

BS EN 13724:2013 Letter Box Standards and Construction

Europe

The European Standard for letter boxes, EN 13724:2002 "Postal services – Apertures of private letter boxes and letter plates – Requirements and test methods", replaces earlier national standards such as BS 2911:1974 "Specification for letter plates" or DIN 32617. It specifies among other things:

- Postbox Envelope size C4 (229 mm × 324 mm) must be deliverable without bending or damage
- The internal volume of a mailbox must be able to hold at least a 40 mm high bundle of C4 envelopes
- Aperture width of a letterbox must be either 230–280 mm (> C4 width) or 325–400 mm (> C4 height)
- Aperture height of a post box should be 30–35 mm
- Mounting height of a mail box should be between 0.7 and 1.7 m for the aperture
- When positioned externally, the post box should not allow more than 1% total capacity water ingress from natural precipitation or moisture causes.
- Various postbox privacy, theft-protection, vandalism resistance and corrosion-resistance test requirements

This postbox Standard is voluntary. It was developed by a German mail boxes manufacturer Burg Wachter and it reflects this manufacturer's technical capability and commercial interests with many of the specifications unfounded, for example, aperture dimensions or internal volume, while the vital issues of letterbox security, post box energy saving, and mail box environmental issues of a property and the occupants are not addressed in the Standard.

Although the Standard was due for a review after 5 years in 2007, this did not happen. In April 2013 the amended Standard **BS EN 13724:2013** was finally published, however, again it was drafted by the same company and is nearly word-for-word copy of the old EN 13724:2002 Standard. The essential amendments (especially important for the UK) were not included again and the interests of security, energy saving and wellbeing of the public were not addressed.

External or curb-side letter boxes are not temperature-controlled, and this can sometimes be a concern for temperature-sensitive products such as pharmaceuticals, live plants or other organisms, or chocolate candies. Conditions can include high or low temperatures outside of the recommended storage conditions for certain products. For example, the USFDA found that the temperature in a steel mailbox painted black could reach 136 °F (58 °C) in full sun while the ambient air temperature was 101 °F (38 °C).

Security

There is a recommendation to have a lock on the letter box, if it is not built into a lockable door. Unlocked letter boxes are often used for **identity theft**, including the ordering of something valuable which is then stolen from the unlocked box. By policy, the USPS will not deliver mail to an unlocked or unsecured box which is located at a centralized mailbox installation.
