

# ADDRESSING GUIDELINES

IMPORTANT UPDATES		
LAST UPDATED DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
January 11, 2010	Clarifications made to rural addressing.	section 3

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## 1 OVERVIEW

Canada Post’s computerized systems can decipher a wide range of addressing styles – from handwritten notation to typed and printed labels, but studies show that a consistent approach to mail addressing leads to more efficient handling. For Canada Post’s Customers, large and small, this translates into better service and lower costs. Consistent and accurate addressing eliminates the need for extra handling or redelivery by Canada Post. Standardized addressing helps ensure that mail is consistently “delivered on time, the first time, every time.”

These addressing guidelines do not limit mailers to any one format, but promote the most technologically efficient formats for addressing. In some cases, because of individual preference or other considerations, mailers may not be able to follow these formats.

Visit [canadapost.ca/postalstandards](http://canadapost.ca/postalstandards) for more technical information on the physical characteristics necessary for effective processing by Canada Post’s automated systems.

## 2 GENERAL INFORMATION

To avoid unnecessary delays to your mail items, follow these addressing guidelines:

- addresses should be written in upper case, however mailers may wish to use lower case due to individual preference or other considerations
- Postal Codes<sup>OM</sup> should be printed in upper case with the first three elements separated from the last three by one space (no hyphens; if the Postal Code is not formatted in this manner, the mail may be delayed)
- the municipality, province or territory, and Postal Code should always appear on the same line and there should be one space between the municipality, province or territory and two spaces between the province or territory and Postal Code
- characters in the address block should not be underlined
- punctuation should not be used unless it is part of a proper name, such as in “ST. JOHN’S”, but mailers may wish to use punctuation due to individual preference or other considerations
- accents may be used as they are an integral part of language but they are not considered to be punctuation
- the # symbol should never be used, nor the French equivalent n<sup>o</sup> as part of the address
- all lines of an address should be formatted with a uniform left margin and should be less than 40 characters per line, excluding spaces
- space between address lines should be at least 0.5 mm but no more than one blank line between lines of addressing
- for machineable mail, printed characters should be between 2 and 5 mm in height and be written in non-proportional fonts, such as the examples shown in [Table 1](#)

**Table 1: Examples of Non-proportional Fonts and Recommended Font Sizes**

FONT SIZE: 10 - 12 POINTS	FONT SIZE: 11 - 12 POINTS
Arial, Copy Pica, Elite, Pica, Letter Gothic, Lotus Line Draw, MS Line Draw, Alpha Gothic, Helvetica, News Gothic, Univers (W1), Universal	Courier, Courier New
OCR B (special font in only one size)	

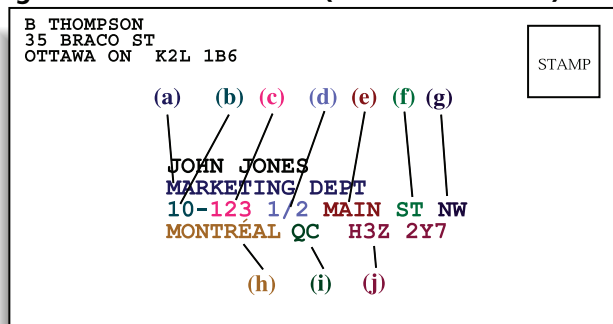
- the return address should be formatted in the same fashion as the destination address, however it cannot be printed larger and must be clearly separated from the destination address (acceptable locations include the top-left corner or on the back of the item along the top).

## 3 ILLUSTRATIONS

The following sections illustrate Canada Post’s recommended addressing guidelines.

### 3.1 Civic Addresses (Street Addresses)

Figure 1: Civic Addresses (Street Addresses)

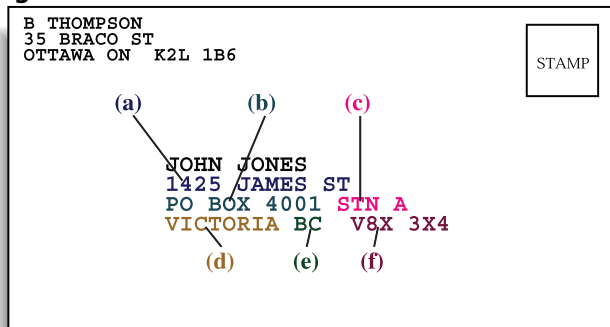


- Additional delivery information** is optional data that a mailer wishes to include (title, floor, etc.). It is always placed above the civic address.
- A **unit number** is placed before the civic number with a hyphen between, OR after the street type, using an acceptable unit identifier (ex. APT 10). See Table 4: “Unit Designators” for a complete list. The unit information may be placed on the line above the street information if space is an issue.
- The **civic number** is the official number assigned to an address by the municipality.
- When a **civic number suffix** is present, there is no space when it is alpha (123A), and there is one space when it is a fraction (123 1/2).
- The **street name** is the official name recognized by each municipality and should not be translated. (Ex.: Main is not Principale.) There is no space between a numerical street name with an ordinal or an alphanumeric character. (Ex.: 2ND ST or 36A ST). When the street name is numeric, there is only one space (no hyphen) between the civic number and the street name. (Ex.: 123 22ND AVE).
- The **street type** is provided by the municipality. Common abbreviations should be used. See Table 2: “Street Type” for a complete list. In some instances, the street type is also the street name (THE PARKWAY). The only street types that may be translated are:
 

ST	=	RUE	A French street type is placed before the street name, unless it is an ordinal number (1 <sup>re</sup> , 2 <sup>e</sup> , PREMIÈRE, DEUXIÈME, etc.)
AVE	=	AV	
BLVD	=	BOUL	
- The **street direction** uses the common one- or two-letter abbreviation. See Table 3: “Street Directions” for a complete list.
- The official **municipality** name (as provided to Canada Post by the municipality), the official abbreviation of the municipality name or an official alternate name should be used and should not be translated. (Ex.: TROIS-RIVIÈRES is not THREE RIVERS.)
- The **province** should always be presented using the official two-letter symbol. See Table 5: “Canadian Provinces and Territories Names and Abbreviations” for a complete list. Mailers may wish to have the province written in full and placed in brackets, for example (Quebec). This is also acceptable.
- The **Postal Code** should be in uppercase and placed two spaces to the right of the province with one space between the first three and last three characters. A hyphen should not be used (ex. T0L-1K0).

### 3.2 Postal Box Addresses

Figure 2: Postal Box Addresses

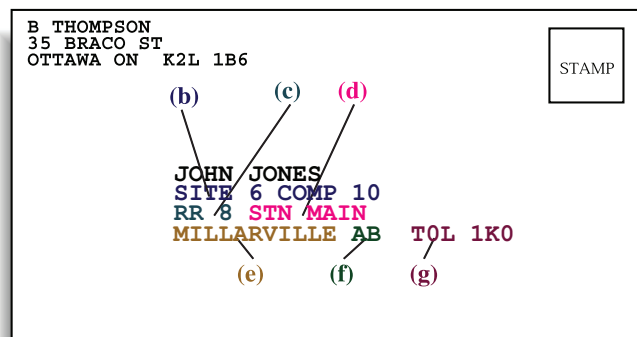
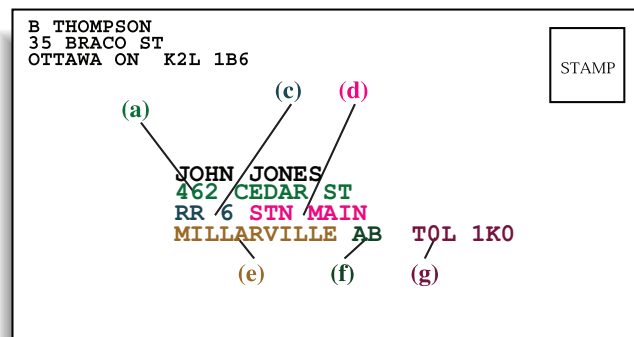


- a) **Additional delivery information** is optional data that a mailer wishes to include. (title, floor, municipal address, etc.). It is always placed above the post office box address.
- b) The **postal box number** should always be placed on the line just above the municipality, province and Postal Code. The # symbol should not be used, nor the French equivalent n°. Punctuation should not be used.
- c) **Station information** should be present to direct mail to the proper postal installation. This is especially important in larger areas where there is more than one installation within the same municipality.
 

Station	=	STN
Retail Postal Outlet	=	RPO
- d) The official **municipality** name (as provided to Canada Post by the municipality), the official abbreviation of the municipality name or an official alternate name should be used and should not be translated. (Ex.: TROIS-RIVIÈRES is not THREE RIVERS.)
- e) The **province** should always be presented using the official two-letter symbol. See Table 5: “Canadian Provinces and Territories Names and Abbreviations” for a complete list. Mailers may wish to have the province written in full and placed in brackets, for example (Quebec). This is also acceptable.
- f) The **Postal Code** should be in uppercase and placed two spaces to the right of the province with one space between the first three and last three characters. A hyphen should not be used (ex. T0L-1K0).

### 3.3 Rural Route Addresses

Figure 3: Rural Route Addresses



- a) Many **rural areas** now have civic addresses. Civic addresses may be added above the rural route. In many locations, the **rural route (RR)** designator may no longer be required and not used as part of the mailing address. The local post office can advise if this is the case.

- b) **Additional address information** is often required for delivery to a rural address that does not contain civic information. In some cases, simply the customer name is used and in others a SITE and COMP (compartment) is assigned. This should be placed above the route information. Please note that the word “BOX” should not be used in place of “COMPARTMENT”.

**NOTE:** If the civic address is available, it may be added above the SITE and COMP information.

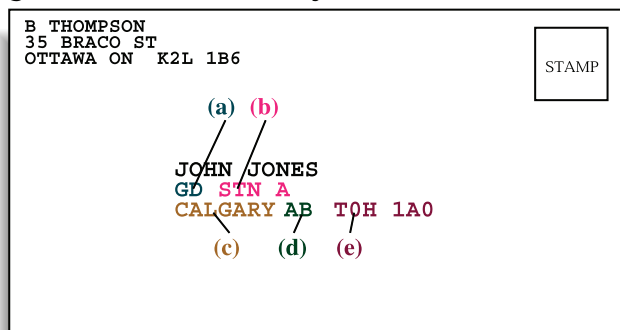
- c) The **rural route** identifier should use the two-letter symbol RR followed by the route number placed one space to the right. The # symbol should not be used, nor the French equivalent, n°. Punctuation should not be used either.
- d) **Station information** should be present to direct mail to the proper postal installation. This is especially important in larger areas where there is more than one installation within the same municipality.

Station	=	STN
Retail Postal Outlet	=	RPO

- e) The official **municipality** name (as provided to Canada Post by the municipality), the official abbreviation of the municipality name or an official alternate name should be used and should not be translated. (Ex.: TROIS-RIVIÈRES is not THREE RIVERS.)
- f) The **province** should always be presented using the official two-letter symbol. See Table 5: “Canadian Provinces and Territories Names and Abbreviations” for a complete list. Mailers may wish to have the province written in full and placed in brackets, for example (Quebec). This is also acceptable.
- g) The **Postal Code** should be in uppercase and placed two spaces to the right of the province with one space between the first three and last three characters. A hyphen should not be used (ex. TOL-1K0).

### 3.4 General Delivery Addresses

Figure 4: General Delivery Addresses



- a) The **General Delivery** indicator should be the two-letter abbreviation “GD.” Punctuation should not be used.
- b) **Station information** should be present to direct mail to the proper postal installation. This is especially important in larger areas where there is more than one installation within the same municipality.

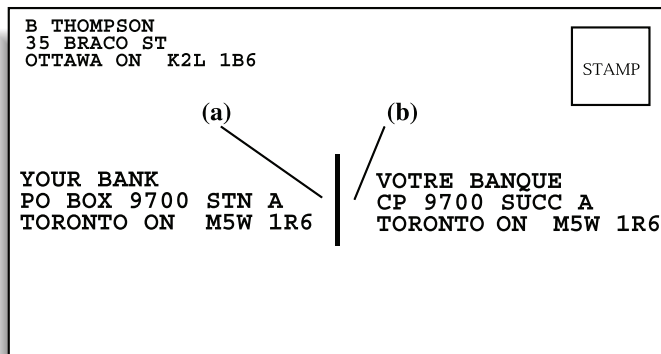
Station	=	STN
Retail Postal Outlet	=	RPO

- c) The official **municipality** name (as provided to Canada Post by the municipality), the official abbreviation of the municipality name or an official alternate name should be used and should not be translated. (Ex.: TROIS-RIVIÈRES is not THREE RIVERS.)
- d) The **province** should always be presented using the official two-letter symbol. See Table 5: “Canadian Provinces and Territories Names and Abbreviations” for a complete list. Mailers may wish to have the province written in full and placed in brackets, for example (Quebec). This is also acceptable.

- e) The **Postal Code** should be in uppercase and placed two spaces to the right of the province with one space between the first three and last three characters. A hyphen should not be used (ex. TOL-1K0).

### 3.5 Bilingual Addresses

Figure 5: Bilingual Addresses



- a) A **solid black line** must be placed between the two addresses. It must be a minimum of 0.7 mm thick.
- b) There must be a **clear space** on each side of the black line. This clear space should be approximately 10 mm.

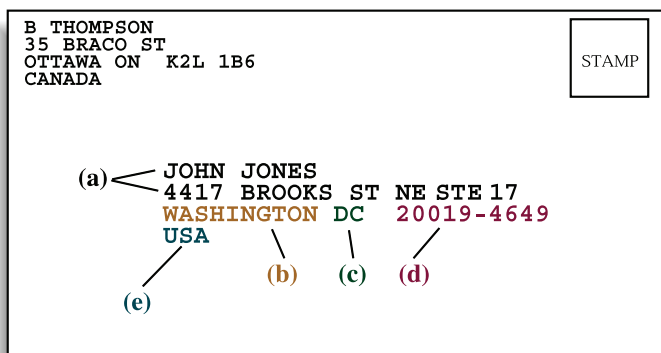
### 3.6 Military Addresses

Military addressing is defined as mail sent to or by the Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces personnel, their dependants and civilians attached to Canadian Forces served through Canadian Forces Post Offices and Fleet Mail Offices. See "[Canadian Forces Postal Service](#)" for more information.

### 3.7 United States of America Addresses

Addressing elements required by the United States Postal Service should be prepared according to the United States postal standards.

Figure 6: United States of America Addresses

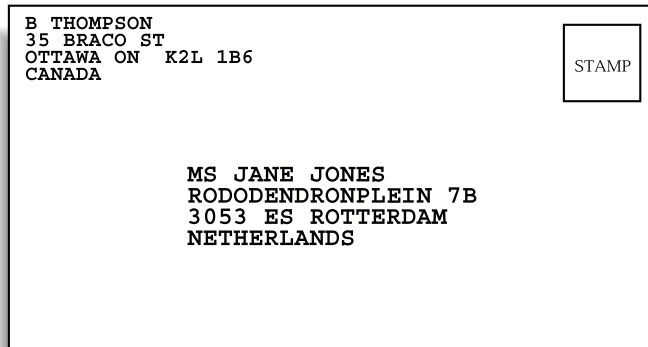


- a) All U.S.A. mail items must be addressed to a specific individual, organization or company name.
- b) The full **municipality** name should be used and should appear as the first component in the second last line of the address block.
- c) The two-letter **state symbol** is preferred over the full state name. The state symbol should appear on the second last line of the address following the municipality, separated by one space. See Table 6: "States, Territories and Possessions Names and Abbreviations U.S.A." for a complete list.

- d) The **ZIP code** must be separated from the state symbol by two spaces. It may be either five or nine digits. If the nine-digit format is used, a hyphen will be used to separate the fifth and sixth digits.
- e) The **country name** must be the last entry on the address. It is placed alone on the last line of the address block, below the municipality/city name and the ZIP code information.

### 3.8 International Addresses

Figure 7: International Addresses



All international mail items must be addressed to a specific individual, organization or company name. Also, to ensure proper processing, the country name must be spelled correctly and in full. (Ex.: UAE is not acceptable for UNITED ARAB EMIRATES).

The name of the country must be the last entry on the address. It is placed at the bottom, below the municipality/city name and any Postal Code/ZIP code information.

**NOTE:** Canada Post encourages all mailers to respect the wishes of Customers in matters of format. These addressing guidelines have taken care to accommodate the requirements of the English and French languages by recognizing and accepting the use of upper- and lower- case characters, including accents, as well as the full spelling of and punctuation between addressing elements.

### 3.9 International Destination Names

See “[International Destination Listing](#)” for a complete list of international destination names.

## 4 SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS RECOGNIZED BY CANADA POST

### 4.1 Street Types

**Table 2: Street Type**

STREET TYPE	ABBREVIATION
Abbey	ABBEY
Acres	ACRES
Allée	ALLÉE
Alley	ALLEY
Autoroute	AUT
Avenue (English)	AVE
Avenue (French)	AV
Bay	BAY
Beach	BEACH
Bend	BEND
Boulevard (English)	BLVD
Boulevard (French)	BOUL
By-pass	BYPASS
Byway	BYWAY
Campus	CAMPUS
Cape	CAPE
Carré	CAR
Carrefour	CARREF
Centre (English)	CTR
Centre (French)	C
Cercle	CERCLE
Chase	CHASE
Chemin	CH
Circle	CIR
Circuit	CIRCT
Close	CLOSE
Common	COMMON
Concession	CONC
Corners	CRNRS
Côte	CÔTE
Cour	COUR
Cours	COURS
Court	CRT
Cove	COVE
Crescent	CRES
Croissant	CROIS

STREET TYPE	ABBREVIATION
Crossing	CROSS
Cul-de-sac	CDS
Dale	DALE
Dell	DELL
Diversion	DIVERS
Downs	DOWNS
Drive	DR
Échangeur	ÉCH
End	END
Esplanade	ESPL
Estates	ESTATE
Expressway	EXPY
Extension	EXTEN
Farm	FARM
Field	FIELD
Forest	FOREST
Freeway	FWY
Front	FRONT
Gardens	GDNS
Gate	GATE
Glade	GLADE
Glen	GLEN
Green	GREEN
Grounds	GRNDS
Grove	GROVE
Harbour	HARBR
Heath	HEATH
Heights	HTS
Highlands	HGHLDs
Highway	HWY
Hill	HILL
Hollow	HOLLOW
Île	ÎLE
Impasse	IMP
Inlet	INLET
Island	ISLAND



STREET TYPE	ABBREVIATION
Key	KEY
Knoll	KNOLL
Landing	LANDNG
Lane	LANE
Limits	LMTS
Line	LINE
Link	LINK
Lookout	LKOUT
Loop	LOOP
Mall	MALL
Manor	MANOR
Maze	MAZE
Meadow	MEADOW
Mews	MEWS
Montée	MONTÉE
Moor	MOOR
Mount	MOUNT
Mountain	MTN
Orchard	ORCH
Parade	PARADE
Parc	PARC
Park	PK
Parkway	PKY
Passage	PASS
Path	PATH
Pathway	PTWAY
Pines	PINES
Place (English)	PL
Place (French)	PLACE
Plateau	PLAT
Plaza	PLAZA
Point	PT
Pointe	POINTE
Port	PORT
Private	PVT
Promenade	PROM
Quai	QUAI

STREET TYPE	ABBREVIATION
Quay	QUAY
Ramp	RAMP
Rang	RANG
Range	RG
Ridge	RIDGE
Rise	RISE
Road	RD
Rond-point	RDPT
Route	RTE
Row	ROW
Rue	RUE
Ruelle	RLE
Run	RUN
Sentier	SENT
Square	SQ
Street	ST
Subdivision	SUBDIV
Terrace	TERR
Terrasse	TSSE
Thicket	THICK
Towers	TOWERS
Townline	TLINE
Trail	TRAIL
Turnabout	TRNABT
Vale	VALE
Via	VIA
View	VIEW
Village	VILLGE
Villas	VILLAS
Vista	VISTA
Voie	VOIE
Walk	WALK
Way	WAY
Wharf	WHARF
Wood	WOOD
Wynd	WYND

**NOTE:** This list is not exhaustive.

## 4.2 Street Directions

**Table 3: Street Directions**

STREET DIRECTION – ENGLISH	ABBREVIATION	STREET DIRECTION – FRENCH	ABBREVIATION
East	E	Est	E
North	N	Nord	N
Northeast	NE	Nord-Est	NE
Northwest	NW	Nord-Ouest	NO
South	S	Sud	S
Southeast	SE	Sud-Est	SE
Southwest	SW	Sud-Ouest	SO
West	W	Ouest	O

## 4.3 Unit Designators

The following are the most technologically efficient unit designators. In some cases, because of individual preference or other considerations, a mailer may use other unit designators.

**Table 4: Unit Designators**

UNIT DESIGNATOR – ENGLISH	ABBREVIATION	UNIT DESIGNATOR – FRENCH	ABBREVIATION
Apartment	APT	Appartement	APP
Suite	SUITE	Bureau	BUREAU
Unit	UNIT	Unité	UNITÉ

## 4.4 Canadian Provinces and Territories

**Table 5: Canadian Provinces and Territories Names and Abbreviations**

PROVINCE OR TERRITORY – ENGLISH	ABBREVIATION	PROVINCE OR TERRITORY – FRENCH
Alberta	AB	Alberta
British Columbia	BC	Colombie-Britannique
Manitoba	MB	Manitoba
New Brunswick	NB	Nouveau-Brunswick
Newfoundland and Labrador	NL	Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador
Northwest Territories	NT	Territoires du Nord-Ouest
Nova Scotia	NS	Nouvelle-Écosse
Nunavut	NU	Nunavut
Ontario	ON	Ontario
Prince Edward Island	PE	Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Québec	QC	Québec
Saskatchewan	SK	Saskatchewan
Yukon	YT	Yukon

## 4.5 States, Territories and Possessions – U.S.A.

Table 6: States, Territories and Possessions Names and Abbreviations U.S.A.

DESTINATION		STATE CODE	A	B	C	D
ENGLISH	FRENCH					
Alabama	Alabama	AL	5	4	6	7
Alaska	Alaska	AK	7	7	7	7
American Samoa	Samoa américaine	AS	7	7	7	7
Arizona	Arizona	AZ	7	6	4	7
Arkansas	Arkansas	AR	5	4	5	7
Armed Forces Africa	Forces armées Afrique	AE	2	1	7	6
Armed Forces Americas	Forces armées américaines	AA	5	5	7	7
Armed Forces Canada	Forces armées Canada	AE	2	1	7	6
Armed Forces Europe	Forces armées européennes	AE	2	1	7	6
Armed Forces Middle East	Forces armées Moyen-Orient	AE	2	1	7	6
Armed Forces Pacific	Forces armées Pacifique	AP	7	7	4	7
California	Californie	CA	7	7	4	7
Colorado	Colorado	CO	6	6	3	6
Connecticut	Connecticut	CT	2	2	7	6
Delaware	Delaware	DE	3	2	7	6
District of Columbia	District de Columbia	DC	3	2	7	6
Florida	Floride	FL	5	5	7	7
Georgia	Georgie	GA	4	4	6	7
Guam	Guam	GU	7	7	7	7
Hawaii	Hawaii	HI	7	7	7	7
Idaho	Idaho	ID	7	6	2	5
Illinois	Illinois	IL	4	3	5	6
Indiana	Indiana	IN	4	3	5	6
Iowa	Iowa	IA	5	4	3	6
Kansas	Kansas	KS	5	5	4	6
Kentucky	Kentucky	KY	4	3	6	6
Louisiana	Louisiane	LA	5	5	6	7
Maine	Maine	ME	1	3	7	5
Marshall Islands	Iles Marshall	MH	7	7	7	7
Maryland	Maryland	MD	3	2	7	6
Massachusetts	Massachusetts	MA	2	2	7	5
Michigan	Michigan	MI	3	3	5	5
Micronesia	Micronésie	FM	7	7	7	7

DESTINATION		STATE CODE	A	B	C	D
ENGLISH	FRENCH					
Minnesota	Minnesota	MN	5	4	2	5
Minor Outlying Islands	Minor Outlying Islands	UM	7	7	7	7
Mississippi	Mississippi	MS	5	4	6	7
Missouri	Missouri	MO	5	4	5	6
Montana	Montana	MT	6	6	1	5
Nebraska	Nebraska	NE	5	5	3	6
Nevada	Nevada	NV	7	7	3	6
New Hampshire	New Hampshire	NH	1	3	7	5
New Jersey	New Jersey	NJ	3	2	7	6
New Mexico	Nouveau Mexique	NM	6	6	4	7
New York	New York	NY	2	1	7	6
North Carolina	Caroline du Nord	NC	4	3	7	7
North Dakota	Dakota du Nord	ND	5	5	1	5
Northern Mariana Islands	Northern Mariana Islands	MP	7	7	7	7
Ohio	Ohio	OH	3	2	6	6
Oklahoma	Oklahoma	OK	5	5	5	7
Oregon	Oregon	OR	7	7	2	5
Palau	Palau	PW	7	7	7	7
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvanie	PA	3	1	6	6
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	PR	7	7	7	7
Rhode Island	Rhode Island	RI	2	2	7	6
South Carolina	Caroline du Sud	SC	4	4	7	7
South Dakota	Dakota du Sud	SD	5	5	2	5
Tennessee	Tennessee	TN	4	3	6	7
Texas	Texas	TX	6	5	5	7
Utah	Utah	UT	7	6	3	6
Vermont	Vermont	VT	1	2	7	5
Virginia	Virginie	VA	3	3	7	6
Virgin Islands	Îles Vierges	VI	7	7	7	7
Washington	Washington	WA	7	7	1	5
West Virginia	Virginie de l'Ouest	WV	3	2	6	6
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	WI	4	3	3	5
Wyoming	Wyoming	WY	6	6	2	5

## 5 POSTAL CODE<sup>OM</sup>

The Postal Code is an integral part of every postal address in Canada. The Postal Code was designed to aid in sorting mail by both mechanized and manual methods. It also enables the Customer to presort mail, thereby bypassing a number of sorting processes within Canada Post and reducing costs.

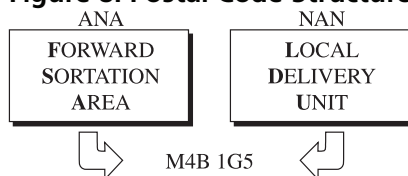
### 5.1 The Structure of the Postal Code

The Postal Code is a six-character uniformly structured, alphanumeric code in the form “ANA NAN” where “A” represents an alphabetic character and “N” represents a numeric character. A Postal Code is made up of two segments: “forward sortation area” and “local delivery unit.”

The forward sortation area is a combination of three characters (alpha-numeric-alpha). It identifies a major geographic area in an urban or a rural location.

The local delivery unit is a combination of three characters (numeric-alpha-numeric). It identifies the smallest delivery unit within a forward sortation area.

Figure 8: Postal Code Structure



## 5.2 Forward Sortation Area – The First Segment of the Postal Code

The “forward sortation area” or “FSA” represents a specific area within a major geographic region or province. The forward sortation area provides the basis for the primary sorting of forward mail.

The **first character** of the forward sortation area segment identifies one of the 18 major geographic areas, provinces or districts (as shown in Figure 9).

**Figure 9: First Segment of the Postal Code**

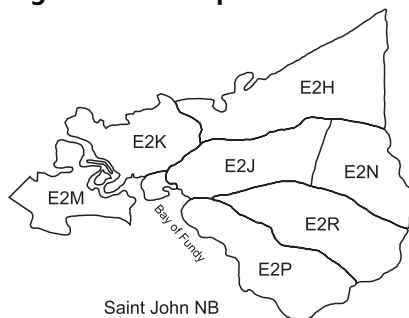


The **second character** of the forward sortation area is an important component of mail preparation as it identifies either:

- an urban Postal Code: numerals 1 to 9 (E2J). Urban Postal Codes are generally serviced by Letter Carrier or community mailboxes; or
- a rural Postal Code: numeral 0 (zero) (A0A). Rural Postal Codes are serviced by rural route drivers and/or post offices.

The **third character** of the forward sortation area segment (E2J) in conjunction with the first two characters, describes an exact area of a city or town or other geographic area.

**Figure 10: Example FSA**



### 5.3 Local Delivery Unit – The Second Segment of the Postal Code

The “local delivery unit” or “LDU”, identified by the last three characters of the Postal Code, allows for a more final sort within a forward sortation area.

In **urban areas**, the last three digits may indicate a specific city block (one side of a street between two intersecting streets), a single building or, in some cases, a large-volume mail receiver.

In **rural areas**, the last three digits, together with the forward sortation area, identify a specific rural community.

### 5.4 Postal Code Address Data

Canada Post’s Postal Code Address data is used to determine or verify the correct Postal Code for an address anywhere in Canada or identify the complete range of addresses that correspond to any one Postal Code. The data is available under licence by download from a secured Canada Post FTP site and on CD-ROM. The updates are distributed monthly.

Delivery Mode data and various types of Householder counts are also available. Visit [canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/business/productservices/atoz/postalcodeproducts.jsf](http://canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/business/productservices/atoz/postalcodeproducts.jsf) for additional information on Postal Code data.

### 5.5 Canadian Postal Code Searching Tools

The *Canadian Postal Code Directory*® contains Postal Code information for all addresses in Canada. It facilitates Postal Code look-up and verification.

The *Canadian Postal Code Directory* can be purchased in hard copy through the National Philatelic Centre at 1.800.565.4362, or at selected post offices.

Visit [canadapost.ca/cpotools/apps/fpc/business/findByAdvanced](http://canadapost.ca/cpotools/apps/fpc/business/findByAdvanced) to use Canada Post’s free Postal Code look-up tool.

Postal Codes can also be obtained by calling 1.900.565.2633 for service in English or 1.900.565.2634 for service in French.

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