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## Statistical Programs Management Guide

Handbook F-95

June 2005  
Transmittal Letter 1

- A. Purpose.** This handbook serves as both a training aid and reference guide for district managers of Statistical Programs in managing district Statistical Programs operations. The procedures contained in the handbook are part of the Postal Service's continuing effort to improve data quality and productivity through benchmarking and standardization of best practices as outlined in the Postal Service's *Transformation Plan*.
- B. Distribution.**
- 1. Initial.** This handbook is distributed to the Statistical Programs Service Center and district managers of Statistical Programs.
  - 2. Copies.** You can order Handbook F-95 from the Material Distribution Center (MDC) by using touch tone order entry (TTOE): Call 800-332-0317, option 2.  
**Note:** You must be registered to use TTOE. To register, call 800-332-0317, option 1, extension 2925, and follow the prompts to leave a message. (Wait 48 hours after registering before you place your first order.)
- C. Online Availability.** You may view this handbook in electronic format on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/>, then click on the *HBKs* tab.  
The Statistical Programs Web site also provides a link to this handbook.
- 1.** Go to <http://blue.usps.gov/statprog/>.
  - 2.** From the Statistical Programs References section, click on Handbooks.
- D. Comments.** Please refer all questions and suggestions about the content, clarity, organization, and format of this document in writing to:
- MANAGER, STATISTICAL PROGRAMS  
US POSTAL SERVICE  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 1830  
WASHINGTON DC 20260-1830
- E. Effective Date.** This handbook is effective June 2005, and includes information previously published in Statistical Programs correspondence up through and including MOP FI-04-25-2005, Policy Memo — *Statistical Programs Letter #6, FY2005*, dated April 25, 2005.



Lynn Malcolm  
Vice President  
Controller

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## Preface

The purpose of this handbook is to assist the district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP), in managing a Statistical Programs unit which consists of managing resources, conducting tests as scheduled, adhering to national and local policies, and implementing, overseeing, and administering all current Statistical Programs procedures. The successful management of the unit is accomplished through the use of various tools, including but not limited to the *Computerized On-Site Data Entry System* (CODES), CODES reports, and handbooks.

The *Statistical Programs Management Guide* is an introduction to the statistical programs that comprise the Postal Service's statistical testing and operations. The *Statistical Programs Management Guide* replaces the *CODES Administrator's Guide*. It also updates and combines material previously referenced from other sources. To that end, it relies heavily on other handbooks, correspondence, and field research.

This handbook refers to other Postal Service handbooks and manuals where appropriate.

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### **Who Should Read This Book**

Newly appointed MSPs use this handbook as a foundation for learning the job, while experienced MSPs should use it as a reference to ensure successful management of the unit according to current policies and procedures.

Persons using this handbook should have a strong knowledge of Postal Service operations and terminology. Familiarity with statistical terminology and the tests described herein will help serve as a common building point for the procedures and other information presented in this handbook.

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## How to Use This Book

The *Statistical Programs Management Guide* is divided into 8 chapters. Each chapter may be read and studied independently.

The *Statistical Programs Management Guide* contains the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. This chapter provides an overview of each of the statistical programs. It also describes the MSP position to those new to the position and refreshes the memory of experienced MSPs. A summary and overview of the various duties and responsibilities MSPs face are presented along with all relevant U.S. Postal Service policies.

- **Chapter 2: General Management Responsibilities.**

Chapter 2 focuses on general management responsibilities such as security, inventory, information management, timekeeping, service and safety checks, vehicles, and budgets.

- **Chapter 3: Scheduling Policies.**

Chapter 3 focuses on all aspects related to scheduling. As the unit coordinator, the MSP is responsible for ensuring that all tests are conducted as scheduled. To do so, the MSP will efficiently schedule the data collectors, unit resources, manage time demands, as well as other non-test events such as leave, training, and process reviews in accordance with current policies and procedures. This chapter also includes the scheduling policies for each statistical program.

- **Chapter 4: Mail Exit Point and Consolidated Originating Unit.**

This chapter provides information and policies for the MSP to administer the Mail Exit Point (MEP) and Consolidated Originating Unit (COU) frame. This chapter also covers the policies for designing MEPs and COUs, identifying sampling units, examples of MEPs, and the frame maintenance policy.

- **Chapter 5: Training.**

The importance of continued training and upgrading of skills reflects the Postal Service's commitment to excellence and to providing excellent service. The policies surrounding training requirements are discussed in this chapter.

- **Chapter 6: Process Review Activities.**

Process review activities are performed on all Statistical Programs personnel to ensure that data collection tests are performed accurately and correctly. How to conduct process review activities is described in this chapter.

- **Chapter 7: CODES Administrative Procedures.**

This chapter outlines and explains the policies governing the CODES Web Base Unit which serves as a central gathering place of collected data from a district's data collectors.

- **Chapter 8: Reports, Analysis, and Interpretation.**

This chapter introduces some of the statistical programs reports that are available after completion and transmission of test data. It assists the MSP in analyzing and interpreting various reports that are accessible through CODES, the mainframe, and those provided by Headquarters. Each report is displayed graphically and includes a brief explanation. By understanding each of these reports, the MSP can assist the organization in meeting and exceeding all of its service and performance goals.

## Conventions Used in This Book

The *Statistical Programs Management Guide* uses certain conventions to make it easy for the reader to identify different types of information. This section describes these conventions.

### Icons

This book contains small images, called icons, to help the reader recognize distinct types of information at a glance. Each icon fits a particular type of information. Each time that type of information is given the reader sees the icon. Icons do not appear if the corresponding type of information is not present.

The following graphic displays are the icons used in the *Statistical Programs Management Guide*. You might see the first three icons at the beginning of a chapter. The remaining icons might occur within the chapter sections.

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#### ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL



The Essential Personnel icon is displayed when there is a discussion about which Postal Service staff members perform specific tasks.

---

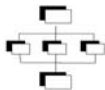
#### REQUIRED MATERIALS



Readers see the Required Materials icon when they are given information they must understand before they try to complete a task.

---

#### ASSOCIATED TASKS



The Associated Tasks icon is displayed when there is a list of subtasks related to the main task.

---

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Readers see the Background Information icon when they are given information they must understand before they try to complete a task.

---

PROCEDURES



The Procedures icon is displayed when there is an explanation of how to do a task.

---

EXCEPTIONS



The Exceptions icon is displayed when there is an exception to a task or tasks explained in a previous paragraph. This icon is shown if the exception applies only to the immediately previous task.

---

RELATED MATERIALS



The Related Materials icon is displayed on the top of each page of the Related Materials section of each chapter. Related Materials contain additional information that could help readers perform tasks.

Notes remind readers about the effect of particular actions. They also alert readers to possible changes in procedure or special recording rules.



**Note:** This note shows how a note is displayed.

Examples illustrate the text that comes before them. Usually, examples describe a situation that might come up on the job and show how to handle the situation.



**Example:** This example shows how an example is displayed.

### Procedures

All step-by-step instructions are numbered and in bold text, as in the following example:

1. **Select a vehicle that has the same type of highway contract as the originally scheduled vehicle.**

For help in finding an identical contract type, consult with the Dock Supervisor, Transportation Analyst, or Dock Expeditor. If the originally scheduled vehicle had an Inter-SCF contract, for instance, select a replacement vehicle that also has an Inter-SCF contract.

Additional information about the step may follow the instruction or system description.

## Bullets

Lines beginning with a bullet in step-by-step instructions indicate alternative steps or a list of options available for a particular step, as in the following example:

### 1. **Select a vehicle that has the same type of highway contract as the originally scheduled vehicle.**

For help in finding an identical contract type, consult with the dock supervisor, transportation analyst, or dock expeditor. If the originally scheduled vehicle had an Inter-SCF contract, for instance, select a replacement vehicle that also has an Inter-SCF contract.

The following contract types are tested in the TRACS HWY Test:

- **Inter-BMC:** Inter-BMC contracts primarily carry mail between BMCs, however, Inter-BMC trips sometimes stop at SCFs. An Inter-BMC route may not necessarily connect two BMCs. This may occur whenever a route is similar to an Intra-BMC route, but has some of its stops outside of the destination BMC's service area.
- **Intra-BMC:** Intra-BMC contracts carry mail within a BMC service area. The route may be from a BMC to an AO or SCF (outbound). The route may also be to a BMC from an AO or SCF (inbound).
- **Inter-SCF:** Inter-SCF contracts carry mail between SCFs. Some trips stop at AOs. These contracts do not usually serve BMCs.
- **Intra-SCF:** Intra-SCF contracts carry mail back and forth between an SCF and the AOs within its service area.

Bullets are also used to emphasize items in a list.

## Bolding and Italicization

Throughout this handbook, menu names as they appear in the CODES Web Base Unit software applications are displayed in italics. In other instances, either bolding, italics, or both will be used to call attention to certain titles, text headings, and bodies of text.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout this book. More detailed definitions of these terms can be found in the Glossary. Further information about these and all Postal Service terms can be found in Publication 32, *Glossary of Postal Terms*.

<b>AIS</b>	Address Information System
<b>AMC</b>	Airport Mail Center
<b>AMF</b>	Airport Mail Facility
<b>AMU</b>	Accountable Mail Unit
<b>AO</b>	Associate Office
<b>AO</b>	Autres Objets (Other Articles)
<b>APO</b>	Army Post Office
<b>ASC</b>	Accounting Service Center
<b>ASM</b>	Administrative Support Manual
<b>BCS</b>	Barcode Sorter
<b>BMC</b>	Bulk Mail Center
<b>BRM</b>	Business Reply Mail
<b>CAG</b>	Cost Ascertainment Group
<b>CCCS</b>	City Carrier Cost System
<b>CCSC</b>	CODES Computer Support Center
<b>CIS</b>	Corporate Information System
<b>COD</b>	Collect on Delivery
<b>CODES</b>	Computerized On-Site Data Entry System
<b>COM</b>	Certificates of Mailing
<b>COU</b>	Consolidated Originating Unit
<b>CP</b>	Colis postaux (parcel post)
<b>CPU</b>	Contract Postal Unit
<b>D&amp;R</b>	Destination and Routing
<b>DCT</b>	Data Collection Technician
<b>DDU</b>	Delivery Destination Unit
<b>DEO</b>	Destination Office of Exchange and Qualifier
<b>DMM</b>	<i>Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual</i>
<b>DPS</b>	Delivery Point Sequence
<b>D/S</b>	Drop Shipment
<b>EAP</b>	Employee Assistance Program
<b>EAS</b>	Executive and Administrative Schedule
<b>EIS</b>	Executive Information System
<b>EST</b>	Eastern Standard Time
<b>ETU</b>	Engineering Technical Unit

<b>EXFC</b>	External First-Class Measurement System
<b>FIM</b>	Facing Identification Mark
<b>FPO</b>	Fleet Post Office
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>GMF</b>	General Mail Facility
<b>HQCD</b>	Headquarters Code
<b>I/O</b>	Input/Output
<b>IBI</b>	Information Based Indicia
<b>IMM</b>	International Mail Manual
<b>IOCS</b>	In-Office Cost System
<b>IPA</b>	International Priority Airmail
<b>IPK</b>	Items Per Kilogram
<b>IPP</b>	Irregular Parcels and Pieces
<b>IRS</b>	Internal Revenue Service
<b>ISC</b>	International Service Center
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>LAN</b>	Local Area Network
<b>LC</b>	Lettres et Cartes (Letters and Cards)
<b>LCD</b>	Liquid Crystal Display
<b>LDC</b>	Labor Distribution Code
<b>LTATS</b>	Loan Transfer and Training System
<b>MMA</b>	Managed Maintenance Account
<b>MIPs</b>	Multiple Identical Pieces
<b>MEP</b>	Mail Exit Point
<b>MIDAS</b>	Military and International Dispatch Accountability System
<b>MODS</b>	Management Operating Data System
<b>MSP</b>	Manager, Statistical Programs
<b>NDCBU</b>	Neighborhood Delivery and Collection Box Unit
<b>NPA</b>	National Performance Assessment
<b>NTD</b>	National Training Database
<b>ODIS-RPW</b>	Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight
<b>OEO</b>	Origin Office of Exchange and Qualifier
<b>OIG</b>	Office of Inspector General
<b>OJT</b>	On-the-Job Training
<b>PAL</b>	Process Activated Learner
<b>PATN</b>	Postal Audio Training Network
<b>PATS</b>	Process Activated Training System
<b>PDC</b>	Processing and Distribution Center
<b>PDF</b>	Portable Document Format
<b>PDF</b>	Processing and Distribution Facility

<b>PDU</b>	Postage Due Unit
<b>PEDC</b>	Postal Employee Development Center
<b>PHS</b>	Predominantly Heavy Sample
<b>PPP</b>	Point-to-Point Protocol
<b>PSTN</b>	Postal Satellite Television Network
<b>RMIS</b>	Rail Management Information System
<b>POS</b>	Point of Sale
<b>POSTNET</b>	Postal Numeric Encoding Technique
<b>PSTS</b>	Process Support and Tracking System
<b>QT</b>	Quarterly Training
<b>RCCS</b>	Rural Carrier Cost System
<b>RVS</b>	Receipt Verification System
<b>SCF</b>	Sectional Center Facility
<b>SESS-ODIN</b>	Service Enhancement Support System-Origin-Destination Information Network
<b>SIRVI</b>	System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound
<b>SIRVO-IODIS</b>	System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System
<b>SME</b>	Subject Matter Expert
<b>SP</b>	Statistical Programs
<b>SPFS</b>	Statistical Programs Field Support
<b>SPS</b>	Statistical Programs Specialist
<b>SPSC</b>	Statistical Programs Service Center
<b>TACS</b>	Time and Attendance Collection System
<b>TRACS</b>	Transportation Cost Systems
<b>TSSR</b>	Test Status and Statistics Report
<b>TTMS</b>	Transit Time Measurement Services
<b>TTOE</b>	Touch Tone Order Entry
<b>UID</b>	Unique Identifier
<b>UPU</b>	Universal Postal Union
<b>USPS</b>	United States Postal Service
<b>VIM</b>	Vertical Improved Mail
<b>WEI</b>	Workforce Environment Improvement

## Where To Go for More Information

In addition to the *Statistical Programs Management Guide*, the following publications are also great resources for more information and background knowledge:

- Handbook F-45, *Data Collection User's Guide for In-Office Cost System*.
- Handbook F-65, *Data Collection User's Guide for Cost Systems*.
- Handbook F-75, *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume and Performance Measurement Systems*.
- Handbook F-85, *Data Collection User's Guide for International Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement Systems*.
- *The Mailer's Companion*.
- *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)*.
- *International Mail Manual (IMM)*.
- *Postal Bulletin*.
- Statistical Programs letters.
- Other appropriate correspondence.
- Statistical Programs Web News items.
- Application User Guides.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



This chapter offers an overview about data collecting, its purpose and structure, then describes the following data collection systems individually:

- Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (section 1.1.1).
- Carrier Cost Systems (section 1.1.2).
- Transportation Cost Systems (section 1.1.3).
- System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (section 1.1.4).
- System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (section 1.1.5).
- In-Office Cost System (section 1.1.6).

This chapter also summarizes the roles and responsibilities of district managers, Statistical Programs (MSPs), statistical programs specialists (SPSs), and data collectors (section 1.2).

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## 1.1 Statistical Programs Overview

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Statistical programs is a group of data collection systems that include four systems for domestic mail (Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW); Carrier Cost Systems; Transportation Cost Systems (TRACS); and In-Office Cost System (IOCS)), and two systems for international mail (System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS), and System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI)).

The following sections explain the purpose for data collection:

- Why Data are Collected (section 1.1.7).
- How Data are Collected (section 1.1.8).

The following remaining sections provide summaries of these systems:

- Systems for domestic mail:
  - Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (section 1.1.1).
  - Carrier Cost Systems (section 1.1.2).
  - Transportation Cost Systems (section 1.1.3).
  - In-Office Cost System (section 1.1.6).
- Systems for international mail:
  - System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (section 1.1.4).
  - System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (section 1.1.5).

### 1.1.1

#### Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight

The Postal Reorganization Act requires the Postal Service to provide data on revenue, pieces, and weight of domestic mail by class, subclass, and special service category. The data required for this cannot be completely obtained from postal accounting systems because they do not identify all the specific categories of mail or contain volume and weight information; therefore, the accounting system information is supplemented with statistical data from the ODIS-RPW system.

ODIS-RPW is a continuous probability sample of all mail exiting the postal system, and a continuous probability sample of registered, insured, Collect on Delivery (COD), and Certificates of Mailing (COM) mailpieces entering the postal system. A destinating sampling unit is defined as all mail exiting the system on a specific date through a specific mail exit point (MEP). An originating sampling unit, or consolidated originating unit (COU) is defined as registered, insured, COD, and COM mail entering the system on a specific date through retail window units. For a MEP or COU, a data collector visits

the test site and randomly selects a subset of the test-day mail where weight and revenue, as well as additional characteristics observed from the mailpiece are recorded. From this sample data, estimates are developed each quarter. The sample is designed to yield specified levels of statistical accuracy for major mail classes on a quarterly basis. The ODIS-RPW program schedules approximately 135,000 tests per year.

Finance uses ODIS-RPW sample data (along with data from accounting and other functional areas) to prepare the RPW report, which is the official summary of postal revenue, volume, and weight. Data from the RPW report are then used in rate case analysis and procedures, which includes forecasting postal volumes. RPW report data are also used to measure productivity and workload. Additionally, ODIS-RPW sample data are used in many other applications where mail characteristics information is needed to address business needs (for example, measuring plant to plant volume by mail class and shape). Finally, ODIS-RPW data provides mail transit time measurement estimates that are used for service performance analysis.

### 1.1.2

#### **Carrier Cost Systems**

The Carrier Cost Systems are used to distribute carrier costs for delivering the various classes, subclasses of mail, and special services. Since the compensation methodology differs for city carriers and rural carriers, there are separate tests to collect carrier cost data. Both tests involve counting class and subclass volumes for individual delivery points. The tests are not used to set work standards or measure carrier performance. The data are used to distribute about \$5 billion in carrier payroll costs to classes and subclasses of mail. The data are also used to determine how mail volume affects the number of stops and deliveries a carrier must make.

The City Carrier Cost System (CCCS) test is used to record mail information for a sample of the Postal Service's city delivery letter routes. Information for Parcel Post and other special purpose routes, such as relay or collection, is not collected with this test. Approximately 8,400 CCCS tests a year are taken on a random sample of city carrier letter routes. The sampling frame is a list of city carrier letter routes from the Postal Service's Address Information System (AIS) file. The frame of city routes excludes city carrier routes classified as unique (firm holdouts) and other unusual firm delivery routes.

For each sampled route, a subsample of stops (i.e., points along a carrier's route at which the carrier physically stops to deliver mail) is selected. For each selected stop, the number of residential and business deliveries, and the volume of mail by shape and rate category are recorded. These data are used to estimate actual and potential stops for the three stop types: (1) business and mixed business/residential, (2) single-delivery residential, (3) multi-delivery residential. Actual and possible deliveries are estimated for all three types of stops. For each of the three types of stops, the sample data are also used to estimate the distribution of mail volume by shape, and within shape, the distribution to mail category. Additionally, counts of collection mail by class are also obtained for the sampled routes.

The Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS) test is used to record mail information for a random sample of the Postal Service's rural delivery routes.

Approximately 6,400 RCCS tests a year are taken on a random sample of rural carrier routes. The data collector samples mailpieces for delivery on the sampled route and identifies the sampled mailpieces by class, subclass, and compensation category. For delivered mail volume, estimates are produced for all categories of mail. Additionally, a count of all mail collected on the sampled route is obtained. For collected mail, estimates are produced for letters and flats, and parcels by rate category, and Certified Mail and Registered Mail.

### 1.1.3

#### Transportation Cost Systems

TRACS is a statistical sampling and data collection system that provides information to estimate costs by subclass for the major purchased transportation cost accounts. The Postal Service distributes approximately \$4 billion each year for the purchased transportation of mail on commercial airlines, network air, and trucking routes. Since the characteristics of purchased transportation vary significantly by mode, TRACS uses separate sampling systems to collect data. These systems are for the following modes:

- Highway.
- Rail.
- Commercial air.
- Day air networks.
- Night air networks.

Over 17,000 truck, airline, and rail van trips are sampled each year in order to distribute these costs to the categories of mail.

A TRACS surface transportation test (highway trucks or rail vans) samples mail traveling on a specific vehicle arriving at the test facility on the test day. All mail off-loaded from the vehicle at the test facility is eligible for sampling. Information on weight and volume by rate category is recorded for the contents of the sampled containers and items. In order to develop cubic-foot-mile estimates, data collectors also record the facility where the mail was loaded onto the test vehicle to establish miles traveled. The percentage of vehicle floor space occupied by each container type is then used to establish cubic-feet utilized. TRACS develops cubic-foot-mile distribution keys for the highway and rail modes.

A TRACS air transportation test samples mail departing from a tested air mail facility on the test day. For commercial air tests, all mail on the sampled flight for a flight that shares the same airline, flight number, origin, and first leg destination combination, regardless of the final destination, is eligible for sampling. TRACS network air (day and night) transportation tests are conducted on mail that was scanned at a specific location on the test day. The subsampling procedure for both commercial and network air tests

consists of selecting a minimum of eight mail items (sacks, parcels, trays, etc.) from each sampled flight based on a primary mail class code listed on the item's Destination and Routing (D&R) tag. The D&R tag is a barcoded label placed on mail items traveling by air after they are scanned at the originating facility. A record is created for each D&R tag code containing the weight of the item and the distance the mail will travel. Volume and routing information recorded by data collectors are merged with the D&R Tag records to develop the distribution keys for the commercial and network air cost accounts. TRACS develops pound-mile distribution keys for commercial air, cubic-foot distribution keys for the day network, and pound distribution keys for the night network modes.

#### 1.1.4

##### **System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System**

SIRVO-IODIS captures revenue, pieces, and weight data for U.S. origin letter-post and Parcel Post mail destined for foreign countries, and measures transit time for U.S. origin (outbound) international air letters and cards (LC) mail. SIRVO-IODIS tests are conducted at international exchange offices (air and surface) and other installations that finalize international mail.

Most exchange offices use Military and International Dispatch and Accountability System (MIDAS) to finalize the mail. In these locations, as the expeditor is pulling down and preparing the mail for dispatch, MIDAS selects the sample receptacle for data recording. The data collector is notified that a sample receptacle is available for recording the mail characteristics of the mail within the selected receptacle. Once the receptacle is sampled, the data collector closes the receptacle, attaches the MIDAS dispatch label, and returns the receptacle for dispatching.

SIRVO-IODIS is a probability sample of mail destined for foreign countries. A sampling unit is defined as a day's worth of mail for dispatch to a specific international destination. When a sampling unit has been selected, the data collector must test the mail immediately before the receptacles or bulk containers are dispatched. The data collector records mail characteristics of the mail within the receptacles or a sub-sample of bulk containers.

From the sample data, estimates of total revenue, pieces and weight are developed for the categories of mail. The data from SIRVO-IODIS also provide estimates of transit time from 3-digit ZIP Codes of origin to "dispatch ready" condition at an international airmail processing facility. SIRVO-IODIS also provides supplemental country-specific data to support terminal dues payments to postal administrations for delivering our mail overseas.

#### 1.1.5

##### **System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound**

SIRVI captures pieces and weight data from foreign origin mail entering the United States. SIRVI also provides country-specific data to support terminal dues settlements. SIRVI tests are conducted at international exchange offices (air and surface) that receive foreign origin international mail.

SIRVI is the primary source of volume data by country. Density is usually summarized as number of pieces (items) per kilogram (IPK). Volume information refers to weight in kilograms. These are the key elements in determining terminal dues, which are the funds paid to postal administrations for the inward delivery of foreign origin incoming mail.

The SIRVI test uses a day sample approach that selects a fairly uniform number of receptacles per day at a given exchange office based upon workload constraints and with tests allocated in proportion to the total flows received at the exchange office. Whenever possible, SIRVI uses the automated receipt verification system (RVS), effectively an inbound MIDAS system. As the expeditor is entering data related to the incoming mail, RVS selects the sample container for recording. The data collector is notified that a sample receptacle is available for recording the mail characteristics of the mail within the selected receptacle. Once the receptacle is sampled, the data collector closes the receptacle, enters it back into RVS and returns it for processing.

#### **1.1.6 In-Office Cost System**

IOCS is the primary probability sampling system used to distribute the labor costs of clerks, mailhandlers, city carriers, and supervisors to the activities carried out by those employees, particularly activities related to the handling of mail of all classes and rate categories and to the provision of special services. The data are used to distribute over \$23 billion in costs to classes and subclasses of mail. Approximately 800,000 IOCS samples are taken each year.

An IOCS reading consists of observing a selected employee at a designated time within the employee's work day, and recording the activity being performed by the employee at the time of the observation. In addition, the characteristics of any mail or mail transportation equipment that the sampled employee is handling at that time are recorded.

#### **1.1.7 Why Data are Collected**

The Postal Reorganization Act requires the Postal Service to “break even” financially. That is, the total revenue of the Postal Service must equal the total costs incurred by the Postal Service. Rates for each mail service are determined using costs as a basic reference point. Rates must be high enough to ensure that the revenue generated by a subclass of mail exceeds the costs “attributable” to that subclass. As part of the effort to achieve this legal requirement, the Postal Service continually collects information about the revenue, costs, volume, and weight of the mail.

The revenue and cost accounting systems do not provide all the information down to the subclass and special service level; therefore, various statistical systems and special studies provide data from which estimates of accrued costs for certain postal operating functions, and estimates of revenues, volumes, and attributable costs for the various categories of mail are

developed. This information is used not only to develop proposals for new postal rates, but also to assist in the preparation of budgets, to conduct management studies, to support management decisions in transportation and operations regarding mail flow and service performance, and measure Postal Service workload and productivity.

Data collected by the statistical programs tests are used for rate cases, determining service performance, volumes, and National Performance Assessment (NPA) calculations, and by the Inspection Service and Marketing, to name a few applications. Statistical Programs also collects information and data for new products and services. By forming the core of Postal Service statistical research, the data a unit collects is vital to the future and smooth functioning of this organization.

Within the Postal Service organizational decisions are made that affect every employee. Many of these decisions are based on the information derived from the data gathered within the statistical programs. Sampling techniques and data collection procedures might change but the need for data will not. In fact, the need for data will continue to increase.

Technology continues to play a role in the development of statistical programs. Hardware and software continue to evolve to meet the demand for more data as well as different types of data for various organization activities.

### 1.1.8

#### How Data are Collected

There are 82 district managers of Statistical Programs (MSPs), 84 statistical programs specialists (SPSs), and 955 full-time data collection technicians (DCTs) located around the nation who conduct statistical tests. There are approximately 2,000 cadre and ad hoc personnel who also collect data for the statistical programs. District MSPs manage the day-to-day operations of Statistical Programs units ensuring resources are trained, assigned to collect the data, and that the data are collected properly. SPSs assist MSPs to ensure quality data collection by training and conducting process reviews of data collectors, and supervising DCTs in the absence of MSPs. The DCTs observe employee work activity, sample live mail, and collect data at randomly selected points within the postal systems. The DCTs record the information into portable computers that validate the data upon entry.

## 1.2 District Statistical Programs Personnel Roles and Responsibilities

A district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP), manages a Statistical Programs unit responsible for the collection of data used by the Postal Service to make corporate decisions on all levels. In addition, there are other duties, related roles, responsibilities, administrative work, and management activities to ensure these things occur. The list of these activities in section 1.2.1 is by no means all-inclusive. Further information is found in other Postal Service handbooks, other sections and chapters in this handbook, as well as from Headquarters communications and manuals.

The MSP's role in managing a Statistical Programs unit includes allocating resources to conduct statistical programs tests in accordance with current policies and procedures, managing a staff of executive and administrative schedule (EAS) and craft employees, analyzing data and information, conducting training and process review activities, and other duties as necessary.

### 1.2.1 District Manager, Statistical Programs Job Duties and Responsibilities

The following is a partial list of activities performed by the MSP:

- **Manages district-wide Statistical Programs: coordinates, administers, and supervises the collection of statistical data involving nation-wide statistical sampling systems.**

Each quarter, sample selection files are received from the mainframe computer detailing how many and what types of statistical programs tests a district must perform. The MSP schedules, assigns, and coordinates resources to comply with and take the statistical tests as scheduled.

- **Implements all guidelines for district-wide Statistical Programs in accordance with current policies and procedures.**

Statistical Programs at Headquarters provides policies and procedures outlining how statistical tests are performed. It is the MSP's responsibility to ensure that these guidelines are carried out properly and consistently.

- **Manages the district-wide monitoring and training programs to ensure proper sampling and reporting techniques are being used.**

The MSP is responsible for conducting process reviews to ensure that data collection procedures are being properly applied. These observations help identify training opportunities and ensure data integrity.

The MSP coordinates the district-wide training programs for data collection personnel, such as quarterly training (QT), Process Activated Training System (PATS), etc.

- **Manages the district mail exit point sampling frame to ensure all mail or other sampling populations are sampled in an efficient and cost effective manner.**

The MSP in each district is responsible for the design and maintenance of MEPs using specific guidelines. The district's MEPs are maintained in the MEP System (MEPS).

- **Conducts tests and provides analysis of various reports using national systems.**

The MSP analyzes various reports using national systems.

- **Implements a quality assurance system to ensure consistency, accuracy, and compliance with current policies and procedures.**

At the district level, the MSP is responsible for implementing a quality assurance system to ensure the collection of statistical programs data and the timely transmission of the data to the Computer On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit. It is very important that sampling reports are reviewed to ensure that tests have been conducted and transmitted.

- **Provides technical guidance, direction, and assistance to other managers, postmasters, and employees throughout the district on statistical data collection.**

The need to collect good data is an important concern to a district's managers. Technical guidance, direction, and assistance to others are required to ensure proper test preparation and data integrity. The MSP must continually look for and take advantage of opportunities to discuss this with them.

It is very important that other Postal Service employees understand their role in the data collection process. In order for the data collection staff to sample the mail, these other employees need to do certain things like prepare the mail for testing by setting it aside. The MSP must educate and emphasize the importance of and contribution to data integrity that all employees make in the data collection process.

- **Prepares and monitors annual workhour requirements and statistical programs expenditures.**

The finance manager might require the MSP to track and tally workhours for his or her function. The MSP's administration of leave policy and management of resources directly influences his or her budget and unit performance.

The finance manager might also require the MSP to monitor his or her unit's expenditures against an annual budget in accordance with current policies and procedures.

- **Manages a small staff of employees performing statistical sampling and systems related activities.**

There are very specific policies for the preparation and posting of staff assignments and activities schedules.

### 1.2.2

#### **Skills for Being an Effective MSP**

The following skills and attributes are suggestions and guidelines for an MSP's managerial development:

- **Technical competency: understanding of and ability to use the CODES Web Base Unit and CODES Laptop.**

The MSP must be able to troubleshoot computer-related questions and error messages. Familiarity with all of the programs is essential, even though these activities may be delegated to other Statistical Programs personnel.

- **Postal Service experience: familiarity with Postal operations and processes.**

The MSP should understand and be familiar with mail classification, sortation procedures, and delivery processes. Additionally, understanding data collection from the perspective of the data collector using a CODES Laptop allows the MSP to coordinate unit activities and support them.

- **Analytical skills: report data.**

Most managers study reports to determine how their district is performing. The MSP could be asked to provide many useful reports to the district's managers. The usefulness of the reports and the statistical data a unit collects varies according to the analytical ability of those viewing the data. An MSP should educate and assist others to understand and analyze his or her unit's data in a meaningful way to turn that data into useful information. These activities and exchanges between an MSP and other district managers set the stage for cooperation and feedback. Ultimately, such activities contribute to better data and smoother postal operations.

- **Communication and management.**

MSPs must be effective communicators as well as possess the ability to manage time and people.

### 1.2.3

#### **Statistical Programs Specialist**

The role of the statistical program specialist (SPS) is to assist the MSP in the coordination and management of training and process review requirements and the administration of unit data collection activities.

The SPS reviews district-wide Statistical Programs data collection operations to ensure compliance with national policies, guidelines, and procedures. They also provide technical guidance, training, and supervision to Statistical Programs data collection employees to ensure data quality. The authorization of an SPS is limited to district office tours without a district MSP or to fill assignments outside the district office.

Other duties and responsibilities of a SPS include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting in the preparation of schedules and assignments.
- Maintaining control reports to ensure that tests have been conducted.
- Performing edits and reviewing activities to ensure consistency, accuracy, and compliance with instructions.
- Analyzing quality measurement and control reports on data collection.
- Providing remedial training to reduce errors in sampling and reporting.
- Reviewing and updating sampling frame lists to ensure that all mail has an opportunity to be sampled efficiently and cost effectively.
- Providing technical advice and guidance on proper sampling and reporting techniques to data collectors.
- Contacting postmasters and other Postal Service managers on issues pertaining to data collection.

This position involves frequent and extensive travel within the district, and frequent schedule changes.

### 1.2.4

#### **Data Collector**

The data collector for a district can be an employee whose bid position is in Statistical Programs (DCT), or whose bid position is in another functional area, but assists in Statistical Programs when needed (cadre or ad hoc). Data collectors gather, record, and analyze a variety of statistical data on selected operating and financial activities in order to serve management needs for these data. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to the following tasks:

- Plan and execute work activities without direct supervision.
- Observe employee work activity, sample live mail, and collect data at randomly selected points in the postal systems.
- Use computer systems at a level sufficient to operate keyboard devices, input data, and transmit to the CODES Web Base Unit.
- Protect the integrity of statistical programs sample selections and data.
- Read, understand, and comply with the procedures in written reference materials including handbooks, manuals, charts, directives, and checklists.

- Refer to supervisory personnel any matters that are not covered by instructions or that require resolution. This includes raising questions on matters that require clarification.
- Communicate both orally and in writing at a level sufficient to interpret and exchange information, answer questions, and give directions.
- Work and deal positively and effectively with others.

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## Chapter 2

# General Management Responsibilities

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BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION



The primary function of a district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) is to manage a Statistical Programs unit. The Statistical Programs unit collects statistical data used by the Postal Service at all levels of management and operations to make corporate decisions affecting Postal Service employees and their customers. It is therefore important that the collected data are valuable and unbiased. Usable, unbiased data is also called *data integrity*. An MSP manages a Statistical Programs unit and ensures data integrity at all levels of unit activity. An MSP must manage numerous resources, including data collection personnel, equipment, and informational tools. MSPs are responsible for what happens within their unit. This chapter provides procedures and guidelines that help the MSP keep his or her unit in order, follow security guidelines, and use equipment for its intended purpose.

This chapter addresses general management responsibilities and provides procedures and guidelines that help the MSP manage the district Statistical Programs unit.

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## 2.1 Security

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Having accurate and consistent data collection is vital to achieving the ultimate goal of Statistical Programs; that is, to obtain accurate information about the revenue, costs, volume, and weight of the mail. To collect these data accurately and consistently, the MSP, SPS, or designee must ensure the security of the data collected, and the equipment that contains the data. The use of passwords is necessary to maintain data and equipment security. This section provides details regarding use and security measures that need to be taken, and identifies Statistical Programs policies governing the collection of data.

### 2.1.1 Data Security and Integrity

Policies and procedures are in place to prevent sampling error, bias, and non-sampling error. Data integrity refers to the accurate recording, collecting, and processing of statistical programs information. To insure the integrity of all data, MSPs must work with their data collectors so that they are familiar with all data collection policies and procedures.

There are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the data are accurate and free from any kind of tampering. The following subsections outline and explain specific rules and policies for securing data.

#### 2.1.1.1 Prohibition Against the Release of National or Subnational Test Data

Data containing information about any Postal Service employee, or any other national or subnational data or data printouts containing actual volumes and/or actual service achievement information or any other national or subnational data are not to be distributed outside of the Postal Service without the written authorization of Statistical Programs at Headquarters. This information is proprietary and must remain guarded at all times.

The IOCS Readings Schedule Report and samples loaded on the CODES Laptop both contain employees' names and Social Security numbers. Social Security numbers are sensitive information that must be safeguarded against unauthorized use or disclosure. Data collectors must keep the Readings Schedule Report and CODES samples secure from unauthorized use.

It is a violation of the Privacy Act to list someone's Social Security number in a publicly accessible location. Ensure that the unit's paperwork and records do not violate the Privacy Act by being publicly accessible. Shred all In-Office Cost System (IOCS) master lists and any sheets with scheduled reading times, since they contain sensitive data (e.g., Social Security numbers).

### 2.1.1.2 Use of Proper Equipment in Testing

All tests and readings must be taken and all data recorded directly on the CODES Laptop, and if applicable, with a functioning scale attached. Manual worksheets may not be used to record test or reading data. Administrative data, like employee location, pay status, and tour of duty, may be temporarily recorded on the IOCS Readings Schedule Report.

All Carrier Cost Systems tests must be entered on the CODES Laptop; however, there are certain exceptions when form 2850, *Carrier Cost System City Carrier* can be used.

**Exception:** In the case of a CODES Laptop failure, Vertical Improved Mail (VIM), and other special situations, the *Carrier Cost System City Carrier* form (Form 2850) can be accessed and printed from the CODES Base Unit. If a laptop failure occurs, the MSP should fill out the *Carrier Cost Systems City Carrier* form.

**Exception:** Recording directly into the laptop might prove difficult when measuring vehicle utilization, collecting pallet information, or recording container contents for Transportation Cost Systems (TRACS) tests. In these situations, the data collector must take notes of the information collected and then enter the data into the CODES Laptop before counting the mail. TRACS mailpiece and weight data must be recorded directly on the CODES Laptop computer.

### 2.1.1.3 Uploading of Test Data from CODES Laptop to CODES Web Base Unit

All tests must be uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit immediately after completion of the test. Duplicating completed tests before disk transfer or transmission of the raw data to other than the CODES Web Base Unit is prohibited. Only Statistical Programs personnel may handle diskettes and laptops containing sample or reading data.

### 2.1.1.4 Prohibition Against Duplicate Recording of Mailpieces

Mailpiece data are to be entered immediately into the CODES Laptop. Recording mailpiece information on a separate worksheet or log is prohibited. After entering mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop, the sampled pieces must be immediately returned to the unit from which they were taken. When returning mailpieces to the mailstream, the data collector must be sure that mailpieces are replaced in such a way as to avoid delivery delay. If the data collector is uncertain about how to return them, he or she should give them to a supervisor or to a knowledgeable employee. Only the trained data collector, or respondent under direction of the trained data collector, is permitted to examine the reading pieces, except for the personnel listed in section 2.1.1.5.

### 2.1.1.5 Prohibition Against Over-the-Shoulder Monitoring

Over-the-shoulder monitoring of a test is limited to the following personnel:

- MSP.
- Statistical programs specialist (SPS).
- Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC) personnel.
- Headquarters and Headquarters-authorized personnel.
- Postal Inspection Service.
- Postal Service independent auditors and Office of Inspector General (OIG) personnel.

Over-the-shoulder monitoring of tests by any other individuals is considered a serious compromise of the systems' integrity and is prohibited; however, notwithstanding the policy stated above, MSPs may still partner with authorized management improvement teams to identify mail processing problems.

### 2.1.1.6 Prohibition Against Other Personnel Hindering a Data Collector from Conducting a Test or Reading

Unauthorized personnel outside of Statistical Programs are prohibited from hindering the data collector from observing and collecting relevant information from a sampled employee, or sampling the mail to be tested. Anyone's direct or indirect interference in the data collection process seriously compromises the independence and integrity of the systems. Avoid even the perception of interference. This prohibition, however, should not be construed to mean that other personnel, such as local management, are to have no contact. Data collectors should maintain good working relationships with local managers and supervisors to ensure data integrity.

Data collectors must contact the manager, supervisor, or designee to be briefed on the vehicle, carrier, employee, or MEP until mail can be located and tested.

### 2.1.1.7 Necessity for Data Collection Personnel

Only a trained data collector under the direction of Statistical Programs is permitted to conduct a test. All other personnel are strictly prohibited from conducting a test.

### 2.1.1.8 Management Involvement in Statistical Programs Tests

Trained non-craft employees may be used to conduct statistical programs tests under the following circumstances:

- No trained craft employees are within a 3-hour round-trip travel time to the test site.

- If trained cadre/ad hoc data collectors are not available because they are already assigned to statistical programs work such as testing, training, or monitoring.



**Note:** The trained non-craft employee must be available at the test site or within a 3-hour round trip travel to the test site.

#### 2.1.1.9 Compromised Test

The MSP must contact the SPSC whenever a test has potentially been compromised. The following list describes some consequences of compromised tests:

- Potential volume is lost due to improper test procedures.
- Communication failures between functional areas.
- Inadequate staffing on the test day.

### 2.1.2 Passwords

Passwords are used to maintain system and data security, for example when working on the CODES Web Base Unit, accessing the San Mateo mainframe computer, and the district local area network (LAN). There are logon passwords for each employee with access to their LAN accounts.

#### 2.1.2.1 CODES Web Base Unit Passwords

The CODES Web Base Unit requires a password to access the individual programs through the *CODES Web Base Unit Application Access* page. Everyone authorized to work on the CODES Web Base Unit is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of their CODES Web Base Unit password. The CODES Web Base Unit software limits access to the data stored in the CODES Web Base Unit. The data and software can only be accessed with the user's correct password.

To request CODES Web Base Unit access, contact the CCSC at 866-877-CODE (2633) or send an e-mail request to CODES, COMPUTER SUPPORT CENTER ([ccodes@usps.gov](mailto:ccodes@usps.gov)).

An MSP account has a higher level of access than the SPS and DCT accounts, which gives the MSP the ability to assign login IDs to the SPSs and DCTs. The MSP gives CODES Web Base Unit access to SPSs and DCTs by registering their Postal Service unique identifiers (UIDs) with the CODES Web Base Unit.

Navigating to the *Set Password* panel of the CODES Web Base Unit *Tools* page allows the MSP to reset passwords. It is the responsibility of all users to safeguard their individual login passwords.

Passwords must be at least 8 characters in length. They must include 3 of the following symbol groups:

- Numbers.
- Lowercase letters.
- Uppercase letters.
- The following punctuation marks: ( \_ ), ( \$ ), ( ~ ), ( \* ), ( - ), ( ! ), or ( / ).

### 2.1.2.2 Mainframe Access Password

A password is required to access to the San Mateo mainframe. A completed PS Form 1357, *Request for Computer Access* (Exhibits RM 2–1.1 and RM 2–1.2) must be submitted to receive San Mateo mainframe access.

PS Form 1357 is available by clicking on the *Forms* link on the Postal Service Intranet at <http://blue.usps.gov/> or directly from the *Forms* page at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms.htm>. It is available in both portable document format (PDF) and Adobe Form Client format. Clicking on a form's PDF icon opens the form within a browser for printing and manual completion, whereas clicking on a form's Adobe Form Client icon launches the form from within the Adobe Form Client application for electronic completion and printing.

The requestor completes items 1 through 11. The MSP or finance manager, whichever is applicable, signs in item 12. For item 13a, the MSP or finance manager enters where access is required (i.e., San Mateo, CA), any existing logon IDs with the facilities, and what access is needed (CODES). Upon completion, the MSP retains a copy for local records and mails the original form to the SPSC for the SPSC manager to sign item 16.

### 2.1.2.3 Managed Maintenance Account

Each district manager of Statistical Programs is assigned a Managed Maintenance Account (MMA). This account is secured by an e-Access request to Headquarters. Headquarters assigns each district a user name and password for access to the CODES Laptop.

### 2.1.3 Equipment Concerns and Responsibility

The MSP and his or her staff are responsible for the physical security of all CODES equipment and supplies. This security includes restricting the use of CODES equipment to Statistical Programs personnel who are authorized by the MSP or designee. The national and district policies for security must be followed at all times.

Each district Statistical Programs unit is assigned a variety of CODES equipment such as laptops, printers, scales, carrying cases, and other items. The amount of equipment varies from office to office and depends on the specific needs of the district. Issues such as the number of data collectors, programs, and tests all affect the amount of CODES equipment an office may have. The MSP is responsible for all of this equipment.

Computer On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) equipment is exclusively for the use of approved Statistical Programs applications. CODES Laptop computers are valuable full-function computers and can be targets for theft, and therefore must be stored in a locked area when not in use. When leaving a work area, the user must always take precautions to secure his or her laptop computer. An MSP may issue keys and passwords only to authorized Statistical Programs personnel.

In order to avoid disruption in unit operations, it is essential that contingency equipment, personnel, and space are available to conduct the test(s). If the Statistical Programs unit does not have all of these areas up to operating standards, then immediate steps must be taken to remedy the situation. The finance manager can help determine the necessary course of action and clarify local policy. The request for additional resources must be justified in writing. The SPSC is also available for support, guidance, and/or direction.

#### **2.1.3.1 Equipment Tracking**

The CODES Equipment Log (RM 2–2) is just one way to track the CODES equipment within an office, regardless of whether it's a district office or a cadre office. The log is used to sign-in and sign-out all portable computers and scales. Signatures on the logs are necessary.

The log serves two purposes. First, it provides written accountability for all equipment. Second, it serves as a record of any hardware or software problems that were encountered during the test. The MSP and SPS are responsible for maintaining the logs, as well as bringing any problems to the attention of the SPSC.

There are different ways to use this log sheet. One method is to record all of the computers on one sheet. Another way is to have a separate sheet for each piece of equipment. This form may also be used as a way to document that a particular laptop has been assigned to a DCT.

Section 2.3.3 includes information about equipment log sheets among its listing of records retention policies. For detailed information about use, maintenance, and policies regarding CODES equipment, refer to section 7.3.1.

### 2.1.3.2 Authorized Use

CODES equipment is exclusively for the use of Postal Service activities. The CODES ACE Laptop along with all other test equipment must be stored in a locked area when not in use. Since the CODES ACE Laptop is used to access CODES applications, the data collector must preserve the integrity of test data by putting the laptop into hibernate mode or locking the keyboard when the laptop is unattended. Access to CODES applications is granted to each district through a Managed Maintenance Account (MMA) logon ID. The MSP is responsible for changing the password, which must only be issued to authorized Statistical Programs personnel.

### 2.1.3.3 Equipment Security and Storage

The security of the equipment used to collect CODES data is extremely important to the Postal Service. Security of CODES equipment decreases the risk of theft or vandalism, and it also reduces the risk of unauthorized use of equipment and possibly unauthorized use of data.

The MSP or SPS and his or her staff is responsible for the physical security of all CODES equipment and supplies. This security includes restricting the use of CODES equipment to Statistical Programs personnel who are authorized by the MSP or SPS. The national and district security policies must be followed at all times.

All equipment must be stored in a secure place regardless of where that equipment is assigned.

The work area must contain lockable cabinets in which laptop computers, scales, diskettes, and other CODES equipment can be stored. Reasonable care must be taken to secure the CODES equipment. CODES Laptops assigned to cadre offices must follow these same procedures.

Any exception to this policy must be requested in writing, and sent to the SPSC. The request must include a description of the steps that are currently being taken to secure CODES equipment.

CODES equipment is exclusively for the use of approved Headquarters Statistical Programs activities. Portable computers can be a target for theft; therefore, they must be stored in a locked area when not in use. CODES Laptops and other equipment must always be secured before the data collector leaves the work area. Passwords must only be issued to authorized Statistical Programs personnel.

Remember, the MSP is responsible for CODES equipment and reasonable care must be taken to safeguard the equipment, the data, etc. The presence and/or use of unauthorized programs on any and all CODES equipment is prohibited. The MSP must ensure that no unauthorized programs or applications are running on any CODES equipment in his or her office. It is the responsibility of the MSP to remove any such programs or applications.

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## 2.2 CODES Equipment

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Statistical Programs unit has very expensive computer equipment. Every data collector needs access to a CODES Laptop. The MSP is responsible for tracking and maintaining all of this equipment. The policies and guidelines regarding equipment appear in this section.

#### 2.2.1

#### Inventory System on the Statistical Programs Web Site

All CODES equipment, except for diskettes, must be included in the inventory listing on the Statistical Programs' Inventory Web site. This site can be accessed by navigating to the Statistical Programs Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov>, the clicking on the *Inventory* link under *Applications*. The inventory files must be updated when new equipment is received, equipment is transferred from one office to another, equipment has been sent for repair, equipment has been excessed or taken out of service, and whenever there is a change for reasons not listed here.

The unit's inventory is to be checked at least twice a year.

#### 2.2.2

#### Getting Help with CODES Equipment

Contact the CODES Computer Support Center (CCSC) for hardware and software problems. The CCSC provides support for all equipment failures and software problems. Software problems consist of such things as program malfunctions, unexplained error messages, and computer lockups. These should be directed to the CCSC help desk, which is available from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m, Monday through Friday, Eastern Standard Time (EST) by calling the toll-free number listed below or by sending an e-mail request to [ccodes@usps.gov](mailto:ccodes@usps.gov).

#### 1-866-877-CODE (2633)

If any problems occur, try to gather as much information about it as possible. Write down error messages as they occur on the screen. Have the CODES Laptop or CODES Web Base Unit accessible when making the call. The following two components affect the time required to fix CODES equipment or software problems:

- Severity of the problem.
- Amount of information provided to the CCSC support personnel.

The amount of information provided to the CCSC support personnel is supplied by the person making the request; therefore, the requestor has a great impact on having the equipment functioning again in a timely manner.



**Note:** Statistical Programs staff is not to seek help from Information Technology (IT) unless suggested to do so by the SPSC or the CCSC. Solutions by staff other than the CCSC could result in unrecoverable data problems and/or damaged equipment.

### 2.2.3

#### The CODES Computer Support Center

Contact the CCSC for help with any of the following issues:

- **Resolving field user software problems.**

**CODES Web Base Units:** Field users must report any problems with accessing the CODES Web Base Unit to the CCSC.

Field users must call or e-mail the CCSC for initial problem resolution. If the CCSC cannot resolve the problem, they will contact the application programmer for guidance and/or escalation. The CCSC directs all Statistical Programs policy issues back to the SPSC. The following list defines Statistical Programs policy issues:

- CODES data entry questions.
- Alterations of any data except for the test identification and test date information.
- Canceling tests.
- Deletions of tests or re-keying after deletions.

- **Resolving field user hardware problems.**

**Scales:** Field users should call or e-mail the CCSC for repair authorizations.

**Scanners:** Field users must call or e-mail the CCSC for problem resolution. If the CCSC determines that a component needs repair, the CCSC will provide replacement authorization. The CCSC maintains a supply of replacement components to send to field users. The CCSC will repair or authorize repair for bad components.

**Laptops:** Field users must call or e-mail the CCSC for problem resolution. If the CCSC determines that a component needs repair, the CCSC will provide replacement authorization. The CCSC will authorize repair for bad components.

- **Completing the anomaly test log.**

The SPSC will complete the anomaly test log for any data lost during computer or diskette data recovery.



**Note:** MSPs must contact the SPSC when potential volume is lost due to improper test procedures, communication failures between functional areas, inadequate staffing on the test day, etc.

## 2.3 Information Management

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Postal Service needs data. To obtain data, the MSP coordinates, supervises, and manages a team of data collectors. Based on the data gathered, the MSP supplies information, raw data, and reports to managers throughout the postal system.

The CODES Web Base Unit programs have their own protocols for updating their system files and deleting old data. The records retention system helps control paperwork and hardcopy files for test data and the district's activities.

This section is designed to help the MSP understand the principles of records retention. The MSP must know and comply with the Statistical Programs specific data retention policies.

### 2.3.1

#### Filing Systems

The MSP may implement any filing system he or she feels works best for his or her district. Refer to the Records Retention Policy (section 2.3.3) for the expected length of duration for keeping such records.

The following list offers suggested guidelines for filing systems:

- Have a file for each data collector in the unit grouped by site location.
- Clearly label the folder tabs.
- Keep a copy of any official documents required by the Postal Service.
- Document and file any granted policy or procedure exceptions.
- Document and file events surrounding personnel issues involving employment condition, status, and performance in case of union involvement concerning grievances or performance issues.
- Document and file any events that might involve workers' compensation.
- Maintain records of any special assignments from the unit's finance manager.

### 2.3.2

#### Keeping Records and Documenting Activities

Not all of a district's activities need to be documented and filed. The Postal Service is committed to recycling. As much as possible, avoid needless use of paper and printing activities. With access to computers, electronic document sharing helps limit printing and using paper.

There are however required forms and paperwork. Forms and various CODES Web Base Unit generated reports all require some level of analysis and action from the MSP in order for his or her unit to run efficiently. In order to manage the status of all programs, the MSP should consider implementing a guideline for regular status checks. By checking these programs daily,

problems and inconsistencies are more easily spotted and corrected. Accessing each of the programs before the daily transmission provides a chance to verify that all of the statistical tests occurred as scheduled. If this status monitoring is delegated to the SPS or one of the data collectors, the MSP should consider having the delegatee leave printouts of each program's status on the MSP's desk for review each morning.

Form retention is governed by the *Administrative Support Manual* (ASM). Refer to the ASM with any questions. There are two guidelines the MSP might want to consider implementing in the unit:

- Handle paperwork once.
- Use the computer program Adobe Form Client to manage, fill out, and file Postal Service forms.

### 2.3.3

#### Records Retention Policy

The following tables detail expected length of duration for keeping records:

- CODES Disks.

Laptop Update Disks and/or CDs	6 months.
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- CODES Logs.

Equipment Log Sheets (RM 2–2)	If signed out daily — current and 2 previous quarters.  If assigned to DCT — until equipment is returned.
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- PS Forms.

PS Form 835, <i>Quarterly Report of Originating Registered and C.O.D. Transactions</i>	1 year.
PS Form 1444-A Series, <i>Statistical Programs Monitoring Audit Evaluation Checklist</i>	Past and present fiscal year (FY).
PS Form 2846, <i>City Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data</i>	Retain until second quarter of the following FY.

PS Form 2848, <i>Rural Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data</i>	Retain until second quarter of the following FY.
PS Form 8215, <i>Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile</i>	Past and present FY.
PS Form 8216, <i>Statistical Programs Planning Calendar for Process Review</i>	Current and previous quarter.

■ Statistical Publications.

Statistical Programs (SP) Letters	Until incorporated into new handbooks.
Statistical Programs Guidelines	Until incorporated into new handbooks.
Status Reports	Current and previous quarter.

■ Training Materials.

Training Records	Maintain until the employee retires. If the employee transfers out of the unit, forward records to the employee's new supervisor.
Training Sign-in Sheets	Current and previous year.

■ Miscellaneous.

DCT Schedules	Current and previous quarter.
Test Printouts	Current and previous quarter.
Sample Selections	Current and previous quarter.

### 2.3.4

#### Data Management

The CODES Web Base Unit is backed up on the mainframe. There is no requirement for the MSP to backup data from the CODES Web Base Unit.

Data management provides the MSP/SPS and the data collector access to the program data files, which have been uploaded to the CODES Base Unit. Before getting involved in the actual processes that perform these functions, MSPs, SPSs and data collectors must have certain tools, which include 3.5" diskettes.

There should be a system in the office that is used to identify disks containing data that need to be uploaded from previously uploaded disks. The idea is to establish several boxes of diskettes that are appropriately labeled.

One box should be labeled, “Blank Formatted Disks.” There should be enough disks for each program and each program’s diskettes should be clearly identified. The label should indicate the following information:

- Program.
- Quarter.
- Fiscal year.



**Example:** The CCCS diskettes would have “CCCS” printed on it for QTR\_\_\_\_, FY\_\_\_\_. This format is repeated for all the programs specific to the site, including international programs, if applicable. The idea is to provide a visual clue or separation of “disks to be uploaded.”

Another box could contain the current quarter sample selection disks that are prepared to update the laptops each quarter or pay period for IOCS. Again, the diskettes should all be clearly labeled by program.

Regardless of the system used, the disks should be easily identifiable and labeled appropriately. It is also strongly recommended that the diskettes are replaced each quarter. The advantages of buying and preparing new diskettes far outweigh the costs involved in using old diskettes and trying to recover tests or other information. New diskettes may be prepared ahead of time, before the critical sample selection downloading process.

## 2.4 Timekeeping

MSPs using the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) must ensure that employees' time is accurate and employees are paid properly. MSPs should attend TACS training locally to ensure that the TACS program is administered properly.

MSPs are responsible and accountable for their employees' time and attendance. It is the responsibility of the MSP to ensure compliance with the guidelines found in Handbook F-21, *Time and Attendance*.

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## 2.5 Safety and Service Talks

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Safety and service talks are governed by national or local agreements or by district policy. MSPs are responsible for complying with national and local agreements and documenting safety and service talks. Safety and service talks offer MSPs the chance to refresh their employees' understanding of Postal Service goals and safety issues.

#### 2.5.1

#### Safety Talks

One of the MSP's primary duties is to oversee and coordinate the collection of statistical data. To do so, MSPs need skilled and trained data collectors who are able to do their work. As their manager, it is the MSP's responsibility to implement safety guidelines for the staff.

All proper safety practices should be followed when performing Statistical Programs work. As the unit manager, it is the MSP's responsibility to ensure that all safety policies are followed and to take preventive measures to ensure compliance with all national and local policies. See Handbook EL-912, *Agreement between United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO* (<http://blue.usps.gov/lrinfo/files/2000apwu.pdf>).

The MSP must document and gather as much information as possible about the circumstances that contribute to accidents, the accident's effects, and possible solutions to prevent the accident from happening again. MSPs should check with the local safety office for their district's policies and procedures. MSPs are to maintain a separate file for every accident and safety issue for their district.

Effective safety talks focus on Postal Service safety issues. It is the MSP's and SPS's duty to educate and communicate safety to the unit staff. See Publication 129, *Safety Talks* (<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub129.pdf>) for guidance on preparing safety talks and recommended material. Handbook EL-814, *Postal Employee's Guide to Safety* (<http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/hand/el814.pdf>) provides succinct information about safety. The local safety office is another good source for presentation material.

#### 2.5.2

#### Service Talks

Service talks keep employees informed and up-to-date on local and national events affecting them. The MSP may check with the local Human Resource department for guidance on current fiscal year requirements.

There are several kinds of service talks to consider. Varying and combining the following types of service talks will help keep them up-to-date and interesting:

- **Informational:** provides new information about the Postal Service and/or data collection related issues.
- **Teambuilding:** offers positive stories about teamwork and suggestions about how the unit might become a more effective team. Include field stories from the local unit to demonstrate how this helps solidify the unit as a team.
- **Instructional:** discusses and illustrates data collection policies, techniques, or other issues.
- **Service-oriented:** discusses ways the data collectors can provide better service and work in the context of their job and interactions with the public and other Postal Service employees.

Bargaining unit employees are required to receive 4 hours of Workforce Environment Improvement (WEI) training each year. Further information about WEI training can be found on the Postal Service Intranet at [http://blue.usps.gov/hrisp/wei/2005\\_trng\\_initiative.htm](http://blue.usps.gov/hrisp/wei/2005_trng_initiative.htm).

Regardless of the mode of delivery, a service talk can reinforce positive principles, work ownership, employee importance to the company, and the many benefits of being a part of the Postal Service. Pride in having good data collection skills makes a unit more confident and effective.

### 2.5.3

#### Guidelines for Safety and Service Talks

The following items are guidelines for making safety and service talks more effective:

- Make it accessible to all unit personnel.
  - Prepare a binder of safety and service talks. Place a binder at each major work site.
  - Mail weekly safety and service talks to light-duty and other data collection staff.
  - Circulate the weekly safety and service talk during training days.
  - Prepare note cards with safety and service related questions on one side and answers on the other. As each data collector correctly answers the questions, they initial one side of the card.
- Reinforce positive work attitudes, employee attributes, and data collection skills and habits.
- Use it to follow up on topics and issues discussed on training days.
- Make use of official Postal Service publications, available from the Postal Service PolicyNet site at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/pubid.htm>. These often suggest appropriate and fitting service talks.
- Express the importance of service talks to data collectors.

### 2.5.4 Documenting Safety and Service Talks

The MSP should document his or her safety and service talks to verify the district staff's participation. The MSP should decide what is the most effective method of communication for his or her unit and raise awareness that it is important, it is documented, and it is an activity that needs to be done.

The MSP should save the documentation verifying data collector participation in his or her files according to standard records retention policy (section 2.3.3). There are many other ways to approach safety talks; the important thing is that they are done as required and documented.

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## 2.6 Statistical Programs Unit Vehicles

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**BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION**

Districts may have vehicles allotted for data collector use. MSPs coordinate the use of many resources, including vehicles. The vehicles are usually maintained by Vehicle Maintenance. Whenever the vehicles require maintenance, MSPs should contact Vehicle Maintenance to make sure the unit's vehicles are running well and safely.

MSPs implement the district's guidelines for vehicle-related issues, like accidents and detailing what their data collectors should do. One of the MSP's responsibilities is to investigate and document any unit vehicle accidents and contact the appropriate groups for repair. MSPs are to obtain and document as much information about an accident as possible according to local, area, and national policies and guidelines.

The keys for Statistical Programs vehicles usually have a small computer chip on the key chain. This computer chip activates the Postal Service gas pumps for refueling the cars. Occasionally, data collectors need to refuel at commercial gas stations. MSPs should follow district policies and procedures in handling these issues.

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## 2.7 Budgets

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



#### 2.7.1

Every fiscal year, each district receives a budget of workhours with which the MSP conducts, coordinates, and performs statistical programs tests. The MSP is responsible for this workhour budget and its use by full-time, part-time, and ad hoc or cadre employees.

#### Full and Part-Time Data Collection Technicians

Full-time and part-time data collection technicians assigned to a district have their workhours tracked automatically to Labor Distribution Code (LDC) 57. It helps to know this number when tracking overall workhour budgets.

The LDC is a string of numbers specific to a function. All data collector workhours are tracked to LDC 57. In the LDC, the number “5” represents the Finance function and the “7” represents the Statistical Programs unit.

When a non-Statistical Programs employee performs an ODIS-RPW test, for example, that clerk uses an operation number specific to LDC 57. Because all of the people working in the unit use LDC 57, it is a quick and easy way for an MSP to verify workhours performed and compare them against his or her fiscal year budget.

The LDC provides a simple and easy way to verify all of the workhours that gradually add up over the course of a fiscal year. If MSPs regularly check these against what they know, they can more effectively manage their units.



**Example:** If an MSP discovers 15 hours charged to LDC 57 in the district’s budget for a test that should have taken only 4 hours, there is reason to investigate this entry.



**Example:** An MSP should investigate when a Post Office used 124 hours of work time in a previous year, but only half way through the current year, twice the hours are being charged with a lighter test load. This can be verified through the local budget office using the Loan Transfer and Training System (LTATS) Weekly Loan, Transfer, and Training Hours report.

#### 2.7.2

#### Ad Hoc or Cadre Data Collectors

Managing the Statistical Programs unit will usually include areas where non-Statistical Programs personnel conduct various tests on a part-time basis. These employees charge their workhours to a district’s LDC.

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## Related Materials for General Management Responsibilities

This section includes all the definitions, tables, and related information necessary for general management responsibilities.

- RM 2-1 Request for Computer Access.
- RM 2-2 Statistical Programs Management CODES Equipment Log.



## RM 2-1 Request for Computer Access

Referenced section 2.1.2.2.

<b>PS Form 1357 Instructions</b>			
Original PS 1357 Located at: Headquarters		U.S. Postal Service <b>Request for Computer Access</b> (Instructions for completing form on reverse side.)	
		Logon ID Assigned Local District Office	
<b>Section A: User Identification</b>			
1. Requestor's Name Joseph D Collector	2. eAccess Unique ID or Last 4 Digits of SSN 4321	3. Area	4. Finance No. 12-3456
5. Requestor's Job Title Data Collection Technician	6. Employment Status (Check One) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Career <input type="checkbox"/> Casual <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary <input type="checkbox"/> Nonpostal		
7. USPS Organization/Department Finance/Statistical Programs	8. USPS or Company Mailing Address (Include ZIP + 4) US Postal Service 123 Main Street Washington DC 20001 1234		
9. Telephone No. 202-123-4567			
10. District Code and Name 200 Capital			
11. User Responsibility Agreement Statement I am responsible for Logon/Logoff, all actions pertaining to the use of my assigned logon ID, and will not provide my logon ID to another person. I agree that access to computer data or files not authorized to me is prohibited. I understand my logon ID may be suspended indefinitely if I violate security procedures or fail to provide update information for Section A whenever I change job positions. I agree that misuse of a USPS computer system may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. I understand that any detected misuse of a computer system will be reported to the Inspection Service.			
(Read Privacy Act Statement on reverse side before signing. Note: Privacy Act Statement <b>MUST</b> be on reverse side of this form.)			
Signature	User Responsibility Agreement Statement	Date 1/3/2005	
12. Manager Responsibility Agreement Statement I agree that modifications to existing service agreements will require additional Form 1357 requests. I agree that this logon ID will be used for authorized USPS work within the scope of my organization. I also agree that upon termination or transfer of the user, I will advise the Computer Systems Security Officer in writing as to the disposition of the computer files and/or data and logon ID. I will periodically review the use of the assigned logon ID and computer files and/or data.			
USPS Manager's Name (Please Print)	Logon ID	Signature	Date
Robert S Manager	1234		1/3/2005
Telephone No. 202-123-7654			
<b>Section B: Computer Access Requested</b>			
13a. Describe Support Required			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Login ID (Select One) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Change <input type="checkbox"/> Delete <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facility Where Access Is Required: Capital			
<input type="checkbox"/> DDEOR: Access Code:    User Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List Existing Logon IDs and Facilities: AAA5AA			
San Mateo SM07; CODES Applications			
13b. Resource Name (Additional room is available on the reverse side)		13c. Sensitive or Proprietary	13d. Access Level Required (See Instructions)
<b>Section C: Computer Access Approvals</b>			
14. Contractor Information (Must be completed by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR))			
a. Does the Contract Contain Provisions for (Select Yes or No):		b. Contract Number:	
1. Screening?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
2. Security of Information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	c. Contract Expiration Date:	
3. Privacy of Information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
4. Contractor Screening by the Inspection Service?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	d. USPS Organization /Department:	
15. USPS COR's Name (Please Print)		Signature	Date
			Telephone No.
16. Functional System Coordinator's Name (Please Print)		Signature	Date
			Telephone No.
17. Logon ID Administrator's Name (Please Print)		Signature	Date
			Telephone No.
PS Form 1357, January 2003 (Page 1 of 2)			
FM 1.0.2			

Exhibit RM 2-1.1. PS Form 1357, Request for Computer Access, Front



## FM 1.0.2



## RM 2–2 Statistical Programs Management CODES Equipment Log

Referenced sections 2.1.3.1 and 7.3.1.1.

STATISTICAL PROGRAMS MANAGEMENT CODES EQUIPMENT LOG					
COMPUTER ID #	DATE	TIME CHECKED		PROBLEMS AND COMMENTS	SIGNATURE
		OUT	IN		

01/04/05

Exhibit RM 2–2.1. Statistical Programs Management CODES Equipment Log

## Chapter 3 Scheduling Policies

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**BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION**



This chapter discusses scheduling activities in the Statistical Programs unit. The manager of the Statistical Programs unit is responsible for scheduling, resources, data collection tests, and data collection staff.

This chapter is most useful to district managers who are newly appointed to Statistical Programs. More seasoned district managers, Statistical Programs (MSPs) and statistical programs specialists (SPSs) should use the index and table of contents to find sections dealing with their specific questions or areas of interest. The MSP's job is to ensure that all statistical programs tests are conducted according to current policies and procedures.

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## 3.1 Scheduling

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



#### 3.1.1

This section acquaints the MSP with some suggestions and guidelines for dealing with some of the administrative scheduling arrangements and, where applicable, provides an overview of those scheduling policies relating to training and process review.

#### Scheduling Time

Scheduling activities in the Statistical Programs unit center around the sample selection files downloaded each pay period and quarter. After the MSP arranges and coordinates coverage for each test, he or she must support his or her data collectors for these tests.

For scheduling of their own work time, past experience and understanding of their job will guide MSPs to make correct decisions. For many other things, their job is one of management. MSPs manage the SPSs and staff of data collectors, scheduling and completion of tests, and application of Postal Service policy as it applies to Statistical Programs. MSP duties are continuous and have an ongoing cycle.

#### 3.1.1.1 Delegating Responsibility

With all of the demands on the MSP's time, it is important to be able to delegate responsibility. The SPS will be of considerable help with managing the unit; however, the MSP may want to consider setting up a guideline by which all of the full-time data collectors attain sufficient proficiency and skill to take responsibility for any duty he or she might wish to delegate to them. Through delegating responsibility, the MSP has prime opportunity for on-the-job training.

#### 3.1.2 Data Collectors' Schedules

One of the MSP's primary duties is to ensure that the statistical programs tests are conducted in a timely and appropriate manner consistent with Postal Service policies and guidelines while minimizing any disturbance to on-time mail delivery performance. This must be in compliance with any local and national guidelines and policies, if applicable.

Test schedules must be developed in compliance with Handbook EL-912, *Agreement between United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO*. Any Local Memorandum of Understanding should also be taken into consideration when preparing schedules.

Every Statistical Programs unit should have the latest copy of EL-912, *Agreement between United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO* and any *Local Memorandum of Understanding*, if applicable for the district. These materials should be readily available as

reference for all data collectors at all times. The *Agreement between United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO* is available on the Postal Service Intranet. Refer to these references for proper scheduling of policies and procedures.

The data collection technician (DCT) duty assignments are scheduled for an entire week. The schedule consists of information related to all scheduled tests, reporting times, and any applicable office/administrative duties. The Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit software contains the DCT Scheduler application, which allows the MSP to easily assign tests and other duties to his or her data collectors.

## 3.2 Scheduling Training Activities

Each quarter, every district must conduct at least one day of statistical programs training for each person involved in data collection. To conduct this training, districts have the option of rescheduling or canceling all statistical programs tests for one day each quarter. If a district decides to reschedule or cancel statistical programs tests for a day to conduct comprehensive training, the MSP must adhere strictly to the guidelines provided each quarter that are found on the *Non-Training Dates TSSR* page (Figure 3.2.0–1).

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® TSSR SYSTEM**

Home Quarter To Date Year To Date Non-Training Dates Tests Not Received Logout

**QUARTERLY TRAINING DAY POLICY**  
 13:03 Thursday, May 12, 2005  
 PQ3 FY2005  
 SPSC: NOVA  
 AREA: Southwest  
 DISTRICT: Dallas

Test Dates					
04/04/2005	04/22/2005	04/26/2005	04/27/2005	04/28/2005	05/05/2005
05/11/2005	05/13/2005	05/14/2005	05/26/2005	06/01/2005	06/06/2005
06/08/2005	06/17/2005	06/21/2005			

Policy allows the option of rescheduling or not conducting all statistical programs tests for one day each postal quarter in order to conduct training. If the district chooses not to conduct all tests for a day, the training day may not be on any of the above test days. If tests will be rescheduled or not conducted, selection of any Quarterly Training Day or change to selected day must be coordinated with the SPSC. For those districts with APO/FPO tests, if a training day is selected on a day with an APO/FPO test, the test must be rescheduled. If no dates are shown above, then all dates are available.

Last Updated: 02/18/2003

Figure 3.2.0–1. TSSR System: Non-Training Dates Page

Each quarter the Test Status Statistics Report (TSSR) System Non-Training Dates displays the days that are “blocked out” as a test-sensitive day. Before scheduling training, refer to the non-training dates report from the TSSR page. This page can be accessed by selecting *TSSR* under the *Reports* section of the *Statistical Programs* Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/statprog/>.

If the district chooses not to conduct all tests for a day, the training day may not be on any of the test dates displayed on the non-training dates page. If tests will be rescheduled or not conducted, selection of any quarterly training date or change to selected day must be coordinated with the Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC). For those districts with Army Post Office /Fleet Post Office (APO/FPO) tests, if a training day is selected on a day with an APO/FPO test, the test must be rescheduled.

If no dates are shown on the *Non-Training Dates* page, then all dates are available. Additional in-depth information about training is provided in Chapter 5.

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### 3.3 Scheduling Process Review Activities

Each district must conduct observations of either live or simulated tests to ensure that all data collectors are employing proper test procedures. For each program that they participate in (Origin-Destination Information System - Revenue, Pieces and Weights (ODIS-RPW), System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS), System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI), Carrier Cost Systems, Transportation Cost Systems (TRACS), In-Office Cost System (IOCS), etc.), every data collector (DCT, cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc.) must be observed according to the minimum requirements listed below:

- A data collector with less than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least twice during the first year in that program.
- A data collector with more than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least once during the fiscal year in that program.

The finance manager and MSP are responsible for initiating action for any improvement opportunities noted during the observations. Additional in-depth information about process review is provided in Chapter 6.

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## 3.4 Test Schedules

The MSP plays an important role in the scheduling process. Each statistical program has a schedule of tests that are partitioned and assigned to each district. These tests are derived from various informational sources and must be completed each quarter, with the exception of IOCS, which is bi-weekly.

- ODIS-RPW test schedules are generated from the mail exit points (MEPs) and combined originating units (COUs) that MSPs establish for their district.
- Carrier Cost Systems schedules are produced from the following two sources:
  - **City Carrier Cost System (CCCS):** The sampling frame is a list of city carrier letter routes from the Postal Service Address Information System (AIS) file. The frame of city routes excludes city carrier routes classified as unique (firm holdouts) and other unusual firm delivery routes.
  - **Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS):** The rural route schedules are generated from the Rural Route Payroll File which is maintained at the Eagan Accounting Service Center (ASC).
- The TRACS schedules are generated from the contract transportation files.
- SIRVO-IODIS schedules are generated from Military and International Dispatch Accountability System (MIDAS) data.
- SIRVI tests are conducted daily and test receptacles are selected by the receipt verification system (RVS).
- IOCS sample selections are derived from payroll files using an algorithm of Social Security numbers combined with a percentage of all the subject employees in the IOCS panel offices across the country.

Once the test schedules are generated by the appropriate program area, they are then transmitted to the Postal Data Center mainframe computer located in San Mateo, CA. San Mateo makes the samples available to each district.

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## 3.5 ODIS-RPW Test Policies

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



ODIS-RPW is a continuous probability sample of all mail exiting the postal system, and a continuous probability sample of registered, insured, Collect on Delivery (COD) and Certificates of Mailing (COM) mailpieces entering the postal system. A destinating sampling unit is defined as all mail exiting the system on a specific date through a specific MEP. An originating sampling unit (COU) is defined as registered, insured, COD and COM mail entering the system on a specific date through retail window units. For a MEP or COU, a data collector visits the test site, samples the mail, and records weight, revenue, and additional characteristics observed from the mailpiece. From this sample data, estimates are developed each quarter. The sample is designed to yield specified levels of statistical accuracy for major mail classes on a quarterly basis. The ODIS-RPW program schedules approximately 135,000 tests per year.

This section provides guidelines to the MSP for administering ODIS-RPW tests. This section also covers policies for scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume ODIS-RPW tests.

### 3.5.1

#### Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the ODIS-RPW sample file on the CODES Web Base Unit. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests using the eDCT Scheduler. The MSP must ensure that sample files are downloaded to CODES Laptops. The sample file contains the sampled MEP and COU information and scheduled test dates. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and download the samples to the laptop.

It is the MSP's responsibility to maintain the status of ODIS-RPW tests on the CODES Web Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume status. The reason for rescheduling and canceling must also be coded. Each test on the CODES Web Base Unit must be accounted for.

### 3.5.2

#### Rescheduling

It is the MSP's responsibility to ensure that all ODIS-RPW tests are conducted as originally scheduled. Rescheduling tests is not an optional procedure, and must not be used as a means of managing data collection resources. Every effort must be made to conduct ODIS-RPW tests as originally scheduled. The MSP is required to keep a pool of trained data collectors (DCTs, cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc.). When scheduling problems arise, such as routine lack of trained data collectors, the MSP must reevaluate staffing requirements, employee work schedules, and MEP designs. The MSP must then make the necessary changes that will correct any scheduling problems. If help is needed in any of the above areas, contact the SPSC.



**Note:** Adequate backup personnel should be trained and ready in case of unexpected absences. Employee illness is not justification for missing an ODIS-RPW test.

If circumstances are such that the rescheduling or canceling of a test cannot be avoided, follow the procedures in section 3.5.2.2.

### 3.5.2.1 Reasons that Could Lead to Rescheduling Tests

The MSP is required to review all tests prior to approving the data for release to the mainframe. MSPs should take special care to identify any test with missing or incorrect data or other evidence that requires tests to be rescheduled. The ODIS-RPW test must be rescheduled due to any of the following situations:

- The test is incomplete due to missing a substantial amount of mail (e.g., missing a complete dispatch of mail or missing bypass mail).
- There was an equipment failure and no backup laptop was available (e.g., the CODES Laptop failed during a test and the data collector was unable to complete the test).
- The test was taken on the wrong MEP (e.g., letter mail processing stream instead of flat mail processing stream).
- The test was not conducted due to quarterly training date (exempted from TSSR).
- No one was scheduled to take the test (e.g., the test was forgotten).
- There is no trained data collector available to take the test.
- Extraordinary weather or environmental or hazardous conditions (e.g., bomb scare or other act of terrorism) (section 3.5.6).
- Test data was corrupt and not recoverable by CODES Computer Support Center (CCSC).
- Included or excluded a substantial amount of mail in error.

If resources are not available to reschedule the test, call the SPSC.

### 3.5.2.2 Rescheduling Procedures

ODIS-RPW tests are critical to transit time analysis, performance measurement systems, flex budgeting process, and the rate setting process. Analyses of historical revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems data show that mail class volumes by day of the week are significantly different. Therefore, rescheduling a test to a different day of the week has a potential to overestimate or underestimate some classes of mail. Every attempt must be made to conduct tests as originally scheduled.

If a test needs to be rescheduled, the MSP must reschedule it as follows:

- For the same day of the week and within the same month in which the test was originally scheduled.
- If a test that is scheduled for the last week of the month needs to be rescheduled, reschedule it to the same day of the week in the first week of the next month.
- If a test that is scheduled during the last 7 days of the quarter needs to be rescheduled, it may be rescheduled on any day within the last 7 days of the quarter.
- If a test cannot be rescheduled in the preferred manner, try to reschedule the test so as to avoid an administrative canceled test.
- Do not reschedule a test to a day that would result in another test being rescheduled.
- Do not reschedule tests for the quarterly training date.

### 3.5.3 Canceling

The MSP must avoid cancellations whenever possible. The CODES Web Base Unit software provides two types of test cancellations: *Unit No Longer Exists*, and *Administrative*.

It is important to select the correct option because the inflation factors are adjusted differently for each. Select the correct option as outlined below:

- **Unit No Longer Exists:** Use this canceling option whenever a MEP or COU unit no longer exists. Record this type of cancellation as a unit no longer exists cancellation. If the MEP/COU has been changed in the MEP System after the sample selection was generated for the quarter, continue to take the test based on how the MEP/COU unit had been listed at the time the sample selection was generated.
- **Administrative:** Use this canceling option whenever a test cannot be taken or rescheduled within the aforementioned rescheduling guidelines. Record any such cancellation as an administrative cancel.

### 3.5.4 Delinquent Tests

Every test must be accounted for. If the MSP is unsure of how to treat the test, he or she may contact the SPSC.

### 3.5.5 Zero Volume Tests

A zero volume test is a test on a MEP or COU for which there was no mail volume on the day of the test. A zero volume test is reported on the CODES Web Base Unit. Typically, MEPs and COUs should be designed as large as possible to minimize the occurrence of zero volume tests. The MSP must review the reason for the zero volume test to determine if a change in MEP design is warranted.

### 3.5.6 Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions

To protect the validity of the systems, tests must be taken as scheduled even when there are extraordinary weather or environmental conditions. The general rule is that if a unit scheduled to be tested has mail available for delivery, then that mail must be tested. If the data collector cannot get to the test location, the test must be rescheduled. If the unit to be tested has no mail available for delivery on the day of the test, then a zero volume test is submitted. If a unit is tested on a day after the occurrence of an extraordinary weather or environmental event, the test must include all mail from the ending cutoff time of the day before the test day through the cutoff time of the test day (test day mail).



**Example:** After cutoff time on June 9, severe weather results in the flooding of your city; no mail is processed or is available for delivery on June 9 when MEP Unit A is scheduled to be tested. Complete the test by following the procedures for submitting a zero volume test. On June 10, MEP Unit B is to be tested but operations have yet to resume and no mail is available for delivery. Again, submit a zero volume test. On June 11, MEP Unit C is to be tested and operations have resumed. All mail for this unit received since the ending cutoff time June 10 through the ending cutoff time June 11 must be included in the test. The volume for this test will be large since it includes all mail held upstream.

The MSP should contact his or her SPSC if he or she is in doubt about the application of these guidelines to the specific situation.

### 3.5.7 Handling ODIS-RPW Test Conflicts with CCCS and RCCS Tests

If there is a conflict between an ODIS-RPW test and a CCCS test, the ODIS-RPW test must be conducted before the mail is cased. The CCCS test must be conducted after the mail is cased. In contrast, the RCCS test must be conducted before the mail is cased. Data collectors may consult with their MSPs and SPSC for scheduling procedures to ensure that no conflicts arise. Remember, test rescheduling is not a matter of convenience.

## 3.6 Carrier Cost Systems Test Policies

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Carrier Cost Systems are used to distribute carrier costs for delivering the various classes, subclasses of mail, and special services. Since the compensation methodology differs for city carriers and rural carriers, there are separate tests to collect carrier cost data. Both tests involve counting class and subclass volumes for individual delivery points. The tests are not used to set work standards or measure carrier performance. The data are used to distribute about \$5 billion in carrier payroll costs to classes and subclasses of mail. The data are also used to determine how mail volume affects the number of stops and deliveries a carrier must make.

The CCCS test is used to record mail information for a sample of the Postal Service's city delivery letter routes. Information for Parcel Post and other special purpose routes, such as relay or combination, is not collected with this test. Approximately 8,400 CCCS tests a year are taken on a random sample of city carrier letter routes. The sampling frame is a list of city carrier letter routes from the Postal Service's AIS file. The frame of city routes excludes city carrier routes classified as unique (firm holdouts) and other unusual firm delivery routes.

For each sampled route, a subsample of stops (i.e., points along a carrier's route at which the carrier physically stops to deliver mail) is selected. For each selected stop, the number of residential and business deliveries, and the volume of mail by shape and rate category are recorded. The data are used to estimate possible stops for the three stop types: (1) business and mixed business/residential, (2) single-delivery residential, and (3) multi-delivery residential. Actual and possible deliveries are estimated for all three types of stops. For each of the three types of stops, the sample data are also used to estimate the distribution of mail volume by shape, and within shape, the distribution to mail category. Additionally, counts of collection mail by class are also obtained for the sampled routes.

The RCCS test is used to record mail information for a random sample of the Postal Service's rural delivery routes. Approximately 6,400 RCCS tests a year are taken on a random sample of rural carrier routes. The data collector samples mailpieces for delivery on the sampled route and identifies the sampled mailpieces by class, subclass and compensation category. For delivered mail volume, estimates are produced for various compensation categories of mail. Additionally, a count of all mail collected on the sampled route is obtained. For collected mail, estimates are produced for letters and flats, and parcels by rate category, and certified and registered mail.

The Carrier Cost System test must be rescheduled if the test cannot be conducted at the scheduled time or if the data is corrupt. Any other special situations should be referred to the SPSC. For more information on rescheduling tests, see sections 3.6.2.2 and 3.6.3.2.

### 3.6.1 Carrier Cost Systems Test Policies

The Carrier Cost Systems are used to distribute carrier costs for delivering the various classes and subclasses of mail and special services. Since the compensation methodology differs for city carriers and rural carriers, there are separate tests to collect carrier cost data. Both tests involve counting class and subclass volumes. The tests are not used to set work standards or measure carrier performance.

The following policies should be observed when conducting Carrier Cost Systems tests:

- All city and rural Carrier Cost Systems tests should be completed as scheduled.
- If a test cannot be completed as scheduled, the MSP must refer to the reschedule policy.
- The MSP must enter the collection mail data on PS Form 2846, *City Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data* and PS Form 2848, *Rural Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data* into the CODES Base Unit within 7 days after the test.
- The MSP is required to review all tests on a regular basis prior to transmitting data to the mainframe.
- The MSP should take special care to identify any test records that contain incorrect data or other evidence that requires a test to be rescheduled.
- The Carrier Cost system test must be rescheduled if the test cannot be conducted at the scheduled time.
- If a route no longer exists or the facility is closed, the MSP must contact the SPSC.

### 3.6.2 City Carrier Cost System

The CCCS test is used to record mail information for a sample of the Postal Service's city deliver letter routes. Information for Parcel Post and other special purpose routes, such as relay or collection, is not collected with this test. Approximately 8,400 CCCS tests a year are taken on a random sample of city carrier letter routes. The sampling frame is a list of city carrier letter routes from the AIS file. The frame of city routes excludes city carrier routes classified as unique (firm holdouts) and other unusual firm deliver routes.

#### 3.6.2.1 Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the CCCS sample file on a weekly basis from the CODES Base Unit. The sample file contains the sample route information and scheduled test dates. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and upload the sampled test data to the CODES Base Unit.

The MSP must maintain the status of CCCS tests on the CODES Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, deleting, and entering zero volume status. The reason for canceling must also be keyed in the space provided.

### 3.6.2.2 Rescheduling Tests

The MSP must review all tests on a regular basis prior to uploading to the mainframe. MSPs should take special care to identify any test records that contain incorrect data or other evidence that require a test to be rescheduled.

The following is a list of reasons that could lead to rescheduling CCCS tests:

- A carrier familiar with the route is unavailable.
- Severe weather prevents mail delivery on the route.



**Note:** If severe weather prevents mail delivery on the test route, then the test should be rescheduled.

- A route inspection.
- Corrupt data.

Any other special situations should be referred to the SPSC.

### Rescheduling Procedures

Reschedule a test on the same day of the week, usually one week before or after the original test date. If a knowledgeable mail carrier will not be available on the new date, reschedule the test to the same day of the week, as close to the original date as possible. If the test was scheduled for the last week of the quarter, then reschedule the test to any day of the last week. If this is not possible, do not cancel the test. It remains delinquent. Every effort must be made for the test to be taken during the scheduled postal quarter.

All CCCS tests are to be completed in the quarter for which they were originally scheduled even if a test appears on the TSSR report under the *Test Not Received* category during the month.

The following exceptions apply to the procedures described above:

In this situation...	Follow these guidelines...
The test was scheduled for the last 7 days of the quarter.	Reschedule the test to any day within the last 7 days of the quarter. If this is not possible, do not cancel a missed test. It remains delinquent.
A route no longer exists.	Call the SPSC.

### **Rescheduling a Test when Lodging is Required**

When overnight lodging is required for rescheduling a CCCS test, the data collector should choose the first applicable rule listed in RM 3–3.

#### **3.6.2.3 Canceling**

For CCCS tests, it is extremely rare that a situation arises that warrants canceling a test. Before canceling a test, contact the SPSC. Give a reason for the cancellation before exiting the option.

#### **3.6.2.4 Delinquent Tests**

A delinquent test is a test that has not been received at the mainframe according to the transmission schedule. An MSP must review the reasons for delinquent tests and correct the causes.

#### **3.6.2.5 Record a Zero Volume Test**

The option to record a zero volume test is used to identify a city carrier route for which there is no volume delivered on the day of the test. Tests that cannot be taken because of bad weather are not zero volume tests. Examples of a zero volume test are a vertical improved mail (VIM) or business route that does not deliver mail on Saturday, or a route with fewer stops than the last digit of the testid (initial stop to be tested). The MSP must enter the reason the test was identified as a zero volume test.

#### **3.6.2.6 Record VIM Route Data**

City carrier routes that are VIM routes are to be tested; however, if there is a VIM route that cannot be tested, the CODES Base Unit is used to identify that test. The data required for the VIM route that could not be tested must be recorded.

#### **3.6.2.7 Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions**

If severe weather prevents mail delivery on the test route, then the test should be rescheduled.

### **3.6.3 Rural Carrier Cost System**

The RCCS test is used to record mail information for a random sample of the Postal Service's rural delivery routes. The data collectors sample the mail before casing by using a mailpiece skip interval and a randomly generated start number. Sampled mailpieces are identified by class, subclass, and rural route compensation category. For each sampled rural carrier route, collected letters and flats, parcels, Certified Mail, and Registered Mail are counted and recorded. Collection mail from collection boxes and neighborhood delivery and collection box units (NDCBUs) is not counted.

### 3.6.3.1 Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the RCCS sample file on a weekly basis from the CODES Base Unit. The sample file contains the sample route information and scheduled test dates. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and has them upload the sampled test data to the CODES Base Unit.

The MSP must review the status of RCCS tests on the CODES Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, and deleting. The reason for canceling a test must also be keyed in the space provided.

### 3.6.3.2 Rescheduling Tests

The MSP must review all tests on a regular basis prior to uploading to the mainframe. MSPs should take special care to identify any test records that contain incorrect data or other evidence that require a test to be rescheduled.

The following is a list of reasons that could lead to rescheduling tests:

- Severe weather prevents mail delivery on the route.
- National mail count.
- Corrupt data.

Any other special situations should be referred to the SPSC.

#### Rescheduling Procedures

Tests must be rescheduled on the same day of the week, usually one week before or after the original test date. If a knowledgeable mail carrier will not be available on the new date, the test should be rescheduled as close to the original date as possible. If the test was scheduled for the last week of the quarter, then it should be rescheduled to any day of the last week. If this is not possible, the test must not be canceled; the test remains delinquent. Every effort must be made for the test to be taken during the scheduled postal quarter.

All RCCS tests are to be completed in the quarter for which they were originally scheduled, even if a test appears on the TSSR report under the category *Test Not Received* category during the month.

The following exceptions apply to the procedures listed above:

In this situation...	Follow these guidelines...
The test was scheduled for the last 7 days of the quarter.	If the test cannot be rescheduled earlier in the quarter on the same day of the week, reschedule the test to any day within the last 7 days of the quarter. If this is not possible, do not cancel a missed test. It remains delinquent.
A route no longer exists.	Call the SPSC.

### **Rescheduling a Test when Lodging is Required**

When lodging is required for rescheduling a test, the data collector should choose the first applicable rule listed in RM 3–3.

#### **3.6.3.3 Canceling**

For RCCS tests, it is extremely rare that a situation will arise to warrant canceling a test. Before canceling a test, the MSP must contact the SPSC and give a reason for the cancellation.

#### **3.6.3.4 Delinquent**

A delinquent RCCS test is a test that has not been received at the mainframe. An MSP must review the reasons for delinquent tests and correct the causes.

#### **3.6.3.5 Zero Volume Tests**

Zero volume tests are not applicable to RCCS.

#### **3.6.3.6 Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions**

If severe weather prevents mail delivery on the test route, then the test should be rescheduled.

#### **3.6.3.7 CODES Base Unit Review Policy**

Detailed CODES Base Unit review policy information for RCCS is available in section 8.3.

## 3.7 Transportation Cost System Test Policies

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



TRACS is a statistical sampling and data collection system that provides information to estimate costs by subclass for the major purchased transportation cost accounts. The Postal Service distributes approximately \$4 billion each year for the purchased transportation of mail on commercial airlines, network air, and trucking routes. Since the characteristics of purchased transportation vary significantly by mode, TRACS uses separate sampling systems to collect data. These systems are for the following modes:

- Highway.
- Rail.
- Commercial air.
- Day air networks.
- Night air networks.

Over 17,000 truck, airline, and rail van trips are sampled each year in order to distribute these costs to the categories of mail.

This section provides guidelines to the MSP for administering TRACS tests. This section also covers policies for scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume TRACS tests.

### 3.7.1

#### Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the TRACS sample file on the CODES Web Base Unit. The sample file contains the test information and scheduled test dates. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and the MSP downloads the samples to the laptops.

The MSP must maintain the status of TRACS tests on the CODES Web Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume status. The reason for rescheduling and canceling must also be coded. Each test on the CODES Web Base Unit must be accounted for.

### 3.7.2

#### Replacement Tests

Sometimes a TRACS test is not conducted in a normal manner. Depending on the situation, it might be appropriate to conduct a replacement test on the same day. Typically, the data collector encounters the situation when they go to the test facility to conduct the test. Decision rules on when to conduct a replacement test and how to select the replacement are provided in RMs 3–4 through 3–6, and also in Handbook F-65, *Data Collection User's Guide for Cost Systems*.

The following list specifies reasons for conducting a replacement TRACS test:

- TRACS highway tests:
  - A permanent routing change.
- TRACS rail tests:
  - No rail van arriving from the scheduled origin bulk mail center (BMC).
- TRACS commercial air tests:
  - There was no mail for the sampled flight on the test day.



**Note:** Replacement tests are not an option for network air tests.



**Note:** Commercial air tests may be rescheduled to a flight before the originally scheduled flight.

### 3.7.3

#### Rescheduling Tests

If a TRACS test cannot be performed as originally scheduled, and if it is not appropriate to conduct a replacement test, then the test must be rescheduled.

The following list specifies reasons to reschedule a TRACS highway, rail, commercial air, or network air test:

- The test was taken on the wrong sample unit.
- A laptop failure occurred, and there was no backup laptop available.
- There was no data collector available to complete the test.

Additional reasons to reschedule a TRACS test can be determined by following the responses on the TRACS Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Trees provided in RMs 3–4, 3–5, and 3–6.

#### 3.7.3.1

##### Rescheduling Procedure

Regardless of the rescheduling rules that follow, all TRACS tests must be completed in the quarter for which they were originally scheduled.

The following list explains TRACS rescheduling rules:

- Take the rescheduled test one week later than the originally scheduled test date, on the same day of the week.



**Example:** A highway test scheduled on a particular contract route on Saturday, week 1 of quarter 2 must be taken on Saturday, week 2, on the same contract route.

- A missed test in the last week of the quarter must be rescheduled within that week.
- Missed tests on the last day of the quarter must be canceled.

- If a TRACS test that was rescheduled from a previous week must be rescheduled for a second time, follow the same procedure used for the original rescheduling. The rescheduling procedure should be followed until the test is completed. If a third reschedule is necessary, the test can be conducted on any day of the week.

## 3.7.4

**Canceling Tests**

Sometimes a TRACS test cannot be performed as originally scheduled, nor can the test be replaced or rescheduled. These situations are not covered by the *TRACS Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Trees*. (Table 3–1) describes exceptional situations that are appropriate for canceling TRACS tests, as well as the associated cancellation codes.

Table 3–1. TRACS Cancellation Codes

Cancellation Code	Subsystem	Exceptional Situation
1	Highway	The test facility no longer exists.
2	Commercial Air	The test facility no longer uses transportation provided by commercial airlines.
3	Commercial Air	The test facility is closed for more than 24 hours.
4	Network Air	The sampled flight is canceled/not operated on test day.
5	Network Air	The test facility is closed for more than 24 hours.
6	Rail	By the end of the quarter, no van with mail has arrived from any BMC since the day the test was scheduled/rescheduled.
7	Highway	The test facility is closed when the truck is scheduled to arrive, and there is a safety concern for the data collector to collect the data when the facility is closed. <b>Note:</b> The MSP must contact the SPSC before the scheduled date of the test to discuss possible alternatives to avoid canceling the test. The test may only be canceled as a last resort.
8	All subsystems	The test is cancelled to provide time for quarterly training.
9	All subsystems	Unable to conduct or reschedule before Quarter end.

For further information on TRACS highway, rail, and air subsystem reschedule, replacement, and zero volume tests, refer to RM 3–4, 3–5, and 3–6.

If one of these exceptional situations is encountered, the MSP should provide the SPSC with the TEST ID, test date, and cancellation code. These tests can then be properly reflected on the TSSR report as canceled.

The MSP may cancel a TRACS test only for training, cancellation code 8 (Table 3–1). For all other cancellation codes, the MSP must call the SPSC to cancel a test.

For exceptional situations not described above and not covered by the *TRACS Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Trees* (RM 3–4, 3–5, and 3–6), the MSP should contact the SPSC immediately and provide the TEST ID, a brief description of the situation, and a contact phone number in case additional information is needed. A TRACS test is canceled if it cannot be rescheduled within the same quarter and must not be rescheduled across quarters.

### **3.7.5 Delinquent Tests**

Every test must be accounted for. If the MSP is unsure of how to treat the test, he or she should contact the SPSC.

### **3.7.6 Zero Volume Tests**

Sometimes a data collector records a zero volume test. Decision rules for when to record a zero volume test are provided in Handbook F-65, *Data Collection User's Guide for Cost Systems*, sections 5.2.1. Unlike other statistical programs, TRACS zero volume tests are recorded in the data collection software and not on the CODES Web Base Unit.



**Note:** Zero volume tests do not apply to rail or commercial air tests.

### **3.7.7 Extraordinary Situations**

Most situations can be addressed using the decision rules provided in Handbook F-65, sections 5.2.1, 6.2.1, and 8.2.1. The *TRACS Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Trees* (RM 3–4, 3–5, and 3–6) also help in determining extraordinary situations. For situations not covered by the decision rules, contact the SPSC.

## 3.8 SIRVO-IODIS Test Policies

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



SIRVO-IODIS is a probability sample of mail destined for foreign countries. A sampling unit is defined as a day's worth of mail for sortation or combination of sortations going to a specific international destination. When a sampling unit has been selected, the data collector must test the mail immediately before the receptacles or bulk containers are closed for dispatch. The data collector records mail characteristics of the mail within the receptacles or a subsample of bulk containers. From the sample data, estimates of total revenue, pieces, weight, and travel time are developed for the categories of mail.

SIRVO-IODIS has been interfaced with MIDAS at those exchange offices with MIDAS operations. In these locations, as the expeditor pulls down and prepares the mail for dispatch, MIDAS selects the sample receptacle for data recording. The data collector is notified that a sample receptacle is available for recording the mail characteristics of the mail within the receptacle. Once the receptacle is sampled, the data collector closes the receptacle, attaches the MIDAS dispatch label, and returns the receptacle for dispatch.

This section provides guidelines to the MSP for administering SIRVO-IODIS tests. This section also covers policies for scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume SIRVO-IODIS tests.

Statistical Programs has made every effort to design the sample selection in such a way as to reduce scheduling conflicts; however, at times an MSP might have to reschedule or cancel a test for some reason. The MSP should reschedule or cancel a SIRVO-IODIS test only as a last resort and only according to the procedures published in this section. Rescheduling or canceling tests must not be used as a means of managing resources.

The MSP must ensure that these tests are performed as scheduled on the sample selection file. Under certain circumstances, however, the MSP has some limited flexibility to reschedule or cancel tests. If circumstances are such that the rescheduling or canceling of a test cannot be avoided, follow the guidelines stated in this section. The MSP must always keep a detailed list of canceled and rescheduled tests and record any relevant information regarding the schedule changes made.

### 3.8.1

#### Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the SIRVO-IODIS sample file on the CODES Web Base Unit. The sample file contains the test schedule information. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests on a weekly basis and have them download the sample to the laptop quarterly.

The MSP must maintain the status of SIRVO-IODIS tests on the CODES Web Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume status.

The reason for rescheduling and canceling must also be coded. Each test on the CODES Web Base Unit must be accounted for.

### 3.8.2 Rescheduling

Revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems test data are critical to Postal Service operations and the rate setting process; therefore, always conduct the SIRVO-IODIS tests as originally scheduled. Never use rescheduling as a means of managing resources. The MSP is required to keep a cadre of trained data collectors. When scheduling problems arise, such as routine lack of trained data collectors, the MSP must re-evaluate staffing requirements and employee work schedules. The MSP must then make the necessary changes that will correct any test scheduling problems. If help is needed in any of the above areas, contact the SPSC.

Analyses of historical revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems data show that mail class volumes by day of the week are significantly different. Rescheduling should be performed only as a last resort. Test rescheduling is not a matter of convenience.

#### 3.8.2.1 Reasons that Could Lead to Rescheduling Tests

The MSP must review all tests on a regular basis before approving the test. MSPs should take special care to identify tests that contain incorrect data or other evidence that require tests to be rescheduled. Statistical Programs accepts only the situations listed below as reasons that may lead to rescheduling a test. Use the following guidelines to determine the appropriate course of action.

- The test was incomplete due to missing a complete dispatch of mail.
- The test was taken on the wrong sample unit.
- There was an equipment failure (e.g., the CODES Laptop failed during a test and there was no backup laptop available).
- There was no data collector available to complete the test.
- The test was exempted from computation for the TSSR because it was the quarterly training date.



**Note:** Employee illness or a statement that a test was overlooked are not justifications for missing a test. Backup personnel should be trained and ready in case of unexpected absences.

#### 3.8.2.2 Rescheduling Procedures

SIRVO-IODIS tests are critical to transit time analysis, performance measurement systems, terminal dues calculations, and the rate setting process. Every attempt must be made to conduct tests as originally

scheduled. The following guidelines have been developed so that the MSP can maximize the number of tests conducted.

Tests may be rescheduled on the same day of the week before or after the original scheduled test date. If the test is scheduled for the last week of the quarter, then the test may be rescheduled for any day of that week.

Analyses of historical revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems data show that mail class volumes by day of the week are significantly different. Rescheduling should be performed only as a last resort; not as a matter of convenience.

### **3.8.3 Canceling**

The MSP may cancel a SIRVO-IODIS test, but must avoid cancellations whenever possible. MSPs may use the following guidelines to cancel a SIRVO-IODIS test:

- A scheduled SIRVO-IODIS test should be canceled by the MSP when the sample unit no longer exists. If a sample unit is changed after the sample selection was generated for the quarter, contact the SPSC for updates and any actions to be taken.
- Cancel a SIRVO-IODIS test on training days if rescheduling is not possible.

### **3.8.4 Delinquent Tests**

The MSP must account for every test. If the MSP is unsure of how to treat the test, he or she may contact the SPSC.

### **3.8.5 Zero Volume Tests**

A zero volume test is a test for which there was no mail processed for the test country on the day of the test. A zero volume test is reported on the CODES Web Base Unit.

### **3.8.6 Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions**

To protect the validity of the systems, tests must be taken as scheduled even when there are extraordinary weather or environmental conditions. The general rule is that if a scheduled test has mail available, then that mail must be tested. If the data collector cannot get to the test location, the test must be rescheduled on the CODES Web Base Unit. If the test cannot be rescheduled, then cancel the test.

The MSP should contact the SPSC if he or she is in doubt about the application of these guidelines to the specific situation.

### 3.8.7 Weigh-Only Procedures

For all weigh-only receptacles, the data collector should enter pieces from a substitute receptacle into the CODES Laptop at a later time than original pieces are entered. The data collector may use the following guidelines when entering substitute pieces into the CODES Laptop:

- Select substitute pieces that have the same general characteristics (destination country and city, label class, transportation mode, receptacle type, etc.) as those pieces in the weigh-only receptacle.
- Never enter substitute pieces into the CODES Laptop on the same day as the original test. If substitute pieces are entered on the same day as the original test, pieces could be double counted for that test.
- Enter substitute pieces within seven days of the original test date. If the substitute pieces are entered during the last week of the quarter, enter by the last day of the quarter.
- The total weight of the substitute pieces should not be more than the original weight.
- The total weight of the substitute pieces should not be more than one kilogram below the original weight.
- For weigh-only receptacles occurring during the last week of the quarter, substitute pieces should be entered by the last day of the quarter. If substitute pieces are not found, transfer the weigh-only test to the CODES Web Base Unit and review and approve the test by the last day of the quarter.

## 3.9 SIRVI Test Policies

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



SIRVI tests use probability sampling of mail that originates in the countries participating in the relevant terminal dues agreements and destinates in the United States. The mail is sampled at various international exchange offices (air and surface) that serve as original entry points of the mail into the U.S. Test schedules are prepared by Headquarters and provided to participating districts. The schedule identifies the test ID and test date, as well as the target receptacles for each test. Target receptacles are defined by the following four characteristics:

- Country.
- Label class.
- Transportation mode.
- Receptacle type.

All original entry mail received at the facility for the test country during the 24-hour test day is to be sampled. The data are used to compute the average weight and number of items of mail from each of the countries covered by the agreements exchanging mail with the Postal Service.

The SIRVI test selects a fairly uniform number of receptacles per day at a given exchange office based upon workload constraints and with tests allocated in proportion to the total flows received at the exchange office. This is referred to as the “day sample.” Whenever possible, SIRVI uses the automated RVS, effectively our inbound MIDAS system. As the expeditor is entering data related to the incoming mail, RVS selects the sample receptacle for data recording. The data collector is notified that a sample receptacle is available for recording the mail characteristics of the mail within the selected receptacle. Once the receptacle is sampled, the data collector closes the receptacle, enters it back into RVS, and returns it for processing.

When foreign postal agencies dispatch mail to the United States, they pay the Postal Service a portion of the costs to sort, transport, and deliver that mail to its final U.S. address. These payments, which are called terminal dues, are made by the originating country to the United States Postal Service for delivering their mail.

In general, the measurement of weight and volume passing from one postal administration to another is determined by the destinating country. The Postal Service collects census weight information from postal documents and estimates volume via the SIRVI.

It is important that the Postal Service accurately estimate the volume of mail dispatched to the United States because these estimates are used to charge the originating country the terminal dues owed to the Postal Service. The accuracy that data collectors maintain in measuring inbound foreign mail

ensures that the Postal Service is collecting all the revenue that is due from foreign postal agencies.

This chapter describes how to prepare for and to conduct a SIRVI test by giving step-by-step procedures.

### **3.9.1 Scheduling Tests**

The MSP accesses the SIRVI sample file on the CODES Web Base Unit. The sample file contains the test schedule information. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and have them download the sample to the laptop on a quarterly basis.

It is the MSP's responsibility to maintain the status of SIRVI tests on the CODES Web Base Unit. This includes canceling, and zero volume status. The reason for canceling must also be coded. Each test must be accounted for on the CODES Web Base Unit.

### **3.9.2 Rescheduling**

Rescheduling tests is not applicable to SIRVI because SIRVI tests are a day sample.

Never reschedule a SIRVI test. When scheduling problems arise, such as routine lack of trained data collectors, the MSP must re-evaluate staffing requirements and employee work schedules.

### **3.9.3 Canceling**

The MSP may cancel a SIRVI test, but must avoid cancellations whenever possible.

The MSP must use the following guidelines to cancel a SIRVI test:

- Cancel a SIRVI test if adequate data collection personnel are not available to perform the test throughout the whole 24-hour test period.
- Cancel a SIRVI test if the facility is closed.
- Cancel a SIRVI test for quarterly training dates.

### **3.9.4 Delinquent Tests**

The MSP must account for every test. If the MSP is unsure of how to treat the test, he or she should contact the SPSC.

### **3.9.5 Zero Volume Tests**

A zero volume test is a test for which there was no mail volume on the day of the test. A zero volume test is reported on the CODES Web Base Unit. The

MSP must review the reason for the zero volume test to determine if a change in procedures is warranted.

#### 3.9.6

#### **Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions**

To protect the validity of the systems and not introduce bias, tests must be taken as scheduled even when there are extraordinary weather or environmental conditions. The general rule is that if a scheduled test has mail available, then that mail must be tested. If the data collector cannot get to the test location, the test must be administratively canceled on the CODES Web Base Unit. If the unit to be tested has no mail available on the day of the test, then a zero volume test is submitted.

The MSP should contact the SPSC if he or she is in doubt about the application of these guidelines to the specific situation.

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## 3.10 In-Office Cost System Test Policies

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The In-Office Cost System (IOCS) is the primary probability sampling system used to distribute the labor costs of clerks, mail handlers, city carriers, and supervisors to the activities carried out by those employees, particularly activities related to the handling of mail of all classes and rate categories and to the provision of special services. The data are used to distribute over \$23 billion in costs to classes and subclasses of mail. Approximately 760,000 IOCS samples are taken each year.

Sampling is conducted independently for each of four employee groups:

1. Clerks.
2. Mailhandlers.
3. City carriers.
4. Supervisors.

DCTs observe a selected employee at a designated time within the employee's workday. The DCT records the activity being performed by the employee at the time as well as the characteristics of any mail or mail transportation equipment the employee might be handling at the time of the observation.

New IOCS sample files are downloaded from the CODES Web Base Unit every two weeks. Readings are conducted and uploaded on a daily basis.

### 3.10.1

#### Scheduling Readings

The MSP or designee is responsible for accessing the IOCS Readings Schedule Report on the CODES Web Base Unit. This file contains information about the sampled employees and might provide the employees' starting and ending times.

After the file is available on the CODES Web Base Unit, the sampled employees' starting and ending times must be verified. The employees' schedules could have changed since the sample selection was performed. Also, the Readings Schedule Report might not have all sampled employees' starting and ending times.

The MSP or designee may print the *Unscheduled IOCS Report* from the CODES Web Base Unit to verify employee starting and ending times. This report can be printed in an Excel, text, or pdf format. To print the *Unscheduled IOCS Report*, the MSP or designee selects *IOCS* as the *Test Type* in the *Sample Viewer* toolbar; sets the date parameters to the date of the pay period; and then presses the *GO* button. A drop-down menu box displays the number of readings that need to be scheduled as *Schedule XX Samples*, for the dates selected in the *Sample Viewer* toolbar.

To verify or obtain the sampled employees' starting and ending times, the MSP or designee consults the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS), locally maintained office roster, or calls the sampled employee's office.

Once the starting and ending times are obtained and verified, the readings are ready to be scheduled on the CODES Web Base Unit. As the readings are scheduled, the starting and ending times must be updated as appropriate. See Chapter 2 of Handbook F-45, *Data Collection User's Guide for In-Office Cost System* for an explanation of how the scheduled reading time is computed.

After the readings are scheduled, the MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the readings. Sample data are loaded onto the CODES Laptop via a telecommunications link or from a diskette.

### **3.10.2 Rescheduling**

The MSP must ensure that all IOCS readings are conducted at the appropriate times. Rescheduling readings is not an optional procedure, and must not be used as a means of managing data collection resources. Every effort must be made to conduct IOCS readings at the appropriate times. The MSP is required to keep a cadre of trained data collectors. When scheduling problems arise, such as routine lack of trained data collectors, the MSP must re-evaluate staffing requirements and employee work schedules. The MSP must then make the necessary changes that will correct any scheduling problems. If help is needed in any of the above areas, contact the SPSC.



**Note:** Employee illness is not justification for missing a reading. Adequate backup personnel should be trained and ready in case of unexpected absences.

#### **3.10.2.1 Rescheduling IOCS Readings on the CODES Web Base Unit**

The MSP or designee reschedules readings on the CODES Web Base Unit. The appropriate reason code must be entered in the software.

#### **3.10.2.2 Reasons that Could Lead to Rescheduling Readings**

If an IOCS reading is not conducted at the scheduled time, then the reading must be rescheduled. This includes the following situations:

- The reading was missed, forgotten, overlooked, or misplaced.
- The sampled employee's schedule or tour changed.
- No qualified employee was available to take the reading.
- The sampler was unable to locate the employee.
- The sampler was unable to complete the reading within 30 minutes.

- The reading was unusable.
- Difficulty in reaching the employee by phone.
- Other — would include circumstantial reasons.
- Hazardous conditions (weather, bomb scare, etc.).
- Laptop failure and no backup laptop available.
- Corrupt data — test is not recoverable by CODES.
- The reading was scheduled for a quarterly training date and exempted from the TSSR.



**Example:** A reading is scheduled for 07:10. The data collector was not able to get to the reading until 07:45. This is a violation of the 30-minute rule; therefore, the data collector must reschedule the reading.

### 3.10.2.3 Rescheduling Procedures

Every effort must be made to complete all IOCS readings within the calendar quarter (Jan–Mar; Apr–Jun; Jul–Sep; Oct–Dec) for which they were originally scheduled. An IOCS reading may not be rescheduled into a different calendar quarter than the one in which it was originally scheduled. Readings must be rescheduled according to the following guidelines:

- If a reading needs to be rescheduled, the MSP must reschedule it one week later than the original date on the same day of the week as it was originally scheduled. If the reschedule date falls on the quarterly training date, the reading may be rescheduled on the following week.
- If the reading is rescheduled on the same date as another reading on that employee, then the reading must be rescheduled again. There must not be two readings on the same employee on the same date.
- If a reading that was rescheduled from a previous week must be rescheduled again, the same procedures should be followed. The rescheduling procedures should be repeated until the reading is completed.
- If a reading that is scheduled during the last 7 days of the quarter needs to be rescheduled, it may be rescheduled on any day within the last 7 days of the quarter.
- Missed readings that occur on the last day of the quarter may not be rescheduled. Refer to section 3.10.3 for more information on canceling a reading.

The scheduled reading time must be recalculated for rescheduled readings. The reading code (1, 2, 3, or L) remains the same as the originally scheduled reading. All readings on any given day have the same random time. Hence,

the random time for the day on which the reading is rescheduled should be used to calculate the rescheduled reading time.



**Example:** A last (L) reading is scheduled for Monday, January 20 at 14:59. The employee reported at 06:00, and was supposed to work overtime until 15:30, but was sent home at the employee's regular ending time at 14:30. According to IOCS procedures, the reading should have been conducted at 12:59, and now must be rescheduled for Monday, January 27. The random time for January 27 is 00:12. This is a last reading and the employee is scheduled to work until 15:30; therefore, the rescheduled reading time is 14:12.

### 3.10.3 Cancel Readings

The option to cancel an IOCS reading is available on the CODES Web Base Unit. However, the MSP must avoid cancellations whenever possible. The CODES Web Base Unit software provides two types of test cancellations:

- **Quarterly training date:** Use this canceling option whenever the reading is scheduled on the Quarterly Training date as approved by the SPSC.
- **Unable to conduct or reschedule before quarter end:** Use this canceling option whenever a reading cannot be taken or rescheduled within the rescheduling guidelines outlined in section 3.10.2.3.

### 3.10.4 Delinquent Readings

A delinquent reading is a reading that has not been received at the mainframe computer. A delinquent reading should not exist in IOCS; it is not an option. The MSP must review the reasons for delinquent readings and correct the causes.

### 3.10.5 Zero Volume Readings

Zero volume is not applicable for IOCS.

### 3.10.6 Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions

To protect the validity of the data, readings must be taken as scheduled even when there are extraordinary weather or environmental conditions. The general rule is that if the Post Office is in operation at a scheduled reading time, then the reading should be taken.

### 3.10.7 Respondents for Telephone Reading

The MSP must work with all facilities where IOCS telephone readings are conducted to ensure adequate support for telephone readings.

When conducting a telephone reading, the data collector calls the sampled employee's work location and asks for his or her supervisor. If the employee's

supervisor is not available, the data collector should ask for another supervisor or someone else who can assist with the reading. He or she should then read the IOCS questions and instructions to the respondent over the telephone to complete the reading. As with on-site readings, the snapshot should occur consistently when both of the following criteria are met:

- The respondent is sufficiently close to identify the employee as the correct sampled employee.
- The respondent is able to readily and safely isolate any mail or empty equipment that the employee is handling.

The data collector must follow any software instructions and the step-by-step instructions for conducting telephone readings provided in Handbook F-45, *Data Collection User's Guide for In-Office Cost System*, Appendix D.

Telephone readings should only be conducted when on-site readings cannot be taken. Telephone readings are acceptable when the data collector expects the total time to travel, locate the employee at the facility, take the reading, and return to his or her normal duty site to be in excess of 60 minutes. Telephone readings are also acceptable when it is not possible to reach the sampled employee at his or her work location at the scheduled time of the reading. For example, hazardous weather conditions could prevent the data collector from going to a station, branch, or associate office, or he or she could have two readings scheduled at the same time at widely separated locations.

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## 3.11 Test Notification Policy

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The MSP must always notify the facility to be tested prior to any testing. Advance notification helps the facility prepare for the data collector's arrival. The following subsections specify the appropriate notification that should be given for each statistical program.

#### 3.11.1

#### ODIS-RPW Tests

For ODIS-RPW tests, the facility to be tested must be notified at least one hour before the beginning cutoff time (start) of the test. MSPs are to provide notification that will allow adequate time to isolate mail for testing and to ensure all mail received during the test period is included in the test.



**Example:** An ODIS-RPW test is scheduled for Tuesday. The cutoff time is set at 11:00 AM Monday. The minimum notification required for this test is by 10:00 AM on Monday.

#### 3.11.2

#### TRACS Tests

For TRACS tests, the district Statistical Programs office must make the following two calls:

1. A call to prepare in advance of the test date for the TRACS highway, air, or rail test. For specific information that is needed, refer to Handbook F-65, *Data Collection User's Guide for Cost Systems*, section 2.3.
2. A final call no more than 2 days prior to the test date to remind the test site of the pending test.



**Note:** The first call (verification of test site, route, mail arrival time, etc.) may be made anytime after the sample is received for the quarter.

#### 3.11.3

#### Carrier Cost Tests

For Carrier Cost tests, the district Statistical Programs office must make the following three contacts:

1. Contact the postmaster of the test date using e-mail or a letter in the beginning of the quarter to inform him that a test is being conducted in his or her office. An example of a letter used to inform a postmaster about the pending CCCS test is given in RM 3-1, and may be modified as appropriate for the specific situation.

2. Contact the postmaster about an upcoming test a week in advance. This advance notice allows the MSP to ensure that the route exists and enables the postmaster to ensure that a carrier who knows the route is scheduled for the test day. It will also allow the MSP to learn if a CCCS test is being conducted on a VIM route.
3. A final call to the test facility 24 hours in advance of the test to gather additional information for the test and to determine when to arrive at the test site.

For RCCS tests, the district Statistical Programs office must make the following three contacts:

1. Contact the postmaster of the test date using e-mail or a letter in the beginning of the quarter to inform him that a test is being conducted in his or her office. An example of a letter used to inform a postmaster about the pending RCCS test is given in RM 3–2, and may be modified as appropriate for the specific situation.
2. Contact the postmaster about an upcoming test a week in advance. This advance notice allows the MSP to ensure that the route exists and enables the postmaster to ensure that a carrier who knows the route is scheduled for the test day.
3. Also contact the supervisor and carrier one day prior to the test to obtain information needed to properly complete the test. The carrier should be contacted the day before the test before the carrier's last pull-down.



**Example:** An RCCS test is scheduled for Wednesday. The pull-down time is set at 11:00 AM Tuesday. The minimum notification required for this test is by 11:00 AM on Monday.



**Note:** It is extremely important that the MSP calls the Post Office associated with the rural route for testing the day before the test. The MSP must call before the carrier begins the final pull-down of mail on the day before the test. Pulling down mail refers to the process of removing mail from the case in preparation for delivery. A carrier might pull down mail more than once a day. The final pull-down is the last time a carrier pulls down mail before leaving for delivery on a given day.

#### 3.11.4

#### SIRVO-IODIS Tests

For SIRVO-IODIS tests, the MSP will contact the facility manager or designee 24 hours before the test is scheduled to begin. Handbook F-85, *Data Collection User's Guide for International Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement Systems*, section 2.2 also has specific detailed information about test notification of SIRVO-IODIS tests.

For the SIRVO-IODIS non-MIDAS/Bulk Container test, the sample unit is a 24-hour sample unit with the beginning cutoff time typically occurring at midnight of the test day, while the ending cutoff time occurs 24 hours later.

#### 3.11.5

##### **SIRVI Tests**

For SIRVI tests, the MSP will contact the facility manager or designee 24 hours before the test is scheduled to begin. The *Data Collection User's Guide for International Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement Systems* (Handbook F-85), section 2.2 also has specific detailed information about test notification of SIRVI tests.

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## Related Materials for Scheduling Policies

This section includes all the definitions, tables, and related information necessary for Scheduling Policies.

- RM 3–1 Form Letter for Informing the Postmaster of a CCCS Test.
- RM 3–2 Form Letter for Informing the Postmaster of a RCCS Test.
- RM 3–3 Rescheduling a Carrier Cost Systems Test When Lodging is Required.
- RM 3–4 TRACS Highway Subsystem: Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Tree.
- RM 3–5 TRACS Rail Subsystem: Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Tree.
- RM 3–6 TRACS Commercial Air Subsystem: Reschedule and Replacement Decision Tree.



## RM 3–1 Form Letter for Informing the Postmaster of a CCCS Test

Referenced section 3.11.3.

<p><b>UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE</b>          315 District Road / Any District, ST 99999-9998</p>	
DATE:	6/12/05
OUR REF:	SAMPLE LETTER TO INFORM TEST SITE OF TEST SCHEDULE
SUBJECT:	City Carrier Cost System (CCCS), Quarter (1, 2, 3, 4 as appropriate)
TO:	POSTMASTER JONES US POSTAL SERVICE 119 W 4TH ST APPLETON CITY MO 64724-9998

I have attached a schedule of City Carrier Route tests to be taken at your office during Quarter \_\_\_\_.

A data collector from the Statistical Programs Unit will contact you one or two days before each scheduled test to determine the time when the carrier for the route to be tested will begin to tie out mail for delivery. On the test date, the data collector will arrive at your office about one hour before the carrier ties out the mail. If the carrier uses a two-bundle system, inform the DCT of the first tie-out time.

The data collector will conduct the test with the assistance of the carrier. The carrier unions are aware of these tests and the carrier assistance that is needed. The CCCS test is used only to classify mail delivered by carriers. It is not a test of the carrier; rather, the test is designed to aid in the distribution of costs.

The test could delay the carrier up to two hours. If additional time is required for the test, the city carrier may be given overtime and/or street assistance to complete the route. A CCCS test is justification for overtime.

Please inform the carrier of the route selected for a test. Your cooperation and assistance are appreciated.

John Doe  
Manager, Finance  
Attachment



## RM 3–2 Form Letter for Informing the Postmaster of a RCCS Test

Referenced section 3.11.3.

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

315 District Road / Any District, ST 99999-9998

DATE: 5/12/05  
OUR REF: SAMPLE LETTER TO INFORM TEST SITE OF TEST SCHEDULE  
SUBJECT: Rural Carrier Cost System Tests (RCCS)  
Quarter (1, 2, 3, 4 as appropriate)  
TO: POSTMASTER JONES  
US POSTAL SERVICE 119 W 4TH ST  
APPLETON CITY MO 64724-9998

I have attached a schedule of Rural Carrier Route Tests to be taken at your office during Quarter \_\_\_\_.

A data collector from statistical programs will contact you approximately one week before each scheduled test to explain the test and clarify what help and information the data collector will require in order to correctly complete the test. A day or two before the test, the data collector also must speak to the carrier and carrier route supervisor in order to obtain information about the route and arrival times of personnel working with the mail and arrival times of the mail. On the date of the test, the data collector will arrive quite early, so the data collector can begin sampling the mail prior to the carrier's arrival – in that way, the data collector will interfere as little as possible with the work of the carrier.

The data collector may ask the carrier for some minor assistance while taking the test, for example, identifying mail for the carrier's route. The carrier unions are aware of these tests.

The test could delay the carrier. The rural carrier will be compensated for this delay at the rural carrier average pay rate. The data collector will ask both the carrier and you to sign a PS Form 2847 to cover any additional time required by the rural carrier cost test.

You will be requested to participate in the rural carrier test. When the Rural Carrier returns from the route, you will need to record information about the mail collected on the route on the day of the test. This should require only a few minutes. Please inform the carrier of the route selected for the test.

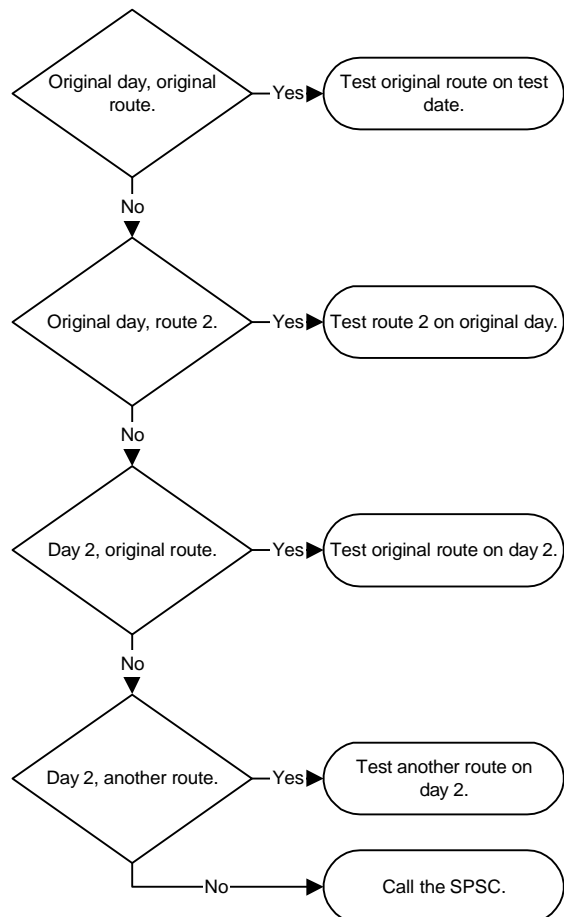
Your cooperation and assistance are appreciated.

John Doe  
Manager, Finance  
Attachment



## RM 3–3 Rescheduling a Carrier Cost Systems Test When Lodging is Required

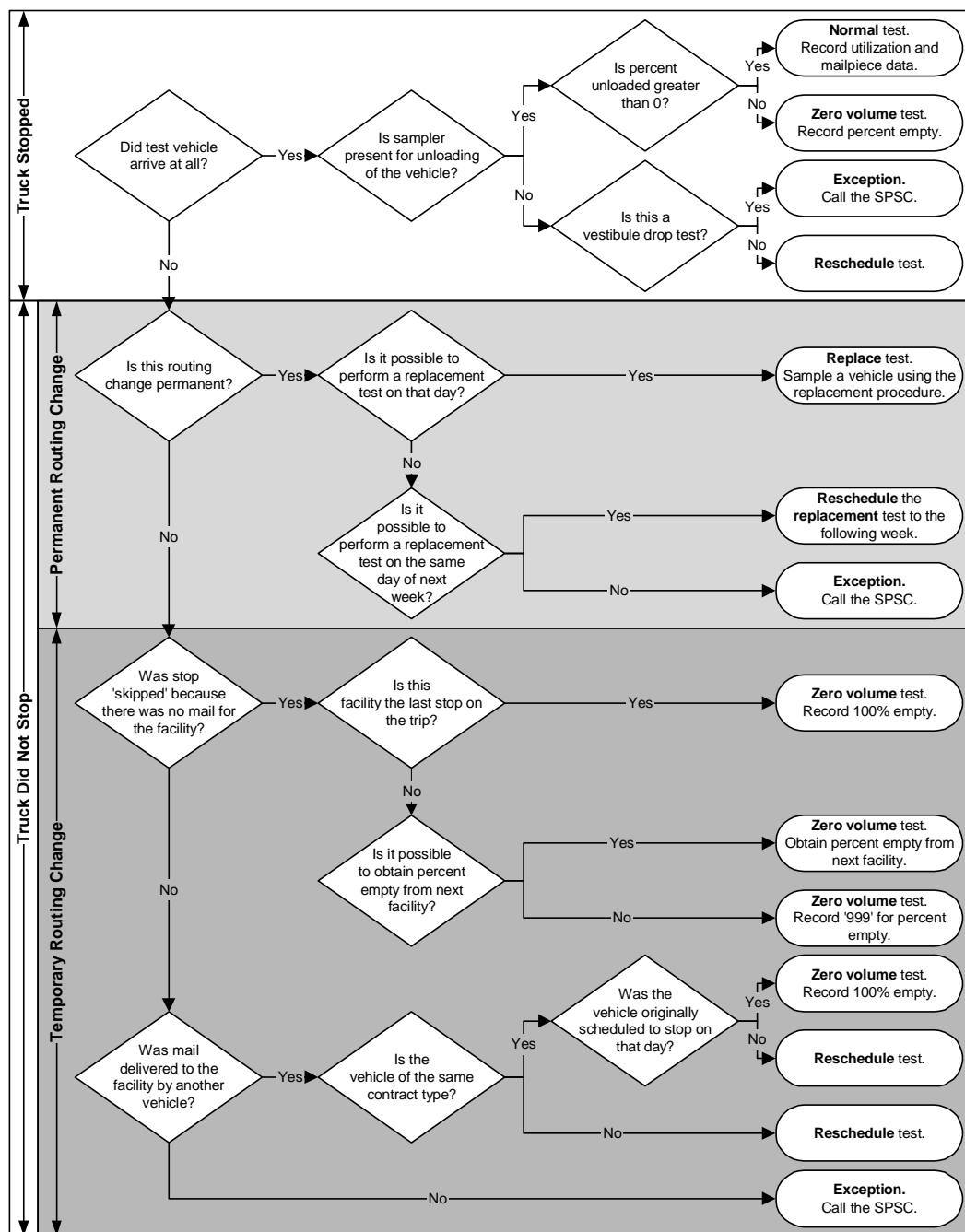
Referenced sections 3.6.2.2 and 3.6.3.2.





## RM 3–4 TRACS Highway Subsystem: Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Tree

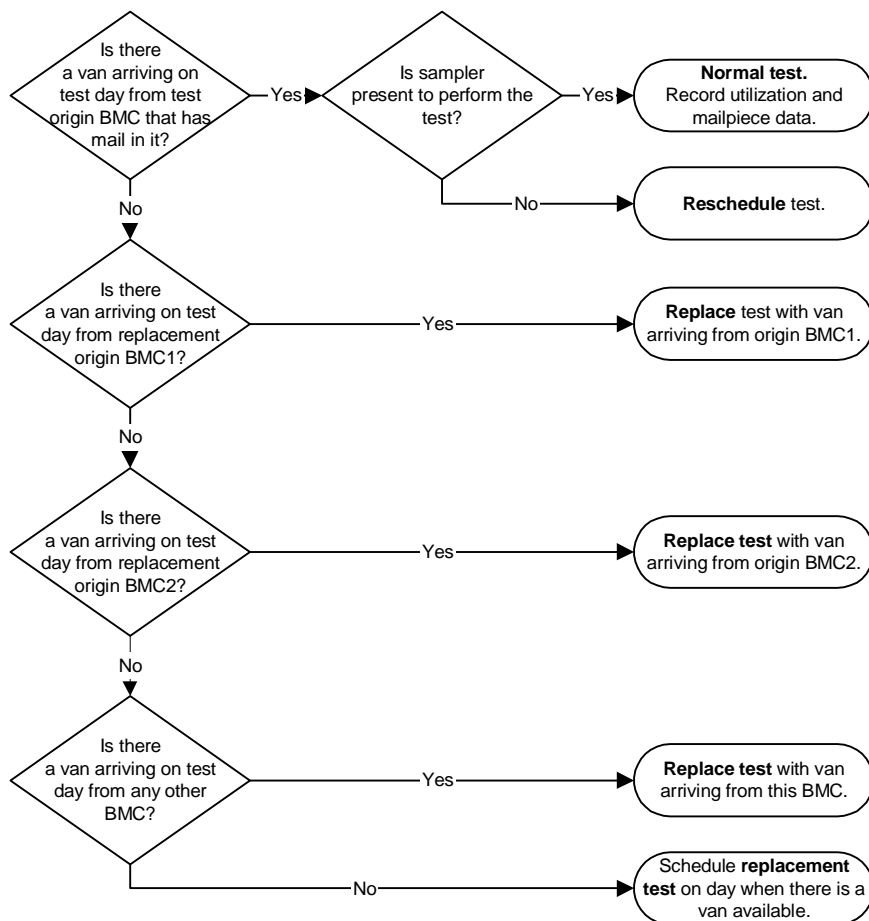
Referenced sections 3.7.2, 3.7.4 and 3.7.7.





## RM 3–5 TRACS Rail Subsystem: Reschedule, Replacement, and Zero Volume Decision Tree

Referenced sections 3.7.2, 3.7.4 and 3.7.7.

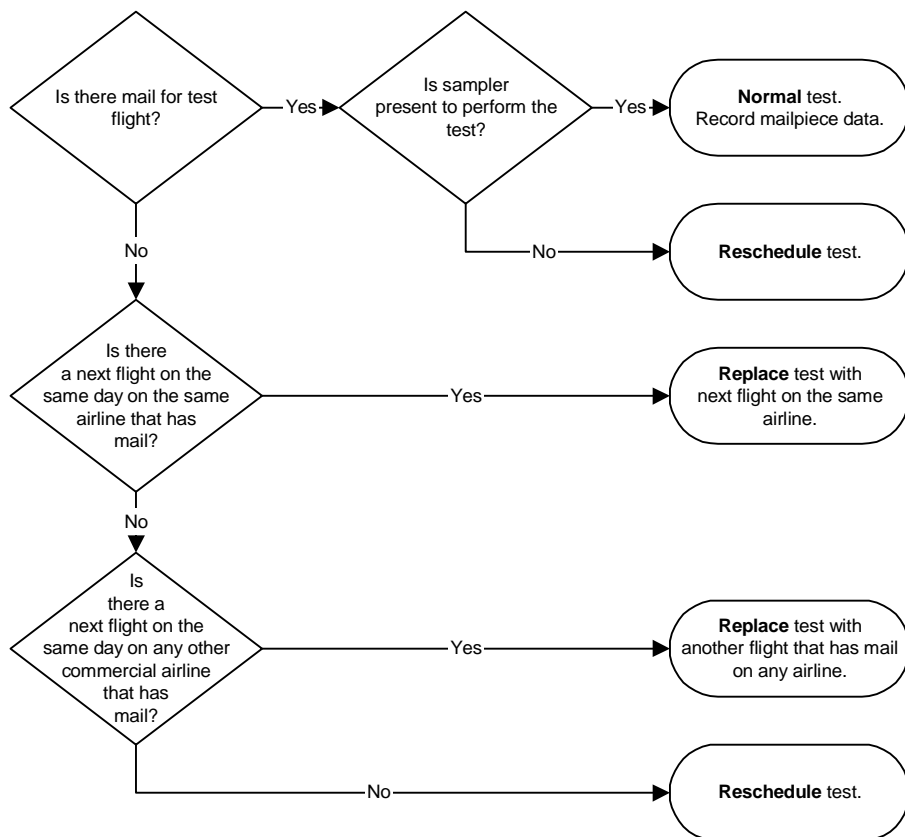


**Note:** There are no zero volume rail tests.



## RM 3–6 TRACS Commercial Air Subsystem: Reschedule and Replacement Decision Tree

Referenced sections 3.7.2, 3.7.4 and 3.7.7.



**Note:** There are no zero volume air tests.

**Note:** If there is a situation that is not answered by the above flowchart, call the SPSC.

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## Chapter 4

# Mail Exit Point and Consolidated Originating Unit

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The mail exit point (MEP) is the foundation of the Postal Service's probability-based revenue, volume, and performance measurement sampling system, the Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW) system. Because we divide the universe of domestic mail exiting the Postal Service into many different sampling units, each MEP-day acts as one building block of this probability-based sampling system. Each MEP-day represents one sampling unit, one part of this universe of domestic mail exiting the Postal Service.

The consolidated originating unit (COU) is the foundation used for measuring registered, insured, collect on delivery (COD), and certificates of mailing entering the Postal Service. Each COU-day represents one sampling unit, one part of the universe of specific domestic mail mentioned earlier, entering the Postal Service. The procedure for designing and setting up COUs is specific. A COU is required for every panel office that has a window retail unit.

This chapter provides information and policies for the district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) to administer the MEP and COU frame. To cover the policies for designing MEPs and COUs, identifying sampling units, examples of MEPs, and the frame maintenance policy, the chapter is divided into the following four sections:

- MEPs, MEP-Days, Sampling Units and Frames (section 4.1).  
Section 4.1 introduces the *MEP*, the *MEP-day*, the *sampling unit*, and the *sampling frame*.
- Designing MEPs (section 4.2).  
Section 4.2 explains the characteristics of MEPs, the types of MEPs, and the basic principles behind MEP design.
- MEP Examples (Basic) (section 4.3).  
Section 4.3 gives a variety of basic MEP examples.
- Frame Maintenance Policy (section 4.4).  
Section 4.4 covers frame maintenance policies.

Since there is very little flexibility in designing COUs, they are explained later in section 4.2.2.7. The goal of this chapter is to present guidelines, principles, rules, and examples for designing and creating MEPs and COUs.

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## 4.1 MEPs, MEP-Days, Sampling Units and Frames

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Every Postal Service facility generally has one or more MEPs. This is the physical place in the mail processing stream between and including the destination mail processing plant and the final delivery unit. At a MEP, mailpieces are isolated and counted so that information about the mail can be recorded. The sampling units within the MEP are called MEP-days, and a list of all the MEP-days is the sampling frame. Each district MSP is responsible for the design and maintenance of the MEPs.

#### 4.1.1

#### Mail Exit Point

A MEP is a physical place in the mail processing stream. The MEP can be found in three areas:

- At a destination mail processing plant.
- At a final delivery unit.
- Anywhere between the destination mail processing plant and the final delivery unit.

A MEP at a facility might be described as follows: *Letter shape mail only — for ZIP Codes 55551, 55552, and 55553*. At a MEP such as this one, the data collector must be able to isolate and count all letter shape mailpieces within these ZIP Codes. The data collector may then record information about these mailpieces.

#### 4.1.2

#### MEP-day and the Sampling Unit

For the revenue, volume, and performance measurement system, a sampling unit is *always* a MEP-day. As explained above, a MEP is a physical place. By itself, a MEP does not allow us to define precisely what volume of mail we should capture and record. In addition, since mail processing is an around-the-clock operation, we need to associate every MEP with a specified time frame (normally one day, but sometimes a specific part of a day). A MEP-day at a facility could be described, for example, as follows: *Letter shape mail only — for ZIP Codes 55551, 55552, and 55553 on January 14th*.

By associating every MEP with a specified time frame and using *cutoff times* to define when the test begins and when the test ends, the universe of mail can be divided into *sampling units*. By testing sampling units, characteristics of all the mail can be statistically estimated. Sampling units of MEP-days allow coverage of every mailpiece required by the revenue, volume, and performance measurement system test.

#### **4.1.3 The Sampling Frame**

A sampling frame is a list of sampling units. Each sampling unit represents a part of all the mail that the Postal Service delivers in a given time period (such as in a given quarter). The number of sampling units in the frame is equal to the number of MEPs in the Mail Exit Point System (MEPS) multiplied by the number of delivery days in a given time period. Accordingly, as described above, the sampling unit is always a MEP-day.

## 4.2 Designing MEPs

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The procedure for designing and setting up MEPs and COUs is flexible. MEPs are designed to adapt easily to technological developments and changes in mail processing and delivery procedures.

#### 4.2.1

#### Essential Characteristics

Two essential traits that characterize MEPs should be considered before designing MEPs:

- MEPs adhere to the four critical *Golden Rules* listed below (section 4.2.1.1).
- Mail associated with any MEP must be at or near its final destination. A MEP must be located no further upstream from the final delivery unit than the *destination* mail processing facility.

#### 4.2.1.1 The MEP Golden Rules

Each MEP must meet the following four *Golden Rules*:

1. **Every mailpiece must be associated with one and only one MEP.**
2. **Every mailpiece in each MEP should be easily isolated for testing.**
3. **MEPs should remain relatively stable through time.**
4. **The cost-effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.**

When designing and maintaining MEPs, ensure that each of the four Golden Rules are met, as described below:

#### A. **Golden Rule 1: Every mailpiece must be associated with one and only one MEP.**

Biased estimates occur whenever a mailpiece is excluded from any MEP or whenever a mailpiece belongs to more than one MEP. To avoid biased data, ensure that every mailpiece belongs to one and only one MEP. In addition, make certain that no mailpiece has the chance of being *double-counted*.

For instance, even if a data collector has not *actually* recorded a particular mailpiece twice, double-counting still might have occurred if the data collector *could have* counted the mailpiece twice. The key to understanding the concept of double-counting can be found in the word *potential*. Double-counting results whenever any mailpiece has the *potential* to be counted twice.

To help prevent double-counting, ask these two questions:

- *If there were tests on every other MEP at this location on the same day, could any mailpiece for this MEP possibly be counted in any of those other tests?*
- *Could any of this mail have the potential to be tested on more than one day?*

Make sure that the exact procedures are followed for isolating mail when testing a MEP at a facility, even if it is the only MEP tested on that day. Remember, mail included in one MEP must always be excluded from every other MEP.

When designing MEPs, MSPs should avoid missing MEPs, duplicate MEPs, MEPs that no longer exist, and inaccurate MEP information.



**Note:** Statisticians at Headquarters use the following terminology to help formulate MEP guidelines dealing with missing and duplicate MEPs, MEP definition error, and surplus MEPs (e.g., MEPs originally defined around a mail processing stream correctly, but operations changed resulting in the elimination of the original mail processing stream; however, the original MEP is still listed.):

- **Coverage:** Coverage is defined as maintaining a collection of MEPs that allows every mailpiece *one and only one* chance of being included in a test.
- **Coverage Error:** Coverage error refers to a bias in ODIS-RPW estimates. This bias may occur whenever a mailpiece *has more than one chance or no chance* of being selected for recording.
- **Missing MEPs:** Missing MEPs can be caused by the omission of a MEP from sources used to update MEPS. They may also result from the lack of frame maintenance. The omission of MEPs leads to the underestimation of total mail volume and revenue.

MEP omission may also be due to new locations in the destination mail processing stream. These new locations are called *births*. The opening of a new facility, for instance, is considered a birth. If an upcoming quarter includes a birth, the MSP should add MEPs that include the mail for the birth in MEPS. These new MEPs must be added to MEPS prior to the sample selection process for the upcoming quarter.

- **Duplicate MEPs:** Duplicate MEPs can occur whenever a mailpiece has more than one chance of being selected because the MEP that the mailpiece belongs to is listed more than once in MEPS. Carelessness in checking the MEPs in MEPS may result in MEP duplication. Duplicate MEPs can lead to the overestimation of mail volume, revenues, weights, and other mail characteristics; moreover, duplicate MEPs promote unnecessary increased frame maintenance and the inefficient use of staff resources.

- **MEP No Longer Exists:** If a facility has closed and the MSP has not deleted them in MEPS, then a test for a MEP in that facility will have to be entered as *Canceled — Unit No Longer Exists*. *Canceled — Unit No Longer Exists* tests will decrease the precision, thereby increasing the variability of estimates.
- **MEP Definition Error:** Although MEPS might contain a complete set of MEPs, certain MEPs within MEPS could be poorly defined. A poorly defined MEP can lead to missed or double-counted mailpieces. The following example illustrates this type of error.



**Example:** A MEP defined at a facility represents all mail shapes for 3 ZIP Codes. A second MEP (a predominantly heavy sample (PHS) MEP) is defined to include all parcel and irregular parcels and pieces (IPP) shapes for the entire facility.

This MEP definition violates Golden Rule 1. Parcel and IPP shape mail for any of these 3 ZIP Codes has the potential to be sampled in both MEPs.

**B. Golden Rule 2: Every mailpiece in each MEP should be easily isolated for testing.**

Mailpieces within a MEP must be easily isolated. Mail should be sampled and recorded without delaying mail delivery.



**Example:** A MEP that combines all the mail for a larger office (thirty carrier routes) *may* pose a problem for a data collector trying to sweep the mail in every physical location of the facility. Such a MEP would force the data collector to search for and find every letter, flat, parcel, IPP, postage due and accountable mailpiece within this office within the time window available for testing.

**C. Golden Rule 3: MEPs should remain relatively stable through time.**

To maximize statistical efficiency, MEP volume should remain as stable as possible from day to day. To minimize required changes to MEPs, observe the following guidelines:

- **Births and Deaths:** The terms *births* and *deaths* are used to mean the creation and termination of MEPs. Whenever possible, the births and deaths of MEPs should occur less frequently than the quarter. It is not good practice, for instance, to define MEPs in terms of bins on machines because mail processing frequently changes the types of mail that go into these various bins.
- **Stratification Information:** Stratification information is used to form groups of MEPs with similar volumes and mail mix to create more precise

estimates for the same cost or number of tests. The stratification data that are collected will include information such as MEP volume by shape.

Stratification information collected for each MEP should remain relatively stable through time. Units that frequently contain *zero volume* are poor MEP candidates. In contrast, larger units are generally better MEP candidates. A large MEP will usually have less day-to-day volume fluctuation.

**D. Golden Rule 4: The cost effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.**

In order to promote good cost management, observe the following guidelines:

- **One Data Collector:** Define MEPs so that, in general, only one data collector is required to conduct a test per tour.
- **Appropriate Time Window:** Maintain an adequate time window to conduct a test with the available resources.
- **Appropriate Size:** The MEP size should be large enough to ensure reasonably stable mail volumes. However, keep in mind that the size of the MEP should be small enough to utilize the data collectors in an effective manner.
- **Low Travel Costs:** When designing MEPs, consider methods to reduce travel costs associated with conducting the tests.

**4.2.1.2 At or Near the Final Destination**

Define all MEPs at or near the final destination point. Avoid the originating point (mail entry point) of the mail processing stream. Testing at or near the destination point supports the corporate requirement for estimating mailpiece transit time between plants. A MEP may be defined upstream as far as the destination mail processing plant (such as the general mail facility (GMF)) as long as the mail is *expected* to arrive at the destination facility on the date of the test.

When performing upstream testing, ODIS-RPW transit time information will not always reflect the time required for a mailpiece to reach the final delivery unit. Nevertheless, transit time analysis will still help field managers who seek to diagnose plant-to-plant transportation and mail processing problems.

Upstream testing can help reduce travel costs. Make sure, however, that any upstream MEP testing does not violate any of the four Golden Rules. For instance, unless special care is taken, the first Golden Rule is easily violated when a MEP is being defined upstream. Double-counting may occur if a MEP has been defined upstream for mailpieces that are later processed into many potential MEPs.

## 4.2.2 Types of MEPs

Besides knowing the essential traits that characterize MEPs, the data collector should also know the fundamental types of MEPs before beginning to design a MEP. This section introduces the fundamental types of MEPs that an MSP might use to capture the volume of mail at a facility. This section also discusses COUs and the types of MEPs that are considered mandatory for each facility, and the types of MEPs that are considered special MEPs. Since some of these topics are presented in greater detail in other sections, references to the appropriate sections are provided, where applicable.

### 4.2.2.1 Mail Processing Stream MEPs

There is a strong relationship between mail category and mail shape. We can use this strong relationship to improve the precision of our statistical estimates for the ODIS-RPW system. We accomplish this by defining MEPs along one or more mail processing streams that are based on mail shape. In addition, during a test, it will be easier for a data collector to locate and count the mail within only one stream. They do not have to sweep all the letter, flat, parcel, and accountable mailstreams in search of all the mailpieces required for the test.

A typical mail processing stream has a mail flow composed of one predominant mail shape. A processing stream of flats, for instance, is considered a flat-based mail processing stream. However, a mail processing stream *can* contain more than one mail shape. For example, a mail processing stream for flats arriving at a station in hampers might also contain letter bundles.

When testing a MEP defined along a mail processing stream, include *all* mail shapes. For instance, if performing an ODIS-RPW test on a MEP defined as a flat-based mail processing stream that includes all possible mail shapes, count and record letters and all other types of mail found in this flat-based stream. Likewise, creating a mail processing stream MEP, note in the *MEP Description* field of MEPS that *all mail shapes* in this stream should be tested. The following is an example of such an entry: *Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes (possible) in stream.*

### 4.2.2.2 DPS MEPs

A delivery point sequence (DPS) MEP is a special type of mail processing stream MEP. A DPS MEP is composed of machinable letters sorted according to the sequence of delivery by the carrier. An 11-digit barcode enables a barcode sorter (BCS) to sequence mail in the exact order of delivery. This process eliminates the need for carriers to sort these letters manually prior to delivery.

*Whenever possible, do not define DPS MEPs before the first pass.* Before the first pass there is a high potential for double-counting DPS mailpieces that have been jammed in, or rejected from, a machine and sent to other operations. Create a DPS MEP before the first pass only if certain that there are no missorted, jammed, or rejected mail that will be included in any other MEP.

Redefine a DPS MEP whenever the time window is too small or the potential for double-counting cannot be eliminated. Consider the following locations for a DPS MEP:

- Between the first and second pass.
- After the second pass, while the DPS mail is waiting to go to the station or associate office.
- After the DPS mail has arrived at the station or associate office.

For more information on mail processing stream MEPs, refer to section 4.2.3.1, and section 4.3.1.

#### 4.2.2.3 Single Mail Shape MEPs

Like mail processing stream MEPs, *single mail shape MEPs* take advantage of the strong relationship between mail category and mail shape.

A single mail shape MEP is defined entirely as one shape of mail. When testing a single mail shape MEP, the data collector sweeps all mail processing streams to isolate all the appropriate mail to be tested. For instance, when testing a single mail shape MEP defined as *letter-shape mail only*, a data collector sweeps the parcel and flat mail processing streams for any letter shape mail.

If an MSP establishes a letter-shape mail only MEP far enough downstream so that any letter-shape mail commingled in other mailstreams can be culled out and directed to the letter mail processing stream, the data collector will not need to sweep flat, parcel, and other mailstreams for letter-shape mail. When entering a MEP consisting entirely of one mail shape, the MSP should note the exclusion of all other mail shapes. The following is an example of such an entry: *Letter-shape mail only — for entire station*. For more information on single mail shape MEPs, refer to section 4.2.3.1, and section 4.3.2.

#### 4.2.2.4 MEPs Defined for Less Than 24 Hours (Multi-tour MEPs and PM MEPs)

Most often, our sampling unit is a MEP-day based upon a 24-hour time frame. However, there are times when a MEP-day can represent a portion of a 24-hour day (such as a tour) as long as all other mail at the facility is accounted for in other MEPs.

Some facilities are good candidates for setting up MEPs defined for less than 24 hours. A good example of such a facility is one where mail for large volume firms can exit the facility around the clock. At such a facility, an MSP might decide to create more than one MEP to cover a 24-hour period.



**Example:** The MSP is creating MEPs for a large volume firm. The MSP discovers that one can easily isolate and test all the mail during three time windows: 1:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. The MSP can therefore define three MEPs. Each MEP would correspond to one of these three time windows.

To create a MEP that is defined for less than 24 hours, the MSP performs the following procedures:

- Defines the cutoff times that will make up the MEPs. Select each cutoff time at a time when a low volume of mail is being processed. The MEP cutoff times do not need to coincide with facility tours.
- Obtains mail volume and other stratification information separately for each MEP.
- Ensures that the mail volume for each MEP remains stable from day to day (Golden Rule 3). If the MEP volume from day to day is unstable, redefine the MEP.
- Ensures that data collectors will be available for any tour or for any other *less than 24-hour MEP*.

The PM MEP is another example of a MEP defined for less than 24 hours. Some facilities receive afternoon or PM dispatches for mail that may or may not be available for delivery the next day; therefore, a PM MEP is a less than 24 hour MEP defined around post-AM cutoff time dispatches to stations, branches, and associate offices of all classes of mail, but usually associated with Priority Mail drop shipment (D/S) or Standard Mail and/or Periodicals. A PM MEP isolates this particular mail processing stream for testing.



**Note: Special MEPs for D/S parcels:** If a PM MEP is created, check the amount of D/S parcels the MEP's facility receives. If it receives more than 100 D/S parcels consistently, add a special MEP to account for D/S parcels.

D/S is a service option offered by the Postal Service that allows the mailer to bypass normal upstream mail processing. The mailer, or a private (non-postal) carrier using this service, transports parcels from the point of production to a Postal Service facility located closer to the final destination. The Postal Service then completes the delivery of the parcels at a lower cost to the mailer. For more information on D/S MEPs, see section 4.2.2.7.

For more information on the Multi-tour MEP and the PM MEP, see the examples in section 4.3.3.

#### 4.2.2.5 Accountable Mail MEPs

Accountable mail MEPs generally consist of mail incoming to the postage due unit (PDU) or accountable mail unit (AMU). Accountable mail is normally postage due mail, business reply mail (BRM), and other special service mail such as Merchandise Return, Certified Mail, and Registered Mail.

Accountable mail MEPs provide the following benefits:

- Accountable mail MEPs easily target large concentrations of accountable mail, which occur relatively infrequently in the mailstream. Targeting accountable mail through accountable mail MEPs will improve sampling efficiency.
- Accountable mail MEPs permit the exclusion of accountable mail from other MEPs. This will allow a data collector to better meet time window requirements.
- Accountable mail MEPs improve the accuracy of accountable mail estimates by removing these mailpieces from MEPs that are located outside the PDU or AMU. The testing of accountable mail outside the PDU or AMU can make proper rate category identification difficult.

The MSP may define accountable mail MEPs in accordance with local conditions. All facilities should have accountable mail MEPs whenever the following apply:

- The facility receives at least 100 accountable mailpieces per day on average.
- Accountable mail is easily identified and isolated in the incoming mail processing stream on a consistent basis.

When defining an accountable mail MEP, MSPs observe the following measures:

- All accountable mail indirectly brought to the AMU or PDU, such as from carriers, should be excluded. This mail has a chance of selection in other incoming mail MEPs.
- Ensure that the proper mailpiece characteristics can be recorded at the accountable mail MEP. For instance, avoid defining a Business Reply Mail (BRM) MEP upstream at the plant if the data collector cannot easily obtain the proper BRM fees.

Accountable mail MEPs for an incoming office may include all or part of such mail for the office. Large business reply firms are ideal candidates for accountable mail MEPs.



**Note:** Registered Mail, Insured mail, and COD mail must be covered in the MEP design — that is, included as part of the MEP(s). In fact, depending on the volume, accountable mail MEP(s) can be set up for one or more of these special service mailstreams. At the same time, panel office COUs include this mail as it enters the Postal Service.

This is not double-counting; do not confuse this with double-counting. COUs are a specific instance where there is a need for revenue reporting to separate special services from the mailpiece revenue, and to improve the estimates of registered mail, insured mail, COD and certificates of mailing from the mail origin. This same mail must be defined in the MEP(s) and sampled at the destination.

For more information on accountable mail MEPs, see section 4.3.

### 4.2.2.6 Delivery Unit(s) as MEP(s)

Because the definition of a MEP is flexible, an MSP may create a single MEP out of any of the following delivery units or delivery unit combinations:

- More than one delivery unit (such as five city carrier routes).
- A combination of parts of more than one delivery unit (such as all letter mail for five city carrier routes).
- A part of a delivery unit (such as a partition of a box section).
- A single delivery unit (such as a city carrier route).

### 4.2.2.7 Mandatory Consolidated Originating Units, APO/FPO MEPs, and D/S Parcel MEPs

The following COUs and MEP types are required for each facility:

- **Consolidated Originating Units (COUs):** COUs are required for window retail units in ODIS-RPW panel offices. COUs are defined to include all Insured mail, Registered Mail, COD, and Certificates of Mailing mailpieces originating from a window retail unit. MEP Type Code 1 identifies all originating COUs. These retail units must be further categorized as either point of sale (POS) or non-POS offices. POS offices are identified by MEP Group Code 2 and non-POS offices are identified by MEP Group Code 3.

Contract postal units (CPUs) for panel offices are to be listed separately and identified by MEP Type Code 3. Due to the special nature of these units, the mail may be captured upstream at the parent office or the main office and then only if all the mailpiece characteristics can be recorded properly. In these situations, the contract office is listed under the panel office main office and the MEP Description/Special instructions annotated to ensure the mail is captured. If multiple CPUs are listed under a finance number they may be combined for sampling purposes.



**Note:** Required with every COU is similar stratification information required with MEPs. The types of information required are travel time, test time, and shape volumes.

- **APO/FPO MEPs:** APO/FPO MEPs are required for all military gateway mail and are subject to testing 7 days per week, unless Headquarters is notified otherwise.

**Avoid creating a separate MEP for each APO or FPO unit.** APO/FPO units should be consolidated to the greatest extent possible so that these MEP units are appropriately large (and meet the conditions of Golden Rule 4). Although these MEPs should have volumes well over 500 mailpieces, consider 500 pieces the minimum for an APO or FPO MEP.

In the *MEP Description* field of MEPS, identify which APO/FPO units are associated with the MEP. This will let the data collectors know which mail should be isolated and tested. MEP Type CODE 2 is used to identify APO/FPO MEPs.

- **D/S parcel MEPs:** D/S parcel MEPs are required if PM MEPs are separately listed and the facility receives more than 100 D/S parcels consistently. If the facility receives less than 100 D/S parcels, this mail may be captured in the PM MEP or the parcel MEP.

The MEP that will account for the D/S parcels must be identified as a PM MEP with MEP Group Code 1 in MEPS. Include the words *D/S MEP* as part of the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* field(s).

By listing large volumes of D/S parcels as a separate MEP, Package Services estimates of mail volumes and associated characteristics will be improved.

When a less than 24-hour MEP is established at the processing center for Priority Mail D/S, and the MEP covers the afternoon time period (i.e., is a PM MEP), then the MEP Group Code should be coded as 1. In addition, when this MEP comes up for testing, and since this is a PM MEP, the test is taken on the day before the scheduled test date.

#### 4.2.2.8 Special Types of MEPs

The following four types of MEPs have reserved codes in MEPS; these special codes will facilitate the identification and proper stratification of these MEP types:

- **Almost exclusively (approximately 95 percent) First-Class Mail:** MEP Type Code 4 is reserved for these MEPs in MEPS. Examples of these MEPs can include large business reply units and some payment processing firms.
- **Almost exclusively (approximately 90 percent) Standard Mail and Periodicals:** MEP Type Code 5 is reserved for these MEPs in MEPS. Examples can include the PM MEP.
- **Unstable MEPs:** MEP Type CODE 6 is reserved for unstable MEPs in MEPS. Unstable MEPs are tested frequently; at least once per month.

The following criteria meet the requirements for an unstable MEP:

- No more than two in any sample area without SPSC approval.
- Volume changes by a factor of 10 or more from day-to-day, or changes of more than 50,000 mailpieces from one day to another.

The type “unstable” is designed to indicate large volume MEPs, ones where volumes fluctuate drastically in any given day. Generally, these have large amounts of letter mail, such as certain kinds of firms (e.g., promotional and sweepstakes return units), or even Internal Revenue Service (IRS) related units. Do not code as unstable MEPs for fluctuations due to Standard Mail mailings, or normal fluctuations in office mailstream MEPs (such as “letter mailstream,” or “flat mailstream,” or “parcels”).

When designing MEPs, good candidates for “unstable” would include mail flows that would be too large, when tested, to be included with other mailstreams. That is, Golden Rule 4 on cost effectiveness of testing would be violated.

- **PM MEPs:** MEP Group Code 1 is reserved for these MEPs in MEPS. A PM MEP is a less-than-24-hour MEP defined around post-AM cutoff time dispatches to stations, branches and associate offices of all classes of mail, but usually associated with Priority Mail D/S or Standard Mail and/or Periodicals.



**Note:** When a less than 24-hour MEP is established at the processing center for Priority Mail D/S, and the MEP covers the afternoon time period (i.e., is a PM MEP), then the MEP Group Code should be coded as 1. In addition, when this MEP comes up for testing, and since this is a PM MEP, the test is taken on the day before the scheduled test date.



**Note:** Smoothing will consider the day prior to the test date for PM MEPs when attempting to equalize the number of tests per day.

### 4.2.3

#### Other Important Characteristics for MEPs

When preparing to design a MEP, the MSP should not only know the essential characteristics and types of MEPs, but also understand MEP requirements that concern MEP volume, stratification data, and the designing of MEPs around a large single shape.

#### 4.2.3.1

##### Large Single Shape

MEPs should be large. MEPs should also be composed of mailpieces of one predominant shape.

Because mail processing streams are not identical, no single rule exists for creating large, single-shape based MEPs. Sometimes, inadequate time windows or the threat of violating one of the Golden Rules will prevent an MSP from creating large single-shape based MEPs.

Nevertheless, *whenever possible*, try to create large MEPs that are based on a single shape. Large, single-shape based MEPs contribute substantially to accurate estimates of smaller mail class volumes such as Priority Mail and Parcel Post.

As discussed in section 4.2.2.1, a strong relationship exists between mail category and mail shape. Because of this strong relationship, MEPs are designed to meet the definitions of one of the following MEP types:

- **Mail processing stream MEP (of predominantly one single shape):** A mail processing stream has a mail flow of one *predominant* mail shape. A processing stream of flats, for example, is considered a mail processing stream for flat-shape mail. Unlike a single mail shape MEP however (see below), a mail shape processing stream MEP *can* contain more than one mail shape.



**Example:** A mail processing stream for flats arriving at a station in hampers might also contain letter bundles. Such a MEP could be entitled *Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes in stream*.

When a data collector tests a mail processing stream MEP, the data collector counts and records *every* mailpiece in the mail processing stream, regardless of whether the mailpiece fits the shape of the majority of the mail in the MEP. Mail processing stream MEPs of one shape are normally found *before* distribution.

- **Single mail shape MEP (of one exclusive shape):** MEPs based exclusively on one mail shape are composed of one, and only one, shape of mail. For instance, if a data collector were to test a *letter-shape mail only* MEP, he or she would collect all the letter-shape mailpieces within the MEP to be tested and exclude all non-letter-shape mail. Single mail shape MEPs are often found *after* distribution.

The mailpieces that are excluded by the data collector must be accounted for in another MEP. For this reason, if a facility has a *letter shape mail only* MEP, it might also have a *flat shape mail only* MEP and an *IPP shape mail only* MEP.



**Note:** Large single-shape MEPs can be based upon either a mail processing stream of one predominant shape or upon one single exclusive shape. Therefore, ensure that all data collectors know, through the *MEP Description* field in MEPS, exactly what mail should be included and what mail should be excluded from a MEP.

#### 4.2.3.2 Volume Requirements

As stated in section 4.2.3.1, MEP volume should be as large as possible. If creating a MEP with a small volume can't be avoided, the MSP should try to exceed a minimum average daily volume of *approximately* 500 pieces. Keep in mind however, that the following MEPs are exceptions to the 500 mailpiece guideline: accountable mail, PHS, COU, and APO/FPO.

In addition, observe the following guidelines for exceptional MEPs:

- In the event there is a multi-shape based MEP averaging less than 2,500 mailpieces a day, the MSP must not break this MEP down into smaller, single-shape MEPs. Examples of such MEPs might include the delivery unit MEP or a MEP that is a small facility.
- Accountable mail MEPs that average less than 100 mailpieces a day should not be broken down into smaller, single-shape MEPs.



**Note: Golden Rule integrity is more important than having a large-volume MEP.** A large volume MEP should not be created if it violates a Golden Rule. Because the integrity of the Golden Rules always has priority over MEP volume, a MEP with a volume of under 500 mailpieces may be designed if it is the only possible way to meet the requirements of the Golden Rules.

Too many small MEPs will reduce the efficiency of sampling and increase MEP unit maintenance, and zero volume tests. MSPs should always create MEPs as large as possible without violating the Golden Rules. MSPs should create MEPs with average volumes of fewer than 500 mailpieces per day only when mail cannot be tested any other way.

#### 4.2.3.3 Accurate Stratification Information

Defining a MEP requires stratification information. Statisticians use stratification information to form groups of MEPs with similar volumes and mail mix and to create more precise estimates for the same cost or number of tests.

Stratification information includes volume by shape, on-site test time, travel time and MEP-type indicator. Estimates based on samples drawn from stratified populations are more precise than estimates drawn from samples using un-stratified designs. Inaccurate stratification information in MEPS will create inefficient MEP groupings (strata with dissimilar MEPs). Consequently, inaccurate stratification information can increase sampling error and decrease the precision of our estimates.

MEPS requires the following volume, test-time, and MEP-type information for all MEPs.

- **Volume:** No requirement exists for an exact mailpiece count in MEPS. MEPS volume measurements are designed to *help* group together MEPs sharing similar characteristics.



**Note:** When obtaining approximate volumes in linear feet or weight, calculate the piece volume using the most applicable conversion rate. Offices without local conversion rates may use Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data System*.

Observe the following guidelines for obtaining MEP volume for MEPS.

■ **Average daily volume by mail shape:**

- Letters/Cards: record to the nearest *hundred* pieces.
- Flats: record to the nearest *hundred* pieces.
- IPPs: record to the nearest *ten* pieces.
- Parcels: record to the nearest *ten* pieces.

■ **Average daily volume of Priority Mail to the nearest *ten* pieces:** Priority Mail volumes are also included in the estimated average daily volumes by mail shape fields described above.

■ **Average daily volume of accountable mail:** PDU or AMU, to the nearest *ten* pieces. Accountable mail volumes are also included in the estimated average daily volumes by mail shape fields described above.

■ **On-Site Test Time:**

The estimated time to conduct a test on a MEP begins with the actual arrival of the data collector at the facility. The estimated time ends when the data collector is prepared to leave the MEP test location. Total time includes equipment setup, isolating and recording mailpieces, down time (such as waiting for another mail dispatch), and time to repack test equipment. If more than one data collector must conduct the test, add both data collectors' test times together.



**Example:** If 2 data collectors start the test, and one leaves after 1 hour while the other works 4 hours, the total on-site test time will equal 5 hours.

When determining on-site test time, consider the following:

- For telephone tests, record only the caller's time spent conducting the test.
- Obtain times in hours and fractions of hours. For example, an on-site test time of 1 hour and 20 minutes is represented in MEPS as 1.3.
- Average test times are recorded for multiple tests on the same MEP (exact calculations are not required).
- **Travel Time:** Travel time to and from a facility is recorded in MEPS in half-hour increments. For instance, if the total travel time to and from the facility is 2 hours and 40 minutes, the MSP should record this travel time in MEPS as 2.5 hours.

Travel time may vary due to differences in the departure points of the available data collectors. If this is the case, use the most frequent or the most typical travel times.

- **MEP Type and Group Indicator:** The following table shows reserved MEP type codes (codes 1–9) and reserved MEP group codes (codes 1–3). MEP units of these types must be assigned the corresponding codes. These codes must not be used for MEPs of any other type.

Table 4.2.3–1. MEP Codes

MEP Type Code	MEP Type Description
A–Z	Local use.
0	Undefined.
1	Consolidated originating unit panel office (not CPU).
2	APO or FPO.
3	CPU consolidated originating unit panel office.
4	MEPs that are almost exclusively (approximately 90%) First-Class Mail. Examples may include large business reply units and some payment processing firms.
5	MEPs that are almost exclusively (approximately 90%) Standard Mail and Periodicals. Examples may include PM mail or afternoon dispatches to facilities.
6	<p>The requirements for an unstable MEP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No more than two MEPs in any sample area without SPSC approval.</li> <li>■ Volume changes by a factor of 10 or more from day-to-day, or changes of more than 50,000 mailpieces from one day to another.</li> </ul> <p>The type “unstable” is designed to indicate large volume MEPs, ones where volumes fluctuate drastically from day to day. Generally, these have large amounts of letter mail, such as certain kinds of firms (e.g., promotional and sweepstakes return units), or even IRS related units. Do not code as unstable for fluctuations due to Standard Mail mailings, or normal fluctuations in office mail stream volume (such as <i>letter mail stream</i>, or <i>flat mail stream</i>, or <i>parcels</i>).</p> <p>When designing MEPs, good candidates for “unstable” includes mail flows that, when tested, would be too large to be included with other mailstreams, which would violate Golden Rule 4.</p>

Table 4.2.3–1. MEP Codes

MEP Type Code	MEP Type Description
7–9	Reserved for future use.
MEP Group Code	MEP Group Description
A–Z	Local Use.
1	PM MEP ( <i>Do not use this code if a Priority Mail D/S at Processing Center</i> ).
2	POS office, applies only to COU — MEP Type of ‘1’.
3	Non-POS office, applies only to COU — MEP Type of ‘1’.
4	BMC MEP.
5	Priority Mail D/S at Processing Center.
6–9	Reserved for future use.

#### 4.2.4 MEP Description and Special Instruction Documentation Requirements

To ensure the accurate testing of a MEP, the characteristics that make up a MEP must be fully described and properly documented. The MEP description and corresponding documentation should provide detailed information about cutoff times, bypass mail, PM mail, D/S parcels, and mail that must be excluded from the test. The MEP description and related documentation should also include whether the MEP is defined along a mail processing stream or exclusively along a single mail shape, the location along the mail processing stream where the MEP will be tested, and standard operating procedures for testing containers holding more than one mail shape.

All required documentation of these MEP characteristics must be maintained in the MEP description and/or *Special Instructions*.

##### 4.2.4.1 MEP Description

MEPS *MEP Description* field allows the MSP to enter up to 80 characters of information. The information entered into this field is uploaded to the mainframe at the time of the close of the frame for sample selection and then downloaded to the Computer On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit along with the sample selection file.



**Note:** The *Header Sheet/Test Schedule* displays all information entered in the *MEP Description* field available at the time of the close of the frame for sample selection. Therefore, if the MEP description, or any other information within the *MEP Description* field is changed after the frame is closed, the new information will not be displayed until the following quarter.

#### 4.2.4.2 Special Instructions

MEPS *Special Instructions* must be used as a supplement to the *MEP Description* field. This option allows the MSP to enter detailed MEP information and instructions that exceed the 80 character limit of the *MEP Description* field.

The following list describes characteristics that must be documented for each MEP:

- **Test Location:** The MEP Description and/or Special Instructions must indicate whether the test is to be conducted off-site (for example, upstream at the destination processing and distribution center (PDC) or sectional center facility (SCF)) or started off-site and finished on-site (for example, at the destination facility or Post Office). The documentation must include the location of the off-site test facility and a list of instructions for the data collector to follow when testing the MEP. MEPs are assumed to be entirely tested on-site (that is, physically and entirely conducted at the facility listed in the Header Sheet/Test Schedule) unless otherwise documented.



**Example:** In some large geographically dispersed locations, MEPs are tested entirely upstream at the destination PDC. In this case, the MSP would call the test facility downstream to inquire about local and bypass mail. The documentation for this MEP needs to indicate that the test is conducted at the PDC. It might also be important to indicate that the data collector needs to call the test facility downstream to follow up about local and bypass mail.

- **MEP Cutoff Times:** Partial day and 24-Hour MEP cutoff times must be documented in the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions*.



**Examples:**

- DPS Letters: First truck arrival at 10 a.m.
- Exclusively PM flat and letter shape mail only from 0900 until 1600.
- **Bypass Mail:** The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* documentation for bypass mail must include which MEP(s) is (are) to include this mail, and where the mail is to be tested. Bypass mail is any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing flow at a facility. It includes mail dispatched from the BMC to the back door either in the AM or PM (often bulk rate Standard Mail and Periodicals), mail direct from the mailer (for example, D/S parcels), office-to-office mail, and dock-transfer mail.
- **PM Mail:** When PM mail is delivered to a Post Office, and there is no PM MEP, document which MEP(s) is (are) to include this mail, and where the mail is to be tested.

- **The Location in the Mail Processing Stream where the MEP will be Tested:** The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* must identify where in the mail processing stream the mail for a given MEP will be tested. The location to test this mail is often determined by whether the MEP is defined as a mail processing stream or as a single mail shape MEP. The documentation for the MEP must indicate if any of the following situations apply:
  - The mail is tested on the dock as it is unloaded.
  - The mail is tested after primary distribution.
  - The mail is tested after secondary distribution.
  - The mail is tested at a staging area.
  - The mail is tested for one or more zone(s).
  - The mail is tested in other specific location(s) or combination(s) of the above.
- **Mail Processing Stream MEPs or Single Mail Shape MEPs:** The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* must indicate whether the MEP is a mail processing stream or single mail shape MEP (section 4.2.3.1).
- **Standard Operating Procedures for Testing Containers Holding More than One Mail Shape:** The district must develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) for handling MEPs where mail flow includes containers holding more than one mail shape. The SOP must describe how to associate mailpieces, and/or containers with the appropriate mail processing stream MEP or single mail shape MEP.

Regardless of whether the MEP is a single mail shape or a mail processing stream MEP, the documentation of SOPs for these MEPs is vital. The following examples outline the required information to include in the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* for both types of MEPs:



#### Examples:

- **Single Mail Shape MEPs:** The documentation must describe how to associate each mail shape (mailpieces and/or containers) in mixed mail shape containers with the appropriate single mail shape MEP.



**Example:** The documentation for a letter mail shape MEP might instruct the data collector to search the parcel mailstream and all other mailstreams for letter trays, bundles, and/or loose letter mail. This would be in addition to the usual letter trays arriving from the plant in APCs. In this case, the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* might be modified to say, *Include all containers and bundles of letters in parcel containers.*

- **Mail Processing Stream MEPs:** The documentation must indicate which MEP is to include containers holding more than one mail shape.



**Example:** A MEP description might indicate to include mixed containers of parcels and IPPs (that will be tested) with the parcel mail processing stream MEP; whereas a mixed container of flats and IPPs (that will be tested) is included with the flat mail processing stream MEP.

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## 4.3 MEP Examples (Basic)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



This section provides basic examples of how an MSP might design MEPs for a facility. The first two examples reflect the basic MEP structure that can be found in most facilities:

- A type of letter MEP.
- A type of flat MEP.
- Some type of PHS, parcel, IPP, and/or Priority Mail MEP such as any of the following:
  - PHS MEP.
  - IPP/parcels MEP.
  - IPPs/parcels/Priority Mail/Acct. MEP.



**Note:** This section will not discuss the following mandatory MEPs: APO/FPO MEPs, D/S parcel MEPs, and COUs. All facilities that have APO/FPO, D/S MEPs, and/or originating mail (panel offices only) must also have these required frame units (section 4.2.2.7).

### 4.3.1

#### MEPs Based Upon the Mail Processing Stream

MSPs often create MEPs based solely upon a facility's mail processing streams. These MEPs usually work well when testing will be performed *before or during* distribution to delivery units in facilities where there is a high degree of automation.

When a MEP based upon a mail processing stream is tested, data collectors must count and record *all mailpieces* in the MEP's mail processing stream. For instance, if an MSP has defined a MEP at a facility as a *letter mail processing stream MEP for entire station — all mail shapes*, data collectors must include in the test all flats, IPPs, and other mailpieces found in this letter mail processing stream. If these mailpieces were not included in the test, the Golden Rules would be violated. Every mailpiece must have one and only one chance to be counted and recorded.



**Example:** If an MSP is defining MEPs based upon the mail processing stream at a facility where there is a high degree of automation, he or she could create the three following MEPs:

- Letter mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.
- Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.
- IPP (including Priority Mail and parcels) mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.

When a mail processing stream MEP is defined, the MSP should ensure that the MEP description clearly indicates that the MEP is based upon a mail processing stream and that it therefore includes every mailpiece found in the mail processing stream, regardless of the mailpiece's shape.

#### 4.3.2 **MEPs Based Upon Mail Shape Only**

An MSP may also create MEPs based solely upon mail shape. Because data collectors will collect mailpieces for recording based only upon shape, these MEPs usually work best when defined *after* distribution to delivery units.

When a MEP based solely upon mail shape is created, data collectors will have to exclude all mailpieces that do not fit the requirements of the MEP mail-shape definition. For instance, if a data collector were to find a letter while testing a *flat shape mail only* MEP, the data collector would exclude this letter from the test.

Mail shape only MEPs defined *before* distribution to delivery units are often difficult to manage. Data collectors would generally have to sweep all incoming mail streams (letters, flats, parcels, etc.) looking for that shape.

If an MSP defines a MEPs after distribution to the delivery unit, he or she might create the following three MEPs that will cover every mailpiece once:

- Letter shape mail only.
- Flat shape mail only.
- IPPs/parcels/Priority Mail only.

After the MSP has defined a mail shape only MEP, he or she should ensure that the MEP description clearly indicates that the MEP is based upon one exclusive mail shape and that every other mail shape found must be excluded from the test.

#### 4.3.3 **Less-than-24-Hour MEPs: The PM MEP and the Multi-tour MEP**

When designing a *less-than-24-hour MEP*, the MSP should ensure, as always, that every mailpiece is accounted for in one, and only one, MEP. When defining a *less-than-24-hour MEP*, he or she must ensure that no mailpiece has escaped either the *less-than-24-hour MEP* or one of the other MEPs.

When defining a *less-than-24-hour MEP*, the MSP must observe the following guidelines:

- Define cutoff times when a low volume of mail is being received at the MEP. MEP cutoff times do not need to coincide with facility tours.
- Obtain mail volume and other stratification information separately for each tour.

- Ensure that the mail volume for each MEP remains stable from day to day (Golden Rule 3). If the MEP volume from day to day is unstable, redefine the MEP, if possible.
- Ensure that data collectors will be available for any test on each tour or PM MEP.

#### 4.3.3.1 PM MEP

The PM MEP is one example of a MEP defined for less than 24 hours. This type of MEP often works well with facilities that receive afternoon or PM dispatches. These dispatches usually consist of Standard Mail and Periodicals. Such mail might or might not be available for delivery the next day.

A PM MEP can isolate this mail processing stream for testing. Because PM Mail MEPs are usually defined to test mail arriving at a facility in the late-morning or afternoon and being cased in the afternoon or evening on the day prior to the test date, both the beginning and ending cutoff times for PM MEPs usually fall on the *day before* the test date.

For instance, the MSP might wish to define a PM MEP at a facility that receives a large volume of Standard Mail in the late morning and afternoon. After casing this mail between 0900 and 1600, this facility usually has this mail ready for delivery on the next day. The MSP determines that this Standard Mail is composed predominantly of letter-size and flat-size mailpieces. He or she could therefore create the following 4 MEPs to capture every mailpiece at this facility:

- PM flat shape mail *only* and PM letter shape mail *only*: from 0900 until 1600 (on preceding day).
- Letter shape mail *only* (excluding PM mail).
- Flat shape mail *only* (excluding PM mail).
- Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail *only* (all dispatches).

#### 4.3.3.2 Multi-Tour MEP

Testing mail for a large volume firm over a 24-hour period can be difficult. An MSP might solve this problem by creating MEPs that correspond to tours.



**Example:** If there is a very large firm with a unique ZIP Code (such as, for this example, ZIP Code 99999). The firm, or its agent, picks up its mail several times a day. The firm receives approximately 100,000 mailpieces per day composed mainly of letter mail, flats, and parcels.

Observing the *less-than-24-hour MEP* guidelines above, an MSP could divide the 24-hour day into 3 tours and further subdivide each tour into 3 separate MEPs based upon a mail processing stream. Accordingly, the design could create a total of 9 MEPs with the following characteristics:

- Tour 1 (Midnight–0800):
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPP, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
- Tour 2 (0800–1600):
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPP, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
- Tour 3 (1600–2400):
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.

#### 4.3.4

#### Accountable Mail MEP

When designing an accountable mail MEP, exclude all mail that arrives from sources other than the incoming accountable mailstream. Any mail brought from carriers or from other indirect sources may already have had the chance to be tested with other incoming mail MEPs (such as letter MEPs). Also, consider the following question: Can a data collector record the proper mailpiece characteristics from an accountable mail MEP's location? For instance, creating a BRM MEP upstream of a plant may pose problems if a data collector cannot determine the proper BRM fees during an ODIS-RPW test.

If the accountable mail volume is less than the recommended minimum of 100 mailpieces per day, do not create an accountable mail MEP. Instead, test the accountable mail together with one of the other MEPs at the facility. *To alert data collectors that accountable mail is tested at a specified MEP, the MEP Description field of that MEP in MEPS should note that the MEP includes accountable mail.* In this way, the MSP might design the following set of MEPs at a facility with under 100 accountable mailpieces per day:

- Letter mail processing stream (*including accountable mail*) — for entire station.
- Flat mail processing stream — for entire station.
- IPP, parcels, and Priority Mail mail processing stream — for entire station.

#### 4.3.4.1 Accountable Mail MEPs for Medium Volume Accountable Mail

If the volume of accountable mail at a facility is over 100 mailpieces, an MSP should consider creating a separate accountable mail MEP for the facility. He or she could, for instance, create the following set of MEPs:

- Letter shape mail only (excluding accountable mail).
- Flat shape mail only.
- Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail only.
- Incoming accountable mail (excluding hand-offs from carriers).

To ensure that accountable mail is not tested with the other MEPs at the facility, include in the *MEP Description* fields of these other MEPs a message for the data collectors. This message should remind data collectors that accountable mail is only tested in the accountable mail MEP.

#### 4.3.4.2 Accountable Mail MEPs for Large Volume Accountable Mail

Some facilities could have very large volumes of accountable mail. For example, there could be a facility that receives over 20,000 business reply mailpieces and over 2,000 registered mailpieces each day. Other accountable mail might represent over 5,000 mailpieces each day. In such a case, the MSP should consider creating the following 3 accountable mail MEPs (in addition to the other required and necessary MEPs):

- A business reply mail MEP.
- A registered/certified mail MEP.
- An *other* accountable mail MEP.

MSPs should also include a message in the MEP description fields of other MEPs. This message should alert data collectors to exclude accountable mail from all nonaccountable mail MEPs.

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## 4.4 Frame Maintenance Policy

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Mail Exit Point System (MEPS) supports the entire sample selection process for the ODIS-RPW system; therefore, MEPS must be kept accurate and current. The integrity of the revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems depends on the continuous review, management, and upkeep of MEPs and MEPS; therefore, a failure to update MEPS can result in MEPs missing from the frame, duplicate and overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurately defined administrative information (e.g., MEP description, MEP type, ZIP Codes, special instructions, etc.). All of these factors can lead to the under-reporting or over-reporting of mail volumes. The reporting of inaccurate reference volume information leads to widely fluctuating mail volumes which in turn affect the precision of the sample estimate. The following frame maintenance policies, when followed and used consistently, will limit the frequency with which these kinds of errors can occur in MEPS. The frame maintenance policies include:

- On-site review of all MEPs in a facility where ODIS-RPW tests are conducted (section 4.4.1).
- Weekly reference volume updates (section 4.4.2).
- Frame review process for sample selection (section 4.4.3).
- Drop/add policy (section 4.4.4).

### 4.4.1

#### **On-Site Review of All MEPs in a Facility Where ODIS-RPW Tests are Conducted**

In order to maintain a complete frame there must be a continuous review of MEPs. This involves checking for duplicate and missing MEPs, overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurate administrative information. The on-site review of MEPs is a critical component because MEPs are regularly defined along mail flows where mail processing is dynamically changing to adapt to new technology and products. Therefore, existing MEPs for a facility must be continuously compared to current mail flows.



**Note:** Constant communication with knowledgeable Post Office staff is an important key in the on-site review process.

Maintaining a complete frame requires the following policies:

**1. All MEPs in a facility must be reviewed, at least once per quarter, if an ODIS-RPW test is conducted in that facility.**

MEPs in a facility are required to be reviewed if an ODIS-RPW test is conducted there during the quarter. The review of the MEPs may be in conjunction with an ODIS-RPW test, but that is not required. The frame review begins anew each quarter, and depends on which MEPs (and their corresponding facilities) are selected for testing in ODIS-RPW. All MEPs in a facility must be reviewed at least once when there are multiple tests conducted in that facility within the quarter.

It is up to the discretion of the MSP to schedule a review of the frame in these facilities. MSPs may voluntarily schedule additional reviews, particularly if this process routinely accompanies data collectors as they conduct tests.

Not all facilities are tested each quarter; however, large volume facilities rarely experience consecutive quarters without ODIS-RPW tests. Smaller facilities may receive only one test per year, or only one test over several years. These smaller facilities will generally have simple mail flows covered by only a few MEPs, and therefore there is less concern about such things as duplicate or missing MEPs.

**2. The review of all MEPs in a facility must be conducted on-site.**

The on-site review of the MEP frame is critical for ensuring that the collection of MEPs allows each mailpiece exiting the Postal Service to have one, and only one, chance of being tested. Without an on-site review the study of mail flows would be impossible, and effective communication with knowledgeable facility personnel would be difficult to establish.

Small facilities with only a few MEPs still require an on-site review when an ODIS-RPW test is conducted. If all the MEPs are defined upstream at the parent plant, the on-site review at the small facility is waived. However, a call to the facility is required to ensure all mail flows are covered within the upstream MEPs.

**3. The review of facility MEPs may be conducted by data collectors in conjunction with ODIS-RPW tests.**

Data collectors conducting ODIS-RPW tests may also conduct a review of all MEPs while at the facility on the test day. Such practices may not be possible in all situations, particularly where the time windows do not exist. *In no case should the isolation, sampling, or data recording be compromised by the review of the facility MEP frame.* However, if the time windows exist, and the data collector understands and can apply procedures for reviewing the frame, the review may be performed in conjunction with the test.

**4. The reviewer must bring a printout of the facility's frame listing.**

Frame listings must be printed from MEPS for the facility and be provided to the reviewer for use during the on-site visit. The listing should include all information about the MEP from MEPS (e.g., ZIP Codes, finance number, MEP type, MEP description, facility name, Headquarters code, and the extended MEP description from the Special Instructions). These listings form the basis from which to compile notes that can be used later to update MEPS and *Special Instructions*.

**5. The review must include the following guidelines to check for missing, duplicate, overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurate administrative information:**

- **Missing MEPs:** The reviewer must check for missing MEPs. Missing MEPs occur when mail consistently misses all MEPs in a facility, and, therefore, could not be included in any existing MEP. The identification of missing MEPs requires an on-site investigation of mail flows (get help from knowledgeable facility personnel). Missing MEPs must be added to MEPS.
- **Duplicate MEPs:** The reviewer must inspect the frame listing for duplicate MEPs. Duplicate MEPs are alike in all respects. They have the same MEP description, ZIP Codes, administrative information, and MEP reference volumes. Determining if duplicate MEPs exist does not require an inspection of mail flows, only a careful review of the facility frame listing. Duplicate MEPs must be deleted from MEPS.
- **Overlapping MEPs:** The reviewer must check for overlapping MEPs. When mail is eligible to be tested in more than one MEP, it means that the MEPs are incorrectly defined and overlapping. Since most MEPs are defined along mail processing streams that consist predominantly of one mail shape, overlapping MEPs often mean that two MEPs cover the same or portions of the same mail processing flows. The identification of overlapping MEPs requires an on-site investigation of mail flows working in conjunction with knowledgeable facility personnel. Corrections to the MEP description in MEPS and to the Special Instructions can often solve these problems. Use the *MEP Description* and Special Instructions to specifically identify which mailstream and type of containers go with which frame unit, cutoff times, etc.
- **MEPs with inaccurate administrative information:** The frame listings must be reviewed for inaccurate administrative information such as: incorrect MEP descriptions, MEP type and group codes, ZIP Codes, and *Special Instructions*. This information is extremely critical to testing consistently from day to day and ensures an accurate sample selection file each quarter. The identification of inaccurate

administrative information requires a combination of examining the frame listing and an on-site investigation of mail flows (working in conjunction with knowledgeable facility personnel). Ensure that the following conditions are true:

- The ZIP Codes are accurate and associated with the correct finance number. This includes the main office, facility, and MEP ZIP Codes.
- The MEP description is complete. It must contain information about such things as cutoff times for less-than-24-hour MEPs and whether the MEP is based upon mail processing stream or mail shape. Refer to section 4.2.4 for information on what to include in the MEP description.
- The *Special Instructions* properly supports the MEP description. This field allows room for storing other information about the MEP that is helpful in testing the MEP in a consistent manner.
- The MEP type and group are correct. The MEP type and group are crucial in software development for CODES data entry. Programmers use these to navigate the data collector through CODES data entry software. The MEP type is also used in stratification, or the grouping of like MEPs for sample selection.



#### Examples:

- *MEP Description* and *Special Instructions* that do not clearly spell out how containers of mixed shaped mail are to be sampled could lead one data collector to test using one method one day, and another data collector to test using another method another day. Even the same data collector might not sample mixed shaped mail containers consistently from one day to the next.
- COUs must be coded with MEP type = 1 or 3. The ODIS-RPW data entry screens follow the MEP type for COU and destination tests. Incorrect coding of the MEP type causes the wrong screens to appear and results in tests which cannot be taken. This is just one of many situations where the proper coding of the MEP type is critical.

#### 6. Communicate with knowledgeable facility personnel.

Always communicate with knowledgeable facility personnel to discuss changes in mail flows, mail processing, dispatch schedules, and any other changes which may lead to missing and overlapping MEPs, confusing MEP descriptions, etc. Effective communication is best achieved through on-site visits to mail facilities.

**7. Collect reports (where necessary), such as automated machine counts, and rural route listings.**

In some instances it may be useful to gather such reports as class reports, rural route listings, case diagrams, and information from the Engineering Technical Unit (ETU). These reports are helpful in reviewing MEPs that are defined in a *similar* manner, such as carrier routes defined as MEPs.

**4.4.2 Weekly Reference Volume Updates**

The MEP History report should be the primary tool used to maintain the MEP reference volumes. It is required that the MEP History Report be generated and reviewed prior to the weekly transmission schedule for all MEPs where an ODIS-RPW test has been completed within the given week. The information gathered from the MEP History Report is then used to update MEPS reference volumes. The MSP should select the MEP verified box in the MEP *Edit* screen when MEP volumes have been updated.

The MSP should use the following process to update MEPS reference volumes on a weekly basis:

**1. Generate and Review the MEP History Report**

It is required that the MEP History Report be generated and reviewed at the end of each week. While certain MEPs that are tested frequently might be updated several times during the quarter, this practice assures a concerted and dedicated effort to maintain accurate reference volumes. Therefore, in order to provide timely and accurate reference volume updates, the following guidelines must be met:

- The MEP History Report *must* be generated and reviewed at the end of each week and include all historical data.
- All historical data must be used.
- After a careful review of the MEP History Report, determine whether or not report averages need to be adjusted following the guidelines established in step 2.

**2. Adjust Test Data Averages if Necessary**

The MEP History Report generates reports that contain an average of the historical test and external data. This average is used to update MEP reference volumes. In some instances there may be a need to adjust the average. In these special cases where it is necessary to make the adjustment, use the following guidelines:

- Evaluating whether an adjustment to the average is necessary.

Any adjustment to the MEP History Report should only be made after a careful review of the individual tests and external records. Always accept the given average, unless the average contains bad tests (for example, wrong skip intervals used, mail not isolated properly, wrong MEP tested, etc.) or bad external data. Recalculate the average excluding the suspect test(s).

- Adjust the test data averages if necessary.

Test data records can only be adjusted manually on the MEP History Report itself.

### 3. Weekly Reference Volume Updates Using the MEP History Report

After a careful review of the MEP History Report, and considering the calculated test and external data average, update MEPS reference volumes.

It is not an acceptable practice to update MEPS reference volumes to the exact test volume for the given test day without considering the reference volume averages from the MEP History Report. The only case where individual test volumes should be considered is when no other test and/or external data are available.

The MSP should select the MEP verified box in the MEP *Edit* screen when MEP volumes have been updated.

#### 4.4.3

### Frame Review Process for Sample Selection

The on-site facility review of MEPs and the weekly reference volume updates are continuous frame maintenance processes. In addition, a final review process must be conducted prior to the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sample selection.

Two weeks prior to the close of the frame, the MSP is required to perform the following activities:

#### 1. Check transactions (Adds/Deletes/Changes) for accuracy before the close of the frame for sample selection.

Prior to the close of the frame for sample selection processing (see the dates listed in number 4), all adds, deletes, and changes must be reviewed. The review must ensure that these modifications have not resulted in missing, duplicate, or overlapping MEPs. After the review, check MEPS to ensure that MEPs are listed correctly where transactions have occurred.

It is important that the MSP keep a record of all MEPs that have changed (this helps to determine if MEPs that have received transactions are listed correctly in MEPS). However, because there is no CODES Web Base Unit program available at this time to record these transactions, it is up to the MSP to choose a method by which he or she can record this information. The ideal way to keep track of this information is to construct

a log, using a notebook or electronic spreadsheet, that contains those MEPS that have received transactions and the types of transactions that were performed (i.e., adds/deletes/changes). Whatever method the MSP chooses to use, it is the careful recording of transaction information that ensures accurate updates to MEPS.

**2. Review Headquarters generated Frame Maintenance and Advancement/Relegation Reports.**

Each quarter, Headquarters sends out the *Advancements and Relegation, and Frame Maintenance for Qxx, Fyy, Sampling Report* which lists potential MEPS that need updating.

The advancements/relegation tables in this report deal with aligning MEPS district frame with the financial accounting systems' official list of finance numbers and their cost ascertainment group (CAG). The table titled *Frame Maintenance Report* lists other potential problems with the district's frame.

Each table must be reviewed and the necessary corrections made to MEPS per the processing deadlines for the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sample selection (number 4).

**3. Completely review the frame listing for accuracy before the close of the frame for sample selection.**

An in-office review of the entire MEP System is a critical final step prior to the close of the frame for sample selection. It is recommended that all MEPS be listed (on hard copy or electronically on screen) by facility and reviewed one last time.

Once the frame is closed and ODIS-RPW tests scheduled, the tests must be performed on the MEPS which existed at the time of sample selection. While updates can be posted continuously, they do not take effect for testing until the following quarter.

**4. Make any necessary corrections on MEPS and process all transactions by the processing deadlines for the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sampling (Sample Selection Processing).**

Make any necessary corrections to MEPS and process all transactions by the processing deadlines given below. Information from the MEPS transmissions is used in creating ODIS-RPW sample selections for the MSP's district. *All additions, changes, and deletions to MEPS must be completed by 4:00 p.m. eastern time on the following dates:*

- November 21st for quarter 2 Sample Selection Processing.
- February 21st for quarter 3 Sample Selection Processing.
- May 21st for quarter 4 Sample Selection Processing.
- August 21st for quarter 1 Sample Selection Processing.

The MSP should select the MEP verified box in the MEP *Edit* screen when MEPS has been updated.

#### 4.4.4

#### Drop/Add Policy

For updates that change the basic definition of the MEP, the MEP must first be deleted and then the new one added.

This ensures that the new MEP has a unique Headquarters code (HQCD) and hence is a unique sampling unit. If the MEP's finance number, main office ZIP or facility ZIP, MEP ZIP, or fundamental MEP definition changes, the original MEP should be deleted and the new or modified MEP added.



**Example:** An original MEP is defined as an all letter and flat mail processing stream to a facility. It is decided to replace this MEP with 2 MEPs, one a letter mail processing stream to the facility and the other a flat mail processing stream to the facility. *Do not modify the original MEP to one of the new MEPs*; it will not be associated with a unique HQCD. Delete the original MEP and add the 2 new MEPs.

## Chapter 5 Training

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The mission of Statistical Programs is to present quality data to the organization. Data analysis rests upon the foundation of data collection which, for any one statistical program, is a series of complicated interconnected processes. Ideally, data collection should be performed exactly the same way at all times in all locations by all data collectors. Training is a key to minimizing variation in data collection. If all data collectors across the country are taught the same materials in the same manner, the impact of a major source variation can be minimized.

It is the responsibility of the district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) to provide data collection personnel with the appropriate tools to do their jobs. Just as the data collector must be provided with a laptop with up-to-date software and a scale that will weigh mailpieces accurately, he or she must also be fully trained.

MSPs perform the following tasks:

- Train new data collectors.
- Train experienced data collectors.
- Record training data.

The data collectors' need to learn is on-going because the statistical programs environment is complex and ever-changing. The MSP needs to employ many tools to help progress the development of the data collector over time. RM 5-1 provides a graphic representation of data collector development and the tools used to aid in that development.

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## 5.1 Training Policy and Procedures

Only trained personnel may conduct a statistical programs test in any of the domestic and international revenue, volume, performance measurement, and cost programs. For Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW), System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO- IODIS), and System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI), only personnel trained in data collection procedures may be used to isolate mail for testing, select sample containers and pieces, and record test data. This includes isolating the mail and selection of containers and/or pieces from PM dispatch mail.

In programs where it exists, all new data collectors — full-time, cadre, and ad-hoc — are to complete the new data collector training prior to conducting a test on their own in that program. In programs where a new data collector program does not exist, all new data collectors — full-time, cadre, and ad-hoc — are to be taught the Process Activated Training System (PATs) processes for a specific program prior to conducting a test on their own in that program.

Each quarter, every district must conduct at least one day of statistical programs training for data collection technicians (DCTs), cadre, ad-hoc, and backup data collectors. Station, associate office (AO), or mail processing personnel who isolate and tag mail for sampling, or who are IOCS telephone readings respondents should receive any relevant update information provided during the quarterly training.

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## 5.2 Training the New Data Collector

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Training new data collectors, including part-time, ad hoc, and cadre data collectors is vital to the success of statistical programs' data collection. It is essential that data are collected properly and without bias. Having standard training programs that instill a good foundation for data collecting provides a strong platform for data collectors to embark on.

The following subsections offer detailed information on PATS training (section 5.2.1), as well as training for new data collectors (section 5.2.2), and training of part-time, ad hoc, and cadre data collectors (section 5.2.3).

### 5.2.1

#### PATS Training

PATS is the primary tool in statistical programs national standardized training program for data collectors. PATS is structured on-the-job training in which a subject matter expert (SME) teaches the novice data collector using a standardized lesson plan. PATS lessons have been developed for all statistical programs.

The following list specifies the fundamental elements of PATS training:

- Only a certified SME trainer may teach the lesson plan.
- Current lesson plans must be used. Trainers can access up-to-date PATS lesson plans can be accessed from the PATS Web page at <http://56.83.138.114/spfs/pats/patsmain.html> on the Statistical Programs Field Support Web site.
- The process activated learner (PAL) must complete all prerequisites prior to training.
- SMEs must cover all statements in all steps of the lesson plan in the proper order.
- PALs must complete the requirements in each process step.
- PALs must complete all steps in order at the end of the lesson.

Demonstration of PATS lesson by a SME at a quarterly training session is not PATS training; it is quarterly training.

### 5.2.2

#### Training Program for New Data Collectors

The training program for new data collectors provides a recommended curriculum for training new data collectors in a specific statistical program. Typically, the curriculum includes test observation, PATS processes, handbook readings, videos, and extensive opportunities for practice and feedback. Actual training of a new data collector may be modified to the requirements for actual job performance.



**Example:** A data collector being trained for ODIS-RPW who will not be conducting tests that employ container subsampling does not need to be taught the PATS processes that cover it.

### 5.2.3

#### Training New Cadre Data Collectors

Training of part-time, cadre or ad-hoc data collectors presents special challenges because typically these individuals are not as available as full-time DCTs. To help meet this challenge, the ODIS-RPW New Cadre Data Collector Program has been developed. It is half the length of the standard program — one week, instead of two.

The reduction in training time can be achieved by careful selection of the part-time, cadre or ad-hoc data collector. It is critical to select someone who has the following qualifications:

- Knowledge of mail flows sufficient to correctly locate Mail Exit Points (MEPs) throughout the office where the ODIS-RPW tests will be conducted.
- Knowledge of mail identification sufficient to identify mail classes.
- Basic familiarity with computers.

The reduction in training time from two weeks to one week is accomplished by having the trainee complete the following tasks:

- Observation of ODIS-RPW tests prior to the training.
- Self train on eight ODIS-RPW lesson plans.
- Practice recording mailpieces on his/her own, following training.

The MSP must ensure that part-time, cadre, or ad-hoc data collectors are fully trained. If an MSP is not successful in obtaining cadre data collectors for sufficient time to be adequately trained, he or she should take the issue to someone who can assist, such as his or her manager or manager's manager. If cadre data collectors still can't be obtained, the MSP should notify the SPSC.

## 5.3 Quarterly Training

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



All data collectors (DCTs, cadre, ad-hoc, and backup data collectors) must receive quarterly training. The following subsections describe the policy in detail.

#### 5.3.1

#### Test Management

To support accomplishment of quarterly training, districts have the option of rescheduling or canceling all statistical programs tests for one day each quarter. If a district decides not to conduct statistical programs tests for a day to conduct comprehensive training, the MSP must adhere strictly to the guidelines provided each quarter with the nontraining days report (available on the Statistical Programs Web site, in the TSSR area) showing the days “blocked out” as a test sensitive day. Selection of any training day must be coordinated through the SPSC if tests will be rescheduled or canceled. Those tests not rescheduled are to be canceled.

#### 5.3.1.1

#### Acceptable Quarterly Training Methods

All data collectors in the district do not have to be trained simultaneously at one site. Training smaller groups of data collectors — even one-on-one training — at multiple sites might be the most practical strategy, especially in districts that are large in geography. Another acceptable training venue is to conduct training using distance learning techniques such as video conferencing or using a program such as Web Meeting where two-way interaction between trainer and learner occurs. Classroom training at least once a year is strongly recommended. The face-to-face group setting provides interaction among the data collectors and enhances the learning process.

Generally, the style of the quarterly training event is not prescribed. Relevant topics should change from quarter to quarter and vary from district to district. At times, Statistical Programs provides topics/data issues identified by independent audit findings to be addressed and/or training materials to implement data collection changes. One recommended strategy for identifying appropriate topics is to review process review forms for data collectors and identify items that have many negative responses; these would indicate a need for training in a specific area. PATS processes covering the item(s) identify the recommended way to perform a specific task and can be reviewed or used as a guide during the training day.



**Note:** When PATS processes are used in quarterly training, the training is to be recorded using the quarterly training course number, not the PATS course number.

#### **5.3.1.2 Unacceptable Quarterly Training Methods**

The following list describes some unacceptable training conventions:

- Mailing out SP letters and instructions regarding software changes.
- Having the data collectors bring in their laptops and spending the training day updating them.
- Not providing structured training (i.e., no agenda), spending the time in general discussion about anything that comes to mind, rambling from topic to topic.

#### **5.3.1.3 Remedial Training**

When observation of an experienced data collector during an annual process review identifies a practice that is not consistent with Statistical Programs policy — typically a “No” response on PS Form 1444-A Series, *Statistical Programs Monitoring Audit Evaluation Checklist* — it is the MSP’s responsibility to correct the deficiency. An appropriate procedure is to have the related PATS process taught to the data collector and then to review the data collector’s work processes a second time.

## 5.4 Documenting Training

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The MSP must ensure that all training for the district is entered correctly into the National Training Database (NTD), which is the Postal Service's record of training activity. The NTD is maintained by Human Resources. The Postal Employee Development Center (PEDC) is responsible for entering district training into the database. The MSP must follow the local PEDC procedures for reporting training. The course numbers for PATS training are posted on the Training section in the Statistical Programs Field Support (SPFS) section of the Statistical Programs Web site.

#### 5.4.1 PATS Training

Each PATS lesson plan has a unique course number assigned to it. A file containing course numbers for PATS training is accessible by clicking on the *PATS Course Numbers* link from the PATS Web page. Additionally, course numbers by statistical program can be found on the Processes Available page from which documents are selected for display.

#### 5.4.2 Quarterly Training

A different course number is used for each quarter's training, as shown in Table 5.4.2–1.

Table 5.4.2–1. Statistical Programs Quarterly Training Course Numbers

Course Title	Course Number
Statistical Programs Quarterly Training: Q1	31201-32
Statistical Programs Quarterly Training: Q2	31203-46
Statistical Programs Quarterly Training: Q3	31203-47
Statistical Programs Quarterly Training: Q4	31203-48

#### 5.4.3 Required Records

MSPs must maintain a current record of training for each individual who participates in Statistical Programs data collection activities. A printout of the individual's training record from the NTD is an acceptable record.

In addition, PS Form 8215, *Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile* (Exhibits RM 5–2.1, and RM 5–2.2), may be used to maintain a record of completed training by program for each individual who participates in Statistical Programs data collection activities. PS forms are available from the Postal Service Intranet *Forms Management* page, and can be filled out electronically by clicking on the *Adobe Form Client* icon.

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## Related Materials for Training

This section includes all the definitions, tables, and related information necessary for training.

- RM 5–1 Data Collector Development.
- RM 5–2 Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile.



## RM 5–1 Data Collector Development

Referenced *Background Information*.

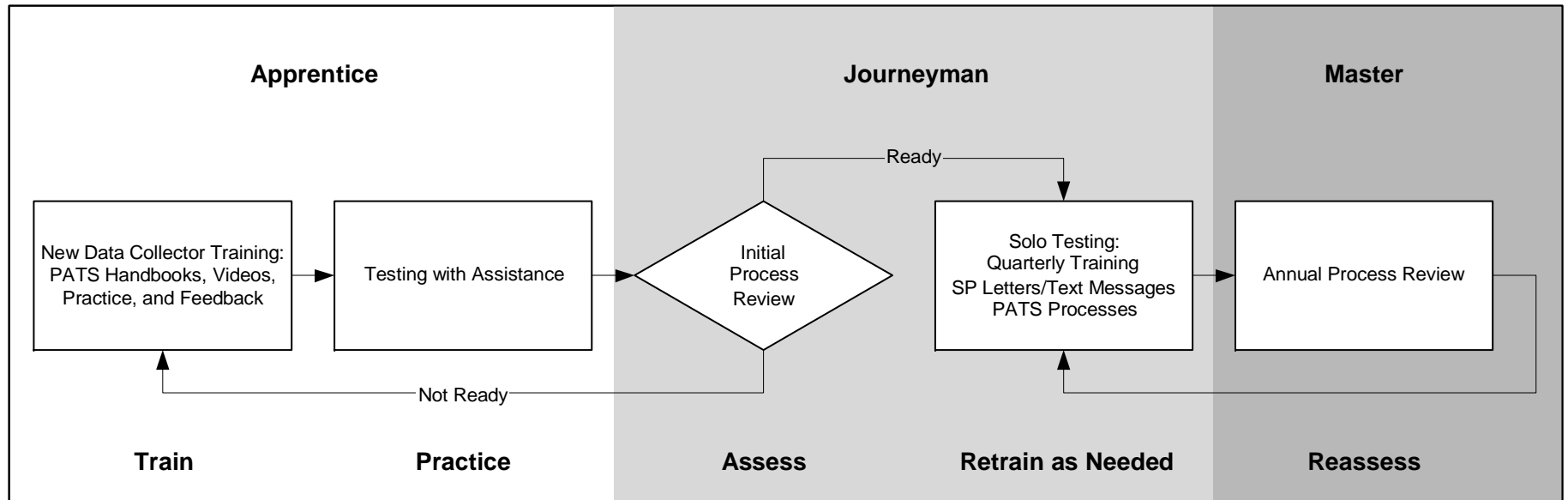



Exhibit RM 5–1.1. Data Collector Development



## RM 5–2 Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile

Referenced section 5.4.3.

		<b>Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile</b> <i>(See instructions on page 2)</i>											
Data Collector Name				ID Code		District		Post Office					
Statistical Program	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			
	Training Method	Month	FY	Training Method	Month	FY	Training Method	Month	FY	Training Method	Month	FY	
ODIS-RPW													
SIRVO- IODIS													
SIRVI													
CCCS													
RCCS													
TRACS													
IOCS													
MEPs													

PS Form 8215, May 2005 (Page 1 of 2)

Exhibit RM 5–2.1. Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile, PS Form 8215, Front



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**Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile**

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**Purpose**

Use this form to maintain a record of completed training by program for each individual that participates in statistical programs data collection activities in conjunction with PS Form 2432, *Individual Training Progress Report*.

**Instructions**

1. Complete all header information: Data Collector Name, ID Code, District, and Post Office™.
2. Enter training method, month, and FY by category.

**Training Method**

Acronym	Training Method
OJT	On-the-job training while performing data collection duties.
PAT	Training by PATS (Include process number).
PED	Training in Postal Employee Development Center.
PST	Training received through the Postal Satellite Television Network.
QTR	Quarterly Training.
TEL	Teleconference or Postal Audio Training Network (PATN).
VID	Training received through the viewing of videos.

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PS Form 8215, May 2005 (Page 2 of 2)

Exhibit RM 5–2.2. Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile, PS Form 8215, Back

## Chapter 6

# Process Review Activities

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



In Statistical Programs, process review is a primary method of quality control to ensure data integrity.

Process review activities assess data collectors' work performance and application of data collection procedures to the various statistical tests. Because policy, procedures, and technology change, it is vital that regular training activities are combined with process review to ensure accurate understanding and correct performance of statistical data collection procedures.

Another advantage of process review is that if done properly, it helps the district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) understand and know his or her data collectors better. PS Form 1444-A Series, *Statistical Programs Monitoring Audit Evaluation Checklist*, provides an evaluative checklist for data collectors in the various tests. Effective reviews are critical to quality data. It is necessary to ensure that correct sampling techniques are applied and that data are recorded accurately and precisely. The MSP is responsible for ensuring process review activities are conducted according to current policies and procedures described in the following subsections.

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## 6.1 Process Review Responsibilities

Each district must conduct observations of either live or simulated tests to ensure that all data collectors are employing proper test procedures. For each program that they participate in (Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW), System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS), System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI), Carrier Cost Systems, Transportation Cost System (TRACS), In-Office Cost System (IOCS), etc.), all data collectors (data collection technicians (DCTs), cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc.) must be observed according to the following minimum requirements:

- A data collector with less than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least twice during the first year in that program.
- A data collector with more than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least once during the fiscal year in that program.

The finance manager and MSP are responsible for initiating action for any improvement opportunities noted during the observations.

Use the PS Form 1444-A Series, *Monitoring Audit Evaluation Checklist*, to document process review activities. See section 2.3.3, Records Retention Policy to determine how long these forms should be kept.

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## 6.2 Policy

The following list displays the objectives of process review:

- Observe and assess the general performance level of administrative procedures and accuracy of the sampling frames.
- Observe data collectors to detect irregularities that are not apparent from review of the data and test printouts.
- Ensure policy and procedures are followed.
- Recommend corrective actions and provide remedial training where irregularities or inadequacies are detected.
- Follow up, in subsequent visits, to ensure corrective action has been taken and proper procedures are used.

The following list describes the three different types of process review:

### 1. Administration Process Review.

This review assesses the district's administrative processes to ensure that data collectors are properly trained and reviewed, data collectors have the necessary tools to properly conduct statistical programs tests, data collectors are assigned to conduct all tests, statistical programs data is administered and reviewed, Computer On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) equipment is secured and updated, etc.

### 2. Frame Process Review.

This review assesses the condition of the sampling frame (MEPS) for the facility where a data collector review is conducted.



**Note:** This review does not replace the frame maintenance policy as described in section 4.4.

### 3. Data Collector Process Review.

This review assesses a data collector's processes to conduct tests. A data collector must be reviewed for all the items on the checklist that he/she regularly performs including data entry verification. Completion of this requirement may entail the use of simulations or multiple tests or readings.

Headquarters has established minimum frequency requirements for each type of review as follows:

#### ■ Administration Process Review:

The MSP is to perform a self-audit of the administrative procedures used in the Statistical Programs unit at least once a fiscal year. If the district has a subordinate unit with Statistical Programs administrative

responsibilities, then the subordinate unit should also be reviewed at least once a fiscal year.

■ **Frame Review:**

When a data collector review is conducted, the frame for the facility (MEP) where the data collector review is conducted is to be reviewed.

■ **Data Collector Review.**

Headquarters has established a minimum requirement for data collector process reviews. The intent is to provide the MSP and SPS the flexibility to conduct data collector process reviews more frequently for those data collectors who require it. Every person involved with collecting statistical programs data is to be reviewed on all processes he/she regularly performs. Included are DCTs, cadre, ad hoc, and backup data collectors. The minimum requirement is as follows:

- A data collector with less than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least twice during the first year in that program.
- A data collector with more than a year's experience in a program is to be reviewed at least once during the fiscal year in that program.

The following tools assist the MSP to conduct process reviews:

■ **Process Support and Tracking System (PSTS).**

MSPs are required to use the PS Form 1444-A Series, *Monitoring Audit Evaluation Checklist*. These forms can be found in PSTS, the section of the Statistical Programs Web page that is used for administering the Process Review Program. These forms can be downloaded and reprinted locally or used as Excel spreadsheets. Once a process review is completed, the results must be entered in PSTS. It is recommended that data entry be completed each quarter. All data entry for the fiscal year must be completed by the 7th day after the end of the year. PSTS also provides reports to be generated on a quarterly basis and used to identify training opportunities. PSTS can be accessed on the Statistical Programs Home Page under *Applications*. A PSTS user's guide is available on the PSTS page.

■ **Planning Process Reviews.**

PS Form 8216, *Statistical Programs Planning Calendar for Process Review*, is available as an aid for MSPs in planning their process reviews; however, its use is not required. The form may be found in Adobe Form Client and reproduced locally.



**Note:** If the planning calendar is not used, then some locally designed record or system must be used to track this information.

## 6.2.1

**Advance Preparation for Data Collector Process Review**

It is important that the MSP plan carefully to maximize the efficiency of the process review. Effective planning proposes that the MSP takes the following measures:

**1. Determine which part of the checklist the data collector regularly performs.**

Data collectors must be reviewed over all checklist items that he or she performs regularly.

**2. Schedule a live test that will enable him or her to observe as many items the data collector regularly performs as possible. Those checklist items that are regularly performed by the data collector and not observed during the live test must be covered using either scenarios, another live test, or simulation.**



**Example:** An ODIS-RPW data collector being reviewed regularly subsamples loose flats. Acceptable methods of review in order of preference are:

1. Complete the checklist items by reviewing the data collector performing a live test on flats.
2. Set up ODIS-RPW scenario 11.0 for subsampling loose flats and complete the checklist items by reviewing the data collector completing the scenario.
3. Simulate an entire test that would cover all the checklist items the data collector regularly performs. Use this only in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., a data collector will only be available for a narrow time window-because it lacks the benefits of review under live testing and the controlled conditions of using the scenarios). Process reviews for IOCS telephone readings must be done using an actual telephone reading.
4. Review the data collector conducting another test in which loose flats are subsampled. This option is less preferred than option 2 because it will involve more time and expense.



**Example:** The data collector being reviewed regularly conducts on-site and telephone IOCS readings. All sections of the IOCS checklist may be completed using scenarios except section 14, Telephone Readings. The MSP will schedule a process review for an actual telephone reading.

3. **Communicate with the data collector before the process review in order to clarify the purpose of the process review and answer fully any questions the data collector might ask. The MSP should explain to the data collector the following purposes of the process review:**
  - To assess the individual data collector's strengths, what he or she does correctly.
  - To further learning/performance improvement of the individual data collector.
  - To identify training opportunities for the data collector.
  - To track the individual's progress over time. Results of this process review will be entered in a database and accessed by the reviewer prior to the next process review.
4. **Identify how many times the data collector will be reviewed during the current fiscal year based on section 6.1.**
5. **Explain how the process review will be conducted using the following criteria:**
  - Provide the data collector with a copy of the checklist for the process review in time for him or her to review it before the process review.
  - Discuss which items will be reviewed (e.g., those that the data collector regularly performs) and how they will be reviewed (e.g., live test, simulation).
  - Explain how the mailpiece recording will be conducted.
6. **Notify the data collector of date(s) of the process review.**
7. **Ask for/answer any questions from the data collector.**
8. **Review the previous year's PSTS report for the data collector if it is available. Note the "N" (No Response) entries in order to see if these deficiencies have been corrected in the forthcoming review.**
9. **Gather the materials that are needed to conduct the process review including the following items:**
  - The checklist(s) for the program(s) to be reviewed.
  - Laptop computer, if mailpiece CD is used.
  - Process review mailpieces, CD, or hard copy.
  - Mailpiece answer key(s) if not using the Automatic Scoring Summary/Analysis Report.
  - Appropriate scenarios.

### 6.2.2 On-Site Preparation for Data Collector Process Review

The following steps advise the MSP how to prepare for on-site data collector process review:

1. **Make the following arrangements upon arrival at the site of the process review:**
  - Gather materials/equipment for scenarios.
  - Secure area to set up computer mailpiece review.
2. **Review the basics of process review with data collector, and answer any questions.**

### 6.2.3 Conducting the Data Collector Process Review

The following steps advise on how to conduct the data collector process review:

1. **Observe the data collector conducting the live test.**
2. **When necessary, use additional live tests, scenarios, and simulations (section 6.2.1, step 2).**
3. **Have the data collector key the process review mailpieces into the laptop software (e.g., ODIS-RPW, RCCS).**



**Note:** Over-the-shoulder observation of data entry may be done as a supplement, but is not required.

Mailpiece recording may be completed at any time, before or after observation of the live test. The data collector may complete it remotely on his or her own or in the presence of the reviewer. There should be no time constraints.

Mailpieces should be recorded at a location with as few distractions as possible.

The MSP will explain the process to the data collector and answer any questions he or she has, and set up the computer with the mailpiece CD or use hardcopy images of the mailpieces.

- For ODIS-RPW and RCCS, the MSP sets up the data collector's computer with the training test ID, and directs the data collector to enter the mailpieces in order and upload the training test to the CODES Web Base Unit.

The ODIS-RPW process review mailpiece entries are automatically scored and the results appear in the Summary/Analysis Report (section 6.2.4). RCCS process review mailpieces must be manually scored using the mailpiece answer key.

#### 4. Complete checklist items.

While observing the data collector, the MSP might find it convenient to record the results on a hard copy or an electronic version of the checklist.

The MSP answers “Y” if the data collector is observed performing all of the elements of the item.

The MSP answers “N” if the data collector does not perform one or more of the elements of the item. He or she answers “N” if the data collector is corrected and subsequently he or she performs the item correctly. The MSP may make a note in the comments section.

The MSP answers “X” if the item does not apply.



**Note:** An item may not be answered “X” merely because it is not observed during the live test. If the data collector regularly performs the task and it is not observed during the live test, the reviewer will use a scenario, another live test, or simulation to review it.

The MSP observes and takes notes, and does not answer the data collector's leading questions during observation. Instead, he or she leaves such questions for discussion after observation.

The MSP gives the data collector immediate feedback to correct errors observed during the live test(s).

### 6.2.4 Process Review: Automated Scoring of ODIS-RPW Data Entry

An automated system for scoring the data entry portion of the ODIS-RPW Process Review is available.

#### 6.2.4.1 Data Entry in the ODIS-RPW Software

Data collectors recording the ODIS-RPW process review mailpieces are to complete the following steps:

1. At the **CODES Main Menu** screen, select **ODIS-RPW**.
2. At the **Options Menu** screen, select **Conduct Test**.
3. At the **Conduct Test** screen, use the <down arrow> to find the Test ID beginning with 97 with MEP Description, “Training Test for Mail Piece Kit.” Highlight this test and press <Enter> to select it.
4. Complete the ODIS-RPW Test Header screen:
  - Enter the data collector ID.
  - Select *Census* from the drop down box for Sampling Method.
  - Verify that the header information is correct and click on **OK**.
5. At the **Options Menu** select **Collect Mailpiece Data**.

6. A new screen will appear, Kit Mailpiece Number; enter the number in the lower left corner of the mailpiece image to be recorded for ODIS-RPW process review data entry and click on OK.
7. The Mail Class & Type screen will appear. Complete data entry for the mailpiece.
8. The Kit Mailpiece Number screen will appear after verification of entries of the previous mailpiece is completed.
9. After all mailpieces have been entered and verified, select End Test and Save at the Options Menu.
10. Upload the test data to the CODES Web Base Unit using methods the data collector normally uses to upload ODIS-RPW tests.



**Note:** Multiple tests may be uploaded at the same time.

#### 6.2.4.2 Accessing the Test Results on the CODES Web Base Unit

To access the data entry results for a data collector on the CODES Web Base Unit the user will complete the following steps:

1. Access the Consolidated Samples page.
2. Set the Test Type field to ODIS-RPW.
3. Enter the date in the date range field.
4. Select Received (RCVD) from the Status field.
5. Set the Display Type field to Screen Display.
6. Click on the Go button.
7. Find and click on the test ID beginning with 97.
8. Click on the Summary Analysis to display the Process Review Mailpiece Review report in PDF format. The report may be printed, saved to disk or e-mailed.

#### Print Out of Results

The data entry results are displayed in two tables. Figure 6.2.4–1 displays *Table 1*, which shows the scoring of 22 laptop entries for each process review mailpiece. Along the top of the sheet running horizontally are the laptop items. Item 1 is Mail Class, item 2 is Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking, etc. A description of each laptop item by number appears below the table. Table 6–1 lists all laptop items.

UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE®

CODES WEB

BASE UNIT (samtcasx26f)

CLOSE

Restricted Information

Sample Control Info

Test Session 1

02/10/2005 04:43 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 2

02/10/2005 08:11 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 3

02/15/2005 12:37 PM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 4

02/15/2005 06:15 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 5

03/11/2005 09:03 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 6

03/11/2005 09:50 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Test Session 7

03/31/2005 07:23 AM

SCREEN PRINT

EXPORT

Summary / Analysts

03/31/2005 07:55 AM

SCREEN PRINT

DEL

TEST ID: 970189

TEST DATE: 03/31/05

VERS 3-1

TABLE 1: PROCESS REVIEW MAILPIECE REVIEW - TRAINING ID: 970189

DCT ID: 062

HF |----- LAPTOP ITEM -----

#

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13

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17

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21

22

(\* - INDICATES DIFFERENCE FROM MAILPIECE KEY)

002

015

017

032

033

038

039

043

051

055

064

069

080

091

102

106

\*

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116

119

127

329

333

344

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345

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349

356

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370

373

375

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501

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502

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506

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\*

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509

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510

511

513

517

526

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%CORR

100

100

100

98

100

98

100

97

91

97

93

86

50

88

96

100

33

100

100

92

96

100

#ITEMS

50

50

8

50

45

42

50

33

35

34

14

14

2

16

23

14

3

4

5

12

50

10

1=CLASS 2=MARKING 3=SUBCLASS 4=SHAPE 5=MAILER 6=INDICIA

7=VOLUME 8=WEIGHT 9=POSTMARK DATE 10=ORIGIN ZIP 11=BARCODE TYPE

12=BARCODE SOURCE 13=HANDWRITTEN 14=SPECIAL SERVICES 15=REVENUE

16=MAILABILITY 17=MEASUREMENTS 18=FIM 19=PRIORITY ID

20=METER MAN. 21=METER# 22=FOR-RET

Figure 6.2.4-1. Process Review Mailpiece Review Table

Along the left margin of the table running vertically is the mailpiece kit ID number. An asterisk (\*) indicates the entry was incorrect; a blank indicates the entry was correct.

At the bottom of *Table 1* (Figure 6.2.4-1) are two lines. %CORR shows the percentage of correct entries for each laptop item. #ITEMS shows how many entries there were for each laptop item.



**Note:** There can be fewer laptop items than mailpieces as not all laptop items will be entered for all mailpieces; for example, weight is not entered for Standard Mail.

Table 6–1. Process Review Mailpiece Review

Column	Title of the Laptop Screen Item
1	Mail class and type.
2	Mail preparation/sortation marking.
3	Mail subclass.
4	Mail type (shape).
5	Type of mailer.
6	Indicia (if multiple indicia, all must be correct).
7	Pieces.
8	Weight (pounds and ounces must be correct).
9	Postmark date (or 4-digit cancellation code must be correct).
10	ZIP Code lookup.
11	Barcode size (Postal Numeric Encoding Technique (POSTNET) only).
12	Barcode source.
13	Address handwritten.
14	Special service(s) present? (If multiple special services, all must be correct.)
15	Total mailpiece(s) revenue.
16	Mailability.
17	Parcel dimensions (length, height, thickness, girth must all be correct).
18	Facing identification mark (FIM).
19	Marking identification (Priority “identified” or “not-identified”).
20	Meter/Information based indicia (IBI) manufacturer.
21	Meter/IBI number.
22	Forwarded/returned and missent (“radio” button on mail class and type screen).
23	(Future use).
24	(Future use).

The %CORR scores from Table 1 (Figure 6.2.4–1) are translated in Table 2 into “Y” or “N” responses for PS Form 1444 section 18 items (Figure 6.2.4–2).

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

CODES WEB  
BASE UNIT (samtcasx26f)

RESTRICTED INFORMATION

Test Session 1  
02/19/2005 04:43 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 2  
02/10/2005 08:11 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 3  
02/15/2005 12:37 PM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 4  
02/18/2005 06:15 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 5  
03/11/2005 09:03 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 6  
03/11/2005 09:50 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Test Session 7  
03/31/2005 07:23 AM  
SCREEN PRINT  
EXPORT

Summary / Analysis  
03/31/2005 07:55 AM  
SCREEN PRINT

TABLE 2 FORM 1444 E-ODIS-RPW - TRAINING ID: 970189 DCT ID: 062

PSTS FORM 1444 ITEM

18.001RECORD MAIL CLASS CORRECTLY 100 % Y

18.002RECORD MAIL PREPARATION-SORTATION MARKING CORRECTLY 100 % Y

18.003RECORD MAIL TYPE -SHAPE- CORRECTLY 98 % N

18.004RECORD TYPE OF MAILER CORRECTLY 100 % Y

18.005RECORD INDICIA - SINGLE AND MULTIPLE - CORRECTLY 98 % N

18.006RECORD NUMBER OF PIECES - VOLUME - CORRECTLY 100 % Y

18.007RECORD WEIGHT OF THE MAILPIECE-S- CORRECTLY 97 % N

18.008RECORD POSTMARK DATE-TIME-DEST 5 DIGIT ZIP CODE 91 % N

18.009RECORD ZIP CODE LOOKUP - 2 DIGIT ORIGIN ZIP CODE 97 % N

18.012RECORD BARCODE SIZE - POSTNET ONLY - CORRECTLY 86 % N

18.013RECORD ADDRESS HANDWRITTEN INDICATOR - CORRECTLY 50 % N

18.014RECORD SPECIAL SERVICES CORRECTLY 88 % N

18.015RECORD TOTAL MAILPIECE(S) REVENUE - CORRECTLY 96 % N

18.011RECORD FIM CORRECTLY 100 % Y

Figure 6.2.4–2. Form 1444 E-ODIS-RPW Table

The automated scoring system translates 100% achievement into a “Y” and less than 100% into an “N.” These translations are meant to be guidelines; if the manager believes there is a valid reason, the entry on PS Form 1444-A Series may be changed.

The final “Y” and “N” responses are to be manually transferred to the ODIS-RPW process review PS Form 1444-A Series for later entry into PSTS.

## 6.2.5

### Evaluating the Process Review

The following steps advise on how to evaluate the data collector process review:

1. Enter into PSTS.
2. Compare current to history and the associated graphs.
3. Discuss the process review with the data collector.

The MSP will review strengths and weaknesses (“Y” and “N” entries), and will be sure to provide positive feedback. The MSP will communicate to the data collector anything he did well.

The MSP will answer any questions that emerged during or after the review.

The MSP should discuss next steps such as training that would help the data collector meet his or her goals.

## Chapter 7

# Administrative Procedures

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) computer architecture is structured around the functions of a “site.” A CODES site could be a district office, an airport mail facility (AMF), a bulk mail center (BMC), or an international service center (ISC).

The main tool used in CODES is the CODES Web Base Unit, which serves as the central gathering place of collected data from a district's data collectors. From it, data can be reviewed and in some cases, edited. Each system has its own requirements for edit, review, and approval. The responsibility for gathering and uploading data according to schedule is as important as ensuring the quality of that data.

The CODES Web Base Unit is a Web-based application. It can be accessed via the Postal Service Intranet.

Statistical Programs has the following automated systems, which serve a wide variety of needs:

- Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW).
- System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS).
- System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI).
- City Carrier Cost System (CCCS).
- Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS).
- Transportation Cost System (TRACS).
- In-Office Cost System (IOCS).
- Mail Exit Point System (MEPS).
- eDCT Scheduler.
- Inventory.

District managers, Statistical Programs (MSPs) are responsible for the overall administration and operation of CODES at their sites. Specific procedures related to CODES functions are described in the sections that follow.



**Note:** As stated in this section, the procedures described in this handbook are the responsibility of the MSP or designee only. No other individual may perform these procedures unless that person has been trained in the utilization of the CODES Web Base Unit procedures and authorized to perform them by the MSP.

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## 7.1 MSP and SPS Task Schedule

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



MSPs and SPSs must adhere to daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and quarterly task schedules. The following subsections list and describe the specific tasks organized by frequency of occurrence.

#### 7.1.1

#### Daily Procedures

The following subsections describe duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or SPS that should be performed on a daily basis.

##### 7.1.1.1

#### Check News Page

The MSP and/or SPS are to check the Statistical Programs and CODES Web Base Unit *News* pages for information updates and take necessary action to implement those instructions.

##### 7.1.1.2

#### Check Test Status

The MSP must maintain the status of tests on the CODES Web Base Unit. In addition to ensuring tests have been uploaded, it includes rescheduling, canceling, delinquent, and zero volume status. The reason for rescheduling and canceling must also be coded.

##### 7.1.1.3

#### Review, Edit, and Approve Tests

On a daily basis, the MSP and/or the SPS is to review the test, edit the test if appropriate, and then approve the test.

ODIS-RPW's editing capabilities are limited to the following fields:

- Container skip.
- Mailpiece skip.
- Mail type.
- Multiple identical pieces (MIP).

If changes extend beyond these fields, the MSP may conduct the following procedures:

1. Delete the mailpiece in error, and any associated special service records.
2. Re-enter the mailpiece into the CODES Laptop software for that test ID.
3. Upload the test records to the CODES Web Base Unit.
4. Review Summary/Analysis report and test detail.
5. Approve.

For additional help or training in the editing of specific programs, contact the SPSC.

The following programs have a report detailing what data was entered; however, editing is not available for these programs on the CODES Web Base Unit:

- SIRVO-IODIS.
- SIRVI.
- IOCS.

#### **7.1.1.4 CODES Web Base Unit Daily Best Practices ODIS-RPW**

The following steps illustrate daily best practices for ODIS-RPW:

- 1. Check the status for the current day.**
- 2. Conduct the following tasks for all received tests:**
  - a. Check to see if all sessions are received (RCVD) (pay particular attention to 24-hour tests that could require more than one session).**
  - b. Check to see if ODIS-RPW Summary/Analysis Report is available.**
  - c. Print the test detail from PDF and print the ODIS-RPW Summary/Analysis Report.**
  - d. Check for any comments from the data collection technician (DCT) by clicking on comments for each test.**
  - e. Conduct the following analysis from the test detail:**
    - Time of inputs.
    - Number of records.
    - Other details.
  - f. Conduct the following analyses from the ODIS-RPW Summary/Analysis Report:**
    - Skip interval summary for valid user IDs and proper use of skip intervals.
    - Volume summary by class and shape for inconsistencies against MEP description.
    - Reference volume analysis for comparison against MEP reference volume.
    - Other reports such as scale use, high proportion of 1-C single piece flats, and warnings on individual records.

- g. **Edit any tests where information is received from the DCT about wrong skips or MIPs.**
  - h. **When satisfied with the data, approve the test.**
  - i. **Print approved screen and attach test detail and ODIS-RPW Summary/Analysis Reports for records.**
  - j. **If additional sessions are uploaded, the test status gets set back to received (RCVD). Repeat step 2., a. through j.**
3. **Run the delinquent report for at least the month (by selecting Status of 'DELQ' and appropriate date range) to be sure everything has been received and approved. Resolve all delinquencies.**
  4. **Look at received (RCVD) tests to verify that they are approved.**
  5. **Make sure that any test that needs to be rescheduled is done on the CODES Web Base Unit before the test is received from the laptop in the field.**

The MSP and SPS should approve all tests with 2 reliable DCTs as backup. Tests should be approved daily.

The CODES Web Base Unit should be reviewed in the morning to assure the previous day's tests are transmitted.

## **7.1.2 Weekly Procedures**

The following subsections describe duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or the SPS that should be performed on a weekly basis.

### **7.1.2.1 Log in to the Network**

The Managed Maintenance Account (MMA) is designed to provide each district's CODES Laptops access to the Postal Service local area network (LAN) to upload test data and receive CODES applications software, as necessary. The MMA is the logon ID assigned to the district's MSP. It is imperative that individually assigned logon IDs are not used when conducting or uploading tests to the LAN. New or updated software relating specifically to CODES applications will be received based on the MMA used to access the network.

The MSP must ensure that every laptop is logged in to the network at least once a week to update the software, including security and anti-virus updates. This update must occur regularly to avoid the laptop from being locked out.

Microsoft Windows XP Security updates and Norton Anti-Virus updates to the CODES Laptops are downloaded via the Postal Service LAN. This happens automatically while connected to the LAN. If users have access to a LAN connection, they only need to connect to the network to update their CODES Laptops. In some cases, LAN access might not be available for offices that

are 100 miles or more from the district. Sites can receive these required updates via a dial-up connection; however, this method could take a significant amount of time and needs to be left connected for at least 1 hour. During this connection, the laptop must not go into the hibernate mode. All CODES Laptops must be connected to the LAN once a week so that these updates can occur.

#### **7.1.2.2 Schedule Tests**

When new samples are received on the CODES Web Base Unit, they must be scheduled by assigning a DCT to each test using either the eDCT Scheduler or another local scheduling system.

The schedules should outline the duty assignments for the entire week. They consist of information related to all scheduled tests, reporting times, and any applicable office duties.

Test schedules should be developed in compliance with Handbook EL-912, *Agreement between United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO*. The current agreement stipulates schedules must be completed and given to data collectors by the end of each data collector's tour on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled week. If a holiday occurs in the following week, the schedule must be completed prior to Tuesday. Any local memorandum of understanding should also be taken into consideration when preparing schedules.

#### **7.1.3 Bi-weekly Procedures**

The following subsections describe duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or the SPS that should be performed on a bi-weekly basis.

##### **7.1.3.1 Schedule IOCS Readings**

IOCS readings are generated every pay period (bi-weekly). The MSP or designee is responsible for accessing the IOCS Readings Schedule Report on the CODES Web Base Unit. This file contains information about the sampled employees and might provide the employees' starting and ending times.

After the file is available on the CODES Web Base Unit, the sampled employees' starting and ending times must be verified. The employees' schedules could have changed since the sample selection was performed. Also, the Readings Schedule Report might not have all sampled employees' starting and ending times.

To verify or obtain the sampled employees' starting and ending times, the MSP or designee consults the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS), locally maintained office roster, or calls the sampled employee's office.

Once the starting and ending times are obtained and verified, the readings are ready to be scheduled on the CODES Web Base Unit. As the readings are scheduled, the starting and ending times must be updated as appropriate. See Chapter 2 of Handbook F-45, *Data Collection User's Guide for In-Office Cost System* for an explanation of how the scheduled reading time is computed.

After the readings are scheduled, the MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the readings. Sample data are loaded onto the CODES Laptop via a telecommunications link or from a diskette.

#### **7.1.3.2 Download IOCS Samples**

Sample files can be downloaded directly from the CODES Web Base Unit to a CODES Laptop, allowing the user to receive sample selection files via data transfer.

The MSP may also download samples onto diskettes and mail them to the remote data collectors.

### **7.1.4 Monthly Procedures**

The following tasks are not required by Statistical Programs but could be expected by a particular district on a monthly basis:

- Pull CIS reports for the MSP.
- Vehicle Utilization Report.
- Vehicle Certification Report.
- Verify voyager card purchases (credit card gas purchases for vehicles).
- Procure supplies.

The following subsections describe duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or the SPS that should be performed on a monthly basis.

#### **7.1.4.1 Pull and Review TSSR Report**

The TSSR is pulled from the Statistical Programs Web site (<http://blue.usps.gov/statprog/>) and reviewed monthly by the MSP. The MSP is to review the TSSR report for missed, canceled, and rescheduled tests. Any missed tests are to be reconciled either by administratively canceling or rescheduling.

#### **7.1.4.2 Scale Calibration**

DCTs use electronic scales in conjunction with CODES Laptops to collect accurate weight data on test mailpieces.

Except for a few differences, the CODES Scale operates much like any other electronic scale. The scale uses a built-in computer to measure, balance, and compute the weight of objects placed on the weighing platter and then transfers the data to the CODES Laptop via a serial input/output (I/O) port connection. CODES then processes the data and displays the weight reading on the liquid crystal display (LCD) laptop screen.

To ensure accurate weight recordings, the scale (Toledo model No. 8571 only) must be calibrated at least once per month. RM 7–1 provides step-by-step instructions for calibrating Toledo scale model 8571.

The Toledo scale model PS6L can only be calibrated by the manufacturer. This scale must be tested for calibration once per month to determine whether calibration by the manufacturer is necessary. RM 7–2 provides step-by-step instructions for testing Toledo scale model PS6L for calibration.

## **7.1.5 Quarterly Procedures**

The following subsections describe duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or the SPS that should be performed on a quarterly basis.

### **7.1.5.1 Download and Review Samples**

Sample selections are usually available at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the new quarter or pay period.

When new software or sample files become available, they are released by Headquarters and the CODES Web Base Unit is updated automatically. A notice is displayed on the News page when new sample files become available.



**Note:** The IOCS schedule is different from the other schedules in that it is generated for each pay period.

### **7.1.5.2 Software Updates**

Software updates are released quarterly due to requirement changes, changing customer needs, classification reform, etc.

The releases are distributed from Statistical Programs at Headquarters via download from the mainframe and LAN. Release notes are provided with the software updates. The release notes contain necessary information and instructions on how to install the software updates to the CODES Base Unit and CODES Laptops. The Statistical Programs Web site also has information on upcoming software releases.

A laptop client disk must be prepared on the CODES Web Base Unit for each CODES Laptop in the field. This allows the laptop to communicate with the CODES Web Base Unit.

### 7.1.5.3 Update Passwords/Users

Passwords and system users must be updated regularly. For MSP changes, the MSP should contact the SPSC. The MSP is responsible for updating passwords for DCTs.

### 7.1.6 As Needed Procedures

The following subsection describes duties and responsibilities required of the MSP and/or SPS that should be performed as needed.

#### 7.1.6.1 Inventory (CODES Web Site)

All CODES equipment (excluding diskettes) must be included in the inventory listing, which can be found on the Statistical Programs Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov/statprog/>. The inventory files must be updated when any of the following situations occur:

- New equipment is received.
- Equipment is transferred from one office to another.
- Equipment has been excessed or taken out of service.
- Whenever there is an equipment change not otherwise listed here.

The MSP/SPS should check his or her inventory on the *Inventory* Web site to make sure it is correct, as he or she is responsible for all district CODES equipment. The Inventory Web site can be accessed from the Statistical Programs Web site (<http://blue.usps.gov/statprog/>) by clicking the *Inventory* link under *Applications*.

The inventory must be maintained on the Statistical Programs Inventory Web site. A dated printed copy of the inventory record must be kept on file at the Statistical Programs unit. This copy should note where the equipment is housed or located (e.g., in the MO Registry Section, at an associate office or a station/branch).

When checking inventory, remember to check each and every location where CODES equipment is assigned.

It is strongly recommended that new MSPs and SPSs check and verify their inventory of CODES equipment. This should be one of the first items on their agenda when returning to their office. It is important to remember that the MSP is responsible for all of this equipment. It is recommended that all inventory is verified at least once every six months or when equipment is sent in for repair.

While IT has an overall responsibility for the laptops, MSPs are required to document the location of ALL equipment under their control.

#### **7.1.6.2 Prepare Laptop Client Disks**

A laptop client disk must be prepared on the CODES Web Base Unit and installed on each CODES laptop in the field. This allows the laptop to communicate with the CODES Web Base Unit.

## 7.2 Contacting the CODES Computer Support Center

The CODES Computer Support Center (CCSC) can be reached via e-mail ([CCODES@usps.gov](mailto:CCODES@usps.gov)) or by calling 866-877-2633.

The CCSC provides technical direction and support to all CODES field sites that are requesting help. This involves resolving hardware and software problems via the CCSC telephone line. Hardware problems are the result of equipment failures. Software problems include, but are not limited to program malfunctions.

The CODES Laptops are currently under a 3 year onsite warranty. CCSC diagnoses the problems and provides the procedures to follow to obtain hardware repair service. The CCSC will help retrieve test data, if needed; make sure the CODES software is not causing the malfunction; and determine if the laptop requires an updated image of the current software version.

If there is a problem, it is important to know as much information as possible about it. This information should be included with any e-mails sent to the CCSC, or be readily available when calling the them. Any error messages that are displayed on the screen should be written down, or the “print screen” key can be used to capture the image electronically. Providing this information to the CCSC can help determine if the problem is hardware or software related. The laptop must also be readily accessible when in contact with the CCSC. The time needed to correct the problem depends on its severity as well as the amount of information that is provided to the CCSC.



**Note:** Statistical Programs staff is not to seek help from Information Technology (IT) unless it has been directed by the CCSC. Solutions by staff other than the CCSC could result in unrecoverable data or damaged equipment. IT has been instructed not to work on any CODES equipment including laptops.

Questions regarding policy issues should be addressed to the SPSC.

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## 7.3 Forms

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The following subsections give detailed descriptions and instructions for essential forms required for documenting various CODES administrative activities.

#### 7.3.1

#### Equipment Related Forms

All CODES equipment is domiciled in the district offices for use in conducting statistical programs tests. In an effort to maintain accurate inventory and tracking records, movement of CODES equipment (transfers to other districts) must always be coordinated through the SPSC. MSPs should contact the SPSC if there are questions or problems, and remember to update inventory at the *Inventory* Web site whenever equipment is new or transferred.

Remember, when dealing with any CODES equipment, the MSP is responsible for it. The forms described in this section serve as a means of documentation and accountability.

##### 7.3.1.1

#### The CODES Equipment Log

The CODES Equipment Log (RM 2–2) is just one of the instruments or procedures used to track the CODES equipment within an office, regardless of whether it's a district office or a cadre office. The log is used to sign-in and sign-out all portable computers and scales. Signatures on the logs are necessary.

The log serves two purposes. First, it provides written accountability for all equipment. Second, it serves as a record of any hardware or software problems that were encountered during the test. The MSP and SPS are responsible for maintaining the logs, as well as bringing any problems to the attention of the SPSC.

There are different ways to use this log sheet. One method is to record all of the computers on one sheet. Another way is to have a separate sheet for each piece of equipment. This form may also be used as a way to document that a particular laptop has been assigned to a DCT.

Regardless of which method is used, it is important to be able to account for all the equipment, whether it is located in a district or cadre office.

The equipment is to be accounted for each time it is used.

Refer to the CODES Logs table in section 2.3.3 for information describing retention of *CODES Log* sheets.

### 7.3.2 Carrier Cost Systems Tests Forms Input

All PS forms from Carrier Cost Systems tests should be entered in the CODES Base Unit according to the guidelines listed below. The information should be checked for accuracy and edited when necessary.

#### 7.3.2.1 PS Form 2846

PS Form 2846, *City Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*, is used to report the volume of mail collected by the mail carrier as he or she delivers the mail. The postmaster or designee of the tested site completes the form. PS Form 2846 may be obtained from the Postal Service Intranet by clicking on the *Essential Links/Forms* link or at Web address, <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2846.pdf>.

The MSP must review submitted forms for completeness and accuracy and must review with the postmaster or designee any incomplete or inconsistent items found. Data from PS Form 2846 should be entered into the CODES Base Unit within one week of the test date.

The MSP is responsible for the keying and transmission of the data on PS Form 2846. The keyer may be the MSP or someone designated and trained by the MSP.

#### 7.3.2.2 PS Form 2847

PS Form 2847, *Rural Carrier Payment Authorization*, is used to compensate the rural mail carrier for the time spent on the RCCS test. Complete this form only if the carrier has been delayed because of the test. Record the minutes that the mail carrier spends, and include the following activities:

- Listening to the data collector explain the test.
- Helping the data collector gather mail.
- Any other test-related tasks that require additional time in the office, including filling out PS Form 2847.
- Waiting for the data collector to sample and record the mail.
- If the Postmaster designates the carrier to count and record the collection mail, the time required to complete PS Form 2848 should be included on PS Form 2847.

When completing PS Form 2847, the data collector must observe the following guidelines:

- If a data collector performs the RCCS test on site, he or she completes the form.
- If a data collector is not on site to perform the test, the mail carrier and postmaster complete the form.

- PS Form 2847 must also be completed for substitute rural mail carriers who help conduct the test if they have been delayed and if their roster designation is between 70 and 78.
- PS Form 2847 must be completed at the test site.
- The mail carrier's social security number must be entered correctly.
- The mail carrier's time must be recorded in minutes, not hours.
- Both the mail carrier and the postmaster must sign the form.
- PS Form 2847 must be completed for carriers with roster designations 70 through 78.
- Intermediate office postmasters sign PS Form 2847 for intermediate offices.
- The postmaster mails the completed and signed form to the Eagan Accounting Service Center, whose address is printed on the form.

PS Form 2847 may be obtained from the USPS Intranet under *Essential Links: Forms* or at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2847.pdf>.

#### 7.3.2.3 PS Form 2848

PS Form 2848, *Rural Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*, is used to report the volume of mail collected by the mail carrier as he or she delivers the mail. The postmaster or designee of the tested site completes the form, unless the tested site is an intermediate office. If the test is at an intermediate office without collection mail, follow the guidelines below.

- The data collector completes both sections 1 and 2.
- Write "Intermediate Office" where collection mail is not counted under item number 13, Additional Remarks, on the front of the form.
- The data collector takes the form back to the Statistical Programs unit.

If the test site is an intermediate office with collection mail, complete PS Form 2848 only if the mail is associated with the leg of the route being tested.

PS Form 2848 may be obtained from the Postal Service Intranet by clicking the *Essential Links: Forms* link or at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/2848.pdf>.

The MSP must review submitted forms for completeness and accuracy and must review with the postmaster or designee any incomplete or inconsistent items found.

The MSP is responsible for the keying and transmission of the data on PS Form 2848.

#### **7.3.2.4 Form 2850**

Form 2850, the *Carrier Cost System City Carrier* form, is used only in emergencies (e.g., CODES Laptop failure) to record city mail counts, and should always be carried during a CCCS test in the event of a laptop failure, power outage, or other similar situation.

This form is available from the CODES Base Unit, City Carrier Test Form 2850 option under the Main Menu of the City Carrier program.

The MSP is responsible for the keying and transmission of the data on Form 2850.



## Related Materials for Administrative Procedures

This section includes all the definitions, tables, and related information necessary for General Management Responsibilities.

- RM 7–1 Instructions for Calibrating Scale Model Number 8571.
- RM 7–2 Instructions for Testing Scale Model Number PS6L for Calibration.



## **RM 7–1 Instructions for Calibrating Scale Model Number 8571**

Referenced section 7.1.4.2.

Scale model No. 8571 must be calibrated at least once a month. This Related Materials section provides the following step-by-step instructions for calibrating scale model no. 8571:

1. **With the CODES Scale ON and leveled, press <0> on the scale's keyboard to zero the scale. An (\*) will appear at the far left of the scale's display indicating that the scale is zeroed.**
2. **Using the standardized weights (1 oz. and 1 lb.) included with the scale, calibrate the scale. Start with the first weight increment and place it on the weighing platter. Observe the value that appears on the scale's display. If the value displayed is incorrect, remove the sample weight and press <0> again. Re-weigh the standardized weight until the proper value is displayed. Repeat this process with your other standardized weights to ensure that all values are correct. If the scale will not calibrate, continue the test with a different scale and contact your MSP later for repair instructions.**
3. **Remove the standardized weights and verify that the scale's display returns to zero weight.**



## **RM 7–2 Instructions for Testing Scale Model Number PS6L for Calibration**

Referenced section 7.1.4.2.

Scale model PS6L can only be calibrated by its manufacturer, Toledo; however, the following procedure is to be performed at least once a month to determine if calibration is necessary:

- 1. With the scale on and leveled, press the zero key.**
- 2. Using the standardized weights (1 oz. and 1 lb.), start with the first weight and place it on the platter. Observe the value that appears on the scale's display. If the value displayed is incorrect, remove the sample weight and press the zero key again. Re-weigh the standardized weight. Repeat this process with the other standardized weight. The scale should return to zero when the weight is removed.**
- 3. If the scale will not display the correct weight or return to zero, inform the MSP. The scale could require servicing.**



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## Chapter 8

# Reports, Analysis, and Interpretation

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



This chapter introduces some of the statistical programs reports that are available after completion and transmission of test data. Generally, these reports will be the most common ones though there are many others that could be encountered and used. The important thing about any report that is generated, studied, or analyzed is to determine what the information means and the purpose of the report. Sometimes, the report name provides a clue as to the report's use; but, many times, the information needs to be pieced together with other forms of information and the experience of the interpreter to be effective.

There are a variety of reports unique to the Statistical Programs unit. These reports can reveal everything from suspicious mail exit point (MEP) volumes to how many pieces of flat shape mail passed through the district for almost any time period. Because the unit collects data upon which these reports are generated, the district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) has a sense of how his or her district is performing and how to appropriately analyze and interpret these reports.

Statistical reports are valuable for a number of reasons. First of all, they are based on statistical data and as such, are free from generalizations and abstract thought. The next and, perhaps, most important issue with statistical reports, is that they enable an MSP to recognize trends. At the district level, trend recognition is important to keep the Mail Exit Point System (MEPS) up-to-date, to correctly schedule data collectors, and to ensure adequate test coverage. All of the reports at the MSP's disposal need to be taken in consideration of other reports to be most effective. Taken together and acted on, analysis of these reports available to the MSP needs to be taken into consideration to be most effective.

For each test that is taken, a Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit Summary or a Test Data Report is generated. The MSP or designee must review the reports prior to approval for Headquarters' processing.

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## 8.1 CODES Web Base Unit Review Policy for ODIS-RPW

Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the ODIS-RPW test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing ODIS-RPW test data.

ODIS-RPW test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing. For every test perform the following steps:

### 1. Review the following summary and test detail reports:

- **Summary report:** The following information is contained in this report:
  - **Skip interval summary:** This report shows the skip intervals used by each data collector and number of pieces.  
Review the report for the following data:
    - Data collector IDs recorded correctly (each data collector must use their own ID).
    - Skips that are not consistent with what the data collector(s) actually used.
    - Number of pieces entered that are not consistent with what the data collector(s) entered.
    - Total pieces that are not consistent with the test day volume.
  - **Volume summary:** This report shows test volume by class and shape. Whenever possible, compare these volumes with previous tests on this same MEP.  
Review the report for the following data:
    - Shape volumes not consistent with MEP (for example, a significant amount of letters in a parcel test).
    - Class volumes not consistent with MEP (for example, Parcel Post in letters only test).
    - Shape volumes inconsistent with class volumes (for example, a significant amount of letters for the periodicals class).
    - Differences in volume compared against previous tests for the same MEP.
- **Reference volume analysis:** Shows test volume by shape, corresponding reference volume, and indicates large discrepancies between the two by displaying three asterisks (\*\*\*) . Generally, asterisks appear when shape volume from the test and its corresponding reference volume vary by a factor of three or more.

Review the large discrepancies (\*\*\*) very closely. They indicate the following:

- Legitimate differences caused by normal daily volume fluctuations. Remember, the reference volume is an average, and the test may be unusually heavy or light in volume on that day.
  - Legitimate differences for small reference volume mail shapes. For example, flats on a letter test occur occasionally in a letter mailstream test. Combined with large skip intervals, the flat test volume could be much larger than the flat reference volume.
  - Potential problems of testing the wrong MEP, including mail from other MEPs or excluding mail normally included in this MEP.
  - Skip intervals entered incorrectly (e.g., used one interval, but then keyed in a different one).
  - **High proportion of First-Class Mail single-piece flats to flat reference volume:** Prints a report when First-Class Mail single-piece flat test volume is more than 30 percent of the current MEP System flat reference volume for that MEP. This particular test must be reviewed closely; especially when the MEP is normally not expected to receive this large a proportion of First-Class Mail single-piece flat mail volume. This report can indicate any of the following situations:
    - Legitimate volumes — that is, MEPs with a high proportion of First-Class Mail single-piece flat mail defined around a business(es), BRM mail MEPs, and MEPs in business districts receiving predominantly First-Class Mail.
    - Out-of-date reference volumes.
    - Substitution of First-Class Mail containers for other mail containers or pieces.
    - Skip intervals entered incorrectly (used one interval, but then keyed in a different one).
  - **Test Report Detail:** This report shows detailed information about each laptop entry.
 

Potential uses are many, including such things as identifying possible revenue entry errors, missing special services, indicia not consistent with the type of test, MIP entry errors, number of pieces per record, etc.
2. **Reconcile all flags on these reports by communicating with everyone involved (e.g., MSP, data collection technician (DCT)).**
  3. **Act on records discovered incorrect.**

The MSP has the option to modify an entry or entries. If the specific field or record cannot be modified, the MSP should contact the Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC) and provide the relevant information regarding the incorrect fields and records. An audit trail is maintained for changes to record entries.

#### 4. Act on tests taken in error:

- **Before Approval:** Delete all sessions and reschedule the test. Upload the rescheduled test, and approve after review.
- **After Approval:** Remove the approved status, delete all sessions, and reschedule the test. Upload the rescheduled test, and approve after review.

Audit records are kept of all status changes.

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## 8.2 CODES Base Unit Review Policy for CCCS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the City Carrier Cost Systems (CCCS) test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing CCCS test data. CCCS test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing.

#### 8.2.1

#### Summary Report

When a CCCS test is uploaded to the CODES Base Unit, a Summary Report is generated. The Summary Report shows route-weighted volume by class and by shape.

It is the responsibility of the MSP or designee to review the Summary Report for each test for possible keying problems by the data collector. A review of the Summary Report should include a check for any of the following circumstances:

- Extremely large volume for the route.
- Extremely small parcel or accountable volume for the route (the data collector might have forgotten the parcels and accountables).
- Large counts of class or shape, not normally seen in Express Mail, free mail, and large parcels.
- Counts of unknown class (the data collector might have been unsure of how to count a particular class/subclass of mail).
- Low or zero count of delivery point sequence (DPS) mail when the route is a DPS route.

If there is a problem with the test, the MSP should look at the detailed listings of the test generated when the test is received at the CODES Base Unit or in the *Data File Management* option of the CODES Base Unit edit process.

If there is a problem with the test, the MSP should fix the problem on the CODES Base Unit. If necessary, he or she should provide training to the data collector on procedures for editing data.

If the MSP cannot edit the problem, he or she should contact the SPSC immediately.

#### 8.2.2

#### Unusual Mail Codes

The MSP must review unusual mail codes that appear on the RCCS test summary report. The summary report lists unusual mail codes below the shape summary. Unusual mail codes are mail codes that are possible, but highly unlikely. The summary report shows the mail code, the weighted count of mailpieces for the mail code, a description of the mail code, and the

address of the stop that contained the unusual mail code. If a mail code appears in the *Unusual Mail Codes* section, the MSP is to review the CCCS test and discuss the mail code with the data collector. It could be that the data collector hit an incorrect key when keying the data into the laptop. If a change must be made, the MSP should use the CODES Base Unit edit process.

### **8.2.3 Large Counts at a Single Delivery Stop**

If a single delivery residential stop with only one delivery has a count of mail greater than 40 pieces, all listings for the stop will be shown on the summary page. The MSP must review the stop with the data collector (and carrier if necessary) to ensure the accuracy of the stop data. It is possible that the DCT misclassified the stop as a single delivery residential stop when the stop has more than one delivery or is a business stop.

### **8.2.4 No Parcels on a Test**

The MSP must verify with the data collector that no parcels were counted at the sampled stops. If there were parcels at the sampled stops and the data collector forgot to count the parcels, a truncated test report should be completed for the test.

### **8.2.5 Data Entry**

MSPs must provide the following information to all CCCS data collectors:

During data entry the data collector could see the following warning message: "You have keyed a mail code representing \_\_\_\_ [*mail code description*]. This mail code is possible, but highly unlikely." If the mail code is correct, the data collector should inform the MSP of this situation upon completion of the test.

### **8.2.6 Data File Management**

The following options are available on the CODES Base Unit under the *Data File Management* menu:

- Review Data File.
- Cancel a Test.
- Reschedule a Test.
- Record VIM Route Data.
- Delete a Test.
- Record a Zero Volume Test.

### 8.2.7 City Carrier Cost System Test PS Form 2846

Whenever a PS Form 2846, *City Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*, is keyed into the CODES Base Unit, the software checks the data keyed for unusual counts. Unusual counts are questioned by the software. The keyer should call unusual counts to the attention of the MSP. Additionally, a validation report, the Cross-Cell Edit Sheet, is generated, for example, whenever there are unusual combinations of mailpiece counts. It is the MSP's responsibility to make sure that the Cross-Cell Edit Sheets have been reviewed and the postmaster contacted, if necessary, in order to verify any unusual counts received.

Data from PS Form 2846 should be entered in the CODES Base Unit within a week of the test date.

#### 8.2.7.1 Reviewing and Editing Completed PS Form 2846

When the PS Form 2846 is received, it must be reviewed for completeness and accuracy before it can be entered into the CODES Base Unit. The MSP should review the front of the form to make sure that all entries are complete, and the back of the form for inconsistencies in data collection. If incomplete, the MSP should contact the postmaster or designee.

#### 8.2.7.2 Reasons for PS Form 2846 Zero Volume

The following reasons may be used to enter a zero volume for a CCCS test:

- The data collector forgot to leave the form.
- The supervisor did not return the form.
- The supervisor misunderstood the instructions and the data were not usable.
- The carrier put all the collection mail in collection boxes.
- vertical improved mail (VIM) route (carrier collects no mail).
- There was no mail collected for the route on the test day.
- Other (comments required to describe situations not described above).

#### 8.2.7.3 PS Form 2846 with Data

**PS Form 2846 Retention Period:** Completed PS Forms 2846 for each fiscal year (FY) are to be retained until quarter 2 of the following fiscal year after which time they can be discarded (e.g., FY2004 forms should be retained until quarter 2 FY2005).

**Availability of PS Form 2846:** Blank PS Forms 2846 are obtained from the Postal Service Intranet by clicking the *Essential Links: Forms* link or at Web address, <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/2848.pdf>. PS Form 2846 must not be printed and distributed to the field units.

#### 8.2.7.4 Form 2850

Form 2850, the *Carrier Cost System City Carrier* form, is used only in emergencies (e.g., CODES Laptop failure) to record city mail counts, and should always be carried during a CCCS test in the event of a laptop failure, power outage, or other similar situation.

This form is available from the CODES Base Unit, City Carrier Test Form 2850 option under the Main Menu of the City Carrier program.

The MSP is responsible for the keying and transmission of the data on Form 2850.

## 8.3 CODES Base Unit Review Policy for RCCS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS) test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing RCCS test data.

RCCS test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing.

#### 8.3.1

#### Summary Report

When a RCCS test is uploaded to the CODES Base Unit, a Summary Report is generated. The Summary Report generates route-weighted volume by class and by compensation category.

It is the responsibility of the MSP to review the Summary Report for each test for possible keying problems by the data collector. A review of the Summary Report should include a check for any of the following situations:

- Extremely large or small volume for the route (perhaps a skip interval problem).
- Extremely large parcel or accountable volumes for the route (perhaps a skip interval problem).
- Counts of unknown class (perhaps the data collector does not know how to count accountables or is unsure of how to count a particular class-subclass of mail).
- Counts of DPS mail on a non-DPS route.
- Extremely large volume for directs (the data collector could be unfamiliar with definition).
- Extremely large boxholder volume (perhaps a skip interval problem).

If there appear to be questionable counts on the summary page, the MSP should look at the individual listings for the test on the detailed listing of the test generated when the test is received at the CODES Base Unit or in the *Data File Management* option of the CODES Base Unit. The MSP should also review the skip interval and count for each listing that the data collector made on the test.

If there appears to be a problem with the test, the MSP should discuss the situation with the data collector. If there is a problem and the test has not yet been sent to the mainframe, the MSP should edit the problem on the laptop by unarchiving the test with the bad data, editing the data, then uploading the edited test to the CODES Base Unit. A new summary will be generated for the correct test. Otherwise, the MSP should contact the SPSC to determine if the test must be rescheduled, or additional steps are needed.

### 8.3.2 Unusual Mail Codes

The MSP must review unusual mail codes that appear on the rural carrier test summary report. The Summary Report lists unusual mail codes below the compensation category summary. Unusual mail codes are mail codes that are possible, but highly unlikely. The Summary Report shows the mail code, the weighted count of mailpieces for the mail code, and a description of the mail code. If a mail code appears in the *Unusual Mail Codes* section, the MSP is to review the rural test and question the data collector about the mail code. It could be that the data collector hit an incorrect key when keying the data into the laptop. If a change must be made, the MSP should unarchive the test on the laptop, edit the error and upload the test to the CODES Base Unit.

### 8.3.3 Unusual Count of Mail for a Test

If there is an unusually large or small count of mail for a RCCS test, the message, "Total estimated volume for the test is unusual for a Rural Carrier Route, please verify the volume for the test" appears on the summary page. It is the MSP's responsibility to look at the detail file and discuss the test volume with the data collector and carrier if necessary.

### 8.3.4 Data File Management

*Review Carrier Data File* is an option from the *Carrier Data File Management* menu that allows the MSP to review, or print data on a RCCS test. Upon entering this option, all tests that have been transferred but not yet uploaded appear on the screen. Highlighting a particular test allows various activities to be performed on the test. The status bar at the bottom of the screen offers choices to preview the data in the selected test.

### 8.3.5 PS Form 2848 (Collection Mail Data)

Whenever a PS Form 2848, *Rural Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*, is keyed into the CODES Base Unit, the software checks the data keyed for unusual counts. A validation report, the Cross-Cell Edit Sheet, is generated, for example, whenever there are large counts of mail for rate categories for which large counts would not be expected. It is the MSP's responsibility to make sure that the *Cross-Cell Edit Sheets* have been reviewed and the postmaster contacted, if necessary, in order to verify the counts received.

## 8.4 CODES Web Base Unit Review Policy for TRACS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the Transportation Cost System (TRACS) test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing TRACS test data.

TRACS test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing.

#### 8.4.1

#### Test Data Report

When a TRACS test is transferred from the laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit, the MSP must print and review a Test Data Report before the data are uploaded to the mainframe. The review should focus on the following areas:

- TRACS Surface Tests:
  - The number of containers sampled equals the targeted number to be sampled.
  - The replacement vehicle is appropriately selected.
  - The item weights and tare weights are reasonable.
  - The origin facility codes for items and pallets are reasonable.
  - Mail categories found on pallets are reasonable.
- TRACS Air Tests:
  - The number of items sampled equals the targeted number to be sampled.
  - The replacement flight is appropriately selected.
  - The item weights and tare weights are reasonable.
  - Mail categories found in international sacks are reasonable.

If there appears to be a problem with the test, discuss the situation with the data collector. If there is a problem and the problem can be fixed, fix it on the laptop. Unarchive the test on the laptop, edit the data, and upload the edited test to the CODES Web Base Unit.

If the problem cannot be fixed, contact the SPSC to determine if the test must be rescheduled.

The initial test that was uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit must be deleted before the test is re-uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit.

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## 8.5 CODES Web Base Unit Review Policy for SIRVO-IODIS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS) test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing SIRVO-IODIS test data.

SIRVO-IODIS test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing.

#### 8.5.1

#### Test Data Report

The review procedures for each SIRVO-IODIS test are as follows:

- Review the test summary for accuracy of the following information in the report:
  - Actual test date.
  - Original test date.
  - Scanner attached: 0 – No; 1 – Yes.
  - Scale attached: 0 – No; 1 – Yes.
  - Weight units: pounds and ounces.
- Review the accuracy of each test in the receptacle summary for the following information:
  - The Origin Office of Exchange and Qualifier (OEO), destination country, Destination Office of Exchange and Qualifier (DEO), label class, transportation mode, and receptacle type are consistent with the target characteristics of the test.
  - The dispatch number and receptacle number compared to the Military and International Dispatch Accountability System (MIDAS).



**Note:** For bulk containers, the MSP must ensure that the actual dispatch number, receptacle number, and reported weight (kg) were entered by the data collector.

If this information was not recorded by the data collector and the test was not transmitted from the laptop, the MSP must obtain the actual MIDAS information from the receptacle label, open the test on the laptop, edit the information, complete the test and transmit the test from the laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit.

If the test was transmitted from the laptop, the MSP should restore the test on the laptop from the archive, obtain the actual MIDAS information from the receptacle label, open the test on the laptop, edit the information, complete the test, delete the first test from the CODES Web Base Unit, and retransmit the test from the laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit.

- The cumulative content weight and actual net weight are within a 10 percent difference of each other (except for bulk containers). This is to ensure that all eligible mailpieces in a selected receptacle are sampled.
- The number of service pieces is reasonably close to the number of target pieces as requested in the software.
- A scanner and scale are used if available. If not, the MSP should check with the data collector and correct for future use.
- The data collector's ID and entry date (under the *Entry TD Stamp* column) are correct (each data collector must use his or her own ID).
- Tests/receptacles recorded in error:
  - Contact the SPSC for guidance on how to handle tests or receptacles recorded in error.

## 8.6 CODES Web Base Unit Review Policy for SIRVI

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all Statistical Programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI) test data are accurate. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for reviewing SIRVI test data.

SIRVI test data are to be reviewed prior to approval for Headquarters processing.

#### 8.6.1

#### Test Data Report

The review procedures for each SIRVI test are as follows:

- Review the test summary for accuracy of the following information in the report:
  - The data collector IDs are recorded correctly (each data collector must use their own ID).
  - The actual test date.
  - The original test date.
  - Scanner attached: 0 – No; 1 – Yes.
  - Scale attached: 0 – No; 1 – Yes.
  - The units of weight are in kilograms and grams.
- Review the accuracy of each test in the receptacle summary for the following information:
  - The OEO, label class, transportation mode, and receptacle type are consistent with the target characteristics of the test.
  - The dispatch number and receptacle number compared to the receipt verification system (RVS).
  - The cumulative content weight and actual net weight are within a 10 percent difference of each other (except for bulk containers). This is to ensure that all eligible mailpieces in a selected receptacle are sampled.
  - The number of content pieces are consistent with the given receptacle type and weight.
  - The number of service pieces is reasonably close to the number of target pieces as requested in the software.
  - The scanner and scale are used if available. If not, the MSP should check with the DCT and correct for future use.
  - The DCT ID and entry date (under the *Entry TD Stamp* column) are correct.

- The number of receptacles tested appears reasonable for the test. Whenever possible, compare this number with the site's daily receptacle target.
- Contact the SPSC for guidance on how to handle tests or receptacles recorded in error.

## 8.7 Status Reports

Test status is available “on demand” from the CODES Web Base Unit Consolidated Samples Web page and details those tests that are received, approved, rescheduled, or canceled, sorted by test ID and date. The MSP is responsible for checking test status against his or her unit’s activities. If there is a discrepancy, the MSP should contact the SPSC to ensure the records are updated properly. In some cases, the SPSC might require retransmission of test data.

For the CODES Base Unit, status reports are available weekly for those systems still in transition to the CODES Web Base Unit. The MSP will receive a test status report specific to his or her district. The test status report details those tests that are either canceled, rescheduled, delinquent, or missing, sorted by test ID and date. The MSP should monitor which tests fall into these categories. Just as in the CODES Web Base Unit, the MSP must check the test status against his or her unit’s activities. Sometimes, the mainframe fails to receive the cancellation, reschedule, delinquent, or missing test updates. The MSP can know this only by reviewing these status reports and checking them against his or her own records. If there is a discrepancy, the MSP should contact the SPSC to ensure the records are updated properly. In some cases, the SPSC might require retransmission of test data.

Failed transmissions occur for a variety of reasons. Properly completed tests might not be received by the mainframe for any of those reasons. They will appear as missing tests in the weekly status report. The MSP must review these reports weekly, though it is recommended that he or she implement a review and follow up process at the same time as the status reports are downloaded.

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## 8.8 Web SESS-ODIN

The Service Enhancement Support System (SESS) for the Origin-Destination Information Network (ODIN), or SESS-ODIN, provides data about a district's mail performance against the service standards by mail class. SESS-ODIN reports can be printed any time. There is a one day time period between transmitted Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW) data and availability of the data in SESS-ODIN reports. If data is transmitted by 3:00 p.m. local time, generally the reports can be accessed the following morning after 8:00 a.m. These reports are proprietary information and may only be shared with authorized personnel or staff.

If difficulty arises from using this software, there are user manuals that can be accessed and printed after the user logs on.

One of the features of SESS-ODIN reports is that actual ODIS-RPW test pieces and their recorded characteristics as transmitted to the mainframe can be viewed. These mailpiece data can then be characterized in the following reports:

- Service Analysis:
  - Detailed Listing of ODIS-RPW Failed Mail Pieces.
  - Listing of Failed ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Destination ZIP Code.
  - Listing of Failed ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Test ID.
  - Listing of Failed ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Week.
  - Detailed Listing of All ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Test Date.
  - Detailed Listing of All ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Destination ZIP Code.
  - Detailed Listing of All ODIS-RPW Test Pieces by Test ID.
  - Profile of Mail Delivery Days by Destination ZIP Code.
  - Profile of Mail Delivery Days by Test ID.
  - Failed Mail Ranking Report.
- Volume Analysis:
  - Report by Class and Day of Week for All Indicia.
  - Report by Mail Type and Mail Class for All Indicia.
  - Report by Mail Class and Indicia.
  - Time Series Report by Mail Class.
- Automation Analysis.
- Postal Numeric Encoding Technique (POSTNET) Barcode Source by Day of Week:
  - POSTNET Barcode Service by Source.
  - POSTNET Barcode Time Series by Mail Class.
  - POSTNET Barcode Volumes by Source.

- Metered Mail Analysis:
  - Listing of Failed Metered Pieces by Destination and Meter No.
  - Listing of All Metered Pieces by Destination and Meter No.
  - All Metered ODIS-RPW Test Pieces for Specified Meters.

SESS-ODIN reports are accessible by pointing an internet browser to the SESS-ODIN Web site (<http://odin.usps.gov>), or by clicking on the SESS ODIN Web link from the Statistical Programs Web site (<http://blue.usps.gov/statprog>).

To acquire access to SESS-ODIN, the user must submit his or her name, phone number, logon ID, position and location to the SPSC by way of e-mail, PS Form 1357, or memo.

The SESS-ODIN reports look very similar to the examples shown below in Figures 8.8.0–1 and 8.8.0–2, except each district has its own data. The following reports are shown as examples of what might be found in an ODIN report.

Revenue & Volume Reporting

RESTRICTED INFORMATION

Page Break

(ODIN) For USPS Internal Use Only

Detail Listing of All ODIS Test Pieces by Destination ZIP

Page: 7

Destinating ZIP: 20100-20199

Date: 06/08/05

For Period(s): FY-05 MO-06

Time: 12.04.26

ACTUAL Pieces used

Proc: ODR100C

\*\*\*\*\* FY-05 MO-06

Dest Zip	Test Date	Test ID	Test Day	Svc Std	Del Day	Mail Class	Pre Mark	P I Mail	Meter No	Postmark Date	PM Time	BAC... code I H	F a	Test Pieces	Failed Pieces (if appl)		
20121	03/08/05	224380	TUE	1-Day	1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 2 N N	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 2 N N	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N N	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N N	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N Y	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N Y	0	1	0	
					1	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N Y	0	1	0	
					2	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/07/05	220 11 9 N Y	0	1	0	
					2	First	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/06/05	220 11 9 N Y	0	1	1	
					2-Day	3	First	None	0	LTR	MXI	PB06865146	03/05/05	452 11 2 N N	0	1	1
					3-Day	1	First	None	0	CAFD	PIM	0	BLANK	601 11 2 N N	* 0	1	0
						1	First	None	0	LTR	PIM	0	BLANK	041 11 0 N N	* 0	1	0
						1	First	None	0	LTR	PIM	0	BLANK	752 11 9 N N	* 0	1	0
					3	First	None	0	LTR	MXI	H00528205	03/05/05	041 11 2 N N	0	1	0	
					3	First	None	0	LTR	MXI	H00528205	03/05/05	041 11 2 N N	0	1	0	
					3	First	None	0	LTR	MXI	H00528205	03/05/05	041 11 2 N N	0	1	0	
					4	First	None	0	LTR	MXI	PB06707564	03/04/05	606 11 9 N N	7	1	1	

ZIP 20121

First-Class % on Time: 1-Day 82.3% 2-Day 0.0% 3-Day 75.0%

58

3

Identified Priority % on Time: 1-Day 2-Day 3-Day

Unidentified Priority % on Time: 1-Day 2-Day 3-Day

Combined Priority % on Time: 1-Day 2-Day 3-Day

20124	03/24/05	212476	THU			Inter	None	0	FLAT	MXI	0	03/17/05	0 0 N N	* 0	1	0
						Inter	None	0	LTR	MXI	0	03/21/05	0 0 N N	* 0	1	0
						Inter	None	0	LTR	STP	0	03/19/05	0 0 N N	* 0	1	0
						Inter	None	0	PARC	MXI	0	03/12/05	0 0 N N	* 0	1	0
						Inter	None	0	PARC	MXI	0	03/18/05	0 0 N N	* 0	1	0

Figure 8.8.0–1. ODIN Report Example #1

UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE®

Revenue & Volume Reporting

RESTRICTED INFORMATION

Page Break

(ODIN) For USPS Internal Use Only

\* CSD Detail Page \*

Report by Mail Class and Indicia  
Destinating CSD: 040  
FY-2005 PQ-02 MO-06 (03-01-2005 to 03-31-2005)  
ADV Volumes used

Page: 1  
Date: 06/08/05  
Time: 12.11.25  
Proc: 00R102A

MAIL CLASS	Stamped	Metered	Permit	Armed Forces	Franked Mail	Penalty	Absentee Ballots	Unknown	Totals	% of Total by Class
CSD MAINE										
First-Class	440,096	760,080	469,311	0	408	34	0	12,226	1,682,155	53.5
Priority	821	12,184	2,541	0	0	0	0	121	15,667	0.5
Periodicals	0	0	145,729	0	0	0	0	2,106	147,835	4.7
Standard Regular	16,530	49,373	985,716	0	1,733	0	0	1,255	1,054,607	33.5
Package Services	383	3,840	13,654	0	0	0	0	699	18,575	0.6
Free Mail for th	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,176	5,176	0.2
International	2,466	1,959	1,290	0	0	0	0	122	5,237	0.2
Standard Mail No	28,667	19,699	165,744	0	0	0	0	923	215,453	6.9
	489,182	846,735	1,783,984	0	2,141	34	0	22,628	3,144,705	100.1

Figure 8.8.0-2. ODIN Report Example #2


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## 8.9 Statistical Programs News Items

News items are compiled by Headquarters and accessed through the Statistical Programs Web site (Figure 8.9.0–1) and the CODES Web Base Unit (Figure 8.9.0–2). All News items should be reviewed carefully as they provide updates and clarification on policy issues, additional information on new software releases, and are a way for Headquarters to communicate with all districts on an informal basis. MSPs are responsible for reviewing news items on a daily basis and taking action as needed to implement anything new or make changes to their district's standard operations.



**Example:** Suppose an MSP discovers a procedural question relating to a new postage technology in his district. Because it is new, the CODES software hasn't accounted for it yet and there are no training materials available. This MSP contacts the SPSC for an answer on what the district staff should do. After considering the answer, Headquarters might use the News item to broadcast both the question and the answer to all districts.



**UNITED STATES  
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**Statistical Programs News**  
 For CODES Support Call **866-877-CODE(2633)**  
 from 7:00AM to 5:00PM EST  
 Email: [CODES.SUPPORT.CENTER](mailto:CODES.SUPPORT.CENTER)


?


*Please select an item you would like to see*


<a href="#">PP 12 IOCS Sample</a>	19-May-05
<a href="#">REMINDER - Frame Close this Saturday</a>	18-May-05
<a href="#">CCCS - Form Letter for Informing the Postmaster</a>	18-May-05
<a href="#">TEST EDIT REMINDER - PRIORITY MAIL FLAT RATE BOXES</a>	18-May-05
<a href="#">Q3, FY2005 Mid-Quarter Update</a>	13-May-05
<a href="#">CODES Web Servers Outage (Not CODES Web Base Unit)</a>	11-May-05
<a href="#">May 2005 IOCS Data Entry Survey</a>	06-May-05
<a href="#">City Carrier Cost Special Services Update</a>	06-May-05
<a href="#">CODES Q3 FY2005 Mid-Quarter Release</a>	05-May-05
<a href="#">SAS Summary/Analysis Fixes</a>	02-May-05
<a href="#">REMINDER: National Statistical Programs Meeting</a>	29-Apr-05
<a href="#">MEP Frame Closeout</a>	28-Apr-05
<a href="#">Updated Service Standard File</a>	26-Apr-05


  
[support form](#)

  
[PSTS](#)

  
[stats home](#)

  
[Old News](#)

  
[Software Versions](#)

  
[Past Surveys](#)

CODES News Web Site v2.01  
Last Updated: 24-Apr-02

Figure 8.9.0–1. Statistical Programs News Page

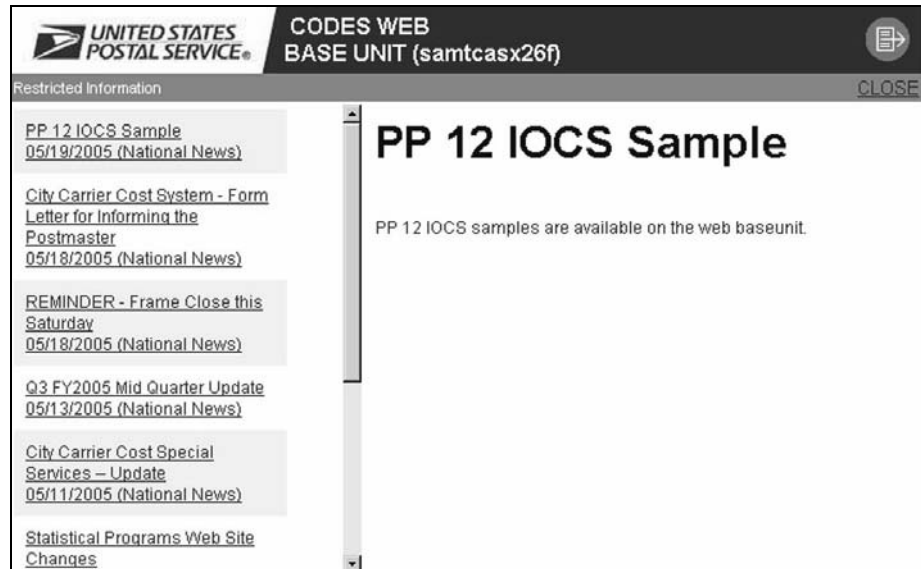



Figure 8.9.0–2. CODES Web Base Unit News Page

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## 8.10 TSSR

Headquarters Statistical Programs personnel generate Test Status and Statistics Reports (TSSR). TSSR provides test accomplishment, including statistics on rescheduled, canceled, zero volume, and delinquent tests. Statistics are provided by district, area, and nation. In this way, Statistical Programs can review district performance and focus attention and resources appropriately.

These reports are available on the Statistical Programs Web site to all districts, MSPs, the SPSC, and other personnel. MSPs use these reports to gauge their own rates for rescheduling, canceling, and missed tests. If a district's rate is high, the MSP might want to review the district's policies and resource assignments in order to resolve any issues.



UNITED STATES  
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# TSSR SYSTEM

Home
Quarter To Date
Year To Date
Non-Training Dates
Tests Not Received
Logout

## TSSR National Report

National Summary  
Test Status Statistics

On Tests Completed, Rescheduled, Cancelled and Not Received  
Year-To-Date as of Month 06 QTR2 FY2005

PROGRAM	NUMBER OF TESTS SCHEDULED	NUMBER OF TESTS COMPLETED	NUMBER RESCHEDULED	RESCHEDULE RATE	NUMBER CANCELLED	CANCELLED RATE	NUMBER NOT RECEIVED	NOT RECEIVED RATE
ODIS-RPW	67,753	66,522	651	0.96%	95	0.14%	560	0.83%
SIRVO	3,527	2,912	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	35	0.99%
SIRVI	1,740	1,664	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	69	3.97%
CCS	7,433	7,331	132	1.78%	N.A.	N.A.	20	0.27%
TRACS	8,650	8,457	158	1.83%	22	N.A.	77	0.89%
IOCS	362,206	359,064	8,469	2.34%	N.A.	N.A.	530	0.15%
IODIS	658	651	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2	0.30%
SIRVO- IODIS	3,709	2,638	0	0.00%	N.A.	N.A.	55	1.48%

Download Report

- Tests originally scheduled on the Quarterly Training Day that are rescheduled or not taken are excluded.
- Sum of tests completed, rescheduled, cancelled and not received may be more than scheduled tests because of tests being rescheduled and then completed.
- Numbers reported in this report are based on a Monthly basis:
- Rescheduling and cancelling tests must be done within established guidelines for the program.

Last Updated: 03/05/2004

Figure 8.10.0-1. TSSR Report Example

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## 8.11 External First-Class Report

The External First-Class (EXFC) report provides actual mail delivery times measuring from the time a mailpiece is placed in a mail collection system (box, Post Office, etc.) to the time delivered to the customer's address. This test is said to be external because it is administered and performed by non-Postal Service personnel.


EXFC scores are expressed in terms of percentages. Having an EXFC score of 97 percent means that for the tested mail type, 97 out of 100 mailpieces were delivered to the customer within Postal Service mail delivery standards.

Each year, the Postal Service announces and commits itself to increasing performance for on-time delivery. EXFC determines whether these standards are met at the national level and its results are made public.

EXFC scores can be accessed by clicking on Corporate (All) from the WebEIS Home Page at <http://webeis.usps.gov> (Figure 8.11.0–1), and then, once WebEIS has loaded (Figure 8.11.0–2), selecting the following path to access the EXFC data: Corporate(All)\Operations\EXFC.



**Note:** WebEIS is powered by a Java applet, and could take a few moments to load.

**blue** Welcome to the United States Postal Service Intranet  Search | Contact Blue | Help | usps.com

Home My Work My Life Inside USPS Wednesday, June 8, 2005

- Corporate (All)
- Expedited/Package
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Operations
- Advanced Features

**Performance Assessment**

- NPA Home

**Enterprise DW**

- FPR - (PSFR/PRAR)
- NWRS

**FLASH**

- eFlash

**Product Tracking Svcs**

- Express Mail Diagnostic Rpts
- Parcel Select Svc Performance
- NOM Diagnostics
- Piece Level Analysis


**Managed Reports**

- CSDRS

Contact Us

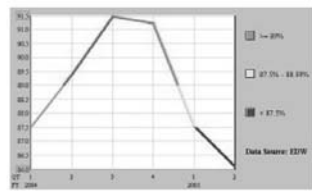
## WebEIS

A Presentation System for the EDW and Other Data Sources

 **Current WebEIS Status:**  
Green: All reports on time and available. No reported issues.

**Recent WebEIS News:**

- Customer Satisfaction Measurement:**  
CSM reports are no longer available in WebEIS. To access current CSM survey results, please go to the Enhanced Customer Satisfaction Measurement (ECSM) Reporting System: <http://ecsm>. ECSM is the official source and central repository for all CSM survey results.  
If you have any questions or complaints, please refer to the Help and contact info listed on the ECSM site.
- EXFC Orig/Dest 2 & 3 Day Composite:**



**WebEIS Information:**

- WebEIS Overview (Audio/Video)
- WebEIS Help
- Request Training  
Onsite WebEIS training — available for groups of 6-20 users per session.
- What's in WebEIS?
- WebEIS Questions:  
Use our **Feedback** page to obtain support for WebEIS problems, or contact Germaine Rich-Fields at (202) 268-4853.
- WebEIS Advanced Features:  
WebEIS Advanced Features let you create, customize, and save screens that you frequently access. You can then quickly and easily bring up your saved screens and view your customized screens with the latest data. To get an account, complete form 1357 on eAccess. Refer to **Why get a WebEIS User Account?** for more information.
- Frequently Asked Questions  
Having problems accessing or using WebEIS? Save yourself troubleshooting time and visit the WebEIS **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** page.
- Application Updates (Under construction)  
Data Updates — Find out the latest updates for data in WebEIS.

Figure 8.11.0-1. WebEIS Web Site

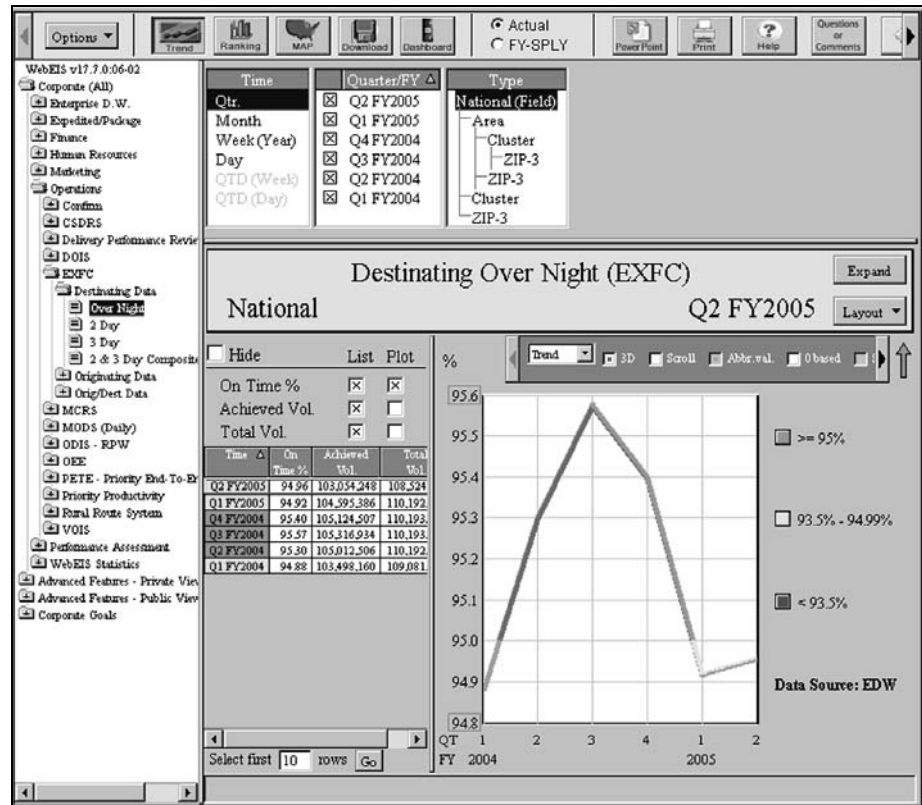


Figure 8.11.0–2. WebEIS Displaying EXFC Data

From the EXFC main menu, options for selecting time ranges, locations, and service commitments can be selected. The data may either be printed or previewed on the computer screen. ODIS-RPW scores are also available from this screen.

WebEIS users should thoroughly familiarize themselves with this site before accessing WebEIS. WebEIS users are able to compare their scores with other districts by selection.

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# Glossary

This glossary contains official Postal Service terms and definitions found in this handbook. A thorough understanding of all the terms in this glossary will be useful for MSPs and SPSSs. Please refer to *Publication 32, Glossary of Postal Terms*, for more definitions.

<b>Accountable Mail</b>	Mail that requires the signature of the addressee or addressee's agent upon receipt to provide proof of delivery or indemnification for loss or damage. This includes Express Mail and special service mail such as Certified Mail, Collect on Delivery (COD), Insured Mail for more than \$50, Registered Mail, and Return Receipt for Merchandise. Accountable Mail also includes Postage Due Mail and Business Reply Mail (BRM).
<b>Accountable Mail Unit (ACU)</b>	A physical location where Accountable Mail is processed.
<b>Airmail</b>	A service by which international mail receives First-Class Mail service domestically, is dispatched by the most expeditious transportation, and receives air or priority handling in the destination country.
<b>Airport Mail Center/Facility (AMC/F)</b>	A postal unit, located at or next to an airport, that concentrates, transfers, receives, distributes, and dispatches mail transported principally by air.
<b>Approve (APPR)</b>	A test status that means a test is released by the MSP after it is edited and reviewed. The <i>Approve</i> check box is located on the <i>Sample Control Info</i> tab on the <i>Sample Control Information</i> page on the CODES Web Base Unit.
<b>Associate Office (AO)</b>	A Post Office that reports to a larger Post Office or that is within the service area of a main facility. It usually receives and dispatches all mail classes from and to the main facility.
<b>Autres Objets (AO)</b>	Also known as other articles. In statistical programs tests, <i>autres objets</i> indicates international mail that consists of printed matter, small packets, and matter for the blind.
<b>Bulk Mail Center (BMC)</b>	A highly mechanized mail processing plant that is part of the National Bulk Mail System. This facility distributes Standard Mail and Periodicals in bulk form and Package Services Mail.
<b>Business Reply Mail (BRM)</b>	Specially printed postcards, envelopes, cartons, and labels that may be mailed without postage prepayment. Postage and fees are collected when the mail is delivered back to the original sender. This domestic service enables authorized mailers to receive First-Class Mail without prepaid postage, back from customers by paying the postage and fee on receipt of mailpieces. (See also <i>Courtesy Reply Mail</i> .)
<b>Cadre</b>	A group of trained data collection personnel who are designated by the district's MSP to conduct statistical programs tests when a district data collection technician is not available. Includes cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc.
<b>CAG K and L Offices</b>	Data are obtained by treating such offices as hold-outs of the designated processing center. The sampling unit is a CAG K office-day or a CAG L office-day.

<b>Carrier Cost Systems</b>	The Carrier Cost Systems are used to distribute carrier costs for delivering the various classes, subclasses of mail, and special services. Since the compensation methodology differs for city carriers and rural carriers, there are separate tests to collect carrier cost data.
<b>City Carrier Cost System (CCCS)</b>	The City Carrier Cost System (CCCS) test is used to record mail information for a sample of the Postal Service's city delivery letter routes.
<b>CODES Computer Support Center (CCSC)</b>	The main help desk support unit for CODES users. The CCSC specializes in assisting CODES users with solving hardware and software problems.
<b>Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES)</b>	A computerized data entry system that uses portable (laptop) computers to record data for statistical programs. It also provides administrative processing and telecommunications.
<b>Consolidated Originating Unit (COU)</b>	A physical location where clusters of mail can be subsampled as they enter the Postal Service. Mail must be Insured, Registered, collect on delivery (COD), or certificates of mailing (COM).
<b>Cost Ascertainment Group (CAG)</b>	A method of classifying Post Offices according to volume of revenue generated. Each year, the <i>Postal Bulletin</i> publishes the number of revenue units for each classification. CAGs range from A to L.
<b>Data Collection Technician (DCT)</b>	An employee whose position is with finance and is dedicated to statistical programs work involving data collection.
<b>Delivery Point Sequence (DPS)</b>	Machinable letters sorted according to the delivery sequence by the carrier. An 11-digit barcode enables a barcode sorter (BCS) to sequence mail in the exact order of delivery. This process eliminates the need for carriers to manually sort this mail prior to delivery.
<b>External First-Class (EXFC)</b>	A slot-to-slot performance measurement system that measures First-Class Mail performance from the time mail enters the mailstream until it is delivered to a household, small business, or Post Office box. EXFC measures service performance from a customer perspective and produces accurate, independent, externally generated results.
<b>Finance Number</b>	An assigned six-digit number that identifies an installation for processing financial data. The first 2 digits are a state code; and the last 4 are uniquely assigned from 0001 through 9999 to each installation in alphabetical order.
<b>General Mail Facility (GMF)</b>	A facility that processes and distributes mail for a specific service area.
<b>Golden Rules</b>	The set of rules which must be met in order to create a mail exit point (MEP). The four rules are as follows: (1) mail must be associated with one and only one MEP; (2) the mail for each MEP should be able to be isolated for testing; (3) MEPs should be relatively stable through time; and, (4) the cost effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.
<b>Handbook</b>	A Postal Service directive that documents the procedures needed to implement Postal Service policy stated in manuals.

<b>Headquarters</b>	The national Postal Service unit that directs administration, policy, and operations. It is located at 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Washington DC 20260-0001.
<b>In-Office Cost System (IOCS)</b>	IOCS is the primary probability sampling system used to distribute the labor costs of clerks, mailhandlers, city carriers, and supervisors to the activities carried out by those employees, particularly activities related to the handling of mail of all classes and rate categories and to the provision of special services.
<b><i>International Mail Manual (IMM)</i></b>	The directive that contains postage rates and classification and other regulations for mailings bound for other countries. The IMM is one of 6 Postal Service policy manuals.
<b>Irregular Parcel and Pieces (IPP)</b>	ODIS-RPW mail shape category that includes any mailpiece not categorized as a card, letter, flat or parcel.
<b>Laptop Personal Computer (PC)</b>	A compact PC used by data collection personnel for source data entry, online editing, automated test control and electronic transmission of statistical data to the CODES Web Base Unit for final processing.
<b>Mail Exit Point (MEP)</b>	A physical place in the mail processing stream between and including the destination mail processing plant and the final delivery unit. At a MEP, mailpieces can be isolated and counted so that information about the mailpieces can be recorded.
<b>Mail Exit Point System (MEPS)</b>	This is the data entry system for recording and maintaining MEPs. This includes the MEP History Report which maintains historical records of test and external data for selected MEPs.
<b>Main Office</b>	The primary Postal Service facility in a city where the Post Office uses subordinate Post Office stations or Post Office branches. It provides complete postal services to a specified geographic area. (Formerly called <i>general post office - GPO.</i> )
<b><i>Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)</i></b>	A directive that contains the basic Postal Service standards for domestic mail services; a description of and requirements for each mail class, special service and ancillary service and conditions governing their uses; and standards for rate eligibility and mail preparation. The DMM is one of 6 Postal Service policy manuals.
<b>Manager, Statistical Programs (MSP)</b>	The district manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) is responsible for the collection of statistical data associated with statistical programs. The primary responsibilities include implementing, and operating statistical programs, and ensuring data integrity of statistical programs within the district.
<b>Military (APO/FPO) Mail</b>	Domestic mail and international mail that bears a U.S. military delivery address or return address and that, in some stage of its transmission, is in the possession of the Department of Defense.
<b>Origin-Destination Information Network (ODIN)</b>	Domestic ODIN is a Web-based system that permits the user to generate both standard and customized reports using ODIS-style data from the ODIS-RPW system. ODIN also allows managers to pinpoint problems at the 5-digit ZIP Code level by day-of-week, shape, level of barcoding, ZIP Codes of origin, etc.

<b>Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW)</b>	ODIS-RPW is a continuous probability sample of all mail exiting the postal system, and a continuous probability sample of registered, insured, Collect on Delivery (COD) and Certificates of Mailing (COM) mailpieces entering the postal system.
<b>Processing and Distribution Center (P&amp;DC)</b>	A central mail facility that processes and dispatches part or all of both incoming and outgoing mail for a designated service area. P&DC also provides instructions on the preparation of collection mail, dispatch schedules, and sorting plan requirements to mailers.
<b>Processing &amp; Distribution Facility (P&amp;DF)</b>	A processing and distribution facility is usually a sectional center facility or a general mail facility, but can also be a dedicated mail processing facility without a Post Office station or Post Office branch.
<b>Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS)</b>	The Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS) test is used to record mail information for a random sample of the Postal Service's rural delivery routes.
<b>Service Enhancement Support System (SESS)</b>	Developed to give first-line field managers direct access to five user-friendly programs in order to improve service. The focus of SESS is to identify problem areas in service and operations.
<b>Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC)</b>	Headquarters field unit that provides technical and field support to the district statistical programs units.
<b>Statistical Programs Specialist (SPS)</b>	The statistical programs specialist is responsible for assisting the MSP (as necessary) in fulfilling their organizational responsibilities such as, training, process review, and any other requirements.
<b>System for International Revenue and Volume Outbound-International Origin-Destination Information System (SIRVO-IODIS)</b>	SIRVO-IODIS captures revenue, pieces, and weight data for U.S. origin letter-post and parcel post mail destined for foreign countries, and measures transit time for U.S. origin (outbound) international air letters and cards (LC) mail.
<b>System for International Revenue and Volume Inbound (SIRVI)</b>	SIRVI captures pieces and weight data from foreign origin mail entering the United States. SIRVI also provides country-specific data to support terminal dues settlements.
<b>Transportation Cost Systems (TRACS)</b>	TRACS are statistical sampling and data collection systems that provide information to estimate the costs by subclass for the major inter-facility purchased transportation cost accounts.

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