



National Zone Charts Matrix Technical Guide

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OVERVIEW

The National Zone Charts Matrix was developed to assist mailers in applying the proper postage rates to a mail piece. Postage rates for zoned mail are based on mail piece weight & the distance the mail piece travels using these zone assignments. The Matrix (Format2.txt file) is used to determine the distance that a mailpiece travels based on the ZIP Code where the mailpiece enters the mail stream (origination) & the ZIP Code™ that will deliver the mailpiece to the addressee (destination). The origination & destination of a mailpiece is referred to as "ZIP™ pairing". Zones are designated as "local" & 1 through 9. Please be advised that the Matrix does not include postage rate information. Current postage rate charts for all mail classes & products are located on-line at <https://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/manuals/dmm300/Notice123.pdf>.

The Zone Charts are **not** "map based" as a time zone would be defined. The USPS® zones are radial, measuring straight-line distance from the **centroid** of the 3-digit ZIP Code origination of the mailpiece, to the **centroid** of the 3-digit ZIP Code destination. The same destination could be zoned differently when mailed from different originations. An example would be as shown below:

A 5lb. package originating in Memphis, TN that is destined to Los Angeles, CA, using ZIP Code pairing 381 to 900, is Zone 7. However, the same 5lb. package originating in Las Vegas, NV going to the same Los Angeles, CA destination, using ZIP Code pairing 891 to 900 would be Zone 3.

The National Zone Charts Matrix reflects the actual zone assignment based on the ZIP Code pairing of the 3-digit ZIP Code origination to the 3-digit ZIP Code of the destination.

In summary, straight-line distances are computed using the GIS coordinates of the origination 3-digit ZIP Code **centroid** & the GIS coordinates of the destination 3-digit ZIP Code **centroid**. Labeling List L002A, located at <https://fast.usps.gov/fast/fastApp/resources/labellistfiles.action> provides a listing of all active 3-Digit ZIP Codes.

An annual subscription to the Labeling Lists data files is available for purchase through the National Customer Support Center, NCSC. An order form can be found at https://postalpro.usps.com/Zone_Charts_Order_Form.

Customers can create custom Zone Charts from a single 3-digit origination on-line free of charge via USPS.COM® at <https://postcalc.usps.com/DomesticZoneChart>.

DEFINING A ZONE

Local Zone (DMM 608.9.4.1)

Local applies to USPS Connect Local and USPS Connect Local Mail pieces deposited at any Post Office for delivery to addresses within the delivery area of that Post Office. For various types of Post Offices, local applies to all mail that both originates and destines within: a. The 5-digit ZIP Code area(s) assigned to the same Post Office. b. Any of the 5-digit ZIP Codes that are part of any unique 3-digit ZIP Code prefix(es) or other separate 5-digit ZIP Code(s), as applicable, assigned to the same Post Office. (National Zone Charts Matrix does not contain local zone information as local zones are at the 5-Digit ZIP Code level.)

Non-Local Zone

Non-local zones are defined numerically as follows.

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Distance</u>
1	Non-local zones within a 50 mile radius of the point of origination
2	51 to 150 mile radius
3	151 to 300 mile radius
4	301 to 600 mile radius
5	601 to 1000 mile radius
6	1001 to 1400 mile radius
7	1401 to 1800 mile radius
8	1801 miles & over
9	ZIP Codes Assigned For Exceptional Network Circumstances **

** Shipping between the 3-Digit ZIP Codes 962-969 does not apply. Use Zone Chart Matrix assignment for those O/D pairs.

MAIL CLASSES REQUIRING ZONE CHARTS

Shown below is a list of products that require a current Zone Chart & pricing chart to determine accurate postage.

- **Bound Printed Matter**
 - Commercial – Flats/Large Envelopes, Parcels
- **USPS Ground Advantage™**
 - Retail, Commercial – Parcels
- **Priority Mail Express®**
 - Retail, Commercial – Letters, Large Envelopes, Parcels
- **Periodicals**
 - Commercial – Letters/Flats Outside County Pound Prices
- **Priority Mail®**
 - Retail – Letters, Large Envelopes, Parcels
 - Commercial – Letters, Large Envelopes, Parcels, PMOD
 - Commercial Cubic – Parcels
- **USPS Ground Advantage™ – Limited Overland Routes (LOR)**
 - Retail – Parcels

MATRIX FILE GENERAL INFORMATION

The matrix file contains only active 3-Digit ZIP Codes.

File Name = Format2.txt

File Format = ASCII text file

Approximate File Size = 2MB

Record Length = 2003

First Record of File = Effective Date

MATRIX FILE STRUCTURE

Description	Start Position	End Position	Field Length	Acceptable
Originating ZIP Code™	1	3	3	Numeric
Zone to Destination: ZIP™ 001	4	4	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 001	5	5	1	*a e b 1 or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 002	6	6	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 002	7	7	1	*a e b 1 or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 003	8	8	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 003	9	9	1	*a e b 1 or space

This format continues for each 3-Digit ZIP to the end of the 3 Digits matrix file.

Zone to Destination: ZIP 969	1940	1940	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 969	1941	1941	1	*a e b 1 or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 998	1998	1998	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 998	1999	1999	1	*a e b 1 or space
Zone to Destination: ZIP 999	2000	2000	1	Numeric
Filler: ZIP 999	2001	2001	1	*a e b 1 or space
Carriage Return Line Feed	2002	2003	2	

* = NDC Entry Discount indicator

1 = Priority Mail® & **USPS Ground Advantage (< 16 oz.)™** sent to Military ZIP Codes – check Exceptions File (Mail Type 01 only)

a = Both NDC Entry Discount indicator & Priority Mail® & **USPS Ground Advantage (< 16 oz.)™** sent to Military ZIP Codes – check Exceptions File (Mail Type 01 only)

b = 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception indicator with NDC Entry Discount indicator – check Exceptions File (Mail Types 00 & 99 only)

e = 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception indicator – check Exceptions File (Mail Types 00 & 99 only)

** When the Zone Charts Matrix file contains a '1' or 'a', it means Priority Mail® & **USPS Ground Advantage (< 16 oz.)™** Zones for outbound Military ZIP Codes are available in the exceptions file. If your 3/5-digit Origination & Destination ZIP Codes fall within the ranges in the exceptions file & the Mail Type field contains '01,' then you will return the Zone from the exceptions file. See below file structure.

EXCEPTION FILE GENERAL INFORMATION

The exception file contains both active & inactive 5-Digit & 3-Digit ZIP Codes.

File Name = exception.txt

File Format = ASCII text file

Approximate File Size = 1KB

Record Length = 31

First Record of File = Effective Date (Format MMDDYYYY)

EXCEPTION FILE STRUCTURE

Description	Start Position	End Position	Field Length	Acceptable
Origin ZIP Code™ Range START	1	5	5	5 Numeric
Origin ZIP Code™ Range END	6	10	5	5 Numeric
Dest ZIP Code™ Range START	11	15	5	5 Numeric
Dest ZIP Code™ Range END	16	20	5	5 Numeric
Zone	21	22	2	Numeric (leading zero)
Mail TYPE	23	24	2	Alpha/Numeric/Space See IMPORTANT INFORMATION below
Filler	25	30	6	Alpha/Numeric/Space
Carriage Return	31	31	1	

For additional information regarding Zone Chart Exceptions, see the ReadMe.txt file located in the Zone Chart Product.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EXCEPTION.TXT FILE!!!

There are 3 distinct groups of 'exceptions' found in the exception.txt file. These exceptions are identified by Mail TYPEs 00, 01 & 99 in field positions 23 & 24. Use the following guide to determine which group(s) of 'exceptions' to use to extract the **required** final & correct Zone results for each Mail TYPE described below.

1. **Mail Type 00** – Required Use – '**Outbound**' Zone rated mail sent to the Freely Associated States (FAS/Zone 9). Mail originating from 962 through 969 sent to 969 ZIP Codes is not affected. Use the Zone Chart Matrix assignment for those O/D pairs.
2. **Mail Type 01** – Required Use – '**Outbound**' Priority Mail® & **USPS Ground Advantage (< 16 oz.)™** processed in Chicago & sent to Military ZIP Codes 090-099 and 962-966 only. Priority Mail Express® is not subject to these 'exceptions'.
3. **Mail Type 99** – Optional Use – **IMPORTANT!!** – Use of these exceptions is optional if '**Inbound**' Military Zone rated mail is not supported. Use these exceptions to calculate Zone results **for Zone rated mail sent from selected 5DG Origin Military Post Office ZIP Codes only (090XX-099XX, 340XX, 962XX-966XX) & sent to 3DG domestic USA ZIP Codes**. These exceptions have no impact on 'Outbound' Retail or 'Outbound' Commercial Zone pricing or preparation of Military mail.

Mail Type 99 users will find a **mt99_master.txt file** within the **charts.zip** monthly subscriber file that provides a current list of Military Post Office ZIP Codes that participate in this joint USPS & DOD initiative. This file allows the user to identify only those 5DG Military ZIP Codes that are subject to these exceptions including 'adds' & 'deletes' as they occur.

Users should ignore any active 5DG Military Post Office ZIP Codes that are not listed in the mt99_master.txt file that are included within any Mail Type 99 Origination or Destination, Start to End exception.txt file 'ranges'.

ORDER FORM INFORMATION

The National Zone Charts Matrix & Labeling Lists Product Order Form [PS Form 8184] can be found on the PostalPro™ web site at https://postalpro.usps.com/Zone_Charts_Order_Form .

The Electronic Product Fulfillment Form [PS Form 5116] gives authorization for secure, on-demand download of the charts.zip files that can be found on the PostalPro™ web site at <https://postalpro.usps.com/PS5116> .

You may also call the National Customer Support Center at 800-238-3150 to request a copy via fax or email.

FILES YOU WILL RECEIVE MONTHLY WITHIN THE charts.zip FILE

- ZoneCharts_Update.txt – Provides the data's (1) Effective (2) Mandatory Use & (3) Last Updated dates
- zcmChanges.txt – Provides any Format2.txt 3DG O/D pair Zone changes from the previous month's file
- readme.txt – Summary of important information relating to the use of the National Zone Charts Matrix
- National_Zone_Charts_Matrix_Technical_Guide.pdf
- mt99_master.txt – Master list of Mail Type 99 exceptions (see page 5 above for more information)
- Format2.txt – This file is known as the National Zone Charts Matrix
- exception.txt – Provides 3 types of exception Zones that work in tandem with the Format2.txt (see page 5)
- excChanges.txt – Provides any exception.txt changes from the previous month's file

LICENSE AGREEMENT INFORMATION

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