

HISTORY OF STATE ABBREVIATIONS

The U.S. Post Office made several revisions in preferred abbreviations for states and territories. The table below shows the history of state postal abbreviations from 1831 to the present:

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

Sources include, 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 Codes*; 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.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Until 1963 the (then called) U.S. Post Office preferred the state and territorial names be written out in full to avoid confusion, but accepted the popular public practice of abbreviation. The Post Office published lists of preferred state abbreviations in the 1831 *Table of Post Offices in the United States* and in the *United States Official Postal Guide*, first published in 1874. Most of the preferred abbreviations in 1874 remained the same for nearly the next 90 years.

When the Post Office implemented the 5-digit ZIP Code in 1963, which was placed after the state name in the last line of an address, to provide room for the new code in the address line, the department also published an initial list of state abbreviations in the June 27, 1963 issue of the *Postal Bulletin*. Many of these initial abbreviations consisted of four letters.

Four months later, in October 1963, the Post Office published the now-familiar list of two-letter state abbreviations in *Publication 59, Abbreviations for Use with ZIP Codes*. Implementation was gradual; initially they were intended for optional use only by large business mailers in conjunction with ZIP Codes.

To date, only one change has been made to the abbreviations issued in October 1963. In November 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.