteria	Rationale	
1	4"	9.5"	.009"	Yes	Letter	Under 1 ounce	No	Machinable letter	
2	5.5"	8.5"	.008"	Yes	Letter	Under 1 ounce	Yes	Aspect ratio	
3	2"	4"	2"	Yes	Irregular Parcel	2 ounces	Yes	Irregular parcel	
4	8.5"	11"	.13"	Yes	Flat	3 ounces	No	Flat	
5	5"	9"	.2"	No	<i>Not mailable</i>	2 ounces	--	Not rectangular	
6	6"	6"	.2"	Yes	Letter	1.3 ounces	Yes	Aspect ratio	
7	12"	6"	.15"	Yes	Flat	Under 1 ounce	No	Flat	
8	4"	7.5"	2"	Yes	Machinable Parcel	6.5 ounces	No	Machinable Parcel	
9	4.13"	6.75"	.5"	Yes	Irregular Parcel	1.5 ounces	Yes	Irregular Parcel/ not rectangular	
10	10.75"	14"	1"	Yes	Machinable Parcel	Over 6 ounces	Yes	Machinable Parcel	
11	6"	4"	.15"	No	<i>Not mailable</i>	.5 ounces	--	Length not 5"	
12	14.5"	19"	1"	Yes	Machinable Parcel	10 ounces	Yes	Machinable Parcel	
13	9"	12"	.20"	Yes	Flat	1 ounce	No	Flat	
14	2"	2"	2"	No	<i>Not mailable</i>	2 ounces	--	No space for address markings and postage	
15	6"	11"	.20"	Yes	Letter	1 ounce	Yes	Untabbed folded self-mailer	

Packaging

- May refuse nonmailable and improperly packed items.
- Other standards may apply to overseas military and International Mail.
- Cushion fragile items to withstand handling in processing, transportation, and delivery.
- Package contents so they do not shift within the mailing container.
- Brace/cushion heavy items to prevent damage to other mailpieces.



Packaging – Stationery

- Stationery-type items thicker than one inch or heavier than one pound are not accepted in letter-style envelopes.
- Secure by tying, banding, or partitions on close-fitting interior containers to prevent shifting.



Packaging – Odd-Shaped Items

Odd-shaped items not permitted in letter or flat-size paper envelopes unless wrapped within envelope contents to streamline shape and prevent damage during postal processing.



Packaging – Liquids

Acceptable closures:

- Screw-on caps, soldering, clips, etc. No friction-top closures (push-down types).
- Steel pails and drums with positive closures, such as locking rings or recessed spouts under screw-cap closures.

Breakable containers for more than 4 fluid ounces must be triple-packaged following DMM requirements.

Liquids



Leakproof interior containers packed within durable outer containers

Between interior and outer containers, absorbent wrapping materials to soak up spills and prevent shifting

Packaging tape

Packaging – Cushioning/Tape/Banding

- Loose-fill cushioning to prevent movement, protect, and stabilize (do not mix fragile and heavy items).
- Stabilize heavy items and activate gummed tapes before application.
- Strong packaging or paper tape at least two inches wide (no cellophane or masking tape – tape must extend at least 3 inches over adjoining side).
- Banding must encircle length and girth at least once (no twine or cord) .
- Perishable, hazardous, or restricted items may affect mailability.
- Must have space for address, return address, and postage (on postage side of mailpiece).



Counter Activity



1. Place the item on the scale.
2. Scan USPS packaging barcode if available or select Mailing/Shipping.
3. If prompted, select Yes or No to the flat rate packaging question.
4. Type the ZIP Code™ and press the Enter on the keyboard.
5. Select a mailing service.
6. Select any additional Extra Services desired.
7. Select Continue.
8. Scan label barcode.
9. Select postage payment type if applicable.
10. Select Print Labels.
11. Select Pay and End Visit to complete transaction.
12. Tender payment if required.

Summary

- Name the five mail processing categories.
- Determine the processing category of a mailpiece by using the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM[®]) and Notice 3-S, *First-Class Mail Shape-Based Pricing Template*.
- Determine if a letter-sized mailpiece is nonmailable or nonmachinable.