

## Standard Enclosures

### USPS revises regulations on Standard enclosures to Periodicals

In our February, April and June 2002 issues, we covered the postal regulations that deal with the weight of Standard mail enclosures to Periodicals rate publications. At that time, the regulations prohibited Standard mail enclosures that weighed more than 150% of the weight of the host publication. The USPS has recently revised this regulation to increase the weight limitation to 300% of the weight of the host publication. For example, a four-ounce Periodicals rate publication can be accompanied by a printed Standard mail enclosure weighing 12 ounces or less. Standard rates of postage must be

paid on the enclosure, and the enclosure must be printed material.

This ruling does not apply to First-class enclosures, ride-alongs, or enclosures that are not printed materials. Keep in mind that enclosures weighing one pound or more cannot be included with Periodicals rate publications, regardless of the postage rate paid. Pieces weighing one pound or more are Package Services mail, which is prohibited from being mailed with Periodicals mail. The revised ruling is covered under Customer Support Ruling PS-306.

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## Anatomy of a Mailing

### How mail is processed in the printing plant

A number of clients have asked for a detailed explanation of how their mail is processed, both at the printing plant and through the USPS. There are a lot of steps in the process. In this article, we will describe the basic steps of processing mail through the printing plant. Some mailings will vary in some of the processes, as will mailings in different plants, but this is the general process flow:

#### The mailpiece

This is where all your creative, production, and marketing efforts come together to produce the actual magazine or catalog. For simplification purposes, we'll assume that all the components for the current issue of the magazine or catalog have been completed and sent to the printing plant at this point. Your book has gone through pre-press and has been printed. At this point, the book is ready to be bound or stitched together in our bindery.

#### The mailing list

Now that the mailpiece is in production, we need to know who to send the finished product to. For magazines, this is usually a list of subscribers or requesters to the magazine, along with a list of advertisers and complimentary copy recipients. You may also include some prospect lists to market to potential subscribers. For catalogs, this is usually a list of current or past customers, perhaps supplemented with some prospect lists.

Once the list has been updated to include all the recipients you want to reach, the list is then processed for ZIPcode correction, applying ZIP + 4 codes, and presorted into the sequence in which the mail will be physically prepared. In other words, the addresses have been sorted together based on the ZIPcode and postal requirements as to how the mail must be packaged and containerized. This part

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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

Monica Lundquist  
816-792-6370 Phone  
816-792-3112 Fax  
mlundquist@banta.com

List Services Manager  
John Buck  
816-792-6349 Phone  
816-792-3112 Fax  
jbuck@banta.com

#### Long Prairie, MN plant

Distribution Manager  
Al Lemke  
320-732-7946 Phone  
320-732-7976 Fax  
alemke@banta.com

Distribution Supervisor  
Jane Zirbes  
320-732-7969 Phone  
320-732-7976 Fax  
jzirbes@banta.com

#### Liberty, MO plant

Distribution Manager  
Jeff Volkmann  
816-792-6402 Phone  
816-792-2031 Fax  
jvolkmann@banta.com

Mailing Coordinator  
Bobbie Hill  
816-792-5300 ext 6376 Phone  
816-792-2031 Fax  
bhill@banta.com

Shipping Manager  
Steve Bieri  
816-792-6363 Phone  
816-792-6480 Fax  
sbieri@banta.com

#### Greenfield, OH plant

Postal Specialist  
Bobby Rivers  
937-981-6320 Phone  
937-981-5032 Fax  
brivers@banta.com

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of the process insures that you will receive the best postal discounts and optimal delivery. Information that is needed for this process includes estimated weight per copy, thickness per copy, advertising percentage (for Periodicals rate mailings), desired label layout and information regarding any mailing versions or any additional processes that might be required, such as duplicate elimination, ink jet messages, etc.

Once the sortation of the list is completed, the names and addresses on the list are output in the presorted sequence onto either Cheshire paper labels, pressure sensitive labels, or as an ink jet file. For the paper and pressure sensitive labels, the output is printed on continuous form fan-folded paper, with the addresses printed four across each page, with 10 or eleven rows of addresses per page, depending on the type of label paper stock. Along with the address output, postal documentation is also produced, as well as sack tags and pallet markers. Postal documentation is used by the USPS to verify that the mail has been physically correctly prepared and that it matches the way the list has been sorted. Sack tags and pallet markers are used to identify to the USPS what is inside the mail container. Pink tags and markers are used for Periodicals mail and white tags and markers are used for Standard and Package Services mail. The tags/markers contain printed information, including the destination city, state, and ZIPcode of the mail, the class and processing category of the mail, and the origination location of the mail. Another by-product of the list sorting process is the mail.dat file. This file contains all the data about your mailing except for the actual names and addresses. This file is used to analyze your mailing for possible drop ship discounts and to produce the mailing statements, from which your postage is calculated.

Once the list sorting is complete, the mailing list, documentation, sack tags, pallet markers and mail.dat files are sent to the appropriate printing plant. Schedule for this varies by customer, but generally speaking the list should arrive in the plant one to two days prior to the binding date.

This list sorting process may be done by your internal list processing department, by an outside source such as your fulfillment company, or you may send your list to Banta Distribution Services (BDS) for this processing. If you send your list to us for processing, this would involve the list being transmitted to us via our web site from your offices or from your fulfillment house. If your list is

processed by BDS, again schedules vary by customer but generally the list files should be transmitted to us four business days prior to the list due date at the plant.

### Mail preparation

Now that the mailing list has arrived at the plant and the magazine or catalog is scheduled for production in the bindery, it is time for the plant distribution department to get the mailing ready. The distribution department will reconcile counts from the mailing lists provided against the bindery work ticket supplied by the plant client services department. This work ticket details all the instructions for finishing, mailing and shipping the magazine or catalog. The distribution department prepares a mail work order that contains specific information about the mailing, such as counts by version (including domestic, Canada and foreign), and information regarding how the copies will be processed, e.g. polybagged, enveloped, etc.

At this point, the distribution department also imports the mail.dat file provided along with the mailing list into specialized software. This software analyzes possible savings available if the mail is shipped to other postal facilities rather than entering the mail at the plant location. If the analysis indicates that there are savings available, information regarding the various drop ship entry points is included on the mail work order and special pallet flags are created to help identify the pallets of mail that are to be drop shipped and to keep these separate from the locally entered mail. The distribution department also verifies at this time that the appropriate amount of postage has been deposited in the trust account.

### The mailing

In most cases, the physical mailing occurs at the same time the magazine or catalog is being bound or stitched in our bindery. The paper labels are fed through a mailing head, which cuts and glues the individual labels to the magazine or catalog as it comes off the stitching or binding line. In the case of ink jet, the addresses are sprayed on the magazine or catalog during the stitching/binding process.

The addressed books are then sent through stacking equipment to place the books into bundles properly sorted in postal sequence. Scan marks, printed on the labels during the presort process, are read by photo eyes on the mailing head as the fan folded sheets of labels pass through the mail

head for application onto the magazine or catalog. These scan marks are printed on the last label of a postal presort bundle and container (sack or pallet). The scan marks trigger the stacker at the end of the mailing line to complete the bundle and send the stacked books into the shrink wrapper. The bundles are shrink wrapped in plastic and then placed into either mail sacks or onto pallets, depending on the postal sort.

The sack and pallet scan marks on the top copy of the bundle, along with the sack or pallet number printed on the address, insure that the bundles are placed into the appropriate container. Each sack or pallet is then labeled, using the sack tags and pallet markers produced during the processing of the mailing list. For jobs that will drop ship to additional entry points, additional pallet flags are placed on the appropriate pallets for each entry. This helps material handling personnel identify that these pallets will be drop shipped vs. entered locally at the plant.

In some cases, the mailing occurs after the magazine or catalog is stitched or bound. Examples of this would be polybagged pieces, back issue mailings, etc. We refer to this type of mailing as off-line mailing. The same process occurs as described above, the only difference is that the process occurs after stitching or binding is complete, using equipments such as a polybagger or off-line mailer.

In some cases, customers request multiple mail drop dates for a single mailing, usually a week or more apart. Customers may do this to stagger the delivery of the mail so that they can better handle the resulting incoming responses to the mailing (such as catalog orders), or to accommodate dated material, such as trade show issues, dated retail sales events, or special announcements. In these cases, the prepared mail is staged in the printing plant to await the requested mail drop date.

**The verification**

Once the mail has physically been prepared into bundles, sacks and pallets, it is presented to the USPS for verification. Each plant has a detached mail unit (DMU), which is a USPS office located inside the printing plant. DMU acceptance clerks weigh the mail, check the mail for presort accuracy, barcode quality, and content. They reconcile this information with the mailing statements produced by the distribution department, and verify that adequate postage funds have been deposited into the trust account. At this point, the round date

stamp is placed on the mailing statements (and Form 8125 clearance documents for drop shipped mail), which is the official USPS seal that the mail has been paid for, verified and accepted. At this point, it is “officially” mail. Once the mail has been verified and accepted, it is loaded on to either postal trucks for local entry, or on to private carrier trucks for drop shipping.

**The shipping**

If the mail is locally entered, the mail on the fully loaded postal trucks leaves the plant and is transported to the local USPS bulk mail center (BMC). For the Kansas City plant, the local BMC is in Kansas City KS. For the Long Prairie plant, the local BMC is in Eagan MN. For the Greenfield plant, the local BMC is in Cincinnati OH. If the mail is drop shipped, the mail on the fully loaded private carrier trucks is shipped to a consolidation center. For the Long Prairie plant, this center is located in Maple Grove MN at Banta’s catalog group printing plant. For the Kansas City and Greenfield plants, the center is located in Bolingbrook IL at a freight consolidation company.

At the consolidation centers, the mail is combined with other mail for similar destinations and loaded onto trucks to those postal facilities. The mail is held at the consolidation center for no more than 48 hours for consolidation and to insure fully loaded trucks. More often, the mail is processed through these facilities within 24 hours. Using freight consolidators keeps the shipping costs down and maximizes postal discounts, because consolidators have much larger volumes of mail and can fill up trucks to more postal destinations than would be possible if we shipped the mail direct from the plants.

There are occasions when drop ship mail is shipped directly from the plants rather than going through a consolidation center. An example of this would be geographically concentrated jobs where the volume to a few closely located postal facilities is sufficient to fill one or more trucks. Another example would be jobs that include newsstand or bulk copies to destinations closely located to postal facilities; again in sufficient volumes to fill one or more trucks.

*This summarizes how your mail is processed through the printing plant. In the next issue, we will cover how the mail is processed through the USPS.*

**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)

**BANTA Mailbox**

is a monthly publication produced by the BANTA Publications Group. Any comments or questions are welcome. Please contact Monica Lundquist of the BANTA Publications Group by phone at 816-792-6370, by e-mail at [mlundquist@banta.com](mailto:mlundquist@banta.com), or write to BANTA Publications Group, Mailing & Distribution Services, 3401 Heartland Drive, Liberty, MO 64068-3378.

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# Banta Workshops

## Printing process seminars include distribution training

If you are not already aware, Banta Publications Group offers on-site workshops to our customers at all three plant locations. The Partners In Printing Excellence (PIPE) program is an intensive two-and-a-half-day seminar that covers the printing process, from pre-press through final distribution. The workshop is designed to provide information on all areas of the printing process, including pre-press, press, bindery, scheduling, paper, distribution and customer service. The format of the program allows you to learn more about these processes and how they impact your particular magazine or catalog. It also allows for one-on-one consultation with production experts throughout the plant and networking with other publishers.

The distribution function is one of the areas covered in the program. This session deals with a variety of issues regarding postal regulations, rates, drop shipping, etc. Sessions at the Kansas City plant include a tour of the local Bulk Mail Center so you can see first-hand how your mail is processed once it leaves the printing plant and is entered into the postal system.

Listed at right are the dates of the sessions for 2003 for each of the facilities, as well as contact information if you are interested in registering or need additional information. There is no charge for

this workshop and all meals are provided. These sessions are very popular and fill up fast, so if you are interested in participating, contact your Banta client services representative or use the contact information below.

### 2003 Banta Workshops

#### **Kansas City plant:**

May 12-15, 2003

October 13-16, 2003

Contact Jerry Himmelberg at  
jhimmelberg@banta.com

#### **Long Prairie plant:**

May 5-8, 2003

July 14-17, 2003

August 11-14, 2003

Contact John Suek at [jsuek@banta.com](mailto:jsuek@banta.com) or  
Marla Schnell at [mschnell@banta.com](mailto:mschnell@banta.com)

#### **Greenfield plant:**

April 7-9, 2003

October 6-8, 2003

Contract Kris Greene at [kgreene@banta.com](mailto:kgreene@banta.com)

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