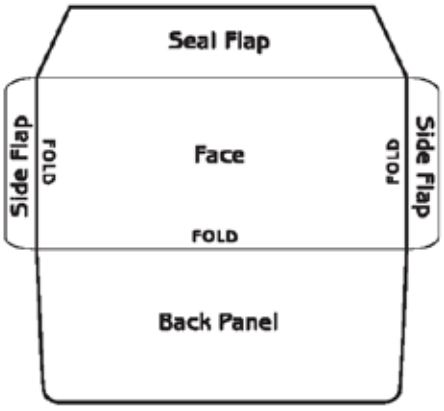
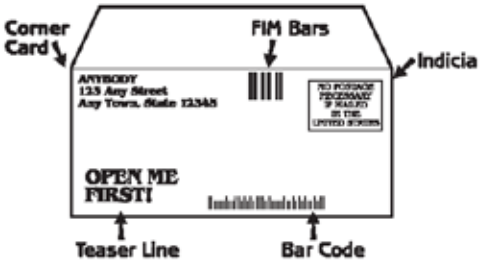
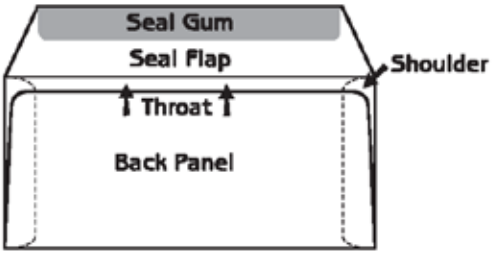
# THE ANATOMY OF AN ENVELOPE



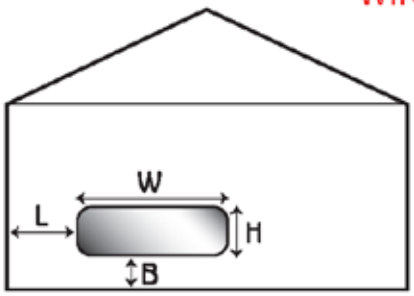




## POSTAL REGULATIONS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Size | The maximum letter size is 6¼" x 11½"; the minimum size is 3½" x 5". |
| Bar Codes | Preferred baseline for barcode is ⅝" from bottom, with first bar between 3½" and 4 ¼" from right and the last bar more than ⅛" from the right. |
| FIM Bars | FIM bars should be ⅝" high, within ⅛" of the top of the envelope and the last bar 2" from the right. |
| Font Size | All postal information must be larger than 8 points. |
| Endorsement | Postal endorsements consist of the following words–"address", "forwarding", "return", or "change"–combined with "service requested". |

*postal regulations are subject to change at any time. Check with your local post office before finalizing artwork.

## WINDOWS




### *Measuring a Window*

A window is always measured with the flap at the top. Its size and position must be given exactly in the following order (as per the diagram): Height (H) x Width (W), Left Margin (L), Bottom Margin (B). Windows can be located on either the front or the back of the envelope.

### *Window Shapes*

A window is usually square (straight edges with slightly rounded corners) although circular, oval and "L" shaped (pistol) windows are possible.

### *Window Patches*

A window will either be open, or it will have a transparent patch over it. Poly, a very clear plastic, is the most common patching material. Cello is a stronger and stiffer patch often used on very large windows. Glassine is a less transparent material that is biodegradable; it is typically found on recycled envelopes.

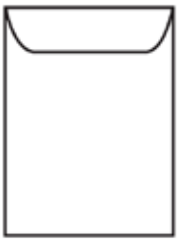
## *Size*

An envelope is measured in inches, with the shortest dimension given first. Although envelopes of almost any size can be manufactured, some sizes are more common than others. See pages 6-16 for a listing of stock envelope sizes.

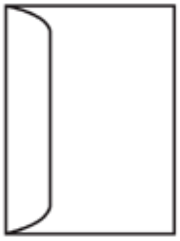
## *Opening*

An envelope is either open on the end, open on the side, or square. This is determined by looking at the envelope with the short dimension at the top.

Open-end Envelopes- Catalogs, scarfs, coins, policies and gloves are types of open-end envelopes.



Open-side Envelopes -Booklets, commercials and announcements are types of open-side envelopes.



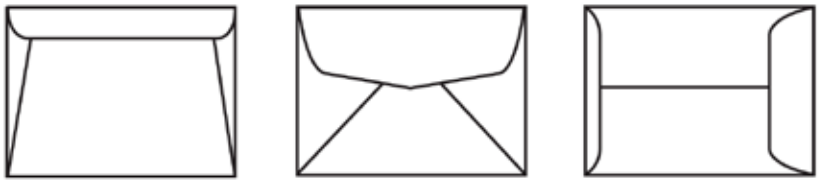
## *Flaps*

Envelopes have a variety of flap styles and sizes. Flaps are measured from the top edge of the fold to the very bottom edge of the flap. The most common flap shapes are:

Having the proper flap can be important when using automatic insertion machines. Flap size is also important when printing on the flap.

## *Seams*

Envelopes typically have one of three seam types:




## *Closure*

Most envelopes have regular gum , which seals the envelope when moistened. Usually the gum is applied across the entire flap, although special applications such as split seal gum and live stamp gum are possible. In addition to regular gum, there are a variety of other possible closures.

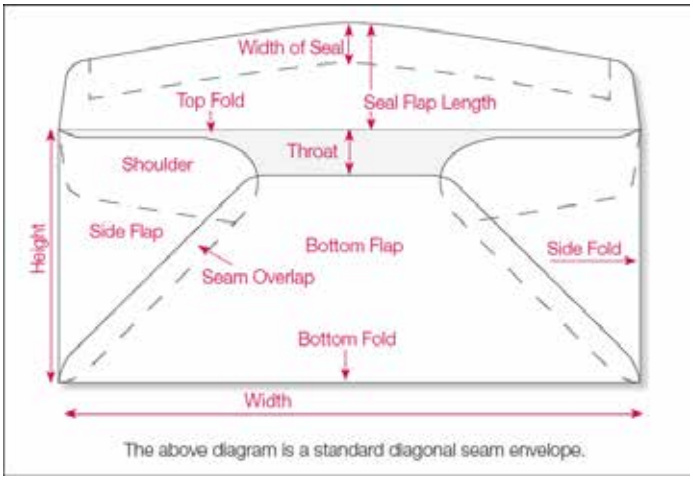
Latex Self-Adhesive Gum — Two strips of latex gum that seal upon contact, one on the underside of the flap and the other on the body of the envelope, are applied to the envelope, usually after printing.

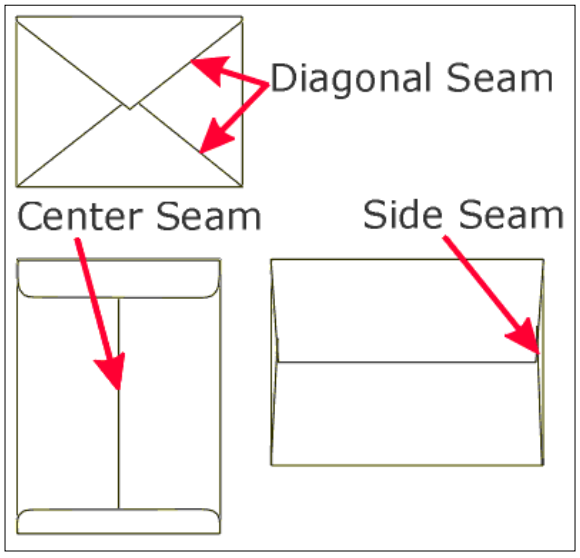
Peel and Seal — A tacky adhesive on the flap covered by a removable lining.

Tac-n-Tac — A reusable seal which can be opened and closed multiple times.

Clasp — A double pronged metal closure which is easily opened and closed.

Button and String — Tie down closure for repeated opening and closing.




The above diagram is a standard diagonal seam envelope.