

Mailpiece Materials and Construction

Paper Weight

The following recommendations for paper and card stock refer to the minimum basis weight of the materials. Basis weight is defined as the weight (in pounds) of a ream (500 sheets) cut to a standard size for that grade.

For example, envelopes for automation-rate mailings should be constructed of paper weighing at least 16 pounds (minimum basis weight). The specific grade of 16-pound paper recommended for envelopes is defined as 500 sheets measuring 17 inches by 22 inches (17 inches by 22 inches by 500 sheets).

Recycled paper and card stock are compatible with postal automation if the materials satisfy the recommendations and the guidelines in this book.

Envelopes

Envelopes (the preferred container) and other letter-size containers sealed on all four edges must be made of paper with a minimum basis weight of 16 pounds (measured weight of 500 17-by-22-inch sheets). For business reply mail envelopes, the minimum basis weight is 20 pounds (see Chapter 6 and DMM section S922).

Folded Self-Mailers

The required minimum basis weight of paper for folded self-mailers varies with the construction of the mailpieces as follows:

- For self-mailers formed from a single sheet folded at the bottom with the open, top edge sealed with one tab or glue spot, the minimum basis weight is 28 pounds (weight of 500 17-by-22-inch sheets) or 70 pounds (weight of 500 25-by-38-inch sheets).
- For self-mailers formed from two or more sheets that are sealed with one tab or glue spot, the minimum basis weight is 24 pounds (weight of 500 17-by-22-inch sheets) or 60 pounds (500 25-by-38-inch sheets).
- For any self-mailer that is sealed with two tabs or two glue spots, the open edge can be at the top or bottom. The minimum basis weight is 20 pounds (weight of 500 17-by-22-inch sheets).

Exhibit 2-3, taken from Quick Service Guide 811, shows the proper placement of tabs or glue spots on folded self-mailers. Tabs, wafer seals, tape, or glue may be used to seal folded self-mailers. Tabs and other seals placed at the top of folded self-mailers should be positioned so that they do not cover the return address, postage, or rate markings.

Exhibit 2-3