

The Maltese Postcode System and Hub Handstamps

By John De Battista

In the early 1990's Malta's Department of Posts initiated a restructuring and enhancement program for its domestic mail distribution system. An integral part of this restructuring was the introduction of postcodes, a system which was adopted for the very first time in these islands on the 5th December 1991.

The basis for the system implemented for postcodes was that the islands were divided into twenty-four postal zones. In their majority, zones were made up of a group of localities that confine with one another. The alphanumeric Postal Code adopted for each zone consisted of three letters which were followed by two digits, with the exception of Gozo where only one letter, G, was used. In addition to these twenty-four zones there was the **CMR** postcode which was reserved for the Central Mail Room. The letters in the postcode indicated the zone, while the digits indicated a predetermined post person's mail distribution route or "beat".

The different postal code zones and the localities that fell under them may be found below:

- BBG:** Birżebbuġa, Hal Far.
- BKR:** Birkirkara, Mrieħel.
- BZN:** Attard, Balzan, Iklin, Lija.
- CSP:** Vittoriosa (Birgu), Cospicua (Bormla), Senglea (Isla), Kalkara, Ricasoli (Rikażli).
- G:** Fontana, Ghajnsielem, Għarb, Għasri, Kerċem, Munxar, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Victoria (Rabat Gozo), Xagħra, Xewkija, Iż-Żebbuġ (Gozo), Comino (Kemmuna), Marsalforn, Mġarr Harbour, Ramla Bay, Ta' Pinu, Xlendi.
- GZR:** Gżira.
- HMR:** Hamrun, Marsa, Santa Venera.
- LQA:** Luqa.
- MLH:** Ċirkewwa, Għadira, Mellieħa, Manikata.
- MSD:** Msida, Pietà, Ta' Xbiex.
- MST:** Mġarr, Mosta.
- NXR:** Għargħur, Naxxar.
- PLA:** Fgura, Paola, St. Lucia (Santa Luċija), Tarxien, Corradino (Kordin).
- QRM:** Għar Lapsi, Qormi, Sigġiewi, Tal-Handaq.

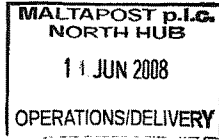
RBT: Dingli, Mdina, Mtarfa, Rabat, Bahrija, Ta' Qali.
SGN: San Ġwann.
SLM: Sliema.
SPB: St. Paul's Bay (San Pawl il-Bahar), Qawra.
STJ: Pembroke, St. Julian's (San Ġiljan), Swieqi, Madliena.
VLT: Floriana, Valletta, Grand Harbour (Port).
ZBG: Haż-Żebbuġ.
ZBR: Marsaskala, Xghajra, Żabbar.
ZRQ: Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żurrieq, Wied Iz-Żurrieq.
ZTN: Ghaxaq, Gudja, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun, Bulebel.

The above mentioned postcode system was superseded through the introduction of a new alphanumeric system in October 2007; this after MaltaPost informed all residents in Malta and Gozo of their new post code by means of a card sent during the Christmas 2006 period and through a letter giving details of the change the following April. This revised system which is still presently in use consists of three letters which are followed by four digits. The three letters in the new postcode, as before, indicate the zone / locality; while the first three digits refer to the road or street with the fourth and last digit referring to the actual street segment. However, MaltaPost offered to allocate personalized post codes to addresses in particular identifiable localities where it had already allocated post codes according to the new scheme. As such, on 1st June 2008 the residents of Tigne` Point became the first to have their request upheld and MaltaPost conceded that their post code be changed to TP01, thus breaking away from this second generation post code format within only a few months of its introduction.

This restructuring program also involved the setting up of centrally located “hubs” which were established and took over a large portion of the work previously done by the sorting rooms at individual branch post offices. Since the above change in the domestic mail distribution system took place, there have been a total of five hubs in Malta and Gozo, with each zone falling under the direct responsibility of one of these hubs.

As time went by each hub started making use of its own handstamp for back stamping mail under certain circumstances. This consists of a rectangular box with the words “MALTAPOST p.l.c. / ***** HUB / DATE / OPERATIONS/ DELIVERY” in black ink. Since their introduction different versions of such handstamps have been put in use. Examples of such handstamps may be seen below.

HUB OPERATIONS DELIVERY HANDSTAMPS



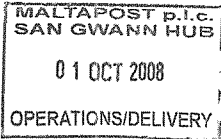
47 mm x 28 mm

North Hub
Mosta Road, Lija.

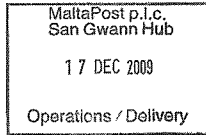


47 mm x 28 mm

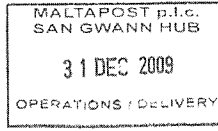
Central 1 Hub
Qormi Road, Marsa.



47 mm x 28 mm



43 mm x 28 mm



46 mm x 25mm



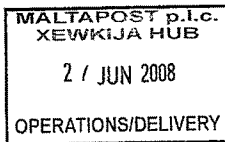
43 mm x 27 mm

Central 2 Hub
Mensija Road, San Gwann.



47 mm x 28 mm

South Hub
Our Lady of Sorrows Street, Zejtun.



47 mm x 28 mm

Gozo Hub
Saint Elizabeth Street, Xewkija, Gozo.