Quick Start Instructions for Using Postage $aver for Windows
with dBase files (.dbf)

(Please note that dBase is a specific kind of data base file. This does not refer to data base files in general, like Excel, Access, etc., which have different formats.)

Running a quick demonstration using the Postage $aver sample file

We suggest you run the sample file before using Postage $aver for your own file. You won't have to set anything up and you can see how Postage $aver works quickly and easily.

1.) After installing the Postage $aver demo, double-click the Postage $aver icon (the yellow stamp), which should be on your desktop or in the Programs/Postage $aver Software section in your start menu. If you are asked for a registration code, click "Run As Pro Demo" (for a barcoded mailing) or "Run As Lite Demo" (for a nonbarcoded mailing) to continue your demo without entering a registration code.

2.) In Postage $aver, click on the blue mailbox to start preparing your mailing. For a quick demo, just click "next" on each screen to use the sample information without making any changes, or you can fill in the actual information for your own mailings. There is a complete help page for each screen.

3.) After the information screens are complete, you will be asked to choose the file you want to sort. Navigate to your "Documents" folder (or your "My Documents" folder) and choose "Postage $aver Sample" (or "Postage $aver Sample.xls").

4.) The next screen will verify that Postage $aver can read the file, and will show you how many addresses the file contains. Click Finish to begin sorting the file.

5.) When the sorting is finished, you can choose the reports you want to print. After printing, Postage $aver will add sorting information and barcodes (if applicable) to the sample file and re-save it in sorted order.

6.) You can open the "Postage $aver Sample" file in Excel to see the finished file. You can print the addresses using a mail merge in Word or another word processing program, and they will be in the correct order for bulk mailing, matching the reports printed by Postage $aver. If you're not familiar with doing a mail merge, you can watch our quick tutorial video.

If you chose a barcoded mailing, you will see the groups of 65 letters in the "barcode" column. For example, the column will have something like:

TADTAFTDTFDDDAATADTTDTDTFDDAFDFDTFTAFDAFFDAAFDFFFTDDTTDADTDFTDAAT

Don't worry about this not looking like a barcode in the Excel worksheet. When you print these characters using the SmartBars12 barcode font, set at 12 point size, the letters will turn into the correct bars. The SmartBars12 font was installed with your demo.

Using Postage $aver with Your Own Files

Setting up your dBase file to use with Postage $aver:

For Postage $aver to read and sort your dBase file, you just need to have each part of the address in a separate column. Postage $aver needs the following columns.

- A single column containing the entire zip code, OR a column with the first five digits and a different column with the next four digits. These should be TEXT format columns, not number format. If you are not barcoding your mail, you only need the first five digits;

- A column with a city and a different column with the two-letter state abbreviation, OR a single column with both separated by a comma and space, as in "Houston, TX". This column can be in general format; and,

- If you want to add barcodes to your mailing, you must have an additional column for a two-digit "delivery point code" (explained below). This should be a TEXT format column, not a number column. (Delivery point codes are not required for parcel mailings.)

Adding optional columns to your dBase file:

To set up your dBase mailing list file for Postage $aver, you need to add at least one new column. Each time you prepare a mailing using Postage $aver, Postage $aver will place a sorting number into this new column. Then, by using dBase to sort your mailing list according to this sorting number, the list will be sorted in exactly the order your need to prepare your bulk mailing. You can then print your envelopes or labels directly from your mailing list table and they will be printed in bulk mail order.

At your option, Postage $aver can also add other information that you may wish to use in preparing your mailing, such as tray/sack number, USPS optional endorsement lines, and barcodes. You will need to have a column in your dBase file for each item that you want Postage $aver to add.

To have Postage $aver add optional information, open your dBase file. Then add any or all of the following columns:

Suggested Field Name	Purpose	Data Type	Minimum Size	Req. or Opt.
MAILSORT	Sorting order	Number or Text	6	Required
TRAY (or SACK)	Tray or sack number	Number or Text	5	Optional
BUNDLE (or group)	Bundle or group number	Number or Text	5	Optional
ENDORSEMENT	Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) for flats	Text	25	Required for flats *
BARCODE	Intelligent Mail Barcode	Text	65	Optional
SERIAL	Barcode Serial Number	Number or Text	6**	Optional

* Optional Endorsement Lines (OELs) are the lines that look like ******** 3D 587 that are printed above the address for mail that is prepared in bundles (flat-sized mail and nonmachinable letters). OELs indicate the sorting level and destination of the bundle. USPS strongly recommends the use of OELs, but in some circumstances allows, instead, a special colored sticker to be placed on the top piece of each bundle.

** If you are a large-volume mailer that has a 6-digit mailer ID, then the minimum size of the serial number field is 9.

The column names shown are suggestions. You can use any name that dBase will accept. Postage $aver will automatically identify the correct columns to use if you use the suggested names shown, but you will always be given the opportunity to match Postage $aver's fields to your column names even if Postage $aver guesses incorrectly.

Additional requirements for barcoded mailings:

Barcoding is not required for bulk mail. However, it can provide additional benefits, such as slightly lower postage prices, faster delivery, free tracing, and a waiver of your annual bulk mailing permit fee.

But to add barcodes to your mailing, your list must first be "CASS-certified", to assure USPS that you have accurate zip+4 codes, and to provide an additional required two-digit "delivery point" code.

Postage $aver does not provide CASS certification for your mailing list. Software to do CASS certification is usually too expensive for small volume mailers to purchase. Instead, most small volume mailers use a list processing service that will certify your list for you for a much smaller charge (typically $30 per list). For more information about what is required for barcoding, and for links to some list processing services, please read our barcode information page.

You do not need to have CASS certification for nonbarcoded mail. For smaller mailings, it is often less expensive to send them without barcoding and not have to pay for CASS certification.

Running Postage $aver:

1.) After installing the Postage $aver demo, double-click the Postage $aver icon (the yellow stamp), which should be on your desktop or in the Programs/Postage $aver Software section in your start menu. If you are asked for a registration code, click "Run As Pro Demo" (for a barcoded mailing) or "Run As Lite Demo" (for a nonbarcoded mailing) to continue your demo without entering a registration code.

2.) In Postage $aver, click on the blue mailbox to start preparing the mailing. For an actual mailing, you need to fill in the information that applies to your own mailings. There is a complete help page for each screen.

3.) After the information screens are complete, you will be asked to choose the file you want to sort. Navigate to your dBase file and select it.

4.) The next screen will verify that Postage $aver can read the file, and will show you how many addresses the file contains.

This screen will also ask you to identify each column in your dBase file that Postage $aver needs to get information from or save information to. For example, in the Excel file shown below, Postage $aver needs to know that the city name is in the third column, the state name is in the fourth column, and the zip code is in the fifth column.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Company	Street Address	City	State	Zip
2	A1 BLUE PRINT CO	BOX 66446	HOUSTON	TX	77266-1668
3	AARON'S FURNITURE RENTA	8131 N IH-35	AUSTIN	TX	78753-8707

Each item that Postage $aver needs has a section on this screen. For example, Postage $aver needs to know the zip code for each address, so there is a section where you can tell Postage $aver where to find the zip code

in your mailing list file. (Note that the whole zip code can either be in a single column, as shown in the dBase file above, or can be split into two columns):
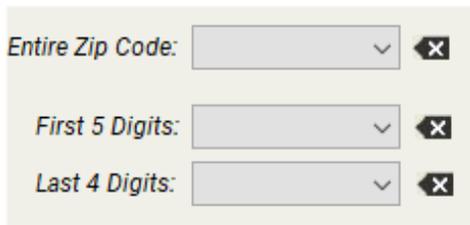
In each section, there is a drop-down list (shown by the down arrow) that shows all of the columns in your mailing list file, one address at a time. If your mailing list file has field names, the list will start by showing those. Otherwise, it will start with the first address in the file. (You can use the "Record now showing" buttons to step through the file to see other addresses.)

Here's the drop-down list showing the field names the Postage $aver automatically found in the dBase file shown above:

Since this file has the entire zip code in one column (rather than splitting it into two columns), you would use the drop-down list next to "Complete Zip Code" (as shown), and select the "Zip" column:

After you make your selection, it will show in the box at the top of the list:
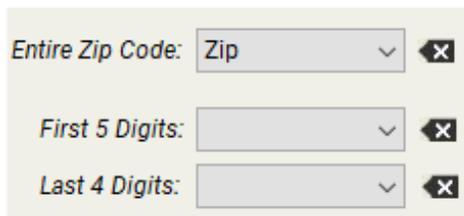
When this screen opens, Postage $aver will try to figure out which columns in your file match the information it needs, and will make selections for you automatically. If Postage $aver has guessed correctly, you can leave it alone. But if Postage $aver has left an item it needs blank, or has chosen incorrectly, you should make the correct selection for that item.

Some items are optional, such as Tray/Sack #s. You are not required to provide a field for those items if you aren't going to use that information and you don't need Postage $aver to supply it.

Once you have identified all of the columns you need, click "Finish" and Postage $aver will move on to sort the file, showing its progress as it goes through the sorting process.

5.) When the sorting is finished, you can choose the reports you want to print. The mail preparation instructions report provides detailed instructions for assembling your mailing. You'll need the tray/sack tags for properly labeling each tray or sack of mail, as specified in the mail preparation instructions. The postage statement and price qualification report are for the post office.

6.) After printing, Postage $aver will save the sorting sequence number, and any optional information you selected, into your dBase table.

Note that Postage $aver does not create a new file. It sorts and re-saves your mailing list in the same file and table that you started with, with any added information.

7.) You can now open your mailing list file using dBase. Use dBase to sort your mailing list based on the Mailsort field, in A-Z order. You can now print your addresses in dBase (or Microsoft Word) and the addresses will be in USPS required order. The order will also match the Mail Preparation Instructions report, and all the postal reports.

Including barcodes in your addresses:

If you are doing a barcoded mailing, the barcodes will show up in the dBase column you selected, but they will be in letter format, not barcode format. The barcode column will have something like this:

TADTAFTDTFDDDAATADTTDTDTFDDAFDFDTFTAFDAFFDAAFDFFFTDDTTDADTDFTDAAT

When you set up your mail merge, choose "SmartBars12" as the font for the barcode field set at 12 point size (as explained in the video) and the font will convert the 65 letters into 65 bars according to USPS requirements. The SmartBars12 font was installed on your computer when you installed Postage $aver.

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Need More Help?

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All of the above information, plus a helpful tutorial on bulk mail, is contained in the Postage $aver Help system. You can find it in the Instructions/Help menu when Postage $aver is running.

If you cannot find what you need in the Help system, please send us your question at our help page and we will respond promptly. Thanks again for trying Postage $aver.