

# W4

**Wednesday  
Morning**

**Fax**

*from*

**The  
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Press**

## **N**ew Standard Mail rules take effect June 1

Beginning this June, the Postal Service will put new postal regulations into force that affect how personalized mailings can qualify for Standard Mail (3rd-Class Bulk) rates.

All decisions concerning postal pricing and classification will be centralized in a 25-employee office in New York, replacing the current system, which allows regional USPS offices to interpret the rules.

According to an article by reporter Larry Riggs in *Direct* magazine, mailers cannot include personal information in Standard mailings, unless:

- The mailer explicitly advertises a product or service, or solicits a donation.
- All the personal information used relates to the advertising or solicitation.
- The sole reason for the inclusion of the personal information is to support the mailer's advertising or solicitation.

Gene Del Polito, president of the Association for Postal Commerce, noted that financial-service companies from June on will not be able to send credit-rejection notices at Standard Mail rates.

- In addition, he observed, "Mailers no longer will be able to shop around for the most favorable rates, as many do now.

"If you're a printer in Wisconsin who has a good relationship with postal officials in Chicago, how are you going to deal with somebody in New York who's never heard of you?"

However, other mailing-industry leaders saw a somewhat brighter side to the new

*First-class mailings declined by  
3.3 billion in 2003.*

regulations, which are published in full in the Federal Register.

Neal Denton of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers remarked that his organization was pleased that the USPS had perceived that nonprofits need the ability to send out newsletters and other correspondence at Standard postal rates.

Louis Mastria of the Direct Marketing Association cautioned that some types of mail currently prepared as Standard "could require substantial modification if they are to remain eligible under the new rule."

To qualify for Standard Mail postage rates, checks — including balance transfer checks, blank checks, and convenience checks — from June on must bear service endorsements such as "return service requested," "address service requested" or "forwarding service requested."

In its first ruling under the new regulation, the USPS decided that envelope headlines such as "Personal — do not throw away" do qualify as Standard mail because it does not consider the marking as "personal." The post office is designing a "decision tree" aimed at helping mailers evaluate the eligibility of advertising to be sent via Standard Mail postage.

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