save.

VALASSIS / MARKETING SOLUTIONS

2022 DIRECT MAIL

/ SPECIFICATIONS GUIDE

/ MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

Save Direct Mail advertisement specifications are divided into three categories: Production Spec, Production Spec (+) and Exception Request. Materials outside these specifications may not run reliably and we may decline to run copy that exceeds the published specifications. In the event we agree to attempt to run out of spec material on an exception basis, additional charges above the Production Spec (+) charge may be required. In any event, we are not responsible for shortages experienced for out-of-spec material.

Copy Specs

Production Spec

	Single sheet	Multi-page product
Width min.	5"	5"
Width max.	10"	11"
Length min.	5"	6"
Length max.	12"	12.5"
Thickness min.	.0028"	.0045"
Thickness max.	.01"	.125"
Aspect Ratio	<2.0	<2.0

Production Spec (+)

Requires upcharge in accordance with Direct Mail Special Services Rate Card

	Single sheet	Multi-page product
Width min.	4.00"	4.00"
Width max.	11"	11.75"
Length min.	5"	6"
Length max.	12.5"	13"
Thickness min.	.0023"	.0040"
Thickness max.	.01"	.125"
Aspect Ratio	<3.0	<3.0

Exception Request

The following require pre-approval from Copy Specification Team and are subject to Spec (+) or additional fees if applicable.

Format	Criteria
Die cuts	Die-cuts are subject to USPS regulations. All requests must be accompanied by a physical sample or die-cut diagram. (See Die-Cut Guidelines for additional information.)
Perforation	Perforations should not be smaller than 16 TPI and should not be closer than 1/8" from the edge of the sheet (no bleed to the edge).
Paper Bags, Magnets, Product Samples, Attachments (gift cards, loyalty cards, etc.)	Physical samples must be provided to Copy Specification Team for evaluation and pre-approval. Attachments must be tipped to a carrier piece when submitted.

Dimension Definitions

- **Length** is measured by the spine (folding edge). All products are inserted by the spine
- **Width** is measured from the spine to the open edge
- **Folded pieces** must have a tight fold without distortions
- **Aspect Ratio** is the longer side divided by the shorter side
- **Single Sheet** is one sheet of paper with two sides and no folds
- **Multi-Page Product** is any piece that is folded or bound creating a thickness of more than one sheet

Pre-Approved Exceptions As Spec (+)

- Multi-page copy with length between 8.0" and 10.0" and between 0.010" and 0.050" thick may have a width as small as 3.75"

Other Guidelines

- All copy attributes are taken from the finished piece in the form it would be loaded into the insertion equipment, not how the piece is printed
- All envelopes must be sealed
- Envelopes follow the multi-page copy specifications
- Coupon books follow the multi-page copy specifications
- All stepped-page multi-page copy is Spec (+)
- All multi-page products must have a closed feed edge. Folded pieces must have a tight fold without distortions. No open flaps facing the direction of feed.
- Maximum weight of an insert is 4 oz.
- Maximum allowable off-fold is 3"
- Maximum allowable pop-out page is 2"
- Unattached or un-nested Spadia must be 2/3 the length of the host piece. Other Spadia formats must be pre-approved.
- For 6 page folded pieces (3 panel), the panels must overlap by at least 2/3 of the width of the page
- Non-stepped multi-page copy with more than 2 points of thickness must be pre-approved

General Requirements — Client Supplied Material

Version Coding

All materials must contain a unique version code — a series of letters and numbers that identify each version of the advertisement for proper mailing distribution.

- For example, version code ABC-XXXX1234 represents the first three letters of the company's name (ABC) and a unique alphanumeric code (XXXX1234) for identifying a specific version of the company's materials.

Version codes should be:

- Printed plainly on the front of each mailing piece (preferably in the lower right-hand corner)
- Printed in 10 point type-size (or greater)
- Made up of a minimum of 5 characters and a maximum of 20 characters
- We are not responsible for errors or shortages due to failure to follow version code guidelines

Count Verifications

- Material counts may be verified by weight or other means at our discretion
- We assume responsibility for the accuracy of counts only for materials printed and provided by us
- Material printed by the client is subject to count verification at the time of mailing
- We are not responsible for weight verification of materials which do not adhere to normal copy-in deadlines

Overruns

We require a certain percentage of overruns — the number of pieces printed in excess of the quantity specified — to complete each job. In the event we agree to run out of spec material, additional overrun(s) will be required.

Overruns

Versions up to 50,000..... 4%
Versions 50,000 - 100,000.... 3%
Versions over 100,000 ..... 2%

[1]Quantities of 250,000 or greater can be reviewed for possible reduction in overrun percentages on a client-by-client basis.

We will discard any remaining overrun material after the mail verification, unless otherwise instructed. We are not responsible for shortages due to insufficient overruns.

Copy Deadlines

Copy must be delivered within the mutually agreed day and time. Failure to comply could result in additional charges or missing the desired mail date.

Special Charges

Unless agreed upon in advance, the following items or situations may result in additional charges:

- Any material that is incorrectly packaged or is missing paperwork is subject to additional charges
- Any material held after the order is completed is subject to a monthly storage fee per warehouse storage location. A per-pallet storage fee will be charged for material over 30 days in idle storage.
- Interruption of workflow, waiting time or re-set up caused by shortages or late delivery of customer supplied material.
- Any client-supplied material that has been separated in transit and needs to be re-stacked, repackaged, or reprinted. (We will not be liable for damaged or non-machinable materials.)
- Change notices requiring rescheduling of production.
- Special weight verification requests
- A $100/hour rate will be charged for any rework caused by damaged copy or poor quality copy

Early Copy Restrictions

Due to limited storage space, copy should arrive no earlier than 7 calendar days prior to the copy due date. Copy arriving earlier is subject to refusal or additional storage fees.

Packing List/Manifest, Skid Flags, Carton Labels

Each of these documents should contain the following information (see chart below).

	Client name	Version code	Total quantity ordered	Total weight	Total number of skids per version	TARE weight	Piece weight total quantity per skid	Total quantity per carton	Total number of cartons per skid	In-home date
Packing list/ ASN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Skid flag	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Carton labels	✓	✓						✓		

Notes

- Each skid should have one copy of the skid flag and material attached
- Each carton should have a label, as well as a sample piece of copy attached on adjacent sides

Bill Of Lading

A separate Bill of Lading (BOL) stamped "Prepaid" must accompany each truckload and contain the following information:

- Printer name, contact person, and phone number
- Trucking company
- Customer and promotion name
- Number of skids
- BOL not required for FedEx and UPS box shipments

Shipping & Receiving Requirements

Payment

We will not accept COD shipments — all payments must be arranged in advance through credit or prepayment.

Hours/Schedule

- Normal receiving hours are 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Specific hours may vary by branch. Contact your Direct Mail Branch or account representative for details
- Alternative receiving hours can be arranged. Contact your Direct Mail Branch or account representative for details.
- Appointments are required for copy deliveries. If appointment has not been made, trucks will be unloaded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Refusal Of Shipment

We reserve the right to refuse any shipment if the trailer is unsafe for unloading.

Packaging Requirements

Pallets

Environmentally friendly plastic pallets are preferred.

All product loads must be placed on pallets. Pallets must be open on all sides, allowing for 4-way entry, and have the following dimensions:

- 48" in maximum length
- 40" in maximum width
- 60" in maximum height
- 2,200 lbs. in maximum weight
- Pallets must be grade B quality

Any material arriving on 3rd party rental pallets (i.e. Perfect Pallets,RM2 Pallets) must receive prior approval from our Operations team. We do not accept responsibility for their storage or return.

Multiple Versions

- Multiple versions in cartons packaged on a single pallet must be separated by cardboard dividers.
- Multiple versions not in cartons must be placed on separate pallets.

Protection

Pallet tops

- The use of wooden pallet toppers is highly discouraged. For safety reasons, any wooden pallet top used must be less than 20 lbs.
- To prevent shifting or crushing of loads, all pallets should be secured by:
  - corner guards
  - cross bands
  - stretch wrap and/or shrink wrap
- Pallet tops should match but not exceed the size of the skid to help protect contents against damage.
- No metal banding material is allowed.

Skid covers

One protective cover should be placed on the skid before stacking material, and another before topping, to prevent damaged and curled material. Materials should not extend beyond the edges of the skid.

Tier sheets

Tier sheets of cardboard should be used on every other tier to keep material flat.

Gaps

Gaps between bundles or unsecured "lifts" in a tier should be avoided to prevent sagging of the next tier. Lifts should span gaps in the tier to prevent the end of the lift from slipping into the gap.

Folded material

Folded pieces should be brick stacked (e.g., open edge alternating left to right) in groups of 50 to 150 pieces (approximately 4 inches thick) with the same side of the document always facing up to ensure square, flat lifts with interlocking layers.

Small Shipments

Small shipments may be boxed in cartons instead of bulk-stacked on skids.

- Different versions must be stacked in separate cartons.
- There must be dividers between rows on the tier.
- Folded materials may be turned by handfuls to prevent a "shingling" effect.
- Lifts or turns should be a minimum of 25, but not exceed 5 inches in height.
- Lifts should be separated by sheets.
- Carton contents should not be wrapped or banded with plastic, string or rubber bands.
- Minimum test weight of the carton is 200 to 275 pounds.
- Carton and contents may not exceed 40 pounds.
- If multiple versions of copy are boxed & shipped on the same pallet, the packing list must include the number of boxes of each version.

Document and packaging requirements developed in conjunction with the Research & Engineering Council of the Graphic Arts Industry, Inc.