



A monthly e-Gram from Harty

⇒ www.hartynet.com



Printing
Mailing
Data Management
Lettershop & Fulfillment

Harty

25 James St.

PO Box 324

New Haven, CT 06513

Phone: 203-562-5112

[Click here to email us](#)

Useful Info About Postal Rate Changes

Here we go again. It wasn't that long ago (January 2006) that postal rates last went up, but in May 2007, rates went up *again*. At first glance, it's not out of line with past increases:

- A first-class stamp is up two cents to 41¢.
- Postcards are up two cents to 26¢.
- A flat-rate Priority Mail envelope is up 55 cents to \$4.60.
- On the plus side, wedding invitations are actually *down* by five cents.

The big news is not necessarily the new rates themselves, but rather the USPS's shift toward so-called "shape-based pricing," designed as an incentive for mailers to make it easier for the post office to automate as much of the mail processing as possible. Instead of sending an 8½ x 11-inch sheet flat, for example, it will be cheaper to fold it and mail it in a letter-sized envelope. There are a host of new size, shape and thickness restrictions, as well.

This is nothing especially new. Odd-shaped postcards and other "non-standard" mail pieces always cost a premium to mail. The only difference is that the USPS has become stricter about what is considered "non-standard."

As a designer, here are some of the steps you can take to ensure that you (and your clients) aren't blindsided by higher-than-expected postal bills:

- Finalize the physical dimensions of the printed piece as early in the process as possible.
- Talk to us as early as possible in the development of a mailing to weigh (as it were) the postal rate ramifications of different design specs.
- Naturally, pay increased attention to paper weight and physical dimensions, with an eye on what the USPS considers "standard" or "automatable."
- Purge and clean mailing lists as much as possible to "de-dupe" names and cut down on undeliverable pieces. You'd be amazed at how much postage can be saved by mailing to a clean list.

With a little education and attention to detail, you can mitigate the negative impact of postal rate increases and achieve both objectives of saving on postage and producing an effective print mailing.

For more detailed information, check out the rates and fees guide from the United States Postal Service. [Click here to download \(PDF\)](#)