

## Section 8 – Letter service specifications

### L8.1 – Envelopes

#### L8.1.1 – Introduction

Electronic letter processing equipment handles letters with greater speed, efficiency and more economically than manual sorting methods. The respective postage charges reflect the difference in handling costs.

##### ■ Why an envelope specification is necessary

Letters passing through modern high-speed postmarking and sorting machines are subject to considerable stress. Envelope specifications are necessary to ensure envelopes can be successfully machine-processed. Sorting officers transfer letters that are not suitable for machine processing to manual processing areas.

Some envelopes are not suitable for machine processing because of the characteristics of the envelope paper, such as strength, porosity, luminescence, and so on. Some types of recycled paper with prominent paper fibres are also unsuitable for machine processing.

##### ■ Contents of a Small envelope

Small letters should not contain stiff objects such as bottle tops, pens, items enclosed in a hard case, and so on. High-speed machine processing could damage such objects, or the objects could damage other articles or the mail processing equipment.

##### ■ The formal specification

Australia Post recommends that envelopes and cards comply with Australian Standards Specification 4611 – 1999, which contains technical envelope specifications including details of the various standard tests that Australia Post applies.

##### ■ Envelope testing

Customers may send sample envelopes with a covering letter for testing to:

Australia Post  
Mail Products  
GPO Box 1777  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

#### L8.1.2 – Application of these specifications as a mandatory requirement

The basis of postage charges for some Letter services is the requirement that all envelopes and wrappers lodged meet certain mandatory specifications. For details of which specifications are mandatory, please refer to the terms and conditions for each particular service.

#### L8.1.3 – Envelope paper quality

The table shows the minimum and maximum values of the attributes of the stock used for the manufacture of envelopes and postcards.

Attribute	Envelope paper stock	Card stock
Density – Small letters <sup>1</sup>	65 – 110 gsm	140 – 500 gsm <sup>2</sup>
Density – Large letters <sup>1</sup>	65 – 110 gsm	240 – 500 gsm
Thickness	0.08 – 0.18 mm	0.18 – 1.5 mm <sup>3</sup>
Stiffness – machine direction	At least 3.0 mN	30 – 1,140 mN
Stiffness – cross direction	At least 1.5 mN	14 – 1,140 mN

1 Refer to the following definitions for letter sizes: **L2.2 – Small letter**, **L2.3 – Large letter** or **L6.1 – Bulk letter sizes and weights**.

2 The majority of cards available at 140 gsm do NOT meet the minimum specifications for thickness or stiffness.

3 0.25 – 1.5 mm for Reply Paid International (IRP).

Attribute	Envelope and card stock
Porosity	250 – 1,000 ml/min
Tearing resistance	At least 350 mN
Smoothness	35 ml/min – 550 ml/min
Opacity	At least 75 per cent
Diffuse reflectance	At least mean of 60 per cent @ 425 – 500 nm At least mean of 70 per cent @ 500 – 700 nm
Coefficient of friction <sup>1</sup>	0.2 – 0.5

1 “Coefficient of friction” describes the relationship of the force of friction between two bodies, and the force pressing them together. Its measurement is a ratio and is relative between two surfaces. For Australia Post the two surfaces are usually two paper mail articles. Relative to each other, the two articles would have a particular coefficient of friction. Letter processing equipment employs material that exerts a higher coefficient of friction on the first article than that of the following article, enabling the machine to pick up one article at a time. The ideal for articles being sorted through Australia Post’s equipment is the lowest possible coefficient. The stated range of 0.2 to 0.5 is felt to be ideal for letter sorting machines. Within this stated range, there is sufficient friction to pick a single article from a mail stack but insufficient friction to cause a second article to be picked at the same time.

**L8.1.4 – Envelope size**

For the size of envelopes, refer to:

- L2.2 – Small letter
- L2.3 – Large letter
- L6.1 – Bulk letter sizes and weights

**L8.1.5 – Envelope colour**

■ Recommended colours

Australia Post recommends white paper or card for your articles, but light tints or half-tones are satisfactory. A general test is that colours should come on or around the following range of 78 acceptable colours from the Pantone Matching System® (PMS).

100	101	106	107	113	114	120	121	127	128	134	135	136
141	142	148	149	155	162	169	176	196	203	217	250	263
277	290	304	317	331	332	337	344	351	358	365	366	372
373	379	386	393	400	406	413	427	434	441	453	454	460
461	467	468	474	475	482	488	489	496	502	503	510	517
524	530	531	538	545	552	559	566	573	579	580	586	587

The colours shown above are approximations only. Refer to official ink colour charts.

Australia Post may reject lodgements of articles in envelopes or wrappers in colours not in the table above. If you have doubts about the intended colour of your articles, send samples for testing to:

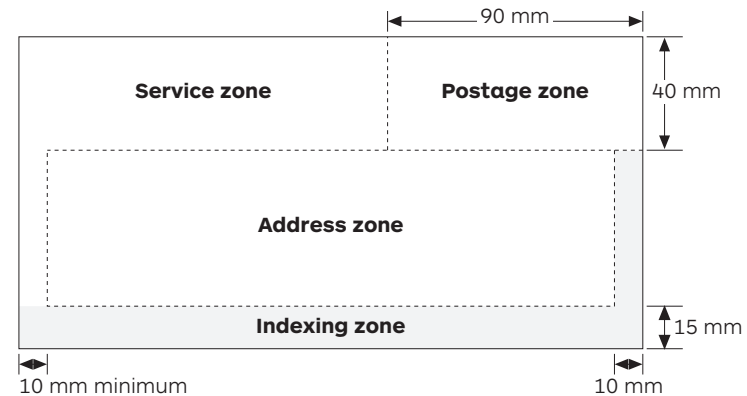
Australia Post  
 Mail Products  
 GPO Box 1777  
 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

**L8.1.6 – Postcode squares**

Small letters with hand-written Australian addresses should always use pre-printed postcode squares when present.

**L8.1.7 – Printing on envelopes**

The diagram shows the zones on the face of an envelope. These zones do not apply to all services, refer to the relevant service guide for full details.



■ Postage zone

The postage zone is reserved for postage stamps, postage meter marks, and Postage Paid indicia. The zone is 40 mm high x 90 mm wide, located at the top right hand corner of the article.

■ Address zone

The address zone is reserved for the postal delivery address. The zone must be kept at least 10 mm clear from the left and right edges of the article.

■ Indexing zone

The indexing zone is reserved for Australia Post barcode printing. The shading in the diagram above is for illustrative purposes only. The zone is:

- 10 mm wide, located on the right side of the address zone at the right edge of the article
- 15 mm high, located along the lower edge of the article.

■ Service zone

The service zone may contain service indicators or the return address.

**L8.1.8 – Imitation envelopes**

Australia Post may reject envelopes that imitate or resemble existing prepaid letter service products.

### L8.1.9 – Reusable envelopes

Reusable envelopes must be designed and manufactured in such a way that they can be successfully machine processed both on their outward and return journeys. To ensure this is so, customers intending to use reusable envelopes should send a design proof or samples for testing to:

Australia Post  
Mail Products  
GPO Box 1777  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

### L8.1.10 – Standards Association reference on envelopes

Australian Standard AS4611-1999 – *Mailing Envelopes* defines Post Office Preferred or POP envelopes. The illustration shows the official distinguishing symbol for POP envelopes. Provided the envelopes meet AS4611-1999, envelope manufacturers and distributors may show the symbol on envelope wrappers, boxes or displays as a guide to purchasers.



No approval to use the symbol is required. The size of the symbol may vary to suit the circumstances.

### L8.1.11 – Transparent panel envelopes

#### ■ Panel quality

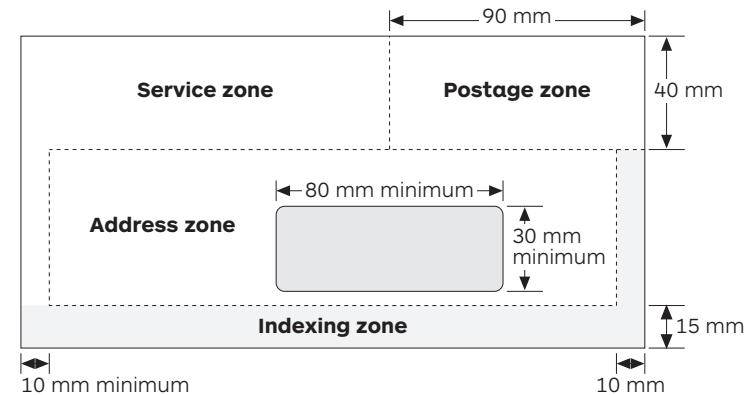
Transparent panel envelopes must have clear panels. Australia Post does not permit open window panels. Even very clear panels can cause problems if they reflect too much light. When measured by a suitable photometric method, the contrast ratio of the panel material must not exceed 25 per cent. Customers intending to use a new panel material should send samples for testing (at least 50 mm × 80 mm) to:

Australia Post  
Mail Products  
GPO Box 1777  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

The envelope paper should securely adhere to the panel material up to and around the entire panel edge. This prevents parts of letter-processing machinery or corners of other articles catching in the panel edges.

#### ■ Size and position of address panel

The address panel on a Small or Small Plus letter should be parallel with the longer dimension of the letter and should be not less than 30 mm × 80 mm. The panel may be located anywhere within the Address Zone.



The Address Zone must be positioned:

- at least 40 mm from the top edge of the article
- at least 15 mm from the bottom edge of the article
- at least 10 mm from the left and right edges of the article.

For bulk mail services, the recommended minimum size for window panels is 38 mm high × 95 mm wide for Small and Small Plus size articles (up to C5) and 45 mm high × 95 mm wide for Large size articles.

#### ■ Contents of panel envelopes

The design of the contents of transparent panel envelopes must ensure that:

- the whole address remains visible in the panel, even if the contents shift
- no non-address information shows in the panel, even if the contents shift
- the address is clearly visible without having to press the panel against the address or shake the envelope to bring the address into view.

Do not use:

- light-weight paper with excessive carbon show-through
- coloured or patterned paper or printed colours or patterns in the address area of the contents.

It is useful to include folding guidelines on the stationery.

If you need a colour for identification, use colour printing on white paper, or a coloured strip away from the address area.

### ■ Second panels

A second transparent panel for advertising, pictorial display or a return address can be used as long as:

- the second panel does not impair the quality or the machine-handling capability of the envelope or impede the processing of any other article with which it comes into contact
- the font-size of any return address in the second panel is smaller than the font used in the address panel.

## L8.2 – Postcards

The introductory comments about the need for a specification for envelopes apply equally to postcards. Refer to **L8.1.1 – Introduction**.

### L8.2.1 – Services in which this specification is mandatory

The basis for the postage charges for some Letter services is the expectation that all postcards lodged meet the Australia Post specifications. This specification is a mandatory requirement for all articles lodged in:

- PreSort Letters / Promo Post / Charity Mail
- Acquisition Mail
- Clean Mail
- Reply Paid.

For use of postcards with Reply Paid, please contact the Reply Paid team at [replypaid@auspost.com.au](mailto:replypaid@auspost.com.au).

### L8.2.2 – Card stock quality

Refer to **L8.1.3 – Envelope paper quality** for the minimum and maximum values of the attributes of the card stock used for the manufacture of a postcard.

The longer edge of a postcard must be parallel to the machine direction (the grain) of the card stock. Most paper suppliers can supply card that meets this specification.

Customers may send card stock samples for testing to:

Australia Post  
Mail Products  
GPO Box 1777  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

### L8.2.3 – Postcard size

A postcard must be within the letter size limits – refer to **L2.2 – Small letter** and **L2.3 – Large letter**.

### L8.2.4 – Postcard colour

The address side of an unenclosed postcard should comply with the same colour specification as an envelope – refer to **L8.1.5 – Envelope colour**.

Australia Post does not accept a tinselled or beaded postcard unless it is enclosed in an envelope.

### L8.2.5 – Printing on postcards

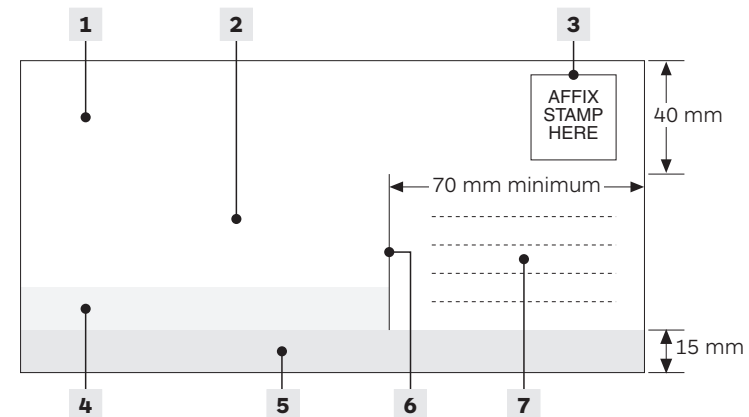
For a non-pictorial postcard – that is, a postcard with the message on the back of the card, the same specification applies as for an envelope. Refer to

**L8.2.7 – Machine addressed postcards**.

### L8.2.6 – Pictorial postcards

The diagram shows the layout and the zones of the address side of a pictorial postcard.

1. Service zone at top left of the article.
2. Message area in centre of the article.
3. Stamp affixing designator at top right corner of the article. No lower than 40 mm from the top edge.
4. Suggested area for description of pictorial scene.
5. Indexing zone reserved for Australia Post – it must contain no printing. At least 15 mm from the bottom edge of the article.
6. Vertical dividing line between the address zone and the message area
7. Address zone at least 70 mm wide, with optional faint or dotted address guide lines.



### L8.2.7 – Machine addressed postcards

Postcards for an Australia Post bulk letter service must comply with the conditions applicable to the article sizes of that service.