

State Abbreviations

On July 1, 1963, the Post Office Department introduced the five-digit ZIP Code. At the time, most addressing equipment could accommodate only 23 characters (including spaces) in the bottom line of the address. To make room for the ZIP Code, state names needed to be abbreviated. The Department provided an initial list of abbreviations in June 1963, but many had three or four letters, which was still too long. In October 1963, the Department settled on the current two-letter abbreviations. Since that time, only one change has been made: in 1969, at the request of the Canadian postal administration, the abbreviation for Nebraska, originally NB, was changed to NE, to avoid confusion with New Brunswick in Canada.

A list of state abbreviations since 1831 is provided at right. A more complete list of current abbreviations, including all U.S. possessions, is available online at

<https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apb.htm>.



Promoting ZIP Codes in New York City, 1966

To allow space for the ZIP Code in the last line of an address, state names needed to be abbreviated. Previously, the Post Office Department preferred that state names be written in full, to avoid confusion.

Postal Abbreviations for States/Territories

	1831	1874	1943	6/1963	10/1963–present
Alabama	Al.	Ala.	Ala.	ALA	AL
Alaska	--	Alaska	Alaska	ALSK	AK
Arizona	--	Ariz.	Ariz.	ARIZ	AZ
Arkansas	Ar. T.	Ark.	Ark.	ARK	AR
California	--	Cal.	Calif.	CALIF	CA
Colorado	--	Colo.	Colo.	COL	CO
Connecticut	Ct.	Conn.	Conn.	CONN	CT
Delaware	De.	Del.	Del.	DEL	DE
District of Columbia	D. C.	D. C.	D. C.	DC	DC
Florida	Fl. T.	Fla.	Fla.	FLA	FL
Georgia	Ga.	Ga.	Ga.	GA	GA
Hawaii	--	--	Hawaii	HAW	HI
Idaho	--	Idaho	Idaho	IDA	ID
Illinois	Il.	Ill.	Ill.	ILL	IL
Indiana	Ia.	Ind.	Ind.	IND	IN
Iowa	--	Iowa	Iowa	IOWA	IA
Kansas	--	Kans.	Kans.	KANS	KS
Kentucky	Ky.	Ky.	Ky.	KY	KY
Louisiana	La.	La.	La.	LA	LA
Maine	Me.	Me.	Maine	ME	ME
Maryland	Md.	Md.	Md.	MD	MD
Massachusetts	Ms.	Mass.	Mass.	MASS	MA
Michigan	Mic. T.	Mich.	Mich.	MICH	MI
Minnesota	--	Minn.	Minn.	MINN	MN
Mississippi	Mi.	Miss.	Miss.	MISS	MS
Missouri	Mo.	Mo.	Mo.	MO	MO
Montana	--	Mont.	Mont.	MONT	MT
Nebraska	--	Nebr.	Nebr.	NEB	NB (to NE in 1969)
Nevada	--	Nev.	Nev.	NEV	NV
New Hampshire	N. H.	N. H.	N. H.	NH	NH
New Jersey	N. J.	N. J.	N. J.	NJ	NJ
New Mexico	--	N. Mex.	N. Mex.	NM	NM
New York	N. Y.	N. Y.	N. Y.	NY	NY
North Carolina	N. C.	N. C.	N. C.	NC	NC
North Dakota	--	--	N. Dak.	ND	ND
Ohio	O.	Ohio	Ohio	OHIO	OH
Oklahoma	--	--	Okla.	OKLA	OK
Oregon	--	Oreg.	Oreg.	ORE	OR
Pennsylvania	Pa.	Pa.	Pa.	PA	PA
Puerto Rico	--	--	P. R.	PR	PR
Rhode Island	R. I.	R. I.	R. I.	RI	RI
South Carolina	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	SC	SC
South Dakota	--	--	S. Dak.	SD	SD
Tennessee	Te.	Tenn.	Tenn.	TENN	TN
Texas	--	Tex.	Tex.	TEX	TX
Utah	--	Utah	Utah	UTAH	UT
Vermont	Vt.	Vt.	Vt.	VT	VT
Virginia	Va.	Va.	Va.	VA	VA
Washington	--	Wash.	Wash.	WASH	WA
West Virginia	--	W. Va.	W. Va.	W VA	WV
Wisconsin	--	Wis.	Wis.	WIS	WI
Wyoming	--	Wyo.	Wyo.	WYO	WY

Sources: 1831, *Table of Post Offices in the United States*; 1874 and 1943, *United States Official Postal Guide*; 6/1963, *Postal Bulletin* 20368; 10/1963, Post Office Department Publication 59, *Abbreviations for Use with ZIP Code*.