PAYMENTS CANADA

RULE A3

ENDORSEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF PAPER ITEMS

2025 CANADIAN PAYMENTS ASSOCIATION

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IMPLEMENTED

February 1983

AMENDMENTS PRE-NOVEMBER 2003

May 1984, November 19, 1986, January 1987, September 18, 1991, November 18, 1992, September 29, 1994, November 27, 1995, May 23, 1996, April 7, 1997, December 18, 1999, March 22, 2001, November 29, 2001 and February 20, 2003

AMENDMENTS POST-NOVEMBER 2003

1. Amendments to reflect consistency with the new CPA Payment Items and ACSS By-law, approved by the Board November 27, 2003, effective January 27, 2004.
2. Amendments to Appendix I to stipulate ink colour of manual identification stamps, approved by the Board October 7, 2004, effective December 6, 2004.
3. Amendment to Appendix III to align the minimum and maximum cheque sizes with Standard 006, approved by the President, effective June 15, 2005.
4. Amendment to update the ABM identifier for La Caisse Centrale Desjardins in Appendix II, approved by the President, effective February 23, 2006.
5. Amendment to clarify the ink colour of manual identification stamps, approved by the Board June 6, 2007, effective August 6, 2007.
6. Amendments to update the ABM identifier for Bank of Nova Scotia and Royal Bank of Canada in Appendix II, approved by the President, effective August 10, 2009.
7. Amendment to replace references to “General Manager” with “President”, consequential to amendments to the Canadian Payments Act (Bill C-37) that came into effect on March 1, 2010.
8. Amendments to update the ABM identifier for BNS, BNC, and CIBC Appendix II, approved by the President, effective May 25, 2010.
9. Amendments to Appendix II to replace references to “Credit Union Central of Canada” with “Central 1 Credit Union”, approved by the Board May 26, 2011, effective July 6, 2011.
10. Amendment to section 1 to accommodate the use of Clearing Replacement Documents, approved by the Board March 29, 2012, effective October 1, 2012.
11. Amendments to update ABM identifier for CCDQ in Appendix II, approved by the Board October 11, 2012, effective December 10, 2012.
12. Amendment to reflect the removal of the Endorsement guarantee consequential to amendments to By-Law No.3 – Payment Items and ACSS, which came into effect August 17, 2012. Approved by the Board October 3, 2013, effective December 2, 2013.
13. Amendment to update the ABM identifier for La Caisse Centrale Desjardins in Appendix II, approved by the Board June 25, 2014, effective July 25, 2014.

14. Amendment to update ABM identifier for HSBC, TD and BNS in Appendix II. Approved by the Board October 9, 2014, effective December 8, 2014.
15. Amendment to update ABM identifier for BMO in Appendix II. Approved by the Board December 3, 2015, effective February 2, 2016.
16. Amendments to Appendix II to replace references to "La caisse Centrale Desjardins du Québec" and/or "La Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec" with "Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec". Revisions made under the authority of the CPA President, effective January 1, 2017.
17. Amendment to update ABM identifier for National Bank of Canada in Appendix II, effective February 1, 2017.
18. Amendments to reflect the addition of Peoples Trust Company as a new ACSS Direct Clearer, made under the authority of the CPA President, effective June 13, 2022.
19. Amendments to remove references to HSBC in Appendix II, made under the authority of the CPA President, effective March 29, 2024.
20. Amendments to update the sample forms in Appendix II and to accommodate the ACSS clean-up exercise, approved by the Board September 18, 2025, effective November 24, 2025.

Introduction

1. This Rule outlines procedures for the Endorsement and Identification of paper Payment Items. For additional requirements with respect to the placement of Identifiers on Clearing Replacement Documents, refer to Rule A10 and Standard 014.

Definitions

2. In this Rule,

   "Endorsement" means a signature made by a holder of an Item on the back of the Item when negotiating (transferring) it to another person. "Endorse" or "Endorsed" have corresponding meanings.

   "Identifier" or "Identification" means a stamp, trace number, Transit Number or other Identification affixed to the back of an Item or transmitted with an Item by a Member that is involved in the Exchange of that Item.

   "Transit Number" means a three-digit Identification Number together with a five-digit Branch Number assigned by that Institution.

Requirement to Endorse

3. Each Member that is party to the Exchange of an Item, beginning with the Negotiating Institution and ending with the Drawee, must identify the Item to facilitate tracing, by affixing its Identifier to the Item.

Guarantee of Endorsement and Necessary Endorsements

4. a. The Negotiating Institution's Identifier constitutes the Negotiating Institution's guarantee of the authenticity of all prior Endorsements and of its undertaking to supply any missing necessary Endorsements. The lack of an Identifier does not negate the Negotiating Institution's responsibility to provide a missing Endorsement. For greater certainty:

      i. subject to paragraphs (ii) and (iii), Members must generally guarantee the authenticity of all prior Endorsements on Items upon which they have affixed their Identifiers and undertake to supply any missing Endorsements;

      ii. Indirect Clearers must guarantee the authenticity of all prior Endorsements on Items upon which the Indirect Clearer or its Clearing Agent, on behalf of the Indirect Clearer, has affixed its Identifier and undertake to supply any missing Endorsement; and

      iii. Centrals must guarantee the authenticity of all prior Endorsements on Items upon which the Central, or any Local belonging to the Central, has affixed its Identifier and undertake to supply any missing Endorsements.

b. A Payee's Endorsement is not a "necessary Endorsement" where a Cheque is deposited to the credit of a person's account and that person is the same person as the named and intended Payee on the Cheque.

Paper Pre-Authorized Debits

5. Each paper Pre-authorized Debit must bear a pre-printed Endorsement of the Payee and the Identification of the Negotiating Institution. Where no date of issue appears as part of this Identification, the date of issue will be deemed to be the date of Exchange.

Manual Identification Stamp

6. Where a manual Identification stamp is used, other than an ABM Identification, the specifications outlined in Appendix I must be complied with.

Return to Third Party

7. Where an Item is to be returned to a Branch other than the negotiating Branch if it is dishonored, the bottom portion of the Identification stamp may include an area indicating the five figure Branch Number and three figure Institution Number of the Branch to which the Item is to be returned (refer to Appendix I).

Mechanical Identifiers

8. The following provisions apply to mechanical Identifiers:

    a. each mechanical Identification must include the:

        i. date; and

        ii. Branch Number and Institution Number (eight figures combined);

    Where possible, each mechanical Identifier must include Member name and Branch domicile.

    b. Despite paragraph 8(a)(ii), the Branch Number and Institution Number on a Data Centre Identification may be waived provided that the Branch Identification includes the Branch Number and Institution Number.

Combined Stamp

9. Where a combined customer and Negotiating Institution Identification stamp is used, the stamp need not bear the date, provided that each Item so stamped is date stamped by the delivering Direct Clearer before the Item is Exchanged.

Reader/Sorter

10. Where a reader/sorter is equipped to supply an Identification, this feature must be utilized in respect of Items passing through the reader/sorter.

ABM Identifiers

11. Sample ABM Identifiers, for information and reference purposes only, are included in Appendix II. Any change to the format or content of a Member's ABM Identifiers must be communicated to the Association as soon as possible.

Placement of Identification

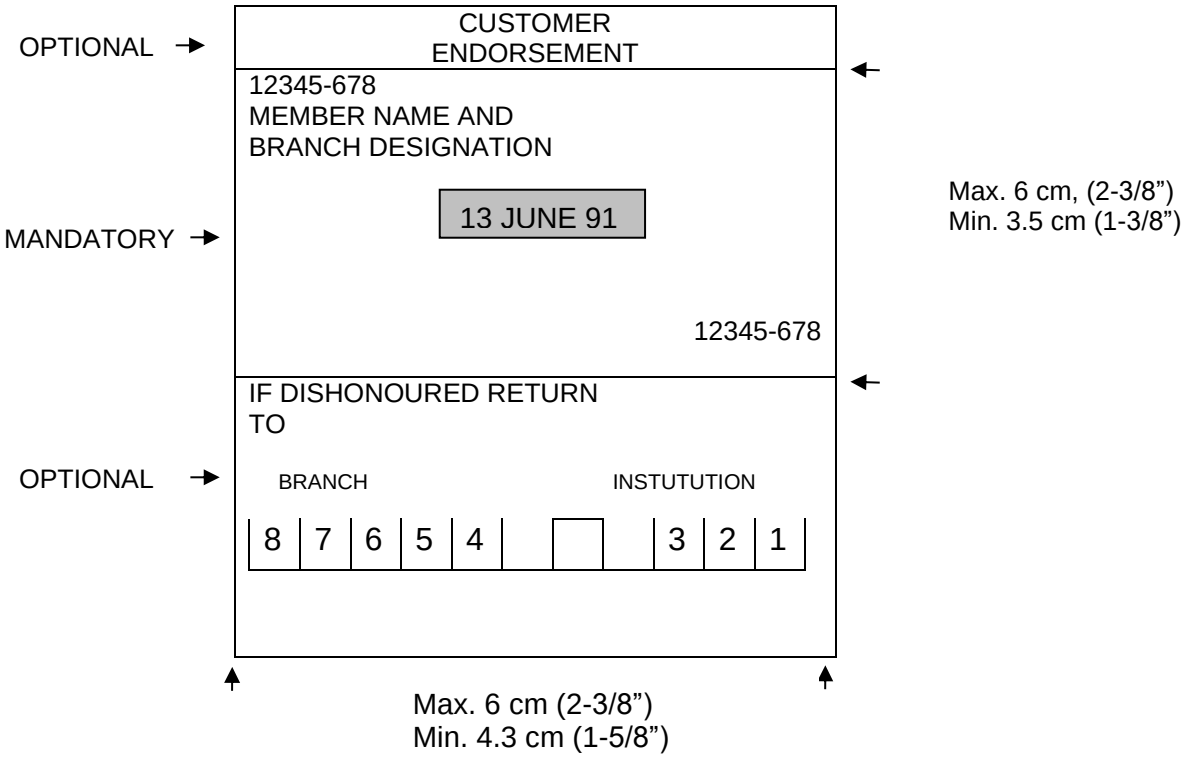
12. Guidelines for the placement of Identifiers are outlined in Appendix III.

Appendices

13. Appendices I, II and III are be deemed to form part of this Rule.

APPENDIX I – DESIGN FOR MANUAL IDENTIFICATION STAMP

Design for Manual Identification Stamp



(Diagram not to scale)

DESIGN FOR MANUAL IDENTIFICATION STAMP (CONT'D)

Size

Maximum Size: 6 cm high x 6 cm wide
2-3/8" high x 2-3/8" wide

Minimum Size: 3.5 cm high x 4.3 cm wide
1-3/8" high x 1-5/8" wide

Ink colour

The standard colour of ink for manual Identification stamps must be black, dark blue or dark purple.

Member Name and Branch Designation

Required: The Member name and Branch designation must appear in the upper half of the stamp.

Date

Required: The date should appear in an area located from the centre of the stamp down to no lower than 1/3 the distance up from the bottom of the stamp (note the shaded area in the preceding illustrations).

Recommended

Format: 2 Position Day (numeric)
4 Position Month (alpha)
2 Position Year (numeric)

Identification Number

Required: The Transit Number (Branch and Institution Number) must appear twice, in the upper left and lower right-hand corners of the stamp.

Format: 5 figure Branch Identification – hyphen 3 figure institution Identification.
Minimum 12 pt print size.

DESIGN FOR MANUAL IDENTIFICATION STAMP (CONT'D)

Teller Identification

Optional: Teller Identification, if utilized, must appear in opposite corners of the endorsement stamp (upper right and lower left). It should be sufficiently distinctive so as not to be confused with either the date or Institution Number.

Customer Endorsement

Optional: If the customer Endorsement is to form part of the Negotiating Institution Identification stamp, it should appear above the Negotiating Institution Identification, and should not be wider than the body of the stamp.

APPENDIX II - ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers – Placement and Content

Any change to Member's ABM Identifiers should be communicated to the Association as soon as possible.

Bank of Montreal – 001

(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

BMO	021	2023986290	070409	172	6438
1	2	3	4	5	6

39511-001	3302042	070410	790080985
7	8	9	10

1. Negotiating Institution (Bank of Montreal)
2. Run Number
3. Image Vision Sequence Number
4. Date Item Deposited at ABM (YYMMDD)
5. ABM Machine Number
6. ABM Sequence Number
7. Transit Number where Item deposited (e.g. Transit # BBBBB-III)
8. Account Number where Item deposited
9. Date Item Processed (YYMMDD)
10. Item Sequence / Reference Number

If dishonoured, return to Transit Number as shown in 7.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

Bank of Montreal – 001(Cont'd)

Endorsement introduced commencing August 2015.

18022015
1

12347-001 5623001
2 3

0239050 1605
4 5

1. Date Item Deposited (DDMMYYYY)
2. Branch and Institution Number
3. Account of Deposit
4. ATM Sequence Number
5. ATM Machine Number

If dishonoured, return to Branch and Institution number as shown in 2.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA – 002

(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

a. Endorsement Zone 1

BNS	001	SSSSSSSSSS	>	70334-002	1234567	1530
1	2	3		4	5	6

1. BNS
2. Run Number
3. ABM Sequence Number
4. Transit Number
5. Customer Account Number
6. Time of Transaction

b. Endorsement Zone 2

YYMMDD	MMMM	EEE	YYMMDD	SSSSSSSSSS
7	8	9	10	11

7. Date of ABM Transaction
8. Scotiabank ABM Identification Number
9. Scotiabank Deposit Sequence Number
10. CPCS Cycle Date
11. CPCS Sequence Number

If dishonoured, return to Transit Number as indicated in 4.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA – 002 (Cont'd)

(B) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

00411	97006-002	000270520072923	TS11	122409	18
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. ABM Transaction Sequence Number
2. Transit Number
3. Customer Account Number
4. ABM Unit ID
5. Process Date (MMDDYY)
6. Operation ID

If dishonoured, return to the Transit Number as shown in 2.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA – 002 (Cont'd)

(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

20140317251010000482 6 E0076 2 PKT07 3

32979 4 002 5 123456789101112134 6

17/03/14 7 EFXX 8 001234 9

EASN00109 10 ESU251 11

1. Proprietary
2. Proprietary
3. Proprietary
4. Branch Number
5. Institution Number
6. Deposit Account Number
7. Processing Date (YYMMDD)
8. ABM Machine Number
9. Proprietary
10. Proprietary

If dishonoured, return to the Transit Number (Branch and Institution Number) as shown in 4 and 5.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Royal Bank of Canada – 003

No Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp in use.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

The Toronto-Dominion Bank – 004

No Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp in use.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

National Bank of Canada – 006

(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

006	2024-09-04	20:23:01	12345678901
1	2	3	4

12345	006	0123456
5	6	7

1. Institution Number
2. Date of Transaction (YYYY-MM-DD)
3. Time of Transaction (HH:MM:SS)
4. ATM Operation Sequence Number
5. Branch Number
6. Institution Number
7. Account Number

If dishonoured return to Transit Number (Branch and Institution Number) as shown in 5 and 6 and Account Number as shown in 7.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce – 010

No Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp in use.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Laurentian Bank – 039

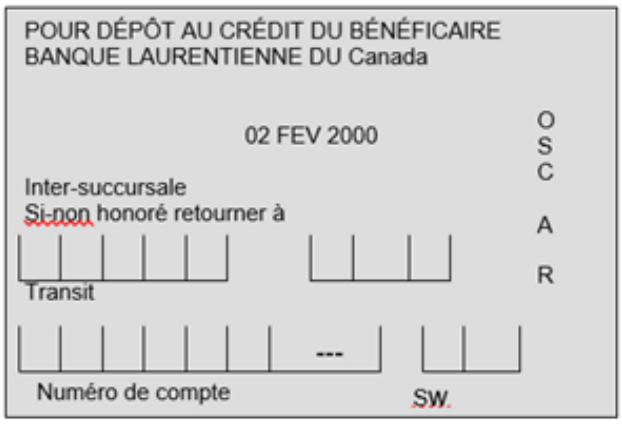
(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Line

21/02	5001	2328101	TRANSIT	0XXX1	-	039
11	2	3		4		5

1. Date of deposit (YY/MM)
2. ABM Identification
3. Account number
4. Branch Number
5. Institution Number

If dishonoured, return to Transit Number (Branch and Institution Number) as indicated in 4 and 5.

(B) Manual Identification Stamp



Item must be returned to the Transit manually entered in the blank Transit field. If there is no information in the blank Transit field, the item must be returned to 09041-039.

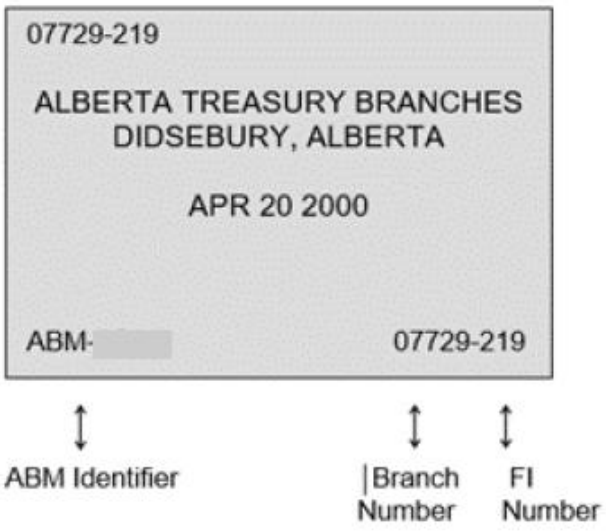
ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Alberta Treasury Branches – 219

Sample

(A) Manual ABM Identification Stamp



ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Peoples Trust Company – 621

No Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp in use.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec – 815

No Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp in use.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

ABM Identifiers

Central 1 Credit Union – 869

(A) Mechanical ABM Identification Stamp

Sample #1

Issuer (1)

Branch (2) / Date (3)

Pan (4) / ABM Number (5) - Sequence Number (6)

Route and Transit number of Issuer (7)

1. Customer Credit Union Name
2. Customer Credit Union Branch Name
3. Processing Date (DDMM)
4. Customer Account Number
5. ABM Sequence Number
6. Transaction Number
7. Customer Credit Union Route and Transit Number

If dishonoured, return to Customer Credit Union and Branch Name and Customer Credit Union Route and Transit Number as indicated in 1, 2 and 7.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

Central 1 Credit Union – 869 (Cont'd)

Sample #2:

Issuer
1
Pan
2
Issuer
3
Processor
4
Acquirer
5
Transaction Number
6
-
ABM Number
7
Date Processed
8

1. Customer Credit Union Name
2. Customer Account Number
3. Customer Credit Union Route and Transit Number
4. ABM Owner Name
5. ABM Owner Route and Transit Number
6. Transaction Number
7. ABM Unit ID
8. Processing Date

If dishonoured, return to Customer Credit Union Name and Route and Transit Number as indicated in 1 and 3.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

Central 1 Credit Union – 869 (Cont'd)

(B) Manual ABM Identification Stamp

Sample #1:

1 ACCEPTED FOR DEPOSIT AT _____
2 CU AUTOMATED TELLER BRANCH NUMBER
3 FOR CREDIT TO _____
4 ACCOUNT NO. _____
5 DATE
IF DISHONOURED RETURN DIRECT TO:
6 CREDIT UNION _____
7 BRANCH_____
8 RT/TRANS _____

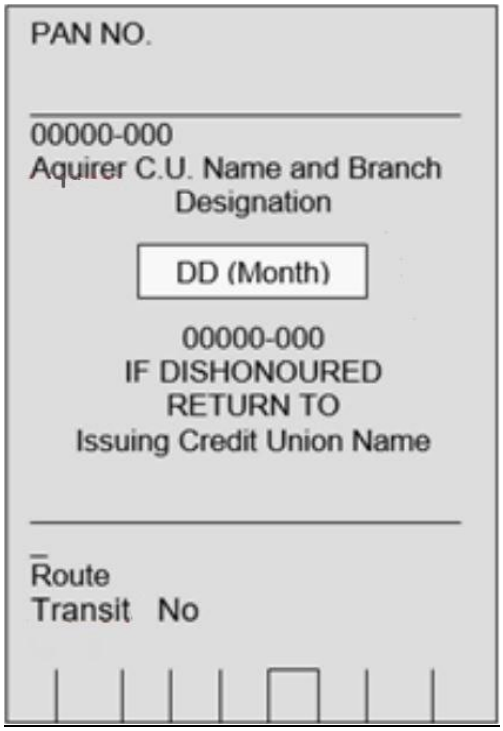
1. ABM Owner Name
2. ABM Owner Transit Number
3. Customer Name
4. Customer Account Number
5. Processing Date
6. Customer Credit Union Name
7. Customer Credit Union Branch Name
8. Customer Credit Union Route and Transit Number

If dishonoured, return to Customer Credit Union Branch and Route and Transit Number as indicated in 6, 7 and 8.

ABM IDENTIFIERS – PLACEMENT AND CONTENT

Central 1 Credit Union – 869 (Cont'd)

Sample #2:



If dishonoured, return to Credit Union Branch and Route and Transit Number as indicated at the bottom of the stamp.

APPENDIX III – PLACEMENT OF IDENTIFIERS AND LOCATOR NUMBERS ON ITEMS

Introduction

1. Where an Item is Exchanged between two Direct Clearers, the Item can be subject to numerous Identification numbers and stamps including several handlings through high-speed equipment designed to automatically place both Identification and locator numbers on the reverse side of the Item as an aid for the return or the tracing of the Item. As such, the purpose of this Standard is to eliminate the possibility of one Direct Clearer's Identification or locator number being obscured in the subsequent handling by another institution. This Appendix applies to all information placed on the reverse side of any Item. The provisions within this Appendix should be adhered to in order to ensure minimum risks of overprinting.

Identification Zones

2. With respect to the areas of Identification:
    a. Attachment I indicates three distinct zones on the reverse side of an Item for the purpose of Identification and tracing information as follows:
        i. Negotiating Institution Endorsement zone;
        ii. Drawee institution Identification zone; and
        iii. Payee Endorsement zone.
    b. Each zone is divided into two tracks: Track A and Track B; and
    c. Attachment II indicates the position to be used when the length of a mechanically or electronically applied Identification is greater than the width of the appropriate zone and this applies to remittance processing systems.

Negotiating Branch/Customer

3. With respect to the negotiating Branch/customer:
    a. the Branch Identification is frequently included in a combined customer/institution stamp, and as such, it should appear in Zone 3;
    b. were an Item is stamped manually, tellers should be instructed to use the identified area in Zone I, Track A (refer to Attachment III); and
    c. customers should be encouraged to use the signature line in Zone 3 (refer to Attachment III).

PLACEMENT OF IDENTIFIERS AND LOCATOR NUMBERS ON ITEMS

MICR Reader/Sorters

4. Most MICR reader/sorters place Identifiers on the reverse side of the Items within well-defined print positions as identified by a combination of the three zones and two print tracks (refer to Attachments I and II), and therefore:
    a. Identifiers and locator numbers placed on Items by the first Direct Clearer must be in Zone 1, Track B; and
    b. subsequent Identifiers and locator numbers must be placed in Zone 2, Track A or Track B or Zone 3.

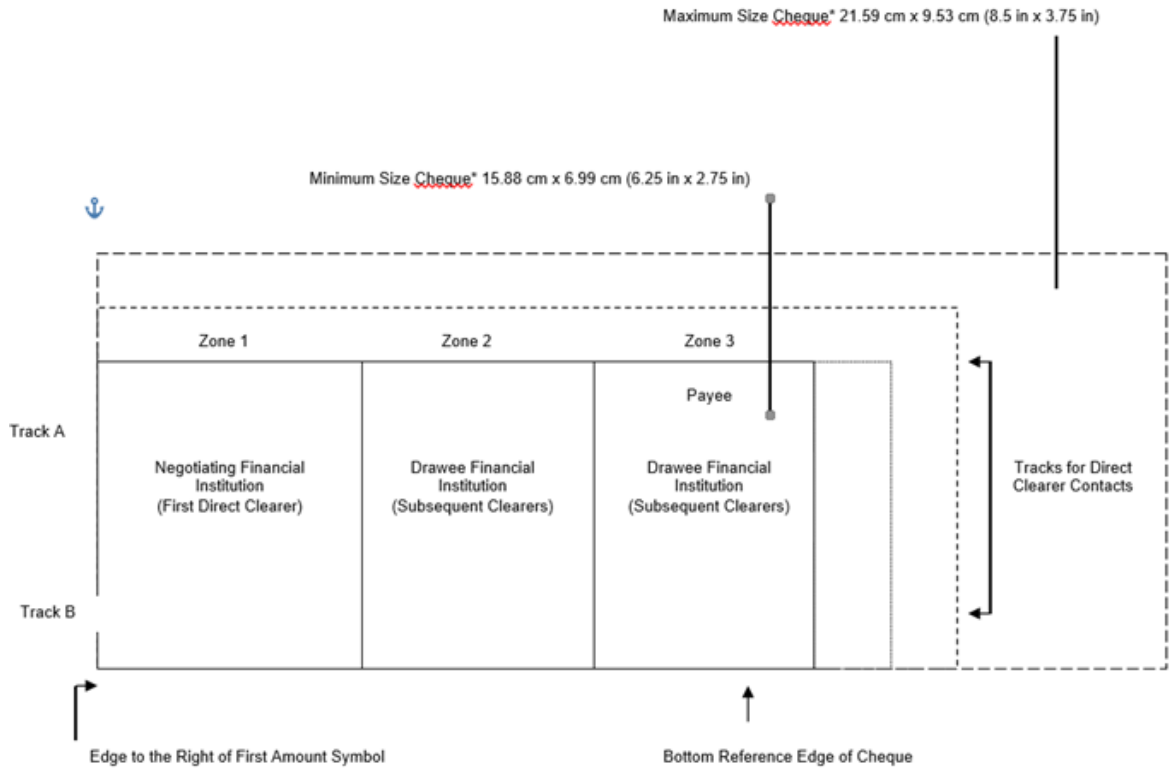
Proof Machines

5. With regard to other types of equipment, such as, but not limited to, proof machines:
    a. the equipment must be reviewed in context with this Appendix, however, where the Identifiers cannot be made to comply exactly with this Appendix, the Endorsements should be adjusted to create the least amount of interference with other Identifiers placed or likely to be placed on an Item;
    b. the use of Track A is recommended for Identifiers placed on Items by this type of equipment; and
    c. long Identifiers which overlap more than one zone should be restricted to the position between Track A and Track B as much as possible.

Ink Colour

6. The standard colour of ink for Endorsements and locator numbers placed by MICR reader/sorter equipment must be black, however, dark purple or dark blue ink should be used for other types of mechanical or electronic Identifiers.

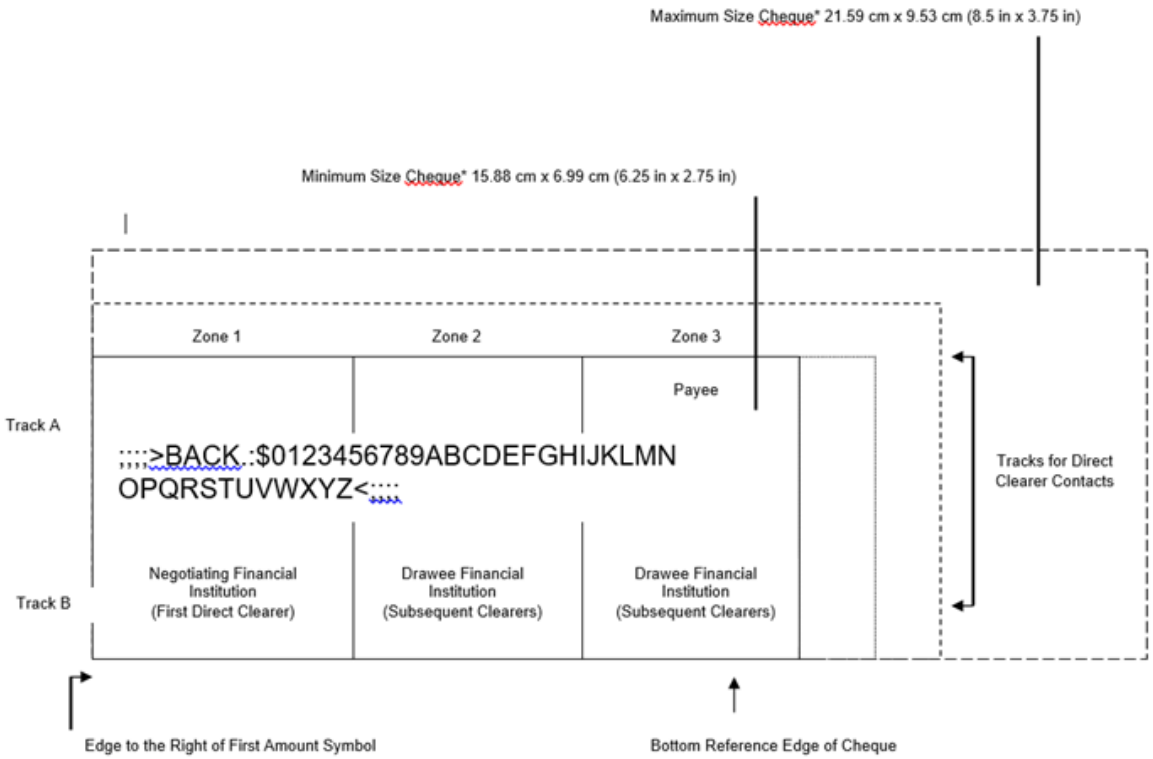
PLACEMENT OF IDENTIFIERS AND LOCATOR NUMBERS ON ITEMS



Back of Cheque

(Diagram not to scale)

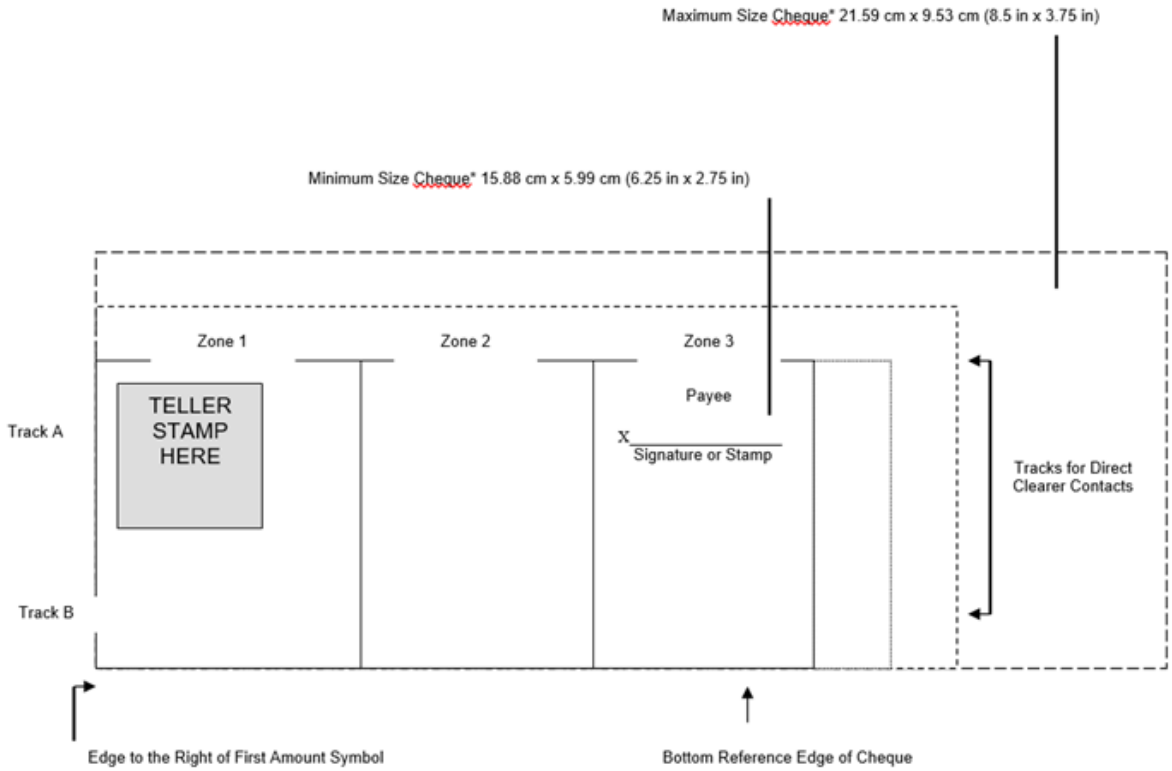
PLACEMENT OF IDENTIFIERS AND LOCATOR NUMBERS ON ITEMS



Back of Cheque

(Diagram not to scale)

PLACEMENT OF IDENTIFIERS AND LOCATOR NUMBERS ON ITEMS



Back of Cheque

(Diagram not to scale)