

## Old Certified Mail Forms Obsolete

The Postal Service requires use of 'new' Form 3811, "green card," and Form 3800, the green receipt slip with the fees and date of mailing.

It appears the change took place in April 2015.

I am told you can order the new forms online or you can get new ones at the Post Office.

[https://store.usps.com/store/browse/productDetailSingleSku.jsp?productId=P\\_FORM\\_3811&categoryId=priority-mail-express](https://store.usps.com/store/browse/productDetailSingleSku.jsp?productId=P_FORM_3811&categoryId=priority-mail-express)

[https://store.usps.com/store/browse/productDetailSingleSku.jsp?categoryNavIds=shipping-supplies&categoryNav=false&navAction=push&navCount=0&productId=P\\_FORM\\_3800&categoryId=shipping-supplies](https://store.usps.com/store/browse/productDetailSingleSku.jsp?categoryNavIds=shipping-supplies&categoryNav=false&navAction=push&navCount=0&productId=P_FORM_3800&categoryId=shipping-supplies)

Today we had a project of 4 certified mail RRR letters rejected due to the new forms.

Rob Robertson, Texas

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Well, I have a stack of about 75 unused old ones if someone has an art project or something else in mind for them ...

Corrine Bielejeski, California

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Odd. I just sent out 22 certified letters using the old forms and the post office accepted them just fine. However, my post office had been out of the new form for return receipt until today so I picked up the new forms while I was there and will use the new form now

Naomi C. Fujimoto, Hawaii

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Who has the post office printing contract? They do this periodically.

Frederick G. Irtz, II

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The new form has a bar code on it. My post office(s) have simply been putting a pre-printed bar code on the old forms when I've used them, and as recently as two weeks ago you could still find the old forms in their bins.

The new form has more detail, but ironically, less room for the tracking number. So while the 'green card' form is new, the green & white 'receipt' is not, and the tracking number overlaps some of the data on the 'green card.' Perhaps both forms are being replaced, but if so, the new 'receipt' has yet to make it to Burbank, Pasadena or Glendale.

Greg Zbylut, California

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I've been using the certified mail form with the return receipt by email rather than the old green card. I've had no problems with it so far.

Sterling L. DeRamus, Alabama

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I noticed what Greg did and wondered who designed the new return receipt and why it was less functional, to me, than the old one.

Naomi C. Fujimoto

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I am getting reports that the old forms have been recently used/accepted.

Greg Zbylut, you comment that the receipt form is not new. It is new. My post had two URLs, which will display the new forms.

My post office branch may have made me use the new forms because 'they' run the receipt slips through a printer which inserts the various fees into the blanks. The blanks on the old receipt and the new do not match so that, I assume, if 'they' ran the old form through the printer now, the data would not print in the right fields. The new receipt form is wider but shorter than the old form.

For those reporting continued acceptance and processing of the old forms, my assumption is that the sender should still be getting back the old green card.

The total cost on the certifieds we mailed today was \$6.76 each where the postage for 2 ounces, before the other fees, was \$.71. Certified mail fee, \$3.45, Return Receipt (hardcopy), \$2.80, postage [2 oz.], \$.71, for a grand total of \$6.76. We had a momentary stump issue today. As the postal clerk processed each letter, he entered the envelope's address into his computer. His monitor is supposed to pull up addresses. Supposedly their computer contains every address in the US and possessions (I think). His computer failed to pull up one of the addresses. (I add, we had a Murphy's Law moment. The failed address was that of a so-called disgruntled heir among the 4 addressees.) He asked if the addressee's address was new. I commented that our office had sent mail for two years to the particular address (rural, outside Tucson, Arizona). One of the addresses his monitor did display had the same ZIP code as our letter, so I just said go ahead and use that because it was not going to change the address on our envelope. Turns out, the printer prints, on the new receipt form, the city and ZIP of the addressee in a field which does not exist on the old form. I do not have certified mail kit software so we must prepare 'certifieds' manually. We find it saves time to print labels for the 'green card,' the receipt, and for that matter, the sender/law firm. For the address to send the 'green card,' we use a rubber stamp

with our law firm address. Nothing runs through our printer. If automation is a time saver for certified, we do not have enough volume to go that route. - - -

Rob V. Robertson

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My PO had plenty of the new 3811 green cards when I stopped in today. But they swore up and down (can a PO swear?) that there was no new 3800 certified receipt. The magnified link at the URL you gave us shows that there is. Is USPS playing mind tricks on us?!?

James S. Tyre, California

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The Form "3800 July 2014" is the current form for the receipt. The new form "3811 April 2015" looks very similar to the retired form. The difference is that there is now a printed tracking number and bar code in the item 1 box that the PO scans to track the item.

I mailed a certified several days ago at the PO counter and the clerk printed and put the tracking slip on the green card. He explained that they now used the bar code for tracking purposes. The problem that I see now is that the Article Number on the receipt that you are to put onto the new form is 3.25 inches long and the space allowed for it on the new form green card is 2.7 inches long.

Curtis Drew, Arizona

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So the conclusion I am drawing is that the post office is being wildly inconsistent with its form use.

Greg Zbylut

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Curtis is incorrect about the newest version of 3800 being July 2014. If you go to <http://1.usa.gov/1NoaNxo> and magnify, it's April 2015, same as the new 3811.

My local PO had the new 3811, but not the new 3800. So I ordered the new 3800 online. A few minutes to set up an account, then total cost, including shipping and handling, was \$0.00.

James S. Tyre

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I'm confused: the Form 3800 (Certified Mail Receipt) looks the same as the old one, meaning it has its own tracking number and stickers.

The new Form 3811 (the green card) now has its own tracking number printed on it. Which one of those is referred to in the letter (e.g., "Certified Mail, No. XXXX XXXXX XXXXX")? How are these new forms supposed to work?

Michael Koenecke, Texas

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I still have some of the "old" (last year) 3800 forms. They also have their own tracking number, but some the of the details on the right side of the form differ between the old and the new.

James S. Tyre

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So there are now two separate tracking numbers: one on the green sticker that goes on the front of the envelope, and one on the green card that sticks to the back? Doesn't that just mean that the one on the sticker is now useless?

Michael Koenecke

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I presume (but do not know for sure) that you can use either to track the package to the recipient. In theory, the new bar code on the 3811 should make tracking the return receipt card back to you easier.

James S. Tyre

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Guys:

First, I suspect this is going to be a 'thread of the month'. I can't believe, or actually, I CAN believe, that bunch of lawyers are spending the better part of a week discussing technical changes in a USPS form. Sheesh. It's as bad as the thread years ago on whether to Z-fold or C-fold correspondence (and please, let's NOT get that thread started again)

Second, you really want to know how it works, tell you what, there's Federal building near you, it's got employees wearing these blue uniforms, they deal with this all the time; I am SURE your friendly postman/postmistress/postperson/postcritter can show you what needs to be done and how it works. And then, you'll know. OK? My local PO is very friendly, they greet me by title (how you doing, counselor) every time I go in. And they'll tell me stuff; oh, you should use that box, it's cheaper; you know, postage is going up soon; this is how you do what you want.

Ronald Jones, Florida

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Ronald, first, I enjoy your posts to Solosez. Keep those coming.

The changes in the certified mail green card and receipt are changes which lawyers do not want to learn about after preparing mailings using the obsolete forms and learning about the new forms when/if the project is rejected. Turns out many Sezzers have thanked for the notice of the changes.

The most significant change has been the addition of bar coding, and long ID numbers, on both sides of the green card, Form 3811. The bar coding appears to differ on each card, and the ID numbers on each card do differ. I assume the bar coding of the green cards relates to more efficient processing of our mail. It amazes me that the postal services do as good a job as they do for the small prices we pay. Okay, I realize the Postal Service gets tax dollars in addition to postage fee.

Notice of changes and rejection will vary from postal clerk to postal clerk and substation to substation. Also, the friendliness and quality of work of postal workers varies widely.

Not only is there variance in notice but the availability of the new forms varies, where lack of supply may be remedied by ordering from usps.com.

Certified mail is still, and will probably remain, a significant process in the legal industry so notice of changes cannot get out to us too soon.

(Another tip I learned years ago, and as far as I can recall the project was not a disaster. If desiring a signed return receipt with international mail, you need to use registered mail, not certified. In one instance regarding mail to South Korea, the card came back bearing a wife's seal, not a signature. We used a witness in court to satisfy the Texas judge that the customary seal was that of the particular addressee and that the seal was the equivalent of her signature.)

At least the postal service has been tracking certified online for many months. The project mentioned above was mailed at the branch on Thursday, August 13. The USPS.COM tracking tool is reporting deliveries today (August 17) in Florida, Louisiana and Arizona.

Has anyone scored any Elvis stamps yet? My branch did not have any on the day they rejected our certified mail project.

Rob V. Robertson

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That's the problem, Ron. Between them, Burbank, Pasadena and Glendale consist of over 500,000 people alone. There's at least half a dozen post offices, and unless you're in one regularly (and one of the small ones at that), they probably don't know you.

Even if they did, they are not consistent. Pasadena has a lot of the old

forms, Glendale has the new green cards (but not the receipts), and Burbank seems to be up-to-date on the green cards, but not on the receipts (as of late June, the last time I was in there). I have no doubt over time they'll all get new forms across the board, but in the interim it's chaotic.

One of the Postal workers in Glendale took my old green card, pulled off a pre-printed bar code and put it on the back (where the return address is) of the green card while saying, "we're supposed to do this and I almost forgot.."

I think this will shake out over time, but in the interim, it will be interesting to see who's going to be a stickler for the new forms and who won't.

Greg Zbylut

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Rob,

That's technically true, but the amount it gets is a de minimis part of its budget (well under 1% per the WSJ).

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324590904578287663348878762>

Essentially it must pay its own way (like the USPTO). Of course, it's having trouble doing that.

Tim Ackermann

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