



State Mail Services: An Introduction

**1910 Darbytown Road
Richmond VA 23231**

Mail Stop Code: 194-16

DGS

**DEPARTMENT OF
GENERAL SERVICES**

Serving Government. Serving Virginians.

What is SMS

- State Mail Services (SMS) is a unit of the Department of General Services that provides consolidated mail operations for the state government in Richmond, Virginia.
- The primary role of SMS is to serve as a consultant to state agencies on everything related to mail.
- SMS offers a one stop approach to meet all postal and shipping needs including most services that are supplied by the US Postal Service and can provide agencies with cost saving opportunities and increased security.



How SMS Helps You Save Money

- The following services can help your agency save money on postage:
 - Presort
 - Using a 6x9 envelope instead of a flat
 - Interagency mail
 - Postcards
 - Talking to SMS before starting a big mailing
- Postage adds up quickly and by using any or all of these services you can cut your costs.



Services Offered

- SMS offers many of the same services as the USPS. Some of the services offered:
 - SMS Mail Services Guide
 - Mail Stops
 - Collection Boxes
 - Package Tracking
 - Inter-Agency Mail
 - Addressing for Success
 - Postage Metering Service
 - USPS Services
 - Express Mail & Packages
 - Mail Consultation/Training
 - SMS Invoices
 - Security
 - Reduce Junk Mail
- See online or the guide for more details.



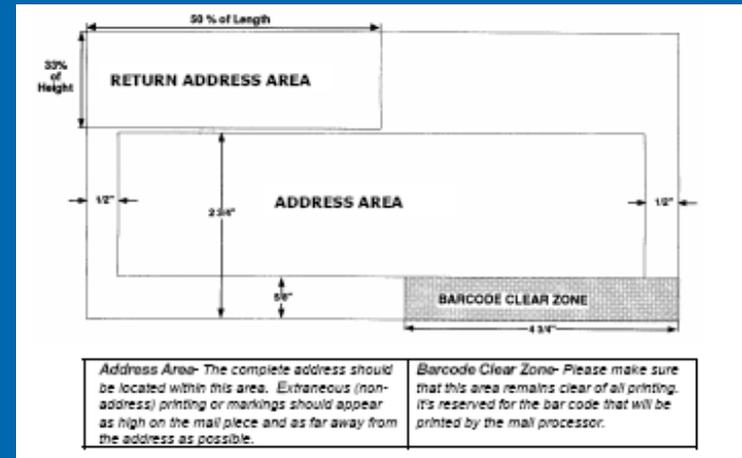
Security

- Mail security has become a high profile issue since the anthrax scare in 2001.
- The Secure Virginia Panel's 2002 Report identified mail security as a major goal and the Governor's 2004 Executive Directive identified efficiency and safety as two major objectives. The 2006 Virginia Acts of Assembly charged DGS State Mail Services with the task of enhancing and implementing a more uniformed mail security program within state government.
- SMS utilizes modern mail security processes and equipment to enhance mail security and to better protect state employees and state property. All mail routed through the SMS mail center, including inter-agency mail, is scanned by X-ray machines.
- SMS staff will continue to receive security training to stay current with the latest mail security programs and trends. Please refer to the SMS Mail Security Guide for details on how to safely process mail.
- Please contact SMS if you have any questions regarding mail security.



Correct Addressing

- Address should NOT be handwritten.
- Address should be printed in all caps.



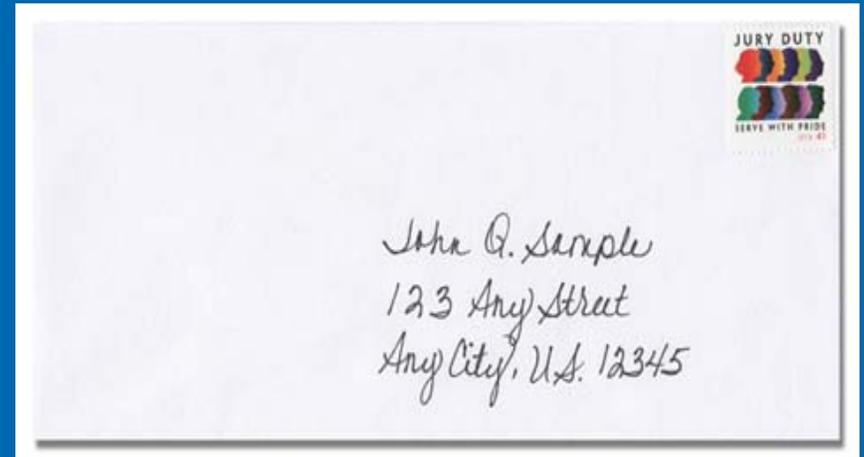
- Example of correct formatting:

- Line 1: Attention Line:
- Line 2: Department Name Line:
- Line 3: Firm Name Line:
- Line 4: Street Address Line:
- Line 5: Delivery Address Line:
- Line 6: City, State & Zip Code + 4:

MR JOHN DOE
OFFICE OF STATE SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMONWEALTH SERVICES
2022 COMMONWEALTH ST
PO BOX 528
RICHMOND VA 23219-3424

- Lines 3, 5 & 6 are mandatory lines on all addresses to comply with USPS automation formats
Lines 1, 2, & 4 are optional lines; they may be used if needed

Why does correct addressing matter?



- Speeds up processing.
- Makes the address easier to read.
- The full list of recommended addressing standards can be found online or in the guide.

Presort Service



- When mail is presorted a postal bar code is applied to the mail piece. It is co-mingled with other agencies' mail to meet USPS minimum volume requirements and sorted in zip code order. This qualifies the mail piece for reduced postage.



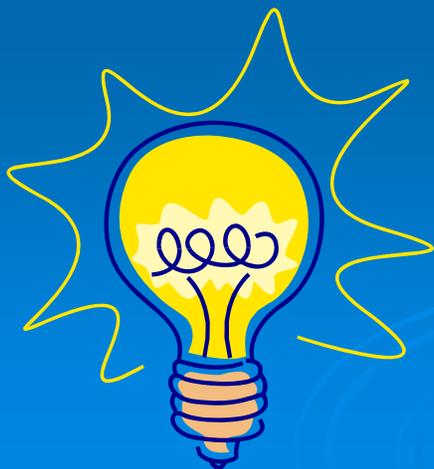
What envelope to choose

- Standard, #10
 - Holds about ## sheets of paper tri-folded Cost = \$0.44
- 6 x 9
 - Holds about ## sheets of paper folded in half Cost = \$0.44
- Flat
 - Holds up to ## sheets of paper flat Cost = \$0.88



Go the Extra Ounce

- With no increase in the cost of each additional ounce, you can offset rising costs by putting more into each and every communication.
 - You can still send each additional ounce of First-Class Mail® at the same low cost, including letters, flats and parcels.



	May '08	May '09
Additional Ounce	\$0.17	\$0.17
1 ounce Letter	\$0.42	\$0.44
2 ounce letter	\$0.59	\$0.61
3 ounce letter	\$0.76	\$0.78
3.5 ounce letter	\$0.93	\$0.95

Flats to Folded

- By converting flats into letter-size mail, you can take advantage of lower postal rates.
 - By conforming to letter-size dimensions, you can save \$0.44 on every piece.

- First-Class Flats – Single Piece Rates

1 ounce Flat	\$0.88
2 ounce Flat	\$1.05
3 ounce Flat	\$1.22
Additional ounce	\$0.17



- By having a good understanding of what constitutes a letter vs. a flat, you can take steps to create mail pieces that are easier for the post office to process.
 - **Design mail pieces to meet letter-size dimensional requirements.**
 - **Convert flat mail to letter-size mail (up to and including 3.5 ounces) with a single fold.**
 - **Repackage parcels as flats.**
- Making it Happen
 - The price change creates many opportunities for savings through proper mail piece planning.



MAIL THAT'S MACHINE-READY

- The “nonmachinable surcharge” – which is assessed when First-Class Mail® letters are designed in ways that make it difficult to process – adds 20 cents to each piece.
- By knowing the guidelines, you can design mail pieces to meet letter-size dimensional requirements and avoid nonmachinable characteristics.
- When you have an unusual mail piece, take a moment to determine whether it meets the machinable requirements. And if not, what you can do differently to meet the letter-requirements. Whoever is designing your mail pieces and marketing promotions should also be brought up to speed on these guidelines. Some mail creation tools which can help include:
 - Duplex printing.
 - Tabbers.



What is Nonmachinable?

- A letter-size piece is considered nonmachinable if it has one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Weighs more than 3.5 ounces
 - Has an aspect ratio (length divided by height) of less than 1.3 or more than 2.5
 - Measures more than 4.25 inches high or 6 inches long, and has a thickness of less than 0.007 inch (0.009 inch for commercial letters.)
 - Is rigid or contains odd-shaped contents
 - Is polybagged, polywrapped, or enclosed in any non-paper material
 - Includes clasps, strings, buttons, or similar closure devices
 - Is a self-mailer with a folded edge perpendicular to the address and is not folded and secured (e.g., tabbed)
 - Contains items such as pens, pencils, keys or coins that cause the thickness of the mail piece to be uneven.



Watch Your Weight

Avoid more costly flat-rate pricing by keeping your letter-size mail pieces to 3.5 ounces or less.

- As the USPS works to better align their rates with actual processing costs, they will charge flat-size prices (or even parcel prices) for letter-size mail pieces that exceed 3.5 ounces in weight.
- By carefully managing the make-up of your mail pieces, you can maximize impact while keeping your mail piece weight in letter-size range.
 - **Design mail pieces to meet letter-size dimensions. Use your weight wisely.**
 - To qualify as “letter-size”, your mailing doesn’t have to fit into a standard #10 envelope – but it does have to comply with USPS standards for letter-size mail. You have a lot of flexibility to create mailings that can stand out while staying within “letter size” specifications.
 - **Prioritize your messaging.**
 - If you’re still over the weight limit, take a good look at your mail piece contents.
 - **Duplex printing.**
 - Duplex or two-sided printing can enable you to reduce mail piece weight – and reduce paper costs as well. It’s environmentally friendly and commonly used in today’s cost-conscious world.



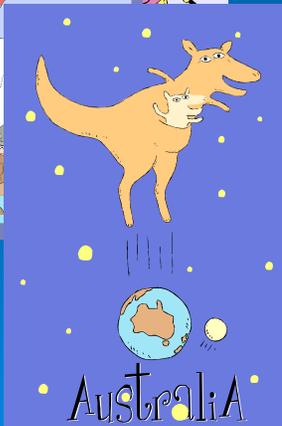
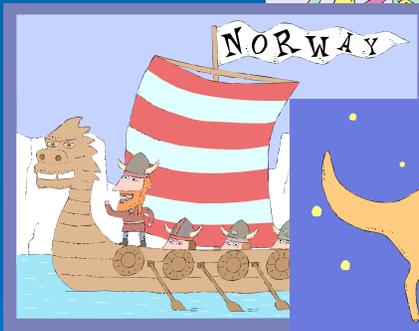
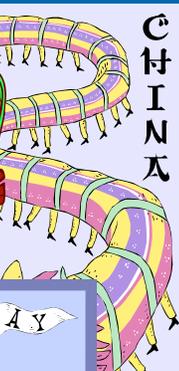
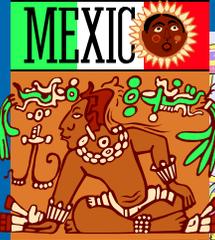
Communicate with Post Cards

Post Cards are highly targeted mailings that can keep you top-of-mind at lower costs. The cost to send postcards is still about 36% less expensive than a letter.

- **Augment your communication plan with postcards.**
 - Postcards are easy to produce and can be personalized for each customer. To qualify for postcard rates, however, your mail piece must conform to USPS requirements.
- **Increase communication frequency.**
 - Postcards are also a great way to connect with customers.
- **Meter or use a permit indicia.**
 - You can set your mailing machine to meter postcards at the lower postcard rates, the same as any other mail you send. If you are having postcards printed, however, you may also want to consider a permit imprint, which may take up less space.



Post Cards Continued



- Creating and mailing postcards is easy, if you have the right tools.
 - **Postcard Addressing:** With the right system, you can print addresses on each card and avoid the less-professional look of a label. Many solutions also offer you the opportunity to print personalized messages, so you can make each piece even more relevant. As a final touch, the automatic creation of a barcode can help speed delivery and lower postage costs, too.
 - **Postage Printing:** If you are printing postcards, you may want to consider getting a USPS permit, so you can pre-print your indicia directly onto your card. Otherwise, you can easily run your postcards through your postage meter – just be sure to set the postage amount to the lower rate.
- Keep in mind, the postage for a First-Class Mail® postcard would in most cases remain cost-effective even when compared to a Standard Mail® letter.

Meter Cards

- Meter cards are used to make sure each agency gets charged correctly for the postage they use.
- Only one card is needed for each bundle of mail.
 - Handwritten, typed, and international each need separate meter cards
- Metered mail cards can be found online and printed with or without barcodes.

State Mail Services (SMS) Metered Mail Card
(attach to each bundle of outgoing mail)

Mail Stop Code: <input type="text"/>	-	A five digit number assigned by SMS.
Agency Budget or Cost Code: <input type="text"/>		Internal tracking numbers agencies have submitted to SMS.

If Agency Budget or Cost Code is blank the postage will be charged to the agency's default account. Mail will not be accepted without a complete Mail Stop Code.

Sender's Name: _____ Number of Mail Pieces: _____

<p style="font-size: x-small;">If nothing is checked, SMS will meter the mail in the most economical manner. See the SMS Mail Services Guide for descriptions of each service.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> First Class <input type="checkbox"/> Priority Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Standard Bulk Mail <small>(Must meet USPS standards)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <small>(Must use proper label or envelope)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> International Mail <small>(Must use proper envelope)</small>	<p>Date: _____ Phone: _____</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail <small>(USPS Form 3800)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Delivery Confirmation Mail <small>(USPS Form 152)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Signature Confirmation Mail <small>(USPS Form 153)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt <small>(USPS Form 3811)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail <small>(USPS Form 3813-P)</small> Value of Contents: \$ _____
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Please contact SMS if you have any questions:
(804) 236-3592 • www.dgs.virginia.gov/SMS • StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov

State Mail Services (SMS) Metered Mail Card
Attach to each bundle of outgoing mail

Mail Stop: 194 - 03
Agency Budget or Cost Code: _____

Senders Name: J. Sample
Date: 6/30/2009
Phone: 555-6456
No of Mail Pieces: 12

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Class <input type="checkbox"/> Priority Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Standard/Bulk Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> International Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Delivery Confirmation Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Signature Confirmation Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail
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Value of Contents: **Not Specified**



194 03

Please contact SMS if you have any questions: (804) 236-3592 • <http://sms.dgs.virginia.gov> • StateMail@dgs.virginia.gov

Packages



- If you have a small or normal sized package that needs to be mailed it can be mailed with the regular mail.
- If there are a large number of packages being mailed or the package is large or heavy, contact SMS to make special arrangements for pickup.

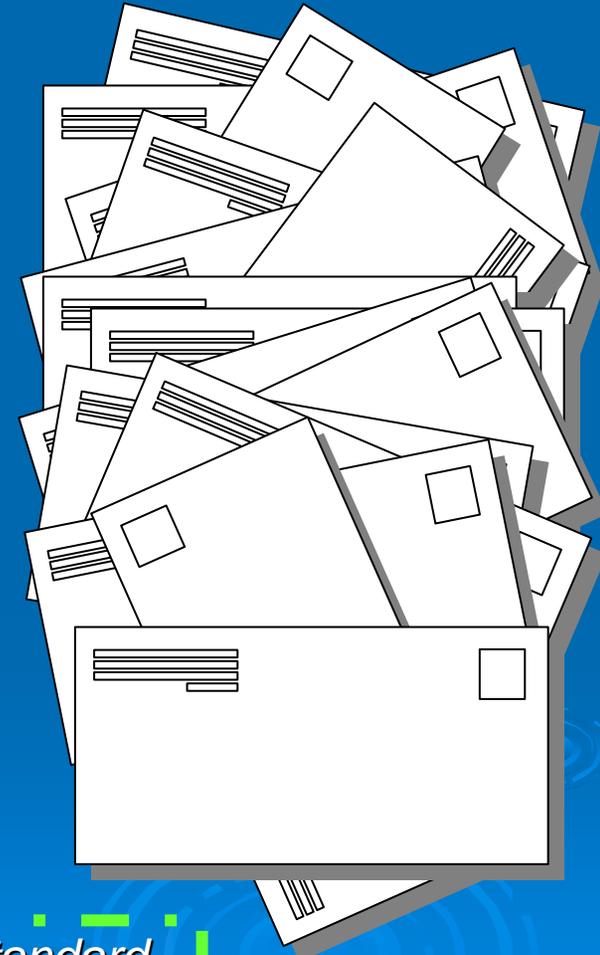
Other Mail Services

- Offered through the Virginia Industries for the Blind:
 - Folding
 - Envelope stuffing
 - Assembly and collating
 - Computer generated addressing
- Contact SMS if you are interested in utilizing these services.



Presort Standard (Bulk Mail)

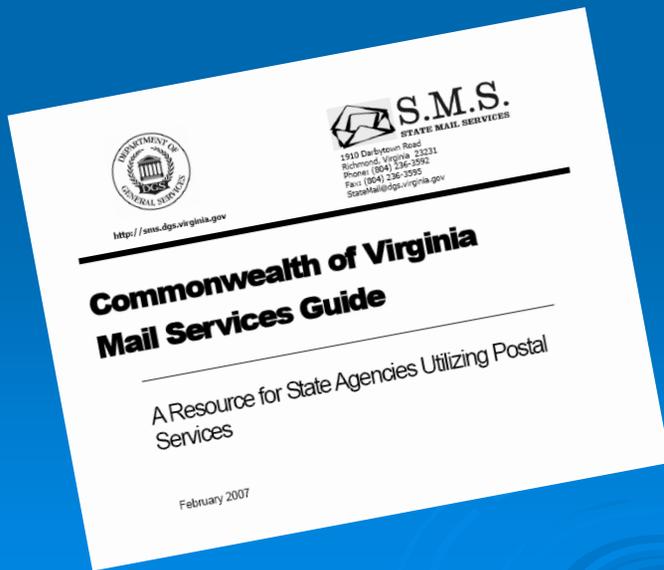
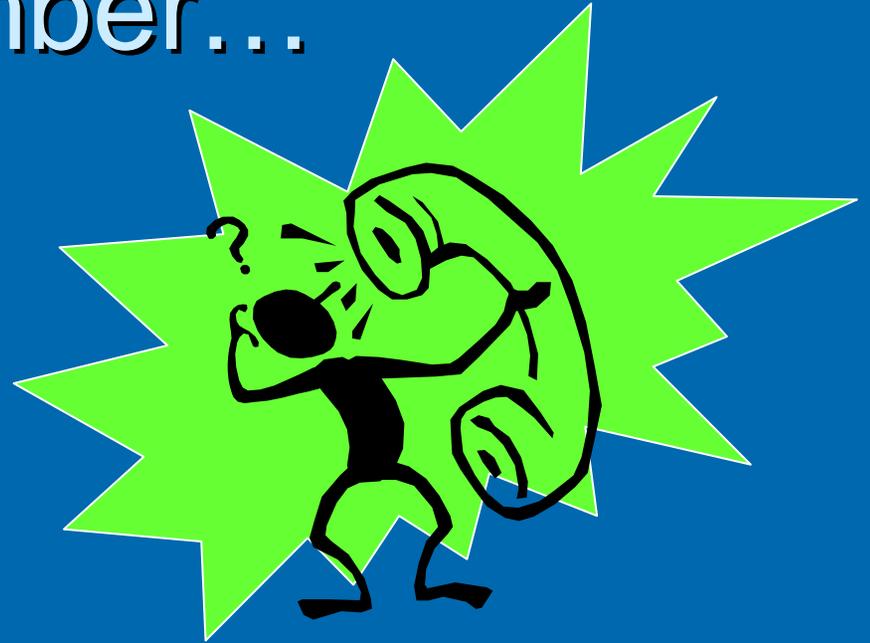
- This service is for bulk mailings.
 - Examples: advertising mail, catalogues, and newsletters that are not required to be mailed as first class
- Requirements
 - Standard mail must weigh less than 16 ounces.
 - A minimum of 200 identical pieces in size, weight, and contents is required.
- Standard mail has no promised delivery standards but it usually delivered within a week or two and regularly should take no more than 5 days within a radius of 500 miles.
- Postage costs for standard mailings are about one-third the cost of a first class mailing.
- Standard mail must be prepared according to specific USPS standards, including a permit number preprinted on the envelopes.



If you are interested in conducting a standard mailing contact SMS before you begin planning.

Remember...

- Don't be afraid to ask someone at SMS if you are not sure about how something should be done.



- The SMS Guide, found online, is another good resource to go to when you are trying to figure something out.

Contact SMS

State Mail Services encourages Commonwealth of Virginia agencies and employees to contact us with any questions relating to mail. SMS can help you develop postal solutions to meet your needs. Please send comments, suggestions, or requests.

**1910 Darbytown Road
Richmond VA 23231
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