
Envelope Glossary of Terms

- ARTWORK** A General term use to describe the digital files containing photographs, drawings, painting, hand lettering, etc., prepared to illustrate printed matter
- BANGTAIL** Perforated coupon attached to the body of a return envelopes; must be torn off before the envelope is sealed. Used for remittance envelopes, order envelopes, and other direct mail applications
- BARCODE** Used by the Postal Service to speed mail processing. Generated by the post office as mail passes through OCR scanners or pre-printed by the manufacturer. If not pre-printed, space must be available on the bottom right of the envelope for the bar code.
- BARONIAL** Type of envelope recognized by large pointed flap, usually open side with a diagonal seams. Used most often for social correspondence.
- BLEED** In printing, an image that extends off the edge of the paper or envelope. Envelopes with bleed generally must be printed before they are folded, since the fold runs through the printed image.
- BLIND EMBOSS** Raised design stamped in the paper, without foil or ink.
- BOOKLET** Flap opens along the long side of the envelope.
- BRE** Business reply envelope. An envelope printed to determine who pays the postage. They are recognized by a series of horizontal bars and other special markings. A special postage permit is required for postage to be paid by the business doing the mailing.
- BRIGHTNESS** The light reflecting property of a paper. The more light reflects, the higher the brightness.
- BULK PACK** Efficient way to package envelopes by packing directly into a corrugated carton. Not utilizing an interior box which is in turn packed into an exterior carton.
- CATALOG** Describes a large Open-End envelope usually with a center seam.
- COMMERCIAL STYLE** The most common business style envelope. "Open side" envelopes which can be diagonal or side seam construction.
- CORNER CARD** Return address and other company identification in the top left corner.
- CROP MARKS** Small lines at the corners of the artwork showing the boundaries of the final printed envelope.
- DIAGONAL SEAM** A seam running diagonally from the bottom fold and the corner up toward the throat of the envelope.

EXPANSION ENVELOPE Envelope with a gusset or box bottom and sides, allowing it to expand for bulky mailings.

FIM Facing Identification Marks – pre-printed bars on the face of the envelope, as specified by the postal service to expedite the automated processing of Business Reply Mail. The vertical bars are located at the top right corner of the envelope.

FLEXOGRAPHY Most common type of envelope printing; fast drying process, suitable for screens of 65-120 lines. Least expensive printing process used mainly for line type and simple logos.

FLOOD To cover a printed page with ink or varnish.

GLASSINE A smooth, dense semi-transparent paper. Sometimes used as window patch material, but losing popularity compared to the new polystyrene materials which are more transparent and less sensitive to moisture. Glassine is biodegradable and recyclable.

GRAIN Direction in which most of the fibers lie in a finished sheet of paper. Paper folds easier with the grain. It offers great resistance if torn across the grain and demonstrates greater tensile strength in the direction of the grain.

GRIPPER EDGE The leading edge of paper as it passes through a printed press or folding machine. No printing can take place on 3/8” of the paper on the gripping edge. Referred to as “common edge” when jogging as a stack of paper.

GUM An adhesive made with a plant base to seal paper envelopes. Some gums take moisture to seal, other such as latex gums will adhere to themselves.

HALFTONE Picture with gradations of tone, formed by dots of varying sizes in one color

INTELLIGENT MAIL BARCODE – (IM BARCODE) is a 65-bar code for use on mail in the United States. IM Barcode is intended to provide greater information and functionality than its predecessors POSTNET and PLANET. The complete specification can be found in USPS Document USPS-B3200E.

INDICIA Postage permit located on the upper right corner of an envelope which is pre-printed and requires no postage stamp.

INSIDE TINT Printed design on the inside of the envelope for added security.

JET PRINTING A general term for printing presses set up to print already manufactured envelopes. Allows for fast, high quality turnaround. Can print screens up to 133 lines per inch.

LATEX SEAL Self-sealing adhesive that requires no moisture. Two gum surfaces are required to create a bond when they are brought together.

LITHO A Generic term for any printing process in which the image area and the non-image area exist on the same plate and are separated by a chemical repulsion, usually oil based offset printing.

- OPACITY** Paper property that measures the degree to which paper stops light from passing through. The more opacity a paper has the less show-through of the envelope contents.
- OPEN END** A style of envelope on which the opening is on the short side. All open end envelopes are called catalog or coin envelopes.
- OPEN PANEL** Die cut opening for a window envelope that does not have patch material behind it.
- OPEN SIDE** A style of envelope on which the opening is on the long side. All commercial envelopes are called open side.
- OVERRUN OR OVERS** – Copies printed in excess of the specific quantity. (Printing trade terms allow for a + - 10% to represent a completed order.
- PATCH MATERIAL** Translucent or clear material covering windows.
- PATCH POCKET** Paper or window film glued on 3 sides to form a pocket. Typically done on the inside of an envelope behind a window, they can also be adhered to the outside of an envelope.
- PDF** Portable Document Format: this is the preferred file format for uploaded artwork. There are many different varieties of PDF files, depending on how the file is to be used. For uploading art to our website, please choose PDF/X1a or PDF/x-4.
- PEEL & SEAL** Term used for adhesive which is exposed by peeling away release paper. Will adhere without moisture.
- PERF** Perforation; hole of precise dimensions/spacing pressed into paper for ease of separating.
- PERFECTING** Printing both sides of a sheet in one pass. Perfecting jobs will be slightly less dense on the back side than on the front, because the image must transfer twice on the back, but only once on the front.
- PMS** Pantone Matching System. A color matching system that has a palette of colors with matching ink formulas. When printing a “Spot” color a PMS color is usually used.
- PROCESS COLORS** The four colors of ink used in 4-color printing. Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black, Commonly referred to as CMYK.
- REMITTANCE** An envelope with a flap almost as big as the envelope itself. Often printed on both sides, remittance (aka: collection) envelopes are designed to allow a customer to fill out an order or pledge information and enclose a check. They save the expense of having a separate order form or pledge card.
- RE-MOISTENABLE** Envelope adhesive activated by water or solvent, applied to seal an envelope flap.
- RE-SEALABLE** Envelopes with latex adhesive designed to form a lighter bond, for multiple sealing and resealing.

- SCORE** To impress or indent a line in the paper to make folding easier.
- SIDE SEAM** Side seams are formed by short side flaps and a wide bottom flap, providing a large area for printing on the back of the envelope.
- STRAIGHT GRAIN CUT** Envelope is so cut that the paper grain runs parallel to the side fold. Envelope is easier to fold and has fewer tendencies to curl or warp with the straight grain cut.
- STRING AND BUTTON** A mechanical closure with a string attached to the flap and a button on the body of the envelope. Used mostly in interoffice and other reusable envelopes.
- SUBSTANCE OR BASIS WEIGHT** Weight measure in pounds, or a ream (500 sheets) or paper is its basic size. Different grades of paper are sold in different basic sizes. Therefore basic weights of different grades of paper cannot be compared directly. A 24lb
- TEXT** Type of high quality paper, manufactured in white or colors from bleached chemical wood pulp and / or cotton fibers. Made in a wide variety of finishes, including antique, vellum, smooth, felt marked and embossed (linen). Often has a matched cover stock. Usually deeper colors than bond or writing grades.
- THROAT** The space between a top of an envelope's back flap and its seal flap crease line.
- THUMB CUT** Found on envelopes manufactured without flaps, such as filing and film storage. Can be cut on one side or double thumb cut through, for easier extraction of contents.
- TYVEK** Spun bonded olefin product manufactured by DuPont. Offers maximum protection and durability at a very light weight. Tyvek is unaffected by moisture and inert to most chemicals. Acid, lint and sulfide free. Often used for floppy disk and microfiche carriers where protection from acid, lint and abrasions is needed.
- WATERMARK** Translucent mark visible when sheet of paper is held up to the light.
- WEB** A roll of paper used in web or rotary printing. Can be referred to in envelope manufacturing where die cutting and folding are done on one machine using a continuous roll of paper.
- WINDOW CUT OUT** Cut out in the body of an envelope positioned to show mailing address, return and or special messages. Usually cover with transparent window patch material. Can be left open with no patch except in Canada.
- WOVE** Paper having a uniform surface and no discernible marks. Soft, smooth finish, most widely used envelope paper.