

Uncorrectable Addresses

Here are 5 of the most common reasons addresses cannot be corrected or are returned as undeliverable:

1. The address is “out of range”. For example, the valid range is 1 to 99 Main Street and your address is 101. Out of range addresses are generally not deliverable. If an address is "out of range" for that street number, it either has a different postal code that cannot be resolved by the software (and is probably on a completely different letter carrier walk) or it receives its mail elsewhere (like a PO Box). These addresses usually require some investigative skills to resolve.
2. Following from this: a PO Box is required but a civic address was entered. This happens most often with business addresses such as warehouses, plants, golf courses, schools, etc. where the mail is delivered elsewhere. These are generally undeliverable as the PO Box location is not normally anywhere near the physical location.
3. A rural route was provided but Canada Post requires a civic style address. Or vice versa. Or, Canada Post requires both and both were not provided. Referred to in my office as the Canadian Rural Headache and often difficult to resolve even after contacting the recipient. If there is sufficient identifying information (i.e. PO Box, street address, RR number, name), these are likely deliverable. Canada Post may have a specific piece of information they need to consider the address "correctable" such as a PO Box but most rural post offices and carriers are very good at making sure the mail piece gets to the intended recipient.
4. A suite number is missing and one is required to consider the address valid. If the recipient is a business, the mail will likely arrive as long as the street address is valid and deliverable and the company is clearly marked. In the case of residential addresses, the mail piece is likely non-deliverable unless the unit is in a small building. Picture finding “ABC Company” in an office building versus “John Smith” in a 1,000 unit apartment building.
5. Large Volume Receivers (LVRs), such as universities/colleges, hospitals, government facilities and large companies, often require a different postal code even if their street address falls within the range of a postal code. Canada Post needs the postal code of the LVR’s mailroom for delivery. Keep in mind, too, that the mail room may require more detailed information to deliver the piece (such as a building name or suite number) and could return mail as undeliverable if it has not been included, even if Canada Post considers the mail room itself as a valid address.

It is important to note that with the popularity of GPS devices, many companies are providing a “locatable” address to facilitate deliveries and customer visits even if the mail is not delivered to that location. These locatable addresses have worked their way into many databases and appear valid when compared against a range-based database system. However, if Canada Post does not deliver to these addresses, they are not considered “valid” for the purposes of address correction, as the point is to ensure the mail reaches the intended recipient.

Beware the web! Companies will often post their locatable address on their website, usually along with directions to their facility. Look for the words “Mailing Address” when verifying addresses on the web. When searching business or residential addresses on the web (e.g. with Canada411 or a similar service), take note if the address does not contain a postal code. This is a big flag that the address is likely a physical and not a mailing address.

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