



Why Can't I Mail It Booklets

There are many times that a design element causes a mailing to go at a much higher rate of postage. This can be frustrating as well as expensive. In order to help you stay away from potential issues here are some things to keep in mind as you are preparing a direct mail campaign.

Now let's look at Booklets:

1. **Booklet sizes are between 3.5 x 5 to 6 x 10.5**, a booklet consists of multiple sheets or pages that are bound by saddle-stitching, perfect binding, pressed glue or other binding method that creates a nearly uniformly thick mail piece. You also have the option of creating a top flap to fold over onto the opposite side of the mail panel so that you can fugitive glue instead of tab. *This category way created in 2009 and was driven by the USPS to curb the marketing industries use of smaller catalogs since flat size catalogs were so much more expensive.*
2. **Paper stock must be a minimum weight for the cover of between 40# to 80# book** depending on the design. *The USPS found that thinner stock on the covers tore off and then they were not deliverable because the address is on the cover.*
3. **Keep your aspect ratio between 1.3 and 2.5.** In order to calculate the aspect ratio you start by looking at the mail panel, then take the length of the booklet and divide it by the height. *The USPS says that when pieces are too narrow the machines cannot feed them.*
4. **There are two options for addressing a Booklet. Barcode in the address block:** 4 x 2 clear area, no varnish, UV coating, text, or images for the address block. The block needs to be a minimum .5 inches from the right edge and .625 inches from bottom edge. The block can be no higher from the bottom of the mailer than 3.5 inches. Lastly the address must remain at a minimum distance from graphics or text of .125 inches. **Barcode clear zone addressing:** The barcode clear zone is the bottom 5/8 of the postcard and must be free of all color, text and images. Next the address block must be a minimum .5 inches from the right edge and minimum of .625 inches from bottom edge. The block can be no higher from the bottom of the mailer than 3.5 inches. Lastly the address must remain at a minimum distance from graphics or text of .125 inches. *As you know from part one and two, these requirements are meant to keep the address in the OCR (Optical Character Reader) read area of the postal equipment. Honestly, the current equipment has more read area than this, but getting the post office to change rules is like pulling teeth!*
5. **Binding requirements allow for two locations on the binding.** You may either bind to the right of the mail panel or to the left of the mail panel. *This is so that the machines feed the booklets with the least amount of jamming.*

6. **Tabbing or Fugitive Glue: 3 tabs are required with a minimum 1 ½ inch diameter** and they may not be perforated. If binding is below mail panel, then two tabs are required to the right of the mail panel and 1 tab to the left. If the binding is to the right of the mail panel, then two tabs are required above the mail panel and one tab to the left. *These are very large tabs, they need to be to hold the booklets closed, but be aware of the size when designing so that they do not distract from your overall message.* **For Fugitive glue:** Continuous glue line along flap or 1 inch glue spots within ¾ inch of right and left edges. *The fugitive glue on the flap does look much nicer and is easier to open.*
7. **Poly bag/envelope:** If you use a poly bag or envelope your mail will have to go at flat postage rates. You cannot use them with booklet letter size mail. *The USPS tells us that they will not feed through the machines. So, we will have to use them only for flat size mail.*

Your best bet is to design your booklet and then send a pdf to us, to have us find any problems with the design. We can help to make sure you are automation compliant and save on postage. As you are going through the process, do not let it stop your creativity. It is the unique and creative pieces that get the recipients attention and increase your ROI. Do not let these regulations limit your design. There are plenty of ways to create booklets that stand out and get attention! Contact us for samples and suggestions.