# Direct Mail Basics

Chances are, most every designer will be called on to do a Business Reply window envelope or card. Here's the lowdown.

The **MLOCR** (multi-line optical character reader) is a machine that scans the address block and translates it into a bar code, then sprays it onto the envelope.

Return address
In addition to being 2¾ inches above the bottom edge of the envelope, the return address should occupy no more than 50 percent of the length of the mail-piece. The return address should be in a type size smaller than the type size of the delivery address.

Most neglected part of a mailing?
It's the quality of address informa-tion. If an address is incorrect, the piece may receive a nega-tive response to the mailer's message, or may not get delivered at all.

Reserved spaces
Certain areas on the envelope are reserved for addressing and related information only. These places are the MLOCR read area, the bar code clear zone, and the return address area.
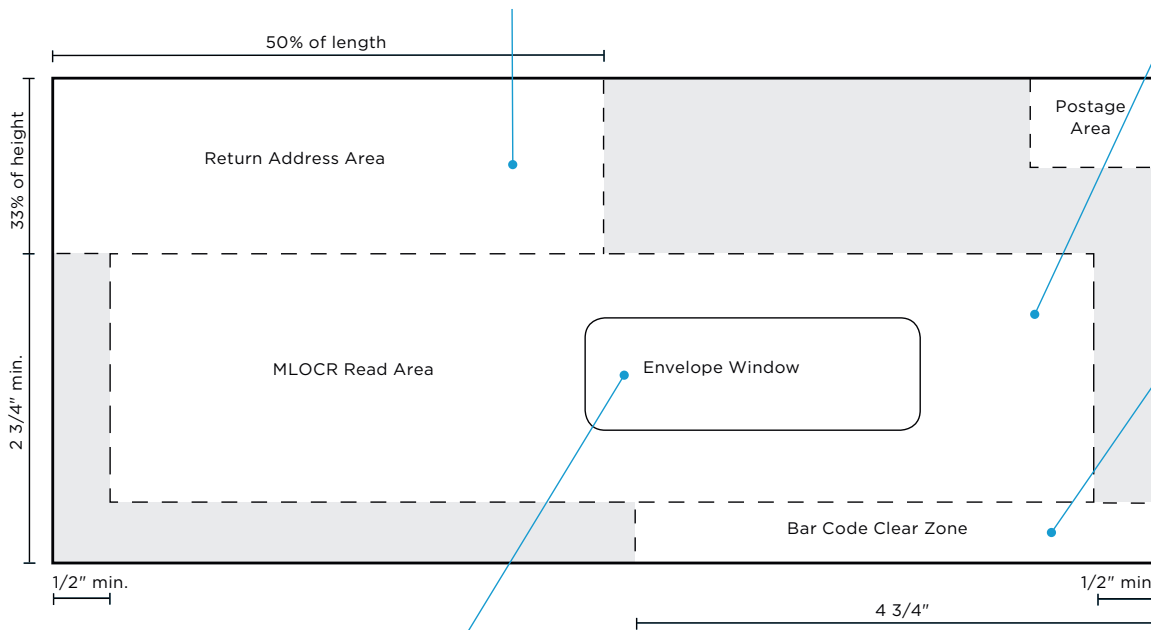
Bar code clear zone
After reading the address, the MLOCR prints the appropri-ate barcode in the lower right corner. To ensure the bar code is readable, the bar code clear zone must be clear of all printing and colored borders. Avoid using colored or coated papers. It's highly recommended to take an example of the envelope to your post office to see if it will be mailable.

Diagram labels:
- 50% of length
- 33% of height
- 2 3/4" min.
- Return Address Area
- Postage Area
- MLOCR Read Area
- Envelope Window
- Bar Code Clear Zone
- 1/2" min.
- 5/8"
- 4 3/4"

Fast processing
Include in the delivery address street desig-nators (for example, Blvd. or Dr.); direc-tionals (NE, SW, etc.); the apartment, suite, or room number; and the ZIP+4 code.

Address window
To ensure successful processing, design your window so the entire address and barcode appear in the window during full movement of the insert. See Quick Tip at right.

Avoiding address problems
1. Don't use fancy typefaces. Condensed, extended, or italic sans serifs aren't easily machine-read.
2. MLOCRs can recognize type sizes between 8 and 18 pts.
3. Make sure spaces between your words are at least the size of a capital letter *M*.

QUICK TIP Ⓦ Ⓜ
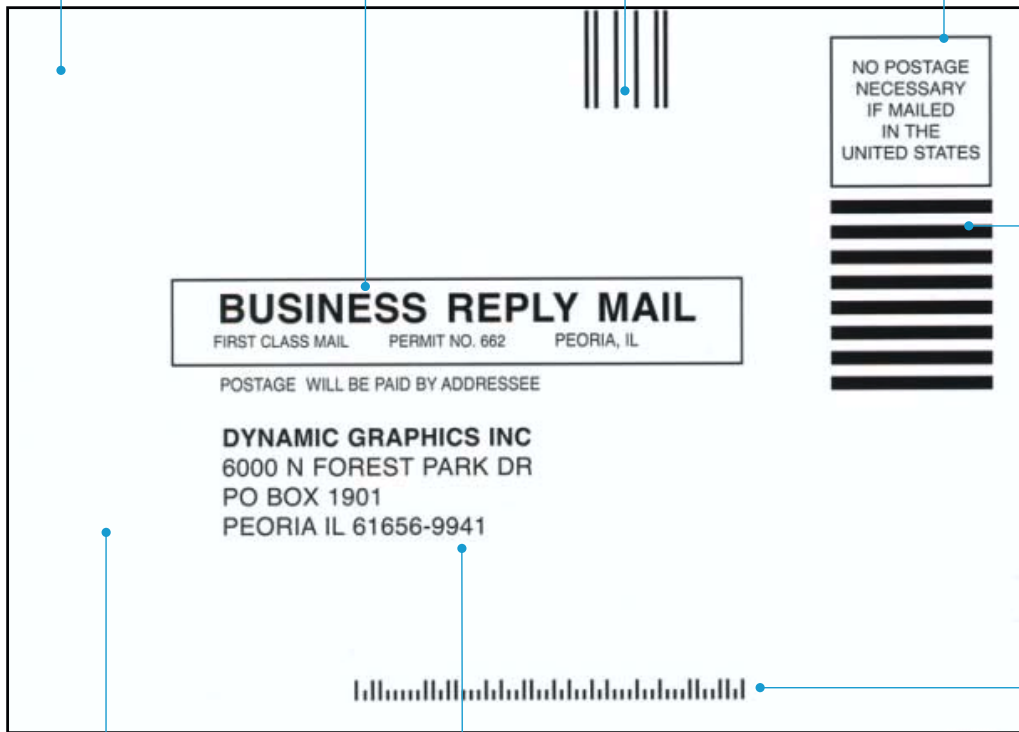Do the "tap test" to check the insert shift in your window:
1. With the insert in the envelope, tap the mailpiece on all sides, jogging the insert in every direction.
2. As each side is tapped, check that the clear space of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch is still maintained between the address and all edges of the window.

Permit holder space
May contain information such as a return address or logo.

Business reply
The words "BUSINESS REPLY MAIL" must appear above the address. Immediately below, place the words "FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO." followed by the permit number and name of the issuing post office, all in capital letters.

FIM
The FIM (Facing Identification Mark) allows automated processing equipment to identify, orient, and separate reply mail. FIM bars must be between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch tall and $\frac{1}{32}$ inch thick. Available at USPS website.

No stamp required
"NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES" must appear in the upper right corner and cannot extend further than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches from the right edge.

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS MAIL   PERMIT NO. 662   PEORIA, IL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

DYNAMIC GRAPHICS INC
6000 N FOREST PARK DR
PO BOX 1901
PEORIA IL 61656-9941

Horizontal bars
A series of uniform bars, parallel to the length of the mailpiece, identifies the card as Business Reply Mail. The bars must be $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick, evenly spaced, and at least 1 inch long.

Great place for logo
A logo may be used in this area if it is placed no lower than $\frac{5}{8}$ inch from the bottom.

Delivery address
Use the complete return address here. The post office will assign a unique four-digit add-on to the ZIP code.

Bar code
The bar code represents ZIP code information for fast scanning. Every five lines represent a number. The code above is for the number 6. To get a bar code, call your Post Office, see *Designing Letters and Reply Mail*, or go to the USPS website.