

BMC Letter Service

Mail List Tips

Whoever mails your prayer letter for you will need to have a copy of your mailing list in a format of some type to be able to address the envelopes. The easier it is for a mailing service to get your mailing list into a format that they can use, the less mistakes they will make in getting it into their computer. Here are some tips that will make it easier for them to get the mailing list in a format that will be usable:

Be consistent with where you put the information - i.e., what field.

The format we use is:

Mr._Mrs.
First_Name
Last_Name
Title/Attention Line
Church/Organization
Address
City
State
Zip
...and for foreign addresses **add:**
Country
Postal_Code



Not every record has all of these fields, and some records may need some fields that are not listed. If so, feel free to **add** fields that fit your particular needs . . . and be sure to **double-check** your entries for errors. Since we mail at the automated rates using the barcodes, once we have your mailing list in our computer we will run it through an address correcting program. This program will check each address against the national postal database and verify that it matches what is in the postal database. Once we have done that we will check the addresses that **don't match** to see if we can determine why they do not match. Some of the main reasons that they do not match are:

1. *Street name not in the database.* This can be caused by a new subdivision, a 911 coding change (often the primary cause!), or a number of other reasons.
2. *Too many or too few digits in the address number.* This can again be due to a new subdivision in the area or a street being extended.
3. *The street needs a directional* in front of the street name. ("North 1st St." instead of just "1st St.") Sometimes these land at the end instead, such as "1st Street North".

4. *The street name is not complete* — such as “Free Ferry **Street**” instead of just “Free Ferry”. In this case there is also “Free Ferry **Road**”, “Free Ferry **Heights**”, “Free Ferry **Lane**”, and “Free Ferry **Circle**”, each with its own zip code extension.

5. The address *needs an **apartment number***, or similar designation.

Special Mailings

Sometimes you may want to make a mailing that is only to your supporters. To do this we will need to know who they are, so you need to note them in some way in your database. A field named ‘*Supporters*’, with just a “Y” entry will do the job.

This group will probably not qualify for bulk rate postage since it will probably not have 200 pieces, but we can still do the mailing for you and charge the postage at the 1st class rate.

Why a Letter Service?

Keeping in contact with friends and supporters is vital to all missionaries!

... but what is the best way to do that? The most obvious method is by newsletters or prayer letters, but doing all the work of copying and sending from the field really isn't a viable option ... so what else can you do?

- Have a friend or family member do all the work and send it for you;
- Have a supporting church do all the work and send it for you;
- Use a letter service.

While a friend or family member can mail it for you (and we started this service as a result of sending prayer letters for a friend), many times they are not able to drop everything when the prayer letter arrives and get it out in a timely manner. Also, many times it becomes a burden for them, because not all people enjoy this type of work, and they may not be set up to address the envelopes except by hand. Many churches mail prayer letters as a part of their support, but some may not have the necessary staff to do all of the work involved and must rely on volunteers to help with getting the prayer letters ready to mail.

This can cause further delays in getting copies in the hands of your friends and supporters. As a letter service, our sole business is doing the work for you and getting your letters mailed to your friends and supporters. We use personalized envelopes and your own letterhead. We also mail 3rd class (now known as "standard mail") with "address service requested". This does two things:

- It cuts the cost of postage
- It notifies us of any address changes.

If a letter is mailed standard mail without the "address service requested" or similar endorsement, it is thrown away by the Post Office when a person moves since standard mail is not forwarded. If a letter is mailed 1st class, it is forwarded with a

note asking the recipient to notify the sender of the change of address. Many people simply do not do this.

We had mailed one missionary's prayer letter for 16 months at first class rates, and the first month that we mailed it 3rd class "address correction requested" we had **8.6%** come back with an address change. We later started mailing for another missionary for whom a friend had been mailing his prayer letter 1st class. The first time we mailed this persons prayer letter we had **12.5%** returned. Of these, **2.1%** of these were not forwardable, most because the forwarding order had expired (a forwarding order is good for one year).

On the second mailing we had only **3%** returned within 13 working days after putting it in the mail, compared to **10.3%** for the same period of time on the first mailing. By mailing this way we feel that we can have confidence that what we mail will reach its intended recipient and that the money spent on wasted postage is minimal.

Postal Regulations That Affect Your Mail

There are always some rules we have to obey in whatever we do. We will try to explain the postal regulations that we have to comply with in doing your mailing. Some of these regulations cover all bulk mail, others only non-profit bulk mail, others only automated bulk mail, some involve forwarding and/or address changes, and still others International mail.

Bulk mail:

- There must be at least 200 pieces stateside for 3rd class and 500 pieces for 1st class.
- All pieces must be identical.
- Self-Mailers: (fold & mail; no envelope)
- They must be tabbed closed in at least 2 places.
- Regulations require at least 70# offset paper (we normally use 60# paper which is equal to a 24# bond.)

Non-Profit bulk Mail:

- The name of the of the organization holding the non-profit mailing authorization (your mission agency) must be on the top line of the return address.
- Several will not effect you, such as no advertising, no solicitation of funds for an organization other than the permit holder.

Automated bulk mail:

- The bottom 2¾ inches of the envelope must be clear with the exception of the address block and possibly the address services endorsement (see next category).
- A postal bar code must be on the front of the envelope (our mailing program places it on top line of the address block)

- We were the first mailer in Fort Smith to mail automated. There is some saving in postage for automated mailing and we pass part of that savings to you. The biggest advantage of automated mailing is the speed of delivery. It is not unusual for a letter mailed by us to be delivered in 3 days in places as far away as Schroon Lake, New York.

Forwarding & address changes:

Unless there is some kind of an endorsement on the mail piece all undeliverable bulk mail is destroyed. If you mail regularly every 2 or 3 months we expect from 3% to 5% of the addresses to be out of date.

Endorsements:

- A.) Return service Requested:
 - Your letter is returned to us at the cost of a 1st class stamp and we can re-mail it to the new address 1st class.
- B.) Address Services Requested:
 - Your letter is forwarded to the new address and we receive a hard copy of the address correction at the cost of 82¢ each ... but there are some options that we use to cut down on this cost and the time involved in making these changes to your mailing list.
- C.) Location of endorsement:
 - Under return address block with at least ¼ inch between bottom line of the return address and the endorsement (preferred location)
 - Under the permit block.
 - Between the return address and the permit block.
 - Directly above the address block

Options we use.

- A.) ACS Code
 - ACS stands for Accelerated Change Service, and is a series of letters just below the barcode in the address block that allows us to get the address changes electronically and we only charge you 33¢ instead of the 82¢ that we are charged if we get the hard copy.
- B.)
 - This is a series of letters and numbers just below the ACS code that we assign to each individual entry in your mailing list. This allows us to receive the change information from the Post Office on computer disk which our program reads automatically and makes the changes to your mailing list. This saves us hours of lookup time over the course of a year.

International mail:

All international mail must be in an envelope (no self-mailers are allowed).

Questions & Answers

- **How do you want my mailing list?**

If you have your mailing list on computer, convert it to a double quotes & comma delimited format, please, as that will **always** work. You can then send it to us on disk or by E-mail. Our mailing program is in a .dbf format, and it will import most .dbf files. If you do not have your mailing list on computer, send us a hard copy and we will enter it.

Suggestion: As you begin to set up your mailing list in a computer, be consistent with where you put your information ... in other words, keep the street address information in the address field, etc.

- Salutation --- Mr., Mrs., Pastor, Dr., etc.
 - If you only want to use names, leave this field blank
- First Name --- If sending to a church, Mission board, etc., leave blank
- Last Name --- Ditto
- Company --- if sending to individual leave blank
- Title --- Pastor, Missions Committee Director, etc.; quite often not necessary
- Street
- City, State Zip

Another field that would be helpful would be a supporter field. If you sent out a letter just o your supporters we would have them marked. Also, if a copy of your letter to a supporter is returned marked undeliverable and we know it is undeliverable we will do all we can to find a new address for them.

- **What about self mailers?**

We do self-mailers but we discourage the use of self-mailers. We have seen the way mail can be damaged in the high speed equipment and think that the envelope offers some protection for the letter. Also the International Mail Manual requires that all mail going overseas be put in an envelope. Personally we think that a mail piece in an envelope looks more professional than one that is not. We have heard some pastors say that if a missionary does not think enough of their prayer letter to put in an envelope they (the pastor) do not have time to read it.

From the standpoint of cost, because we can insert an envelope by machine but would have to tab self mailers by hand it is actually cheaper to use envelopes than self mailers.

- **What about Multi Color printing?**

We preprint multicolored letterheads, but do not recommend multicolored printing for envelopes. The expense of printing almost doubles when the second color is added. Therefore it is not economically feasible to print multicolor in quantities of less than 2000.

- **Do you send me a copy of my mailing list?**

We have been providing a hard copy of each mailing list that can be put in a notebook or file folder, but we can be flexible with this. When we send the new mailing list would it be better sent in regular #10 envelopes, although it may take several, rather than one large envelope? (i.e.: Would it be less likely to be opened

and/or tampered with?) [If you know of any special handling needs for mail sent to your field of service and/or other countries please let us know as we do not want to jeopardize any missionary's life or work.] We can also either upload your mailing list and send it E-mail or send it to you on a disk. We do realize that uploading and downloading files from some mission fields can be rather expensive, so we will not upload a file to you unless you expressly ask for it that way.

• I want to send a special or separate letter to my supporters besides my regular prayer letter; can you do that?

Yes, but being a small quantity we will have to mail them 1st class and will charge you 1st class postage. Other charges still apply.

• I want to send several copies to my supporting churches. Can you take care of that for me?

Yes we will mail multiple copies to one address. When we do this we only charge a processing charge for the one name and then charge the actual cost of postage.

• What about Colored Envelopes?

We have checked into the use of colored envelopes and have found that they cost twice as much as white envelopes. If you want to make an investment into a case 2500 of colored envelopes we can use colored envelopes, but we do not think they are worth the extra cost.

General Information Sheet

Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Mission Board	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Field	
Frequency of Mailing	
Number on List	
Paper Size	Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/>
Envelope Ink Color	Black <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Specify Color: <input type="text"/>
Pre-Printed Letterhead	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Special Design	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Elaborate as needed	
Letterhead Ink color other than black	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Specify Color <input type="text"/>

Paper color other than White	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Specify Colors <input type="text"/>
Most of the time my letter will be sent via:	Postal <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> E-Mail <input type="checkbox"/>
Internet Address	<input type="text"/>
Programs and Versions Used:	Letter
	Mailing List
<p>We mail with an "Address Service Requested" endorsement in an attempt to keep your list as up to date as possible with the correct addresses. When corrections are received from the Post Office, we will RE-MAIL those letters to the new address if you wish, or simply make the change in the database and not re-mail that particular letter, meaning that person will miss that particular issue.</p>	
Do you wish us to re-mail letters?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (make change but do not re-mail)
Billing: To Mission Board?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (if "no", Specify to whom we should send billing:)
	Name <input type="text"/> Address <input type="text"/> City, State, Zip <input type="text"/> Phone <input type="text"/>
Your account number (if Applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Length of Letters (generally)	one side only <input type="checkbox"/> *Two sides <input type="checkbox"/>
	*If two-sided, please specify the type of "flip": "head-to-head" <input type="checkbox"/> "head-to-tail" <input type="checkbox"/> (Head-to-tail" flip is great for posting on church bulletin boards!)
<p>If your list is on computer in a database program, you may send it to us on computer disk, or attached to an E-Mail message. We prefer that it be in ASCII format (text with commas). We can generally handle most*.DBF files. We also like to have a hard copy of the list for reference in case we have difficulty with your disk.</p>	
Mailing List	ASCII <input type="checkbox"/> Date <input type="text"/>
Filled out General Information	Sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Date <input type="text"/>
	Prayer Card <input type="checkbox"/> Date <input type="text"/>

Checklist

This is to help you keep track of what you have sent us and what we still need:

	<u>Date Sent</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Mailing List — ASCII	_____	_____
Filled out General Information Sheet	_____	_____
Prayer Card	_____	_____