



Intelligent Mail[®] Technical Integration Webinars – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

April 3, 2009 Session

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION:

I see that the meaning of the 3-digit Service Type is changing. When we use '042' or '702' now, it will mean something a little different come May 11th.

How are we suppose to handle this change? Is it all changing on May 11th? If pieces are in the mail before 5/11/09, how will they be processed?

ANSWER:

The new Service Type IDs take effect on May 11, 2009. While there are several new Service Type IDs, if you continue to use the legacy Service Type IDs used today to support Confirm and OneCode ACS, you will continue to receive those services. Pieces inducted prior to May 11 that remain in the mailstream after May 11 will be treated per the new Service Type ID processes as described in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* found on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

2. QUESTION:

Concerning the Service Type table on pages 14-15 of *A Beginner's Overview to Intelligent Mail Services*, why is the same Service Type number used for multiple areas? For example *current* code 704 (Periodicals) is used for No-Service, Ancillary Service Endorsement (w/Manual Corrections) and OneCode ACS (w/Traditional ACS - both with and without Ancillary Service Endorsement).

I assume the *No-Service* means there is no Ancillary Service Endorsement printed and the *w/Manual Corrections* means the Ancillary Service Endorsement "*Address Service Requested*" is printed. But how does it know that OneCode ACS (w/traditional ACS) is being requested since its code is also 704?

What Periodical, Standard Mail and BPM Service Type(s) - both current and after May 18 - indicate you want the "default" UAA treatment AND that you are using OneCode ACS (w/o Traditional ACS)?

ANSWER:

The use of an Ancillary Service Endorsement allows mailers to control the type of address correction data they receive while using the same Service Type ID. A piece for which no address correction data is requested should not carry an Ancillary Service Endorsement.

Periodicals are a little different from the other classes in that only one endorsement action is available. Address Service

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Requested for periodicals requires not only that printed endorsement, but also the address to where the undeliverable mailpieces will be returned postage due to be printed on the address side of the piece. Periodicals do not have the ability to never take a correction on a particular piece the way the other classes do. The class itself requires at least one correction in whatever format the mailer provides if the address has not been corrected by the customer.

Today's "no service" code of 704 actually means that only the default handling should be provided based on the available data on the piece – manual, electronic, or OneCode ACS corrections are determined by those elements present.

Mailers cannot receive OneCode ACS with Traditional ACS. Mailers can use the IM barcode, requesting ACS service, with printed Traditional ACS participant ID and keyline, but the Mailer ID in the barcode must not be registered for ACS.

Traditional ACS records are not considered free Full-Service ACS records, and will continue to be provided and charged as they are today.

3. QUESTION:

Is it permissible to apply the Barcode Identifier corresponding to sortation level for flat and letter mail where the Optional Endorsement Line will always be printed on mailpiece?

Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide, January 13, 2009, Rev. 3.5

3.1. Barcode Identifier

The Barcode Identifier field is a 2-digit field that is reserved to encode the presort identification that is currently printed in human readable form on the optional endorsement line (OEL) as well as for future Postal Service use. Generally, this field should be left as "00" if an OEL is not printed on the mailpiece. The exception is for automation-rate eligible flat mail with an optional endorsement line, where the Intelligent Mail barcode must contain OEL coding corresponding to the correct sortation level of each piece.

Value	Barcode ID / Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) Description
00	Default / No OEL Information
10	Carrier Route (CR), Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR), and FIRM
20	5-Digit/Scheme
30	3-Digit/Scheme
40	Area Distribution Center (ADC)
50	Mixed Area Distribution Center (MADC), Origin Mixed ADC (OMX)

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ANSWER: You can apply an Intelligent Mail barcode with the OEL information populated for both letters and flats but it is only required for flat mail.

If a human readable OEL is applied to a mailpiece, the appropriate Barcode Identifier must be used in the IMb.

4. QUESTION: My question has to do with populating the 2-byte Barcode ID field when preparing an automation-rate flat. If we choose *not* to image the OEL (Optional Endorsement Line) are we 'allowed' to populate the Barcode ID field with the rate-tier (i.e., 10, 20, 30, etc.)? It is easier for us to always populate the Barcode ID field with the associated rate-tier rather than deal with an either-or situation. After answering the question please explain the USPS workflow on your FSMs so we can understand how the Barcode ID and the Endorsement are used to process Flats.

ANSWER: See #3

5. QUESTION: The *IMb Technical Resource Guide* states that the Barcode Identifier field "should be left as '00' if an OEL is not printed on the mailpiece." Does this mean that '00' is *required* when an OEL is not present on the mailpiece, or can the IDs listed in Appendix B be used on pieces without an OEL? For some sort types, the OEL is only required on the first piece in a bundle. Sometimes the decision to print the OEL on all or just that first piece is made right before printing - after the IMb is constructed. In other words, should the Barcode Identifier ***always*** be populated with '00' unless the OEL is printed or in the special case of automation-eligible flat mail?

ANSWER: See #3

6. QUESTION: Example1: We make Flats with a First-Class Mail Service Type Code in the IMb. We want to send this mail to a vendor who expedites the mail and dropships (DBMC or DSCF) back to the USPS as Standard Mail. Since the vendor cannot put a second barcode on the piece (it's a flat), what happens to the mail?

Example 2: We make flats with an OEL code of "40" (ADC) in the IMb. We want to send this mail to a vendor who co-mingles that mail which then qualifies as 3-digit. Since the vendor cannot put a second barcode on the piece (it's a flat) what happens to the mail?

Example 3: We have any type of mail where we originally put an IMb with a Standard Mail service code. Because of a delay in processing (or similar) we now need to put this mail into envelopes with First-Class Mail indicia and send out as First-Class

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Mail. How can we accomplish this? Even if we pay at single-piece rates here, will there be delivery issues down stream? If this is a letter, would we still need to have a new IMb put on even if we paid at single-piece?

ANSWER:

Example 1: The electronic documentation must be updated to reflect these First-Class Mail mailpieces have been converted to Standard Mail. The mailpiece must also carry the appropriate postage that correctly identifies the mail class. Caution when converting First-Class Mail to Standard Mail: be sure that the content is allowable as Standard Mail.

Example 2: Only the top mailpiece of a bundle must carry the correct OEL. The vendor would be required to apply a new barcode, covering the old, with the correct OEL information included.

Example 3: The electronic documentation must be updated to reflect these Standard Mail mailpieces have been converted to First-Class Mail. The mailpiece must also carry the appropriate postage that correctly identifies the mail class as well as all appropriate markings.

7. QUESTION:

In your *Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide*, on Page 17, it says "Starting in May 2009, Basic and Full-Service option mailpieces must use the Service Type IDs in the first two columns of the table below. Nonautomation and all other mailpieces must use the Service Type IDs in the last column of the table." In most mailing lists, there is a small percentage of addresses that do not DPV confirm, so they do not get the ZIP+4 or delivery point codes when run through CASS software. Do we need to change the service type code on those pieces to the codes in the "Nonauto/Other" column, even though the rest of the mailing qualifies for automation rates and can get the service type code in the Full-Service or Basic Option column? Or would we use the code for Full-Service or Basic Service on the entire mailing, even though a small number of pieces do not have a ZIP+4 code?

ANSWER:

You will need to use the appropriate Service Type ID for the mailpieces, including use of a non-automation Service Type ID on the non-automation mailpieces.

8. QUESTION:

The new Full-Service ACS file format for COA records has a 34 character IMb field – but the IMb is only 31 characters – please explain.

ANSWER:

The Full-Service ACS file format is consistent with the IM Barcode field of the Piece Detail Record in the Mail.dat specification.

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9. QUESTION: Eight trays of mail for NJ, CSM-1006 ids 1-8, are non-palletized in an original Mail.dat. During production processing they are all combined on a pallet for entry at BMC NJ. A CSM record is added for the new pallet, CSM-1006 id 400, in the Mail.dat. An IM barcode (99Mxxxxxyyyyyyyyyyyy) is generated for the pallet, placed into CSM-1150, and printed on the pallet's placard. Parent reference id 400 is added to CSM-1109 for each of the CSM records of the eight trays. Production processing continues and submission of the mailing's Mail.dat to Postal One subsequently occurs. Further downstream, an appointment is requested for the pallet at BMC NJ via Web Services Mail.XML. The request includes a Mail.Dat summary block supplying the Mail.Dat jobid and the pallet's CSM id (400). There is no direct reference to the original trays in the request other than their parent's CSM id (400) from the mailing.

- 1) Under Full-Service is this sufficient for *PostalOne!* content data to be linked to the FAST appointment?
- 2) Is the pallet's IM barcode also necessary in the appointment request summary block?
- 3) Is any reference to the original trays CSM ids or IM tray barcodes necessary for container scan information or does the parental link in the Mail.Dat naturally ensure this?
- 4) Does the final FAST appointment number need to be resubmitted by the mailer to *PostalOne!* for Full-Service? If so, how specifically?

ANSWER: **1) If the Mail.dat has been submitted to *PostalOne!*, the Mail.dat summary block can be leveraged to reference the data for the pallet. *PostalOne!* will generate the USPSSummary block and provide all the necessary data to FAST.**

2) No. If the data was provided in the Mail.dat that was submitted to *PostalOne!*, *PostalOne!* will generate the USPSSummary with the IM container barcode data.

3) No.

4) No. If the appointment was created using Web Services and Mail.XML, it is not needed to be resubmitted to PO! for Full Service.

10. QUESTION: Please provide the URL for the TMS Guide.

ANSWER:

[http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/Postal One TMS Guide.pdf](http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/Postal_One_TMS_Guide.pdf)

ADDRESS CHANGE SERVICE (ACS)

11. QUESTION: Is it actually a requirement or is it a recommendation to submit test mailpieces with IMb if using OneCode ACS?

ANSWER: The sample process for OneCode ACS is now voluntary. USPS strongly recommends that mailers new to the process or making changes in handling requests provide their local MDA the opportunity to help them develop the best possible application of the barcode. If we cannot read the barcode, or you use any invalid data in it, you could generate unexpected results or costs.

12. QUESTION: Is it permissible for a mailing agent to use their Mailer ID and have their customer use traditional ACS?

For example, the Intelligent Barcode would contain the mailing agent MID for Basic Service and the address block would have the ACS Participation Code and key line.

ANSWER: The major component of using traditional ACS on an IM barcoded piece includes the important caveat that the Mailer ID must not be registered for ACS service.

13. QUESTION: Can mailers purchase traditional ACS even if they are doing Full-Service IMb?

ANSWER: Yes, but the MID must *not* be registered as an ACS MID.

14. QUESTION: You should mention the PDR is required for getting the keyline back in the Full-Service ACS world.

ANSWER: Full-Service ACS will provide the keyline if it was provided in the electronic documentation.

BASIC OPTION

15. QUESTION: Is 45-day uniqueness required for Basic Service?

ANSWER: No. Unique barcodes are only required for the Full-Service option.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

16. QUESTION: Has the USPS defined and released information on the make up of Cast of Characters?

ANSWER: To use Cast of Characters to distribute Confirm data to a third-party, the electronic documentation (including Cast of Characters) must be received by the USPS and the postage statement must be finalized three hours prior to induction of the mail. No Full-Service ACS or Start-the-Clock data may be distributed to a third-party unless the electronic documentation and Cast of Characters messages are received by the USPS prior to the induction of the mail.

There are two types of authorization Mail Owners/Preparers can grant: static and dynamic. Profiles may be set up for a specific Mailer ID with effective start and end dates. A profile effective start data must be at least 24 hours in the future.

When a Mail Owner/Preparer desires to engage a third-party to manage their data for a specific Mailer ID and service they will create a static relationship. For example, a Mail Owner who holds a Mailer ID may hire a service provider to receive all Full-Service ACS data associated to their Mailer ID and obtain that information on their behalf. A Mail Owner who holds a Mailer ID may also authorize their Mail Preparer to receive all data associated with mailings that specific Mail Preparer created. The CastOfCharactersCreate message supports this capability.

To enable a Dynamic Relationship, a user associated to the Mail Owner/Preparer that holds the Mailer ID would update the profile for that Mailer ID to allow access to the users associated with the third-party provider. This access would be marked as "Partial Access" in the profile and would enable the third-party to receive only the portion of the data associated to that Mailer ID identified in a Cast of Characters file. The Mail Owner/Preparer would then submit a Cast of Characters message to identify a mailing (or portion of a mailing) and the service for which data should be provided to the third-party. This relationship applies whether the Mailer

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ID is on the mailpiece or identified in the electronic documentation as either the Mail Owner or the Mail Preparer.

A Cast of Characters message may be submitted by a Mail Owner for all mailpieces prepared on their behalf. A Mail Preparer may submit a Cast of Characters message for mailpieces they have prepared when a dynamic profile exists. A Cast of Characters message will only be applied to Full-Service ACS, Start-the-Clock and Container Visibility data received three hours after the transmission of the Cast of Characters message.

This information is found in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* located on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

CODING ACCURACY SUPPORT SYSTEM (CASS)

17. QUESTION: This is related to CASS. What software is best for a university with approximately 16,000 pieces in any one mass mailing?

ANSWER: The Postal Service does not endorse or recommend specific commercial products. A mailer should evaluate the various CASS-certified address hygiene products offered by commercial supplier to determine which product best suits the mailer's requirements. For assistance, the Postal Service publishes a listing of all CASS-certified software products at: <http://www.usps.com/ncsc/ziplookup/vendorslicensees.htm>

CONFIRM

18. QUESTION: Does Confirm have to be used in conjunction with the IMb serial number for tracking the individual mailpieces? Also, would an OEL need to be used to incorporate customer information as part of the tracking with IMb?

ANSWER: For Confirm specifically, the serial number field can be used - along with the Routing Number address digits -- to identify mailpieces. Subscribers can choose how and to what extent they wish to identify mailpieces, but should adhere to the requirements of other applications in which they participate (e.g., Full-Service Intelligent Mail). Confirm service specifically has no requirements or functionality related to OEL.

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19. QUESTION: If I want to use Confirm service, do I have to presort?

ANSWER: **No. Customers just need to properly barcode their automation-compatible letter and flat mailpieces and subscribe to Confirm service.**

20. QUESTION: Will I be able to track an individual Standard Mail mailing with IMb without using a third party vendor or a Confirm subscription?

ANSWER: **No. In order to obtain tracking data for letter or flat mailpieces, customers must subscribe to Confirm or receive data/information via a third party vendor who is a subscriber.**

21. QUESTION: We currently subscribe to Confirm service. Will the tracking data file names / extensions, etc. be different with IMb scan data or a different naming convention from Planet Code scan data?

ANSWER: **Confirm files containing IMb data records always start with the 3 characters FSB followed by 7 additional alpha/numeric characters and end with an extension .pkg. Confirm files containing PLANET Code data records contain 8 alpha/numeric characters and end with an extension .pkg.**

CONTAINER BARCODES / LABELS

22. QUESTION: I would like to ask if there will be a tool (downloadable program) to make the pallet signs/placards for Standard Mail using the new Basic and Full-Service options?

I believe the old signage simply included destination city, destination state, destination ZIP Code, type of mail (letter/flat) and origin city, origin state and origin ZIP while the new will use a barcode to for both destination and origin ZIP Codes.

ANSWER: **An “on demand” system for generating IM container placards does not exist. It is envisaged that the mailers would use their own systems to produce the placards.**

23. QUESTION: Will there be a tool/application to make pallet placards?

ANSWER: **See #22**

24. QUESTION: What are the dimensions for the new container labels?

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ANSWER: Intelligent Mail container placards may be produced in two configurations:

- a. Affixed placard measuring at least 8 inches by 11 inches.
- b. Optional self-adhesive placard measuring at least 4 inches by 7 inches with restricted mailer area.

This information is in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) on Postal Explorer at <http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/708.htm#wp1353109>.

Additional information is in the Intelligent Mail Container barcode specification on RIBBS at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_container_barcode/documents/tech_guides/IM_CONTAINER_BARCODE_SPECIFICATIONS_\(SPUSPS-B-3215B001\).pdf](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_container_barcode/documents/tech_guides/IM_CONTAINER_BARCODE_SPECIFICATIONS_(SPUSPS-B-3215B001).pdf).

25. QUESTION: Where will we be required to place barcodes on placards and placards on containers?

ANSWER: In addition to the general requirements for pallet placards in 705.8.6, Intelligent Mail container placards must retain the top one-half of the placard for USPS-required elements.

The barcode along with the corresponding USPS banner and identification bars must be printed on the front side of the pallet placard. When the identification bars extend beyond the length of the barcode, the barcode must be horizontally centered.

Mailers using placards bearing IM container barcodes must:

- a. Place two placards on pallets, one on each adjacent side. Effective November 29, 2009, placards must be affixed by self-adhesive or other adhesive means that will not obscure any required element of the placard and remain secure throughout USPS processing. Prior to November 29, 2009, placards measuring at least 8 inches by 11 inches may be affixed to pallets under DMM 705.8.6.1.
- b. Place one placard in the designated area on other USPS containers.

This information is in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) on Postal Explorer at <http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/708.htm#wp1353109>

26. QUESTION: Will there be a USPS certification process for IM container barcode placards? There is currently only a requirement for the

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IM tray labels.

ANSWER: The IM tray label certification is the only certification program available today; this certification is voluntary. At this time, there are no plans to institute a certification program for the IM container placard.

27. QUESTION: I've seen conflicting information on whether or not you can print mailer information on a 4x7 placard. Can one line of mailer information be printed on the bottom of the 4x7 format placard?

ANSWER: Yes, one line of mailer information may be printed on the bottom of the 4 inches by 7 inches placard. The maximum is 12 point font.

This information is in the Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) on Postal Explorer at <http://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/708.htm#wp1353109>

FULL-SERVICE ACS™

28. QUESTION: The answer below needs clarification.

We need the last line clarified "carrier route flats will not receive free ACS". We were under the impression only Standard Mail High Density and Enhanced carrier route mail was the only carrier route mail that did not get free ACS when Full Service OneCode ACS is used. The last line implies all carrier route flats for all classes of mail.

QUESTION: Is one of the criteria for using Full-Service that the mailpiece must qualify for automation rates? Or can Carrier Route and Firm packages qualify for Full-Service?

ANSWER: All mail that qualifies for Full-Service must have an Intelligent Mail barcode to include an 11-digit delivery point routing code. All Standard Mail carrier route letters are potentially eligible for Full-Service if they meet the eligibility requirements for Standard Mail Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) prices. Standard Mail ECR basic and high-density are eligible and all carrier route Periodicals are eligible. While eligible for Full-Service, Standard Mail ECR basic and high-density flats and presorted Bound Printed Matter, DDU entry and carrier route flats will not receive free ACS.

ANSWER: Correct as stated above. Standard Mail basic and high-density carrier route flats will have lower prices in November under Full-Service, but Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail flats will not receive Full-Service ACS.

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29. QUESTION: Provide more detail on the Full-Service FREE ACS. What are the timeframes for the free notifications for all classes of mail? Please explain how those timeframes are calculated (what date is used?). Please explain how the not-free notifications are charged. Will there be a difference in the COA record layout for the Free versus the not-free? Will there be a new publication that explains all the details on Full-Service ACS (not just the record layout, but a full publication – Pub 8c for example)?

ANSWER: The Intelligent Mail Full-Service option offers Full-Service ACS which is address correction information at no additional charge. Change of address and nixie detail records will be available to IM Full-Service mailers for forty-five days. Full-Service ACS records will be provided at no charge for all First-Class Mail indefinitely; Periodicals for 60 days; and Standard Mail for 30 days. Timeframes are measured from the first notice per address correction per mail owner. This information is in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

The record layouts for OneCode ACS and Full-Service ACS are different. For information on OneCode ACS, please see Publication 8B, *OneCode ACS Technical Guide*, on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/PUB8B.pdf.

There is no plan at this time to create another publication to explain Full-Service ACS. More information on Full-Service ACS is available in the *Intelligent Mail Full Service Option User Access and Reports Guide* on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/IMFullServiceOptionUserAccessReportGuidev1_032009.pdf.

30. QUESTION: When will the USPS be ready to start charging for the Full-Service ACS for Standard and Periodical mail? If it is not in May, will ACS then be free until the system can charge for it? And when the system is ready, will some charges be retroactive?

ANSWER: There will be no charge for Full-Service ACS until a payment system is designed and implemented. Charges will not be retroactive.

31. QUESTION: Is a human readable ancillary service endorsement required with Standard Mail?

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ANSWER: Standard Mail pieces with OneCode ACS using an Intelligent Mail barcode require the use of a printed on-piece endorsement. ACS mailers are encouraged to use the "Electronic Service Requested" text endorsement.

32. QUESTION: When will the Full-Service ACS file available for testing?

ANSWER: CSV, Excel and XML files have already been made available to the MTAC 122 group for testing purposes.

33. QUESTION: When will the new ACS file format and file pickup location rules be published? Today we pick up ACS files from the RIBBS site, but it's my understanding this will change when we are running Full-Service and uploading to *PostalOne!*.

ANSWER: Full-Service ACS file pickup rules are easy. *Only Full-Service mailings with the Service Type Identifier of a Full-Service in the IMb will be available through the Full-Service Reports and through Full-Service data distribution. The Full-Service ACS reports will be available in May through the Business Customer Gateway interface. This information is available in the User Access Electronic Mailing Information and Reports Guide on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/ElectronicmailingInformationReportsGuide.pdf.*

The Full-Service data distribution is available through Mail.XML and that information is available in the Postal Service Mail.XML Technical Specification on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/MailXMLTechnicalGuidev6_8_4.pdf.

34. QUESTION: Please explain that free ACS notices are limited for Standard Mail and Periodicals - and that any pieces in a Full-Service mailing that fall to Basic will receive OneCode ACS, not Full-Service ACS if the Service Type Code is not changed.

ANSWER: Under Full-Service ACS™, mailers of First-Class Mail Full-Service pieces will receive all COA and Nixie address correction records without additional charges for subsequent notices. There will be no limit on the number or the length of time that address correction notices will be provided. Compliance with the Move Update standard is required and mailers must meet this requirement regardless of their receipt of address correction notices at no additional charge.

Mailers of Standard Mail and Bound Printed Matter (BPM) Full-Service pieces will receive the first unique COA/Nixie

notice at no additional charge. Subsequent notices for the same COA record or Nixie notice will continue to be provided at no additional charge for 30 calendar days after the initial notice. Beginning on the 31st day after the COA/Nixie notice is first made available to the mailer, the mailer will be charged for subsequent notices provided for the same COA record or Nixie notice. The price will be the current price in effect for additional automated notices for Standard Mail letters and for electronic notices for Standard Mail or Bound Printed Matter flats. Compliance with the Move Update standard for Standard Mail mailpieces is required and mailers must meet this requirement regardless of their receipt of address correction notices at no additional charge.

Periodicals Full-Service mailers will receive the first unique COA/Nixie notice at no additional charge. Subsequent notices for the same COA record or Nixie will be at no additional charge for 60 calendar days after the initial notice. Beginning on the 61st day after the COA/Nixie notice is first made available to the mailer, the mailer will be charged for subsequent notices provided for the same COA record or Nixie notice. The price will be the current price in effect for electronic notices.

Address correction notices provided for one class of mail will not be considered in determining charges for address correction notices within another class of mail.

This information is in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

FULL-SERVICE OPTION

35. QUESTION:

In *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats*, the information available to indicate the Mail Owner (for non-sequential IMb unique numbers using PDR files) has the order of preference as the MID, CRID, and Local Permit Ref Number. There is no mention that the final option for Mail Owner could only be used for Permit values. Publication values will fail *PostalOne!* now.

We need to make sure that the Local Permit Ref Number value can be a Permit or Publication number. And if it is a Publication number, that it does not fail *PostalOne!* processing.

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ANSWER: Permit and Publication numbers are used synonymously. Mail Owners in May will be identified by Permit or Pub Numbers for postage. The Mail.dat documentation has separate fields for Permit Number and Publication Number.

36. QUESTION: Please clarify the 45-day uniqueness requirement for sequence numbers for Full-Service IMb. Is it required to be unique for 45 days as measured by the date on the mailing statement, the dates that the pieces are in the mail system, or some other measure?

ANSWER: Two of the fields in the Intelligent Mail barcode are used to maintain barcode uniqueness.

- **Mailer ID:** A 6-digit or 9-digit number assigned by the Postal Service that uniquely identifies the Mail Owner or Mail Preparer.
- **Serial Number:** A 6-digit or 9-digit sequence number used to further identify the mailpiece or mailing.

The combination of these two fields is used to create a unique mailpiece identifier in the Intelligent Mail barcode, as required for Full-Service mailpieces. Intelligent Mail barcodes with the same Mailer ID and Serial Number cannot be repeated within mailings of the same mail category within 45 calendar days of the Postage Statement Mailing Date in the .csm or Postal Wizard mailing date. Mailpiece uniqueness is not enforced across mail classes meaning two mailpieces could carry the same Mailer ID and Serial Number combination within the 45-day uniqueness period provided the pieces were in different mail classes (e.g. First-Class Mail and Standard Mail). Mail class is part of the Service Type ID field. Any Intelligent Mail barcode can be kept unique for longer than 45 calendar days.

It is up to the mailer to determine the optimal approach to defining uniqueness within the mailing supply chain.

37. QUESTION: If a mailer wants a mail piece to receive the Full-Service discount and the only other service requested is OneCode ACS, does that piece have to have a unique sequence number? The reason we're asking this question is because of a statement in *OneCode ACS Technical Guide* (Publication 8b) https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/PUB8B.pdf. On page 52 of that PDF, the question and answer read:
Q: *Is it correct that a unique 9 byte serial number will have to be created for a given name and address for a 45 day window?*
A: *The 45 day requirement is for CONFIRM and Full Service options. So if you plan to participate in one of those programs then*

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*the 45 day rule would apply. The 45-day rule is **not necessarily enforced** for ACS participation.*

"Not necessarily enforced" needs to be clarified. Is there or isn't there a 45-day requirement if the piece is only requesting OneCode ACS, and will it qualify for the Full-Service discount in November?

ANSWER: **To qualify for the Full-Service option, the mailpiece must carry a unique Intelligent Mail barcode that is maintained unique for 45 days. This is a requirement regardless of your participation in the ACS program.**

38. QUESTION: We are currently live with *PostalOne!* using 8.2 Mail.dat and we are in the testing phase with 9.1 Mail.dat. Can you please tell me how long we can expect the testing to take when the Test Environment for Mailers (TEM) goes live so we know when we can offer Full-Service to our customers? I realize it is going to be dependent on the results of the testing, but assuming all goes well, how quickly do you foresee someone transitioning over to the production environment?

ANSWER: **The length of time for testing is dependent on several factors including the degree to which a mailer is prepared to test the specific scenarios for their mailing environment (i.e., Presort, MLOCR, Manifests, OnePass, etc.). These criteria can be found in section 4 of the *Electronic Documentation and Intelligent Mail; Ready, Set, Go!* guide on RIBBS.**

With proper lead time file preparation, the test scenarios could be completed in one to two business days. If "all goes well with testing", the length of time to transition to production depends on whether they have an Special Postage Payment System (SPPS) or they are a Weigh Verify site. SPPS sites require a parallel process which requires them to send all required electronic documentation to *PostalOne!* for five consecutive business days, after which, a review of the results will be conducted by BMS at an agreed upon time with the mailer.

Weigh verify sites do not require a 5-day plus parallel process, however final approval to move to production will be given by BMEU personnel.

39. QUESTION: Mail.dat 9.1 - Because of the IMb implementation, we will not be able to being testing Mail.dat 9.1 until May 18. That version contains information in the Segment Record for the Move Update date and method.

However the Postage Statements and regulations go into effect on May 11. How are we to bridge the gap?

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ANSWER: Mailers should continue to present postage statements and documentation via Mail.dat 8.1 and 8.2 until they have completed testing 9.1 in the Test Environment for Mailers.

40. QUESTION: How does the tray size impact the piece count per tray?

ANSWER: The tray size limits the number of pieces that can fit in a tray but from a system perspective there is no impact.

41. QUESTION: Since there is no distinction between mail tray sizes (1-2 ft), why does it need to be entered?

ANSWER: Container Type is a required field in the Mail.dat specification which is used in the Full-Service system. It is important that you populate this field with the correct type of container (i.e., tray versus pallet, etc.).

42. QUESTION: Does the FAST appointment number have to be included in the Mail.dat update file to be eligible for Full-Service or is there another way to update with FAST the appointment after an update has been submitted to *PostalOne!* ?

ANSWER: To meet the requirements for FAST and Full-Service, an appointment must be created/updated via Mail.XML with Intelligent Mail container barcodes (IMcb). For one-time appointments, the FAST appointment number does not need to be included in the Mail.dat.

For recurring appointments, if mailers choose not to update FAST via Mail.XML as described above, mailers may use Mail.dat to update FAST with the IMcb data. In this scenario, the following data in the .CSM should be populated:

- **Reservation Number** - This should be populated with the FAST recurring sequence (i.e., 12345R). The recurring sequence will not change for the duration of the recurring appointment.
- **Scheduled Induction Date** - The date of induction of mail into USPS
- **FAST Content ID** - This data is retrieved from FAST. It represents a unique ID that is specific to a content on the shipment. The FAST Content ID will not change for the duration of the recurring appointment. (A content in FAST is representative of similar characteristics for a pallet of mail. This includes mail class, mail shape, mail class subtype, etc. Please note that a content doesn't equate to one pallet. A content could be one or more pallets. For

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example if there is a co-pal of different mail that is bundled and is shipped in multiple pallets, this could represent only one content given that they are the same type of mail across all pallets.)

43. QUESTION: If the IMb sequence # is assigned before the presort can you use the Mail.dat range file or do you have to submit the Mail.dat piece detail file?

ANSWER: You can use the Mail.dat Intelligent Mail Range (IMR) file if you can create contiguous, sequential ranges of any size. The smallest range size may be one mailpiece, there is no limit to the largest range.

44. QUESTION: On statement reversal and having to send the new job - shipping most likely is already completed, so there will be no FAST appointments made on the new job. Will it still be eligible for Full-Service?

ANSWER: To be eligible for Full-Service, you must associate the mail in your electronic documentation to the appropriate FAST appointment.

45. QUESTION: When will the *Guide to Full Service User Access and Reports* be available?

ANSWER: This guide has been published with a new name: *User Access Electronic Mailing Information and Reports Guide*. It is available on RIBBS at https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/ElectronicmailingInformationReportsGuide.pdf.

46. QUESTION: Can I use Postal Wizard and achieve the Full-Service option when I start using the IMb?

ANSWER: Full-Service mailings may be submitted using Postal Wizard when documentation is not required, that is, for mailings of fewer than 10,000 pieces, and postage is affixed to each piece at the correct price or each piece is of identical weight and the mailpieces are separated by price

47. QUESTION: What minimum volume of mail do you suggest to support having Full-Service IMb?

ANSWER: Implementing the Full-Service option is a business decision that will vary for every potential user. The Intelligent Mail

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Benefits Calculator is available on RIBBS at <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intelligentmailbenefitcal>.

You might also confer with a variety of mail service providers who would be able to assist with the decision making.

48. QUESTION: What is the date we need to implement the required Service Type ID changes – May 11 or May 18? What happens to records that are received during this conversion for Basic and for Full-Service?

ANSWER: The new Service Type IDs take effect on May 11, 2009. While there are several new Service Type IDs, if you continue to use the legacy Service Type IDs used today to support Confirm and OneCode ACS, you will continue to receive those services. Pieces inducted prior to May 11 that remain in the mailstream after May 11 will be treated per the new Service Type ID processes as described in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* found on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

49. QUESTION: It would be really helpful if mailers can view a \$\$ savings chart that shows how much they can save if using Full-Service as opposed to not using it.

ANSWER: There are many factors that must be considered to weigh the benefits of Intelligent Mail services. You can use our Intelligent Mail Benefits Calculator to determine how Intelligent Mail fits into your business plan. The Calculator is on RIBBS at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intelligentmailbenefitcal>.

If you simply want to estimate postage savings, all of our prices, including Intelligent Mail prices that will be effective on November 29, are on the *USPS Price List*, Notice 123, available on the Postal Explorer website at http://pe.usps.com/PriceChange_May2009/PDF/PriceList/PriceList.pdf.

50. QUESTION: Can one continue to submit some mailings using paper after being qualified to submit Mail.dat files? That is, can one select which technique (paper or Mail.dat) on an ongoing basis?

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ANSWER: Mailers may choose the technique that fits their needs. The USPS recommends that all mailing documentation be submitted electronically but it is not a requirement.

51. QUESTION: With the IMb implementation in May will we have to submit all documentation electronically?

ANSWER: You have two Intelligent Mail options: Basic and Full-Service. Only the Full-Service option requires electronic documentation (eDoc), but Full-Service will also offer the lowest automation prices. More information is available in the *Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats* on RIBBS at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

52. QUESTION: Is there a big difference between Full-Service and Basic service prices?

ANSWER: There is a difference. Here are some examples:

Class of Mail	Letters	Flats	
First-Class Mail	\$ 0.003	\$ 0.003	Subtract this amount for each addressed piece that complies with the Full-Service Intelligent Mail option requirements (effective November 29, 2009)
Periodicals	\$ 0.001	\$ 0.001	
Standard Mail	\$ 0.001	\$ 0.001	
Bound Printed Matter	NA	\$ 0.001	

53. QUESTION: Is the plan to have all documentation provided through electronic means to be able to get *any* presort rate (once the POSTNET barcode is not used-May of 2010)?

ANSWER: The USPS recommends that all mailing documentation be submitted electronically but it is not a requirement. When POSTNET barcodes are discontinued for automation prices in May 2011, electronic documentation will only be required for the Intelligent Mail Full-Service option.

54. QUESTION: If switching to the IMb now and we do our MASS test, do we need to do a separate MASS test for our annual test?

ANSWER: If switching now, the customer has to perform a test for Cycle L, and yes, they would have to do their annual test after they receive notification to do Cycle M which starts after August 2009.

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55. QUESTION: Do we have to have the ZIP + 4 in every address block to qualify for automation rates?

ANSWER: Automation prices are based on providing qualifying barcodes, not the address information printed on a mailpiece, other than the new addressing standards that apply to flats.

Until May 10, automated letters must have delivery point information in the barcode. Automated flats may have ZIP+4 or delivery point information.

As of May 11, both automated letters and flats will require the delivery point information in the barcode.

56. QUESTION: When must we begin using the Intelligent Mail barcode to gain maximum automation discounts?

ANSWER: The Full-Service prices become effective on November 29, 2009.

MAILER IDs & CUSTOMER

REGISTRATION IDs (MIDs & CRIDs)

57. QUESTION: If a mailer is assigned a 9-digit Mailer ID, is it true that the unique sequential number can only be 6 digits long? If so, then if you start at 1 you can only go to 999999. So if your mailing exceeds 999,999 pieces what can you do to make them unique for Full Service IMB processing?

ANSWER: It is true that when using a 9-digit Mailer ID the sequence number is a 6-digit number. If your mailing exceeds 1 million mailpieces then you should use multiple 9-digit Mailer IDs.

58. QUESTION: If we do not have a permit, but mail pieces through a letter shop, can I still apply for an MID for my organization?

ANSWER: Yes.

59. QUESTION: I have acquired a MID for my MLOCR. Working for a local government agency with many different departments, do I need a unique MID for every department?

ANSWER: No, you may use your MID on your clients' mail.

MAILING STANDARDS

60. QUESTION: One of the touted advantages of using the IMb on mailing pieces has been the ability of the IMb to replace the OEL and eliminate the need to print the OEL on the mailing piece. However, there are some circumstances where both the OEL and IMb must be printed on the piece.

When must both the OEL and IMb be used? When can the IMb be used without the OEL?

ANSWER: When there is an OEL printed, it must also be in the IMb. When an OEL is not required, such as for automation letters, then it can be in the IMb, but not printed.

This information can be found in *A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats on RIBBS* at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf.

61. QUESTION: Is it a valid statement that Basic Service does not offer any discounts, only Full Service?

Also, when POSTNET barcode is phased out and if mailers still have not implemented IMb, will they have to purchase extra service to get automation discount?

ANSWER: Basic service is when the IMb is used for automation prices instead of using a POSTNET barcode, so Basic service implies that the mailpiece and the mailing meet all eligibility requirements for automation prices, which are lower than nonautomation prices.

In May 2011, when IM barcodes will be required for an automation price for letters and flats, if an IMb is not used, then automation prices cannot be claimed.

MOVE UPDATE

62. QUESTION: Are NCOA compliant records nixies, un-CASS-ables that have met MERLIN? What percentage is allowed before we get hit 7 cent charge and should they not be mailed? Aren't they undeliverable under presorted mail?

ANSWER: Address records that cannot be assigned a ZIP+4 Code by CASS-certified address matching software will never produce a match when using NCOA^{Link} and cannot be updated with a new address if the customer has moved. The Postal Service

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considers the attempt made by the mailer to update the non-ZIP+4 coded address using NCOA^{Link} as satisfaction the Move Update requirement. When the non-ZIP+4 coded address is evaluated in MERLIN it will again not be matched using NCOA^{Link} and will not be determined to be an outdated address. Consequently, it will not be included in the calculation of the percentage of outdated addresses that is the basis for assessing additional postage.

The Postal Service recommends that mailers carefully consider the value of sending a mailpiece where a known address deficiency exists as the likelihood it will be undeliverable-as-addressed is greater.

TRAY BARCODES / LABELS

63. QUESTION: Do the tray tags have to change when we start using the new bar codes?

ANSWER: The Intelligent Mail Full-Service option requires the use of Intelligent Mail tray barcodes on handling units, i.e., trays and sacks and Intelligent Mail container barcodes on container placards. The following documents on RIBBS will provide more information:

A Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats at http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailv5_10.pdf

Transitional 10/24-digit Intelligent Mail Tray Label Specification at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_tray_label/documents/tech_guides/IMTL_10_1024_SPECIFICATIONS_FOR_MAILERS_\(SPUSPS-L-3191\).pdf](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_tray_label/documents/tech_guides/IMTL_10_1024_SPECIFICATIONS_FOR_MAILERS_(SPUSPS-L-3191).pdf)

Pure 24-digit Intelligent Mail Tray Label Specifications at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_tray_label/documents/tech_guides/IMTL_24-Digit_SPECIFICATIONS_FOR_MAILERS_\(SPUSPS-L-3216-001\).PDF](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_tray_label/documents/tech_guides/IMTL_24-Digit_SPECIFICATIONS_FOR_MAILERS_(SPUSPS-L-3216-001).PDF)

Intelligent Mail Container Barcode Specifications at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_container_barcode/documents/tech_guides/IM_CONTAINER_BARCODE_SPECIFICATIONS_\(SPUSPS-B-3215B001\).pdf](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_container_barcode/documents/tech_guides/IM_CONTAINER_BARCODE_SPECIFICATIONS_(SPUSPS-B-3215B001).pdf)

64. QUESTION: If we're using an IMb, can we still use regular container tags (tray labels?) and reporting and still get an automation rate? (not take the Full-Service option as yet).

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ANSWER: **Yes.**

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