



# Speed up your post

**an post**  
**commerce**

For your world

# An Post want to provide you with the best postal service possible.

**We've invested heavily over the years in automating our mail processes so that your post can be delivered quickly and efficiently.**

OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is well established within An Post and is so called because of its capacity to Optically Recognise Characters within address blocks and sort through mail at the phenomenal rate of 40,000 pieces per hour.

To achieve maximum sorting rate OCR must be presented with mail which is compatible with its capabilities.

In this comprehensive "Speed up your Post" leaflet you have a handy guide to post preparation which will not only ensure that the whole system works more efficiently, but most importantly will get your post there on time.

Definitions of sizes, weights, formats etc. in this document are not a legal definition of a "letter", " large envelope", "packet", "parcel" or "postcard". This guide is to be used to maximise the machinability and OCR (Optical Character Recognition) of your mail to allow for speedier and quicker sorting and delivery of your mail.

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Speeding up your post

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# Address layout

## Standard Structure

- Each element of the address (e.g. County, Town, Locality, Street) should appear on a separate line. This facilitates our automated system which matches an address element from our electronic address database.
- The Eircode should appear on the last line of the address. Dublin postal districts should appear on the line above the Eircode. Abbreviations such as D4 or Dub 1 should not be used.
- Addresses outside of the Dublin postal districts should include the County Name and identifier on the line above the Eircode. The Post Town should appear on the line above the County. See sample address layouts on page 7.
- Post Towns are the nearest towns in which mail is sorted and delivered to the recipient and may be some distance from the recipients location. If the recipient lives near a county boundary the Post Town may be in the neighbouring county from which the recipient resides. (e.g. if the recipient lives in Ardmore, Co. Waterford, the postal address is Ardmore, Youghal, Co. Cork as the mail is sorted and delivered from the Youghal Delivery Services Unit.)
- In the case of international addresses, the name of the destination country should appear on the last line of the address.
- Addresses should be left justified. Nothing resembling an address should be printed on the back of an envelope. No non address text should appear within the address block.
- Do not use colour, italics, underlining or punctuation including commas in the address.
- Printed addresses are recommended, however if the address is hand written please use block capitals.

## Address Block Spacing

Address lines should have a minimum spacing of 2mm and maximum spacing of 4mm in between each address line.

## Business Reply / Freepost Address Structure City Addresses

Business Reply or Freepost should appear on the address line above the town and county.

## County Addresses

Outside cities, Business Reply or Freepost should appear on the line above the town and county.

## PO Box Address Structure City Addresses

A PO Box number should appear above the postal district in Dublin addresses.

## County Addresses

Outside cities PO Box should appear on the address line above town & county.

## Business Reply or Freepost

When a PO Box number is combined with Business Reply or Freepost it must always appear above Business Reply or Freepost.

## Suitable Fonts and Sizes

The recommended address font is Arial black text on a white background. Other sans serif fonts such as Gothic, Helvetica or Calibri can also be used.

Font sizes 11pt, 12pt and 13pt are perfect with a pitch value of 10, 11 or 12 (i.e. letters not too close together).

# Envelope content and colours

## Content

When posting keys, coins, metal objects or thick card it is best to use jiffy or padded envelopes. Staples, metal or plastic clips should not be used on the envelope itself. Certain levels of phosphor and/or metal in the outer cover of mail items can result in the rejection of the mail items from the automated system. Please contact the Customer Service at 01 705 7600 for technical advice.

## Colours

White and pastel coloured envelopes provide the best background for OCR recognition. Dark backgrounds such as red, yellow, orange, blue or green are unsuitable and should not be used.

Preferred colour:



Suitable colour:

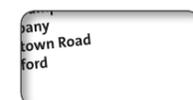


Unsuitable colour:



## Perfect Fit

Check that contents are not loose in the envelope, otherwise the address can disappear from the window.

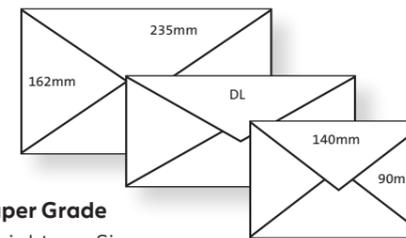


# Envelope specifications

## Letter/Postcard

### Size

Standard envelopes range from:  
Minimum Size 90mm x 140mm  
Maximum Size 162mm x 235mm



### Paper Grade

Weight	Size
75gsm	Letter
110gsm	Postcard 104mm (H) x 140mm (L)
160gsm	Postcard 162mm (H) x 250mm (L)

### Item Depth (thickness)

Standard envelopes including contents should be at least 0.18mm in thickness and not exceed 5mm.

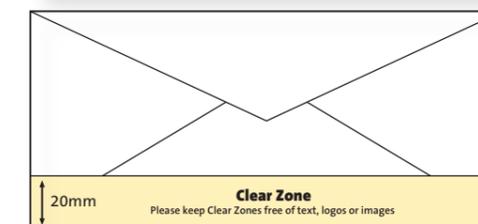
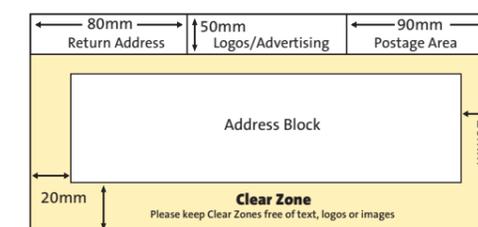


### Plastic

Transparent, plastic & shrink wrapped items are not permitted for Letters or Postcards.

### Height to length ratio

The length of the envelope should be 1.5 x its height.

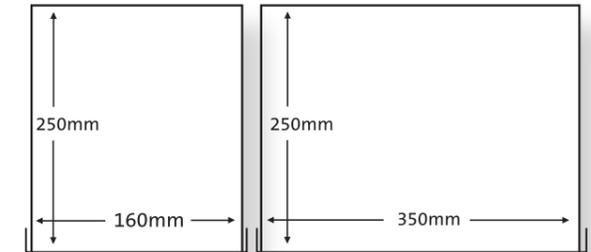


The clear zone at the bottom of the front and back of the envelope should be the same white or pastel colour. This avoids colour contrast between the front and back which can sometimes lead to false doubles detection.

## Large Envelope

### Size

Standard envelopes range from:  
Minimum Size 160mm x 250mm  
Maximum Size 250mm x 350mm



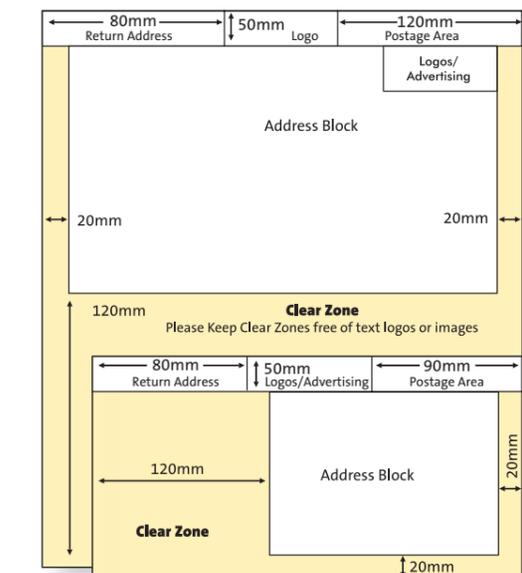
### Item Depth (thickness)

Large envelopes including contents should be at least 0.18mm in thickness and not exceed 18mm.



### Paper Grade/Plastic

Recommended minimum paper weight for envelopes is 75gsm. Transparent, plastic & shrink wrapped items are fine for OCR but shrink wrapped items should have a consistent surface and plastic wrapping tightly fitted. When overlabelling plastic or shrink wrapped items, please ensure that the address is printed on a white label.



Ensure all envelopes are sealed without excess glue which can cause envelopes to stick together.

# Windows, labels and paper quality

## Windows and Labels

Ensure the window or label is positioned within the address block & text is left aligned.

Label sizes min 32mm x 70mm, max 50mm x 120mm

Make sure that only the address appears in the window/label. Text should not be closer than 15mm from the left edge of the window/label and not closer than 5mm from the top, bottom & right hand side of the window/label.

Ensure the address (and label if using one) is straight. The maximum tolerance for text skew is +/- 5° from the horizontal.

## Window Surface

Window surface should be shiny rather than matt with no wrinkles. Contrast ratio should be >50%

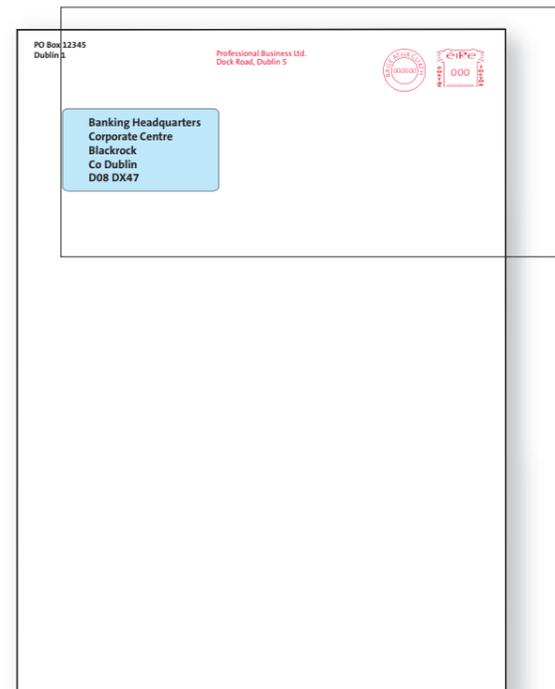
- Window opacity <25%
- Window transparency >75%

## Paper Quality

Ensure your paper quality is not so poor that letter text is visible through either the envelope or address area. Paper specifications for small and large envelopes are outlined separately under the envelope specifications section. The gloss levels on the paper should not be too high to prevent the absorption of ink used for ID tag printing during the automation process.

## Use of plastic covers

The use of plastic covers on letters / postcards is prohibited. However in the case of large envelopes customers who wish to print addresses directly onto plastic should do so on a white background ensuring the plastic is tightly wrapped around each item.



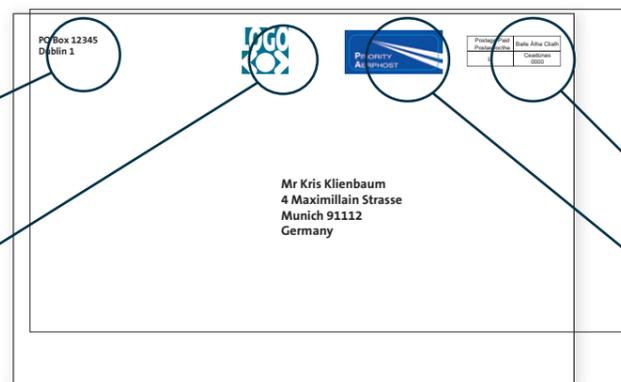
# Return addressing, advertising and other insignia

## Return Address

Return address should appear here, Font size 8 or smaller.

## Logos & Advertising

Place logos or advertising here.



## Postage

Postage should go here

## Air Mail

Air Mail labels should appear to the left of the postage area.

**Back of large Envelope:** logos and advertising can appear on the back of the envelope.

# Sample address layouts

## Dublin Postal District address

Sample layout



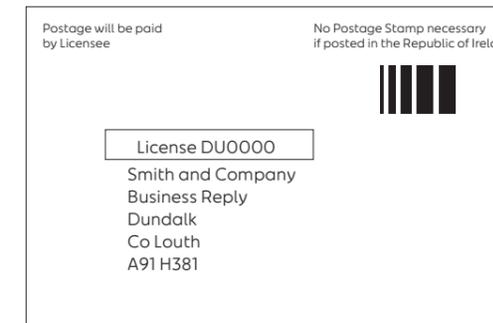
## County Dublin or Provincial address

Sample layout



## Business Reply

Sample layout



## Freepost

Sample layout



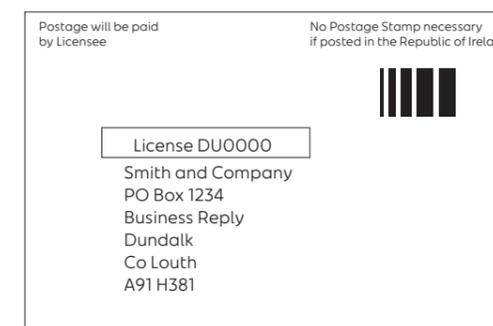
## PO Box

Sample layout



## PO Box business reply

Sample layout



## PO Box Freepost

Sample layout



For further details with regard to speeding up your post:

**Visit:** [anpost.ie](https://anpost.ie)

**Call Customer Services:** 01 705 7600

**Email:** [Customer.Services@anpost.ie](mailto:Customer.Services@anpost.ie)

**Write to:** An Post, Customer Services, GPO, O'Connell Street Lower  
Freepost, Dublin 1, D01 F5P2

**Call into:** your local Post Office and ask for details.

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