

Envelopes

Mohawk Fine Papers Inc.
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When designing envelopes, you need to make sure they will meet postal requirements, print well, and be sturdy enough to protect the contents until they reach their destination.

Envelope papers must not interfere with automated address reading. If considering brilliant colored, highly glazed paper or paper with an overall tint or graphic, a U.S. Post Office representative should review the design to be certain that it meets postal standards.

Think about how the envelope will be addressed, and consider how it will look when paired with various types of labels or ink jet printed addresses. Make sure that the addressing label will adhere to the chosen paper stock.

Envelope paper

The U.S.P.S. requires that envelopes be constructed in at least 16 lb. paper and recommends 24 lb. and up basis weights.

Printing after converting

Printers generally prefer printing converted envelopes without bleeds. Bleeds can only be positioned on three sides of an envelope, leaving one of the short dimension edges for the gripper of the press. Non-bleed images and addresses may be printed on the back flap.

Screens or printed text may sometimes appear heavier on the seams, where the double thickness of paper and glue create a raised area. Depending on your artwork, it may be best to choose a side-seam or diagonal-seam envelope.

Printing prior to conversion

In printing an unconverted envelope, it's possible to bleed solids or screens on all four sides of the outside and inside of the envelope and flap. Bleeds on the inside of the envelope are common for both dramatic effect and provide security through added opacity. Always contact your envelope convertor before printing to find out if there are any special requirements for areas that will be glued.

Aligning seams

Because of the variability in die-cutting and folding, avoid designs that require an exact register across an envelope's seam.

Stamping and embossing

Unlike converted envelopes, unconverted envelopes allow you to foil-stamp and emboss a design without leaving a debossed image on the opposite side of the envelope.

continued

The U.S. Postal Service publishes the Domestic Mail Manual, an extensive list of requirements.

THE BASICS:

All mailpieces 1/4" thick or less must be rectangular in shape, at least 3 1/2" high and at least 5" long.

A mailpiece must be at least .007" (7pt.) thick when it does not exceed 4 1/4" in height and 6" in length.

A mailpiece must be at least .009" (9pt.) thick if it is greater than 6" in length or width or both.

For a Domestic Mail Manual, visit www.usps.gov or write to:

Superintendent of Documents
Mail Stop SSOM
Washington, DC 20402-9375

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Layout

To avoid costly mistakes and structural problems, be sure your printer asks for an envelope layout guide and instructions from the paper merchant or envelope convertor. Be sure to leave enough time in the schedule for the extra steps and communications that conversion requires.

Laser printing on envelopes

Test your envelope in the laser printer before running to avoid jamming and creasing caused by envelope thickness. Spot tacking of the seal flap can occur when the glue is exposed to the intense heat and moisture generated in the fusion chamber of the laser printer. If the flap starts to stick, open the door alongside the fusion chamber while printing. If tacking continues, place a small, low velocity electric fan near the open chamber door to circulate fresh air through the chamber.

Convertors

Envelopes are manufactured by convertors who sell to paper merchants. Some printers also have envelope converting equipment. You should consult with both early on in the planning process.

Availability

Because of the large number of possible paper/envelope size combinations, it is not possible for any merchant to inventory a complete selection of envelopes. Merchants and envelope convertors stock a subset of popular sizes—typically No. 10 commercial, A2, A6, etc. in cream or white stock. However, any text weight can be converted into any size or style as long as you plan ahead. A good rule of thumb is to allow three weeks for non-standard envelope orders. Contact your paper representative early in the process to ensure that the envelopes arrive by your press date.

Envelopes made from Mohawk, Strathmore and Beckett grades are stocked by:

> National Envelope Company 1-800-448-3463

Envelopes made from Mohawk grades are also stocked by:

> Leader Paper Products 1-800-876-2273

> JRC Industries 1-562-698-0171

For more information, please call your local merchant or Mohawk at 1 800 the mill.

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