Intelligent Mail[®] Barcode

Frequently Asked Questions

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OVERVIEW

The Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb), formerly referred to as the 4-State Customer barcode, is the Postal Service barcode used to sort and track letters and flats. The Postal Service is promoting use of the Intelligent Mail barcode because it expands the ability to track individual mailpieces and provides customers with greater visibility into the mailstream.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does it work?

The Intelligent Mail barcode combines the data of the previously used POSTNET[™] and the PLANET Code[®] barcodes, as well as other data, into a single barcode. The Intelligent Mail barcode is a type of height-modulated barcode, that uses four distinct vertical bar types (Full, Tracker, Ascender and Descender) as shown below.

Note: The Postal Service Flat Mail Identification Code Sort (FICS) program uses another type of 4-state barcode that looks similar to the Intelligent Mail barcode, but it is applied as an ID tag on non-barcoded flat mail pieces only.

How do mailers benefit from the Intelligent Mail barcode?

The Intelligent Mail barcode is the result of the Postal Service's efforts to develop more robust codes capable of encoding more information, while minimizing the space used on the mailpiece. The Intelligent Mail barcode:

- ♦ Has a greater overall data capacity than existing barcodes.
- Provides mailers with more digits for their use, allowing for unique identification of up to a billion mailpieces per mailing.
- Provides more accurate and detailed information about mailings which can enable better decision making.
- Increases mailpiece "real estate" by eliminating the need for multiple barcodes.
- Allows for participation in multiple USPS service programs with a single barcode.

What services use the Intelligent Mail barcode and when can I start using it?

The Postal Service offers a suite of services for letters and flats using the Intelligent Mail barcode. Business Mail Entry Units (BMEU) started accepting letters with Intelligent Mail barcode in September of 2006. In May of 2007 the Postal Service expanded use of the Intelligent Mail barcode by allowing mailers to use it on automation-rate flat-size mailpieces.

Since then, mailers have had the option to use the Intelligent Mail barcode on letter and flat mail for the Confirm® Service, referred to as OneCode Confirm™ and; a version of Address Change Service™ (ACS™) called OneCode ACS™.

- Mailers can use Intelligent Mail barcode on First-Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, and Periodicals when participating in OneCode Confirm and OneCode ACS.
- Current Confirm subscribers should contact Confirm Customer Assistance at 800-238-3150 for instructions on how to use their Subscriber ID within the Mailer ID field and to modify their account to accept the Intelligent Mail barcode.

What about automation prices?

Since March 2007, mailers using the Intelligent Mail barcode have been able to qualify for automation prices as long as all other automation requirements are met including meeting addressing, readability, and other requirements for processing on automated equipment.

- The Intelligent Mail barcode must contain a proper routing ZIP Code[™] and a valid Mailer ID (MID) to satisfy the criteria for automation prices. Mailers without a previously-assigned MID should contact a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) at 1-877-672-0007 or MDA@usps.gov. For more information visit: https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/mailpiece-design-analyst-mda-customer-service-help-desk
- Mailers printing the Intelligent Mail barcode solely to qualify for automation prices must populate the Service Type ID field with one of the following values:

700 for First-Class Mail, 702 for Standard Mail, 704 for Periodicals, or 706 for Bound Printed Matter.

• Remittance mail such as CRM and MRM may use the Intelligent Mail barcode by populating the Service Type ID field with the First-Class Mail designation. Mailers using Business Reply Mail (BRM) without any services should populate the Service Type ID field with 708.

Will I need to complete CASS™ or MASS™ certification again?

- The Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) certification enables the Postal Service to evaluate the accuracy of address-matching software programs. The CASS process is applicable to mailpieces with the Intelligent Mail barcode, but there is no need to redo this certification.
- The Multi-line Accuracy Support System (MASS) certification is an extension of CASS. It has an annual certification requirement and the Intelligent Mail barcode certification is now incorporated into this process.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Where can I place the Intelligent Mail barcode?

- ⇒ On letters, it can be placed either in the address block or in the barcode clear zone found on the lower right corner of the envelope.
- ⇒ On flats, the Intelligent Mail barcode can be placed anywhere on the address side as long as it is at least 1/8th inch from any edge of the piece.

What are the dimensions of the Intelligent Mail barcode?

The 31-digit Intelligent Mail barcode contains 65 bars. The print specification allows mailers some flexibility in choosing the height and width of the barcode they produce.

- Vertical dimensions shall be based on the centerline of the barcode, forming an overall barcode height of 0.125 inch to 0.165 inch. Any vertical jitter shall be contained within the vertical dimensions from the centerline.
- Horizontal dimensions shall be based on the centerline of the individual bars, forming an overall barcode pitch of 22 ±2 bars per inch. Individual bars shall be printed with a width of 0.020 ±0.005 inch. The pitch and widths shall result in spacing between bars of 0.012 inch to 0.040 inch.
- Length The distance from the lead (left) edge of the 1st (left most) bar to the lead (left) edge of the 65th (right most) bar shall never be less than 2.667 inches. The distance from the lead (left) edge of the 1st bar (left most) to the trail (right) edge of the 65th (right most) bar shall never be greater than 3.225 inches.
- **Clear Zone** A clear zone shall be placed around the barcode to ensure that readers can locate and read the barcode. A minimum clear zone shall be 0.028 inch above and below the barcode and 0.125 inch on each end of the barcode.

Figure 1: Dimensions (not to scale)

Figure 2: Clear Zone (not to scale)

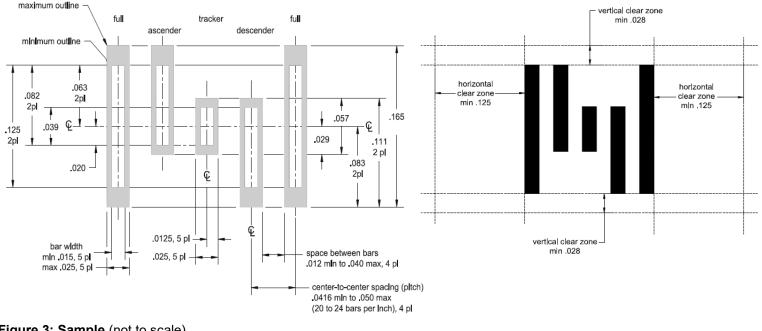


Figure 3: Sample (not to scale)

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

What data is included in the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb)?

- **Barcode ID:** A 2-digit field reserved to encode the presort identification printed in human-readable form on the Optional Endorsement Line (OEL). Should be left as "00" if an OEL is not printed on the mailpiece.
- Service Type ID (STID) : A 3-digit field used to identify the class of mail and any additional or special services requested for the piece. Defines the mailpiece as Full-Service, Basic or Non-Automation. Used to determine the disposition of Undeliverable-As-Addressed (UAA) mail.
- Mailer ID (MID): A USPS-assigned 6 or 9-digit (depending on mail volume) field used to identify the mail owner or mail preparer.
- Serial Number: A 6 or 9-digit field (depending on MID) defined by the mailer.
- Routing Code: 5-digit, 9-digit, or 11-digit field that identifies the delivery ZIP Code data in the address.

Data Type	Data Field	# of Digits							
Tracking Code	Barcode Identifier	2 (2nd digit must be 0-4)							
	Service Type Identifier	3							
	Mailer Identifier	6 or 9							
	Serial Number	6 (when used with a 6-digit MID) 9 (when used with a 9-digit MID)							
Routing Code	Delivery Point ZIP Code	0, 5, 9, or11							
Total		31 maximum							

Π	Intelligent Mail Barcode for Letters and Flats: 6-Digit and 9-Digit Mailer IDs																													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Bar ID (code (2N)	÷	ervi ype (3N	ID		Ma	iler	ID (6N)				Se	rial	Nur	nbe	r (91	N)				Rout	ing	Cod	e (0,	5, 9	or 1	L1N)		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	code (2N)	•	ervi ype (3N	ID			N	lail	er ID	(91	J)			S	eria	l Nu	mbo	er (6	N)			Rout	ing	Code	e (0,	5, 9	or 1	(1N)		

Resources

Where can I find more information on the Intelligent Mail barcode?

For the latest information on the Intelligent Mail barcode, including the full dimension specifications, visit the PostalPro website at: <u>https://postalpro.usps,com/mailing</u>

- <u>Customer Registration ID (CRID)</u>
- Full-Service Fact Sheets
- Intelligent Mail[®] Barcode | PostalPro (usps.com)
- Intelligent Mail[®] Barcode (IMb) Encoder Software and Fonts
- Intelligent Mail[®] Barcode Resources | PostalPro (usps.com)
- <u>Mailer Identifier (MID)</u>
- Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC)
- Publication for Streamlined Mail Acceptance for Letters and Flats (Pub 685)
- <u>Service Type Identifiers (STIDs)</u>
 - <u>Service Type Identifier (STID) Table Effective January 23, 2022 | PostalPro (usps.com)</u>