Folded Self Mailers

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Futurology
Reshaping the communication landscape.

Why Revise Standards?

Letter mail mix shifting from envelopes

- Booklets and folded self-mailer volume growing
- Creativity of elements / designs outpacing DMM
- Appeals to the PCSC for exceptions are increasing

Operational implications

- Do not behave like envelopes in automation
- Damage and jam rates higher, thru-put is lower
- Diversion to flat sorters or manual operation is costly

Balance between innovation & machinability

- Mailers want options for design creativity and clear standards

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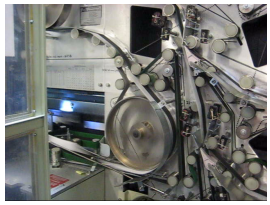
On the operational side

- Letters automate at a rate of 10 pieces per second
- Folded self-mailers do not behave the same as an enveloped letter
  - Equipment jams due to folds, causing damaged mail pieces
  - Lower processing thru-put



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Examples of the damages

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Folded Self-Mailer Definition

A folded self-mailer is formed of panels that are created when one or more unbound sheets of paper are folded together and sealed to make a letter-size mailpiece.

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New Regulations

- Dimension
  - Height: 6" maximum
  - Length: 10.5" maximum
- Weight & Thickness
  - Up to 3 ounce maximum for weight and ¼" for thickness
- Paper Basis Weight
  - Based on book-grade (text, Offset) paper unless otherwise specified
    - Can also vary depending on the total weight of the piece or any additional elements that are incorporated into the design
  - Minimum 70 lb. for 1 oz. mailpiece; 80 lb. over 1 oz up to 3 oz
- **Optional elements added**
  - Basis weight ranges from 80 lb to 120 lb
  - Basis weight increases when piece weight is over 1 ounce
- **Newsprint paper allowed: quarter-fold design only**
  - 55 lb. minimum paper and 3 tabs required
- Closure method
  - Tabs; 2 or 3 based on mailpiece design (non-perforated)
  - Continuous glue line or elongated glue lines, glue spots
  - Place along Top or on Lead & Trail
    - Within 1 inch from edge

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New Regulations, cont.

- Fold style / orientation
  - Horizontal or vertical
- Flap is final fold used in closure of mailpiece
  - External flap final fold down from top on non-address side or from lead to trail edge
  - Die-cut shape allowed with sufficient seal to panel
- Panel is formed when sheet(s) of paper are folded
  - Panel is final fold, bottom up to top on non-address side
  - Number of host piece panels determined by design
  - Max number of panels = 12
- Address placement
  - When folded self-mailers are produced on uncoated paper printing addresses in a mid-to-left position is preferred
  - Address placement on folded self mailers must be on the center panel
- Quarter-folded self-mailers
  - Made of a minimum of 100 pound book grade paper may have as few as 4 panels
  - Made of 55 pound or greater newsprint must have at least 8 panels and may contain up to 24 panels

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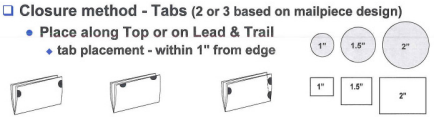
Closure Methods

❑ **Closure method - Glue** (adhesive or cohesive)

Continuous Glue Line	Glue Spots	Elongated Glue Lines
1/8" W to within 1/4" of each edge	3/8" radius 3- 4 spots based on mailpiece design	1/8" W x 1/2" L or 1/4" W x 1/2" L or 1/8" W x 1" L 3- 4 lines based on mailpiece design / wgt

❑ **Closure method - Tabs** (2 or 3 based on mailpiece design)

- Place along Top or on Lead & Trail
  - tab placement - within 1" from edge



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Basic Design Elements

❑ **Fold style / orientation**

- Horizontal - final fold at bottom
  - panel folded up to top on non-address side
  - external flap folded down from top on non-address side

- Vertical - final fold on lead edge to non-address side

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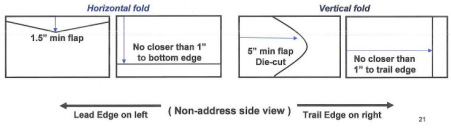
Basic Design Elements

❑ **Flap -** used for closure of mailpiece

- Horizontal folded mailpiece, external flap is final fold
- Vertical folded mailpiece, external flap must be the final fold
- Die-cut shape external flaps allowed
  - glue line sealed along the contour of the edge recommended
  - glue spots or elongated glue lines sufficient to seal flap to panel



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Basic Design Elements

❑ **Panels - created when a sheet(s) of paper are folded**

- Each folded section of a sheet is a separate panel
- Equal - nearly equal size; varied fold styles with panels of differing sizes, short panels covered by full-size panel(s)
- Internal partial panels count toward # panels allowed
- Final fold panel creates non-address side of mailpiece by folding from bottom to top, or lead to trail edge

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Basic Design Elements

❑ **Panels - formed when a sheet(s) of paper are folded**

2 Panels	4 Panels	3 Panels
Single sheet of paper folded once in half (Bi-fold)	Two nested sheets folded once in half One sheet folded three times One sheet quarter-folded perpendicular	Single sheet of paper folded twice (Tri-fold)

.....up to 12 panels for most designs

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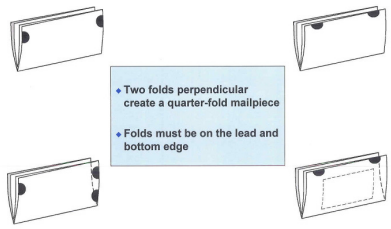
Quarter-Fold Design



- Two folds perpendicular create a quarter-fold mailpiece
- Folds must be on the lead and bottom edge

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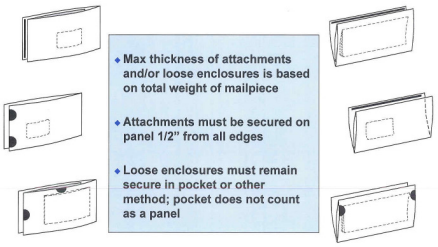
Interior Attachment or Loose Enclosures



- Max thickness of attachments and/or loose enclosures is based on total weight of mailpiece
- Attachments must be secured on panel 1/2" from all edges
- Loose enclosures must remain secure in pocket or other method; pocket does not count as a panel

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Attachments

- **Internal attachments (must be adhered to panel)**
  - Multiple attachments must be nearly uniform in thickness
  - When multiple attachments are adhered on separate panels, combined thickness is applied to maximum thickness allowed if those attachments align stacked.

  - Where multiple attachments are placed adjacent across length, thicker attachment applies to maximum allowed

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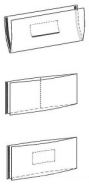
Perforations on Non-Address Side



Pop-Open Panel* - three sides perforated

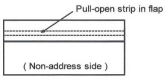
Pull-Open Vertical Strip

Pull-Open Horizontal Strip in Flap

Pop-Out Panel* - full perimeter perforation

*Rectangle, square, circle, oval shape

Size, placement, amount, and cut-to-tie ratio are based on design element used



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Die-Cutout on Cover

- Address window or up to two die-cut holes
- Die-cut holes can be address or non-address side panel
- Circular or rectangular* shaped
  - up to ¼" radius corners
- Size, placement will be limited
- No "through-holes" allowed

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Old vs. New Standards Applied

- Top picture show pieces using current regulations, 60 lb. paper with 1 tab at top center
- Bottom picture shows pieces using new regulations, 70 lb. paper with 2 tabs at top edges

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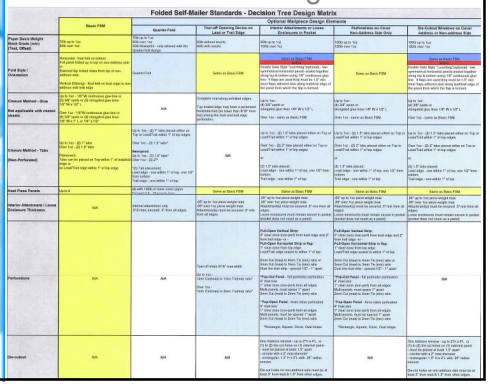
Decision Tree Design Matrix



Folded Self-Mailer Standards - Decision Tree Design Matrix

	Basic FSM	Optional Mailpiece Design Elements				
		Quarter-Fold	Tear-Off Scoring Device on Lead or Tail Edge	Interior Attachments or Loose Enclosure in Pocket	Perforations on Outer Non-Address Side Only	Die-Cutting/ Windows on Outer Address or Non-Address Side
Paper Stock (Weight and Caliper) (Text, Offset)	70lb up to 1oz 80lb over 1oz	70lb up to 1oz 80lb over 1oz - only allowed with dry Postmarked design		80lb up to 1oz 100lb over 1oz	100lb up to 1oz 120lb over 1oz	100lb up to 1oz 120lb over 1oz
Fold Style / Orientation	Perpendicular - Short fold on bottom Full panel folded up to top no non-address side Optional flap folded down from top of non-address side. Vertical (Oblong) - fold fold on both edges to non-address side fold edge	Quarter-Fold	Same as Basic FSM	Same as Basic FSM Double Gate Style "Leveling Options) - two vertical folds parallel to each other, one along top & bottom using 1/8" continuous glue line or 3/8" spots or 25 straight glue lines, other flaps adhered also along bottom edge of the panel from which the flap is formed.	Same as Basic FSM	Same as Basic FSM Double Gate Style "Leveling Options) - two vertical folds parallel to each other, one along top & bottom using 1/8" continuous glue line or 3/8" spots or 25 straight glue lines, other flaps adhered also along bottom edge of the panel from which the flap is formed.
Closure Method - Glue Not applicable with reseal panels	Up to 1oz - 50" 3/8 continuous glue line or 25 3/8" spots or 25 straight glue lines 1/8" W x 1/2" L Over 1oz - 1.5"/8 continuous glue line or 25 3/8" spots or 25 straight glue lines 1/8" W x 1" L or 1/4" x 1/2"	N/A	Complete matching unfolded edges Top matching edge may have a perforated horizontal line (no lower than 6.5" from bottom) along the front and back edge perforation.	Up to 1oz 25 3/8" spots or elongated glue lines 1/8" W x 1/2" L Over 1oz - same as Basic FSM	Up to 1oz 25 3/8" spots or elongated glue lines 1/8" W x 1/2" L Over 1oz - same as Basic FSM	Up to 1oz 25 3/8" spots or elongated glue lines 1/8" W x 1/2" L Over 1oz - same as Basic FSM
Closure Method - Tabs (Non-Perforated)	Up to 1oz - (2) 1" tabs Over 1oz - (2) 1.5" tabs Placement: Glue can be placed on Top within 1" of leading edge Glue can be placed on Tail within 1" of trailing edge (2) 1 tab oriented Tab edge - one within 1" of top, one 1/2" from edge Tab edge - one within 1" of top	N/A	N/A	Up to 1oz - (2) 1.5" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges Over 1oz - (2) 2" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges or (4) 1.5" tabs placed Tab edge - one within 1" of top, one 1/2" from edge Tail edge - one within 1" of top	Up to 1oz - (2) 1.5" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges Over 1oz - (2) 2" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges or (4) 1.5" tabs placed Tab edge - one within 1" of top, one 1/2" from edge Tail edge - one within 1" of top	Up to 1oz - (2) 1.5" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges Over 1oz - (2) 2" tabs placed either on Top or Lead/Trail within 1" of top edges or (4) 1.5" tabs placed Tab edge - one within 1" of top, one 1/2" from edge Tail edge - one within 1" of top
Inset Face Panels	Same as Basic FSM	N/A	Same as Basic FSM	Same as Basic FSM	Same as Basic FSM	Same as Basic FSM
Interior Attachment / Loose Enclosure Thickness	N/A	Interior attachment only #10 Envelope, Invitation, 8" Slim all edges	.02" up to 1oz piece weight max .03" over 1oz piece weight max Attachment(s) must be secured .3" min from all edges Loose enclosures must remain secure in pocket when mail piece is turned over	.02" up to 1oz piece weight max .03" over 1oz piece weight max Attachment(s) must be secured .3" min from all edges Loose enclosures must remain secure in pocket when mail piece is turned over	.02" up to 1oz piece weight max .03" over 1oz piece weight max Attachment(s) must be secured .3" min from all edges Loose enclosures must remain secure in pocket when mail piece is turned over	.02" up to 1oz piece weight max .03" over 1oz piece weight max Attachment(s) must be secured .3" min from all edges Loose enclosures must remain secure in pocket when mail piece is turned over
Perforations	N/A	N/A	Front Full edge 9/16" max width Slot 1oz: Slot 1oz+: With Exit(max) in Slot: 7 w/max slot	Pull-Open Vertical Strip: Pull-Open Horizontal Strip in Flap: Flap-Side Panel - full perimeter perforation: Flap-Top Panel - three sides perforated	Pull-Open Vertical Strip: Pull-Open Horizontal Strip in Flap: Flap-Side Panel - full perimeter perforation: Flap-Top Panel - three sides perforated	N/A
Die-cutted	N/A	N/A	N/A	Only Address window - up to 2"h x 4"l, .x", (1) 1/2 (0) min from top or (1) desired panel - must be placed at least 1.5" apart Only Non-Address window - up to 2"h x 4"l, .x", rectangular, 1.5" H x 3", with .25" radius corners Die-cut holes on non-address side must be at least 6" from each 1.5" from other edges.	N/A	Only Address window - up to 2"h x 4"l, .x", (1) 1/2 (0) min from top or (1) desired panel - must be placed at least 1.5" apart Only Non-Address window - up to 2"h x 4"l, .x", rectangular, 1.5" H x 3", with .25" radius corners Die-cut holes on non-address side must be at least 6" from each 1.5" from other edges.

Aspect Ratio Formula

- To calculate aspect ratio use the final finished size of the mail piece.
- Length divided by height
- Answer must be between 1.3 and 2.5
  - No rounding up or rounding down. Has to be exact, for instance, 1.297 does not qualify neither does 2.51

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Additional Information

https://ribbs.usps.gov

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Mail Piece Design Questions?

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