Intelligent Mail Barcode

SALEM 1

Intelligent Mail Barcode is REQUIRED

In an effort to continue to streamline services and delivery the United States Postal Service (USPS) will require the use of the Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB). Mailers will need to be compliant on both their outgoing mail and reply mail. In order to receive any presorted barcode discounts the IMB MUST be used on outgoing mail. Good news here is PostMark has already made the change over to the IMB.

Additionally, the USPS will require the use of the IMB on ALL reply mail. In order to use the IMB on your reply mail you need to obtain a Mailer ID. You can get a Mailer ID by going to https://gateway.usps.com/bcg/login/htm and register as a new user if you do not already have an online account set up with the USPS.

For more information, go to: https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intelligentmail

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the USPS changing to the IMB?
The IMB gives the USPS more flexibility in sorting mail as well as tracking mail as it moves through the system. You can have tracking information embedded into the IMB so you can see how your mail is advancing through the USPS system.

What is the difference between the normal barcode and the IMB?
The current barcode encodes only the zip code, Plus 4, delivery point and a final destination check digit. The IMB encodes more data such as class of mail, sortation, the Mailer ID (USPS knows to whom the mail belongs), tracking data (if applicable), unique ID of the mail piece, zip code, Plus 4, and delivery point. The IMB also allows for quicker sortations and mail to be sorted by bundles rather than individual pieces.

Do I need to leave more room in the address area to accommodate the IMB?
Yes, the IMB is a taller barcode and does require more space. We suggest considering when using window envelopes, investigate the cost difference between the normal 1" window and a 1.25" window depending on how much data is being used for your address.

What does the IMB look like compared to the postnet barcode?
Below are examples of return pieces, the one on the left has the postnet barcode and the one on the right has an IMB.

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