

MTAC WG # 188 (Restart) – Retain Mail Volume by Expanding DMM Paper Machinability Standards

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Workgroup Issue Statement

The current supply chain crisis in the paper market has left many in the industry scrambling to find any paper as well as or forced to choose substitute stocks for their mailing programs. Some of these paper stocks do not conform exactly to current paper weight specifications as listed in the DMM. Mailers want to submit samples alternate stocks they believe will meet machinability characteristics and requirements for USPS Engineering testing and PCSC approval. If we do not have a robust process in place, USPS and Industry will have many mail programs that may not be mailed this year due to lack of an approved paper stock or an acceptable substitute. This process will create more mutually acceptable paper options which will improve USPS volume and revenue. Keeping volume in the mail is the reason we are restarting WG 188 which had previously been sunset.

Recommendations

1. The workgroup developed a procedure for submitting and tracking alternate paper stocks for testing.
2. A document outlining this procedure, along with supporting documentation, and a tracking log are posted at <https://postalpro.usps.com/paper-testing>
3. A mailer wanting to use an alternate paper stock should check the tracking log
 - a. If the type of paper the mailer proposes to use has already been tested for the format they will be mailing, the mailer should request an exception for their mailing(s) from the PCSC, citing the corresponding test results.
 - b. If the type of paper the mailer proposes to use has not been tested, the mailer should follow the instructions for submitting test stock found with the tracking log.
4. A high-level overview of the process is
 - a) Mailer sends request to the PCSC, who assigns a case number to the test, logs the test, and tracks test results.
 - b) Mailer sends a minimum of 100 addressed samples of the mailpiece format made from the alternate paper stock and 20 8.5" x 11" sheets of the alternate stock to USPS Engineering, identifying all samples with the case number.
 - c) USPS Engineering tests the format samples and paper stock samples, and reports results to the PCSC, who notifies the mailer of the results. If the samples pass, the PCSC will issue an exception letter allowing the mailer to use the alternate stock.