

# Printing receptacle labels with IPS Light

IPS Light makes it possible to generate receptacle labels for all your outbound mail.

## Why print receptacle labels?

Acquiring a label printer and using it have a cost, but there are great advantages:

- The printed receptacle labels include a barcode that makes it much easier for airlines and your partner posts to handle your mail. Additionally, when you provide labels with barcodes, your partner posts can send you back tracking information about your receptacles and help you improve your service quality.
- Even for your partner that do not currently scan barcodes, the printed text of the label is more legible than handwritten text. This means that there are fewer errors from misread labels.

So, printing receptacle labels with barcodes ensures that your receptacles are dealt with most efficiently; it contributes to increasing quality of the way your mail is handled abroad.

## Prerequisite

You must use the dispatching module of IPS Light in order to generate receptacle labels. When you create and close receptacles and dispatches with IPS Light, your labels are printed automatically.

## Choosing a barcode printer

Basically, if you are able to print the sample PDF file available at the following link [http://ipslight.upu.org/downloads/Sample\\_Label.pdf](http://ipslight.upu.org/downloads/Sample_Label.pdf) on the label printer, then it can be used with IPS Light!

When purchasing a label printer, remember the following points:

- **Windows driver:** the barcode printer **must** be provided with a **Windows printer** driver. The Windows driver allows you to print labels exactly like printing with a standard laser printer. This driver, to be installed on each computer connecting to the label printer, displays the label printer in the list of available printers in Windows.
- **Performance:** Depending on the brand, model and connectivity (serial port/printer port/USB), printing a label may take up to 30 seconds or even more. Some printers have a Windows driver optimized for USB connection that makes printing much faster. It is important that you test how quickly the printer performs and make sure it is acceptable for your needs. To test printer performance, print the sample label referenced in the link above and note how long the printer takes to complete the job.
- **Printing technology:** when you choose a label printer, you also choose one of the following technologies:
  - **Direct thermal:** the paper used has some chemical properties that become black when heated. Advantage: No ink is required for printing -> easier maintenance, but after a few weeks, the printed text may not be clearly visible anymore (so it is not recommended for surface mail).
  - **Thermal transfer:** an ink ribbon is used between the print head and the paper. Heat is applied which causes ink to be transferred to the paper. Advantage: the quality is normally better.
- **Supplies:** you will need certain supplies for your label printer: The paper ribbons depend on the printing technology chosen (different type of paper for direct thermal and thermal transfer). If you use thermal transfer, you also need ink ribbons.

The minimum label size is: 125 x 75 mm

Make sure you always have supplies in advance and make sure you can renew them before running out of stock.

- **Quality:** the barcode printed on the label must be correctly printed. As a test, you can try scanning the barcode on a test label with a barcode reader. If it fails or requires many attempts, then the quality is not good enough.  
Sometimes you must change the printer settings to optimize printing quality. These settings include the printing speed, contrast and others. The quality also depends on the type of paper you use and ambient conditions such as temperature and humidity in your location.  
Please read the UPU standard S29 in the UPU technical standards, distributed on CD to all postal administrations, for a full description of quality requirements.  
Make sure you perform quality tests successfully before generating labels in the operational process.
- **Possible brands:** we do not have any partnership with a label printer manufacturer. However, the brands are represented in many countries and are widely used in the postal industry:
  - Datamax [www.datamaxcorp.com](http://www.datamaxcorp.com)
  - Intermec [www.intermec.com](http://www.intermec.com)
  - Zebra [www.zebra.com](http://www.zebra.com)