

Customer Support Ruling  
Mailing Standards  
Headquarters, US Postal Service  
Washington DC 20260-6808

Cosmetic Color Strips

PS-037 (C200)

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This is in reference to advertisements pertaining to cosmetic products that are being published in Periodicals publications.

Cosmetic color strips comprised of the same or most of the same ingredients as a cosmetic product (such as rouge/blusher, mascara, lipstick or eye shadow) are considered to be samples of that product and therefore subject to the Standard Mail rates when enclosed in mailed copies of a Periodicals publication. However, if blended color pigments are reformulated with solvents, binders, viscosity adjusters, and other additives to form color inks, those inks may be printed on pages of copies of a publication and mailed at the Periodicals rates. The amounts of the simulated colors printed on pages of mailed copies of a Periodicals publication should be in small quantities so that they themselves may not be used as products by the readers of a publication. Thus, for example, it should not be possible for a woman to completely cover the portion of her face that the actual product is designed to cover.

The pages with the color strips printed thereon **MUST NOT** bear any language which would indicate that the strips are actual samples of a manufacturer's product. Thus, words such as "Look Inside For A Sample Never Before Offered", or "Open To Test Product", and "Now Sample Two Of The Six Glorious Shades Of (Name of Manufacturer)", may not be printed on the pages of copies of publications mailed at the Periodicals rates of postage. An endorsement such as "Smooth Finger Across Color And Apply To Hand To Test Shade" would be acceptable.

Moreover, each advertisement must bear a readable disclaimer notice, such as "These Cosmetic Color Strips Simulate Colors And Are Not Actual Samples Of A Product". Such statements will serve to alert postal employees that the cosmetic strips are not actual samples of a manufacturer's product, and thereby eliminate the cause to unnecessarily question or delay the publications containing the advertisements while in the mail stream.

All technological printing processes must be approved by the Postal Service before they are used in Periodicals publications. Thus, if a company develops new processes for printing advertisements in the future, it must be reviewed the advertisements are inserted in copies of publications mailed at the Periodicals rates of postage.

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