

POSTAL SERVICE**39 CFR Part 111****POSTNET Barcode Discontinuation****AGENCY:** Postal Service™.**ACTION:** Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service will revise the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) throughout various sections to discontinue price eligibility based on the use of POSTNET™ barcodes on all types of mail.

DATES: *Effective date:* January 28, 2013.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bill Chatfield, 202–268–7278 or Jeff Freeman, 202–268–2922.**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

On March 2, 2012, the Postal Service published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** (77 FR 12764–12769) to discontinue price eligibility for POSTNET barcodes. For automation letters and flats and for Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM), an Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb™) will be required.

Summary of Comments and USPS Responses

The Postal Service received 27 comments from a variety of mailers and from several mailer associations. Some of the initial comments were critical of one proposed element to require a barcode clear zone on all letters. To maintain focus on the discontinuation of price eligibility based on the POSTNET barcode, USPS® quickly responded by deleting that element from the proposal. There were 11 comments specifically critical of the main proposal to discontinue POSTNET barcodes for automation letter and flat price eligibility. There were six comments specifically in agreement with the main proposal. One association strongly recommended that two IMbs be allowed on each piece, to facilitate processing by presort companies. We added language to specifically allow more than one barcode on automation letters under certain conditions. For flats, we also changed the proposed language to allow more than one barcode on each automation flat under certain circumstances, due to anticipated flats sortation software upgrades in early 2013. Other comments, and our responses, follow.

Comment: Mailers may be forced to make considerable investments in new printers; and some felt they will not be

able to and will be forced to stop mailing.

Response: Print technology has evolved over the past several years increasing in efficiency, and in many instances, lowering unit cost. Additionally, instead of replacing printers, existing models may be able to be upgraded with fonts that assist in maintaining speed while printing IMbs. The Postal Service RIBBS® Web site (ribbs.usps.gov) has a tool that enables fonts to be downloaded to assist in printing IMbs.

Comment: Allow the use of the POSTNET barcode for automation prices, but at higher prices than for the use of the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb).

Response: Since the POSTNET barcode is not capable of including information other than the routing code, we will not be including its use for any automation pricing as of January 2013.

Comment: There were problems for some mailers when they tried to convert to IMb and not enough USPS support to surmount problems.

Response: The staff of the district Business Mail Entry offices are available for customer assistance, RIBBS material and tools are being updated, and local Postal Customer Councils will be assisting customers. There will be designated support personnel at the district level to help with the transition.

Comment: There is no perceived benefit to converting to IMb for local mailers who are satisfied with their current level of service.

Response: Converting to IMb is an important first step on the way to full-service automation, which allows for free address correction as well as better mailpiece visibility. Increased mail visibility not only helps the mailers directly, but also helps them indirectly by allowing the Postal Service to fine tune its processes.

Comment: The USPS has provided plenty of time to convert to IMb. The industry as a whole will benefit by standardizing to the use of one barcode format.

Response: We appreciate the supportive comments.

Implementation

The Postal Service will discontinue price eligibility for the use of POSTNET barcodes and allow only IMbs for automation price eligibility purposes (including QBRM prices). The Postal Service understands that some mailers currently use POSTNET barcodes and we are committed to providing information to and working with individual mailers and software providers to ensure that the use of an

Intelligent Mail barcode is achievable for all mailing customers.

Change for Letters and Flats

For the past several years, both USPS and the mailing industry have used the IMb to gain information about letters and flats as they move from induction to delivery. As of January 27, 2013, the use of the IMb will be required for all automation letters, including Business Reply Mail® letters that qualify for Qualified Business Reply Mail prices, Permit Reply Mail letters, and automation flats.

Withdrawn Change for Letters Only

To maintain focus on the POSTNET barcode discontinuation, the Postal Service removed the proposal to require barcode clear zones on all automation letters and cards and all letters and cards claiming an automation carrier route letter price, and to require all machinable letters to have barcode clear zones. We will retain the current language for barcode clear zones.

Changes for Parcels

Currently, the POSTNET barcode is an available option to satisfy the parcel barcode requirement for Standard Mail® parcels. We will discontinue the eligible use of the POSTNET barcode on parcels, and disallow its use on parcels unless it is printed in the address block. EVS® parcels would not be allowed to bear POSTNET barcodes in any location.

The Postal Service adopts the following changes to *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), which is incorporated by reference in the Code of Federal Regulations. See 39 CFR 111.1.

List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 111

Administrative practice and procedure, Postal Service.

Accordingly, 39 CFR Part 111 is amended as follows:

PART 111—[AMENDED]

■ 1. The authority citation for 39 CFR Part 111 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 13 U.S.C 301–307; 18 U.S.C. 1692–1737; 39 U.S.C. 101, 401, 403, 404, 414, 416, 3001–3011, 3201–3219, 3403–3406, 3621, 3622, 3626, 3632, 3633, and 5001.

■ 2. Revise the following sections of *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM), as follows:

Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)

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200 Commercial Letters and Cards**201 Physical Standards**

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3.0 Physical Standards for Machinable and Automation Letters and Cards

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3.17 Enclosed Reply Cards and Envelopes**3.17.1 Basic Standard**

[Revise the text of 3.17.1 as follows:]

Mailers may enclose reply cards or envelopes, addressed for return to a domestic delivery address, within automation mailings subject to provisions in 3.0 for enclosures. See 505.1.0 for Business Reply Mail (BRM) standards, 604.4.5.2 for postage evidencing reply mail (also known as Metered Reply Mail or MRM) standards, and 3.17.2 regarding Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM).

[Revise the title and text of 3.17.2 as follows:]

3.17.2 Courtesy Reply Mail

Courtesy reply mail (CRM) is reply mail other than BRM or MRM enclosed in other mail, with or without prepayment of postage, for return to the address on the reply piece. If postage is required, the customer returning the piece affixes the applicable First-Class Mail postage. Each piece must meet the physical standards in 1.0 or 2.0.

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202 Elements on the Face of a Mailpiece

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3.0 Placement and Content of Mail Markings

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3.5 Exceptions to Markings

Exceptions are as follows:

[Revise the first sentence in item 3.5a as follows:]

a. Automation letters. Automation letters do not require an "AUTO" marking if they bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code in the address block or on an insert visible through a window. * * *

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5.0 Barcode Placement**5.1 Barcode Clear Zone**

[Add a new first sentence and revise the second sentence of 5.1 as follows:]

Each reference to letter or letter-size piece in 5.0 includes both letters and postcards. Each letter-size piece in an automation price or an Enhanced

Carrier Route mailing at automation letter prices must have a barcode clear zone unless the piece bears an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code (see 708.4.3) in the address block. * * *

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5.2 General Barcode Placement for Letters

[Revise the first sentence of 5.2, and add a new second sentence, as follows:]

Each automation price letter and each letter claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route automation saturation or high density letter prices must bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a correct delivery point routing code. A nonautomation letter may bear an Intelligent Mail barcode or a POSTNET barcode, under 708.4.0. * * *

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[Revise the title and the first two sentences of 5.4 as follows:]

5.4 Additional Barcode Permissibility

An automation letter or a letter claimed at Enhanced Carrier Route saturation or high density automation letter prices may not bear a POSTNET barcode or a 5-digit or ZIP+4 Intelligent Mail barcode in the lower right corner (barcode clear zone). The piece may bear a POSTNET barcode or an additional Intelligent Mail barcode in the address block only if a qualifying Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code appears in the lower right corner.

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[Delete current 5.6, DPBC Numeric Equivalent, in its entirety, and renumber current 5.7 through 5.11 as new 5.6 through 5.10.]

5.6 Barcode in Address Block

When the barcode is included as part of the address block:

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[Revise renumbered items 5.6c through 5.6e as follows:]

c. The minimum clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and any information line above or below it within the address block must be at least 0.028 inch. The separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 0.625 (5/8) inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any adjacent printing must be at least 0.125 (1/8) inch.

d. If a window envelope is used, the clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing or window edge must be at least 0.125 (1/8) inch. The clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and the top and

bottom window edges must be at least 0.028 inch. These clearances must be maintained during the insert's range of movement in the envelope. Address block windows on heavy letter mail must be covered. Covers for address block windows are subject to 5.10.

e. If an address label is used, a clear space of at least 0.125 (1/8) inch must be left between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label. The clearance between the Intelligent Mail barcode and the top and bottom edges of the address label must be at least 0.028 inch.

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[Revise the title and introductory text of renumbered 5.7 as follows:]

5.7 Barcode on Insert in Barcode Window

If the barcode is printed on an insert to appear through a barcode window in the lower right corner of an envelope:

[Revise renumbered item 5.7a as follows:]

a. The envelope and window must meet the physical standards in 5.9 through 5.10.

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[Revise renumbered item 5.7c as follows:]

c. When the insert showing through the window is moved to any of its limits inside the envelope, the entire barcode must remain within the barcode clear zone. In addition, a clear space must be maintained that is at least 0.125 (1/8) inch between the barcode and the left and right edges of the window, at least 0.1875 (3/16) inch between the barcode and the bottom edge of the mailpiece, and at least 0.028 inch between the barcode and the top edge of the window.

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220 Priority Mail**223 Prices and Eligibility**

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3.0 Basic Standards for Priority Mail

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3.2 Additional Standards for Critical Mail Letters

* * * Critical Mail letters also must:

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[Revise item 3.2b as follows:]

b. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets address quality standards in 233.5.5 and 708.3.0.

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230 First-Class Mail**233 Prices and Eligibility**

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4.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Nonautomation First-Class Mail Letters

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4.2 Barcodes

[Revise the text of 4.2 as follows:]
Any Intelligent Mail barcode on a mailpiece in nonautomation First-Class Mail mailings must be correct for the delivery address and meet the standards in 202.5.0, 708.3.0, and 708.4.0.

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5.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Automation First-Class Mail Letters**5.1 Basic Standards for Automation First-Class Mail Letters**

All pieces in a First-Class Mail automation mailing must:

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[Revise item 5.1e as follows:]
e. Bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 202.5.0 and 708.4.0.

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5.5 Address Standards for Barcoded Pieces

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[Revise the title and text of 5.5.3 as follows:]

5.5.3 Numeric Delivery Point Routing Code

The numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code is formed by adding two digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

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[Delete 5.6, Reply Cards and Envelopes Enclosed in Automation Price First-Class Mail, in its entirety.]

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240 Standard Mail**243 Prices and Eligibility**

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3.0 Basic Standards for Standard Mail Letters

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3.3 Additional Basic Standards for Standard Mail

Each Standard Mail mailing is subject to these general standards:

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[Revise item 3.3i as follows:]
i. Any Intelligent Mail barcode on a mailpiece must be correct for the

delivery address and meet the standards in 202.5.0, 708.3.0, and 708.4.0.

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6.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail Letters**6.1 General Enhanced Carrier Route Standards**

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6.1.2 Basic Eligibility Standards

All pieces in an Enhanced Carrier Route or Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail mailing must:

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[Revise the introductory text of item 6.1.2d as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these address quality standards:

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[Revise item 6.1.2g as follows:]

g. Meet the requirements for automation compatibility in 201.3.0 and bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 202.5.0 and 708.4.0, except as provided in 6.1.2h. Pieces prepared with a simplified address format are exempt from the automation-compatibility and barcode requirements. Letters entered under the full-service Intelligent Mail automation option also must meet the standards in 705.24.0.

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6.4 High Density Enhanced Carrier Route Standards

[Revise the title and text of 6.4.1 as follows:]

6.4.1 Additional Eligibility Standards for High Density Prices

In addition to the eligibility standards in 6.1, high density letter-size mailpieces must be in a full carrier route tray or in a carrier route bundle of 10 or more pieces placed in a 5-digit (or 3-digit) carrier routes tray. Except for pieces with a simplified address, pieces that are not automation-compatible or not barcoded with an Intelligent Mail barcode under 202.5.0 are mailable only at the nonautomation high density letter prices.

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6.5 Saturation ECR Standards

[Revise the title and text of 6.5.1 as follows:]

6.5.1 Additional Eligibility Standards for Saturation Prices

In addition to the eligibility standards in 6.1, saturation letter-size mailpieces must be in a full carrier route tray or in a carrier route bundle of 10 or more pieces placed in a 5-digit (or 3-digit) carrier routes tray. Except for pieces with a simplified address, pieces that are not automation-compatible or not barcoded with an Intelligent Mail barcode under 202.5.0 are mailable only at nonautomation saturation letter prices.

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7.0 Eligibility Standards for Automation Standard Mail**7.1 Basic Eligibility Standards for Automation Standard Mail**

All pieces in a Regular Standard Mail or Nonprofit Standard Mail automation mailing must:

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[Revise the introductory text of item 7.1d as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these address quality standards:

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[Revise item 7.1e as follows:]
e. Bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 202.5.0 and 708.4.0.

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7.5 Address Standards for Barcoded Pieces**7.5.1 Basic Address Standards for Barcodes**

[Revise the text of 7.5.1 as follows:]
To qualify for automation prices, addresses must be sufficiently complete to enable matching to the current USPS ZIP+4 Product when used with current CASS-certified address matching software. Any barcode as defined in 202.5.0 and 708.4.0 that appears on a mailpiece claimed at an automation price must be the correct barcode for the corresponding delivery address on the piece.

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[Revise the title and text of 7.5.3 as follows:]

7.5.3 Numeric Delivery Point Routing Code

The numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code is formed by adding two digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

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[Delete 7.6, Enclosed Reply Cards and Envelopes, in its entirety.]

[Renumber current 7.7 as new 7.6.]

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300 Commercial Mail Flats

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302 Elements on the Face of a Mailpiece

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2.0 Address Placement

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2.4 Type Size and Line Spacing

* * * These additional standards apply to automation pieces:

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[Revise item 2.4c as follows:]

c. For pieces that bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code under 708.4.3, mailers may print the delivery address in a minimum of 6-point type (each character must be at least 0.065 inch high) if all capital letters are used.

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5.0 Barcode Placement

[Revise the title and text of 5.1 as follows:]

5.1 Barcode Placement for Flats

On any flat-size piece claimed at automation prices, the piece must bear an Intelligent Mail barcode with a delivery point routing code. The barcode may be anywhere on the address side as long as it is at least $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from any edge of the piece. The portion of the surface of the piece on which the barcode is printed must meet the barcode dimensions and spacing requirements in 708.4.2.5, and the reflectance standards in 708.4.4. Intelligent Mail barcodes are subject to standards in 708.4.3.2. A POSTNET barcode or an additional Intelligent Mail barcode may also appear in the address block of an automation flat, when the qualifying Intelligent Mail barcode is not in the address block. Other non-USPS barcodes may appear on the address side of a flat if the barcode format is not discernable to automated postal flat-sorting equipment.

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[Delete current 5.2, Applying One Barcode, and 5.3, Applying Second Barcode, in their entirety.]

[Renumber current 5.4 through 5.7 as new 5.2 through 5.5.]

5.2 5-Digit and ZIP+4 Barcodes

[Revise the text of renumbered 5.2 as follows:]

An automation flat-size piece must not bear a 5-digit or a ZIP+4 barcode.

[Revise the title and text of renumbered 5.3 as follows:]

5.3 Delivery Point Routing Code Numeric Equivalent

In automation mailings only, the numbers corresponding to the delivery point routing code may appear in the delivery address. If read from left to right: a correct numeric equivalent consists of five digits, a hyphen, and six digits.

5.4 Barcode in Address Block

When an Intelligent Mail barcode is included as part of the address block:

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[Revise renumbered items 5.4c through 5.4e as follows:]

c. The minimum clearance between the barcode and any information line above or below it within the address block must be at least 0.028 inch, and the separation between the barcode and top line or bottom line of the address block must not exceed 0.625 ($\frac{5}{8}$) inch. The clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any adjacent printing must be at least 0.125 ($\frac{1}{8}$) inch.

d. If a window envelope is used, the clearance between the leftmost and rightmost bars and any printing or window edge must be at least 0.125 ($\frac{1}{8}$) inch, and the clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom window edges must be at least 0.028 inch. These clearances must be maintained during the insert's range of movement in the envelope. Covers for address block windows are subject to 5.5. Window envelopes also must meet the specifications in 601.6.3.

e. If an address label is used, a clear space of at least 0.125 ($\frac{1}{8}$) inch must be left between the barcode and the left and right edges of the address label, and the clearance between the barcode and the top and bottom edges of the address label must be at least 0.028 inch.

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320 Priority Mail

323 Prices and Eligibility

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3.0 Basic Standards for Priority Mail

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3.2 Additional Standards for Critical Mail Flats

[Revise the introductory text of 3.2 as follows:]

Critical Mail, a category of Priority Mail, is available for barcoded, automation-compatible letters and barcoded, automation flats, using IMb's under 708.4.3. With the exception of restricted mail as described in 601.8.0,

any mailable matter may be mailed via Critical Mail. USPS-produced Critical Mail flat-size envelopes must be used for all Critical Mail flats. Flats may not exceed 13 ounces in weight or $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in thickness. Critical Mail flats also must:

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[Revise item 3.2b as follows:]

b. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets address quality standards in 333.5.5 and 708.3.0.

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330 First-Class Mail

333 Prices and Eligibility

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4.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Nonautomation First-Class Mail Flats

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4.2 Barcodes on Nonautomation First-Class Mail

[Revise the text of 4.2 as follows:]

Any barcode on a mailpiece in a First-Class Mail nonautomation flats mailing must be correct for the delivery address and meet the standards in 708.3.0 and 708.4.0.

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5.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Automation First-Class Mail Flats

5.1 Basic Standards for Automation First-Class Mail

All pieces in a First-Class Mail automation flats mailing must:

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[Revise items 5.1d through e as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these address quality standards:

1. The address matching and coding standards in 5.5 and 708.3.0.

2. If an alternative addressing format is used, the additional standards in 602.3.0.

e. Bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 302.5.0 and 708.4.0, either on the piece or on an insert showing through a window.

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5.5 Address Standards for Barcoded Pieces

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[Revise the title and text of 5.5.3 as follows:]

5.5.3 *Numeric Delivery Point Routing Code*

A numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code is formed by adding two digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

[Delete 5.6, Reply Cards and Envelopes Enclosed in Automation Price First-Class Mail, in its entirety.]

340 **Standard Mail**

343 **Prices and Eligibility**

3.0 **Basic Standards for Standard Mail Flats**

3.3 *Additional Basic Standards for Standard Mail*

Each Standard Mail mailing is subject to these general standards:

[Revise item 3.3i as follows:]

i. Any barcode on a mailpiece must be correct for the delivery address and meet the standards in 302.5.0, 708.3.0, and 708.4.0.

6.0 **Additional Eligibility Standards for Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail Flats**

6.1 *General Enhanced Carrier Route Standards*

6.1.2 *Basic Eligibility Standards*

All pieces in an Enhanced Carrier Route or Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail mailing must:

[Revise the introductory text of item 6.1.2d as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these address quality standards:

7.0 **Additional Eligibility Standards for Automation Standard Mail Flats**

7.1 *Basic Eligibility Standards for Automation Standard Mail*

All pieces in a Regular Standard Mail or Nonprofit Standard Mail automation mailing must:

[Revise the introductory text of item 7.1d as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4

code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these address quality standards:

[Revise item 7.1e as follows:]

e. Bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 302.5.0 and 708.4.0.

7.4 *Address Standards for Barcoded Pieces*

[Revise the title and text of 7.4.3 as follows:]

7.4.3 *Numeric Delivery Point Routing Code*

A numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code is formed by adding two digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

[Delete 7.5, Enclosed Reply Cards and Envelopes, in its entirety.]

360 **Bound Printed Matter**

363 **Prices and Eligibility**

1.0 **Prices and Fees for Bound Printed Matter**

1.1.4 *Barcoded Discount—Flats*

[Revise the text of 1.1.4 as follows:]
For discount, see Notice 123—Price List. See 4.1 and 6.1 for eligibility information.

4.0 **Price Eligibility for Bound Printed Matter Flats**

4.1 *Price Eligibility*

* * * Price categories are as follows:

[Revise item 4.1d as follows:]

d. Barcoded Discount—Flats. The barcoded discount applies to BPM flats that meet the requirements for automation flats in 301.3.0 and bear an accurate Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code. See 6.1 for more information.

6.0 **Additional Eligibility Standards for Barcoded Bound Printed Matter Flats**

6.1 *Basic Eligibility Standards for Barcoded Bound Printed Matter*

[Revise the text of 6.1 as follows:]

The barcode discount applies only to BPM flat-size pieces that bear an Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with

the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 302.5.0 and 708.4.0. The pieces must be part of a nonpresorted price mailing of 50 or more flat-size pieces or part of a presorted mailing of at least 300 BPM flats prepared under 365.7.0, 705.8.0, and 705.14.0. The barcode discount is not available for flats mailed at Presorted DDU prices or carrier route prices. To qualify for the barcode discount, the flat-size pieces must meet the standards in 301.3.0.

6.4 *Address Standards for Barcode Discounts*

[Revise the title and text of 6.4.3 as follows:]

6.4.3 *Numeric Delivery Point Routing Code*

A numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code is formed by adding two digits directly after the ZIP+4 code.

400 **Commercial Parcels**

402 **Elements on the Face of a Mailpiece**

4.0 **General Barcode Placement for Parcels**

[Revise the title and text of current 4.3 as follows:]

4.3 *Intelligent Mail Barcodes and POSTNET Barcodes*

Intelligent Mail barcodes and POSTNET barcodes do not meet barcode eligibility requirements for parcels and do not qualify for any barcode-related prices for parcels, but one barcode may be included only in the address block on a parcel, except on eVS parcels. An Intelligent Mail barcode or POSTNET barcode in the address block must be placed according to 302.5.4.

[Delete current 4.3.1, General Placement of POSTNET Barcodes, 4.3.2, POSTNET Barcode in Address Block, and 4.3.3, Window Cover, in their entirety.]

440 **Standard Mail**

443 **Prices and Eligibility**

4.0 **Price Eligibility for Standard Mail**

4.4 Surcharge

Unless prepared in carrier route or 5-digit/scheme containers, Standard Mail parcels are subject to a surcharge if:

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[Revise item 4.4c as follows:]

c. The irregular parcels do not bear a GS1–128 routing barcode or an Intelligent Mail package barcode for the delivery address.

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6.0 Additional Eligibility Standards for Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail Marketing Parcels

6.1 General Enhanced Carrier Route Standards

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6.1.2 Basic Eligibility Standards

All pieces in an Enhanced Carrier Route or Nonprofit Enhanced Carrier Route mailing of Standard Mail Marketing parcels must:

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[Revise the introductory text of item 6.1.2d as follows:]

d. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets these addressing standards:

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500 Additional Mailing Services

503 Extra Services

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14.0 Confirm Service and IMb Tracing

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14.2 Barcodes

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14.2.2 Intelligent Mail Barcode Requirements

[Revise the introductory text of 14.2.2 as follows:]

To obtain IMb Tracing, mailers must apply Intelligent Mail barcodes on letter-size pieces or on flat-size pieces meeting automation-compatibility standards in 201.3.0 (letters) or 301.3.0 (flats). The following standards apply:

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505 Return Services

1.0 Business Reply Mail (BRM)

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1.3 Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) Basic Standards

1.3.1 Description

Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) is First-Class Mail that:

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[Revise item 1.3.1d as follows:]

d. Is authorized to mail at QBRM prices and fees under 1.3.2. During the authorization process, the mailer is assigned a unique ZIP+4 code for each price category of QBRM to be returned under the system (one for card-price pieces, one for letter-size pieces weighing 1 ounce or less, and one for letter-size pieces weighing over 1 ounce up to and including 2 ounces).

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[Revise item 1.3.1f as follows:]

f. Bears the correct Intelligent Mail barcode that corresponds to the unique ZIP+4 code in the address on each piece distributed. The barcode must be correctly prepared under 1.9 and 708.4.0.

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1.8 Format Elements

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1.8.6 Delivery Address

The complete address (including the permit holder's name, delivery address, city, state, and BRM ZIP Code) must be printed directly on the piece, except as allowed under 1.7.5 or under item a below, subject to these conditions:

[Revise item 1.8.6a as follows:]

a. Preprinted labels with only delivery address information (including an Intelligent Mail barcode under 1.9) are permitted, but the permit holder's name and other required elements must be printed directly on the BRM piece.

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1.9 Additional Standards for Letter-Size and Flat-Size BRM

[Revise the text of 1.9 to incorporate the current item 1.9a, including items a1 and a2, into the introductory text and revise the new introductory text as follows:]

In addition to the format standards in 1.8, QBRM letters and cards must be barcoded with an Intelligent Mail barcode. When an Intelligent Mail barcode is printed on any BRM pieces, it must contain the barcode ID, service type ID, and correct ZIP+4 routing code, as specified under 708.4.3. QBRM pieces must bear the ZIP+4 codes and equivalent Intelligent Mail barcodes assigned by the USPS. The IMb must be placed on the address side of the piece and positioned as part of the delivery address block under 202.5.7 or within the barcode clear zone in the lower right corner of the piece if printed directly on the piece.

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2.0 Permit Reply Mail (PRM)

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2.3 Format Elements

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2.3.6 Delivery Address

[Revise the text of 2.3.6 as follows:]

The complete address (including the permit holder's name, delivery address, city, state, and ZIP+4 code) must be printed on the piece. PRM pieces must bear an Intelligent Mail barcode encoded with the correct delivery point routing code, matching the delivery address and meeting the standards in 202.5.0 and 708.4.0.

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600 Basic Standards for All Mailing Services

601 Mailability

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6.0 Mailing Containers—Special Types of Envelopes and Packaging

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6.5 Reusable Mailpiece

* * * Except for reusable mailpieces that originate as permit imprint mailings, the piece must meet these standards:

[Revise the first sentence of 6.5a as follows:]

a. Basic Design. The piece must be designed and constructed to allow the recipient to reconfigure the piece to remove or obscure the address, barcode, postage, and any marking or endorsement applied to the piece when it was originally mailed so that these elements are not mistaken by the USPS as applying to the returned piece. * * *

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602 Addressing

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4.0 Detached Address Labels (DALs) and Detached Marketing Labels (DMLs)

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4.2 Label Preparation

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4.2.2 Addressing

* * * [Revise the last sentence of 4.2.2 as follows:] In addition, if DALs accompany saturation mailings of Periodicals or Standard Mail flats, a correct Intelligent Mail barcode with an 11-digit routing code must be printed on each DAL except when using a simplified address.

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700 Special Standards

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708 Technical Standards

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[Revise the title of 4.0 as follows:]

4.0 Standards for Intelligent Mail and POSTNET Barcodes

4.1 General

[Revise the text of 4.1 as follows:]

Intelligent Mail barcodes and POSTNET (Postal Numeric Encoding Technique) barcodes are USPS-developed methods to encode ZIP Code information on mail that can be read for sorting by automated machines. Intelligent Mail barcodes also encode other tracking information. POSTNET barcodes do not qualify for automation pricing.

* * * * *

We will publish an appropriate amendment to 39 CFR Part 111 to reflect these changes.

Stanley F. Mires,

Attorney, Legal Policy & Legislative Advice.

[FR Doc. 2012-10505 Filed 5-2-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

[Docket No. FWS-R9-IA-2008-0123;
FXES111309F2120D2-123-FF09E22000]

RIN 1018-AI83

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reclassifying the Wood Bison Under the Endangered Species Act as Threatened Throughout Its Range

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), are reclassifying the wood bison (*Bison bison athabasca*) from endangered to threatened. This action is based on a review of the best available scientific and commercial data, which indicate that the primary threat that led to population decline, unregulated hunting, is no longer a threat and that recovery actions have led to a substantial increase in the number of herds that have a stable or increasing trend in population size. Critical habitat has not been designated because free-ranging wood bison only occur in Canada and we do not designate critical habitat in foreign countries.

DATES: This rule becomes effective June 4, 2012.

ADDRESSES: This final rule is available on the Internet at [http://](http://www.regulations.gov)

www.regulations.gov under Docket No. FWS-R9-IA-2008-0123 and at <http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/endangered/index.htm>. Comments and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in the preparation of this rule, will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Regional Office, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503; 907-786-3856.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Marilyn Myers at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fisheries and Ecological Services, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503; or telephone at 907-786-3559; or facsimile at 907-786-3848. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), please call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Summary

Why we need to publish a rule. We listed the wood bison as endangered in 1970. Since listing, the status of wood bison has improved because enactment and enforcement of national and international laws and treaties have minimized the impacts of hunting and trade, and reintroduction of disease-free herds has increased the number of free-ranging herds in Canada from 1 population of 300 in 1978, to 7 populations totaling 4,414 bison in 2008. These free-ranging populations are stable or increasing. Therefore, we have determined that the wood bison no longer meets the definition of endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

This rule changes the listing of the wood bison from endangered to threatened.

Basis for our action. While we have determined that the wood bison no longer meets the definition of endangered under the Endangered Species Act, some threats to wood bison remain. Habitat loss has occurred in Canada from agricultural development, and we expect losses will continue in concert with human growth and expansion of agriculture, including commercial bison production. The presence of disease in Canada constrains herd growth, and regulatory mechanisms are inadequate to prevent disease transmission within Canada. However, the continued reintroduction of disease-free herds, the ongoing development and updating of management plans, the active management of herds, the ongoing research, and the protections provided by laws and protected lands provide

compelling evidence that recovery actions have been successful in reducing the risk of extinction associated with the threats identified. Therefore, we are reclassifying the wood bison from endangered to threatened.

The majority of comments we received support this action. The majority of comments (13 of 19) supported downlisting. A subset of these comments (7 of the 13) asserted that the Service should delist the species immediately. Three comments stated that wood bison should remain listed as endangered. The peer review comments provided very specific corrections to details about two of the wood bison herds in Canada, and we have updated our information in this rule accordingly, but these changes do not alter our finding.

Background

Previous Federal Actions

The listing history for wood bison is extensive and was described in the proposed rule published on February 8, 2011 (76 FR 6734). Please refer to that proposed rule for the complete listing history. Here we present only the most pertinent facts.

The wood bison became listed in the United States under the 1969 Endangered Species Conservation Act when it was included on the first List of Endangered Foreign Fish and Wildlife, which was published in the **Federal Register** on June 2, 1970 (35 FR 8491). In 1974, the first list of federally protected species under the 1973 Endangered Species Act (Act; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) appeared in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and the wood bison appeared on this list based on its inclusion on the original 1969 list. Because the wood bison was listed under the 1969 Endangered Species Conservation Act and grandfathered in for protection under the Act, there is not a separate **Federal Register** notice that defined the population(s) and their range or analyzed threats to the species. The wood bison was classified as endangered and has retained that designation since the original listing.

On May 14, 1998, the Service received a petition from a private individual requesting that the Service remove the wood bison from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, primarily because it had been downgraded from an Appendix I to an Appendix II species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In a 90-day finding published on November 25, 1998 (63 FR 65164), we found that the petitioner did not provide substantial