Large Letter mail

How to get it right

This document offers a technical guide to addressing and preparing Large Letter mail. Large Letter mail is defined as mail which is between C5 and B4 in size, which is more than 5mm but less than 15mm thick.

Use it for information and advice about:

1 Envelope layout

2 Mailpiece specification

3 Addressing

first impressions

When you send business mail, the envelope is the first point of contact with your customer, and it sets the standard for its contents. Your envelope layout also affects how accurately and quickly we can process your mail with our automatic machines.

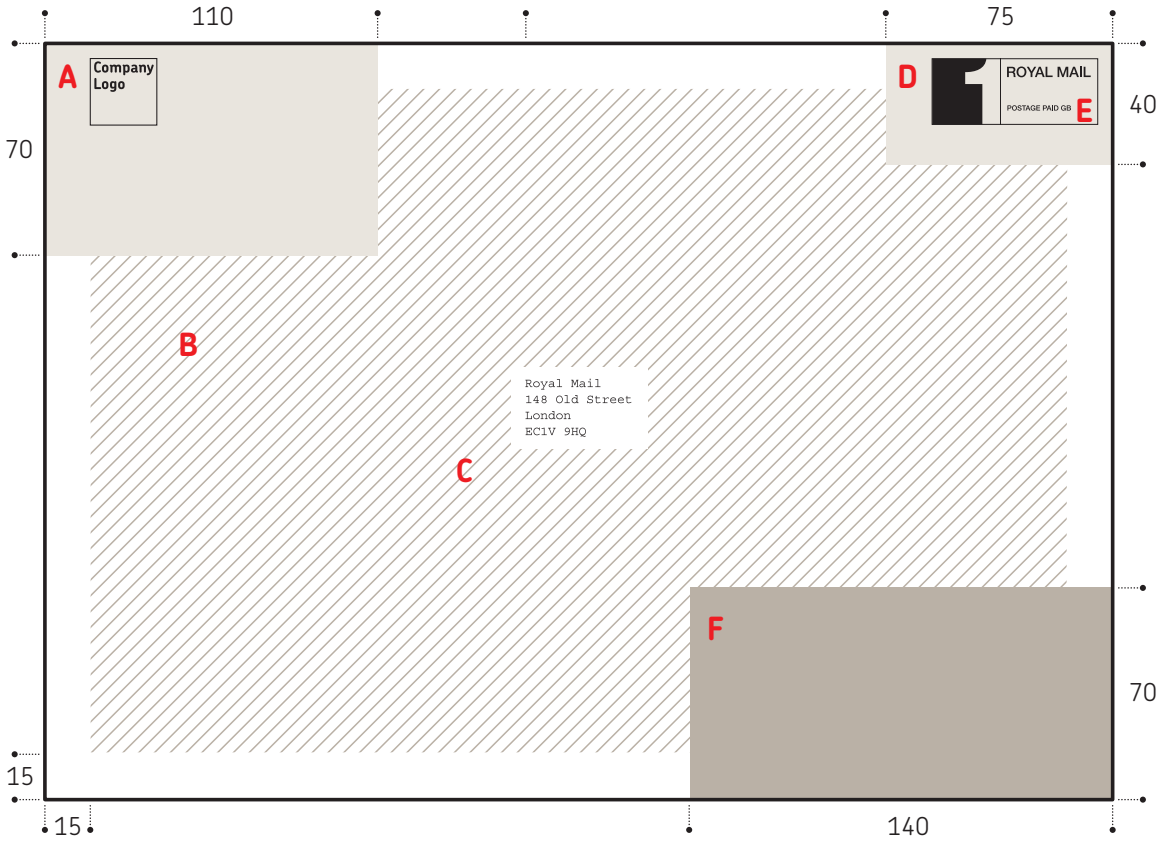
This guide is designed to help you, by providing you with layout diagrams and advice for the most commonly used B4 and C5 sized envelopes, as well as directions regarding maximum and minimum sizes.

If you have any questions, please call us on **08457 950 950**. We can advise you on envelope sizes and layouts, paper types and weights, mailshots, bulk mail and anything else regarding Large Letter mail preparation.

1 Envelope layout

maximum sizes landscape

B4 envelope front (353mm x 250mm)



All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

Logo or indicia zone Codemark clear zone Address zone

A Logo zone. (Logos and other postal operators' indicia must ideally be placed in this area in the top left hand corner).

B Address block can be anywhere in the hatched area.

C Typical position for address block.

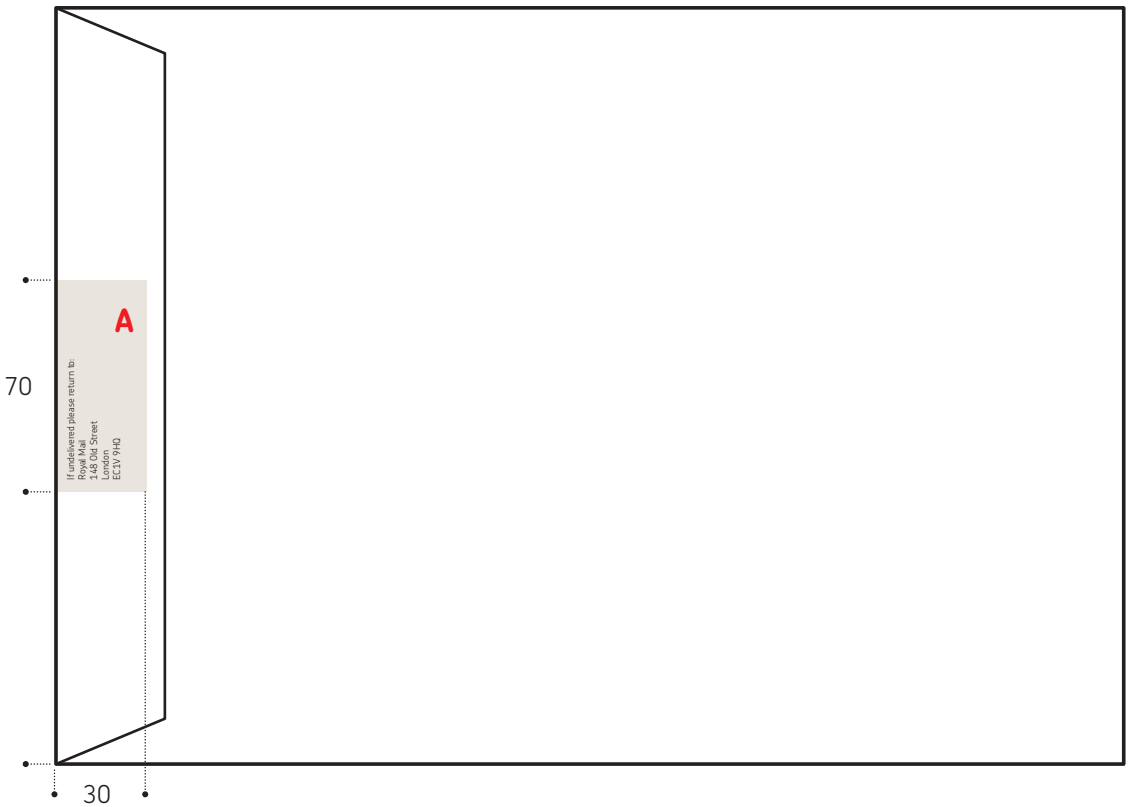
D Royal Mail indicia zone.

E Typical Royal Mail indicia positioned in top right corner.

F Codemark clear zone. Reserved for Royal Mail use only.

maximum sizes landscape

B4 envelope rear (353mm x 250mm)



All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

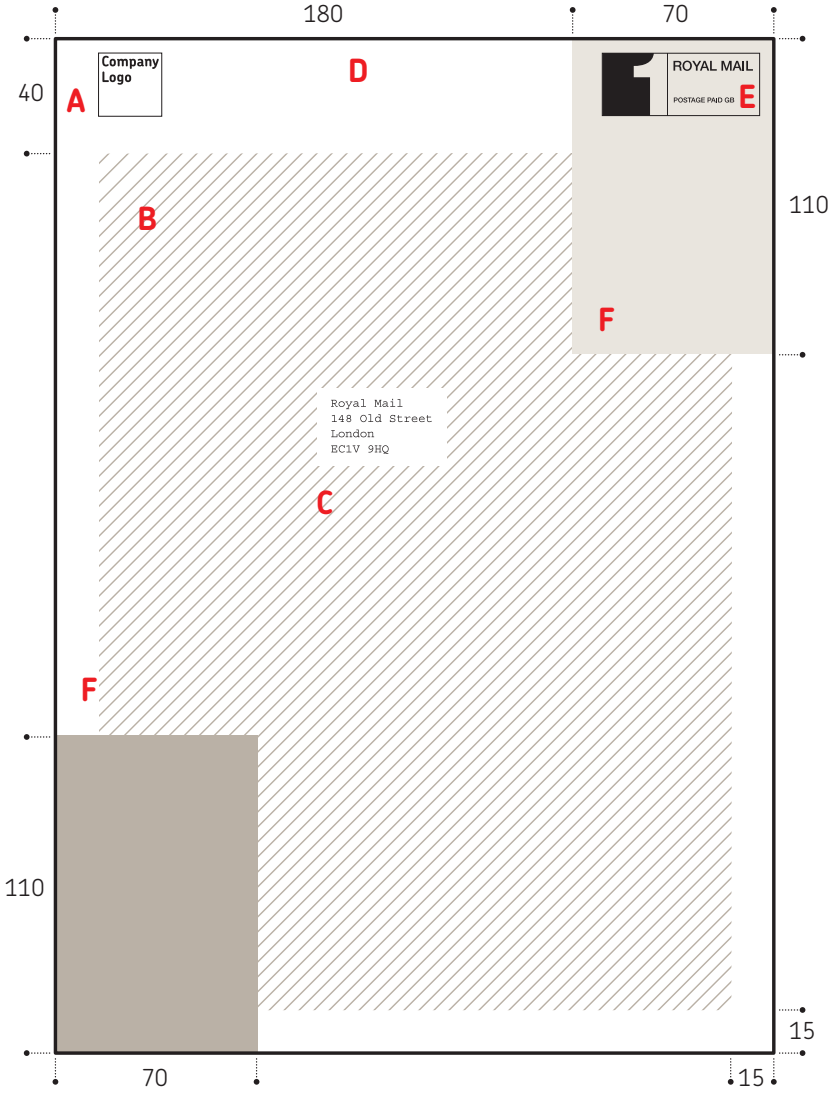
Return address zone

A Return address must be centrally located at the side, rear of the envelope occupying a box with maximum dimensions 30mm x 70mm.

For help at any time, call us on 08457 950 950.

maximum sizes portrait

B4 envelope front (250mm x 353mm)



All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

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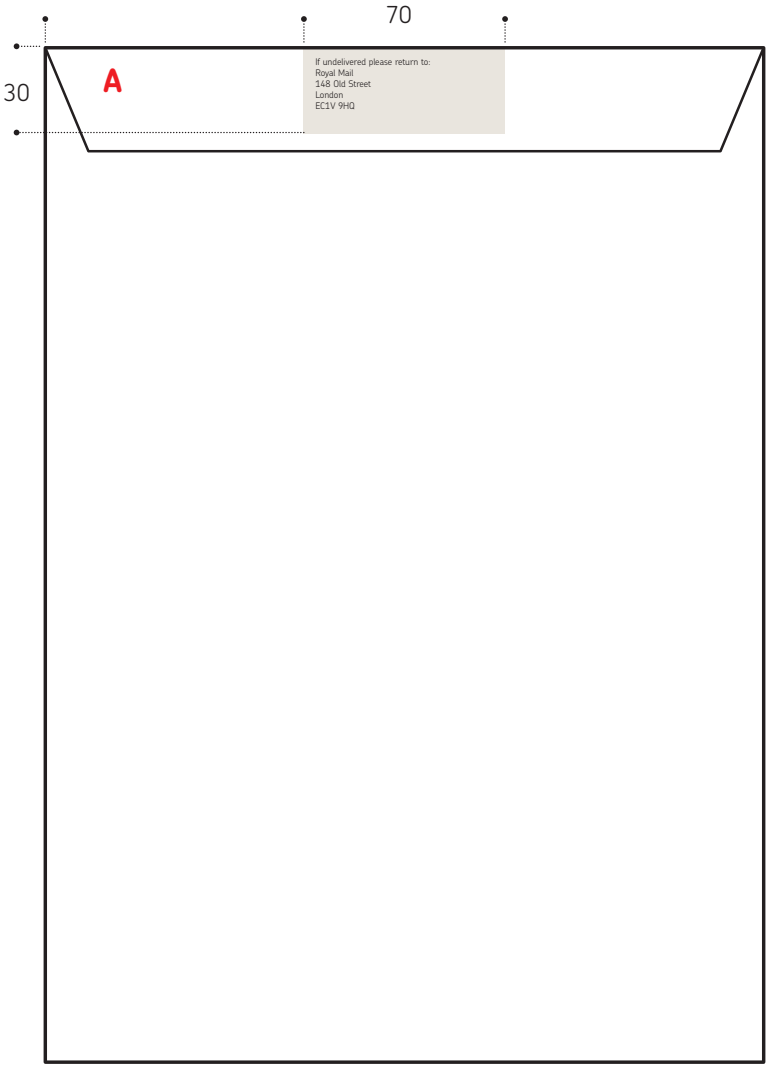
maximum sizes portrait

B4 envelope rear (250mm x 353mm)



All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

Return address zone

A Return address must be centrally located at the top, rear of the envelope occupying a box with maximum dimensions 70mm x 30mm.

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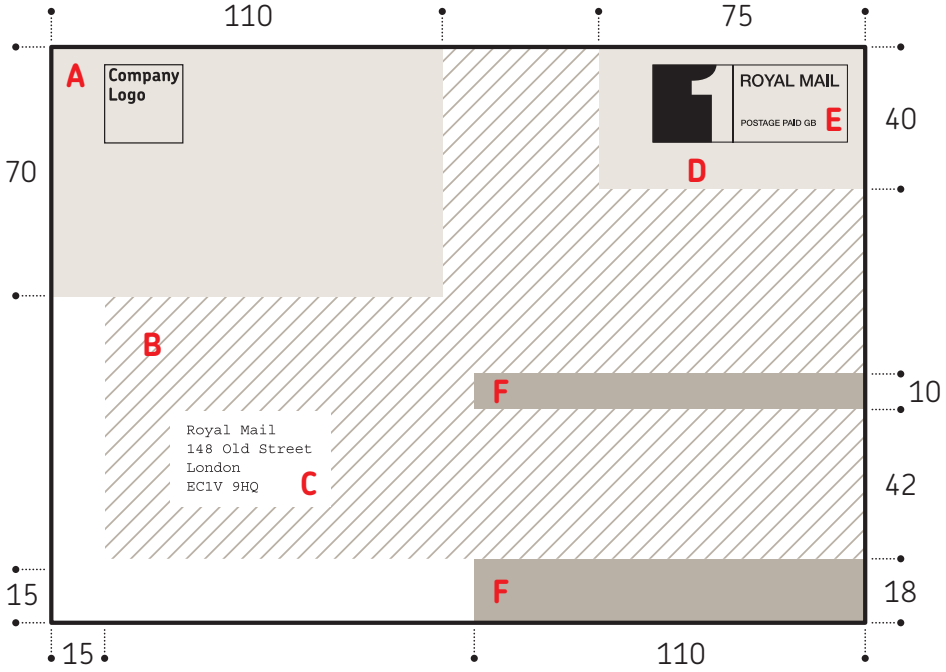
minimum sizes landscape

C5 envelope front (229mm x 162mm)



This size is only applicable if the thickness of the mailpiece is in excess of 5mm.

All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

Logo or indicia zone Codemark clear zone Address zone

A Logo zone. (Logos and other postal operators' indicia must ideally be placed in this area in the top left hand corner).

B Address block can be anywhere in the hatched area.

C Typical position for address block.

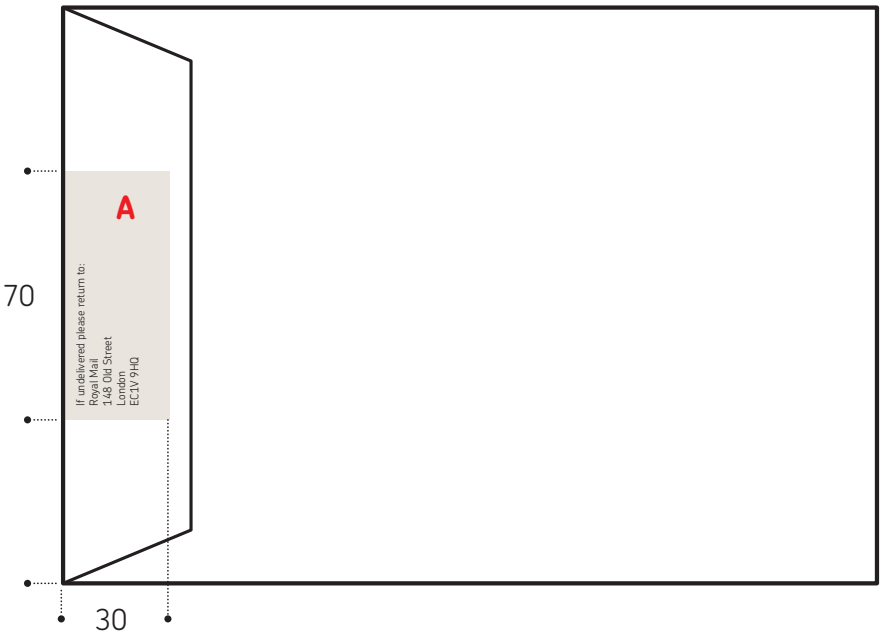
D Royal Mail indicia zone.

E Typical Royal Mail indicia positioned in top right corner.

F Codemark clear zone. Reserved for Royal Mail use only.

minimum sizes landscape

C5 envelope rear (229mm x 162mm)



All measurements are in millimetres. Measurements not to scale.

Return address zone

A Return address must be centrally located at the side, rear of the envelope occupying a box with maximum dimensions 30mm x 70mm.

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vital statistics

Shape
Mail items must be rectangular in shape (this includes square items).

Thickness
Mail may be up to 15mm thick. Thickness variation should be no more than 5mm across the height or length of the mail item.

Weight
The maximum weight for an item in the automated stream is 1.4kg.

Robustness
Mail should be robust enough to prevent it being damaged during sorting and delivery. This applies to the materials that the mail is made from and to the sealing of the individual mailpieces.

Paper envelopes

- Envelope paper: minimum 70gsm
- Single piece mail (folded and sealed): minimum 100gsm
- Single piece card: no minimum paperweight, but must be at least 0.25mm thick
- Minimum opacity of envelopes must be 85% (BS ISO 2471)

Window envelopes
Any wrinkling or creasing of the window will significantly affect the ability of our equipment to read the address. It is essential that the window is robust enough to not become deformed.

Plastic envelopes
Plastic envelopes must be robust enough to go through the Royal Mail material handling process without damage to the item itself or to the equipment. Loosely wrapped plastic items cannot be processed through the flat mail sorting machine.

Sealing
All mail must be fully sealed to prevent loss of contents and because unsealed mail is more prone to damage during the sorting process.

- A complete seal means that all sides must be sealed and there should be no holes or flaps in either the front or back face
- Envelope flaps must be sealed down, not just tucked in
- For single piece folded and sealed items, the item must be sealed on all sides

- Do not use metal clips or staples as these can snag on other mailpieces causing poor separation or damage

Separation of mailpieces
The sorting process must handle each mailpiece individually, so it is essential that stacks of mail can be separated easily. Poor separation often results in mail being mis-sorted and delayed.

Some automatic processors use a vacuum to pull off one mailpiece at a time from a stack of mail. But the vacuum can accidentally pull through two mailpieces if the paper used is too lightweight or there are not enough sheets of paper. Generally, enveloped items do not have this problem as they comprise three or more layers of paper. But this requirement also applies to single piece card or mail items.

Electrostatic charge on polyethylene film-wrapped items causes mail to stick together. So films must contain a minimum amount of antistatic agent, this is to ensure that items are not too slippery for the machine to handle.

Please also avoid any residue of gum on items of mail.

Content
The mass of any enclosed contents should be evenly distributed and have limited movement within the envelope. All envelopes should be sealed with less than 19mm of movement of the contents inside.

Paper Colour
The best colours for the face of mailpieces are white, cream or light buff.

Water absorbency
The water absorbency of a mailpiece affects the migration of the ink used for codemarks and cancellation marks into the item.
If absorbency is too low, the ink will sit on the mailpiece surface resulting in smudging. If it is too high, the ink will be absorbed into the paper and migrate laterally creating an indistinct mark. In both cases our sorting equipment cannot read the codemark.
Please note: this applies to paper items only.

Your mailpiece must have surface water absorption of 15-35gsm in one minute by Cobb Test standards.

written rules

So that we can sort and deliver your mail, the address must be clearly visible at all times, including the clear zones shown in the mailpiece diagrams.

Also consider potential movement of mailpiece contents when checking for address visibility, particularly for window envelopes.

Address orientation
The address should be kept parallel to either side of the envelope.

Address location
The address must fall within the address clear zone as indicated in the diagrams – B4 envelope landscape, B4 envelope portrait and C5 envelope landscape shown earlier. The area around the address block must be kept clear of graphics, printing and variations in background to enable our address interpretation equipment to locate the address and read a clean address image. There must be a clear zone of 5mm all around the address.

Address background
To sort and deliver mail efficiently it must be possible to differentiate the address information from the background it is printed on. For this:

- The address must be darker than the background (no reverse contrast is allowed)
- There must be a clear contrast between the address and the background
- The material that the address is printed on must be opaque enough to prevent any character or pattern behind from showing through and preventing our equipment from reading the address

For help at any time, call us on 08457 950 950.

Wherever the address is printed within the envelope window, and for 5mm all around the address, the background must have:

- A spectral reflectance of at least 30% higher than the colour used for the address (i.e. the minimum reflectance difference between the address and the background must be 30%) when measured in the red region (600nm) with a spectral reflectometer
- A minimum spectral reflectance of 35% (in the red 600nm region) when measured with a spectral reflectometer

Return address

To prevent confusion, the return address must be on the rear of the mailpiece, in the middle of the flap on the back for paper envelopes, or on the back for plastic envelopes.

Typeface

When choosing a typeface, you must consider legibility. Select a typeface that is clear and sharp and stands out from the background. Please do not use italic or calligraphic typefaces. Font sizes can be between 10 and 15 point, though 12 point is best.

The easiest typefaces for our machines to read are:

Arial 10–12 point
Avant Garde 11–15 point
Century School Book 10–11 point
Courier 10–15 point
Courier New 10–15 point
Franklin Gothic 10–12 point
Franklin Gothic (Book) 11–14 point
Geneva 10–12 point
Helvetica 10–14 point
News Gothic MT 10–12 point
Univers 10–15 point
Verdana 10–12 point

Poor spacing and inconsistent alignment can ruin the look of your mail and make it harder for our machines to process.

Printing

When printing your envelopes or labels, please ensure:

- Uniform font size for each line of address
- 10 to 12 characters per inch (25.4mm)
- Maximum 10mm spacing between words
- At least 1mm uniform spacing between lines
- Maximum 32 characters per line of address (including spaces)
- 6 lines per inch (25.4mm)
- No blurring, smudging or incomplete characters
- Two spaces separation between the two parts of the postcode
- Black print for the address text, not colour

Address format

When addressing your mail, please ensure:

- All lines of the address are justified left
- The address has a maximum skew of +3 or -3 degrees from the horizontal
- No punctuation or underlining is used in the address block
- You print the post town in CAPITALS
- You print the postcode in CAPITALS as the last item of an address, on a line by itself

Window envelopes

There is no maximum or minimum size for an envelope window. However the window size is constrained by length of address, number of lines of address, font size, address boundaries and clear zones. You must also bear in mind a 5mm clear zone around the full address.

Gloss of window film

Gloss expressed as a unit refers to the amount of light that is reflected back from the surface being measured. The higher the unit the glossier the surface being measured.

Your envelope must have a maximum gloss value of 150 measured at 60 degrees in accordance with ASTM 2457.

Haze of window film

Haze is an indication of the clarity of the material being measured. The higher the haze the more difficult it is to see through the material.

Your envelope window must have a maximum haze value of 75% measured in accordance with ASTM D1003-2000 Procedure A (Haze Meter).