

2008 PIT Meeting Questions and Comments

Based on the feedback received during the comment period the USPS has decided that all requirements presented at the Partnership in Tomorrow (PIT) meeting held in February 2008 will be implemented in CASS cycle M.

Additionally, the inclusion of the use of the vacant table as a required part of the CASS test has been considered and the USPS decided on the following:

The DPV vacant table will be tested as a CASS requirement. The DPV vacant table will be tested to make sure the software probes the vacant table and it is able to return the information.

It is a customer's business decision as to whether or not to mail to the address. Therefore, the vacant table may be probed selectively based on mailer preferences.

The USPS also received many responses to our question about the future of CASS. These responses are being reviewed separately.

Responses to Questions and Comments

30 Character Rule

Q1: Are there any concerns about readability with 30 character abbreviations?

A1: USPS® is prepared to support the handling of addresses with 30 Character Abbreviations.

Q2: Do we return the abbreviated alias in all cases in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 tests?

A2: For the purposes of the CASS™ test, the USPS wants approved abbreviated alias in all cases where it is appropriate to do so. Please refer to the flow chart on page 47 of the PIT 2008 presentation.

Q3: Do we return the abbreviated city in all cases in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 tests?

A3: For the purposes of the CASS test, the USPS wants abbreviated returns in all cases where it is appropriate to do so.

Q4: On pg 24, Q14 re: multiple abbreviated aliases for a single base, they DO exist and have been forwarded to you for correction.

A4: In the event this is encountered, treat this as if NO abbreviated alias exists.

We are working with the local office to remove all duplications.

Q5: I would much rather see this as an option that provides a competitive edge for software manufacturers.

A5: For the purposes of the CASS test, the USPS wants approved abbreviated alias in all cases where it is appropriate to do so.

Software vendors are allowed to introduce alternative abbreviation logics as long as they support the CASS requirement.

Q6: Could an alternate RV9 file be provided for NCOA^{Link®} and LACS^{Link™} by the USPS that contains the shorter versions of the street names?

A6: The current policy is that you must reprocess the output from NCOA^{Link} or LACS^{Link} through CASS certified software to obtain the shorter address representation if requested

The USPS will evaluate alternative 30 character solutions for LACS^{Link} and NCOA^{Link} at a future time.

Q7: While this option will be of great value for mail owners who do not operate under a regulatory environment; it is not in the best interests of mail owners governed by state regulations. The use of abbreviated output should remain an option to standardize the physical address on its mail pieces.

A7: For the purposes of CASS, the ability to provide 30 character addresses and 13 character city names is a requirement.

However, the output of these data is optional based on mailer request. If the mailer wants to continue to receive standardized output regardless of output size the software can return non-30 character (and 13 character) values.

Q8: If LACS^{Link} was built using the base address and the abbreviated street names then LACS^{Link} could find the matches.

A8: This has been discussed and considered. The current policy is that the base address must be submitted to LACS^{Link}.

Q9: What are the future intentions of the USPS to require support for further abbreviation utilizing the abbreviation rules defined in Pub 28?

A9: Mailers and vendors may apply PUB 28 rules at their discretion.

Q10: Can users of the USPS supplied 30 character abbreviations for longer street addresses have their CASS Certified™ software code these abbreviated addresses to receive automation discounts, and not have to retain the longer form of the address in their files in order to obtain automation discounts?

A10: Mailers may retain and use the abbreviated address formats that are returned from CASS processing.

Q11: If less than 1% of the records in the USPS data have names greater than 30 chars, why are we focusing so much effort on implementing this requirement?

A11: Requiring manufacturers to provide 30-character output to the mailer adds value to the mailer and better enables the mailer to manage their systems-of-records.

Q12: If an abbreviated address is presented to NCOA^{Link} and LACS^{Link}, what will be returned and will the software be able to accept and match to an abbreviated address input? If the address output from NCOA^{Link} and LACS^{Link} is greater than 30-characters, how will address be presented in the output?

A12: Matches done to LACS^{Link} are achieved through the presentation of the Base Record. The output is based on the mailers preference. In the future, the USPS will take steps to ensure that the ability to match the abbreviated alias in LACS^{Link} will continue should a base record be deleted.

NCOA^{Link} matches are based on the 11-digit ZIP CodeTM, not on the literal representation of the address.

Firm Matching

- Q13: In an MLOCR environment the requirement to retain a firm ZIP + 4TM code will lead to increased miscodes. With existing rules we can fix a misread that would make a +4 code seem to be a firm +4 but is in fact not.
- A13: We believe that after matching the street address, the likelihood that a firm ZIP+4 Code will be misread that also happens to be associated with the street address is minimal. If this proves incorrect we will reevaluate this requirement for MLOCR systems.

Q14: It is a bad idea to prefer a ZIP +4 Addon match to a firm record OVER a Firm name match.

A14: This policy will be implemented as described at the PIT meeting.

IM Barcode Certification

Q15: As part of MASSTM Cycle M, only the IMTM barcode will be sprayed. Originally, it was suppose to be completed by January 2009. However, it appears that it may be pushed back to May 2009.

How would this push affect the MASS Cycle M testing?

A15: CASS cycle M begins August 1, 2009. This is still after the effective date for the allowable use of the IM Barcode. There is no affect on CASS Cycle M testing.

Static Test Data

Q16: Will the Cycle M test data be completely cut from whole cloth or will it simply be a certain month's data frozen?

A16: The data will be as dense as production data and will be created and updated as needed.

Q17: I would like to urge you to provide the test data for ZIP+4, DPV, LACS^{Link}, and Suite^{Link} at least 14 days prior to the availability of the Stage I file.

A17: The USPS will be ready to provide all test data as of June 1, 2008.

Vacant Table

Q18: Unless there is a pressing need I believe the DPV[®] vacant table and DPV no stat table should remain optional. These tables provide no value for my MASS vendors and are not remotely on the planning table for my other customers. We've not had one call in three years for either of those tables.

A18: The DPV vacant table will be tested as a CASS requirement. The DPV vacant table will be tested to make sure the software probes the vacant table and it is able to return the information.

However it is a customer's business decision as to whether or not to mail to the address. Therefore, the VACANT table may be probed selectively based on mailer preferences.

Q19: What is the “formal” definition of “vacant”?

When is an address noted as vacant?

Does vacant include snow bird/seasonal addresses in which a customer will eventually return to?

Is this really an address or lot on which no mail delivery will ever occur or is it simply an address where no one currently resides at the address so it is considered vacant?

A19: A VACANT delivery point is any delivery point was active in the past, but is currently not occupied (in most cases unoccupied over 90 days) and not currently receiving delivery. When an address is marked as vacant it is possible that the address will begin to receive mail in the future.

The vacant table is NOT an indicator of seasonal addresses.

Dual Addresses

Q20: Can the USPS educate the vendors and mailers on the logic as to why the PO BOX cannot be used for DPV in areas where the PO BOX address is required?

A20: In an instance where both PO BOX and street address are presented on the same line, the USPS preference is for coding to the PO BOX if the PO BOX confirms in the presented 5 digit ZIP Code.

This exact requirement is outlined in the minutes for the PIT meeting held in February 2005.

There is no current CASS rule regarding the preference for the PO BOX if both PO BOX and street address are presented on different lines.

If a PO BOX address does not DPV confirm in a PO BOX only ZIP Code, the PO BOX likely is not a delivery point.

Q21: When the street address fails DPV, why is the CASS process not allowed to use the alternatively supplied PO Box address?

A21: In an instance where both PO BOX and street address are presented on the same line, the USPS preference is for coding to the PO BOX if the PO BOX confirms in the presented 5 digit ZIP Code.

This exact requirement is outlined in the minutes for the PIT meeting held in February 2005.

There is no current CASS rule regarding the preference for the PO BOX if both PO BOX and street address are presented on different lines..

LACS^{Link}

Q22: How will the USPS ensure the option for mailers to support both the LACS^{Link} standardized addressing as well as the option to not be required to standardize all other addresses for mail presentation?

A22: As of August 1, 2009 the acceptance and use of LACS modified addresses will be required in order to use the 11-digit barcode when address lists are processed through CASS software. The same policy applies to MLOCR environments.

Q23: Mailers are also concerned about the size and the accuracy of this file. What are the Postal Service's plans concerning updating LACS^{Link}?

A23: Currently there are no plans to roll off old data. LACS^{Link} will continue to be updated as addresses are converted by local addressing authorities. If the file size grows very large the USPS will look at the possibility of rolling off older records.

Q24: If the address information is converted into the correct components of the IM / postnet barcodes the modification of the physical address should remain an option. Unless states change regulations regarding what mail owners can change on customer address information, a mandate for standardization appears to be in conflict with rules that are required and associated with CPNI (Customer Proprietary Network Information).

A24: As of August 1, 2009 the acceptance and use of LACS modified addresses will be required in order to use the 11-digit barcode when address lists are processed through CASS software. The same policy applies to MLOCR environments.

Suite^{Link}

Q25: It is not clear about the timing of when mailers will be required to deploy the software and be responsible for updating address data with this solution.

A25: As of Cycle M CASS software will be required to include Suite^{Link}TM as an option for end users. End users (mailers) will not be required to use Suite^{Link} until the following CASS cycle. This will provide the industry with at least one full year to test.

Q26: What percentage of the delivery points are government delivery points?
What percentage of delivery points are businesses?
What percentage of delivery points are not represented in the Postal Service's database?

A26: At the discretion of the USPS, statistics regarding the Suite^{Link} product may be published separately and at a later date.

Q27: An incorrect secondary number could be entered that is still a valid delivery point but is assigned to a different business. Can Suite^{Link} be used to improve addresses by correcting secondary information when a suite number already exists on the input record?

A27: Suite^{Link} should not be used to change a valid secondary to a different valid secondary because it is not appropriate to assume that the business doesn't also occupy the original address. Where the existing suite number is valid Suite^{Link} is unnecessary.

Q28: This should remain an option for CASS Cycle M until more is known about intent of the product, to fully understand parameters and impact to the physical address in relation to the regulatory environment surrounding modification of our customer's proprietary information (which includes their addresses).

A28: As of Cycle M CASS software will be required to include Suite^{Link} as an option for end users. End users (mailers) will not be required to use Suite^{Link} until the following CASS cycle. This will provide the industry with at least one full year to test.

Preferred Alias

- Q29: We would like some clarification in writing that the Preferred Alias Rule is actually an “option.”
- A29: The return of the Preferred alias is not optional except as it may be overridden by rules regarding the return of 30-character output. As with all CASS output, the use of Preferred alias remains optional for the end user.

DPV Tie Breaking

- Q30: Slide 25 – In this example, should the ZIP+4 be returned since the assigned address does not DPV confirm?
- A30: No. A ZIP + 4 assignment should not be made. However, this does not affect the ruling as this was an example for how CASS software should code to the lowest +4 if multiple +4 exists for the same record under the current Cycle L rules.

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- Q31: Slide 26 - Should the title reflect the example is for cycle M?

A31: Yes

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- Q32: Slide 28 – For the original example, the input record matched to a singleton (or rangeless) range, contrary to your notes, should the software make a match to this singleton record?

A32: This requirement was implemented and during CASS cycle F 2000

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- Q33: Slide 28 – What if your example had different CRIDs, but one DPV confirmed and the other did not- should the software return the confirmed address?

A33: Yes

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- Q34: Mailers and mail users are interested to know whether there are regional weaknesses to the DPV tiebreaker – such as Washington, DC, with its four different directionals.

A34: The possibility that two addresses will match with only the directional information being different is always a possibility. For example, if an address confirms with a directional of SW and also confirms with a directional of S or SE, DPV would not be able to be used as a tie break in this instance.

Unique ZIP Code

- Q35: Slide 57 – This slide denotes that NO adds, deletes, or modifications are allowed, but it was noted at the meeting and in the official minutes that there are some exceptions, like # to STE. Would it be possible to get an official list of acceptable exceptions to this rule? e.g. Is Nrth to North OK? And Str to St?

A35: Only the secondary indicator can be modified and still meet the requirement of no adds, deletes or modifications. All other information must be the same.

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- Q36: When the customer applied ZIP+4 is retained for a Unique ZIP Code address and no assignment is made to a street address what record type and carrier route should be returned?

Previously, the ZIP+4 had to exist and the record type and carrier route for the associated ZIP+4 record were returned. The retention of the applied ZIP+4 will result in retaining a ZIP+4 for which no record type or carrier route can be determined. I would suspect that the return values would be just that... nothing. Would this record be considered a "default" assignment as would have occurred with the application of the "0001" in previous cycles?

Wardens Office
3001 W Highway 146
La Grange KY 40032-9993

This ZIP+4 does not exist in the ZIP Code, but must be retained. Cycle L would apply the following 40032-0001 C000 Record Type = 'S'.

Would Cycle M apply 40032-9993 C000 Rectype = S

This next case differs from the above only in that the street address does not exist in the unique zip
1604 18 Mile Church Rd
La Grange KY 40032-9993

I would expect this would result in 40032-9993 C000 RecType = 'S'

A36: We will update the Unique ZIP Matrix to account for various situations and what to output as the rules apply to CASS Cycle M. Currently the same rules as the 0001 will apply.

Validation of Secondary of "0"

Q37: Does this mean the mailer will get a Zip+4-coded address (default Zip+4) if the address is missing a suite or apartment number? We ask that the Postal Service inform industry how many valid addresses have a secondary value of "0" so industry can understand the scope of this issue.

A37: The rule is that a high-rise default ZIP + 4 must be used if "0" does not appear in the valid range for the secondary. If the record does exist in the secondary range then the secondary specific +4 is used.