

Customer Support Ruling  
Mail Preparation and Standards  
Headquarters, US Postal Service  
Arlington, VA 22209-6038

Computer Prepared Contribution Notices and Pledges

PS-262 (E110.1, E610.2)

UPDATED March 2001

This ruling concerns the classification of three printed forms that were completed by computer, and which are referred to in this ruling as Exhibits A, B, and C.

*Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) E110.1.4 and E610.2, respectively, provide that matter having the character of actual and personal correspondence, and bills and statements of account are First-Class Mail. DMM E110.1.6 states, in part, that computer-prepared material is subject to First-Class postage if it has the character of actual and personal correspondence.

DMM E610.2.1 states that circulars, including printed letters which, according to internal evidence, are being sent in identical terms to more than one person, are Standard Mail (A) matter. A circular does not lose its character as such when a date and the name of the addressee and of the sender are written therein, nor by the correction in writing of typographical errors.

DMM E610.2.2 and E610.2.3 provide that printed matter weighing less than 16 ounces may be sent as Standard Mail matter. For the purpose of this standard, printed matter means paper on which words, letters, characters, figures, or images, or any combination of them not having the character of a bill or statement of account, or of actual and personal correspondence, have been reproduced by any process other than handwriting or typewriting. Computer-prepared material is considered to be printed matter and is not considered to have the character of actual and personal correspondence merely because it contains the following:

- a. specific information about a product offered for sale or lease (e.g., size, color, or price) or a service being offered (e.g., the name, address, and telephone number of a company representative).
- b. Information relating the addressee directly to an advertised product or service.
- c. Information such as the amount paid for a previous purchase, pledge, or donation, when associated with a sales promotion or solicitation for donations.

If a computer-prepared notice contains information showing how much money was donated or pledged by the addressee, shows the dates the money was donated, and lists which fund the money was donated to or used for, (for example, a building fund or a memorial fund), that notice would not constitute a bill or statement of account (whether or not it bears a statement soliciting donations). However, it would be subject to the First-Class rates of postage because it contains personalized information (the actual amounts of the donations or pledges made by the addressees, the dates of the donations or pledges, and how the funds were or will be allocated).

If, as stated in DMM E610.2.3, the information in the aforementioned computer-prepared notice is associated with a solicitation for donations, that notice will qualify for mailing at the Standard Mail rates of postage.

Exhibit A is a printed form that has been completed by a computer to show a record of contributions made by the addressee to a church. It contains the dates of the donations, a listing of the disposition of each donation, budgeted amounts, and non-budgeted amounts, along with the statement "*Your continued contributions will be greatly appreciated.*" Since that statement constitutes a solicitation for more contributions, that form qualifies under DMM E610.2.3 to be mailed at the Nonprofit Standard Mail rates of postage.

Exhibit B is a computer-prepared statement (on a sheet that bears the letterhead of a church) which shows contribution periods, amounts of contributions, and information about pledges along with the following sentences:

*Please note that our Session Committees are spending less than the 1992 budget. Nevertheless, expenditures are exceeding income. Please consider what You can do for Jesus Christ through the Church.*

Since that message constitutes a solicitation for more contributions or increased pledge amounts, the computer prepared statement qualifies under DMM E610.2.3 to be mailed at the Nonprofit Standard Mail rates of postage.

Exhibit C is a printed form that has been completed by a computer to show in two places the last day of the payment period, donor number, balance, and the name of the donor along with the pledge amount, amount paid, address of the donor, and statements in English and Spanish concerning the payment of the amount pledged. This form is subject to the First-Class rates of postage when mailed because it contains personalized information. However, if a statement that requests increased pledges or additional donations is added to each form, such forms will qualify under DMM E610.2.3 to be mailed at the Nonprofit Standard Mail rates of postage.

Sherry Suggs  
Manager