White Paper

Why a Global Address Standard is Critical to Success in Direct Mail
Marketing and Electronic Commerce

DRAFT

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Executive Summary

The Problem

With the advent of the Internet, companies that had been solely domestic enterprises have suddenly found themselves involved in international commerce. Cross-border mail is increasing substantially. Companies that developed customer databases based upon domestic addressing requirements are finding these databases entirely inadequate for the storage of multinational address information.

Differences in requirements and address element placement make it extremely difficult to design and maintain a single database, adequate for the storage of multinational address information, in the traditional, country specific, address line structure. It is also true that it is difficult to keep up with address requirements and the changes that occur in one country, let alone globally.

The Solution

PROLST is a UN/EDIFACT Message In Development (MID) for international name and address lists. PROLST is designed to simplify the collection and storage of multinational address information in one database in a manner that enables validation of many of the address components. PROLST will make it much easier to maintain international addresses by supplying information on current address elements and address element placement (formats) for participating nations.

How Does PROLST Work?

An address is a structure composed of elements: house numbers, streets, Post office boxes, directions, street types, cities, countries, Post codes, states, provinces and so on. The good news is that the vast majority of addresses are composed of elements that are common worldwide. The challenge is to identify and define these elements in a common manner, then format templates can be designed for each country, for every type of address within each country. The format templates and code tables are maintained on a readily available WEB site. Templates will be accessed based upon country code and template number.

The codification of the individual elements allows the editing for content, or the abbreviation of the content. Each individual element may be placed in the appropriate position on the output medium (label, envelope, or file) based upon the country specific address format template.

Codification facilitates an intelligent rendition of an address when the number of address lines or length of an address line exceeds the space available. Rendition Instructions will define how to consolidate and/or abbreviate address information to avoid truncation. This insures that the summarized address information retains the necessary information for the proper delivery of the mail piece and displays the address information in a manner that meets the local Post requirements.

Background: Traditional Address Collection

Historically businesses have collected address information in proprietary databases designed for collecting domestic address information. There was no standard format, so sharing information with trading partners was sometimes complicated and the quality of the resulting addresses was questionable, especially when the receiving partner's address fields were shorter and address information was truncated.

As a result of the lack of standards:

- Mail may be more difficult to deliver.
- Mail may take longer to deliver.
- Mail may be misdelivered.
- Mail may be undeliverable.
- Mail is more expensive to deliver.
- Customers are dissatisfied.
- Companies lose customers.
- Commerce is discouraged.

Consequently, the mail piece is more expensive for the Post to handle and the mailer may not get the desired response. The cost to the mailer is measured not only by the expense of producing and mailing the mail piece, but in the loss of potential business, as well.

 For Mailers using standardized codes can leverage the global interconnected electronic infrastructure (including the Internet, and other inter-company networked applications) to market their products. When addresses contain all of the necessary elements, mail reaches the recipients at a fraction of the cost (to both Post and mailer). In addition, electronically readable codes insure greater accuracy and productivity in communications with business partners. Codes help minimize returned mail, allow for better database management, and facilitate the collection of multinational mailing information.

For both the Posts and mailers the lack of address standards makes the current aggregation and dissemination of mail an expensive and inefficient proposition--an effort duplicated by each Post and mailer in the world. With standardized machine-readable addresses, mail is delivered more accurately, with greater speed and less expense.

Standards for describing the physical destination of the mail are the next frontier of electronic commerce. Just as standards such as HTML and TCP/IP have led to the enormous success of the Internet, so too will address coding standards lead to a new level of efficiency for the physical delivery of electronic commerce business products.

Why Codify Addresses?

By coding address elements one database can be used for many countries. The individual elements can be reassembled to create a mailing address that can be modified to meet the mailers needs. This facilitates change when Post address formats requirements change due to changes in automation equipment or automation requirements. A simple change to an address format allows for the

restructuring of address components to meet the new data collection and mailing requirements. This gives the mailer flexibility and ensures deliverablilty.

The address format templates, along with Rendition Instructions supply the type of guidance needed when dealing with multinational mailings (see UN/PROLST Formats and Code Examples at http://www.eccma.org/iaec/).

An address coding convention brings many benefits to the mailing functions of a company. These benefits are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. The Pros and Cons of PROLST.

Pros	Cons
Enables the use of a single address database to support multinational mailings	Requires the conversion of existing address information to individual elements (should be done with software)
Standardizes the collection capability across channels of address collection (forms, call centers, Internet)	Requires a change in the process of collecting address information
Consistent coding across collection methods and information systems giving a common view of enterprise data.	Requires a large database structure with many additional fields
Facilitates control over the quality of address information	Collecting information on a field by field basis may be cumbersome.
Maximizes deliverability regardless of size of address label or envelope window	Templates and rendition instructions are required to format addresses.
Software already exists in the United States and Canada (perhaps elsewhere as well) that will break an address down into the individual address elements	World Posts will have to cooperate to insure that the elements, templates and requirements for their own country are kept current

Uncovering the hidden value of addresses

For any collection of data, when a pre-set vocabulary of terms is used to index the contents, search precision is aided enormously. A common coding convention allows computer systems to automatically list similar address information. When a person is searching for an address in a particular category, he or she finds precisely the addresses being sought and nothing else. In contrast, when forced to use text-string searches on such collections, it leads to a great number of irrelevant hits. By pre-tagging address information with a pre-set vocabulary of terms that has been developed by industry participants, it is possible to search for and analyze data with precision.

Analysis

When every address transaction of an enterprise is tagged with a common set of identifiers, managers are able to analyze the customer base. With identifiers that are part of an address structure, detail information can be rolled up into categories that are more generic. For example:

- Data with addresses containing a specific ISO Country Code can be rolled up into totals for "Country Customer Base" or into the broader "European Sales"). This allows the marketing managers to determine where the marketing effort is paying off.
- Finance will be interested in where they are reaping the most business benefit from their investments.
- Accounting will need to know the countries, cities and/or localities in which the corporation does business for tax purposes.

Naming Convention for the Tag Labels

The United States Postal Service Publication 28 was utilized as a starting point for developing this standard. The codes in the International Address Element Codes (IAEC) were developed and propagated, using the names and definitions from this publication. Additional codes and expanded definitions will be required for worldwide use. Representatives from the world Posts will participate in this project through the Universal Postal Union to insure that each country has an opportunity to insure their unique requirements are incorporated.

The UN/PROLST Classification

The UN/PROLST coding system is an open, global electronic commerce standard that provides a logical framework for classifying address components.

Methodology

The team validated and enhanced the draft version using both Post and mailing professionals and public documents (USPS Publication 28 and Publication 32). Then the team consulted industry experts to ensure accuracy and the common use of names, groups and definitions.

Using and Getting Value from the UN/PROLST

Using the UN/PROLST as a mailer or postal organization

To get started with using the UN/PROLST standard:

Assign codes to your addresses

In the creation of web sites and mailings, use UN/PROLST to tag addresses. You may use software or a third party to do this for you. Your address matching software may have this capability.

Requesting the creation of a new code from the UN/ECCMA Secretariat

If you cannot find a code within the UN/PROLST classification that applies to your address element, ECCMA members can request a new code. Within two weeks of receiving your request, you either will have a new code, or will be advised of an existing code, that the secretariat membership deems appropriate for your use.

Using the UN/PROLST as a Mailer

Ask your suppliers to use the code in address transactions.

If you conduct commerce electronically with your suppliers, request that they use the UN/PROLST codes in all address transaction exchanges. If they transmit address information to you electronically, ask them to have UN/PROLST codes assigned to each address by a certified third party. If you exchange mailing addresses, use and ask the receiver to use UN/PROLST codes to identify every address element.

- Ask technology and software vendors to incorporate the UN/PROLST codes into their systems.

- Assign the codes to existing record archives.

- This can be done with software tools or by hiring a third party to come in and do it for you.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Companies should consider using the UN/PROLST Products Address Standard as a routine matter of business. To use the codes, use software to insure data integrity and accuracy.

UN/PROLST Format and Code Examples

In the United States, there are eight basic address formats the following diagram illustrates the formats from most common to least common.
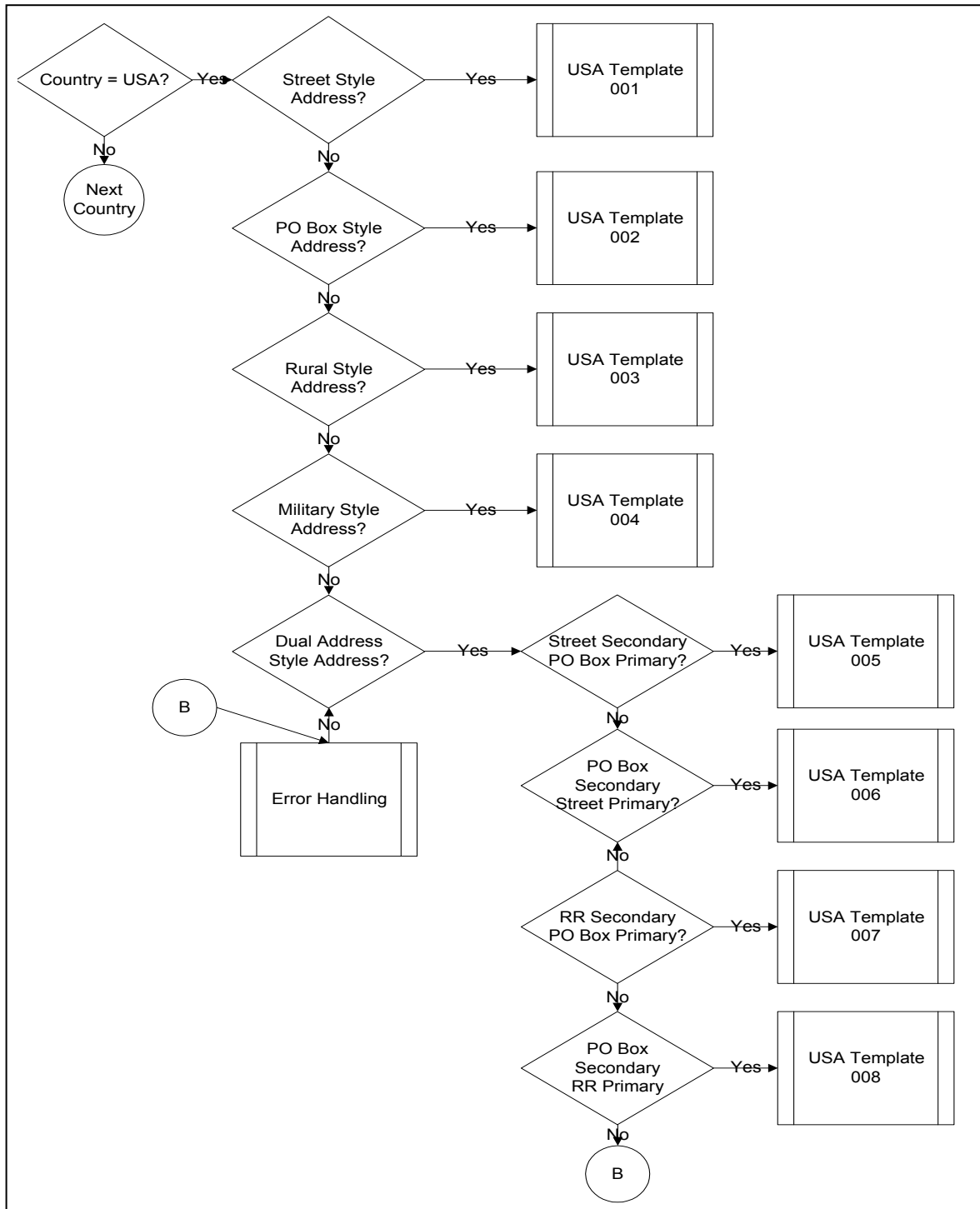
The Use of Elements and Templates to Format Addresses

The templates that are used on the following pages do not include the lines for the POSTNET barcode, the ACS Key line, or the Optional Endorsement Line.   These options are sufficiently complicated to require separate documentation, which can be found in the USPS Publication 25, *Designing Letter and Reply Mail.*

The elements used in the following templates have been broken down to the finest unit of an address component. This process can be done manually but is facilitated by the use of address matching software available in the U.S., Canada and some other countries of the world.

The templates are a vertical-line and horizontal-field oriented representation of how to rebuild properly formatted addresses using the address elements. When viewing the examples one will notice that there are some literals specified in quotes. These literals indicate a value that should be inserted at the specified location.

Potentially, each country will have several types of address structures that will require multiple templates for a given country. However, it is more likely that we will find that many countries have similar addressing requirements and the number of address structures will actually be substantially less than the total number of countries represented. In the United States, the basic format for addresses varies only slightly concerning the formatting of the address elements for Street Address 1 and Street Address 2 in the templates.

The secondary street address field, Street Address 2, which is positioned above the primary address line, Street Address 1, is used primarily as an area to handle address line overflow (see Rendition Instructions).   Whenever possible street address line elements should use a single line. Street Address 2 is also used in the examples of Dual Addresses.

Dual addressing is a technique used by some mailers to specify an alternate delivery address. The problem with this technique is that in many cases the primary (Street Address 1) and secondary (Street Address 2) address lines are not within the same ZIP (Post) Code. In some cases, the primary and secondary addresses may not even be in the same city.   To aid in rebuilding dual addresses we have created an indicator (Dual address preference - tag 115) that identifies which address line was used to obtain the ZIP (Post) Code. The identified address line must be used as the primary address line.

Not all of the format elements will be required for all street addresses but when present they should be presented in the order specified in the templates (see Rendition Instructions for the handling of address overflow). In the following template, the highlighted elements are utilized in the examples that follow.

The current tables for address elements and templates may be viewed from the ECCMA Web page:
http://www.eccma.org/iaec/

USA TEMPLATE 001 - Street Style Address

The street style address is the most common address format in the United States. This format is used for addresses with street names (tag 013) when no Dual address preference (tag 115) is specified or the dual address preference specified is "S".

FIELDS	**CONTAIN**
Mailstop	**012**
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046, 047, 048, 049, 050, 052, 051**
Title	**055**
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, **011**
Organization	**045**
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**006**, 142, **013**, **014**, 015, **016, 017**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
MS 454
MR ED J L FLOWERS III ESQ
ATTORNEY AT LAW
MAIL FRAUD DIVISION
INSPECTION SERVICE
436 7TH AVE STE 454
PITTSBURGH PA  15220-1818
```

FIELDS	**CONTAIN**
Mailstop	012
Mailee	**139**
Primary Name	**046, 047, 048,** 049**, 050,** 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**006**, 142, **013**, **014**, 015, **016, 017**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
C/O MRS GWENDOLYN FOSTER
MISS EDWINA LEE FLOWERS
12345 HAIGHT CT APT 2
CHICAGO IL  60612-1012
```

USA TEMPLATE 001 - Street Style Address Continued

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046, 047,** 048**,** 049**, 050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	**056, 057**, 058, 059, **060**, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**006**, 142, **013**, **014**, 015, 016, 017
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
MR IVAN KENT
MRS IMA KENT
121 1/2 SADDLE CIR HIGHLAN
PARK IL  60712-1012
```

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	**012**
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046**, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	**055**
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	**010**, 011
Organization	**045**
Urbanization	**017**
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**006**, 142, **013**, 014, 015, 016, 017
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
MS-454
SR JUAN VALDEZ
BANK MANAGER
INVESTMENT DEPT
BANK OF SAN JUAN
URB ROOSEVELT
508 CALLE OCTAVIO MARCANO
SAN JUAN PR 00918-2749
```

USA TEMPLATE 002 - PO BOX Style Address

The PO Box Style Address is the second most common address format used in the United States. The PO Box Style Address format is indicated when a post office box number (tag 019) occurs and no dual address preference (tag 115) is specified or the dual address preference specified is "P".

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	**012**
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046**, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, **051**
Title	**055**
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	**010**, 011
Organization	**045**
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	"PO BOX", **019**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029,** "-", **030**

```
MS-101
DR LILLIAN HERMAN MD
CHIEF OF STAFF
PULMONARY MEDICINE DEPT
NORTHWEST HOSPITAL
PO BOX 111
AMARILLO TX  79175-0001
```

USA TEMPLATE 003 - Rural Route Style Address

The Rural Route Style Address is the third most common address format used in the United States. Rural Route style addresses are still relatively common in rural areas of the United States; however, these addresses are being systematically phased out in favor of street style addresses. This address format is used for Rural Route style address (tag 020) when there is no dual address preference (tag 115) indicated.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046**, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**020**, "BOX", **040**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
MR JOAQUIN HERNANDEZ
RR 2 BOX 914C
SUFFOLK NY  11901-2221
```

```
MS J JAMISON
HC 32 BOX 172
NEWBERRY PA 17701-9783
```

INTEGRATED BUSINESS SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS CENTER

USA TEMPLATE 004 - Military Style Address

The Military Style address is the fourth most common address format used in the United States. If the state code (tag 024) is "AE", "AA" or "AP", the address is a Military style address.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046**, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**013**, "BOX", **040**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029**, "-", **030**

LT LESLIE CARRIO
USS LOUISIANA BOX GOLD
FPO AP 96667-2146

If the Box Number (040) is not specified:

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046, 047, 048, 049, 050, 052, 051**
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	
Street Address 1	**013**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029**, "-", **030**

CAPTAIN JOSEPH PATRICK MICHAEL WILSON JR PHD
USS PATRIOT
APO AE 09492-1927

USA TEMPLATE 005 - Dual Address PO Box Primary/Street Secondary

The Dual Style Address is the fifth most common address format used in the United States. Most commonly, what you see in dual addressing is both a PO Box and a Street style address. The Dual address preference (tag 115) value of "PS" indicates a PO Box-Street Order is preferred for this PO BOX and Street style address.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	046, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	**006**, 142, **013**, **014**, 015, 016, 017
Street Address 1	"PO BOX", **019**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

JACK GREEN
600 ABINGTON ST
PO BOX 5001
PEORIA IL 61602-5001

USA TEMPLATE 006 - Dual Address Street Primary/PO Box Secondary

A Dual address preference (tag 115) of "SP" is used to indicate a Street Order-PO Box order is preferred for this, Street style and PO BOX address.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	046, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	"PO BOX", **019**
Street Address 1	**006**, 142, **013**, **014**, 015, 016, 017
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

```
JACK GREEN
PO BOX 5001
600 ABINGTON ST
PEORIA IL  61601-0011
```

USA TEMPLATE 007 - Dual Address PO Box Primary/Rural Route Secondary

Less commonly, what you see in dual addressing is both a PO Box and a rural style address. A Dual address preference (tag 115) value of "PR" indicates the PO Box is in the Street Address 1 line and the rural style address in the Street Address 2 line.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046, 047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	**020**, "BOX", **040**
Street Address 1	"PO BOX", **019**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

MS JOAN WYNDHAM
RR1 BOX 56
PO BOX 349
BOGLE CORNER IN 47438-0349

USA TEMPLATE 008 - Dual Address Rural Route Primary/PO Box Secondary

A Dual address preference (tag 115) of "RP", it indicates a Street/PO Box Order is preferred for the PO BOX and Rural Route style address.

FIELDS	CONTAIN
Mailstop	012
Mailee	139
Primary Name	**046**, **047**, 048, 049, **050**, 052, 051
Title	055
Secondary Name	056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 061
Department/Division	010, 011
Organization	045
Urbanization	017
Street Address 2	"PO BOX", **019**
Street Address 1	**020**, "BOX", **040**
City/State/ZIP	**022, 024, 029, "-", 030**

MS JOAN WYNDHAM
PO BOX 349
RR1 BOX 56
BOGLE CORNER IN 47438-0056

RENDITION INSTRUCTIONS

Many examples of how to handle exception process and rendition can be found in the USPS Publication 28, *Postal Addressing Standards*. In the following examples, the Publication 28-page number and the heading under which the topic is discussed is specified in the description of the problem.

When the primary address line (Street Address 1) is too long to fit in the allotted space the secondary information (apartment or suite information) should be rolled up to Street Address 2 (Alternate Location - page 7).

```
MS-425
MR DANIEL FUKUYAMA JR PHD
BENEFITS MANAGER
LIFE INSURANCE DEPARTMENT
THE PRUDENTIAL
STE 401
2000 PALM BEACH LAKES BLVD
WEST PALM BCH FL  33409-6504
```

When the number of lines in an address exceeds the number of lines available on a mailing label, address lines can be consolidated or eliminated intelligently using rendition instructions. Consider rolling up the Title to follow the Name components. Move the Mailstop down to the Department/Division line following the Department/Division component. If necessary, abbreviate common business words in the Title and Department/Division. This techniques used in the following example are described in Publication 28 (pages 43 -53).

```
MS-454
SR JUAN VALDEZ
BANK MANAGER
INVESTMENT DEPARTMENT
BANK OF SAN JUAN
URB ROOSEVELT
508 CALLE OCTAVIO MARCANO
SAN JUAN PR  00918-2749
```

```
SR JUAN VALDEZ  BANK MGR
INVESTMENT DEPT  MS-454
BANK OF SAN JUAN
URB ROOSEVELT
508 CALLE OCTAVIO MARCANO
SAN JUAN PR  00918-2749
```

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http://pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub25/pub25.pdf

Postal Addressing Standards   Publication 28, United States Postal Service. November 1997.
http://pe.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub28/pub28.pdf

Glossary of Postal Terminology   Publication 32, United States Postal Service.   May   1997.
http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/32html/welcome.htm