

Optimizing Communications Thru Mailing, Printing, Digital & Logistic Solutions

USPS Shape-Based Pricing

The United States Postal Service instituted shape-based pricing in 2008. However, there is still some confusion regarding how shape-based pricing works. Gone are the days in which postage is based solely on the weight of your mail piece.

Shape-based pricing was designed to help reduce the costs the USPS incurs by making more mail processable by machines.

There are 3 criteria for determining the amount of postage needed:

1. Shape
2. Thickness
3. Weight



Let's take a closer look at how each factor plays a part in determining postage.

There are 3 basic size categories: Letter, Flat and Parcel.

Letter

Shape: This category includes postcards and what we've traditionally considered letters. The minimum size is 3-1/2" x 5" (postcards) and the maximum size is 6-1/8" x 11-1/2".

Thickness: Your mail piece must be at least .007" thick and cannot be more than 1/4" thick.

Weight: Your mail piece cannot be more than 3-1/2 oz.

If you exceed any of these criteria, your mail piece moves up to the next category (Flats) or, you can ship it via Priority Mail Flat Rate.

Flat

Shape: The minimum size is 3-1/2" and the maximum size is 15".

Thickness: Your mail piece must be at least .007" thick and cannot be more than 3/4" thick.

Weight: Your mail piece cannot weigh more than 13 oz.

If you exceed any of these criteria, your mail piece moves up to the next category (Parcel).

Parcel

Shape: No more than 130 inches in combined length and girth. If your mail piece is between 108" and 130" in combined length/girth, you must use the oversized price

Weight: Your mail piece must weigh over 13 oz., not to exceed 70 lbs.

The price in this category is based on the distance the mail piece is traveling (zones).

For more information on shape-based pricing, go the Postal Service's website: www.usps.com.