Introduction to Business Mail Entry

Participant's Workbook

Draft Pilot Course
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United States Postal Service
Employee Development
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
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Use of Training Materials

These training course materials are intended to be used for training purposes only. They have been prepared in conformance with existing USPS policies and standards and do not represent the establishment of new regulations or policies.

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INTRODUCTION

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MISSION OF BUSINESS MAIL ENTRY

The Postal Service enters into "workshare" agreements with business mailers. Worksharing is a program wherein the mailer assumes the responsibility for various mail processing activities. Our business mail customers enjoy discounted rates because they presort and prepare their mailings, which reduces Postal Service handling costs. The following are a few examples of ways our Business Mail Customers can earn these discounts.

> - presorting the mail by ZIP Code;
> - sacking, traying, and palletizing the mail by ZIP Code;
> - designing mailpieces so those articles can be processed on automated equipment;
> - adding a barcode to the address so the mail can be processed on our Bar Code Sorting (BCS) equipment; and
> - transporting mail.

All of these activities are forms of worksharing. In its workshare agreements, the Postal Service offers discounts for mailings that are presorted by the mailer prior to entering the mailstream. Having mailings presorted before they enter the mailstream enables the Postal Service to process them faster using fewer workhours. The time and money saved by the Postal Service on presorted mailings is given back to the mailer in the form of reduced postage rates.

Business Mail Entry is tasked with making sure the required workshare elements (i.e., presort levels, mailpiece sizes and barcodes) meet the standards required to be eligible for these discounts. This is the "mission" of Business Mail Entry. The mission has three key areas of concentration:

1. Customer Service
2. Consistency In Procedures and Rates
3. Revenue Protection

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MODULE 1
CLASSES OF MAIL

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to identify the characteristics of the five classes of mail, describe the distinguishing features of each, and determine the proper classification of a mailpiece.

INTRODUCTION

There are restrictions that eliminate certain matter from the mailstream (i.e., flammables, explosives, etc.). Every piece of matter that <u>can</u> be mailed belongs to a certain class. The class to which it belongs determines the way it is processed. Content, weight, urgency and price are factors that determine class of mail and level of service. The five classes of mail are:

> ➢ Express Mail
> ➢ First-Class Mail
> ➢ Periodicals
> ➢ Standard Mail (A)
> ➢ Standard Mail (B)

Each class of mail possesses unique characteristics according to Postal standards spelled out in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM).

WHAT IS EXPRESS MAIL?

Express Mail is the U.S. Postal Service's premium service. It is the quickest way to mail an article to its destination, providing reliable expedited mail delivery with same day, overnight, or second day services. Delivery is provided 7 days per week, 365 days per year, including holidays. It is the only class of mail that promises a delivery time with a money back guarantee.

Any article that is mailable and conforms to the size, weight and packaging requirements can be sent by Express Mail. A special Express Mail address label must be used. This label is a self-adhesive multi-part label that provides the mailer with a mailing receipt.

WHAT IS FIRST-CLASS MAIL?

Virtually anything that is mailable can be sent as First-Class Mail. Certain items are considered First-Class material and **must** be sent at First-Class, Priority, or Express Mail rates. These items include:

> ➤ Handwritten or typewritten material
> ➤ Material sealed against Postal inspection
> ➤ Material having the character of actual and personal correspondence
> ➤ Bills and statements of account
> ➤ Business Reply Mail

There is a reduced First-Class rate for Post Cards that meet the restrictions applicable to cards as identified in the DMM. First-Class Mail weighing over 13 ounces and up to 70 pounds is required to be sent at Priority Mail rates.

There are a number of workshare programs for larger volume (500 pieces or more) mailings of First-Class Mail. These programs are available to mailing customers, at their option, and provide for discounted rates.

WHAT ARE PERIODICALS?

Periodicals is a class of mail that is only available to authorized mailers of approved Periodicals publications. Periodicals include only printed publications, such as newspapers, magazines, newsletters, etc. All Periodicals publications must be published on a regular, fixed schedule at least four times a year and may not be designed primarily for advertising purposes. Periodicals must meet a multitude of eligibility criteria before an application for these rates can be approved.

WHAT IS STANDARD MAIL (A)?

Standard Mail (A) consists of mailable matter weighing less than 16 ounces that is not mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail and not entered as Periodicals. Standard Mail (A) is not sealed against inspection and must be of a non-personal nature.

The following articles qualify as Standard Mail (A):

> Printed matter that is neither personal correspondence nor a bill or statement of account such as:
>   > Circulars
>   > Flyers
>   > Catalogs
>   > Booklets
> Certain types of computer prepared material.
> Lightweight merchandise such as:
>   > Small Plants
>   > Seeds or bulbs
>   > Product samples

Each mailing qualifying for the Standard Mail (A) rates must consist of at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail. Customers must pay an annual Presort Mailing Fee. The mail must be presorted, and various additional barcoding, packaging, traying, sacking, and labeling requirements may apply. The DMM identifies these requirements depending on the level of discount being claimed.

There are two categories of Standard Mail (A) rates: regular and nonprofit. Each of these two rate categories has a multitude of sub-categories.

Each piece of mail sent at the Standard Mail (A) rates must be identified as "Presorted Standard"/"PRSRT STD" or "Nonprofit Organization"/"Nonprofit Org." in the postage area. Additional markings may be required for automation rates and carrier route discounts.

Nonprofit rates are special discounted Standard Mail (A) rates available only to certain types of nonprofit organizations. An organization must apply for and be approved to be eligible for those rates.

WHAT IS STANDARD MAIL (B)?

Standard Mail (B) consists of merchandise, printed matter, and articles not mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail or entered as Periodicals, and generally weighing 16 ounces or more. The weight of a mailpiece is what distinguishes Standard Mail (A) from Standard Mail (B). Standard Mail (A) <u>must</u> weigh less than 16 ounces.

There are several sub-categories of Standard Mail (B). Rates are normally based on distance between point of mailing and point of delivery (zone rated), as well as weight. They are:

Parcel Post	1 to 70 lbs	zone rated
Bound Printed Material	1 to15 lbs	zone rated; content restrictions
Special Standard Rate	1 to 70 lbs	content restrictions
Library Mail Rates	1 to 70 lbs	content restrictions; mailer/addressee eligibility restrictions

Many of these categories have workshare programs available, at the mailer's option, that provide discounts for sorting, barcoding, and transportation efforts fulfilled by the mailer.

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Module 1 Quiz

Complete the following quiz by circling the answer you believe is correct.

1. Delivery time for Express Mail is guaranteed.
   a. True
   b. False

2. All First Class Mail matter weighing more than 8 ounces must be sent as Priority Mail.
   a. True
   b. False

3. Anyone can mail a magazine at the Periodicals rate.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Each Standard Mail (A) mailing must consist of 50 pieces of mail or 200 pounds.
   a. True
   b. False

5. Which of the following may be mailed at Standard Mail (B) rates?
   a. Personal correspondence
   b. Material sealed against postal inspection
   c. Merchandise
   d. A bill for services

6. Which of the following is **not** required to be mailed as First-Class Mail?
   a. Mail sealed against postal inspection
   b. Advertising circulars
   c. Handwritten correspondence
   d. Typewritten correspondence

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Answers to Module 1 Quiz

1.   **a** *True* Express Mail is the only class of mail that promises a delivery time with a money back guarantee.

2.   **b** *False* First-Class mail weighing more than 13 ounces and up to 70 pounds must be sent at Priority Mail rates.

3.   **b** *False* Periodicals is a class of mail that is available only to authorized mailers.

4.   **b** *False* Each Standard Mail (A) mailing must consist of 200 mailpieces or 50 pounds of mail.

5.   **c** *Merchandise* Standard Mail (B) consists of merchandise, printed matter, and articles not mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail or entered as Periodicals.

6.   **b** *Advertising Circulars* All material hand written, typewritten, sealed against postal inspection, personal correspondence, bills and business reply mail is mailable at First-Class rates.

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MODULE 2
MAIL PROCESSING CATEGORIES

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to name the five mail processing categories, explain why the Postal Service established these processing categories, and describe the characteristics of each.

INTRODUCTION

The Postal Service has established mail processing categories because mailpieces of different sizes, shapes, and weights are processed in different locations within a postal facility or, in some cases, in different facilities. Mailpieces may also be processed on different types of equipment and be placed on different types of transportation. The primary purpose of identifying the processing category of a mailpiece is to assure that it is placed in the mail processing stream where it will be most effectively and efficiently processed.

MAIL PROCESSING CATEGORIES

All mailable matter must be at least 0.007 inches thick, weigh no more than 70 pounds, and be no more than 108 inches in combined length and girth, except Parcel Post, which can measure up to 130 inches in combined length and girth. All mailpieces (except keys and identification devices mailed under the applicable standards) that are ¼ inch thick or less must be rectangular in shape, at least 3½ inches high, and at least 5 inches long.

Rectangular in shape means that the opposite sides of a mailpiece must be equal in length and meet at right angles. Square mailpieces meet this requirement and are mailable.

Based strictly on the physical dimensions of the mailpiece, regardless of the address placement, all mail is assigned to one of the following five mail processing categories:

Letter-Size Mail Mailpieces at least .007 inches and at most .25 inches thick, with additional length and height restrictions.

Flat-Size Mail Unwrapped, paper-wrapped, sleeve-wrapped, and enveloped matter that exceeds one or more of the maximum letter-size dimensions, but does not exceed any of the maximum dimensions for flat-size mail.

Machinable Parcels Mailpieces which can be processed by Bulk Mail Center (BMC) parcel sorters. This includes parcels that meet minimum/maximum criteria and have no characteristics making them flats, irregular or outside parcels.

Irregular Parcels Parcels that do not meet the dimensional criteria for machinable parcels and therefore cannot be processed by BMC parcel sorters.

Outside Parcels Parcels which because of their size, shape, density, container type, or contents, cannot be processed in postal sacks and are not machinable.

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Module 2 Quiz

Complete the following quiz by circling the answer you believe is correct.

1. If a mailpiece is less than ¼" thick, the minimum size dimension standards are .007" thick by 3½" high by 5" long.
    a. True
    b. False

2. Square mailpieces are mailable.
    a. True
    b. False

3. Why does the Postal Service establish mail processing categories?
    a. To protect revenue.
    b. Different mailpieces are processed in different locations.
    c. To secure both large and small mailers.
    d. All objects are not mailable.

4. Which of the following is **not** a mail processing category?
    a. Letter-Size
    b. Irregular Parcels
    c. Standard
    d. Machinable Parcels

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Answers to Module 2 Quiz

1. **a** *True* All mailable matter must be at least 0.007 inch thick. All mail pieces (except keys and identification devices mailed under the applicable standards) that are ¼ inch thick or less must be rectangular in shape, at least 3 ½ inches high, and at least 5 inches long.

2. **a** *True* Rectangular in shape means that the opposite sides of a mailpiece must be equal in length and meet at right angles. Square mailpieces meet this requirement and are mailable.

3. **b** *Different mailpieces are processed in different locations.* The Postal Service has established mail processing categories because mailpieces of different sizes, shapes, and weights are processed in different locations within a postal facility or, in some cases, in different facilities.

4. **c** *Standard* The five mail processing categories are: letter-size mail, flat-size mail, machinable parcels, irregular parcels and outside parcels.

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MODULE 3
POSTAGE PAYMENT METHODS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to distinguish among the three postage payment methods for presorted mail.

INTRODUCTION

All mailpieces delivered by the Postal Service must bear some indication of postage payment. In addition to providing payment for delivery, the Postal Service uses this indication to verify that postage was paid, and at what rate.

Mailers who elect to presort their mailings have three options for paying postage:

1. Precanceled Stamps
2. Meter Stamps
3. Permit Imprints

PRECANCELED STAMPS
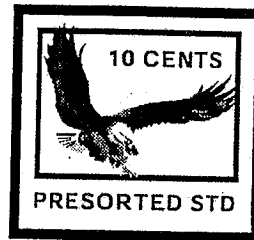
The Postal Service cancels postage stamps to prevent their reuse. A precanceled stamp is a postage stamp like any other, with a definable cost and value. Unlike regular stamps however, the USPS does not manually cancel a precanceled stamp with the date of deposit. The most common precanceled stamps are those that the USPS pre-prints with the rate category (such as Presorted First-Class) as indication of cancellation.

Precanceled postage stamps are one of the payment methods for mailing at bulk or discounted First-Class or Standard Mail (A) rates. This payment method requires that a stamp be affixed to each mailpiece. Precanceled stamps must be applied to the upper right hand corner of the envelope, address label, or address area.

A complete domestic return address is required. This is the only one of the three payment methods for presorted mail that <u>always</u> requires a domestic return address.

Mailings must be deposited at the post office where the precanceled stamp permit is held. Mail with precanceled postage must not be deposited in collection boxes.

Precanceled stamps are usually non-denominated. That is, they do not show a numeric postage amount.
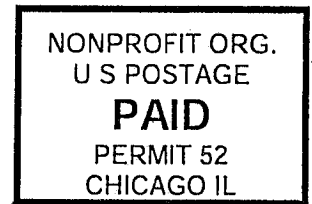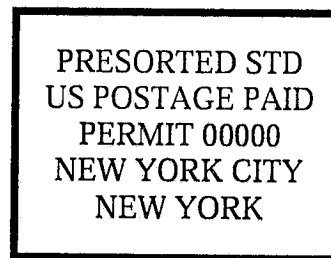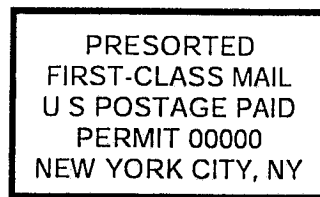
METER STAMPS
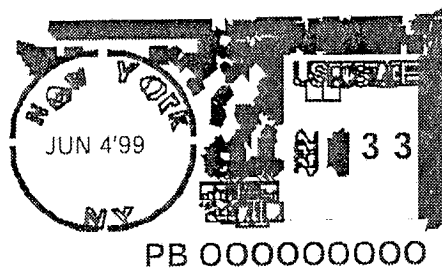
A meter stamp is a postage payment method that prints a denomination of postage directly on the envelope itself. You do not apply a physical "stamp". Instead, ink from a postage meter prints a meter impression directly on the mailpiece. Mailers may also print meter impressions onto an adhesive tape, called a meter strip. They then apply this meter strip to the mailpiece as postage.

Postage meters are available only by lease from authorized manufacturers. No one other than the manufacturer may possess a postage meter without a valid USPS postage meter license and a rental agreement with the meter manufacturer. A customer may not possess a postage meter before the USPS sets, seals, and checks it into service. A postage meter is "filled" with postage by the Postal Service. A customer pays for this postage when the Postal Service fills their meter. As postage is metered on the mailpiece via the meter stamp, the postage amount in the meter is decreased.

Metered postage (printed meter impressions) must be legible and not overlap. Certain information must always appear in the meter impression, for example; a valid postage amount, city, state and the manufacturers meter serial number. Fluorescent ink is mandatory for metered postage on letter-size mail. Metered postage must be printed or applied in the upper right hand corner of the envelope, address label, or tag. USPS approved tape must be used when meter strips are printed on tape.

Mailpieces using meter stamps do not require a return address. However, each meter stamp bears a meter serial number, and city and state designation. The Postal Service can use this information to determine the sender of the mailpiece.

Permit Imprint

```
+---------------------------+   +---------------------------+   +---------------------------+
|        PRESORTED          |   |      PRESORTED STD        |   |     NONPROFIT ORG.        |
|     FIRST-CLASS MAIL      |   |     US POSTAGE PAID       |   |      U S POSTAGE          |
|     U S POSTAGE PAID      |   |      PERMIT 00000         |   |         PAID              |
|       PERMIT 00000        |   |      NEW YORK CITY        |   |       PERMIT 52           |
|     NEW YORK CITY, NY     |   |        NEW YORK           |   |       CHICAGO IL          |
+---------------------------+   +---------------------------+   +---------------------------+
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The use of a permit imprint allows mailers to mail without affixing adhesive postage stamps or meter stamps to each piece. The mailer obtains an authorization to mail with a preprinted permit imprint (also called an indicia) indicating the postage payment on their pieces. Permit imprints may be used on First-Class Mail and Standard Mail.

Mailers can establish a postage account, which is similar to a checking account. The mailer deposits the dollar amount necessary to pay the postage prior to mailing. The postage statement that accompanies the mailing prompts a deduction from the account, similar to what happens when you write a check.

The actual permit imprint indicia, often called the permit imprint, replaces the postage stamp. Mailers may print the permit imprint directly on mailpieces or on labels permanently affixed to mailpieces.

Mailers must place the permit imprint parallel to the address of the mailpiece, in the upper right corner of the address side, the address area, or the address label.

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Module 3 Quiz

Answer questions 1-3 by using the following list of postage payment methods.

    a.   Precanceled Stamps

    b.   Meter Stamps

    c.   Permit Imprints

    d.   All of the above

1. Some postage stamps are printed with the rate category as the method of cancellation. What are these types of stamps called? Ans. _____

2. Florescent ink is mandatory on which type of postage stamp? Ans. _____

3. Which type of postage always requires a complete domestic return address? Ans. _____

Complete 4-6 by circling the answer you believe is correct.

4. For the convenience of the customer, mail paid with Precanceled Stamps may be deposited in a collection box.

    a.   True

    b.   False

5. Mailpieces using meter stamps require a return address.

    a.   True

    b.   False

6. A mailer must obtain authorization to use a permit imprint on their mail pieces.

    a.   True

    b.   False

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Answers to Module 3 Quiz

1.   *a* ***Precanceled Stamps*** The most common Precanceled Stamps are those that the USPS pre-prints with the rate category (such as Presorted First-Class or Presorted STD) as an indication of cancellation.

2.   *b* ***Meter Stamps*** Meter Stamps must be applied using fluorescent ink on all letter sized metered mail.

3.   *a* ***Precanceled Stamps*** Precanceled stamps always require a complete domestic return address.

4.   *b* ***False*** Regardless of the postage payment method, presorted mail must <u>always</u> be brought to a designated facility. It must <u>never</u> be deposited in a collection box.

5.   *b* ***False*** Mailpieces using meter stamps <u>do</u> <u>not</u> require a return address.

6.   *a* ***True*** The mailer obtains an authorization to mail with a preprinted permit imprint (also called an indicia) indicating the postage payment on their pieces.

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MODULE 4
MATH SKILLS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to solve problems involving mathematical calculations which are commonly encountered in the Business Mail Entry function.

INTRODUCTION

In order to perform your duties in Business Mail Entry, you will need to master certain mathematical computations. These include the following:

> Rounding decimals
> Computing the average weight of a single piece
> Converting pounds to ounces
> Converting ounces to pounds
> Computing percentages
> Computing the number of pieces in a mailing

The following exercises demonstrate how these computations are calculated. You will need a calculator to work through this module.

ROUNDING NUMBERS

Rounding requires increasing the last digit of a number by 1 or keeping the last digit unchanged.

Rounding off increases by 1 the last digit to be kept if the digit to its right (which is not to be kept) is five or greater. If that digit is 4 or less, the last digit to be kept remains unchanged.

Increased by 1:   to 4 digits: .1255̲93 becomes .125̲6   to 3 digits: .125̲593 becomes .12̲6

Kept unchanged: to 4 digits: .0123̲45 becomes .012̲3   to 3 digits: .012̲345 becomes .01̲2

Rounding up requires increasing by 1 the last digit to be kept if there are any digits to its right, regardless of significance.

Always round up: to 4 digits: .1255̲93 becomes .125̲6   to 3 digits: .125̲493 becomes .12̲6

WEIGHT OF A SINGLE PIECE

To find the average weight of a single piece of mail divide the total sample weight by the number of pieces in the sample. Piece weights are expressed in decimal numbers rounded off to 4 decimal places. Check the equations below on your calculator.

a.   10 sample pieces
     1.42 pounds total sample weight

Equation: $\dfrac{1.42}{10}$ or 1.42 ÷ 10 = .1420 pounds per piece

b.   18 sample pieces
     .984 pounds total sample weight

Equation: $\dfrac{.984}{18}$ or .984 ÷ 18 = .0547 pounds per piece

POUNDS TO OUNCES

To convert the weight of a mailpiece expressed in pounds to its weight expressed in ounces, you must **multiply** the pound weight by 16 (16 ounces = 1 pound). Use your calculator to compute these two problems:

a.   1 mailpiece weighing .25 pounds

     Equation: .25 x 16 = _____

b.   1 mailpiece weighing .1625 pounds

     Equation: .1625 x 16 = _____

Answers: (a)piece weight = 4 ounces; (b)piece weight = 2.6 ounces.

OUNCES TO POUNDS

Sometimes we know the weight of a mailpiece stated in ounces and need to convert to weight in pounds. To convert ounces to pounds, **divide** the piece weight in ounces by 16 (16 ounces = 1 pound). Use your calculator to compute these two problems:

a.   1 mailpiece weighing one ounce

     Equation: 1 ÷ 16 = _____ pounds

b.   1 mailpiece weighing 2.6 ounces

     Equation: 2.6 ÷ 16 = _____ pounds

Answers: (a)piece weight is .0625 pounds; (b)piece weight is .1625 pounds.

PERCENTAGES

To find the percentage of a number, multiply that number by the percentage expressed as a decimal number. Remember when multiplying percentages, move the decimal two places to the left. Remember to place the decimal point in the correct location. For example: 25% (25 ÷ 100) would be expressed as .25, while 30% (30 ÷ 100) would be expressed as .30. Use your calculator to compute the following percentages.

    a. 25 percent of $104.00

        $104.00 x .25 = _____

    b. 3½ percent (3.5%) of 200 mailpieces

        200 x .035 = _____

Answers: (a)$26.00 is 25% of $104; (b)7 is 3.5% of 200 mailpieces

To find what percent one number is of a total (a is what percent of b), divide that number by the total number (a ÷ b = c%). You can check your answer by multiplying back (c% x b = a). Use your calculator to compute the following:

    a.   454 pieces is what percent of 895 pieces? _____

    b.   22 pieces is what percent of 212 pieces? _____

Answers: (a)50.73%; (b)10.38%

PIECES IN A MAILING

We normally determine the number of pieces in a mailing by weight rather than by counting each piece. This is done by taking the total net weight of the mail expressed in pounds and dividing it by the weight of a single piece expressed in pounds. The resulting answer provides the number of pieces.

Net Weight ÷ Average Single Piece Weight = Number of Pieces $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Rounded off to the} \\ \text{nearest whole number} \end{array} \right\}$

Use your calculator to find the number of pieces in the two mailings below. Don't forget to round off the answer to the nearest whole number.

a. Total net weight of mailing is 50.5 pounds. The average single piece weight is .0547 pounds.

50.5 ÷ .0547= _____   Ans: _____ pieces

b. Total net weight of mailing is 187 pounds, 8 ounces. The average single piece weight is 4 ounces.

First convert the ounces to pounds (see pg. 43):
8 ounces = _____   4 ounces = _____

Next compute the number of pieces in the mailing.
_____ pounds ÷ _____ pounds = _____ pieces

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<u>Module 4 Quiz</u>

Complete the following mathematical problems. Round off your calculated weights to 4 digits, when possible. (For pieces in a mailing remember to round up to the nearest whole number.)

1. Round off the following numbers.
   a. .96595   Ans._____
   b. .34712   Ans._____

2. Round up the following numbers.
   a. .96595   Ans._____
   b. .34712   Ans._____

3. Using the piece counts and sample weights below, what is the single piece weight expressed as a decimal fraction of a pound?
   a. 10 mail pieces with a sample weight of 2.3 pounds?   Ans. _____
   b. 15 mail pieces with a sample weight of 1.23 pounds?   Ans. _____

4. Change the following piece weights to decimal fractions of an ounce.
   a. .0475 pounds   Ans._____
   b. .0269 pounds   Ans._____

5. Change the following piece weights to decimal fractions of a pound.
   a. 3 ounces   Ans._____
   b. 1.418 ounces   Ans._____

6. How many pieces are in a mailing when the total net weight of the mail is 834.75 pounds and the average weight of a single piece is 2.5 ounces?
   Ans. _____

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Answers to Module 4 Quiz

1.   (a) .9659⬚5⬚ = .9660   (b) .3471⬚2⬚ = .3471
       Rounding off increases by I the last digit to be kept if the digit to its right is five or greater.

2.   (a) .9659⬚5⬚ = .9660   (b) .3471⬚2⬚ = .3472
       Rounding up requires increasing by 1 the last digit to be kept if there are any digits to its right, regardless of significance.

3.   (a) 2.3 pounds ÷ 10 = **.23 pounds**   (b) 1.23 pounds ÷ 15 = **.082 pounds**
       To find the average weight of a single piece of mail, divide the total sample weight by the number of pieces in the sample.

4.   (a) .0475 x 16 = **.7600 pounds**   (b) .0269 x 16 = **.4304 pounds**
       To convert the weight of a mailpiece expressed in pounds to the weight of a mailpiece expressed in ounces, you must **multiply** the pound weight by 16.

5.   (a) 3 ounces ÷ 16 = **.1875 pounds**   (b) 1.418 ounces ÷ 16 = **.0886 pounds**
       To convert ounces to pounds, **divide** the piece weight in ounces by 16.

6.   2.5 ounces ÷ 16 pounds = .15625 pounds.
       834.75 ÷ .15625 = 5342.4 = **5343 pieces**
       To determine the number of pieces in a mailing take the total net weight of the mail expressed in pounds and divide it by the weight of a single piece expressed in pounds.

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MODULE 5
REFERENCE MATERIALS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to name the reference materials most commonly used in the Business Mail Entry function; identify the type of information each one contains, and explain the relationships among them.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding mailing requirements involves knowledge of a great many rules and regulations. In addition, requirements for mailings change and are updated regularly. To provide postal personnel with information to perform their duties efficiently, the Postal Service provides manuals, handbooks, Postal Bulletins, publications and other directives for administering these rules and regulations. Furthermore, our customers depend on us to provide them with the most current and accurate information so their mailing experience is a successful and profitable one.

This module will introduce you to some of the reference materials used by Business Mail Entry personnel, their relationship to each other and a description of the content found in each.

MANUALS

Manuals are the official source of postal policy. There are six major manuals that could be used by Business Mail Entry employees:

1. Administrative Support Manual (ASM)
2. Financial Management Manual (FMM)
3. Postal Operations Manual (POM)
4. Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)
5. Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)
6. International Mail Manual (IMM)

All other handbooks and publications either support or supplement these postal manuals. The two manuals most often used by Business Mail Entry employees are the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) and the International Mail Manual (IMM).

Domestic Mail Manual - The DMM contains information concerning the basic rules and regulations, we call standards, governing domestic mail service. The DMM describes the classes of mail, as well as, special services and conditions overseeing their uses. It also provides standards for rate eligibility and mail preparation. Some factors that classify domestic mail include: size, weight, content and services.

International Mail Manual - The IMM is the USPS manual that contains classification regulations (standards) and other requirements for mailing between the United States and other countries.

PUBLICATIONS

The Postal Service uses many publications to supplement the information found in the six major manuals previously mentioned. They contain standing instructions, training materials, and procedures. They are intended for a particular audience explaining specialized topics too detailed or inappropriate to be included in the manuals themselves.

Examples of frequently used publications in Business Mail Entry are:

Publication 25 - *Designing Letter Mail* - Shows how to design letter-size business mail for improved service and postage savings

Publication 32 - *Glossary of Postal Terms* - Defines Postal jargon and acronyms.

Publication 49 - P*reparing Standard Mail (A)* - Shows how to prepare bulk Standard Mail (A), obtain a permit, and pay for the annual bulk mailing fee. It includes easy-to-follow instructions for preparing mailings for new business mail customers.

Publication 65/65-A - *National 5 - Digit Zip Code and Post Office Directory* – Published annually, it provides correct and current Zip Code and mailing information. Including proper packaging, special Postal services, as well as locations of Mail Classification Centers. Currently, Publication 65 is offered for sale to the public, while publication 65-A is for use at Post Office lobbies.

Publication 417 - *Nonprofit Eligibility* - Discusses eligibility, authorization, and mailing rules for the Nonprofit Standard Mail (A) rates.

POSTAL BULLETIN

The Postal Bulletin is a periodical published every two weeks and mailed to Postal Service installations and public subscribers. It communicates instructions and notices of changes in policy and standards.

Postal Bulletins often contain changes to DMM standards. Changes are effective immediately or they may provide an implementation period. Other times the change may not be effective until a new DMM is published. You must be aware of any changes and implementation dates that affect the acceptance of mail and postage rates.

NEWLETTERS

Other helpful sources of information for Business Mail Entry employees and their customers include the following free monthly newsletters:

The Mailers Companion-provides the latest USPS information essential for effective mailings. It includes information about DMM revisions, mail processing networks, postage payment systems, address management, mailing standards, rulings, interpretations and other relevant issues. It also contains columns for reader's comments, questions, and includes articles about customer mailroom operations and equipment.

Memo to Mailers-is published by the Postal Service Corporate Relations department for mailers and mailing specialists. It provides information about Postal Service products and services, as well as changes taking place in the mailing industry.

Subscriptions for these newsletters are available by request from the Postal Service.

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<u>Module 5 Quiz</u>

Answer the questions using the following list of reference materials.

      a. Domestic Mail Manual
      b. International Mail Manual
      c. Postal Bulletin
      d. Newsletters
      e. Publications

1. A mailer asks how much it will cost to mail a parcel to Ireland. Where would that rate information be found?
   Ans. _____

2. If you are looking for addressing instructions for a mailpiece being mailed from New York to California, which of the reference materials would you use?
   Ans. _____

3. In what type of reference material would you find postal acronyms defined?
   Ans. _____

4. To learn about the most recent policy and standard changes, which reference material would you read?
   Ans. _____

5. Which type of reference material could you obtain current information about changes that occur in the mailing industry?
   Ans. _____

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Answers to Module 5 Quiz

1.   *b   IMM* The IMM is the USPS namual that contains classification regulations (standards) and other requirements for mailing between the United States and other countries.

2.   *a   DMM* The DMM contains information concerning the basic rules and regulations governing domestic mail service. It also provides standards for rate eligibility and mail preparation.

3.   *e   Publications Publication 32-Glossary of Postal Terms* is a Postal publication which defines Postal jargon and acronyms.

4.   *c   Postal Bulletin* The Postal Bulletin communicates instructions and notices of changes in policy and standards for the Postal Service.

5.   *d   Newsletters. Memos to Mailers* provides information about Postal Service products and services, as well as changes taking place in the mailing industry.

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MODULE 6
CUSTOMER RELATIONS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module you will be able to name the key elements of a successful business transaction and describe effective telephone techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Good customer relations is good business and involves a variety of factors. These include appearing and sounding approachable, being neat in appearance and attire, maintaining a clean workplace, being efficient, and knowing how to find the solution to the customer's problem. We want our customers to:

✔ continue using our products and services,

✔ tell their friends to use our products and services,

✔ believe that the USPS provides products and services that are at least as good as, if not better than, those provided by our competitors.

A BMEU employee conducts transactions with customers both face-to-face and by telephone. In either case, the quality of the service the customer receives influences whether they continue to use the services we provide. Three key elements of a successful business transaction are: 1) Setting the tone and focus of the interaction, 2) exchanging information clearly and accurately, and 3) helping to identify and resolve problems.

SETTING TONE AND FOCUS

One key to successful customer transactions is **your** positive attitude. The key to your attitude is your recognition of how important our customers are. In order for us to satisfy our customers, we must understand their business needs.

We are all customers of numerous businesses. Occasionally, we might be dissatisfied with the service we receive. We have been tempted, at one time or another, to complain about particularly unpleasant transactions. To be successful with our transactions and have a positive impact, we must first set the tone and focus.

To set the proper tone, begin each transaction with a friendly greeting that allows the customer to see you as approachable, courteous, and ready to help. It is important for the customer to perceive that you give their business the highest priority. Clearly, the opening moments of the transaction are critical for setting a positive tone.

Your words are important but are _not_ the only element. Just as important as the words you use is _your tone of voice_. You need to inject some enthusiasm and warmth into your tone. A professional manner can be business like without being cold and unfriendly. At the same time, the focus of the transaction is on the customer's business needs. The proper tone and focus are especially important when the customer expresses dissatisfaction. You need to concerntrate even more on maintaining a positive tone and focusing on a satisfactory solution.

Often customers will go on and on about a problem. Sometimes, they begin to discuss problems that do not even concern the Postal Service. When that happens, courteously redirect the conversation back to the main focus. Discuss what the customer originally called about. Try to keep control of the conversation – diplomatically. Remain sympathetic to the customer's concerns at all times.

EXCHANGING INFORMATION

All transactions involve exchanging information. When the information is clear and accurate the transaction has a good chance of being successful. To make sure the information is clear and accurate:

> - listen closely to what the customer is saying
> - ask questions to make sure you understand
> - talk about complex issues in a way that simplifies them for the customer
> - pronounce words clearly
> - know what you are talking about
> - don't use acronyms

While exchanging information during a transaction, consider it an opportunity to educate the customer. This requires you to remain current with Postal policies and procedures.

IDENTIFYING AND RESOLVING PROBLEMS

We stated above that all transactions involve exchanging information. The purpose of exchanging information is to identify the customer's business needs and resolve any problems.

<u>Help the customer identify the problem</u>

1. Listen carefully to the customer's questions and comments.
2. Ask questions that ensure a complete and accurate understanding of the customer's issues.
3. If necessary, help the customer ask the right questions. They may not know what questions to ask.
4. Answer questions effectively.
5. Ensure customer is aware of relevant details and current information.

<u>Resolve the problem</u>

1. Provide solutions specific to the customer's needs.
2. Present advantages and disadvantages of solutions.
3. Offer more than one solution when appropriate.
4. Remain flexible and accommodating, while working within the boundaries of Postal policies and procedures.

Staying focused on the customer's needs will allow you to achieve an effective and quick resolution.

FACE-TO-FACE vs TELEPHONE TRANSACTIONS

Communicating with customers over the telephone is similar to conducting transactions with them in person.   In both situations, you need to set the tone and focus, exchange information and identify and resolve problems The one advantage you have in face-to-face transactions is positive use of body language (non-verbal communication).

Non-verbal communication is as important as the tone of your voice. Approach each customer in a pleasant and helpful manner using the following guidelines:

> Initial eye contact should show your concern.
> A smile sets a positive tone and generates a similar response.
> Facing the customer squarely indicating your full attention.
> Maintaining eye contact will show your interest.

Since telephone communications do not have a visual component, what you say and how you say it becomes even more important because you can't depend on your winning smile or eye contact to help create a congenial atmosphere. You must depend entirely upon your tone and inflection of your voice. Use the following telephone techniques to guide you to effective telephone transactions.

ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE

- Always keep paper, pens or pencils and telephone message pads by all telephones.
- Answer the telephone on or before the third ring.
- Identify yourself and your office right away, then ask, "May I help you" or say "Thank you for calling the _____post office. This is _____. May I help you?
- Talk at a normal speed, in a normal voice. Do not speak as if in a hurry or doing something else as you speak.
- Remember to smile. You cannot sound pleasant when you are frowning.
- Putting someone on hold requires a little extra courtesy. Be sure to ask and wait for an answer. When you go back on the line, be sure to thank the customer for waiting. Use a sentence like "Thank you for waiting. Now, how can I help you!." Or "Thank you for waiting. I have that information now."
- If the call involved a message, repeat the message to make sure all the information is correct.

HANDLING THE ANGRY CUSTOMER

- LISTEN – do not interrupt. Be courteous and attentive. Take notes! Let them get the problem "off their chest!"
- BE PATIENT – Value the customer, take time. Don't take the customer's concern personally! They are not upset with you!
- BE SYMPATHETIC – Understand, apologize when appropriate. Repeat what the customer has said to check out your understanding.
- EDUCATE – Explain (do not dictate) our regulations and/or policies to help the customer understand (only if appropriate). Let the customer know what we CAN DO for them. Don't emphasize what we cannot do. Be sincere and honest.
- TAKE ACTION – Do what you promised the customer. *Be careful,* do not promise what cannot be done.

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Module 6 Quiz

Complete the following quiz by circling the answer you believe is correct.

1. Part of telephone courtesy is to answer the telephone within _____ rings.

2. Using Postal acronyms and jargon is the most efficient way to communicate information to our customers.
   a.   True
   b.   False

3. To ensure that clear and accurate information is exchanged with the customer, ask questions to make sure you understand.
   a.   True
   b.   False

4. What is the difference between face-to-face and telephone transactions?
   a.   There is no difference.
   b.   You have to remember too much information.
   c.   Positive use of body language.
   d.   None of the above.

5. Which of the following can be used to help you handle an angry customer?
   a.   Listen and think.
   b.   Listen, be patient and think.
   c.   Listen, be patient and sympathetic.
   d.   None of the above.

6. Which of the following is not one of the three key elements of a successful business transaction?
   a.   Exchanging information clearly and accurately.
   b.   Setting the tone and focus of the interaction.
   c.   Maintaining eye contact to show your interest.
   d.   Helping to identify and resolve problems.

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Answers to Module 6 Quiz

1.   *3 rings* Answer the telephone on or before the third ring.

2.   *b False* When exchanging information, to make sure the information is clear and accurate don't use acronyms.

3.   *a True* When exchanging information, to make sure the information is clear and accurate ask questions to make sure you understand.

4.   *c Positive use of body language* The one advantage you have in face-to-face transactions is positive use of body language (non-verbal communication).

5.   *c Listen, be patient and sympathetic* Five ways to handle an angry customer are: Listen, Be Patient, Be Sympathetic, Educate and Take Action.

6.   *c Maintaining eye contact to show your interest* a, b and d are the three key elements to a successful business transaction. C is a guideline for non-verbal communication discussed in *Face-to-Face vs Telephone Transactions.*

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MODULE 7
REVENUE PROTECTION

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to identify ways in which revenue is lost in the Business Mail Entry function and how to protect the Postal Service from these losses.

INTRODUCTION

Like any business, the Postal Service charges for the service it performs. Revenue protection means making sure that all of the money due the Postal Service for fees, products and services is collected. Employees who accept mail from customers (e.g. Window Clerks, Bulk Mail Clerks, etc.) protect the revenue by assuring that mailing customers pay the correct amount of postage.

For mail presented at Business Mail Entry Units, the Postal Service offers customers a variety of worksharing discounts. That is, the customer and the Postal Service share the work of processing the mail. When customers do some of the preparation, sortation, and/or transportation of the mail it saves the Postal Service time and money. We pass those savings on to the customer in the form of postage discounts.

In order to protect postal revenues, Business Mail Entry employees verify (1) that the correct postage is paid, (2) that the correct postage payment method is used, and (3) that the mailings are properly prepared (sorted and trayed or sacked). Revenue protection in Business Mail Entry is critical to the Postal Service because the potential for significant losses are greater here than anywhere else in the Postal Service. Fifty to sixty percent of the entire mail volume is entered at BMEUs or DMUs (Detached Mail Units – an acceptance unit located in a mailers plant).

CATEGORIES OF REVENUE LOSS

Listed below are some of the ways in which revenue can be lost in the Business Mail Entry function:

Misclassified Mail – With the exception of First-Class Mail, acceptance employees must open a piece of mail and verify that the customer has correctly classified the material. Failure to perform this verification could result in First-Class material being mailed at Standard Mail postage rates.

Mail Preparation – Discount presort rates require mail preparation by the customer. The clerk examines the mail to verify that the customer has performed the preparation required for the rates claimed. Failure to correctly perform this verification could result in the customer obtaining discount rates for a mailing that did not save the Postal Service time and money to process.

Nonpayment of Postage – The customer indicates the number of pieces in a mailing on a postage statement that is submitted with the mailing. BME employees must verify the accuracy of the customer's piece count. Failure to perform this function could result in pieces of mail entering the system without payment of postage. For instance, a mailer indicates 5,000 pieces on a postage statement when there are actually 10,000 pieces in the mailing.

Short Paid Mail – Precanceled Stamps for regular Standard Mail (A) are all valued at 10 cents. All regular Standard Mail (A) presorted rates are more than 10 cents. Therefore, when a customer presents a presorted Standard Mail (A) mailing bearing precanceled stamps, the clerk must verify the piece count and collect the difference between the actual postage due and the value of the precanceled stamps.

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Module 7 Quiz

Complete the following quiz by circling the answer you believe is correct.

1. BME employees who accept mail from customers protect revenue by verifying that the correct amount of postage is paid, and the correct method of paying postage is used.
   a.   True
   b.   False

2. Revenue protection in the BMEU is critical because the potential for loss is greater there than anywhere else in the Postal Service.
   a.   True
   b.   False

3. At this time, the Postal Service does not have a postage discount program.
   a.   True
   b.   False

4. Precanceled Stamps for regular Standard Mail (A) are valued at:
   a. $0.01
   b. $0.05
   c. $0.10
   d.   All of the above

5. Which category is a way in which revenue can be lost in the Business Mail Entry function?
   a.   Mail preparation
   b.   Short paid mail
   c.   Misclassified mail
   d.   All of the above

6. The Postal Service offers worksharing discounts to mailing customers because they:
   a.   Mail large volumes of mail.
   b.   Prepare and sort their mail.
   c.   Know the postmaster.
   d.   Have a right to use lower rates.

Functional Area of Instruction	Objective	Subobjectives

Classes of Mail	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to identify characteristics of the five classes of mail, describe the distinguishing features of each, and determine the proper classification of a mailpiece.	◆ Describe the characteristics of:
		  ➤ Express Mail
		  ➤ First-Class Mail
		  ➤ Periodicals
		  ➤ Standard Mail (A)
		  ➤ Standard Mail (B)
		◆ Name and differentiate the distinguishing features for each of the five classes of mail.
		◆ Choose the proper classification for different types of mailable matter.

Mail Processing Categories	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to name the five mail processing categories, explain why the Postal Service established these processing categories, and describe the characteristics of each.	◆ Explain the purpose for mail processing categories. ◆ Describe the minimum size dimension standards for all mailpieces. ◆ Explain the standard of rectangular mailpieces.

Postage Payment Methods	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to distinguish among the three postage payment methods for presort mailings.	◆ Describe the characteristics of:
		  ➤ Precanceled Stamps
		  ➤ Meter Stamps
		  ➤ Permit Imprints
		◆ Name the distinguishing features of the three postage payment methods for presorted mail.

Math Skills	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to solve problems involving mathematical calculations which are commonly encountered in the Business Mail Entry function.	◆ Demonstrate use of a calculator. ◆ Choose the correct calculation formula to be applied, given routine mathematical problems. ◆ Calculate percentages demonstrating use of decimal points. ◆ Demonstrate rounding decimal numbers, by rounding off and up. ◆ Perform conversion of numbers. ◆ Calculate the average weight of a single piece and the number of pieces in a mailing.
Reference Materials	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to name the reference materials most commonly used in the Business Mail Entry function; identify the type of information each one contains, and explain the relationships among them.	◆ Name various Postal manuals, handbooks, guides and other reference materials. ◆ Distinguish basic types of information found in the most commonly used reference materials of the BME.
Customer Relations	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to name the key elements of a successful business transaction and describe effective telephone techniques.	◆ Describe the different elements of face-to-face versus telephone transactions. ◆ Characterize the three key elements of a business transaction. ◆ Describe proper procedures for answering the telephone. ◆ Name techniques for handling the angry customer.
Revenue Protection	Upon completion of this module trainees will be able to define revenue protection, explain it's importance to the Postal Service and identify ways in which revenue is lost in the Business Mail Entry function.	◆ Define revenue protection and explain its importance to the Postal Service. · Name and describe the most occurring categories of revenue loss found in the BME.

Introduction to Business Mail Entry
BME Prerequisite Self-Study Course

Purpose

This is how Des Moines will present

Introduction To Business Mail Entry is a self-study course designed to:

1) Introduce the participant to the key concepts of Business Mail Entry
2) Prepare them to attend the Business Mail Academy

An employee must successfully complete *Business Mail Entry Basics*, conducted at the National Center for Employee Development in Norman, Oklahoma, in order to become the successful bidder for one of the following positions:

- Bulk Mail Clerk
- Mailing Requirements Clerk
- Bulk Mail Technician

In order to attend *Business Mail Entry Basics*, a bidder for one of the above positions must complete the required prerequisite course, *Introduction To Business Mail Entry*, and pass a series of tests. Both the prerequisite course and the series of tests are administered locally.

Purpose of this guide

This guide is designed to assist the BME Representative in facilitating *Introduction To Business Mail Entry*.

Materials Needed by Participant

Pencil or pen
Calculator

Time Allotted

5 minutes – Brief introduction and distribute course material

3 hours – Course completion

> **Note:** Because this is a self-study guide, participants will complete the course at their own pace. Some students may take less time and others may need longer.
>
> *There is no time limit.*

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Course Delivery

1. Ensure participant has adequate space and privacy.

2. Provide pencil and calculator.

   Note: Make sure calculator is in working order.

3. Give instructions to participant.

   a. Course completion is estimated at approximately three hours. However, there is no time limit. Express to participants to take as long as they need.

   b. Briefly describe contents of the course.

      1) Course is a basic introduction to the Business Mail Entry function.

      2) The course consists of an introduction and seven modules.

      3) There is a quiz at the end of each module.

         "When you are confident of the material in each module, take the quiz, check your answers and then move on to the next module. You can check your work with the answer key located behind each module quiz."

      4) Completion of the course.

         Tell participants that you will return to aid in their review, before they take the final exam. Instruct them to look back over the course to review material and items missed on the individual quizzes before you return.

         Answer questions about content, but do not spend more than five minutes on each one. You are there to help them understand their areas of concern, but you are not there to instruct. If there is an area that needs further instruction or explanation, simply tell the participant that they will learn that subject in more detail if they are admitted into the BME Academy course.

         When the participant is ready to take the final exam notify the Course Administrator.

      5) Ask if there are any questions before beginning the course.

      6) Distribute the course material and notify the Course Administrator of the starting time.

Introduction to Business Mail Entry
BME Prerequisite Self-Study Course

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Time Allotted

5 minutes – Brief introduction and distribute course material

3 hours – Course completion

> **Note:** Because this is a self-study guide, participants will complete the course at their own pace. Some students may take less time and others may need longer.
>
> *There is no time limit.*

Course Delivery

1. Ensure participant has adequate space and privacy.

2. Provide pencil and calculator.

   Note: Make sure calculator is in working order.

3. Give instructions to participant.

   a. Course completion is estimated at approximately three hours. However, there is no time limit. Express to participants to take as long as they need.

   b. Briefly describe contents of the course.

      1) Course is a basic introduction to the Business Mail Entry function.

      2) The course consists of an introduction and seven modules.

      3) There is a quiz at the end of each module.

         "When you are confident of the material in each module, take the quiz, check your answers and then move on to the next module. You can check your work with the answer key located behind each module quiz."

      4) Upon completion of the course, review any areas of concern.

         Instruct participants – before taking the final exam, look back over the course to review material and items missed on the individual quizzes.

      5) Taking the final exam.

         "When you are ready to take the final exam notify the Course Administrator."

         Note: *Make sure participants know how and where to contact the Administrator.*

      6) Ask if there are any questions before beginning the course.

      7) Distribute the course material and notify the Course Administrator of the starting time.

Prerequisite Administrator's Time Record Form

Volunteer's Name: _____

Position Title: _____

Pay Level: _____   Years In Position: _____   Years With USPS: _____

Education Level: _____

District: _____

Instructions: For the volunteer named above, the Prerequisite Administrator is to record the date, actual start time, and actual end time for each activity. The administrator is not expected to acquire all of the information first-hand. Rather the administrator should;
- give copies of this form to those who will conduct the various activities
- ask them to complete the form for those activities, and
- collect the information and compile it on this form

Activity	Date	Recommended Allotted Time	Actual Start Time	Actual End Time
JOB PREVIEW VIDEO				
View Video		15 minutes		
DATA ENTRY TEST (714)				
Listen to instructions		2 minutes		
Take test		20 minutes		
BASIC SKILLS TEST				
Fill out grids		10 minutes		
Listen to instructions		5 minutes		
Take Test		40 minutes		
SELF-STUDY COURSE				
Listen to instructions		5 minutes		
Study materials		3 hours		
Q & A		30 minutes		
KNOWLEDGE TEST				
Listen to instructions		10 minutes		
Take test		45 minutes		
TELEPHONE ASSESSMENT				
Study materials		30 minutes		
Take test		30 minutes		

PILOT STUDY

A NEW SELECTION / TRAINING PROCESS
for
BULK MAIL CLERKS
MAILING REQUIREMENTS CLERKS
BULK MAIL TECHNICIANS

Information for Volunteers

BACKGROUND

The selection / training process for Bulk Mail Clerks, Mailing Requirements Clerks, and Bulk Mail Technicians is being revised. These are all "senior qualified" positions in the Business Mail Entry function. Currently, the senior bidder qualifies for the job by successfully completing the following process:

- Passes a data entry test (local option)
- Attends a 3-week training program consisting of:
  - 2 weeks of classroom training
  - 1 week of on-the-job training
- Passes a qualifying exam consisting of:
  - A computer-based knowledge test
  - An on-the-job performance evaluation

The entire process is conducted locally, that is, within the District. The three weeks of training, as well as the on-the-job training evaluation, are conducted by incumbent Business Mail Entry Clerks.

The process is being revised to address ideas for improving it which were identified at several employee focus groups. Before deploying the revised process, however, we need to test it. So we are recruiting volunteers for a pilot study.

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER

Both craft workers and EAS workers are welcome to volunteer, but they must meet two conditions:

1. Have minimal knowledge of business mail
2. Have no current interest in bidding on a job in the Business Mail Entry function

NOTE: Only five volunteers will be selected from your District.

WHAT YOU WILL BE VOLUNTEERING TO DO

Essentially, you will be volunteering to play the role of someone who has bid on a Business Mail Entry position and who genuinely desires to qualify for and work in that position. You will be required to spend two weeks away from home at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) in Norman, Oklahoma. You must agree to participate in the entire process as outlined below:

At Your Local Office
- View a job preview video
- Take a data entry test
- Take a basic math and reasoning test
- Attend a brief prerequisite course (self-study) on basic Business Mail Entry concepts
- Take a two-part test based on the content of the prerequisite course
    - A test administered via telephone assessing customer service skills
    - A computer-based test assessing the remainder of the course content

At the National Center for Employee Development
- Attend the Business Mail Academy, a two-week classroom / laboratory program
- Take a two-part qualifying exam which consists of:
    - A paper-and-pencil knowledge test
    - A hands-on performance test

Back at Your Local Office
Report to the Business Mail Entry Unit for one week (five days) during which:
- You will perform your assigned tasks to the best of your ability
- You will assess your own performance
- A supervisor or clerk will also assess your performance

DATES

- Your local office will conduct the initial testing and the prerequisite course in June or July.
- You will attend the Business Mail Academy at NCED
    - either August 23 thru September 3
    - or September 13 through September 24.
    - You will not have a choice. You must be available to attend either offering.
- You will report to your local Business Mail Entry Unit on the Monday following your last day of attendance at the Academy.

TRAVEL, LODGING, AND OTHER COSTS

Employee Development at Headquarters is covering all costs associated with this pilot study, including travel, lodging, per diem, and workhours. Craft workers who volunteer will be paid at the EAS-15 pay rate (exempt) during the time they are participating in this project. Travel and per diem costs as well as work hours will be charged to finance number 67-0577. The LDC code will be 86.

Flight Arrangements
Your local office will be expected to make your flight arrangements. They should arrange for you to fly to Oklahoma City on the day before your program begins. Since your program begins at 8:00 AM on a Monday morning, you will be required to travel on the previous Sunday. You should plan your return flight for no earlier than 2:00 PM on the last day of your program, which is a Friday. You will not be able to stay at NCED on that Friday night.

Lodging, Meals, Per Diem
Your hotel room at NCED will be booked for you and paid for by Employee Development. The per diem rate for Norman, Oklahoma is $30 per day. During your two-week stay at NCED, three meals daily will be provided for you Monday through Friday. Breakfast is $4.00, lunch is $6.00, and dinner is $13.00, totaling $23.00 per day. This total will be subtracted from your $30.00 per diem. Therefore, Monday through Friday you will receive $7.00 a day per diem. You will receive the full per diem of $30 on Saturday and Sunday because on those days all meals are offered on a cash basis only.

POINTS YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND
IF YOU SHOULD DECIDE TO VOLUNTEER

- When you report back to your local Business Mail Entry Unit after attending the Business Mail Academy, you may be assigned work hours during that week which are different from your normal work hours.
- During your attendance at the Business Mail Academy, there may be days when you are expected to work slightly longer than 8 hours. The reason for this is that the instructors will be learning how best to instruct the course. They will be experimenting and sometimes getting feedback from you. This is what a pilot study is all about.

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS MAIL ENTRY

Scheduling Information

The Business Mail Entry pilot project involves several steps requiring the assistance and partnership of both the Prerequisite Administrator, BME and local HR.

The Prerequisite Administrator is to coordinate all steps in the process. An NTAC certified examiner is required for all testing. The examination/prerequisite training sequence is as follows:

PROCESS ONE	PROCESS TWO
Bellmawr, NJ **Greensboro, NC** **Albany, NY** **Fort Worth, TX**	**Brooklyn, NY** **Nashville, TN** **Detroit, MI** **Des Moines, IA**
1. JOB PREVIEW VIDEO	1. JOB PREVIEW VIDEO
2. TEST 714	2. TEST 714
3. BASIC SKILLS TEST	3. PREREQUISITE COURSE
4. PREREQUISITE COURSE	4. BASIC SKILLS TEST
5. KNOWLEDGE TEST	5. KNOWLEDGE TEST
6. TELEPHONE ASSESSMENT	6. TELEPHONE ASSESSMENT
7. BME BASICS	7. BME BASICS
8. ON-THE-JOB WEEK	8. ON-THE-JOB WEEK

This is the order we will be presenting the tests

Exam 714

The Prerequisite Administrator is to contact local HR to arrange testing. Exam 714 is a routinely used data entry test with a process in place. The low standard is to be used.

Basic Skills Test

The Basic Skills Test is for the purposes of this pilot only (no exam number). Copies of this exam and DFC have been provided to Area HR for dissemination to the pilot districts.

Knowledge Test

The end of prerequisite training Knowledge Test (currently no exam number) is to measuring prerequisite learning. Copies of this exam and DFC have been provided to Area HR for dissemination to the pilot districts.

Telephone Assessment

The Prerequisite Administrator will work directly with local HR to make arrangements for the individualized telephone assessment. Scheduling the telephone assessment will require:

1) The Prerequisite Administrator obtains a quiet location equipped with a desk and phone for each volunteer.
2) The Prerequisite Administrator must then contact the local HR to verify NTAC examiner availability for telephone assessment.
3) Once NTAC examiner availability is established, the Prerequisite Administrator will call ASI to schedule the time slot for the telephone assessment (see scheduling information section below).
4) The Prerequisite Administrator will inform both the volunteer and local HR of the date, time, and location of the telephone assessment.
5) Local HR will ensure the NTAC examiner receives the schedule for administering the telephone assessments and telephone assessment materials. The NTAC examiner will administer the telephone assessment.

Telephone Assessment Scheduling:

Assessment Solutions, Inc (ASI), the consulting company assisting us with this pilot effort, has provided the following information on the scheduling process:

A slot is a reservation for an assessment at a specific time. Slots are set up by ASI to accommodate client requests to schedule telephone assessments. Slots can be scheduled either on the hour or the half-hour. For the purpose of the pilot, scheduling of assessments is to be done by the Prerequisite Administrator. NTAC examiner availability must be verified with local HR prior to scheduling the slots.

Scheduling of slots can be done between 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM (Eastern time) Monday through Friday. The Scheduling Coordinators, Michael Riordan and Brian Dendy will be your scheduling contacts at ASI. They may be reached at 1-888-3ASI-TES. In order to meet your assessment needs, scheduling well in advance is highly recommended. If you need special scheduling arrangements (for example weekend or evening slots), please contact Michelle Schulman at (516) 271-1777 extension 209.

Please call ASI as soon as you have the information on the training session schedule and examiner's availability. Please be prepared to supply the ASI operator with the name and social security number of the volunteer(s) you are scheduling. ASI will fax you a confirmation sheet with slot numbers for each date and time scheduled.

CANCELLATIONS:

If a slot is canceled before 3 PM (Eastern time) 2 business days before the assessment there will be no charge incurred. If a slot is canceled after 3 PM (Eastern time) 2 business days before the assessment though 3 PM (Eastern time) 1 business day before, there will be a "cancellation" fee of 25% of the assessment incurred. If a slot is canceled after 3 PM (Eastern time) 1 business day before an assessment through the start time of the assessment, or if the candidate scheduled does not participate in the assessment, there will be a "No Show" fee of 50% of the assessment incurred.

SPECIAL REQUESTS:
If you are unable to reserve a slot for an assessment 2 business days in advance, you may call ASI to see if a special accommodation can be made of short notice. ASI will make every effort to accommodate your request.