

Guidelines to create OCR readable mail...

Introduction

Royal Mail increasingly uses automation to aid the mail sorting process. Mail addressed in the correct way can be automatically read by the Royal Mail **O**ptical **C**haracter **R**ecognition (OCR) machinery which speeds the sorting process.

This leaflet gives brief guidelines which should be followed when addressing mail using your Pitney Bowes system. Full details of the Royal Mail requirements for OCR may be found in the Technical Mailing Manual obtainable from Royal Mail.

Address Format

All addresses should include, in this order:

- Name of addressee
- Name of company (*where applicable*)
- Name of building (*not needed if it has a number*)
- Number of building and name of street or road
- Locality name (*where necessary*)
- Post town IN CAPITAL LETTERS
- County name (*where necessary*)
- Postcode IN CAPITAL LETTERS

All lines of the address should be justified left. The Postcode should form the last line of the address, but if for reasons of space it has to share a line, it **must always** be the **last** element of the **last line**. The Post Town, County and Postcode should **never** appear together on the same line. Please avoid commas and full stops where these are unnecessary.

No printed or other interfering information should appear at all to the right of or below the address, and an area of at least 15mm to the left of the address must also be clear.

Fonts

Most effective OCR is obtained if the address is printed in a non-proportional, evenly spaced font at 12 point size. Fonts similar to **Courier** read best. Other 'plain' fonts such as **Helvetica, Arial, Avante Garde, Avalon, Franklin Gothic** or **Frankfurt Gothic** perform reasonably well. If you have to use a proportional font, it will read more easily if it is given a spacing (kerning) of +0.75.

Return Addresses, Logos, etc.

Any non-address information printed on the front of the envelope must appear in the top left corner of the envelope.

It should not take any similar form to the address, as the OCR could mistake it for the mailing address and code it incorrectly.

Codemark Areas

There are two Codemark areas in which blue phosphor coding marks are printed. These occur first in the bottom right corner of the envelope, 14mm high and 115mm long, and second with the same dimensions but at a height of 60mm to 68mm from the bottom edge of the envelope.

Both these Codemark areas must remain free from any printed or address information.



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