

Advertising Mail reference guidelines

Reference guidelines for Advertising Mail

This reference guide will provide you with an understanding of what key attributes are needed for the Advertising Mail specification so you can ensure your mail complies with the Advertising Mail requirements. The details in this reference guide are taken from the Royal Mail's User Guide which must be referred to when preparing your letters.

The full Advertising Mail specification can be found in the relevant up to date Royal Mail User Guide and Royal Mails schedule 6 document¹. For additional help, please ask your account manager. The Royal Mail's full Advertising Mail specification and this reference guideline are in addition to the full Royal Mail User Guide which should be used to ensure your mail complies with all guidelines, tariffs and presentation requirements.

1. Background

This reference guideline sets out the terms on which Royal Mail agree that you may post Advertising Mail, the criteria for which must be satisfied in full to qualify for the relevant Advertising Mail postage rates. Advertising Mail is a six working day delivery service performed Monday to Saturday. Royal Mail aim to deliver our customers mailing items on the first working day after handover and acceptance by them, from Citipost Mail.

2. Definitions and interpretation

This section explains the meaning of some words and phrases in this reference guide, defined below:

Words/phrases	Definition
Advertising Mail	Mailing items which are declared by you (the customer) as Advertising Mail, and which meet the criteria for Advertising Mail set out in this reference guide
Advertising Mail discount	The reduction on the charges payable on a mailing item eligible for Advertising Mail compared to the charges payable on the applicable non-Advertising Mail access service, as published on the Royal Mail website and as amended from time to time in line with the terms of the Royal Mail access contracts for the amendment of access charges
Advertising Mail posting	A UCID posting containing only Advertising Mail
ASBOF	The Advertising Standards Board of Finance or any successor body of that organisation from time to time
ASBOF levy	The voluntary levy on Advertising Mail payable to ASBOF



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Advertising Mail	An access service, as detailed in our Advertising Mail reference guidelines and defined in detail in Royal Mail's most up to date User Guide and Schedule 6 document
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3. Specifications for Advertising Mail

The specifications and requirements set out in this reference guideline are in addition to the specifications and requirements contained elsewhere in the Royal Mail User Guide in reference to Royal Mails presentation and tariff guidelines. Customers must ensure they comply with all Royal Mail guidelines in reference to their mail items.

However to specifically qualify as Advertising Mail the customer must ensure:

That all mailing items:

- Consist of a largely uniform message to all addressees of the Advertising Mail posting.
- Have the purpose of promoting the sale or use of products or services, or to encourage contribution to or support of a cause.
- Are presented in trays or bags or, as long as the requirements set out in the Royal Mail user guide for an unbagged posting are met, are presented unbagged.
- Are presented in bags or trays that exclusively contain Advertising Mail and if presented as an unbagged posting, are in bundles that exclusively contain Advertising Mail.
- Meet the requirements of the data specification set out in section 4 of this reference guide and seed mailing items set out in section 5 of this guideline.
- Comply with the presentation specifications of the Royal Mail User Guide.

That each Advertising Mail posting:

- Contains a minimum 4,000 mailing items in a daily posting.
- Is assigned a UCID pertaining to your 'Originating Customer' or 'Customer Entity'. (For clarity, you may not mix mailing items with different mailing pack designs in containers assigned to a single UCID).²

4. Data specification

There are very specific guidelines around data condition, processes and management with regards to the requirements to meet the conditions of Advertising Mail. Please refer to each of the points below and ensure your mail complies with these guidelines.

- Where data is not from a consent based file, the customer must have a documented procedure in place that is used to suppress customer and prospect data against the Mailing Preference Service (MPS), including MPS Deceased, and each address list used by you (the customer) to prepare your Advertising Mail must on each occasion you (the customer) hand over Advertising Mail be run against these files not more than 30 days before the mailing



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item that uses the data is delivered to the recipient (and for the purpose of this reference guide, all references to the term 'delivered' shall mean 'posted').

- Keep and maintain an internal suppression file to ensure that opt-outs are properly logged, and each Advertising Mail posting must be run against these files 30 days or less before the mailing item that uses the data is handed over to Royal Mail.
- Ensure that at least 90 per cent of mailing items are fully and accurately addressed and postcoded in line with the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF®).

5. Seed Mailing Items

For each Advertising Mail posting you (the customer) must provide both Royal Mail and Citipost Mail with a sample of each mailing pack design to verify conformance to the content requirement of the Advertising Mail specification. This can be provided by including us as a seed to the posting. Royal Mail and Citipost Mail retain each of the items received and use them for reference during the Royal Mail Advertising Mail audit process (which is detailed further in section 7 of this reference guideline). You (the customer) are required to provide samples or seeds that are exact reproductions of the mailing items posted in terms of both envelopes used and contents enclosed for each Advertising Mail posting. The samples or seeds must be:

- Posted to Royal Mail and Citipost Mail at the below nominated addresses, or such other location(s) as may be notified from time to time:
 - RM Sample
Royal Mail Wholesale (immediately followed by your UCID²)
PO Box 72662
London
EW1 9LD
 - Citipost Mail
Unit 1 Langham Park
Berristow Lane
South Normanton
Derbyshire
DE55 2JL
- Included/handed over on the same date as the Advertising Mail posting is posted.

6. Failure to meet the specifications

If you (the customer) hand over an Advertising Mail posting and Royal Mail establish to their reasonable satisfaction that you (the customer) have not complied with all or any of your obligations under their Schedule 6 document or that mailing items in your Advertising Mail posting do not meet the Advertising Mail specifications, then Royal Mail may perform one or any of the following actions:



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- Reject the Advertising Mail posting.
- Allow Citipost Mail to hand over the Advertising Mail posting on your behalf but remove the Advertising Mail discount from that Advertising Mail posting and charge you (the customer) the applicable access charges for the access service specification that those mailing items meet .
- Suspend or terminate the customer's right to post Advertising Mail under their Schedule 6 document, immediately on giving written notice to you or your carrier (Citipost Mail).

7. Audit and non-compliance

Royal Mail must be reasonably satisfied at all times that you (the customer) can comply, and are complying, with the terms of their contract in relation to Advertising Mail including the terms of their Schedule 6 document. To satisfy them of your ability to comply and your continued compliance with those terms, you (the customer) agree, among other things, to do the following:

- Allow Royal Mail to carry out a compliance audit where necessary.
- Provide Royal Mail and Citipost Mail with seed mailing items or samples of the mailing packs.
- Ensure your (the customers) UCID is present on the seed mail packs.

Royal Mail reserves the right to audit Advertising Mail postings with Citipost Mail, its originating customers and customer entities. Should Royal Mail audit Citipost Mail and subsequently you (the customers) mail, we and you shall be expected to give all reasonable assistance with their audit process to show that the advertising mail guidelines are/have complied with all Advertising Mail guidelines. This may include giving Royal Mail access to Citipost Mails premises, staff, records and processes and subsequently the premises, staff, records and processes of our originating customers or customer entities where such access is reasonably required by Royal Mail for the purpose of their audits. If you require any further detail with reference to Royal Mail audits and non-compliance charges then please ask your Citipost Mail account manager, or refer to Royal Mails Schedule 6 document.

It is the responsibility of the original posting customer to ensure that all mailing items handed over to us as Advertising Mail meet the requirements of this reference guide and Royal Mails Access 6 schedule.

8. Pricing

Only mailing items considered and accepted by Royal Mail as eligible for Advertising Mail will qualify for the Advertising Mail discount. Royal Mail reserves the right to change the Advertising Mail discount on at least ten weeks' prior written notice. Royal Mail publish the Advertising Mail charges on the pricing page of their website, as amended from time to time. The charges for



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Advertising Mail as published include the Advertising Mail discount, for up to date pricing please contact your account manager.

9. Deduction of the ASBOF Levy

You (the customer) agree that Royal Mail may (so long as they are appointed to do so), collect the ASBOF levy on behalf of ASBOF on all direct mail mailing items presented as Advertising Mail under the terms of the contract. The ASBOF levy is voluntary. Royal Mail shall pass the entire value of the ASBOF levy to ASBOF at the end of each quarter of the financial year. The value of the ASBOF levy shall be that as stated on the pricing page of the Royal Mail website, as changed from time to time. You (the customer) and Royal Mail agree that when you present mailing items as Advertising Mail with Responsible Mail, the ASBOF Levy will be applied only once and not across both access services.

You (the customer) acknowledge that Royal Mail are providing a collection service for the ASBOF levy only. If you (the customer) would like a refund of the ASBOF levy that you have paid, you must submit a written retrospective claim to ASBOF, on a quarterly or annual basis, to be sent to The Treasurer, ASBOF, 5th Floor, 21 Berners Street, London, W1T 3LP (or such other address as may be advised from time to time), giving the following information:

- Evidence confirming that you have paid the ASBOF Levy, and confirmation of the amount paid.
- An explanation (in reasonable detail) setting out the reason for your request for a refund.

Royal Mail reserve the right to amend or withdraw the requirements set out in this Section 9 in reference to the deduction of the ASBOF levy on three months' notice.

10. Change and termination

Regardless of any other term of access services, Royal Mail may change or withdraw the Advertising Mail service on four months' written notice in which event their Schedule 6 document and subsequently (this document) our reference guidelines will terminate at the expiry of that four month period.



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Direct Mail message content guidance list

The list of mailing examples below is indicative and for guidance only. Each request to post Responsible Mail and Advertising Mail must be considered individually on its own merits to determine whether it can be considered to qualify as Responsible Mail and/or Advertising Mail. All mailing items to qualify must be addressed and must comprise a largely uniform message with the purpose of promoting the sale or use of products or services, or to encourage contribution to or support of a cause.

The list is not absolute or exhaustive and it to be used as a helpful guide only*

Example		DM?	Why?
1	A credit card company, store or retailer sending an offer of a new credit card	Yes	Promoting the sale or use of products or services
2	A charity I society sending a reminder mailing to renew the subscription	Yes	Encourage donation to a cause
3	A mail order company sending its new or seasonal catalogue to an existing or prospective customer base	Yes	Promoting the sale or use of products or services
4	Customer satisfaction questionnaire which specifically captures information relating to a customer's experience of the product, service or cause with the aim of using such information to be more targeted when sending further information on such products or services	Yes	Promoting the use of products or services
5	A travel company/tourist board sending its new or seasonal brochure unsolicited to an existing customer base or prospective customer base	Yes	Promoting the sale or use of products or services
6	An unsolicited mailing of a discount code or discount vouchers, tickets or invitations with a uniform message to customers/prospects to encourage purchase or re purchase	Yes	Promoting the sale or use of products or services. No obligation to send
7	An organisation sends a letter to its customers/prospects to notify dates of future events promoting its products or services or cause	Yes	Promoting product/services/cause
8	A company sends a sample of its products/services with or without a voucher, (unsolicited)	Yes	Promoting the sale of products
9	Loyalty scheme providing the opportunity to take advantage of offers or redeem coupons, either in store or online. (This mailing may include details of an individual's number of loyalty points available for conversion)	Yes	Promoting the sale or use of products or services
10	An unsolicited customer publication i.e. a magazine or newsletter forming part of a company's/charity's customer communication programme to encourage purchase or support of a cause that is not paid for by the recipient or via subscription	Yes	Promoting a cause or the sale or use of products or services. There is no obligation on the company or charity to send the publication
11	Insurance company sending letter to existing or prospective customers with quotes for products and services provided that the letter is not detailing a value of a previous/current policy	Yes	Promoting the sale of products/services



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Example	DM?	Why?
1	No	Primary purpose is the statement (the ad/promotion is secondary and would not happen without the fulfilment)
2	No	Primary purpose is the bill (the ad/promotion is secondary and would not happen without the fulfilment)
3	No	Message is not uniform as it is unique to the individual (promotional material is secondary)
4	No	Purpose is the information on prices (this is not an ad/promotion)
5	No	Purpose is providing information not promotion
6	No	The recipient has requested it or is expecting it (the promotional material is secondary and would not happen without the fulfilment)
7	No	Purpose is providing information
8	No	Purpose is fulfilment/ transaction, not promotion
9	No	Purpose is providing information not promotion
10	No	Purpose is fulfilment (ad/promotion secondly and would not happen without the fulfilment)
11	No	Purpose is the execution of a public service duty not promotion
12	No	Purpose is to seek information/data for data collection not promotion
13	No	It is a legal requirement under the Companies act for shareholders to be notified of the AGM



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14	A company sending out a loyalty/membership card to a subscribed customer	No	The loyalty/membership card has been sent as fulfilment to conclude the service that the subscriber has already responded to and purchased
15	Local utility company explaining forthcoming changes to utility ownership. e.g. water company detailing changes to ownership and responsibility of sewage/water pipes	No	Purpose it to provide clarity of boundary ownership and responsibility
16	Political party mailings which have the aim of influencing the recipient's political view point or the way in which they may vote in an election	No	There is no elasticity for this type of political mailing and the purpose is to influence a political view point

¹ For Downstream Access Services through Citipost Mail the full Advertising Mail specification is detailed in the Royal Mail User Guide and their Schedule 6 document. Please refer to both the 'User Guide for Condition 9 Access Services' and the 'Access Letters User Guide'. Customers must ensure their posting complies with the most up to date Royal Mail User Guides and its schedules; this 'Citipost Mail Advertising Mail reference guideline is a reference guide only.

²UCID, are unique numbers created to identify each unique customer and posting location combination. If you need any further information on UCID numbers, please ask your account manager.

