

The **Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb™)** is a 65-bar Postal Service™ barcode used to sort and track letters and flats. It allows mailers to use a single barcode to participate in multiple Postal Service programs simultaneously, expands mailers' ability to track individual mailpieces, and provides greater mailstream visibility.

The **Intelligent Mail barcode** can be applied on letters and flats, instead of the POSTNET™ barcode, on

Information on OneCode ACS is available in [Publication 8b, OneCode ACS Technical Guide](#). Information on OneCode Confirm is available in [Confirm Service Featuring OneCode Confirm User Guide \(Publication 197\)](#). Users should also read [A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats](#), which provides in-depth information on the Intelligent Mail program.

Priority Mail®, First-Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, and Periodicals, as well as on Bound Printed Matter flats. The POSTNET barcode will be retired in May 2011. The Intelligent Mail barcode can be used for OneCode Confirm™ service, and it can be used for address correction services: manual address correction notices, traditional ACS™, OneCode ACS®, and Intelligent Mail's Full-Service ACS™. **OneCode Confirm** provides information on when and where the Postal Service sorts a mailpiece on mail processing equipment. **Traditional ACS, OneCode ACS, and Full-Service ACS** provide

mailers with electronic address-correction information when a mailpiece cannot be delivered as addressed.

STEP 1: Download and Install the Encoder and Font

1 The Intelligent Mail barcode consists of a 20-digit Tracking Code (Barcode Identifier, Service Type Identifier, Mailer Identifier, and Serial Number) and a Routing Code (ZIP™ Code) field of up to 11 digits. An encoder is required to convert the digits into a 65-character string representing the bars of the IMb, and a special font is required to convert the 65-character string into the IMb itself. Users can download a library of IMb fonts and computer source code from the [Fonts and Encoders Download](#) page on [RIBBS](#). The [Intelligent Mail Barcode Resource Download Site](#) provides many useful links and answers to frequently asked questions.

Once the encoder and font are installed, verify the print quality by producing samples, as instructed in the encoder package. [The Intelligent Mail barcode Specification USPS-B-3200](#) and [The Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide](#) provide extensive technical information about Intelligent Mail barcodes.

STEP 2: Apply for a Mailer Identifier

2 A Mailer Identifier (Mailer ID or MID) is required for the IMb with the exception of Origin Confirm (see [DMM 708.4.3.1\(c\)](#)). New Mailer IDs are assigned through centralized USPS processes, generally the [Business Customer Gateway](#). Refer to the [User Access to Electronic Mailing Information and Reports Guide](#) on [RIBBS](#), which has step-by-step instructions for using the Mailer ID System. Mail owners and mail preparers will be assigned six- or nine-digit MIDs based on annual mail volume as verified by the USPS. The six-digit MIDs assigned begin with '0' through '8'; nine-digit MIDs begin with '9'. The [Intelligent Mail Mailer ID Application](#) page on [RIBBS](#) explains the few exceptions to the use of the Business Customer Gateway for obtaining new Mailer IDs, such as requests for multiple Mailer IDs or when mailing agents are acting on behalf of mail owners.

STEP 3: Populate the Barcode Fields

3 The five IMb fields are the **Barcode Identifier**, the **Service Type Identifier**, the **Mailer ID**, the **Serial Number**, and the **Routing Code (ZIP Code)**. The **barcode identifier** field should be "00" (zero-zero) with the exception of automation-price eligible flat-sized mail bearing a printed optional endorsement line (OEL). When mailers prepare flat-size pieces using IMbs to meet automation-price eligibility requirements, the IMbs on any pieces bearing printed OELs must contain the barcode identifier corresponding to the printed OEL used. See the [Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide](#) to determine the correct barcode identifier.

The attributes that determine which **Service Type Identifier (STID)** should appear in an IMb are the class of mail, the ACS service desired, and whether Confirm® service is desired. [A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats](#) has extensive information on selecting STIDs.

The **Mailer Identifier (MID)** is explained in Step 2, above. All Intelligent Mail barcodes must contain a valid MID with the exception of Origin Confirm mailpieces.

The **Serial Number**, in conjunction with the MID and class of mail identified by the STID, can uniquely identify the mailpiece. Serial number uniqueness is not required to qualify for basic automation prices. Intelligent Mail's full-service option does require serial number uniqueness and mailers must ensure that these numbers remain unique for a period of at least 45 days. Depending on the length of the MID, the serial number is either a six- or nine-digit number.

The **Routing Code** can contain a five-digit ZIP Code, nine-digit ZIP+4[®] Code, or 11-digit delivery point code. To obtain automation discounts, a delivery point ZIP Code from Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS)-certified software is required. Mailers may opt not to populate the ZIP Code and use the IMb only for tracking the mailpiece. If populated, it must never be padded with leading or trailing zeros that are not part of a valid five-, nine-, or 11-digit ZIP Code.

The Intelligent Mail barcode concatenates the five fields in this way:

Six-digit Mailer Identifier

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID		Service Type ID			Mailer ID						Serial Number						Routing Code (ZIP)													
[2N]		[3N]			[6N]						[9N]						[none,5,9, or 11N]													

Nine-digit Mailer Identifier

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID		Service Type ID			Mailer ID						Serial Number						Routing Code (ZIP)													
[2N]		[3N]			[9N]						[6N]						[none, 5, 9 or 11N]													

STEP 4: Put Everything Together

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Once mailers have selected service(s), received their MID, and devised a unique serial number strategy, they are ready to put the five fields together to form the 20- to 31-digit string, encode it to 65 characters, and convert the 65-character string using the IMb font to form the 65-bar Intelligent Mail barcode as in the example below. On letters, the Intelligent Mail barcode can be placed in the address block or in the barcode clear zone. On flats, it can be placed on the address side at least 1/8 inch from the edge of the piece.

EXAMPLE: An IMb with a Barcode ID of 00, Service Type ID of 270 (First-Class Mail, Intelligent Mail full-service option, with Confirm service, no address correction), Mailer ID 123456, uniquely identified by Serial Number 200800001, and going to ZIP Code 98765-4321(01), is encoded as follows:

Digit String: 0027012345620080000198765432101

→ *Intelligent Mail barcode encoder* → **Encoded string**

(T=Tracker, F=Full Bar, A=Ascender, D=Descender):

TTFAFDADTFFFADTAFADTTDATDFAAFTDAFDFFDFDATFDFTDDDDFADFFDADDTTDDTTDAT

→ *Intelligent Mail barcode font* → **Intelligent Mail barcode:**



To learn more about the IMb, including the complete specifications, visit the [RIBBS Web site](#).