To: All Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) and Multiline Accuracy Support Systems (MASS) Customers

Subject: "Partnership in Tomorrow", 01 - 02 Meeting Minutes
CASS Cycle – F, August 22, 2000

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Alice VanGorder opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. Bruce Kinser and Steve Thomas of the Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) Department led the general discussion. These minutes constitute a written record of the discussions held during this meeting. In addition, they may be considered as requirements for the upcoming CASS/MASS cycle regarding address matching guidance and any other policy issues discussed during the meeting. These minutes are subject to change. Any changes would be published in writing prior to November 15, 2000 for the 01-02 CASS/MASS cycle. Unless otherwise modified, the Postal Service (USPS) will automatically consider the concurrence of the hardware/software industry. Developers and manufacturers may submit written comments to the Certification Department for receipt by close of business November 1, 2000.

General Discussion Items

We have had several people query as to how to obtain an invitation to our annual Partnership-In-Tomorrow meetings. All current Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) and Multiline Accuracy Support System (MASS) manufacturers are sent invitations by letter. These invitations are sent directly to our contacts, as supplied by the customer. Although we encourage attendance, at the same time, we are constrained by limited accommodations for everyone. If you have not attended in the past, be sure to contact your company's CASS/MASS person and make them aware of your desire to attend future meetings.

Past Cycle Post-Op

Highlights of the 1999 - 2000 cycle were reviewed. Again, the certification department was compelled to extend the MASS cycle in order to support end users. Although CASS Stage I & II files were essentially delivered on schedule, significant enough changes in address matching requirements apparently contributed to delaying many software manufacturers from getting certified early prior to the 2000 - 2001 cycle. We continue to take the position that the "long pole in the tent" is the software developers obtaining certification. If they fail to certify early, end users--particularly MASS end users--will not have adequate time to obtain certification. We strongly encourage software developers, especially those that support the MLOCR industry, to get in early and secure certification. **MASS certification for manufacturers is required to be completed by April 15, 2001.** We have no plans to adjust the F cycle start date beyond August 1, 2001.

Past cycle events:

- Annual Meeting Held 08/24/00
- Stage 1 File Released 10/22/99
- Stage 2 File Available 01/15/00

- First CASS-Certified Product 03/08/00
- MASS Test Decks Available 05/10/00
- First MASS Manufacturer Certified 06/05/00
- MASS Extension Granted 07/28/00

Policy Clarifications

Line-of-Travel:

Regarding use of the Line-of-Travel (LOT) product, when overlapping ranges exist on the LOT product, consisting of both a ranged record and a single range record, software must assign the LOT sequence number and ascending and descending code based on the exact range in LOT.

It has also been brought to our attention that not all ranged ZIP+4 codes on the ZIP+4 File necessarily have a corresponding low/high range in the LOT product. This has created some confusion in LOT assignments, when the input ZIP+4 code falls into one of these ambiguous situations. This occurs primarily in building the address directories in the development of your software. For consistency in assignment, if the LOT range is less than the ZIP+4 range, then software must assign the LOT sequence number and ascending/descending code for any given ZIP+4 falling within the valid range based on the LOT product. For the range in LOT that is not corresponding to the ZIP+4 file, software assigns the default code of 0000/D.

An example is provided for clarity:

ZIP+4 File contains:

ZIPCode	Rec Type	CRID	Str Name	Prim Low	Prim High	Addon Low	Addon High
06151	P	B001	PO BOX	40000	40000	0001	9999
06151	P	B001	PO BOX	40737	40737	0737	0737

LOT Product contains:

ZIPCode	CRID	Seq No	A/D	Rec Type	ZIP+4 Low	ZIP+4 High
06151	B001	0001	A	P	0001	0737

Input: PO Box 40000
Hartford CT 06151

Output ZIP+4: 06151-0001
LOT Output: 0001/A

Input: PO Box 40000
Hartford CT 06151-0738

Output ZIP+4: 06151-0738
LOT Output: 0000/D

ZIPMove:

This simply modifies our guidance issued last cycle regarding when a match to a ZIPMove record is not appropriate. Given there are two candidate records available, one being a ZIPMove record and the other being a record in the current ZIP+4 File, an exact match against the current ZIP+4 file is preferable over a match to a ZIPMove record.

Stage File Accuracy

CASS will continue to improve the process to identify changes occurring on the City-State, Alias, and ZIPMove Products. This process identifies the changed records and deletes them from the pool of addresses used for building Stage questions. This action should significantly improve the quality of the Stage files released in cycle F.

CASS Message Board

The CASS Department will begin using a Web message board as a means of communicating on such items as release of monthly Stage I files, address matching issues, and other related subjects. Developers may use this venue to ask address-matching questions or discuss CASS requirements or policy issues. Customers can use their current customer number and password to access the message board. Be sure to click on the "More" button and click the option to receive automatic email notifications when messages are posted to the web board. The URL is: http://ribbs.usps.gov:8080/~Cass/login.

Analysis Tools Via The Web

The developer analysis version of the USPS address-matching system will be distributed monthly, at no charge, to all CASS Certified vendors, effective October 1, 2000, unless otherwise requested. This lookup is the same software that supports our address-matching engine on the *www.usps.com* web page. This lookup provides details on each matched ZIP+4 record and is used by the CASS Department in evaluating error reports.

Web Automated Ordering System

Steve Thomas presented a live demonstration of our new electronic Web ordering system. This Web page is currently under construction and will be ready by January 15, 2001.

Recent PMB Policy Changes Regarding Use of the “#” Sign

The Postal Inspection Service recently issued policy regarding the use of the Private Mailbox (PMB) designator. It was published August 16, Volume 65, Number 159, entitled “Delivery of Mail to a Commercial Mail Receiving Agency”. You may locate this notice through RIBBS. Customers of Commercial Mail Receiving Activities (CMRA) may now use the “#” sign, in lieu of PMB, as an additional option for mail addressed to CMRA box holders. According to the Federal Register Notice, use of a three-line address format is acceptable with one exception: where the “#” sign is used for the physical address (in lieu of APT, for example) of the CMRA the “#” sign is not permitted. If a secondary unit designator is present, customers must use the four-line address format. The effective date is August 1, 2001.

Address matching software must not convert “#” sign to PMB. The “#” sign does not necessarily equate to PMB; vendors should be cautious about changing extraneous address information on customer’s files.

Permissible	Not Permissible
Name PMB 234 RR 1 BOX 45 MEMPHIS TN 38101-2564	Name RR 1 BOX 45 # 234 MEMPHIS TN 38101
Name PMB 234 123 MAIN ST STE 45 MEMPHIS TN 38101-6588	Name 123 MAIN ST STE 45 # 234 MEMPHIS TN 38101
Name 123 MAIN ST STE 45 PMB 234 MEMPHIS TN 38101	Name 123 MAIN ST STE 45-234 MEMPHIS TN 38101

CASS considers the “#” sign extraneous address information and will offer address questions containing the “#” sign in stage files and MASS test decks. CASS software must not interpret the “#” sign as a secondary unit designator when two or more are on the same address line

CASS will require software to retain the “#” sign and address information following the “#” sign when it does not match to a valid secondary address range. Converting the “#” sign to PMB is not appropriate under any circumstances when ZIP+4 coding an address list.

Addresses containing two or more “#” signs, where one or both, may be a valid or invalid secondary address, software must default to the base record or high-rise default record. CASS will continue to include address questions containing the “#” sign where the unit number is out-of-range. Software must not drop this address information.

Use of the "#" in Puerto Rico already has certain meaning. CASS does not intend to change this meaning given the broader use of the "#"; current rules apply when finding the "#" on an address line in Puerto Rico.

In the following cases software must code to hi-rise default record:

Name 100 N MAIN ST #1 MEMPHIS TN 38103	NAME 100 N MAIN ST # 123 #3404 MEMPHIS TN 38103
Name #3404 100 N MAIN ST STE 3 MEMPHIS TN 38101	Name 100 N MAIN ST STE 123 #3404 MEMPHIS TN 38101

(Note: Valid secondary range is 3404 – 3404)

As a reminder, CASS software must parse the PMB information into the output PMB fields whether the input address is a match or no-match.

Early Warning System Update

The early warning system refers to a project conducted by the CASS Department to identify errors that may result due to the currency of the ZIP+4 database. Analysis demonstrated that new addresses added to the Address Management System (AMS) database experience miscoding when matched against ZIP+4 databases in use per DMM policy. The monthly ZIP+4 database product is extracted from AMS approximately 30 days prior to the official "release date." ZIP+4 databases can be used for 105 days per DMM A950. Addresses that are activated after the extract of monthly ZIP+4 product release may not be accessible to address matching products for 135 days. The potential for miscoding of valid addresses increases with the age of ZIP+4 database in use. Once a valid address is updated with erroneous match results, the effect is permanent without manual intervention. The CASS Department is evaluating posting of "miscoded" addresses for use by address matching products in identifying potential errors. CASS would post a listing of ZIP+4 codes only. This project will continue to be pursued, and we hope to have a beta file release prior to the end of the year.

DMM A950 Database Use Policy Review

We presented this same issue last meeting and wanted to readdress it again this year. It appears that a consensus exists within the developer community that transitioning to a required monthly update (AIS Products) for end users of address matching software is not a viable direction in which to proceed, at least

at this time. We will continue to review the DMM A950 database use policy, however, we do not foresee implementing any change until we can improve the way in which all AIS products are distributed to our customers and their end users.

Our proposal to modify DMM language regarding use dates is also under review. This proposal calls for calculating all dates on the PS Form 3553 solely based upon the product release date of each product--the 15th of each month. This would reduce the maximum age for carrier route mail from 225 to 135 days. Additionally, the maximum age for ZIP+4 coded mail would be reduced from 315 to 225 days. Although we believe this proposal to have its merits, most of the developers present at the meeting voiced that end users are already complaining about bi-monthly updates and would strongly oppose such a severe reduction in database use.

Mandatory Line-Of-Travel Certification Proposal

Last meeting we introduced our proposal to make Line-of-Travel certification mandatory for use for rate eligibility. The current policy is confusing since mailers may use LOT software that has not been certified by the CASS Department. We amended the PS Form 3553 and added a LOT section, which is populated when an address list has been processed by CASS certified software. However, in our effort to simplify the form, non-certified LOT software continued in use and problems often occur in mail acceptance. Some mailings were being challenged or even rejected by local personnel where the LOT sections was not properly completed. Although field reports have decreased for the number of LOT based mailings being received out-of-sequence per DMM specifications; we are going forward with this proposal. Delivery personnel are still confusing LOT with walk-sequence. Proposal to change DMM language to require lot certification to qualify for rate will continue to be pursued.

CASS/MASS 01 - 02 Cycle Timeline

The CASS Cycle 01 - 02 timeline was reviewed. No major changes were recommended in the schedule, other than a request to extend the MASS certification deadline, to avoid another situation where a “last-minute“ extension would be necessary to support service bureaus. As discussed during the meeting, the schedule of events allows the software developers who support MLOCRs; sufficient time to obtain certification and ensure software is made available to MLOCR manufacturers and their end-users without causing an interruption in service. As long as the CASS Department fulfills its obligations noted in the schedule, with quality and timely Stage files, our partners will reciprocate and commit to meet the timeline below.

Pre-meeting with CASS Developers	06/17/2000
Full CASS/MASS Meeting	08/22/2000

Meeting Minutes Released	10/01/2000
Stage I File Released	10/15/2000
Stage II File Available	12/15/2000
MASS Test Decks Available for Manufacturers	03/15/2001
MASS Manufacturer Mandatory Compliance Date	04/15/2001
MASS Manufacturer Release Software To End Users	04/30/2001
2000-2001 Testing Terminated	04/15/2001
Mandatory Compliance Date	08/01/2001

Major Mailer's Association (MMA) Feedback

The Major Mailer's Association shared their perspective with attendees on several issues. The first being the annual software update and changes required of mailers using CASS software, the timing of the CASS cycle and, finally, recommendations to improve communication channels between end users of address matching software and the Certification Department.

In summary, the MMA expressed concern that mailers were not clear of changes in requirements from cycle to cycle in address matching software, and what to expect as far as encode rates with newly released software. They were concerned that they only had a limited amount of time to communicate any impacts to mailer's address files. Unknown consequences of changes made with address matching rules were of special concern for large mailers. As a result, mailers take extra effort and require thorough testing to ensure a quality implementation of new cycle software, particularly in a mainframe environment.

The MMA recommends that USPS publish a requirements document, currently provided to CASS/MASS vendors, to all mailers. USPS should specifically identify to the mailing community expected results of rule changes regarding address-matching initiatives. They also recommended CASS/MASS vendors to confirm and communicate expected changes and impacts to mailer address lists.

Mailer's also are concerned that they are not provided timely annual updates. More frequent update cycles (daily / monthly) by mailers possible if annual update changes were managed. USPS exceptions and vendor time bombs of software are not clear to mailers. They recommended USPS publish an implementation timeline and provide mailers with at least 90 days to implement annual updates.

We sincerely appreciated the views expressed by the mailers group and welcome their suggestions and recommendations. The Certification Department, together working with the software industry, will make every effort to better inform and give them every opportunity to improve current processes.

Fee-Based Certification

Due to escalating costs at all levels, CASS and MASS certification will be fee-based, beginning with CASS Cycle 01 -02. The new pricing scheme is listed below.

Fee-Based Certification	Dec-Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
CASS	$200	$200	$200	$500	$500	$500	$500
MASS (3500) Manufacturers			$300	$500	$1000	$1000	$1500
MASS End-users (3500)			$0	$0	$300	$400	$500
MASS (350 piece) Manufacturers			$50	$50	$100	$100	$250
MASS End-users (350 piece)			$0	$0	$50	$100	$150

For CASS certification, customers will be billed based on the number of separate software configurations certified not on the number of Stage II files ordered. In contrast, MASS customers will be billed for each test deck ordered, regardless of the number of decks needed to achieve certification. Note: The cost of a MASS test deck will be based on the return date of the test deck to the NCSC and not on the date the test deck was ordered. Billing procedures are being coordinated with our Accounts Receivable Department. Essentially, customers will be billed as certification is awarded.

This sliding-scale fee structure offers a financial incentive for CASS and MASS customers to obtain certification at the earliest opportunity. We understand that end users are at the mercy of their software/hardware vendors, however, we remain confident that manufacturers are committed to attempt manufacturer certification earlier than later, with the new fee-based structure in place. Test decks generated for either a relocation of a certified machine or any test deck generated during a cycle for a machine that is already certified, and is retained by the same entity, are provided at no cost.

Pass/Fail CASS

Percentage scores will no longer be provided on Stage II files or test decks when software/hardware achieves the required scores for certification. Both CASS and MASS customers are affected by this new policy. CASS/MASS has always been organized as a pass/fail scoring system, since any software/hardware system achieving in excess of 98 percent is awarded the same level certification as a any CASS or MASS system achieving the minimum score for successful certification. This policy was based on the philosophy that CASS/MASS scores

were not, in any fashion, intended to be a component of any marketing strategy in an attempt to bolster a company's product--based on scores achieved--over a competitor's.

Scores will continue to be made available upon each failed attempt to certify. This allows each vendor to perform the necessary self-analysis to successfully obtain certification. If a customer achieves the required percentage scores for certification, they will only receive a certificate and an error report.

Double Jeopardy Implementation

Double jeopardy refers to the doubling of the error count when the same questions answered by a user are different than those of the manufacturer. Double jeopardy, although planned to go into effect last cycle, was held in abeyance until more data was collected. It will be in effect for 01-02 cycle. Double jeopardy will also apply to MASS customers.

Progressive Error Inclusion (PEI)

PEI refers to a new grading policy that was to be implemented in the 2000-2001 CASS cycle, but will be in the 01 – 02 cycle. Where an address matching error is identified on the last passing CASS certification test, that error condition will be included in subsequent CASS tests in the next cycle's Stage II files. PEI will only be applicable to software manufacturers. Errors replicated into subsequent Stage II files will replace questions from the applicable category on a one-to-one basis. PEI questions will continue to be included in the CASS test until the error is corrected. This applies only from a cycle-to-cycle basis.

Qualitative Statistical Summary (QSS)

The QSS refers to a summary of default match counts and matches to records on any processed list that has been converted through the Locatable Address Conversion System (LACS) program. This summary information will be reflected as part of an amended PS Form 3553, CASS Summary Report.

CASS certified software, beginning cycle 01 – 02, must identify matches to hi-rise default and rural route default addresses by populating a default flag in a designated output answer field. Software, in addition, will be required to recognize when a hi-rise default record is not present, and, as a result, matches to the base street record, and sets the default flag accordingly. The default indicator/flag is set (review the revised Stage I file layout for position of this default answer flag) when the output answer field is populated with the character "Y".

Field Name	Length	Position From/Through
DEFAULT-FLAG	01	552 – 552

An example of when software must set the default match indicator field to “Y”:
Condition: No hi-rise default record exists on the ZIP+4 File.

Input: 1350 Doral Cv
Germantown TN 38138

The August ZIP+4 File contains:

Rec Type	High/Low	Street	Suffix	Sec Rnge	ZIP+4	Set Default?
S	1300 – 1399	Doral	Cv		38138-2014	Yes
H	1350	Doral	Cv	101-304	38138-2029	

The match is made to the “S” record and the default flag is set.

Condition: Hi-rise default exists on the ZIP+4 File.

Input: 9155 Poplar Ave (blank secondary or outside valid range secondary)
Germantown TN 38138

The August ZIP+4 File contains:

Rec Type	High/Low	Street	Suffix	Sec Rnge	ZIP+4	Set Default?
S	9101 – 9291	Poplar	Ave		38138-7903	
HD	9155 – 9155	Poplar	Ave		38138-7914	Yes
H	9155 – 9155	Poplar	Ave	1 – 16	38138-7909	
H	9155 – 9155	Poplar	Ave	17 – 24	38138-7910	

The match is made to the hi-rise default record and the default flag is set.

Examples of when software *does not* set the default match indicator field to “Y”:

Input: South American Apt Co
6854 Poplar Ave Ste 340
Germantown TN 38138

Condition: Hi-rise match is made; no default flag is set.

The August ZIP+4 File contains:

Rec Type	Prim Hi/Lo	Firm	Street	Suff	Sec Hi/Lo	ZIP+4	Set Default?
H	6854		Poplar	Ave	340-340	38138-0637	No

F	6854	Mid-America Apartment Co	Poplar	Ave	340-340	38138-0615	

Default flag is not set in this case. Note: If the input contained no secondary address, then a match to the base street record or to the hi-rise default record would occur with the default flag set for that address.

Revised PS Form 3553

The revised PS Form 3553 will contain a new section referred to as the Quality Statistical Summary (QSS) report. This section incorporates the total counts on any list processed by CASS certified software. These totals will consist of the exact number of records matched to:

- Hi-rise default
- Hi-rise exact
- Rural route default
- Rural route exact
- Addresses Converted Under the Locatable Address Conversion System (LACS) program

The format for the revised PS Form 3553 hardcopy should be available to developers not later that October 31, 2000. CASS software must adopt these changes to the form for implementation August 1, 2001. Commercial multilines (MLOCRS) are not required to adopt this change, since it is the intent of the Postal Service to eliminate the PS Form 3553 for MLOCRs only and replacing it with a unique machine ID.

Database and Electronic Header Information

Beginning CASS cycle “F”, software must populate the electronic Stage II file returned for official grading, with the PS Form 3553 summary information in the header record, as defined in the CASS technical guide. If no header record is present, no grading will occur. QSS counts will be incorporated into the revised electronic header record. See below for the new header record format and the revised Stage file record layout.

Field Name	Length	Position From/Through
HDR-TOT-HIRISE-EXACT	06	495 – 500
HDR-TOT-HIRISE-DEF	06	501 – 506
HDR-TOT-RURAL-EXACT	06	507 – 512
HDR-TOT-RURAL-DEF	06	513 – 518
HDR-TOT-LACS	06	519 – 524

CASS is modifying its policy on the processing of customer's files. CASS will evaluate and process a customer's files using the database date as identified in the electronic header record. This information is already in the current PS Form PS Form 3553. Also, to reflect a more real world-processing environment, current databases will be considered for grading only (e.g., Current minus 3 months will be maintained).

The impact on customers attempting CASS certification will be the following: CASS will no longer bypass incorrect answers due to Z4Change activity occurring ahead of the customer's database date. For example, customer returns a processed Stage II file in August, indicating in the electronic header record that the June ZIP+4 File was used. The CASS Department has already run August Z4Change against the pool of address questions. An error will be bypassed only if it was affected by June Z4Change transactions, not if the question is affected by a July or August monthly transaction. CASS previously would have bypassed these incorrect answers, to the benefit of the customer, regardless of what database the customer used to process the Stage II file.

Platform Testing Discussion Items

Beginning CASS cycle F, CASS will no longer waive separate platform testing. All platforms must be individually certified for each configuration. This reverses our position regarding separate platform testing from previous cycles. This policy will be reviewed again, following this cycle and the performance of separate platforms in CASS testing.

Grading Issues

Percentage Score Needed to Certify

Accuracy requirements for CASS and MASS certification will remain at 98%.

Optional Categories Changing To Required Status

Category L will remain optional, while category N & Q will be required for ZIP+4 coding, but not graded for standardization.

The following subcategories will be required:

- AD - Swap Firm Name and Address Field
- AE/BE - Normalized Street Name
- O0/O1 - Extra Information; Optional to Return Extra Information on Address Line 2
- W6 Will Change from Match to No Match

Puerto Rico questions to change from optional to required status: (Category 5)

- 5F - Begin/End Address Space Alphanumeric
- 59 - Missing URB Noise End Address
- 7A – Multiple Address Lines

Misspelling Categories

Optional subcategories containing misspelled street and city names will remain optional but CASS will offer more challenging and realistic questions. Refer to the Business Word Table in Publication 28 for more examples of the type of misspellings CASS/MASS will offer in the next cycle testing.

Examples of new types of misspellings to be introduced:

- Knoxvl - Knoxville
- Orchrd Prk - Orchard Park
- Junctn Cty - Junction City
- Missn Viejo - Mission Viejo
- Crnston - Crescenton
- Blue Bayoo - Blue Bayou
- No Little Rock - North Little Rock

Changes To Multiple Response Rules

CASS will allow software to make matches where overlapping primary street ranges exist on the ZIP+4 File. The following changes to multiple response rules will be in effect Cycle 01 - 02:

Software may match where it was previously considered multiple response scenarios (no-match) in the following manner:

Everything else being equal (Street Indicia, Carrier Route, etc.)

- Overlapping primary/secondary number ranges - assign lowest ZIP+4.
- Single range within a ranged number range - assign single ranged record ZIP+4.
- For hi-rise - input secondary unit designator breaks the tie (i.e., Apt 101 is the input and ZIP+4 contains both Apt 101 and Ste 101).

MASS Issues

Machine Identification (ID) Proposal

A review of the machine identification proposal was discussed. This proposal requires every certified MASS hardware item to spray a unique identifier on each mail piece that receives a ZIP+4 code. We have received feedback from only two vendors concerning whether their multilines are capable of spraying a seven-character identifier in place of the current rate markings (the rate markings will be incorporated into the new machine ID). The ASCII character set was initially requested, while a minimum of alphas and numbers must be used in order for the Certification Department to have adequate identifiers to cover present and future certified equipment needs. The identifier proposal is strongly supported by the industry that is intended to assist in the rapid identification of machines that may be miscoding mail.

Refer to the sample ID below. The identifier will include the date of the ZIP+4 File used (first character), the cycle indicator (second character), the machine ID (next two characters), and a character allocated to the machine manufacturer (last character) that identifies a subsystem(s) where final assignment of the ZIP+4 was achieved. The UM will be the newly abbreviated rate markings.

A suggestion was also submitted to identify mail pieces "exposed" to *Fastforward* systems, however, were not forwarded by using the database character (first character) in a lower case format. This proposal is still under review by USPS and a decision is considered imminent. The industry is in agreement with the benefits of the program and we expect to announce an implementation date soon.

Sample Machine ID: A F OL UM +

a F OL UM + (*FF*)

Over-labeling MASS Test Pieces

MASS has allowed customers to overlabel in test environments in situations where the machine has malfunctioned and as a result, the barcodes are clearly unreadable. This is considered prudent; rather than having the customer request another test deck. However, it's been brought to our attention that encoding station operators are using their discretion in over-labeling when a poor assignment by the machine was made. This is not the intended application of this allowance.

We review this policy to ensure manufacturers do not alter the intent of this allowance in their instructions to their customers. A maximum of 100 pieces for the 3500 piece test deck and 50 pieces for the encoder test deck is considered to

be an acceptable number of pieces that may be over-labeled without seeking the prior approval of the MASS Department. When a system sprays a barcode, then that is the final answer unless, again, the barcode is unreadable.

No General Delivery Coding For Encoders

Several field personnel have reported that General Delivery barcodes are being sprayed by MASS systems where the address on the mail piece may or may not be eligible for a valid ZIP+4 code. It is suspected that keying operators attempt to use this as a means of obtaining a ZIP+4 code when an assignment cannot otherwise be made.

As a result, the MASS Department will deny the opportunity for encoding stations/remote video encoding systems to assign General Delivery ZIP+4 codes under any circumstance beginning next cycle. MASS will offer General Delivery addresses in test decks, expecting them not to be coded. This policy does not apply to MLOCRs.

MASS Grading Percentage and Test Deck Fonts

As previously noted, no increase in the percentage required for certification is planned for next cycle—the passing percentage will remain at 98 percent. Also, we will not increase the number of fonts or introduce new fonts into MASS test decks.

Penalty For Misreads Miscodes

In attempt to reduce the number of miscodes caused by poor character recognition, MASS is increasing the penalty for misreads/miscodes to 1.5 percent, while at the same time, increasing the allowance for rejects to 7.5 percent. Character recognition is becoming a critical factor in successfully obtaining MASS certification.

As the percentage for certification is raised in future cycles, character recognition systems are challenged to improve their capabilities to accurately discern characters, and to similarly not spray barcodes when clearly ambiguous conditions are present. By increasing the allowance for reject pieces in the MASS test, MASS is relaxing the number of pieces required to be coded to facilitate this approach.

Penalty For Default Matches In Keying Environments

MASS will assess penalties for default matches in keying environments only. Depth of coding is an issue when an operator fails to key the entire address, particularly when the secondary-address information is excluded. The penalty will be doubled for each depth of coding error.

DPC Assignment Accuracy Adjustment

The Address Quality Department has released a trailing alpha file specifically designed to increase the accuracy of delivery point coding within the commercial multiline industry. This list will be incorporated into their data files to improve delivery point coding when the secondary address contains a trailing alpha. This listing identifies those addresses in the ZIP+4 File that have trailing alphas within all numeric ranges. This file will be maintained on a monthly basis and access is currently restricted to MASS manufacturers only. The DPC assignment accuracy rate, as a result, will be adjusted from .75 to .5 percent. MASS developers may obtain this listing by calling the MASS Department at (800) 642-2914.