

**POSTAL SERVICE****39 CFR Part 111****New Specifications for Automated Flats**

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This final rule sets forth the DMM standards adopted by the Postal Service to implement the discount rate for automation flat-size mailpieces processed on the Flat Sorting Machine (FSM) 1000. The FSM 1000 is capable of processing mailpieces that cannot be processed on the FSM 881. FSM 1000 machines are being retrofitted with barcode readers. Mailpieces that currently do not qualify for automation flat rates will be eligible if pieces meet the size and other criteria for processing on the FSM 1000, are prepared with correct ZIP+4 or delivery point barcodes, and meet other preparation requirements.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This final rule became effective at 12:01 a.m. on October 4, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Karen A. Magazino, (202) 268-3854.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On August 26, 1998, the Postal Service published for public comment in the **Federal Register** a proposed rule (63 FR 45440) that provided information on the implementation of automation flat rates for pieces prepared as automated flats that meet the physical mailpiece requirements for the FSM 1000. The revised DMM standards became effective October 4, 1998.

Deployment of 340 FSM 1000s has been completed in major processing and distribution centers nationwide. Barcode reader deployment for the FSM 1000s will be completed by February 1999. Newspapers, tabloids, catalogs, and many kinds of polywrap that cannot be processed on existing FSM 881 equipment can be processed on FSM 1000 equipment and will now be able to qualify for automation discounts.

Flat mailpieces must meet the uniformity requirements contained in C820.8.0.

The FSM 1000 can efficiently process pieces that are bound or, if unbound, are double folded. Since newspapers are double-folded, they pose little problem for processing on the FSM 1000. However, many flat-sized mail pieces are not bound or double-folded; therefore, unbound flat-sized mailpieces will be required to be prepared with two folds. The second fold must be perpendicular to the original fold. In order to give publishers and printers the

opportunity to make adjustments to their periodical design to comply with this requirement, the Postal Service has determined to suspend the effective date of this requirement until October 4, 2000.

Testing has shown that larger pieces can be processed on FSM 1000 than on the FSM 881. Separate size, weight, and thickness dimensions for mail that can be processed on the FSM 1000 will be added to the eligibility criteria for automation flat rates in DMM C820. The FSM 1000 can process a piece up to 12 inches high by 15¾ inches in length. For the FSM 1000, the length is the longest edge except that for pieces that are folded or have a bound edge, where the length is the dimension parallel to the folded or bound edge. This is different from the definitions of length and height for mailpieces processed on FSM 881. For FSM 881 pieces, the height is defined as the dimension parallel to the folded or bound edge. The length for folded pieces or pieces with a bound edge that are processed on the FSM 1000 increases 3¾ inches (for example, the bound edge) but the height decreases 3 inches (for example, the edge perpendicular to the bound edge). The minimum height and length for all flats processed on the FSM 1000 is 4 inches high by 4 inches long provided the mailpiece is greater than ½-inch. Mailpieces less than 5 inches in length must be greater than ¼-inch thick. The minimum thickness for pieces 5 inches or more in length is 0.009 inch.

Testing of flat mailpieces demonstrated that as the length of the piece decreases, the thickness may increase. The maximum thickness requirement for the FSM 1000 mail is 1¼ inches if the length of the mailpiece is 13 inches in length. For pieces over 13 inches, the thickness cannot exceed 7/8 inch.

The maximum weight for First-Class Mail mailpieces processed on the FSM 1000 is 11 ounces (13 ounces after rate case implementation, January 10, 1999), up to 16 ounces for Standard Mail (A), and 6 pounds for Periodicals.

For pieces processed on the FSM 1000, the correct and properly prepared POSTNET barcode must be placed at least ⅛ inch from any edge of the mailpiece. However, since there has been a demonstrated "slump" on certain mailpieces, we strongly recommend barcodes be placed at least 2 inches from the dimension that is the length (the longest edge or, if bound or folded, the bound or folded edge).

For pieces processed on the FSM 1000, barcode requirements found in C840.4.0, C840.5.0, and C840.6.0 still apply.

Pieces that do not meet the FSM 881 dimensions, but do meet the FSM 1000 dimensions may be prepared with polywrap under the guidelines specified in DMM C820.4.0 except that only physical property number 2 (haze) will be required. Pieces prepared with FSM 1000 approved polywrap must bear a separate marking from pieces prepared with FSM 881 approved polywrap to indicate the flat sorting machine for which the polywrap was approved. Mailers will be given a 1-year grace period to begin using the new polywrap markings that specify whether the polywrap is approved for FSM 881 or FSM 1000 approved.

When addressing a polywrapped FSM 881 or FSM 1000 flat mailpiece, if the address label is on the outside of the polywrapped piece, the haze requirement is not applicable nor is review of the polywrap by the mailpiece design analyst (MDA) prior to mailing.

Although the Postal Service is extending the discount to pieces that can be processed on FSM 1000 equipment, it does not wish to encourage mailers to prepare pieces in a manner that would cause them to migrate from the more productive FSM 881 to the FSM 1000. In addition to productivity concerns, a large migration could also cause equipment capacity problems. Therefore, in order to qualify for the automation flats rates, mailpieces that meet the current automation flat height, length, thickness, and weight dimensions applicable to the FSM 881 under DMM C820.2.0 must continue to meet the current specifications for turning ability and deflection (current DMM C820.5.0 and proposed DMM C820.7.0) and if prepared with polywrap, must continue to meet all the polywrap criteria in DMM C820.4.0.

When presorting mail for the automation flat-size rates, pieces meeting the FSM 881 dimensions must be prepared in separate packages from pieces that meet the FSM 1000 dimensions. When preparing packages of pieces meeting the dimensions for the FSM 881, mailers may combine pieces of nonidentical weights provided appropriate postage payment methods are used. Likewise, within a package of pieces meeting the dimensions for the FSM 1000, mailers may combine pieces of non-identical weights provided appropriate postage payment methods are used. Separate package minimums must be met for each type of package, e.g. 10 pieces per package for First-Class and Standard Mail (A) and six pieces per package for Periodicals). This will allow packages of mail to be sorted to the appropriate flats processing

equipment at sack or tray opening units and at pallet breakdown operations.

Both types of automation flats packages (FSM 881 and FSM 1000 packages) may be placed in the same tray (First-Class) or in the same sack (Periodicals and Standard Mail (A)). For Periodicals and Standard Mail (A) both types of automation flats packages (FSM 881 and FSM 1000 packages) may be placed on the same pallet.

In addition, for Periodicals sacked mail, FSM 881 and FSM 1000 packages may be combined with nonautomation packages in 3-digit, SCF, ADC, and mixed ADC sacks and/or pallets. Periodicals automation flats packages must be placed in separate 5-digit sacks or pallets from Periodicals nonautomation packages. For First-Class and Standard Mail (A) mailings, automation rate mail must continue to be separately trayed (First-Class) or sacked (Standard Mail (A)), or separately palletized on five digit pallets from nonautomation rate mail.

These changes will be included in DMM Issue 54.

Part A of this notice summarizes major changes that have been made to or material added to the proposed implementation standards since the proposed rule was published. This includes changes made by the Postal Service in response to mailers' comments or for other reasons. Part B contains an analysis of comments received on the proposed rule and the Postal Service's responses. Part C summarizes the changes to the DMM, followed by the text of the revised DMM standards.

#### **A. Major Changes and Additions to the Specifications Outlined in the August 26, 1998, Proposed Rule**

1. Overhang (selvage)—The proposed rule required the polywrap overhang on the sides of the mailpiece must not be more than 1/4-inch. However, it has been determined that the FSM 1000 can process flats up to 3/4-inch overhang from all edges.

2. Double folds—The proposed rule required newspapers and tabloids to have two folds. It has been determined that newspapers are double-folded and, if any telescoping problems occur, they will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Bound tabloid publications appear to remain intact in processing operations. However, unbound publications cause mail slippage and telescoping problems; therefore, they are required to be double-folded, with the second fold perpendicular to the original fold. For publishers who are unable to comply at this date, a 2-year transition period will be given.

3. Polywrap marking—The proposed rule require the marking to include the company name in the mailpiece identification statement. The product name is required instead of the company name for verification purposes. In addition, the 6-month transition period for existing polywrap markings has been extended to one year, until October 4, 1999.

4. Package preparation—For periodicals, automation and nonautomation packages may not be combined in 5-digit sacks. Therefore, Customer Support Ruling 29, dated January 1997, will be rescinded. The applicable standards will be published in the DMM.

5. Wrap direction—The polywrap seam must be along the addressed side of the mailpiece, oriented from top to bottom on FSM 881 pieces. However, it has been determined that this is not a requirement for a FSM 1000 flat-size mailpiece.

6. Polywrap requirement—When addressing a polywrapped flat-size mailpiece the haze and verifying requirements are not applicable if the address label is placed on the outside of the polywrapped piece.

#### **B. Summary of Comments From the August 26, 1998, Proposed Rule**

The Postal Service received 21 pieces of correspondence offering comments on the August 26, 1998, proposed rule. Respondents included four associations and 17 major mailers, publishers, and printers.

The specific points raised in the comments are presented below, organized by general comments and by specific comments on particular issues. In addition to receiving numerous comments from the mailing industry, the Postal Service has had extensive ongoing exchanges of viewpoints with representatives of the mailing industry. This cooperative effort has led to the development of revised standards that the Postal Service believes strikes a better balance between the interests of the mailers and the Postal Service.

##### **1. General Comments**

Ten comments were received concerning the separation of specifications for pieces that will run on FSM 881 versus the FSM 1000. One commenter stated that having two sets of specifications is confusing to the mailers and USPS acceptance staff. One commenter said mailers have no control over the type of equipment their mailpieces are run on, so they should not be expected to meet different specifications to qualify for the same postage rate. Postal management did

consider these comments. There are two types of FSM's to handle two different types of flats. However, USPS operations is concerned about flats that are currently processed on the FSM 881 migrating to the FSM 1000 because of changes in preparation standards. In addition, current automation polywrap must be used on the FSM 881 pieces when claiming the barcode discount for 881 shaped pieces. Without this standard we would see a mass migration by mailers to the less expensive polywrap and would result in a substantial diversion of mail to the FSM 1000. There are capacity issues (340 FSM 1000 compared to 812 FSM 881) as well as productivity, service, and cost concerns. USPS acceptance personnel will be receiving instructions from the office of Business Mail Acceptance regarding the acceptance and verification procedures for these two sets of specifications for flat-size mail qualifying for these discount rates.

##### **2. Machinable Parcels Qualifying for the FSM 1000 Discount**

One commenter indicated that they are presently mailing nonautomation-compatible parcels that he would qualify as automated compatible flats under the new specifications for automated flats. However, the requirement relating to package and mail preparation, as proposed, will make it cost-prohibitive for them to participate in this program. This commenter further asked whether he could mail to an SCF level and stack mail in large (mixed) cartons sectioned by SCF instead of bags, trays, or pallets. The Postal Service currently allows bundled Standard Mail (A) and Periodical Mail to be prepared as packages of flats placed on pallets. However, there are sortation requirements in DMM M820. Flat-size automation rate First-Class Mail, Periodicals, and Standard Mail (A) must be prepared under M820 and meet the eligibility standards for the rate claimed. Package, sack, and tray preparations are subject to M010, M020, and M030. Firm packages may not be included. Trays and sacks must bear the appropriate barcoded container labels under M032. In addition, each piece must also include a complete delivery address with correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code. Address and barcode quality is subject to A800 and CASS/MASS standards in A950. For Standard Mail (A) mailpieces mailed at rates for the FSM 1000 flats, this portion in non-automation rates is subject to the residual shape surcharge if these mailpieces do not meet the standards in C050 for a letter or a flat.

### 3. Polywrap

Ten commenters were concerned that polywrap requirements for the FSM 881 require more expensive polywrap than for mailpieces processed on the FSM 1000. Mailers feel this requirement is causing an unfair competitive situation and request all mailers be permitted to use the same type of polywrap, only complying to property number 2 (haze) in order to qualify for automation flats rates. One commenter indicated that, based upon the characteristics of the mailpiece, it should be left up to operations personnel at the USPS to determine which piece of equipment the flats should be processed on. Another commenter volunteered time and energy to assist the USPS in a limited time test to estimate the probable volume of mail that will migrate from the FSM 881 to the FSM 1000 because of the polywrap requirements and the overall net advantage to the Postal Service of receiving automation based mailings from a sector of the publishing industry currently not using automation.

The Postal Service has had extensive ongoing exchanges with USPS Engineering and mailers currently using and not using the polywrap required for FSM 881. This cooperative effort has led to the development of revised polywrap requirements for the FSM 1000. Initially, properties 1, 2, and 7 were proposed in workgroup meetings. However, the USPS's main concern regarding the FSM 1000 is the readability of the barcode. It was agreed that property 1 and 7 did not affect readability. In addition, the USPS must maintain separate standards for polywrap for operational efficiency. Therefore, pieces meeting the FSM 881 processing dimensions must also meet all 7 polywrap properties standards in C820.4.0 if polybagged when claiming the barcode discount. Without this standard, the USPS would see a mass migration by mailers to the less expensive polywrap and a substantial diversion of mail to the FSM 1000 causing capacity, service and cost problems.

### 4. Co-Mailing and Selective Binding

Twelve commenters proposed that the Postal Service allow co-mailers and selective binders to mix FSM 881 pieces and FSM 1000 pieces together in the same package and use the less expensive polywrap. One commenter stated the only possible alternative available to it would be to split all of their co-mailings into two mailstreams, one for carrier route pieces, and the others for all other levels of presort. They further explained that this would

cause less finely prepared mail for the Postal Service. Several commenters requested reconsideration permitting the mix of the FSM 881 and FSM 1000 pieces in co-mail and selective bind situations. They also stated that the co-mail and selective bind processes are aggressive workshare concepts that should not have penalties preventing mailer participation. Another commenter stated that mailers who already enter highly workshared and dropshipped mail that is otherwise fully automatable should not be discouraged from taking part in this automation program by an unnecessary requirement. One association indicated that the Postal Service needs to increase FSM 1000 capacity if a marketplace response to incentives for worksharing drives such a need. A "Blue Ribbon" Committee task force addressed these issues for the Postmaster General in relationship to USPS capital expenditures. The USPS Operations position is that the FSM 881 and FSM 1000 flat-size mailpieces cannot be merged in the same package. Allowing the combination of these pieces in the same package would result either in FSM 881 pieces diverting to the FSM 1000 or FSM 1000 pieces rejecting on the FSM 881, depending on the machine on which the package was processed. This requirement also leaves the door open in the future for possible relaxation of the existing requirement to segregate FSM 881 sized automation flats from FSM 881 nonautomation flats. The existing FSM 881 will be receiving an OCR modification over the next 12 months and the need for automation/nonautomation segregation on FSM 881 pieces will be reduced. Therefore, there is a long-term value in maintaining a split of FSM 881 and FSM 1000 pieces because the auto/nonauto split could possibly be eliminated for the FSM 881 pieces. The relaxation of the automation/nonautomation separation for FSM 881 pieces could be much more beneficial for the overall industry since a high percentage of the non-carrier route flats are machinable on the FSM 881. Conversations with some industry representatives have confirmed the relaxation of the auto/non-auto separation for FSM 881 pieces may be a greater need than the ability to combine FSM 881 and FSM 1000 pieces. Finally, the combining of FSM 881 and FSM 1000 pieces is not compatible with the Postal Service's long term objective for flats sorting.

### 5. Increase Thickness and Uniformity of Thickness

Four commenters indicated that the maximum thickness for an FSM 1000

piece should be increased to at least 1½ inches thick. One commenter stated that he is satisfied with the minimum and maximum standards however, he noted that it is virtually impossible to manufacture a six pound publication with a proposed maximum thickness of only 1¼ inches. Two commenters believed that if the ability of the FSM 1000 was to process thicker pieces depending upon the length of the piece, whereas longer pieces must be thinner to be successfully processed, then shorter pieces should be able to be thicker and still be processed successfully. Several proposals were submitted based on this "sliding scale" theory. In addition, several commenters would like clarification on how the uniformity requirement applies to the FSM 1000 when individual mailers have watched their machinable parcels run through the FSM 1000 with no problem. According to USPS Engineering, the maximum thickness of 1¼ inches for the FSM 1000 allows for some misalignment of the plastic chutes in relation to the diverter modules (transport belts). Items above the maximum thickness will jam against the edge of the chutes if the chutes are not precisely aligned. In addition, if a mailpiece is not uniform in thickness, the flats flip over when they go into the accelerator module of the induction station. This results in jams since the photocells will indicate a flat below the minimum length when the mailpieces on the corners don't lay flat. A uniformly thick flat is on the geometric center of the mailpiece and thus will not flip once accelerated to the speed of the sorter. The observations made were based on a short run of testing different size and thicknesses of mailpieces. The USPS agrees that the possibility does exist on increasing the thickness to 1½ inches thick, however, this will entail extensive testing and evaluation by the USPS engineering department. The Manager of Mail Preparation and Standards will request such testing to be formally performed.

### 6. Turning Ability and Flexibility

Four commenters requested that "flimsy pieces" that fail the deflection test and therefore do not qualify for the FSM 881 automated rates be allowed to qualify for the automation rates for the FSM 1000. One mailer commented that Standard Mail (A) flats volume has grown over the last 5 years while the average piece weight has been decreasing. This shows a trend toward more "flimsy" type mailpieces as direct marketers and catalogers strive to target their customers. The Postal Service would like to ensure that FSM 881

mailpieces are not diverted to the FSM 1000. There are currently 340 FSM 1000s compared to 812 FSM 881s and the migration of this mail to the FSM 1000 could have a direct effect on service and higher costs. Allowing the migration is not compatible with the Postal Service's long-term direction for sequencing flats in the carrier's line of travel.

#### 7. Mailer Identification Statement for Polywrap

Seven commenters requested an extension of time from the previously proposed 6-month grace period to a one-year extension for the requirement of separate markings distinguishing FSM 881-approved polywrap from FSM 1000-approved polywrap. Mailers have inventories of preprinted automatable polywrap already in stock. Two commenters suggested that special markings for the FSM 1000 approved polywrap be used and the current markings for approved polywrap on the FSM 881 polywrap continue as a default. Many mailers have a supply of preprinted polywrap and a delay will allow them to use up existing stock. The Postal Service will require the mailpiece identification markings identifying FSM 881 and FSM 1000 polywrap for various reasons. Business mail entry employees must be able to determine if the correct polywrap is being used to qualify mailpieces for the barcoded rates. The Postal Service does understand the comments received regarding polywrap in stock and supply, therefore, a one-year transition period through October 4, 1999.

#### 8. Overhang (Selvage)

Four commenters indicated that the overhang requirement for the FSM 1000 should be increased due to relative trim size in a selective polywrap co-mailing process. Variances during a co-mailing run have a proportional effect on both the "head to foot" and "side to side" overhang. The following overhang extensions were requested: head to foot increase from 1½ inches to 2¼ inches and side to side increase from ¼-inch on each side up to 1.375 inches. The Postal Service has amended the proposed standard for overhang indicated in Exhibit 4.1b, of C820.4.0 to include a separate section for the FSM 1000 overhang allowance. The Postal Service consulted with USPS engineering and the requirement for the FSM 1000 overhang now is a maximum of ¾-inch from any edge. The requirements for the FSM 881 remain unchanged.

#### 9. Wrap Direction and Protective Coverings

One commenter proposed that the Postal Service "suggest" recommended wrap configuration instead of having a requirement and, in addition, allow the MDAs review to be the final deciding factor in determining if mailpieces will produce handling and processing problems. The Postal Service has worked with USPS Engineering on this issue and has taken this request into consideration. After several discussions with engineering the Postal Service agrees that the wrap direction requirement only need apply to the FSM 881 mailpieces. One commenter strongly recommended that the Postal Service eliminate the prohibition of protective covers for automated flats to be processed on the FSM 1000. This issue is not solely related to the FSM 1000 requirements and the new specifications. However, the Postal Service will continue to evaluate and review mailpieces with the various types of protective coverings and possibly relax this requirement.

#### 10. Barcode Placement

All 21 commenters supported the requirement to place the barcode a minimum of ⅛-inch from any edge; however, three commenters requested that the Postal Service remove the language that currently states, "preferably 2 inches from the bound or folded edge." These commenters are concerned that Entry employees will misinterpret this requirement and possibly reject their mail. Business Mail Acceptance at USPS Headquarters is disseminating to all managers, business mail entry to ensure situations like this do not occur.

Therefore, the Postal Service is retaining this preference in the final rule.

#### 11. Double-Folds

Four commenters expressed their concerns about the proposed standards that newspapers and other unbound flats must have two folds, the second fold perpendicular to the original fold. One commenter explained that 25% to 30% his mailed copies contain supplements and inserts which, due to thickness, prevent secure quarter-folding. Currently, one commenter stated that they are working closely with USPS engineering employees on possible solutions to the "telescoping" problems with a new "embossing" procedure. Another commenter believes the telescoping of tabloids on the FSM 1000 is greatly exaggerated. The Postal Service has had numerous discussions

with USPS Engineering on this issue, and it has been determined that unbound flat-sized mail pieces without a second fold cause the most problems with telescoping such as the body of the mailpiece separating from the inner sheets during postal processing on the FSM 1000. Therefore, the requirement for this final rule is that any unbound flat-size mailpieces will be required to be double-folded by October 4, 2000. A transition of 2 years will be extended to publishers and printers who are unable to comply.

### C. Summary of Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) Changes and Additions

#### List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 111

Postal Service.

For the reasons discussed above, the Postal Service hereby adopts the following amendments to the Domestic Mail Manual, which is incorporated by reference in the Code of Federal Regulations (See 39 CFR Part III).

#### PART 111—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 111 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 39 U.S.C. 101, 401, 403, 404, 3001, 3011, 3201, 3219, 3403, 3406, 3621, 3626, 5001.

2. Amend the Domestic Mail Manual as set forth below:

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)  
C Characteristics and Content  
C800 Automation-Compatible Mail  
\* \* \* \* \*

#### C820 Flats

[Amend 1.0 by changing the term "2.0" to "1.0" and "7.0" to "9.0" and adding additional standards for FSM 881 and FSM 1000 pieces to read as follows:]

#### 1.0 BASIC STANDARDS

Flats claimed at automation rates must meet the standards in 1.0 through 9.0 and the general and specific standards for mailability and the class of mail and rate claimed. Pieces meeting the dimensions for FSM 881 processing under 2.0 (height, length, thickness, and weight) must also meet the turning ability and deflection requirements in 7.0 in order to qualify for the automation flats discount. If polywrap is used with FSM 881 pieces meeting the dimensions under 2.0, the polywrap must meet all of the physical properties in Exhibit C820.4.1a of section 4.0 in order to qualify for the automation flats discount. Pieces that do not meet the dimensions for height, length, thickness, and weight under 2.0 (FSM 881 pieces), but that do meet the dimensions in 3.0

are eligible for processing on the FSM 1000. Such FSM 1000 pieces need not meet the turning ability and deflection requirements in 7.0. If prepared with polywrap, the polywrap for FSM 1000 pieces must meet only physical property number 2 (haze) in Exhibit 4.1a.

[Amend the heading of 2.0 to read as follows.]

## 2.0 DIMENSIONS FOR FSM 881 PROCESSING

\* \* \* \* \*

[Delete the second sentence of section 2.3 b(2).]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Redesignate 3.0 through 7.0 as 5.0 through 9.0, respectively. Insert new 3.0 and 4.0 to read as follows.]

## 3.0 DIMENSIONS FOR FSM 1000 PROCESSING

### 3.1 Determining Length and Height

The length and height of an automation compatible flat-size mailpiece eligible for FSM processing is not determined by the orientation of the address. It is determined by the following:

- For a piece prepared as a single sheet or in an envelope, full-length wrapper, or full-length sleeve, the length is the longest dimension. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length.
- For a piece that has a bound or folded edge (e.g., a newspaper, tabloid,

and catalog), the length is the dimension parallel to the bound or folded edge. The height is the dimension perpendicular to the length. If the piece is folded more than once or bound and then folded, the length of the mailpiece is based on the final fold.

### 3.2 Address Placement and Folded Pieces

- A flat-size mailpiece with a final fold must be designed so that the address is in view when the final folded edge is to the right and any intermediate bound or folded edge is at the bottom.

- Unbound flat-size mailpiece will be required to be double-folded on October 4, 2000.

### 3.3 Shape and Size

Pieces must meet the following requirements:

- Height: no more than 12 inches or less than 4 inches.
- Length: no more than 15¾ inches or less than 4 inches.
- Minimum thickness:
  - For pieces at least 5 inches long, 0.009 inch.
  - For pieces at least 4 inches long, but less than 5 inches long, 0.25 inch thick.
  - Maximum thickness:
    - For pieces 13 inches long or less, 1.25 inches.
    - For pieces longer than 13 inches up to and including 15¾ inches, 7/8 inch.

### 3.4 Maximum Weight

Maximum weight limits are as follows:

- For First-Class Mail, 11 ounces (13 ounces as of January 10, 1999).
- For Periodicals, 6 pounds.
- For Standard Mail (A), less than 16 ounces.

## 4.0 COVERINGS

### 4.1 Polywrap Films

The Postal Service will allow plastic manufacturers to use the results of their American Standard Testing Methods (ASTM). Product tests must be used to certify that the polywrap films meet or exceed the minimum requirements for the physical properties outlined in Exhibit 4.1a and 4.1b.

#### Exhibit 4.1a

#### FSM 881 Polywrapped Flats Specifications

Automation flat pieces that meet the height, length, thickness, and weight dimensions for the FSM 881 in 2.0 must meet all seven properties. Automation flat pieces that do not meet the height, length, thickness, or weight dimensions in 2.0, but meet the dimensions for the FSM 1000 in 3.0, may be prepared with polywrap that only meets property number 2 (haze).

Property	Requirement	Test Method	Comment
1. Kinetic Coefficient of Friction, MD .....	<0.28 .....	ASTM D1894	Stainless steel finish must be in accordance with ASTM A 480/A 480M.
a. Film on Stainless Steel with No. 8 (Mirror) Finish			
b. Film on Film .....	0.20 to 0.40 .....	ASTM D1894	
2. Haze .....	<70 .....	ASTM D1003	Address labels are an alternative to meeting this requirement.
3. Secant Modulus, 1% elongation .....	>40,000 .....	ASTM D882	
a. TD, psi .....			
b. MD, psi .....	>50,000 .....	ASTM D882	
4. Tensile Strength:			
a. TD, psi .....	>2,000 .....	ASTM D882	
b. MD, psi .....	>3,000 .....	ASTM D882	
5. Density, g/cc .....	0.900 to 0.950 ..	ASTM D1505	
6. Nominal Gauge, in .....	>0.001 .....	ASTM D374	
7. Static Charge, kV .....	<2.0 .....	ASTM D4470	Antistatic additives can regulate this charge.

#### Exhibit 4.1b

#### Wrap Instruction

- The polywrapped flat shall be machinable according to USPS-STD-28A and as outlined in section C820. Shrinkwrapped mailpieces shall be approved if they conform to the machinable flat requirements according to USPS-STD-28A and as outlined in DMM 54 section C820.

- Wrap direction shall be specified as around the shorter axis of the mailpiece

so that the seam is along the addressed side of the mailpiece, oriented from top to bottom. This seam must not cover any part of the address and barcode read areas (FSM 881 mailpieces only).

#### 3. Overhang around edges:

- For FSM 881 mailpieces, overhang (selvage) of not more than 1.5 inches of polywrap shall be allowed at the top of the mailpiece when the contents are at the bottom of the package. Overhang on each side shall not be more than .25 inch, however. The piece shall not be

wrapped so tightly as to cause the product to bend.

- For FSM 1000 mailpieces, overhang (selvage) cannot exceed ¾ inch from any edge.

#### 4.2 Polywrap Certification Process

The polywrap certification program requires plastic manufacturers to provide to the producer of the polywrapped flats an official ASTM certification of conformance verifying that their polywrap product meets the

physical properties described in Exhibit 4.1a. Prior to the initial mailing with that polywrap product, the producer of the polywrapped pieces must submit for evaluation barcoded sample pieces that meet both applicable DMM mailing standards for automated flats and the minimum standards for polywrapped flats including the configuration requirements described in Exhibit 4.1b. Mailpiece design analysts (MDAs) may authorize the producer of the polywrapped flats that it may claim the automation rates for their initial mailing of flat-size barcoded pieces if both of the following conditions are met: (A) The pieces are prepared in a polywrap product for which the plastics manufacturer provides an official ASTM certification of conformance; (B) The prepared mailpiece meets all other mail preparation standards for polywrapped flats such as overhang, seam, and barcode readability. The MDA who authorizes the producer of the polywrapped flats that it may claim the automation rates will notify the applicable business mail entry unit of the authorization.

#### 4.3 Submission of Samples for Evaluation

A producer of polywrapped flats who wishes to obtain authorization to claim automation rates for that polywrap product must submit samples to the Manager of Business Mail Entry for review by an MDA. Each sample submitted must consist of at least 30 polywrapped and barcoded sample mailpieces with a certification of conformance verifying that the polywrap material meets the physical property specifications in Exhibit 4.1a and Exhibit 4.1b, for either the FSM 881 mailpieces or the FSM 1000 mailpieces. If the address is placed on the outside of the polywrapped FSM 1000 flat, the submission of test pieces is not required.

#### 4.4 Mailpiece Identification

Producers of polywrapped flats authorized to claim the automation rates must endorse the flats to show that they are automation-compatible polywrapped flat-size pieces. The mailer may meet this requirement by adding "USPS (product name of polywrap) FSM 881 Approved Automatable Polywrap" or "USPS (product name of polywrap) FSM 1000 Approved Automatable Polywrap," as applicable, on the address side of the piece, preferably below the postage area or in another visible location on the outside of the mailpiece. The polywrap marking must not interfere with the delivery address or the recognition of

the barcode. The polywrap marking may also be printed directly on the polywrap material. Producers of polywrapped flats not currently using the appropriate mailpiece identification marking will have until October 4, 1999, to comply with this standard. For a list of USPS-approved polywrap manufacturers, refer to the USPS website.

#### 4.5 Suspension of Approval

Any mailing found to be improperly prepared will not be accepted at the automation rates for flats. The repeated submission of nonmachinable mailings is cause for exclusion from the polywrap flat automation rates for polywrap pieces.

[Delete renumbered 5.1. Renumber 5.2 and 5.3 as 5.1 and 5.2.]

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 6.0 TABS, WAFER SEALS, TAPE, AND GLUE

[Amend the first sentence in renumbered 6.0 to clarify that tabs, seals, tape, and glue are not required, to read as follows:]

Although not required, mailpieces may be prepared with tabs, wafer seals, cellophane tape, or permanent glue (continuous or spot) if these sealing devices do not interfere with the recognition of the barcode, rate marking, postage information, and delivery and return addresses.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 7.0 TURNING ABILITY AND DEFLECTION

##### 7.1 Turning Ability

[Amend the first sentence of renumbered 7.1 by adding "881" to read as follows:]

A flat-size mailpiece meeting the FSM 881 dimensions in 2.0 must fit between two concentric arcs drawn on a horizontal flat surface, one with a radius of 15.72 inches and the other with a radius of 16.72 inches in one of these ways:

\* \* \* \* \*

[Renumber Exhibits 5.1a and 5.1b as Exhibits 7.1a and 7.1b.]

##### 7.2 Deflection

[Renumber Exhibit 5.2 as Exhibit 7.2; amend renumbered 7.2 by adding "881" to read as follows:]

A flat-size mailpiece meeting the FSM 881 dimensions in 2.0 must be sufficiently rigid so that, when placed flat on a surface to extend unsupported 5 inches off that surface, no part of the edge of the piece that is opposite the bound, folded, or final folded edge (as applicable) deflects more than 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches (if the piece is less than 1/8 inch

thick) or more than 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (if the piece is from 1/8 to 3/4 inch thick). See Exhibit 7.2.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### C840 Barcoding Standards

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 3.0 BARCODE LOCATION—FLAT-SIZE PIECE

[Revise 3.0 to read as follows:]

On any flat-size piece claimed at an automation rate, the barcode may be anywhere on the address side that is at least 1/8 inch from any edge of the piece. For FSM 1000 pieces, it is preferred that the barcode be placed at least 2 inches from the dimension that is the length for that type of automation piece (the longest edge, or for pieces with a folded or bound edge, the folded or bound edge). That portion of the surface of the piece on which the barcode is printed must meet the reflectance standards in 5.0. The address side may bear only one POSTNET-format barcode (i.e., the correct barcode for the delivery address on the mailpiece). Other mailer-applied non-POSTNET barcodes may appear on the address side if their format is not intelligible or not confusing to automated postal equipment. Address block barcodes are subject to the standards in 2.5a through 2.5e.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### M Mail Preparation and Sortation

##### M820 Flat-Size Mail

##### 1.0 BASIC STANDARDS

\* \* \* \* \*

##### 1.5 Package Preparation

All pieces must be prepared in packages. Firm packages must not be included in mailings prepared under M820. Pieces meeting the size dimensions for the FSM 881 under C820.2.0 must be prepared in separate packages from pieces that do not meet the FSM 881 dimensions (but that meet the dimensions for FSM 1000 processing). Each FSM 881 package and each FSM 1000 package must separately meet the package size minimum number of pieces in M820.2.1, 3.1, or 4.1 as applicable for the class of mail. When the total number of FSM 881 or FSM 1000 pieces for a specific presort destination (e.g., the 5-digit ZIP Code 12345) meets or exceeds the applicable minimum package size, the pieces for that presort destination must be prepared into a package or packages labeled to that presort destination in accordance with the standards for the rate claimed. The physical size of each package for that specific presort

destination may contain the exact package minimum, more pieces than the package minimum, or fewer pieces than the package minimum depending on the size of the pieces in the mailing or the total quantity of the pieces to that destination. Rate eligibility is not affected when a physical package for a presort destination contains fewer pieces than the minimum package size for the above reasons, provided the total number of FSM 881 pieces physically packaged for that presort destination, or provided the total number of FSM 1000 pieces physically packaged for that presort destination, meets or exceeds the rate eligibility package minimum under E140, E240, or E640.

[Renumber 1.6 and 1.7 as 1.7 and 1.8, respectively, and insert new 1.6 to read as follows:]

#### 1.6 Sack Preparation

Mailers may combine FSM 881 packages and FSM 1000 packages in the same tray (First-Class Mail) or in the same sack (Standard Mail (A) and Periodicals).

\* \* \* \* \*

[Amend the heading of renumbered 1.8 to read "Exception—Periodicals Packages."]

[Insert new 1.9 to read as follows:]

#### 1.9 Exception—Periodicals Automation and Nonautomation

For Periodicals, packages of automation mail (both FSM 881 and FSM 1000 packages) prepared under 3.1 and packages of nonautomation mail prepared under M200.2.4c through f may be sacked together under 3.2d through 3.2e. Automation and

nonautomation packages may not be combined in 5-digit sacks. Under this exception, documentation required under P012 must identify the mail claimed at each rate by package and sack sortation level. Under this exception, nonautomation mail continues to qualify for rates under E230 and automation mail continues to qualify for rates under E240 (i.e., rates for pieces in automation flats packages are based on the package level and rates for pieces in nonautomation flats packages are based on the package and sack level).

\* \* \* \* \*

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[FR Doc. 98-27674 Filed 10-9-98; 3:45 pm]

BILLING CODE 7710-12-P