

Botswana Permit Mail

by Gordon Smith

In the early 2000's, BotswanaPost introduced Permit Mail as an alternative to stamps and meter franks for large volume mailers. This service was first noted in the Bechuanaland and Botswana Society journal, the Runner Post, in August 2001. Additional information, including a portion of a flyer describing the service, was published in the Runner Post in February 2002. Links to these articles can be found at <https://postalhistory.ca/botswana-permit-mail/>.

Permit Mail cannot be placed in regular mailboxes. Mail items must be submitted to BotswanaPost in trays, boxes or bundles. Payment terms are negotiated prior to or at the time of mailing. It is only accepted at the Southern Sort Center at Poso House, Gaborone, the Pota Sort Centre in Palapye, and the Tati-town Sort Centre in Francistown. Permit Mail envelopes may not be used as Business Reply envelopes.

To use this service, organizations apply to BotswanaPost for an "Authority Number" that must be included in the Permit Mail impression. This number is permanently assigned to the requesting organization until it is cancelled. The issued Authority Numbers of which I am aware range from 10000 to 10042, so I assume that the numbers start at 10000 and that there are at least 42 permit holders. Figure 1 provides a list of Authority Numbers and the name of the organization holding them of which I am aware.

The Permit Mail impression (Figure 2) must be designed according to the following specifications and the impression must be pre-printed in upper right corner of the envelope. The impression may be printed in any colour.

While permit impressions can be organized by authority number, this service has been available since the early 2000's and organizations have made multiple printings of envelopes using the same authority number.

To date, permit imprints come in three major types:

1. Professionally printed directly on the envelope
2. Handstamp applied to the envelope
3. Professionally printed on a label which is subsequently stuck on the envelope

These types can be further differentiated based on the following features:

- a. Colour
- b. Fletching characteristics (lines on the side of the circle) - e.g., curved vs. angular, spacing, boldness
- c. Overall size of Imprint
- d. Font size and boldness
- e. Boldness of circles and fletching

The following list provides examples of various permit imprints organized by types and further differentiated by variety. Various printings can be further distinguished by looking at other aspects of the printing on the envelope, such as the colour and style

of logo and the size and boldness of the font in the return addresses. However, as an overview, this article only illustrates the examples of some of the major varieties. A more complete listing of permit impressions, organized by authority number,

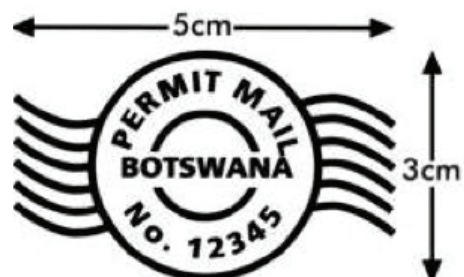


Figure 2.

can be found at <https://postalhistory.ca/botswana-permit-mail/>.








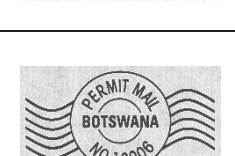

All illustrations of the imprints have been reduced to 50%. Colour descriptions are determined using the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Colour Key (Item No. 2350, 1994). Where the Colour Key description does not provide a sufficient match, further description is added in brackets.









"Dia." is the diameter of circle is measured horizontally across middle of word "Botswana". Often, when this dimension is more than 30 mm., the vertical dimension is 30 mm. creating a slightly oval shape that is not immediately apparent to the naked eye. The o/o (out-to-out) distance is measured horizontally from the extreme outer edges of fletching (the wavy lines on

Authority No.	Holder
Blank	Not Known
10000	BotswanaPost
10001	Botswana Power Corporation
10004	MultiChoice
10005	Botswana Telecommunications Corporation
10006	Water Utilities Corporation
10009	Botswana Life Insurance Limited
10010	Standard Chartered Bank
10011	Orange
10012	Mailing Services (PTY) Ltd
10013	Stanbic Bank
10014	Mascom Wireless
10020	Botswana Couriers
10023	Not Known, assume a mailing service due to variety of companies
10028	Not Known, possibly Motsvedi Securities
10032	Mailwise International
10033	Skip Hire
10034	Barclaycard
10035	Botswana Unified Revenue Service
10038	Barclays Bank of Botswana Ltd
10039	Price Waterhouse Coopers
10042	Botswana Examinations Council


Figure 1.





Permit Impression - Professionally Printed Directly on the Envelope

Illustration	Description
	Blackish Olive Irregularly spaced fletching 31.0mm dia., 50.5mm o/o Small lettering Regular boldness of circles and fletching
	(Light) Olive-Black Regularly spaced fletching 31.0mm dia., 50.5mm o/o Medium lettering Regular boldness of circles and fletching
	(Light) Grey-Black Regularly spaced fletching 31.9mm dia., 53.9mm o/o Large lettering, boldly printed Bold printing of circles and fletching
	Slate Regularly spaced fletching, vertical ends 32.8mm dia., 50.5mm o/o Medium lettering, fine printing Regular boldness of circles and fletching
	Grey-Black Regularly spaced, broken fletching 30.0mm dia., 50.9mm o/o Very large lettering, fine printing Fine printing of circles and fletching
	Grey-Black Regularly spaced fletching 25.0mm dia., 43.5 o/o Small bold lettering for "PERMIT MAIL" and "BOTSWANA", small fine lettering for Authority No. Fine printing of circles and fletching
	Greenish Black Regularly spaced, wavy fletching, vertical ends 29.0mm dia., 49.0mm o/o Medium lettering, very fine printing Fine printing of circles and fletching
	Olive-Black Thin angular fletching, vertical ends 26.5mm dia., 50.0mm o/o Large lettering Fine printing of circles and fletching
	Slate-Black Regularly spaced, angular fletching 29.8mm dia., 49.6mm o/o Large lettering, finely printed Fine printing of circles and medium printing of fletching



	<p>Grey-Black</p> <p>Regularly spaced, long. angular fletching</p> <p>24.5mm dia., 50.0mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering</p> <p>Fine boldness of circles and fletching</p>
	<p>Bright Purple</p> <p>Regularly spaced fletching, vertical ends</p> <p>35.0mm dia., 54.0mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering, fine, with Botswana in bold</p> <p>Regular boldness of circles and fletching</p>
	<p>Ultramarine, bold</p> <p>Regularly spaced fletching</p> <p>31.3mm dia., 53.2mm o/o</p> <p>Large lettering, very bold</p> <p>Bold printing of circles and fletching</p>
	<p>(Light) Deep Grey-Blue</p> <p>Regularly spaced fletching</p> <p>30.0mm dia., 50.0mm o/o</p> <p>Large lettering, bold</p> <p>Bold printing of circles and fletching</p>
	<p>(Light) Steel Blue</p> <p>Regularly spaced fletching</p> <p>29.8mm dia., 49.9mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering, bold</p> <p>Regular printing of circles and fletching</p>
	<p>(Light) Royal Blue</p> <p>Regularly spaced fletching</p> <p>30.2mm dia., 50.5mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering, finely printed</p> <p>Very fine printing of circles and fine printing of fletching</p>
	<p>(Light) New Blue</p> <p>Irregularly spaced fletching</p> <p>31.5mm dia., 50.1mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering</p> <p>Fine printing of circles and fine printing of fletching</p>
	<p>(Bright) Turquoise-Blue</p> <p>Regularly spaced somewhat angular fletching, off centre, vertical ends</p> <p>30.0mm dia., 50.3mm o/o</p> <p>Large lettering</p> <p>Very fine printing of circles and regular printing of fletching</p>

Permit Impression - Handstamp applied to the envelope

	<p>Bright Rose Red</p> <p>Irregularly spaced fletching</p> <p>30.0mm dia., 50.0mm o/o</p> <p>Medium lettering</p> <p>Regular printing of circles and fletching</p> <p>Imprints in the red range are the predominant colour of the handstamps</p>
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	(Light) Rosine Regularly spaced angular fletching 31.0mm dia., 53.5mm o/o, large circle is oval-shaped Large lettering Very fine printing of circles and fine printing of fletching
	(Fluorescent Pink) Irregularly spaced fletching 30.5mm dia., 48.2mm o/o Small lettering Regular printing of circles and fletching
	(Light) Ultramarine Handstamp Irregularly spaced fletching 29.7mm dia., 48.5mm o/o Regular lettering Regular printing of circles and fletching Only handstamp seen in the blue range of colours
	(Light) Slate-Black Regularly spaced somewhat angular fletching, off centre, vertical ends 30.0mm dia., 50.0mm o/o Large lettering, finely printed Fine printing of circles and fletching Only handstamp seen in the black range of colours

Permit Impression - Professionally printed on a label

	Black Regularly spaced fletching, off centre 27.0mm dia., 45.0mm o/o Large bold lettering for "PERMIT MAIL", large fine lettering for "BOTSWANA", regular lettering for Authority No. Fine printing of circles and fletching
	Slate-Black Regularly spaced fletching, somewhat flat 28.0mm dia., 50.5mm o/o Medium lettering, finely printed Fine printing of circles and fletching

either side of the circles), also more-or-less centred across the word "Botswana".

I would be delighted to hear from anyone who has additional information on this subject. You can reach me at gs@postalhistory.ca.

References

- Warrender, Bruce. Botswana Permit Mail. The Runner Post. (August 2001). Issue 53. Page 1315. Retrieved on 25 May 2021 from <https://postalhistory.ca/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Runner-Post/Runner-Post-53-August-2001.pdf>.
- Midwood, Neville. Permit Mail. The Runner Post. (February 2002). Issue 54. Page 1348. Retrieved on 25 May 2021 from <https://postalhistory.ca/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Runner-Post/Runner-Post-54-February-2002.pdf>.

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On April 8, 1635, a flotilla of Dutch ships bound for Batavia arrived at Table Bay and left letters beneath this Post Office Stone. It was discovered during excavations in Adderley Street in 1974

Highlights

Canadian Soldiers
Botswana Permit Mail
Rail Post Labels
Stamps Are Our Ambassadors
Shire Highland Map

Cape Town International Exhibition in November