

**Form provided by the Mailer's Postmark Permit Club**  
**Subject: Mailer's Postmark Permit Application**  
**Revised June 20, 2011**

To: Postmaster (city, state Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Greetings:

In accordance with the regulations in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) section 604.3., I would like to apply for a permit so I can:

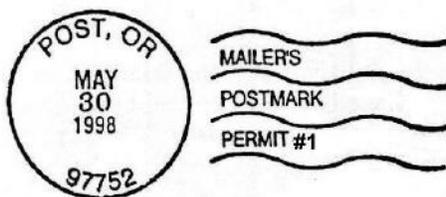
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Cancel (postmark) my own mail for philatelic purposes.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Use precanceled stamps (e.g., Bulk Rate and Non-Profit stamps) on my outgoing mail
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Both of the above.

Attached is a completed USPS Form 3615 for your consideration.

\*\*\*\*\*Fill out this section only if you have checked lines a or c above.\*\*\*\*\*

My postmark will look like the sample below with the MPP number you assign me. The city will be \_\_\_\_\_, the state will be \_\_\_\_\_, and the 5-digit Zip will be: \_\_\_\_\_.

My postmark will be the same shape as the one shown below. However, in the circular part (instead of city, state, zip) mine will say: MAILED FROM ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_.



Please note that different manufacturers use different formats for dates in their MPP rubber stamps. The date in my rubber stamp could appear on one line, two lines or three lines. For example:

29	APR				
APR	29	APR 29 2011	29 APR 2011	APR 29	29 APR
2011	2011			2011	2011

Some manufacturers center the Zip code at the bottom of the circle, while others insert the Zip Code directly after the name of the state on the right side of the circle.

The diameter of the circular part of the rubber stamp will be approximately 1-1/4 inches. The overall width of the stamp will be approximately 2-7/8 inches.

A strike of my actual postmark will be submitted to your office as soon as you assign me an MPP number and the rubber stamp is received from the supplier. Under DMM regulations, the postmaster is required to attach this sample postmark to my completed Form 3615.

I understand the regulations governing the use of a Mailer's Postmark Permit to cancel my own mail.

1. The postmark must be of the design above.
2. The postmark must cancel at least part of every stamp on the envelope or package.
3. Black ink must be used, which provides enough contrast and indelibility to prevent reuse of the stamps.
4. Mail cancelled with an MPP must not be deposited in any mailbox. I will deliver the mail to a clerk at the post office unless instructed otherwise.
5. My mail must be properly dated.
6. The Mailer's Postmark cannot be used for any illegal purposes.
7. I may use my Mailer's Postmark on postal cards, first class letters and flats, Express Mail, Priority Mail, Media Mail, and Parcel Post. Basically, this is any service available to the general public.
8. I must pay the full retail rate for the service I choose. I am not entitled to any discount.
9. There is no fee to obtain this permit, and there are no minimum number of pieces to be mailed at a given time.

Note: The "old" DMM section 143.221 (b) states that MPPs should be sequentially assigned beginning with number 1 from a separate log used exclusively for Mailer's Postmark Permits held at this post office. (For whatever reason, this section did not migrate from the "old" DMM to the current versions.) If I am the first person requesting an MPP at this Post Office, I would like to request MPP number 1.

\*\*\*\*\*Fill out this section only if you have checked lines b or c above.\*\*\*\*\*

I understand the regulations governing the use of a precanceled stamps on my own mail.

1. Mail containing precanceled stamps must not be deposited in any mailbox. I will deliver the mail to a clerk at the post office unless instructed otherwise.
2. I may use precanceled stamps on postal cards, first class letters and flats, Express Mail, Priority Mail, Media Mail, and Parcel Post. Basically, this is any service available to the general public.
3. I must pay the full retail rate for the service I choose. I am not entitled to any discount.
4. I may use precanceled stamps by themselves or I may use them in combination with regular (commemorative and/or definite) stamps to make up the full retail rate
5. There is no fee to obtain this permit, and there are no minimum number of pieces to be mailed at a given time.

\*\*\*\*\*Fill out this section if you have checked lines a, b or c above. \*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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## FAQ Section for Permits

Based on our past experiences at the Mailers Postmark Permit Club, postmasters fall into one of two categories. In category 1, the postmaster has processed Form 3615 before for stamp collectors. If that's the case, the postmaster understands all of this, and the postmaster can probably issue a permit to the stamp collector in about 10 minutes.

In category 2, the postmaster has never heard of this before, and he/she will probably have a bunch of questions. We'll try to answer the most common questions below in terms of stamp collectors..

**What is a Mailer's Postmark Permit (MPP)?** An MPP is a rubber stamp that a collector uses to cancel [postmark] his own mail. This is done for philatelic [stamp-related] purposes as it makes for a more interesting cover [envelope], especially when mailed to another stamp collector.

**What are precanceled stamps?** Examples of precanceled stamps are "Bulk-Rate" and "Non-Profit" stamps. At one time, the USPS sold precanceled stamps mostly to large mailers. Stamp collectors, however, could also purchase precanceled stamps from the USPS "caves" in Kansas City. The collectors frequently purchased a roll of stamps and selected a few stamps for their stamp collection. Many times, these same collectors had no use for the remaining stamps, and they wanted to use them on regular mail.

**What is the Mailer's Postmark Permit Club (MPPC)?** The club is basically a group of stamp collectors who like to cancel their own mail for philatelic purposes. The club was started in 1979. MPPC is Affiliate Member 100 of the American Philatelic Society (APS).

**Does the USPS know about MPPC?** Yes. Each year the MPPC is listed in the *USPS Guide to Postage Stamps*, an official publication of the USPS. In the 36<sup>th</sup> edition, for example, MPPC is listed on page 347.

**Is all of this covered in USPS regulations?** Yes, both canceling one's own mail and using precanceled stamps are covered in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) section 604.3.

**Is canceling one's own mail legal?** Yes, as long as the person doing it has been issued a permit by the post office where he/she is mailing the mail. The applicant uses PS Form 3615 to apply for a permit to cancel his/her own mail and/or to use precanceled stamps on his/her outgoing mail. Note that PS Form 3615 requires the applicant to provide two forms of identification, just like someone who is applying for a post office box.

**Is a stamp collector permitted to use precanceled stamps on his/her outgoing mail?** Yes. DMM section 604.3.5 allows stamp collectors to use precanceled stamps. In order to do this, however, he/she needs a permit which is obtained using PS Form 3615.

**If a stamp collector is using precanceled stamps on his outgoing mail, and he/she is not canceling [postmarking] his/her mail, are there any special requirements for marking the cover [envelope]?** No. However, the Mailer's Postmark Permit Club recommends that stamp collectors mark their envelopes with a three-line label or a rubber stamp that reads, "Precanceled stamps used by permit / Permit Number x / City. State, ZIP." This is because, even though the collector has a permit at the post office where the mail originates, a downstream post office may not know this, and it may return the mail because of (what it believes) is an improper use of precanceled stamps.

**Can a stamp collector use a single PS Form 3615 to get a permit to only cancel his own mail, to only use precanceled stamps on his outgoing mail, or to do both?** Yes. If he/she wants just one service, he/she checks one box on the form. If he/she wants to do both, he/she checks two boxes on the form. (On the sample PS Form 3615 at the end of this document, we have checked both boxes in section B, line 2.)

**If the stamp collector only applies for one service, and later he/she wants both services, can the postmaster amend the original PS Form 3615?** Yes, basically, all that needs to happen is to check a second box on the form.

**The stamp collector applying for a permit to use precanceled stamps on his/her outgoing is telling the postmaster that there is no fee to get this permit. Is that correct?** Yes. Section 604.3.5 allows stamp collectors to use precanceled stamps. Section 604.3.2.1 (last line) specifically states "There is no fee for this service." This covers both an initial application fee and an annual fee. The initial application fee is only applicable to Permit Imprint Authorizations, and the stamp collector is not applying for one of those. The "Annual fee is required to present presorted mail" (see the single asterisk footnote on PS Form 3615, Section B, line 2, of the January 2011 version of the form.) The stamp collector is not required to presort his mail because he is paying the full retail price for the mailings he/she is doing.

**The stamp collector applying for a permit to cancel [postmark] his/her own mail is telling the postmaster that there is no fee to get this permit. Is that correct?** Yes. The initial application fee is only applicable to Permit Imprint Authorizations, and the stamp collector is not applying for one of those. The "Annual fee is required to present presorted mail" (see the single asterisk footnote on PS Form 3615, Section B, line 2, of the January 2011 version of the form.) The stamp collector is not required to presort his/her mail because he/she is paying the full retail price for the mailings he/she is doing.

**The stamp collector is telling the postmaster that there is no minimum quantity required on any given mailing. Is that correct?** Yes. If he/she were mailing using discounted rates, there would be a minimum number of pieces required on a single mailing. However, he/she is mailing at the full retail rate, so no presorting is required, and there is no minimum number of pieces required.

**Who actually assigns the permit number for the stamp collector?** If the applicant is in a small post office, normally the postmaster (or his/her designee) assigns the permit number. If the applicant is in a big city (i.e., there are multiple branches), the person who normally assigns the permit numbers to the "large mailers" would also issue the permit number to the stamp collector.

**Does the stamp collector have to turn in his/her mail to the Bulk Mail Receiving Center in his/her city?** No. Normally the stamp collector will present his/her mail at his/her local post office. He/she can, if he/she wishes, present his/her mail at any station with the same city/state as his/her permit. However, most stamp collectors prefer to turn in their mail at their local station where the window clerks understand what the collector is doing.

**What Zip Code goes into an MPP?** The Zip Code normally matches the return address of the stamp collector. So, if the return address of the stamp collector is Atlanta, GA 30339, then that's what goes on the MPP. This is, however, not a DMM requirement. Some postmasters require the stamp collector to use the Zip Code of the main post office. Some postmasters let the stamp collector use a different Zip Code within the city. This is purely a local-policy decision.

**Can a stamp collector have multiple MPPs?** Yes, some members of the MPPC have 50 or more MPPs from different cities. Each MPP, of course, must have City/State/Zip of the issuing post office. The collector who wishes to do a mailing from a specific town must physically present his/her mail at the post office in that town on the date of the postmark. Alternatively, he/she can make advance arrangements with the postmaster where the mailing will occur and ship the mail (in a larger envelope or a box) to that postmaster. On the date matching the postmarks on the outgoing mail, the postmaster releases the mail into the mail stream.

**Does a stamp collector have to surrender his MPP if he/she moves out of the town that issued the MPP?**  
No.

**Can a business use an MPP for philatelic purposes?** Yes. For example, the owner of a small business might apply for a permit. He/she could then use the permit to make his/her outgoing mail more interesting to existing or potential customers. There is no fee for this permit as long as the company is paying the full retail price of the postage. (If the company wants a presort discount, it would have to pay an annual fee.)

**Whom should a postmaster contact if he/she has additional questions?** Some postmasters have had good luck contacting their local Rate & Classification office. As recently as the Fall of 2010, the MPPC has verified all of our information with Stamp Services and the Business Mail Entry and Payment Technology Office, both at USPS headquarters. For additional information, please feel free to contact:

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