

# National Zone Charts Matrix Technical Guide

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DEFINING A ZONE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
LOCAL ZONE.....	2
NON-LOCAL ZONE .....	2
<b>MAIL CLASSES REQUIRING ZONE CHARTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MATRIX GENERAL FILE INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MATRIX FILE STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MATRIX ZONE DETERMINATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MATRIX FILE EXAMPLE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXCEPTION FILE GENERAL INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXCEPTION FILE STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ORDER FORM INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LICENSE AGREEMENT INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>

## 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 and the distance the mail piece travels using these zone assignments. The matrix is used to determine the distance that a mailpiece travels based on the ZIP Code where the mailpiece enters the mail stream (origination) and the ZIP Code™ that will deliver the mailpiece to the addressee (destination). The origination and destination of a mailpiece is referred to as "ZIP™ pairing". Zones are designated as "local" or 1 through 9. Please be advised that the matrix does not include postage rate information. Current postage rate charts for all classes of mail 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 from the 3-Digit ZIP origination point of the mailpiece, to the destination. The same destination could be zoned differently when mailed from different origination points. An example would be as shown below:

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

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

The Sectional Center Facility (SCF) serves as the processing and distribution center for post offices in a designated geographic area defined by the first three digits of the ZIP Codes of those offices. Distances are computed using the coordinates of the Sectional Center Facility (SCF) servicing the origination ZIP Code and the coordinates of the SCF servicing the destination ZIP Code. Labeling List L005, located at <https://fast.usps.gov/fast/fastApp/resources/labelListFiles.action> provides a listing of 3-Digit ZIP Code prefixes sorted at the SCF level. 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/node/199>.

Actual Zone Charts can be found on-line free of charge via USPS.COM® at <https://postcalc.usps.com/DomesticZoneChart>.

## DEFINING A ZONE

### Local Zone

The local zone applies to mail deposited at any post office for delivery to any address within the delivery area of that post office. Check with your local post office for specific details regarding the ZIP Codes that qualify for local zone in your area. The National Zone Charts Matrix does **not** contain local zone information since local zones are at the 5-Digit ZIP Code level.

### Non-Local Zone

Non-local zones are defined numerically as follows. Zone Distance

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 and over
9*	ZIP Codes Assigned For Exceptional Network Circumstances **

\* Except for Priority Mail® and Priority Mail Express® mailed to Zone 9 ZIP Codes, Zone 9 prices will be the same as Zone 8 prices

\*\* Shipping between the 3-Digit ZIP Codes 967, 968 or 969 does not apply

## MAIL CLASSES REQUIRING ZONE CHARTS

Shown below is a list of mail classes that require a current zone chart and the associated mail class rate chart to determine accurate postage for the mailpiece.

- **Bound Printed Matter**
- **First-Class® Package Service (effective 1/27/19)**
- **Priority Mail Express®**
  - Retail, Commercial Base, Commercial Plus
- **Parcel Select® - Destination Entry**
  - Commercial Parcels - Machinable and Non-Machinable
- **Parcel Select® - Ground**
  - Commercial Parcels
- **Periodicals - Commercial**
  - Outside County Pound Prices
- **Priority Mail®**
  - Commercial Base – Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
  - Commercial Plus – Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
  - Commercial Plus – CUBIC, Regional Rate Boxes, PMOD
  - Retail Letters, Large Envelopes and Parcels
- **USPS Retail Ground®**
  - Retail – Parcels
- **USPS Retail Ground® – 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

<b>Description</b>	<b>Start Position</b>	<b>End Position</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>
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® and First Class® Package Service sent to Military ZIP Codes Zones – check Exceptions File

a = Both NDC Entry Discount indicator and Priority Mail® and First-Class® Package Service sent to Military ZIP Codes Zones – check Exceptions File

b = 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception indicator with NDC Entry Discount indicator – check Exceptions File

e = 5-Digit ZIP Code Exception indicator – check Exceptions File

\*\* When the Zone Charts Matrix file contains a '1' or 'a', it means Priority Mail® and First-Class® Package Service Zones for outbound Military ZIP Codes are available in the exceptions file. If your 3/5-digit Origin and Destination ZIP Codes fall within the ranges in the exceptions file and 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 and inactive 5-Digit and 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

<b>Description</b>	<b>Start Position</b>	<b>End Position</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>
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 <b>IMPORTANT INFORMATION</b> 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 and 99 in field positions 23 and 24. Use the following guide to determine which group(s) of 'exceptions' to use to extract the **required** final and correct Zone results for each Mail TYPE described below.

1. Mail Type 00 – '**Outbound**' Zone rated mail sent to the Freely Associated States (FAS/Zone 9) deployed April 1, 2014.
2. Mail Type 01 - '**Outbound**' Priority Mail® and First-Class® Package Service processed in Chicago and sent to Military ZIP Codes 090-099, 962-966 deployed January 1, 2018. Priority Mail Express® is not subject to these 'exceptions'.
3. Mail Type 99 – **IMPORTANT!!** – Use these '**Inbound**' exceptions deployed June 1, 2018 to calculate Zone results **for Zone rated mail sent from selected 5DG Origin Military Post Office ZIP Codes only (090XX-099XX, 340XX, 962XX-966XX) and sent to 3DG domestic USA ZIP Codes**. These exceptions have no impact on 'Outbound' Retail or 'Outbound' Commercial Zone pricing or preparation.

Note: Users should ignore any inactive 5DG Military Post Office ZIP Codes that are included within any Origin or Destination, Start to End exception.txt 'ranges'.

## **ORDER FORM INFORMATION**

The National Zone Charts Matrix and Labeling Lists Product Order Form [PS Form 8184] can be found on the PostalPro™ web site located at <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/1121>. Or, call 800-238-3150 to request a copy via fax or email.

## **LICENSE AGREEMENT INFORMATION**

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