



GENERATING AN INTELLIGENT MAIL BARCODE (IMB)

By David Davoust, President, Robis Elections

Every piece of election mail requires an Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) if you want to track it. The IMB is made up of five components:

- 1. Barcode ID.** This is usually '00'.
- 2. Mailing service identifier.** This code informs the post office what kind of mailing you are doing. For example, 720 is a first-class, full-service ballot mailing with IV-MTR and no address corrections.
- 3. Your mailer ID or (MID).** This is assigned by the USPS. It is either 6 digits or 9 digits. The example below is 123456789. We suggest requesting a 6- digit MID to allow more room for your serial numbers.
- 4. A unique serial number** that you assign for each piece. It is six-digits if you are using a 9-digit MID or nine-digits for a 6-digit MID. This must remain unique for at least 45 days, so you should think in terms of assigning a number to each voter for each mailing.
- 5. Delivery ZIP code.** This is a 5, 9 (ZIP+4) or 11 (ZIP+4+Delivery Point) digit ZIP code. In the example below, it is 60187-0039. The dash is not included.

The raw IMB for this example would be:

Barcode ID	Mailing Service	Mailer ID (MID)	Serial Number	ZIP Code
00	720	123456789	000001	601870039

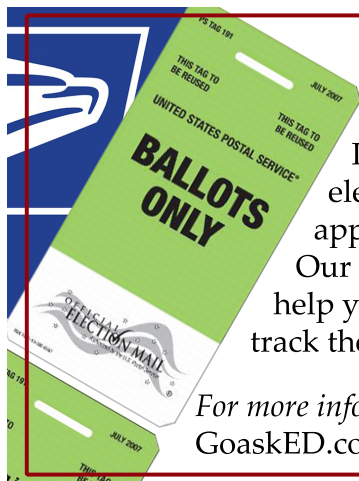
18 It is all concatenated to look like this:
00720123456789000001601870039

The IMB then needs to run through an encoder. The USPS provides one on their site for doing one at a time. But you will need to use a commercial service or provider to do an entire list. The encoding of the above raw IMB results in the following 65-character string:

AFFFAATDDFTTDTTADTDDFTTTAFDFAD
AATDTDFDTTADTFAAFADFTDTFTFTD

Once you have this string, you use an IMB font to display the barcode (*shown at top*). Barcode size and placement on your mail piece must meet strict USPS guidelines and a mock-up should be approved by a USPS design analyst prior to printing.

About the author: David Davoust is President of Robis Elections in Wheaton, IL. Robis Elections is a full service election mailing service provider. To learn more call 844-842-7533 or visit robiselections.com.



Full Service Election Mailing Service Provider & On Demand Ballot Printing

Robis Elections is ready to fulfill all your election mailing needs including ballots, applications, postcards and more. Our innovative, award-winning software will help you manage your entire absentee process and track the progress of each piece.

For more information, contact us at:
GoaskED.com or by phone at 844-842-7533

