
Appendix B Frequently Asked Questions ACSTM

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Change History

Version #	Page #	Title	Description of Change
1.0		Appendix B FAQ ACS	New document
1.1		Appendix B FAQ ACS	Corrected some errors in document.

Table of Contents

General Questions	4
Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMb)	6
Traditional ACS™ Questions	6
OneCode ACS®	7
Full Service ACS	7
SingleSource ACS™	8
Intelligent Mail® Package Barcode (IMpb)	9

General Questions

Q1: What different formats of Address Change Service (ACS™) does the Postal Service offer?

A: Currently there are four distinct ACS types:

1. Traditional ACS, which requires a USPS® provided Participant Code and an optional Keyline that is created by you and can be used with or without the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb);
2. OneCode ACS® which requires the IMb
3. Full Service ACS which requires the IMb
4. IMpb ACS which requires the Intelligent Mail Package Barcode (IMpb)

You can find additional information on each of these ACS types in their specific Technical Guide.

https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/

Q2: Are there fees to receive ACS data?

A: There are no fees for signing up for ACS; however, there are fees for each record provided. Please refer to the *DMM*® Notice 123 Domestic Other Service, Address Correction Service for all related fees at <http://pe.usps.com/text/DMM300/Notice123.htm>

Q3: How does the Postal Service obtain the Change-of-Address (COA) information for each mail piece/account?

A: The Postal Service obtains COA information two ways: 1) A postal customer moves and files a Change-of-Address order with the Postal Service, or 2) the delivery employee discovers that the customer has moved without submitting a COA, and files a "Moved, Left No Address" or "Box Closed, No Order" for the addressee.

Q4: Where can I go for additional information?

A: The Postal Service has a number of publications on [RIBBS](#) under ACS such as this Appendix B you are currently reading. In addition to these documents, there is a group within the Postal Service who provide support for this system - the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) in Memphis TN.

After reviewing all of the documentation, please feel free to contact the NCSC ACS Group via email at acs@usps.gov or by phone at (877) 640-0724 (Option 1). Due to expected high call volume we recommend submitting questions via email.

Q5: What forms do I need to receive ACS records?

A: The ACS Enrollment Form and the ACS Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF) Web Access Form can be found at: https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/

Q6: What is EPF and how do I receive the data in an EPF file?

A: The Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF) website is a data transfer portal where an ACS customer can retrieve their ACS files. The ACS customer logs in to the EPF site using a password of their choice to download and open their password-protected zip file using their assigned customer password. There is a free ACS Download Manager application that can be used to automate the download process. Contact the NCSC ACS department email acs@usps.gov or call 877-640-0724 (option 1) if you need it.

Q7: What data is in an EPF file?

A: Traditional and OneCode ACS customers receive:

- ACS Notification File (ASCII text file, no delimiters, fixed field length, fixed record length)
- ACS Shipping Notice File (formatted text file)

SingleSource ACS customers receive:

- ACS Notification File (ASCII text file, no delimiters, fixed field length, fixed record length)
- ACS Shipping Notice (formatted text file)
- Shipping Notice Report File (formatted text file)

- Shipping Notice Data File (CSV data file)
- Full Service Chargeback Data File (fixed field length, comma delimited, fixed record length)
- Invoice File (CSV data file)
- Invoice File (PDF data file)

Additional and more specific information can be found in the Technical Guide for each ACS type.

Q8: How many different files/ formats are there and do I have to obtain them separately?

A: OneCode, Traditional & SingleSource ACS customers use the EPF website. The ACS Notification File has (COA) and Nixie data together.

Full Service customers use the Business Customer Gateway (BCG). There are two different files for each fulfillment – Change-of-Address (COA) and Nixie. The BCG requires separate downloads. SingleSource customers may also use BCG.

Q9: How old is the data we get in the Fulfillment file?

A: The date of the file includes the fulfillment date and any of the ACS notices created since your previous fulfillment. If you receive daily fulfillments, today's file contains everything that was processed through Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) or CFS in the 24 hours since the Postal Service's last processing run.

Q10: If I use ACS™ on a mailpiece, does that mean I meet the USPS® Move Update requirement to qualify for postage discounts?

A: Not necessarily. The Move Update requirement is to validate and/or update the address prior to submission of the mailpieces to the Postal Service. Therefore, using ACS on a mailpiece allows future mailings to meet the Move Update requirement when the mailer uses the data. For the current mailing to qualify, some other action has to have occurred, such as use of ACS on a prior mailing to this address or processing via NCOA (within the required frequency).

Q11: Is there a list of service providers or licensed software providers that can perform this service?

A: The Postal Service does not license the Intelligent Mail® barcode or the ACS product. There may be service providers that may be able to perform this function for you; however, the USPS cannot recommend any particular company.

Q12: Do I need to provide 20 *different* names and addresses on the samples I submit?

A: The samples should reflect different names and addresses. Printing the same piece repeatedly does not reflect a real world scenario.

Q13: Does ACS provide foreign addresses?

A: Yes, if known.

Q14: Under what conditions should I expect to receive manual notices instead of electronic ACS notices?

A: The following circumstances will result in a manual address correction notice:

- When the addressee is Deceased (though occasionally these notices are provided electronically).
- Mail that is undeliverable for a reason that is not available through ACS (see "Deliverability Codes" in the OneCode ACS® Technical Guide).
- Mail from a single point delivery that distributes their own mail internally and therefore identifies and processes their undeliverable-as-addressed mail. Ex: hospitals, college/university, military address or other businesses or institutions.
- Mail with an improperly created IMb or an IMb that has been damaged during printing or processing.
- Multiple moves by an addressee may sometimes create manual notices on the 2nd processing. For example: the addressee moves from address A to address B, then from B to C. The notice regarding move B to C may be provided manually because the original information on the mailpiece may no longer be usable because it is covered by the first label.

Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMb)

Q1: Where can I find information about the Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb)?

A: <http://ribbs.usps.gov/onecodesolution>

Q2: How do I get started with the IMb?

A: https://ribbs.usps.gov/onecode_solution/documents/getstrtd/USPSIMB_Getting_Started.pdf

Q3: What does an Intelligent Mail barcode look like?

A: Here is an example of IMb:



An IMb encoder is located on RIBBS website <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=encodertool>

Q4: What is the Mailer Identifier?

A: The Mailer Identifier (MID) is a field within the IMb that is used to identify mailers. MIDs are assigned by the USPS® to a Mail Owner, Mailing Agent, or other service providers who request them. MIDs are either a 9-digit or a 6-digit numeric code and are assigned based on annual mail volume criteria. One 9-digit MID is assigned to a business location without a volume requirement. The MID is used to consolidate and provide OneCode ACS transactions.

Q5: How many Mailer IDs can I obtain?

A: The number of available Mailer IDs is determined by the annual volume of your mail.

Q6: Can the IMb have less than 65 bars?

A: No. The IMb should always have 65 bars, regardless of ZIP Code™ length – see IM® barcode specs here: https://ribbs.usps.gov/onecode_solution/onecode_solution_print.htm

Traditional ACS™ Questions

Q1: What are the requirements for Traditional ACS?

A: Requirements can be found in Traditional Technical Guide https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/TraditionalACSTechnicalGuide.pdf and *DMM*® 602.

Q2: How do I receive a Participant ID (PID) and Keyline?

A: Contact the NCSC ACS department email acs@usps.gov or call 877-640-0724 (Option 1) for your Participate ID. YOU create your own keylines. It is something you use to identify your customer internally and the Postal Service is only involved in the rules how you create it.

Q3: Must I use the # symbol on my mailings?

A: Yes, the # symbol assists automation equipment in reading the PID and Keyline information. See *DMM* 507.4.2.3a, 507.4.2.5 and 708.7.2.3 for PID description, placement, ancillary services and Optional Endorsement Line (OEL).

Q4: Do I need my Keyline creation process approved?

A: Yes, the Traditional Technical Guide on page 10 will assist you in Keyline calculation https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/TraditionalACSTechnicalGuide.pdf, and the NCSC will assist you with your keyline approval. Also we have available a Keyline utility: https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/KEYLINE.ZIP

Q5: Why do I need the Keyline?

A: A Keyline is needed to receive Nixie notices. Mailers may need it to match back to your database.

Q6: What are the Mail Piece Identifier / Keyline?

A: If the mailpiece generates a Traditional ACS transaction, the keyline can be used as a key to update that specific customer record on your base file.

Q7: Can I use the Intelligent Mail® barcode (OneCode, Full Service) for discounts and keep my Traditional ACS?

A: Yes, however if you plan to leave the Traditional ACS data on the mail and utilize the IMb **to obtain discount prices only**, you **must** utilize a Traditional ACS Service Type ID in the IMb. See the STIDs by service available at

https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/AncillaryServices_STID_Detailed_Explanation.pdf

Q8: How can I get **Shipper Paid Services**?

A: Currently, Shipper Paid Services are only available with the use of Traditional ACS. See the SPS Technical Guide for more information,

https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/TraditionalACSSPFTechnicalGuide.pdf

OneCode ACS®

Q1: Why should I participate in OneCode ACS?

A: To take advantage of the cost savings over Traditional ACS and manual corrections; potentially lowering your overall costs for maintaining your address list, and to qualify for the Move Update requirements. Utilizing OneCode ACS can also improve the esthetic appearance of the mailpiece and allows you to participate in other USPS services.

Q2: What is the best way to incorporate OneCode ACS?

A: That decision is ultimately made by you. We strongly suggest reading the OneCode ACS Technical Guide and all of the accompanying documents it suggests.

Q3: What is the Serial Number?

A: The Serial Number is normally used to identify a specific mailpiece. If the mailpiece generates an OneCode ACS transaction this identifies the mailpiece within that mailing.

Q4: Can all zeroes be used as the Serial Number?

A: A serial number containing all zeroes for OneCode ACS is not allowed.

Q5: How can I verify that my Intelligent Mail barcodes are being generated correctly?

A: Obtain a hand held scanner or contact your local USPS Mailpiece Design Analyst.

Full Service ACS

Q1: Can I participate in Full Service ACS™ and leave my Traditional ACS information on the mailpiece?

A: Yes, however be advised that if the Intelligent Mail® barcode cannot be read on undeliverable mail that is prepared with both the IM® barcode and the Traditional ACS Participant Code, you will receive a Traditional ACS notice and will be charged the electronic address correction fee.

Q2: Is it correct that a unique 9-character serial number will have to be created for a given name and address for a 45-day window?

A: Full Service mailings require a unique IMb on each mailpiece. The Full Service IMb Serial Number field, in combination with the mail class and MID, is used to make the IMb unique. Full Service IMb's should not be reused for a minimum of 45 days.

Q3: When does the 45-day window begin?

A: The 45-day window starts on the day the piece was mailed in a Full Service mailing. Refer to the *Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* in https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf

Q4: Is it correct that if I mail using the same list again within 45 days, then that exact name and address should get a different Serial Number?

A: Yes.

Q5: Can the same Serial Number be used in a later mailing?

A: Yes, the same Serial Number can be reused after the initial 45-day window.

Q6: Can I receive my Full Service ACS records from the Business Customer Gateway and SingleSource?

A: Yes. However, both Traditional ACS and OneCode ACS records are also available on the SingleSource EPF website.

SingleSource ACS™

Q1: Do I have to be a Full Service qualified mailer to use SingleSource ACS?

A: No, SingleSource ACS is available to ALL mailers who desire to receive all of their ACS notices in a single file format and from a single fulfillment source.

Q2: Can I pay for my SingleSource ACS invoice through a Centralized Account Processing System (CAPS) account?

A: Not at this time. We will let all of our customers with existing CAPS accounts know as soon as this payment option becomes available.

Q3: If I am new to ACS, where on the enrollment form do I indicate that I want to participate in SingleSource ACS?

A: The SingleSource ACS option is identified on page 2 of the ACS Enrollment Form under "ACS Options" and "Alternative Fulfillment Method".

Q4: Do I need to complete the ACS Enrollment Form and EPF Web Access Request Form if I am already an ACS participant in OneCode or Traditional ACS?

A: No. Existing customers can email us at acs@usps.gov and request that your account be flagged as a SingleSource ACS account. You will also need to provide any additional Mailer IDs or Traditional Participant codes (if applicable) that you would like associated with this new SingleSource ACS account. If you are already an OneCode or Traditional ACS customer, you are a current EPF user and you will not need to submit an additional Web Access Request Form (PS 5116), unless an additional EPF login is desired.

Q5: Will I still receive my qualifying Full Service ACS notifications at no charge?

A: Yes, a SingleSource account has Full Service records available on the EPF website as well as the USPS® Business Customer Gateway. You are charged differently under the following circumstances:

- ACS mailers are charged the automated or electronic address correction fee for ACS notices fulfilled. The amount charged is based on the method used to provide the ACS notice. Undeliverable letter mail that requests OneCode ACS that can be processed on letter automation equipment is charged the automated fee.
- Currently the USPS does not have automated equipment that is capable of creating ACS notices for flat mail. Therefore flats, non-machineable letters, and automated letters that may lose their integrity or be damaged on letter automation equipment are charged the electronic fee. Traditional ACS notices are charged the electronic fee.
- ACS notices that contain a Basic/Non-auto Service Type ID in the IMb are charged the automated or electronic fee.
- Full Service ACS notices that contain less than an 11-Digit Delivery Point Validated ZIP Code in the routing fields are charged the automated or electronic fee.
- Mailpieces with a Full Service STID that cannot be matched to an eDoc are considered “Unassociated” and are not provided in the Full Service COA and Nixie reports through the Business Customer Gateway. Mailpieces that were downgraded to basic are not considered as Full Service eligible and the USPS will not attempt to match these pieces to an eDoc for Full Service ACS fulfillment. Both of these types of Full Service ACS notices are only made available to SingleSource ACS participants and are charged the automated or electronic address correction fee.

NOTE: Full Service pieces that lose the Full Service discount due to a container/handling unit error still receive Full Service ACS, provided by the Mailer ID, CRID, or Permit in the eDoc, if the uniqueness requirement is met. The ACS notices are provided at no charge. Full Service ACS notices that cannot be associated to an eDoc are continually reprocessed for 35 days. If a match cannot be made during this time, the IMb in the ACS notice is reported as “Unassociated”. The Unassociated IMb is reported to the mailer and charges are applied for the record in the next available billing cycle.

Q6: How is the billing for SingleSource ACS different than OneCode or Traditional?

A: SingleSource ACS invoices come from the NCSC in Memphis, TN instead of going through Eagan, MN and San Mateo, CA. Also, invoices are no longer mailed monthly. They are uploaded to the EPF site and retrieved by the customer. The customer receives an email notification when it is available.

Intelligent Mail® Package Barcode (IMpb)

Q1: What is an Intelligent Mail package barcode?

A: An Intelligent Mail package barcode is a 34-digit modulated barcode that generally follows the specifications of the GS1-128 barcode. The IMpb allows for improved routing, tracking, and service capabilities.

Q2: What does an IMpb look like?

A: Here is an example of an IMpb:

USPS TRACKING



9402 8052 1368 3062 5229 20

Q3: What mail class is IMpb ACS available for?

A: The IMpb ACS service will be available for the following mail classes:

- First-Class Mail[®] Packages
- Priority Mail[®]
- Parcel Select
- Standard & Parcel Select Lightweight
- Package Services (Including Library Mail, Media Mail)
- Bound and Printed Matter
- Periodicals
- Standard Post

Q4: Are there new Service Type ID's (STIDs)?

A: No. IMpb ACS does not use Service Type ID's (STIDs)

Q5: Are there new Service Type Codes (STCs)?

A: No new IMpb ACS Service Type Codes are planned.

Q6: If the Service Type Code in the IMpb is not used to identify the ancillary service requested, how is ACS indicated?

A: The shipper must print the endorsement desired on the parcel. "Electronic Service Requested" may be printed if a specified ancillary service is identified in the ACS Profile and that service will always be desired.

Q7: Is the billing process going to change?

A: The billing process for IMpb is the same as it is for SingleSource ACS. You can find more information on this process in the SingleSource Technical Guide which can be found on RIBBS: <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=acs>

Q8: Will the Ancillary Services also change?

A: Yes and No. The Ancillary options still include "Address Service Requested" and "Change Service Requested". However, there is an additional service for "Return Service Requested".

For details on the Ancillary Service Options, please see the IMpb Technical Guide or contact the ACS helpdesk at acs@usps.gov or (877)-640-0724 (Option 1).

Q9: What are the requirements for IMpb ACS?

A: The following requirements must be met to use IMpb ACS:

- Certify (or re-certify) barcodes and files

- Include ZIP Code™ in IMpb (9 digit preferred)
- Register the Mailer ID used in the IMpb for use with ACS
- Print an ancillary service endorsement on parcels

Q10: How will the USPS® know the weight and mail (sub) class of the parcel?

A: Shippers that currently manifest their parcels include this information in their shipping documentation (eVS). *A shipper that does not provide electronic shipping documentation will not be able to use IMpb ACS.*

Q11: How does the USPS know the weight on the manifest is correct?

A: An eVS is a prerequisite to participate. We will also investigate potential use of Passive Adaptive Scanning Solution for non-eVS parcels.