

Barcoding

Barcoding is an important part of Australia Post's strategy to improve services to customers mailing bulk quantities of letters.

What is a barcode?

A barcode is a machine readable representation of information, usually printed as parallel lines. A barcode can be read by barcode readers or scanners and improves the speed and accuracy of data capture and processing, and also speed up the processing and sorting of mail for delivery within Australia.

The barcode used by Australia Post is called a 4-state barcode.

Barcoding provides the following benefits:

- Simplified pre-sorting requirements
- Enhanced service. Barcodes can be read faster and more accurately than address text. This improves sorting efficiency.
- Greater addressing flexibility. Using barcodes, the range of fonts and envelope layouts is enhanced.
- Simplified pricing structure. The efficiencies created by barcoding means cost reductions can be passed on to customers.

To take advantage of barcoding, customers need to:

- Review (and modify if necessary) their customer database on a regular basis to accommodate the eight digit Delivery Point Identifier (DPID)
- Validate their customer database against Australia Post's Postal Address File (PAF), using approved address-matching and correction software (AMAS). This software appends the correct DPID.
- Print the barcode using AMAS or alternative barcode printing software.

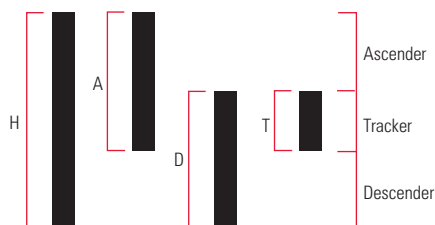
Barcodes and Business Letter Services

The table below lists the Business Letter Service and where a barcode is required for discounted postage rates.

Required	Optional	Not required
PreSort Letters/ Charity Mail Acquisition Mail Reply Paid	Clean Mail Print Post	Impact Mail Unaddressed Mail

Four states

The barcode used by Australia Post is called a **4-state barcode**. It comprises four types of bars (states), each of which is identified by both a name and a value.



Each bar comprises a 'tracker' (middle section), to which an 'ascender' (top section) and/or 'descender' (bottom section) may be added.

This creates four possible bar states:

- Tracker with ascender and descender (H) (value: 0)
- Tracker with ascender (A) (value: 1)
- Tracker with descender (D) (value: 2)
- Tracker on its own (T) (value: 3)



Correct addressing

The address on every mail article is a direction to Australia Post. It should be complete, concise, and clearly written or printed so that Australia Post can process and deliver the article accurately and quickly.

Why correct address?

For bulk mail services, Australia Post offers *lower postage rates* to customers who prepare and lodge articles in accordance with the bulk mail service conditions. One of these conditions is to correctly format the delivery address of each article to ensure that the addresses are compatible with Australia Post's automated letter sorting systems which can efficiently process articles.

To enable the letter sorting equipment to perform at high levels of efficiency all lines of the address should be formatted correctly and in a consistent manner. The established standards for each service outline the correct format and layout for addresses to be presented on articles, and are detailed in Table 1.

Components of a standard correct address

With the exceptions of Unaddressed Mail and Reply Paid, the address on any postal article must be aligned left and is constructed from the following components:

1 Australia Post
 2 Attention of: Mr A. Sample
 3 321 Exhibition Street
 MELBOURNE VIC 3000
 4 5 6

- 1 **Name of Addressee:** First line of address: (*Essential*)
For articles addressed to a person at a company or organisation, this is the company or organisation name. In Registered Post, you must not use an acronym or a codename, unless the address also contains a 'care of' named addressee in a subsequent line.
- 2 **"Attention of" or other reference details:** Second and, if necessary, third line of the address (*Optional*).
- 3 **Street address**
- 4 **Locality name or the name of the office of delivery**
- 5 **State or territory abbreviation**
- 6 **The postcode**

When 'Australia', or any abbreviation of Australia appears in the address, it should be placed below this bottom line.

Articles for each bulk mail service are designed to follow specialised processing streams. For this reason correct addressing conditions vary between services. Full details are provided in each of the Service Guides.

TABLE 1

	Acquisition Mail	Clean Mail	PreSort/ Charity Mail	Print Post	Impact Mail
Address lines must be aligned left	1	✓	1	1	✓
Fonts must be clearly readable	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fixed-pitch fonts are recommended	–	✓	–	✓	✓
Proportional fonts (if used) are preferred to be 12 point in size	–	✓	–	✓	✓
Artistic or script fonts can be used	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Fonts are preferably 12 point in size	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Font characters must be 1.8–7.0mm high and 0.3–7.0mm wide. The ideal height is 2.0–4.0mm	–	✓	–	✓	–
Line spacing should be 1.0–2.5mm	–	✓	–	✓	–
Individual characters can touch or overlap	2	✗	2	✗	✓
Attributes such as <i>italics</i> , bolding , shadowing or underlining can be used	3	✗	3	✗	3
Dark inks such as black which clearly contrast against the background are preferred	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red, orange and yellow inks can be used	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Second last line: Must contain the delivery address, ie the number and name of the street or thoroughfare or PO Box or Bag number	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bottom line: Must contain in this order: locality, state abbreviation, postcode. In CAPITALS with no punctuation or underlining	4	✓	4	✓	5
Bottom line: Leave 1 or 2 spaces between locality, state abbreviation and postcode	–	✓	–	✓	–
Additional address information , eg business or person's name, must be above the last two lines of the address (not below, alongside or within these lines)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Window panel envelopes: The entire address block must be clearly visible when presented for lodgement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Address labels can be used, if straight and firmly affixed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- 1 Excluding barcode placement.
- 2 It is strongly recommended that print characters do not overlap.
- 3 These attributes are permitted, but their use should be avoided.
- 4 Must contain the locality and postcode. The state abbreviation is recommended.
- 5 It is recommended that the locality, state abbreviation and postcode be printed on the same line. CAPITALS are strongly recommended.



Paper stock for bulk mail

This fact sheet is for the guidance of customers, paper mills/merchants and printers, to ensure that your paper stock meets Australia Post's requirements for envelope construction and postcards.

Why paper stock matters

Paper stock for envelopes and postcards is an important consideration as it can affect the ability of Australia Post's high speed letter sorting equipment to process articles.

- Mail articles that are too flimsy, or too thick or rigid, may jam in letter sorting equipment.
- Articles with either very rough or high-slip surfaces may fail to travel through friction feeders
- Articles with loose fibres or dust may cause buildup and malfunction on the equipment
- Articles with poor opacity or reflectivity may provide insufficient contrast for the automatic reading of the delivery address or its barcode
- Articles with coated or non-porous surfaces may result in smearing of the postmarking impression or the fluorescent orange sorting barcodes that Australia Post prints on the front and back of articles.

Mail articles that do not meet the paper stock specifications may be damaged or delayed, and may be ineligible for the lower postage rates which are available for bulk mail services.

Which bulk mail service?

The paper stock requirements vary between some of Australia Post's bulk mail services.

- *Impact Mail* articles have very few restrictions on the stock used.
- Articles that are addressed with barcodes (*PreSort Letters* and *Acquisition Mail* services) have requirements for the physical attributes of the paper stock but allow for a wide range of paper colours.
- Other articles (for *Clean Mail*, *Print Post* and *Reply Paid*) must also be on paper or card in a colour that approximates an approved colour.

Paper stock conditions also vary depending on the size of the articles being posted.

For these reasons it's important to know which bulk mail service is being used, and to refer to the relevant *Service Guide* for definitions of the article sizes accepted for each service.



Paper stock specifications

Impact Mail

The construction of Impact Mail articles is not limited to paper based stock. Articles can be made from a range of non-paper materials such as rubber, plastic, laminate, vinyl, leather or wool. If using a material other than paper stock, the article must be submitted to Australia Post for testing.

The table shows the recommended minimum stock for the construction of Impact Mail articles, as either paper envelopes or as cards.

Attribute	Envelope paper minimum	Card minimum
Density	65gsm	140gsm
Thickness	0.08mm	0.18mm
Stiffness – machine direction	3 mN	30 mN
Stiffness – cross direction	1.5 mN	14 mN
Tearing resistance	350 mN	350 mN

Plastic wrapping

With several Business Letter Services, customers can lodge articles wrapped in plastic rather than in envelopes. Specific requirements apply to the preparation of these articles. Plastic wrapping is an alternative to paper envelopes or wrappers.

Benefits

- Artwork can be printed on a *flysheet* which is visible through plastic wrapping
- Delivery address details can be included on the cover of the article
- Plastic wrapping can provide a creative alternative to enveloping

Plastic wrapping of articles is a specialised process. Customers can get help with plastic wrapping from a range of businesses that specialise in designing, printing, preparing and sorting mail. These businesses are typically called *Mail Service Providers* and can help with a single part of a bulk mailing, such as plastic wrapping, or the entire process—from article creation to mail lodgement.

As well as plastic wrapping, Mail Service Providers can provide support with purchasing or renting address lists, managing address databases, designing and printing articles, sorting articles and lodging them with Australia Post for bulk mailing. Mail Service Providers and their contact details can be found in the Yellow Pages.




More detailed information (about plastic wrapping) can be found in the *Print Post Service Guide*, *PreSort Letters Service Guide* and *Acquisition Mail Service Guide* and at the Australia Post website www.auspost.com.au

Eligibility

Table 1 below shows the eligibility and the maximum plastic overhang of plastic wrapped articles for the bulk mail services.

Article Size	PreSort Letters	Charity Mail	Print Post	Acquisition Mail
Small	10mm DIRECT TRAY	10mm DIRECT TRAY	35/60mm	10mm DIRECT TRAY
Small Plus	10mm DIRECT TRAY	—	—	10mm DIRECT TRAY
Medium	35/60mm	—	—	—
Large	35/60mm	—	35/60mm	—

Legend for symbols:

-  Maximum plastic overhang (excess plastic wrap) is 10mm
-  Maximum plastic overhang is:
 - 35mm for articles up to 10mm thick
 - 60mm for articles over 10mm thick
-  These plastic wrapped articles must be lodged in Direct Trays

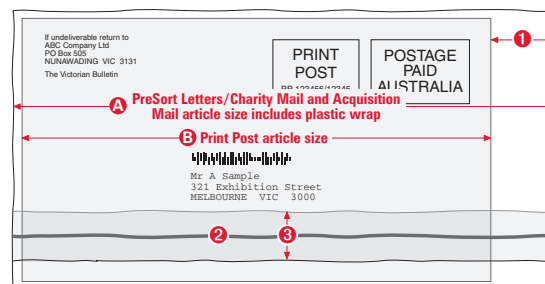
Specifications

A PreSort Letters/Charity Mail and Acquisition Mail plastic wrapped articles are measured on *the total plastic size*, not on the size of the contents.

If Charity Mail articles exceed Small, or Acquisition Mail articles exceed Small Plus letter dimensions, they will no longer be eligible for those rates, and may be charged at PreSort Letters rates in a larger category.

B Print Post plastic wrapped articles are measured on *the size of the contents*, not on the total plastic size.

Eligibility for correctly addressed Residue and CBD Sort Division pricing is dependent on not exceeding the maximum plastic wrap overhang limits. A surcharge can be applied when the limits are not observed.



- 1 The maximum overhang (excess plastic wrap) is not to exceed specified limits, as per Table 1.
- 2 The sealing seam (weld) must not intersect the address block or barcode. For Print Post articles, a surcharge can be applied if this requirement is not met.
- 3 Australia Post prefers the hem (overlapping plastic area) not to cover the address block or barcode.

Impact Mail

Impact Mail gives you the creative freedom to think outside the traditional envelope format. There is virtually no restriction on the shape you send, so the only limit is your imagination.

Shape

Impact Mail articles must be non-rectangular in shape, and fit within the size specifications listed below. You can experiment with shapes, die-cuts, folds – you name it, you can send it with Impact Mail.

Some shapes are more susceptible to damage than others. Some examples of shapes that are not recommended are:

- long 'tails' (likely to bend or break off during mail carriage)
- shapes that are likely to become entangled with other mail articles
- shapes with sharp and/or pointed edges that could cause injury to people or damage to other postal articles
- shapes that have insufficient area to clearly show the address, return address and Postage Paid imprint, or to affix a redirection or return-to-sender sticker.

▼ Some suitable shapes for Impact Mail



▼ Some shapes not recommended for Impact Mail



Not recommended because the long legs are likely to bend or break off during mail carriage.

Not recommended because the shape is likely to become entangled with other mail articles.

Not recommended because there is insufficient area to clearly show the address, return address and Postage Paid Imprint, or to affix a redirection or Return-To-Sender sticker.



Materials

The construction of Impact Mail articles is not limited to paper based stock. Articles can be made from a range of non-paper materials such as rubber, plastic, laminate, vinyl, leather or wool.



If using a material other than paper stock, the article must be submitted to Australia Post for testing:

Australia Post
Attn Manager Customer Connections
GPO Box 1777
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

