

# BANTA Mailbox

Banta Publications Group ■ 12 Salt Creek Lane, Suite 350, Hinsdale, IL 60521 ■ March 2002

## International Mail

**S**ince the USPS recently increased the rates for international mail, we felt it appropriate to discuss international mail options. First, let's define some of the categories of international mail. Mail destined for addresses outside the United States is considered international mail. Mail for Puerto Rico, US territories (such as Guam and the Virgin Islands) is not considered international mail. Military mail (APO and FPO) is also not considered international mail.

If you are using the USPS for distribution of your international mail, there are three basic categories of international mail for the types of product that Banta Publications Group produces:

**Publisher's Periodicals:** This is reserved for publications that are authorized for Periodicals rates.

**Letter Post Economy:** This is for publications and catalogs that are not authorized at Periodicals rates. These rates are more expensive than Publisher's Periodicals rates.

**Letter Post Airmail:** This may be used by any publication or catalog that wishes to receive expedited (air vs. surface transportation) delivery. These rates are more expensive than Publisher's Periodicals rates and are also generally more expensive than Letter Post Economy rates (some Airmail rates for lower weights are actually less expensive than Economy rates).

There is a five-tier postage rate structure for both Letter Post and Publisher's Periodicals, depending on destination. There are five rate groups; one for Canada, one for Mexico, one for Australia, Japan and New Zealand and two other rate groups for which country listings may be found in the International Mail Manual.

Generally speaking, surface transportation will result in delivery times of 8-12 weeks. Air transportation will result in delivery times of 1-2 weeks. Air rates are generally considerably more expensive than surface rates, with some exceptions for lower weight magazines at Letter Post rates (11 ounces and under for Canada, 15 ounces and under for Mexico and 4-6 ounces for all other countries).

There are also other vendors aside from the USPS that handle international mail. Banta's business partner for international mailings is World Distribution Services, although we can accommodate any vendor with whom you may have negotiated agreements. Pricing for using World Distribution Services can be provided upon request.

Some countries prohibit some material from being distributed through the mails. In the publishing arena, this may be items such as religious journals, magazines with sexual content, etc. Consult the International Mail Manual (available at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)) for specifics by country.

### Periodicals Mail Training

The USPS is offering a training course on Periodicals mail. Periodicals is the most complicated class of mail from both a regulation and a rate standpoint. The course is offered in a classroom setting and spans three full days. The classes are held at either the National Center for Employee Development in Norman, OK or the William F. Bolger Center for Leadership Development in Potomac, MD. The topics covered in the training are:

- Basic Elements and Categories of Periodicals Mail
- Rate Eligibility
- Original Entry Application Process and Additional Entry, Reentry or Special Rate Request
- Content and Characteristics, Measuring Advertising
- Preparation, Documentation and Statement of Ownership

The current schedule of classes is as follows:

March 5-7, Norman, OK  
April 8-10, Potomac, MD  
June 25-27, Norman, OK

The cost of the course (includes lodging, three meals per day and all course materials) is \$1,050 per student at the MD location and \$850 per student at the OK location. For more details, or to enroll in the course, call 405-366-4639.

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**Banta Publications Group Distribution Contacts**

As a customer, you are encouraged to direct all of your communications to your plant Customer Service Representative. However, there may be occasions when you may need to contact someone in the distribution areas directly. To facilitate this, the following is a list of contacts:

**Entire Publications Group**

Director, Mailing & Distribution Services

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**Liberty, MO plant**

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816-792-2031 Fax  
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**Greenfield, OH plant**

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# Ride-Along Rate Update

## USPS looks to make ride-along rate permanent

The USPS implemented an experimental postal rate, called the ride-along rate, back in 2000. This experimental rate, which had a test period of two years, was designed for Periodicals mailers with non-qualifying enclosures that “ride along” with the magazine. Examples of such pieces are catalogs, product samples, CD ROM’s, etc. The experimental rate is a flat 10 cents per piece, which compares with the 17.8 cents to 32.2 cents per piece range that these pieces would incur if mailed by themselves.

This experimental rate was scheduled to end on February 26, 2002, but the USPS has requested that the Postal Rate Commission extend the rate until June 2002. The ride-along rate is also included in the current postal rate case. The USPS has made a request in the rate case to make the rate permanent and has also asked for an increase in the rate from 10 cents to 12.4 cents. If the rate case settlement agreement is approved (see February issue for details), the increased rate would be effective June 30, 2002.

As a refresher, the following are the regulations regarding the ride-along rate:

- 1) Applies to pieces that are bound in, tipped in, or polybagged with the magazine.
- 2) The ride along cannot exceed 3.3 ounces in weight, nor can it exceed the weight of the host publication. For example, if the host publication weighs 2.5 ounces, then the ride along cannot exceed 2.5 ounces.
- 3) The ride along cannot exceed any dimension of the host publication. This includes trim size, thickness, and weight.
- 4) The combined piece (host publication plus ride along) cannot exceed ¾” in thickness.
- 5) Only one ride along per copy of the magazine is permitted. If additional pieces are included, those are charged at the full Standard Mail rates. Keep in mind that if you do include multiple pieces it may be less expensive to pay the Standard Mail rates on the weight of both pieces together than to pay the Ride Along rate for one piece and Standard Mail rates for the other. You may also include different ride along pieces in a mailing. For example, in a total mailing of 15,000 magazines you

could include a catalog in 10,000 copies and a CD ROM in the other 5,000 copies. You may also include the ride along with only a portion of the total copies in the mailing.

6) Inclusion of the ride along cannot change the processing category of the magazine, e.g. change the piece from a letter to a flat.

7) The resultant piece (host publication plus the ride along) must be of uniform thickness. For example, you could not include a tube of toothpaste in a polybag with a magazine.

8) If you are claiming barcode rates on the magazine, inclusion of the ride-along piece cannot take the resultant piece (host publication plus the ride along) outside of the automation compatibility constraints for the host publication. For example, if the host publication is FSM 881 compatible (standard size magazines less than a pound), inclusion of the ride along cannot cause the piece to exceed ¾” thickness, exceed the maximum weight of one pound, or cause the resultant piece not to meet the turning radius for the FSM 881 machines. An illustration of this would be if a standard size magazine weighed 14.2 ounces and the ride along weighed 3.3 ounces, thus causing the total weight to go over one pound. Another example would be inclusion of a CD ROM that is contained in stiff packaging with a standard size magazine resulting in a piece that is too stiff to make the turns on the FSM 881 processing equipment. In cases like these, you may still include these pieces at the ride along rate, but you would give up the barcoded rates on the magazine itself.

9) The ride-along piece cannot cover the title of the host publication. For example, if you plan on polybagging a CD ROM on the front cover of a magazine, the CD ROM must be attached to the cover so that it cannot move around and obscure the magazine title. The USPS is not currently enforcing this requirement, but this may change without notice.

10) The resultant piece must include the endorsement “Periodicals Ride Along Enclosed.” This endorsement can be printed on the magazine

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cover or cover wrap, on the polywrap, on the label carrier, on the mailing label, or it can be included in the ID statement inside the publication. You cannot include this endorsement on copies that do not contain a ride along. If you are including both a ride-along piece and a Standard Mail enclosure, then the endorsement is as follows: "Periodicals Ride Along and Standard Mail Enclosed."

11) Canada, Mexico, and international copies do not qualify for the ride-along rate. If you include the ride along in these copies, they will be subject to the higher Letter Post (Economy or Air, whichever is less) rates of postage.

12) The publisher must complete a one-page questionnaire and provide a sample of the magazine and the ride-along piece in the SAME FORMAT AS THEY ARE MAILED. For example, if you are including a CD ROM loose in a polybag

with a magazine, the sample provided to the USPS must consist of the magazine polywrapped with the CD ROM. The CD ROM must be placed in the position that it will be placed for mailing and the combined piece must be polybagged using the polyfilm that will be used for mailing. If you are including ride alongs with multiple versions of the magazine, you need only supply a sample of the heaviest version. These items must be submitted at the time of mailing. These items must be supplied for each mailing, even if the identical ride along is mailing in more than one issue. The items must also be submitted for supplemental or back issue mailings. The sample of the magazine is in addition to the marked copy that is already required. Once the ride-along rate becomes permanent, the requirement for completing the questionnaire will go away.

"Only one ride along per copy of the magazine is permitted. If additional pieces are included, those are charged at the full Standard Mail rates."

## Periodicals Mail

### How the USPS calculates Periodicals Mail postage

**W**e often get questions from customers asking how postage is calculated for Periodicals rate magazines. Periodicals mail has the most complicated rate structure of any class of mail. The postage rates are calculated on the following:

#### Per Pound Rates

These rates are calculated on the weight of the magazine. The rates are different for the advertising portion (more expensive) of the magazine than they are for the non-advertising portion (less expensive) of the magazine.

The rates for the advertising portion of the weight are based on distance or zones. The further the final delivery destination of the mail is from the plant location, the more expensive the postage rate. For example, from our Liberty, MO plant, mail destined for Los Angeles, CA is defined as a Zone 6, while mail destined for Chicago, IL is defined as a Zone 3. Mail destined for Los Angeles is more expensive than mail destined for Chicago if it is mailed from Liberty, MO.

The rates for the non-advertising portion of the weight are not based on distance; it is a flat rate regardless of destination.

#### Per Piece Rates

These rates are calculated on each piece of mail and have nothing to do with the weight of the magazine. The rates for each piece of mail are based on how the mail is sorted before it is presented to the USPS. Mail must be sorted by ZIPcode before it is presented to the USPS. The more sortation that is done by the mailer, the cheaper the postage rate. This process is done by computer and is known as postal presort. The sortation levels are as follows:

**Carrier Route:** This is the finest level of sortation and receives the least expensive postage rate. To achieve this rate, all mail for an individual mail carrier's route has to be sorted together and sequenced in the order in which the carrier walks their delivery route. This requires fairly high geographic concentrations of mail. Carrier route mail does not qualify for barcode discounts.

**Firm:** To achieve this rate (available only for Periodical rates), all mail for a specific company (or firm) at the same address must be sorted together. Since the USPS does not have to break open these packages of mail and sort them, each pack-

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age is treated as a single piece for calculation of rates. For example, if 10 copies of XYZ Magazine are packaged together for Banta Publications Group in Long Prairie, MN, the USPS considers this one piece for postage calculation rather than 10 pieces. Firm sorted mail does not qualify for barcode discounts.

**5-Digit:** To achieve this rate, all mail for a specific 5-digit ZIPcode must be sorted together. Mail that contains a postnet barcode receives cheaper rates than mail without these barcodes. Barcoded mail can be processed on more automated postal equipment, thus the cheaper postage rate.

**3-Digit:** To achieve this rate, all mail for the first three digits of a ZIPcode must be sorted together. Mail that contains a postnet barcode receives cheaper rates than mail without these barcodes. Barcoded mail can be processed on more automated postal equipment, thus the cheaper postage rate.

**Basic:** This rate is for whatever mail is left over after all the above sorts have been done. Mail that contains a postnet barcode receives cheaper rates than mail without these barcodes. Barcoded mail can be processed on more automated postal equipment, thus the cheaper postage rate.

**Discounts**

There are discounts deducted from the piece rates of postage for the non-advertising content. There

are also discounts deducted from the piece rates for pieces at the Delivery Unit and SCF zones (these are the closest zones to the destination of the mail).

**Nonprofit, Classroom, and Science of Agriculture**

There are different, less expensive rates for publications that qualify for nonprofit, classroom or science of agriculture rates. Nonprofit rates are discounted 5% from regular rates on the non-advertising zoned rates only. Nonprofit and Classroom publications are not charged the zoned rates of postage if their advertising content is 10% or less. In these cases, the publications are charged the flat, non-zoned rates. Classroom and Science of Agriculture rates have lower zoned rates (for Delivery Unit, SCF and zones 1-2 only) than regular rates.

**In County**

Periodical publications which have 50% or more of the total mailed copies destined within the county of publication can qualify for In County rates. This rate structure consists of reduced pound rates and reduced piece rates. Publications qualifying for these rates are usually local newspapers or regional magazines.

**Online Information**

More information on Banta Corporation is available through the company's World Wide Web site at [www.banta.com](http://www.banta.com)