

CASS[™]

Certification Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions



2007-2008



**UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE[®]**

CASS™ Cycle L (2007-2008) Certification: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is CASS Cycle L?

A. CASS Cycle L is the next regularly scheduled update of address-matching software. The USPS requires address-matching software vendors to update their software logic once a year to meet higher quality standards. Mailers seeking postage discounts are required to use CASS Cycle L address matching software to remain eligible for discounts.

Q. What does CASS Cycle L mean for mailers?

A. Beginning with Cycle L, CASS Certified™ software will assign a ZIP + 4® code to a mailpiece *only* if the primary number of the address is verified through DPV™ software as a valid point of delivery. CASS Cycle L also requires the use of LACS^{Link}™ software to update addresses that have been changed due to 911 implementations.

Q. When will CASS Cycle L be implemented?

A. It will be implemented in August 2007.

Q. Why is the Postal Service implementing this requirement?

A. The Postal Service wants to preserve the integrity of workshare discounts, which have been beneficial to both mailers and the agency. The provision of workshare discounts is predicated on the expectation that there will be a reduction in processing steps for the Postal Service. In 2004, there were 1.3 billion mailpieces with incorrect primary numbers that required manual processing, at a cost of \$150 million. Effective August 1st 2007, the Postal Service will begin requiring mailers to use CASS-DPV for discounts.

Q. What can mailers do to preserve the discounts they are currently receiving?

A. With continued use of address-quality products and services, matching levels percentages should continue to decline. Mailers with a ten percent or higher drop in primary number DPV confirmation should evaluate their address list hygiene practices to determine where addressing errors are originating. The Postal Service can help mailers improve these addresses through the AEC II™ program. In addition, mailers should use vendor or Postal-provided address correction tools to correct any addresses that do not validate.

Q. If a new address is added to our mail list after our regular batch process has been performed through CASS Certified software, can that address qualify for automation discounts?

A. ALL addresses must be processed through a CASS batch process before claiming automation discounts, therefore the new address added after batch processing would NOT qualify for automation discounts.

Q. Do we have to purchase integrated CASS/DPV/LACS^{Link} software?

A. If you are currently running DPV and LACS^{Link} as separate batch processes, you do not need to purchase new integrated CASS/DPV/LACS^{Link} software, as long as your existing software meets the Cycle L requirements.

Q. Is nine months enough time to get ready for this program?

A. The Postal Service signaled its intention to make DPV a part of CASS as early as August 2004, when it became a requirement for vendors to support the CASS Cycle J product release. We formally announced the requirement to use DPV within CASS Cycle L in February 2006.

Q. What can mailers do now to prepare for Cycle L?

A. All CASS Certified address matching products have had a DPV interface available since August 1, 2005. Mailers should begin testing their systems with DPV, if they have not already done so.

Q. When must software be released to end-users?

A. Manufacturers should release software to their end-users by May 1st. This requirement was put in place to allow end-users 90 days to test the software before they have to begin using it.

Q. When must my customers begin using Cycle L software?

A. Customers are required to begin using Cycle L software no later than August 1, 2007.

Q. After I certify my MLOCR on CASS Cycle L, can I reload Cycle K software without having to recertify?

A. The current MASS policy states that when a software version is uninstalled and reinstalled with a different version, it must be recertified. This requirement has been waived for customers who choose to reinstall Cycle K software for use until July 31, 2007. On August 1, 2007, all customers must have Cycle L software installed to receive automation discounts.

Q. What is the expected result of matching levels when DPV is used?

A. Initial testing has seen matching levels drop roughly 2 percent. This was an average across all mailer groups. Mailers with higher quality address lists will experience smaller drops in matching levels.

Q. Will the use of DPV lead to longer processing times for mailers?

A. Processing times will be longer, but can be minimized with proper computer configuration. We are working with the software industry to provide multiple DPV product configurations to accommodate the varied nature of the mailing industry's computer systems.

Q. Will additional CPU or memory be needed to accommodate DPV?

A. The Postal Service has provided several configurations of DPV that will not require additional CPU or memory to improve systems operations. We recommend that mailers work closely with their product vendors to select a configuration that best suits their needs.

Q. Does DPV include a DSF²-style "throwback" table?

A. DPV will validate a throwback address in the database, but there is no throwback table in DPV, nor will DPV identify the address as a throwback. DSF2 will validate AND identify the address as a throwback.

Q. Are type E throwback addresses on the ZIP + 4 database?

A. No. A Street Address that may correlate to a Group E PO Box is not required on the database, but when it is, DPV should return the address as a valid delivery point.

Q. What is DirectDPV™ and how can I make use of it?

A. DirectDPV is a tool to allow mailers to prescreen address records that have previously been ZIP + 4 coded using CASS Certified Cycle L software in an authorized mode. DirectDPV contains either a ZIP + 4 or a ZIP + 4 and a delivery point value for addresses known to the Postal Service to have undergone a change which would require an update to the address maintained in the mailer's file. This means that addresses that have not changed will not require reprocessing, reducing the processing time associated with CASS reprocessing.

Use of DirectDPV does not alter the mailer requirement to validate addresses every 180 days using CASS Certified software to qualify for automation rates, except that DirectDPV is an authorized process to use in meeting the 180 day validation process. The Postal Service will require all addresses within the mailer's file be resubmitted to a CASS Certified address matching process on an annual basis regardless of whether DirectDPV is used to maintain the address file.

Q. The Stop Processing requirement used as a security feature in DPV will cause CASS™ processing to be terminated. What can I do to minimize any business interruption caused by Stop Processing?

A. The Postal Service is willing to give consideration of allowing a False Positive reporting option to be used for mailing activities demonstrating a low risk of abuse. This will typically include instances where processing of finished mail on MLOCR equipment occurs and other instances where the use of DPV is used in the immediate production of mail. In considering whether to allow the use of the Stop Processing report-only option, the user will be required to demonstrate to Postal Service satisfaction that their ability to prepare and enter mail would suffer a severe negative impact by the termination of the CASS software. The user will be required to complete an agreement to immediately report any instances when a Stop Processing incident involving the DPV software occurs. When the Stop Processing incident of DPV software can be responded to in a reasonable timeframe that minimizes the impact associated with mail production, the Postal Service will require that the Stop Processing termination function remain in place and the user will be required to contact their CASS software vendor for a restart code, as presently defined.

Q. When CASS Certified software is used within a Call Center operation, can an address be standardized and assigned a ZIP + 4 code regardless of whether the primary address can be delivery point validated?

A. Where a mailer uses CASS certified software product in a call center operation to validate customer address information, the mailer can make full use of the CASS data. When the address is submitted for standardization and delivery point validation, it can be checked using DPV to determine the accuracy of the primary and secondary address values. All informational return codes and match footnotes can be interrogated and used to interact with the customer to improve the address quality.

If the primary address does not DPV confirm, the input address can be standardized and a 5-digit ZIP Code assigned to the address, but it may not be updated with the ZIP + 4 code prior to being recorded in the mailer address file.

Any address obtaining a ZIP + 4 code assignment using an interactive process to capture and match the address is ineligible for inclusion in the PS Form 3553 statistics and does not qualify for postal automation rates. The address must be subsequently validated using a batch process with CASS Certified software to qualify for automation rates.

CASS Certified software used within a call center operation may be allowed to use the Stop Processing report-only option in lieu of the termination function.

Note: Refer to the DPV Licensee Performance Requirements for additional information.

Q. I understand that there is a prohibition of distributing DPV internationally. Does this also prevent any access to DPV by technical support personnel residing outside the United States. For example, can a system administrator from outside the US access a computer installed within the US to perform normal functions such as product updates, technical support, backup, etc.

A. There are no restrictions that prevent anyone outside of the United States from performing routine technical support and system administration functions on computer systems where DPV is involved. A system administrator from outside of the US can install the DPV updated data files, perform necessary backup functions, submit jobs for DPV processing, etc.

The only prohibition that would apply is that the DPV data file(s) cannot be copied from a US-installed computer system to a computer system outside of the US, regardless of purpose. The responsibility for protecting the security of the DPV data resides with the end user and any violation that occurs may result in the end user being disallowed from using DPV.

Q. Can a foreign-national within the US access or perform technical support involving DPV?

A. The Postal Service does not restrict the ability of a foreign-national within the US to access or perform technical service support where DPV is involved.

Q. The Postal Service states that the DPV data must reside within the US. Can a company outside of the US rent an office within the US and place a server there that holds the DPV data and access the DPV data remotely without there being any employees or assets of the company at the location?

A. The Postal Service requires that the DPV database be under the administration of a US entity that exists within the US for the primary purpose of doing business with the US public or other domestic entities. It is not sufficient to simply establish a mailing address or minimal business presence within the US solely for the purpose of obtaining DPV for use from outside of the US.

Q. How does the Postal Service define the term “software developer” as it applies to licensing access to the DPV product?

A. It is the intention of the Postal Service that DPV shall only be licensed to those software developers who are the original authors of the programming logic that performs the ZIP + 4 assignments per the specifications of the CASS requirements. The burden to make DPV work within the CASS Certified environment is placed upon these original authors as part of the decision process for selecting and providing ZIP + 4 codes. The additional burden is placed upon these software authors to implement DPV security features and supply their DPV-enabled product in such a manner that it can only be accessed by their specific product and no other.

DPV is not intended for direct licensing from the U. S. Postal Service to other entities who may act as software integrators that combine a front-end interface with a ZIP + 4 coding engine, either through object module access, Application Program Interface libraries, or other such configurations or methods. Any software integrator or other entity who wishes to have access to DPV must obtain the DPV product as part of the CASS Certified software supplied by the original software author.

Q. Is it really important to use LACS^{Link}?

A. Addresses converted by local community addressing authorities from a rural route or box number to a locatable street address continue to be serviced by the USPS at the old address for one year following the address conversion. During that year, customers should advise their mailers of their new street address. After the year expires, the USPS may return mail with the old address as “Insufficient Address.” To avoid having important mail returned, mailers should update their addresses using the LACS^{Link} product.

Q. Will there be any degradation in match rate with LACS^{Link}

A. LACS^{Link} should not degrade match rate. You may experience an improvement in match rate because LACS^{Link} provides the opportunity to upgrade an unmatched address to a valid new address.

Q. Are "old side" LACS addresses on the LACS^{Link} database represented on the ZIP + 4 database?

A. No, but LACS^{Link} provides the opportunity to match to the old side address and, if a match is made, provide the new address. This process does not require a ZIP + 4 for the old side address.

CASS software will still be able to identify LACS conversions even though they will not return the ZIP + 4 code on the "old side" address?

Q. My industry has regulatory/policy restrictions that prevent me from changing my customer's address without direct contact from the customer. Must I update my address fields with the new address from LACS^{Link}?

A. The U. S. Postal Service will allow mailers who do not want to update their customer's original address information when LACS^{Link} returns a new address to retrieve only the ZIP + 4 code and delivery point for the new address and use it in conjunction with the original address. This allowance to maintain the old address and use it with the new address ZIP + 4 code and delivery point value is an interim solution and is subject to change in future CASS cycles. Mailers should be advised that there is a limited period in which the old address is present in the ZIP + 4 data and they should update their address to avoid potential loss of automation discounts.

Q. What is AEC II?

A. The AEC II program uses Delivery Force Knowledge™ to correct the errors in addresses that are not correctible by other programs. Delivery Force Knowledge leverages the efforts of local delivery unit employees who review bad addresses and enter corrections into an AEC II electronic process for return to the submitting customer.

Examples of these corrections include incorrect or transposed letters in a street name, missing directionals (such as North or South), or abbreviations that prevent accurate bar coding. As a result, the mailers' correction rate increases and more mail is properly addressed.

Q. Will a standardized Delivery Drop address returned by CASS contain the secondary address?

A. The standardized address with secondary address information should be returned.

For additional information or concerns regarding the 2007 CASS requirements, please contact us at:

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