

MAC Batch™ Certification

Technical Guide

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MAC Batch™ Purpose

The Manifest Analysis and Certification Batch (MAC Batch™) program is a process designed in cooperation with the mailing industry to evaluate presort/manifest software for accuracy in sorting address files according to *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM®), and *Guide to the Manifest Mailing System* (Publication 401), standards for varying sized pieces, accuracy of calculated postage and utilizing permit imprints. MAC Batch is available only to software developers, i.e., companies that develop presort/manifest software for resale or internal use. Participation in the program is purely voluntary. Although this program evaluates and validates presort/manifest products manufactured by software developers, MAC Batch does not guarantee acceptance of mail prepared using MAC Batch certified software. MAC Batch does provide national approval of computer generated facsimiles of United States Postal Service® (USPS®) postage statements, standardized documentation, and other presort/manifest documentation.

MAC Batch Overview

The United States Postal Service defines a MAC Batch certified software product as a presort/manifesting product specifically written to operate on a particular platform or operating system and assigned a specific version number. Many products use different language compilers to process files within different operating systems or on different hardware platforms. Therefore, to maintain the highest quality standards, MAC Batch will certify a software developer's product that operates on a particular platform at the current version number. The software developer may submit all platforms, or as many as are desired, for certification. MAC Batch will evaluate each presort/manifest product platform on its own merits and will issue a specific certification for that platform if warranted.

At this time MAC Batch will only be testing and certifying First Class Mail® Auto Letters and First Class Mail® Auto Flats (tray-based), utilizing Permit Imprint only. Other presort categories may be added in the future.

Note: Throughout this manual, any reference to a "presort/manifest product" implies a product written for a specific hardware/software platform at the current version number.

Example:	<u>Software Developer</u>	<u>Presort/Manifest Product</u>	<u>Platforms</u>	<u>Version</u>
	Presort R Us	FASTsort	Win XP	1.2

MAC Batch Certification

Presort/manifest products that participate in MAC Batch certification must return both electronic and hardcopy documentation in the form of PDF files together for each test. Electronic testing allows tracking and verification of every mailpiece within a test file. Software developers must append each test address record in the electronic file with the specific presort/manifest information as described in the Universal File Format and the Universal Name/Address Record.

MAC Batch provides the following benefits for software products seeking certification:

1. All MAC Batch certified presort/manifest products will be listed in the MAC Batch Certified Products List (<http://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=macbatch>)
2. All certificates issued to presort/manifest products will indicate that they have received MAC Batch certification.
3. Testing is available at no cost. Re-testing fees are assessed after three free electronic/hardcopy attempts, when the 2 month free testing period has expired and if a customer requests testing out of cycle (hardcopy tests will be submitted simultaneously with the electronic file).

Testing Calendar

The current MAC Batch™ Certification Cycle Calendar is available at:

https://ribbs.usps.gov/macbatch/documents/tech_guides/pubs/MACBatchAdvisories/MB003CycleN_Calendar.pdf

Version Number Policy

All MAC Batch certifications are awarded to specific versions of presort/manifest products. To receive MAC Batch certification, these guidelines must be followed:

- If all submitted tests are completed without the need for any corrections or changes, the original version number of the presort/manifest product submitted will be certified.
- If corrections or changes to the presort/manifest logic are required for any of the test categories, a new version number will be specified by the software developer of the presort/manifest products after all corrections and modifications are successfully completed.
- Changing a MAC Batch certified product's version number requires notification to the BMA Certification department to determine if testing is necessary for recertification of the product at the new version number.

Reporting of Product and Version Number

For the purpose of MAC Batch certification, the USPS® requires software developers to indicate the product name and version number at the bottom of postage statement facsimiles and in the header portion of the USPS® Manifest Report. Doing so will facilitate efficient resolution of errors or problems encountered when the presorted/manifested mail is presented for acceptance.

Multiple Products with Same Presort Engine

It is recommended that all presort/manifest products that produce a manifest mailing sortation under various environments be tested for MAC Batch certification.

However, it is recognized that within the same business entity/development group, the same manifest/presort engine can be used for a variety of manifest/presort products. In some instances, this covers multiple versions of the same manifest/presort product that are designed to run on different operating systems. It may also apply to a manifest/presort engine that is bundled with other software enhancements, such as address matching software, resulting in a new product line.

In the situations described above, the software developer may elect to submit one product for full certification testing. It is required this be the product that incorporates the full set of supported options. Upon successful completion of certification of the primary product, MAC Batch will reserve the right to perform sample testing on the latest product, provided the same manifest/presort engine is utilized without any additional code alterations or modifications added.

A statement attesting to the fact that the manifest/presort engine has not been altered will be required. The number of additional tests needed may vary between software developers, dependent on the stated capabilities of the additional product versions being tested.

Licensing Certified Products

If the MAC Batch certified software is licensed to or from another company, the BMA Certification department must be notified in writing and the requirements of MAC Batch certification testing will be similar to that described for "Multiple Products with Same Presort Engine".

If a certified product is licensed, repackaged and sold by another company as a different product but without any modifications being made, other than graphic changes to accommodate the new company and software information, then MAC Batch certification can be extended to the second product without the need for additional testing. Certification for the original product must be completed before the second product can receive certification. MAC Batch will reserve the right to perform sample testing on the newly packaged product prior to certification being extended. Any substantiated deficiencies that are subsequently reported from field activities would, if not corrected, adversely affect the certifications of both products.

When a manifest/presort engine is licensed to another company and the second company builds its own user interface around the manifest/presort code in order to market a new product line, full testing of the new product will have to be performed before that product can be MAC Batch certified.

MAC Batch Phraseology and Advertising Policy

MAC Batch certified software developers may use “MAC Batch™ -Certified” on marketing materials, packaging, advertisements and other user documentation if it corresponds to and identifies a specific presort/manifest category for which the product is certified. In other words, if you advertise that your product is “MAC Batch™ -Certified”, you must list all the presort/manifest categories for which your product is certified. If there are space constraints to the advertisement, you must state “Certified for ## presort/manifest categories. See our (website, users’ manual, certificate etc.) for details”. When an advertisement directs a customer to Web sites, user manuals, certificates etc. for additional information, the informative material must plainly state each presort/manifest category certified. Web sites that reference MAC Batch™ should link to the list of presort/manifest categories for which the product is certified.

Violation Consequences

Any examples of misrepresentation of MAC Batch™ certification will be turned over to Postal Legal Department and the U. S. Postal Inspection Service.

1st Offense warrants a “cease and desist” letter from the National Customer Support Center. Postal Inspection Service and Legal Department will be notified.

2nd Offense warrants a temporary suspension of certification (removal from MAC Batch certified list on the USPS® website) until correction can be made.

3rd Offense warrants a suspension of certification privileges for a period of time to be determined depending on the severity of the infraction (decided upon by NCSC Management).

Examples of Corrective Actions

1. Retraction
2. Withholding advertising or marketing literature
3. Postponement of product catalog mailings
4. Removal of MAC Batch certified from exhibitor displays
5. Removal of any MAC Batch reference from website

Field Error Detection and Resolution

It is the BMA Certification department's goal to assist software developers in achieving the highest quality presort/manifest product possible. The field error detection and resolution policy is used by both the BMA Certification department and the software developers to ensure presort/manifest product quality. Regardless of cycle schedules, quality assurance remains an ongoing part of the MAC Batch certification program. Occasionally, presort/manifest errors are detected and reported by USPS[®] field personnel or mailers after a MAC Batch certified product has been distributed to customers. If this situation occurs, the following protocol is followed to resolve the problem:

1. The BMA Certification department starts an incident report file for the product and version number.
2. The BMA Certification department works to determine if the problem is a presort/manifest error or some other problem such as a user setup issue.
3. The BMA Certification department alerts the software developer to the existence of a possible problem.
4. The BMA Certification department and the software developer collaborate in determining a reasonable time frame in which to correct the problem. If the time frame is exceeded, MAC Batch certification may be revoked or suspended.
5. The BMA Certification department will keep all appropriate parties informed of the status and progress.
6. The BMA Certification department reserves the right to request that the software developer retest any applicable test files before release of corrected software.
7. When the BMA Certification department determines that the problem has been corrected, the software developer must release a patch to all customers.

Charges and Excessive Testing Fees

The MAC Batch certification program is free-of-charge, for the first 60 days of a cycle. However, a fee is charged for:

- Any software developer initiating testing in the MAC Batch program after the initial 60-day free of charge period
- Any product that has failed the combined electronic/hard copy testing three times in any one test category
- Any software developer initiating testing out of cycle.

This fee is assessed as follows:

- Minimum fee for first test after the 60-day 'free period' or first test following the allowed free maximums as stated above is \$250.00 – the initial evaluation fee of \$200 and initial test (file generation) fee of \$50.00.
- Additional tests have a fee of \$35.00 each – evaluation fee of \$25.00 and test file generation of \$10.00.

Example 1: If you exceed the three no-charge tests, and are taking one test for the fourth time, the charge is \$250.00, as explained above.

Example 2: If you need to take any additional tests, a \$35 fee is charged for every test thereafter.

Data Products Available

The NCSC has a variety of data products and services available for developers to utilize in creating a comprehensive presort product. For information regarding the availability, applicable costs, etc. of these items, contact the NCSC at 800-238-3150

Products and Services include, but are not limited to:

- Carrier Route Product
- City State Product
- Delivery Statistics Product
- Enhanced Line of Travel (eLOT™) Product
- Labeling List
- Zone Chart
- ZIP + 4® Product

The MAC Batch Certification Process

The software developer has the choice of testing in any or all of the available categories. All presort categories and associated tests must be submitted together. In other words, a software developer may not present an order form and test for only automation letters, then later the same year submit another order form and test for flats; developers will test for both letters and flats at the same time. All software developers are required to complete and return their test files (electronic and hardcopy) **within 21 calendar days** from the date on the cover sheet. MAC Batch software developers attempting certification must successfully complete both the electronic and hardcopy testing process.

Electronic files should be submitted zipped and encrypted with a password via email to mac.batch.ncsc@usps.gov.

Test data is provided in the form of text files. Each presort/manifest test has its own address file and has specific characteristics and attributes, such as mailpiece dimensions, specific entry point, sortation levels allowed, processing category, etc. Each file is processed as a specific presort/manifest job with explicit parameters. MAC Batch is a certification standard of excellence; therefore, we will certify and list your product's required and optional mail preparation standards for each presort/manifest category.

The following presort test categories are available:

- First-Class Automation Mail
- Letters
- Flats (Tray-Based)

Each file is graded individually for accuracy of presort/manifest and compliance with the current *DMM*[®] and *Publication 401* regulations. The evaluation includes inspection of standardized documentation; tray tags, computer-generated postage statement facsimiles, and other presort/manifest documentation. If the electronic file and/or documentation presented is deemed 100% accurate and in compliance with the current *DMM*[®] and *Publication 401* regulations, certification is awarded for the specific presort/manifest category tested. If any errors preventing certification are detected, an evaluation report identifying the specific violations and their appropriate *DMM*[®] or *Publication 401* references will be provided to the software developer. After the proper changes and/or adjustments are made to the software, a new test file will be generated. Reprocessing the original test is prohibited. In some instances, the BMA Certification department may request that a product be retested in certain categories if a failure or modification affects another category.

NOTE: All references to "hardcopy" in this document mean submission of PDF files of the manifest, postage statement and other printed materials. The PDF and electronic files should be submitted electronically via email. Files should be zipped and encrypted with a password given to the developer by the MAC Batch team.

Naming of Files

A two-character field in the test file name will be used as the Set Identifier. A four character Test Identification Number will follow the Identifier. For example in Cycle N test 602 will be named EAM_602.set. All test files will end in a .set suffix. When software developers process the files they are to be saved as a .tst file. Text files that are generated by MAC Batch as a result of electronic grading will be in an .htm format.

Products Attempting Certification

After processing the test, the software developer returns (***within 21 calendar days*** from the date on the cover sheet) the appended electronic and hardcopy test file. The test file will be processed through the MAC Batch electronic grading program. The computerized grading program is designed to search for specific violations of presort/manifest rules and USPS® regulations. The hardcopy documentation will be evaluated by an analyst. If passed, the software product becomes certified; otherwise, the software developer will be asked to retest the product.

List of Presort/Manifest Scenarios

The USPS offers the following presort/manifest categories for testing:

PRESORT CATEGORY	DMM Ref.	TEST #
PREREQUISITE TESTS (Required for Products Not Previously Certified)		
First-Class Mail Letters or Flats	235, 335	600
FIRST-CLASS MAIL TESTS		
First-Class Automation Letters	235.6	602
First-Class Automation Flats–Tray Based Option	335.6.6	607

**Note: Process any applicable prerequisite test or required test only once.*

General Testing Instructions

To achieve MAC Batch certification, the following instructions, guidelines, and parameters must be followed:

Step 1: Complete MAC Batch order form located at the following URL:

<http://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=macbatch>

Step 2: Complete EPF registration form to create an account to download test data. EPF form can be found at the following URL.

<https://epf.usps.gov/index.cfm>

Step 3: Fax or email the order forms to the BMA Certification department.

Fax: 650-357-6796
Email: mac.batch.ncsc@usps.gov

Step 4: After order form has been received and processed, a cover sheet that describes the presort category and options will be faxed or emailed to the software developer. The software developer will review the cover sheet. If any concerns or errors are perceived, the software developer will contact the MAC Batch department for resolution.

Step 5: Once the cover sheet is reviewed and deemed correct, the software developer downloads the applicable test files and data tools from EPF at the following URL:
<https://epf.usps.gov/>.

Step 6: Process the test files and produce the required documentation. Electronic files should be submitted zipped, encrypted with a password and emailed to mac.batch.ncsc@usps.gov,

Step 7: The BMA Certification department will verify that the files have been received and contact the software developer with test results. Please allow two weeks for results.

Step 8: If the software developer has questions regarding their test results, they should be emailed to mac.batch.ncsc@usps.gov. Once the questions have been answered, a conference call will be scheduled if necessary. The BMA Certification department will verify with the software developer which test sets are required for further testing.

Step 9: If there are no questions and there is a PASS, a signoff sheet will be emailed to the software developer. Once it is approved, the certified product will be posted to [RIBBS](#).

MAC Batch Test Files

File 600

A prerequisite test, for certification in any First-Class Mail[®] presort/manifest category.

Files 602 and 607

First-Class Mail[®] tests include automation and presort/manifested categories. Tests will cover the processing categories of letters and flats.

The Universal File Format and Universal Name / Address Record describe the fields and formats required in the electronic tests. Returned electronic test files must adhere to this format and structure in order to be evaluated. These documents can be found at https://ribbs.usps.gov/macbatch/documents/tech_guides/pubs/.

Modification of any of the data provided on the shaded area of the header record (Universal File Format) will result in the returned test file be rejected from the electronic grading system.

As an added benefit of the MAC Batch program, the BMA Certification department will also examine any additional presort/manifest documentation generated by the software, as well as tray tags and computer generated facsimiles. To determine which, if any, of the additional documentation is necessary for any given test, consult the specific cover sheet provided.

MAC Batch Cover Sheet

Each test ordered includes an individualized cover sheet. The cover sheet indicates any necessary optional processes (electronic and/or hardcopy testing) and/or documentation requirements (hardcopy testing) for that specific test. If the software developer uses these parameters exactly, indicate this by checking the boxes beside the measurement used in the space provided. If the parameters are not used exactly, the software developer must provide the measurements used. The cover sheet also includes vital information concerning your company and product. This information will be reported directly on the MAC Batch Certified Products List, when certification is awarded. You are responsible for confirming the accuracy of company and product information on the cover sheet so that it is accurately reported on the [RIBBS](#) website and certification after testing is successfully completed.

Job Setup Parameter Report (JSP)

Presort/manifest products that produce a Job Setup Parameter (JSP) report are exempt from returning the completed MAC Batch cover sheet if the following components are included, and easily identified, in the JSP:

- Class of mail, *DMM*[®] or *Publication 401* reference
- Mailpiece height, length, thickness, and weight for all pieces within the mailing
- Container Type
- Max Pieces per Container
- Entry Point
- Product Name and Version Number
- Total Pieces Processed
- Full Tray Default Setting

Submit the JSP and/or cover sheet with the returned test files.

Hardcopy Output Required

Hardcopy Output	Required
USPS Manifest Report including Rate Summary	Each Test
Job Setup Parameter Report (JSP) - Optional	Each Test
MAC Batch Cover Sheet	Only if no JSP is provided
Completed Postage Statement Facsimile	Only if produced by software and indicated as necessary on the MAC Batch cover sheet
Barcoded Tray and Sack Tags	Only if produced by software and indicated as necessary on the MAC Batch cover sheet
Additional User Documentation	Only if produced by software and indicated as necessary on the MAC Batch cover sheet

Postage Statement Facsimile

MAC Batch reviews all computer-generated postage statement facsimiles for form and content. If the software supports generation of postage statement facsimiles, software developers must submit hardcopy facsimiles when indicated by the MAC Batch cover sheet. For the purpose of MAC Batch certification, each postage statement facsimile is required to have “Facsimile” on the bottom of each page next to the form number. Software developers are also required to include the product name and version number on each facsimile. The MAC Batch Certification process will include the verification of postage calculations on any and all submitted postage statement facsimiles.

Tray Tags

The MAC Batch certification process includes analysis of barcoded tray tags. If your presort/manifest product produces tray tags, they should be returned when indicated by the MAC Batch cover sheet with any other required documentation for review. The BMA Certification department will examine tray tags for correct usage of labeling list tables and formatting of line 1 (destination), line 2 (CIN), and line 3 (office of mailing or mailer information) based on *DMM*[®] standards.

Standardized Documentation

Standardized documentation (i.e., USPS[®] Manifest Report with Rate Summary) must meet the USPS[®] standards set forth in *Publication 401* and *DMM*[®] 708.1.2. The following is a brief description of the requirements of the USPS[®] Manifest Report with callouts and steps for preparing the report. Numbers 1-10 describe the header information required on the top of each page of the standardized documentation. Examples can be found on the [RIBBS](#) website under Certifications, MAC Batch[™].

Fields and Descriptions

Field #	Field	Descriptions
1	Mailer's Name and Address	Company Name and Address
2	Post Office™ of Mailing	Memphis TN 38115 (5-digit ZIP Code™ where your mail is being entered)
3	Permit Number	Company's Permit Number for this Post Office™.
4	Software Name and Version	Product name and version number of MAC Batch certified software.
5	Date of Manifest	Date that the mailing is deposited.
6	Class of Mail	List class of mail.
7	Processing Category	Presort/Manifest category and DMM® reference
8	Manifesting Sequence #	This is a mailer-selected number shown on each MMS (Manifest Mailing System) document to relate to a specific manifest mailing.
9	Page Number	Page number of document.
10	Tray#	Numbers the containers for verification.
11	Tray Size	Indicate 1-foot, 2-foot, or EMM trays.
12	Tray Level	Sortation level (Informs acceptance clerk of contents of the container; may be found in DMM® 708.1.2 and 708.1.3)
13	Tray ZIP	Container destination, according to the labeling list
14	Piece ID#	Assign a unique identification number before or after producing the piece. The ID number is required to reconcile individual mailpieces to a manifest to ensure that postage was calculated correctly and all pieces are listed.
15	Prices	Actual names of the price level or corresponding abbreviations can be found in DMM® 708. Codes that inform the clerk of the rate claimed within the container: 5B (5-digit Bar-coded), 3B (3-digit Bar-coded), and AB (AADC Automated).
16	Totals	Total pieces by rate.
17	Batch Postage	The total postage for the batch.
18	Cumulative Postage	The total postage for each batch and cumulative postage totals are also listed.
29	Rate Summary	The Rate Summary consolidates the detailed information about the mailing.