Partnership in Tomorrow Meeting Minutes
CASS™ MASS™
Cycle 2011-2013, March 30, 2010

The Partnership in Tomorrow Meeting was hosted by the National Customer Support Center in Memphis, TN with attendees and webinar participants from various industry representatives.

These minutes are a record of discussions held during the meeting.

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Review of CASS™/MASS™ Cycle M

CASS™ Cycle M required implementation of LACS$^{Link®}$ for all end users. If a LACS^{Link} address was found but the new address could not be sprayed on a mailpiece only a 5-digit ZIP™ Code could be returned.

Suite$^{Link®}$ was required to be used by manufacturers during CASS testing but was optional for end users.

New address logic was introduced for Unique ZIP Codes.

Static test data was provided by the USPS® to all CASS developers. Manufacturers were responsible for distributing the static data to their customers and notifying them to use it for CASS and MASS testing.

An extension was granted to accommodate the mailing industry to the "required by date" from July 31, 2009 to September 30, 2009.

The Fee schedule was altered for MASS certification to coincide with the certification extension. And, Cycle M certification was deferred to expire on July 31, 2011 instead of July 31, 2010.

CASS/MASS Cycle N Requirements

CASS™/MASS™ Cycle N – Fee Schedule

Fee-Based Certification	Aug/Oct (New Cycle)	NOV/ DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	After July 31, for Current Cycle
CASS	$200	$200	$200	$500	$500	$600	$700	$800	$900	$1,000
MASS MFG (MLOCR)		$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$1,500
MASS End-Users (MLOCR)								$500	$1,000	$1,500
MASS MFG (Encoder)		$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$750	$1,000
MASS End-Users (Encoder)								$300	$750	$1,000

Suite$^{Link®}$ Mandatory for end users

Suite^{Link} will be mandatory for end users for CASS/MASS Cycle N.

Suite^{Link} contains suite numbers for business addresses in selective highrise buildings. These are targeted highrise addresses with high volume of default mail. The Suite^{Link} product improves business addressing information through the assignment of a suite number when available, and allows the USPS to achieve increased mail volume sorted in delivery point sequence.

Suite^{Link} data is available at no cost to software developers through the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) Licensing Department. The Licensing Department can be reached at 800-589-5766 or via email at ncoalink@usps.gov.

Suite^{Link} will be included in all tests for both CASS and MASS. Software developers are required to supply the static test data to all end users who will take a CASS or MASS test using their software. Suite^{Link} production data must also be included in CASS Certified™ software that will be released to end users.

Statistics show the use of Suite^{Link} increased volume of mail sorted in delivery point sequence.

- 4.4% records matched the previous 2 Fiscal Years
  - FY 08: 103 million records finalized by Suite^{Link}
  - FY 09: 160 million records finalized by Suite^{Link}

Q: What does the 4.4% represent?

A: 4.4% represents the percentage of candidate records (records that were identified as missing secondary address information during the normal CASS processing) that matched to a Suite^{Link} record.

Suite^{Link} Impact

- CASS™ Developers
  - Will be included in all CASS certification tests
  - Must be included in software released to end user

- MASS™ Developers
  - Will be included in all MASS certification tests
  - End Users required to certify using Suite^{Link} test data
  - Required to spray new 11-Digit barcode for suite number
  - Required to spray suite number on mailpiece

- End Users (CASS/MASS)
  - Mandatory for use in production environment
  - Suite number required to be appended to address printed on mailpiece in order to use ZIP+4® code

Note: If the secondary number is not appended to the original address when one is available from Suite^{Link}, use of the ZIP+4 Code associated with the new address is prohibited. The mailer may continue to use the input address with ONLY the 5-digit ZIP Code associated with the input address.

Suite^{Link} must be done prior to an NCOA$^{Link®}$ or FAST*forward*® lookup

Q: Will the MASS order form be updated to include Suite^{Link} and LACS^{Link} printing capability of the MASS machine?

A: Yes the MASS Order Form will be updated.

Q: Is there a way to identify the new and old static data files? This will provide the mailer with a tool to ensure they are loading the correct data file.

A: Yes, we have changed the product date from 99/99/9999 to 99/99/2013. 2013 represents the year the CASS Cycle N software will expire.

Q: In the MASS environment, if you choose to not spray the suite number, can you still qualify the mailpiece for 3 and/or 5 digit presort?

A: Yes, as long the appropriate 5 digit for the printed address on the mailpiece is used.

Q: Does the user have the option to turn off Suite^{Link}?

A: We can't preclude them from doing this, but the subsequent mailings produced from any runs with Suite^{Link} turned off will not qualify for Automation discounts.

An observation was made from the gallery for customers using multiple products; they make sure all data aligns by ensuring all are working off the same release for the respective products.

Suite^{Link} Candidate Records

Suite^{Link} candidate records are addresses where there is a known secondary address deficiency and it matches to a high-rise default or street default. A street default is a record where a high-rise default is not present and high-rise specific records exists.

Please note, a match to a firm record missing secondary address information should not be considered as a candidate record for Suite^{Link}.

Q. How many suites are on the Suite^{Link} database?

A. There are approximately 10,000,000 Sutie^{Link} records in the database.

Q. An observation was made from the gallery that if you follow the Software Developers Guide (SDG) verbatim, you will not pass the test. Is this true?

A. Further discussion clarified that the reference was to a particular scenario where the suite number or other extraneous information was imbedded with the business name and the guidelines provided in the (SDG) would prevent a match from being made. We will evaluate the SDG and make any necessary correction.

Suite[Link] Examples

Example 1

The input address matches to high-rise default record. DPV® returns a "D" which indicates the secondary is missing. Software must query Suite[Link].

Rec Type	Firm	DPV	Prim Range	Street Indicia	Unit	Secd Range	City	ZIP Code	Unique	ZIP+4 Range	CRID
H		Y	910	MADISON			MEMPHIS	38103	N	3403	C029
H		Y	910	MADISON	STE	823 – 826	MEMPHIS	38103	N	3435	C029

Input: UT Animal Research
910 Madison Ave
Memphis TN 38103

Output: UT ANIMAL RESEARCH
910 MADISON AVE STE 823
MEMPHIS TN 38103-3435

Suite[Link] Return Code: A

Note: If end-user cannot append secondary number to the mailpiece when Suite[Link] provides one, they would return input with appropriate 5-digit ZIP Code without the ZIP +4 code value.

Example 2

The input address matches to high-rise default record. DPV returns a "D" which indicates that secondary is missing. Software must query Suite[Link]. If no match is found, return the original ZIP + 4 match.

Rec Type	Firm	DPV	Prim Range	Street Indicia	Unit	Secd Range	City	ZIP Code	Unique	ZIP+4 Range	CRID
H		Y	24	SALT POND RD			WAKEFIELD	02879	N	4314	C001
H		Y	24	SALT POND RD	LOWR	C6	WAKEFIELD	02879	N	4304	C001
H		Y	24	SALT POND RD	UPPR	C6	WAKEFIELD	02879	N	4323	C001

Input: C6 Merolla
24 Salt Pond Rd
Wakefield RI 02879

Output: C6 MEROLLA
24 SALT POND RD
WAKEFIELD RI 02879-4314

Suite[Link] Return Code: 00

Q: We have found that matching business names are sometimes dependent on how the customer has the business name and how they are coded in the Postal Service database. Do we have to change the business name around to try different variations to find a match and would this have a negative influence on matching capability of software?

A: We have described the process by which business names would be matched to Suite^{Link} data. It is not a straightforward compare 'strings against strings'. It is a word by word comparison after taking out what is determined as extraneous information; words we don't think will impact the match (e.g. Inc, Company, etc). When you are done with the process and compare the words from the input address against the candidate Suite^{Link} records, we have established thresholds that say if there are "X" many of words on input, at least "Y" number of words must match before it is considered to be a match. Much of the ambiguity should have been eliminated thru the process. We don't want the software to manipulate the data except for what is outlined in the Software Developers Guide.

Example 3

The input address matches to high-rise default record. Software must query Suite^{Link} without the invalid secondary number. If match found, insert secondary number. Do not throw away the extraneous info that was on input.

Rec Type	Firm	DPV	Prim Range	Street Indicia	Unit	Secd Range	City	ZIP Code	Unique	ZIP+4 Range	CRID
H		Y	910	MADISON			MEMPHIS	38103	N	3403	C029
H		Y	910	MADISON	STE	823 – 826	MEMPHIS	38103	N	3435	C029

Input: UT Animal Research
910 Madison Ave # 9
Memphis TN 38103

Output: UT ANIMAL RESEARCH
910 MADISON AVE STE 823 # 9
MEMPHIS TN 38103-3435

Suite^{Link} Return Code: A

Note: If end-user cannot append secondary number to the mailpiece when Suite^{Link} provides one then they would return input with appropriate 5-digit ZIP Code without the ZIP +4 Code value.

Q. Would Move Update have a problem with '# 9'?

A. The 9-digit ZIP Code along with the primary number and secondary number of the matched ZIP + 4 record is used to create the EMDP to query the NCOA^{Link} data. In this example, # 9 is not used to build the EMDP since its extraneous information.

Example 4

The input address matches to high-rise default record. Software must query Suite[Link] without the invalid secondary number. If match found, insert secondary number. Do not throw away the extraneous info that was on input.

Rec Type	Firm	DPV	Prim Range	Street Indicia	Unit	Secd Range	City	ZIP Code	Unique	ZIP+4 Range	CRID
H		Y	910	MADISON			MEMPHIS	38103	N	3403	C029
H		Y	910	MADISON	STE	823 – 826	MEMPHIS	38103	N	3435	C029

Input: UT Animal Research
910 Madison Ave Ste 9
Memphis TN 38103

Output: UT ANIMAL RESEARCH
910 MADISON AVE STE 823 STE 9
MEMPHIS TN 38103-3435

Suite[Link] Return Code: A

Q. What do you do with extraneous information if it has a unit designator?

A. The meeting minutes from 7/27/1995 addressed this. CASS will add extraneous secondary information to a small number of street record questions where a high-rise default or secondary range does not exist on the database. If the input secondary unit designator is valid (per Pub 28) it should be retained and returned standardized. If the input does not contain a valid secondary unit designator (i.e. - BOX) then # should be returned in place of the secondary unit designator

Example 5

The input address matches to a street default record. DPV returns a “D” which indicates that secondary is missing. Software must query Suite[Link].

Rec Type	Firm	DPV	Prim Range	Street Indicia	Unit	Secd Range	City	ZIP Code	Unique	ZIP+4 Range	CRID
S		Y	2201 - 2299	VETERANS BLVD			DEL RIO	78840	N	3120	C019
H		Y	2205	VETERANS BLVD	STE	D1 – D9	DEL RIO	78840	N	3137	C019

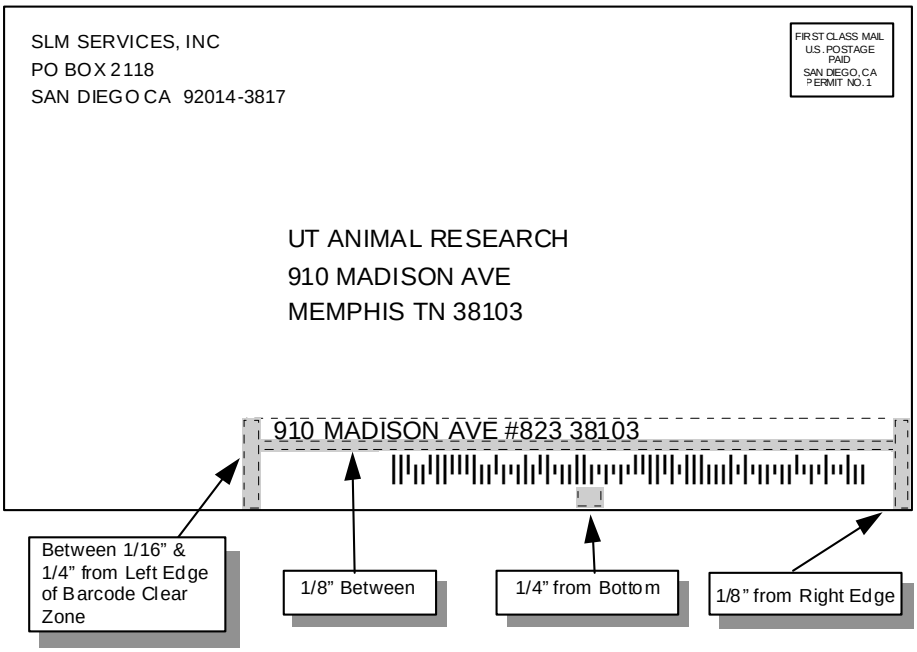
Input: D5-DALYS GOLD N CHAIN
2205 VETERANS BLVD
DEL RIO TX 78840

Output: D5-DALYS GOLD N CHAIN
2205 VETERANS BLVD STE D5
DEL RIO TX 78840-3137

Suite[Link] return code: A

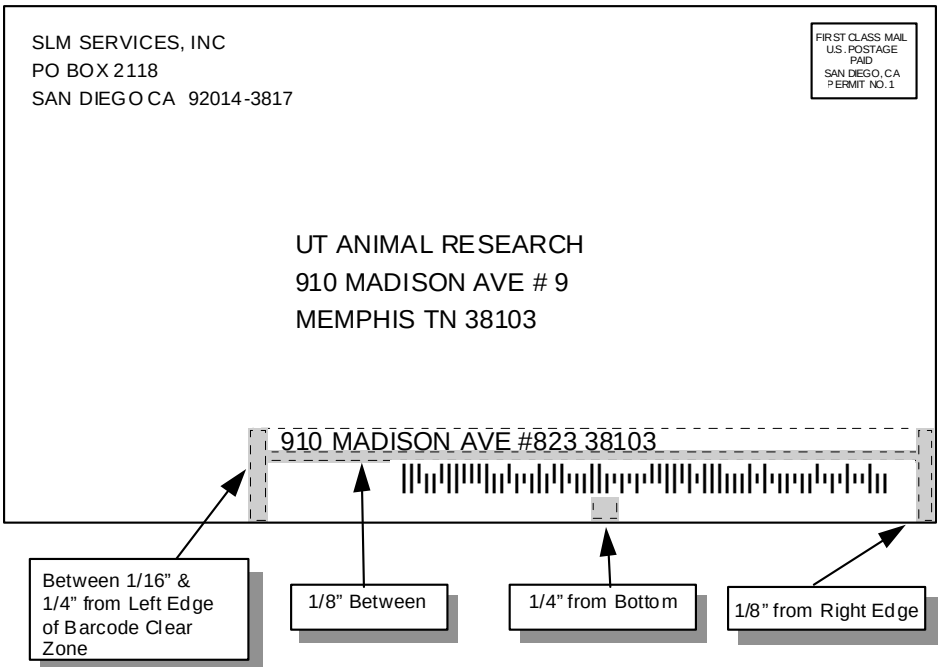
Example 6

Example of mailpiece with text information placement for MLOCR machines when appending secondary number that is provided from Suite[Link].



Example 7

Example of mailpiece with text information placement for MLOCR machines when appending secondary number that is provided from Suite[Link]. The input address in this example contains extraneous information.



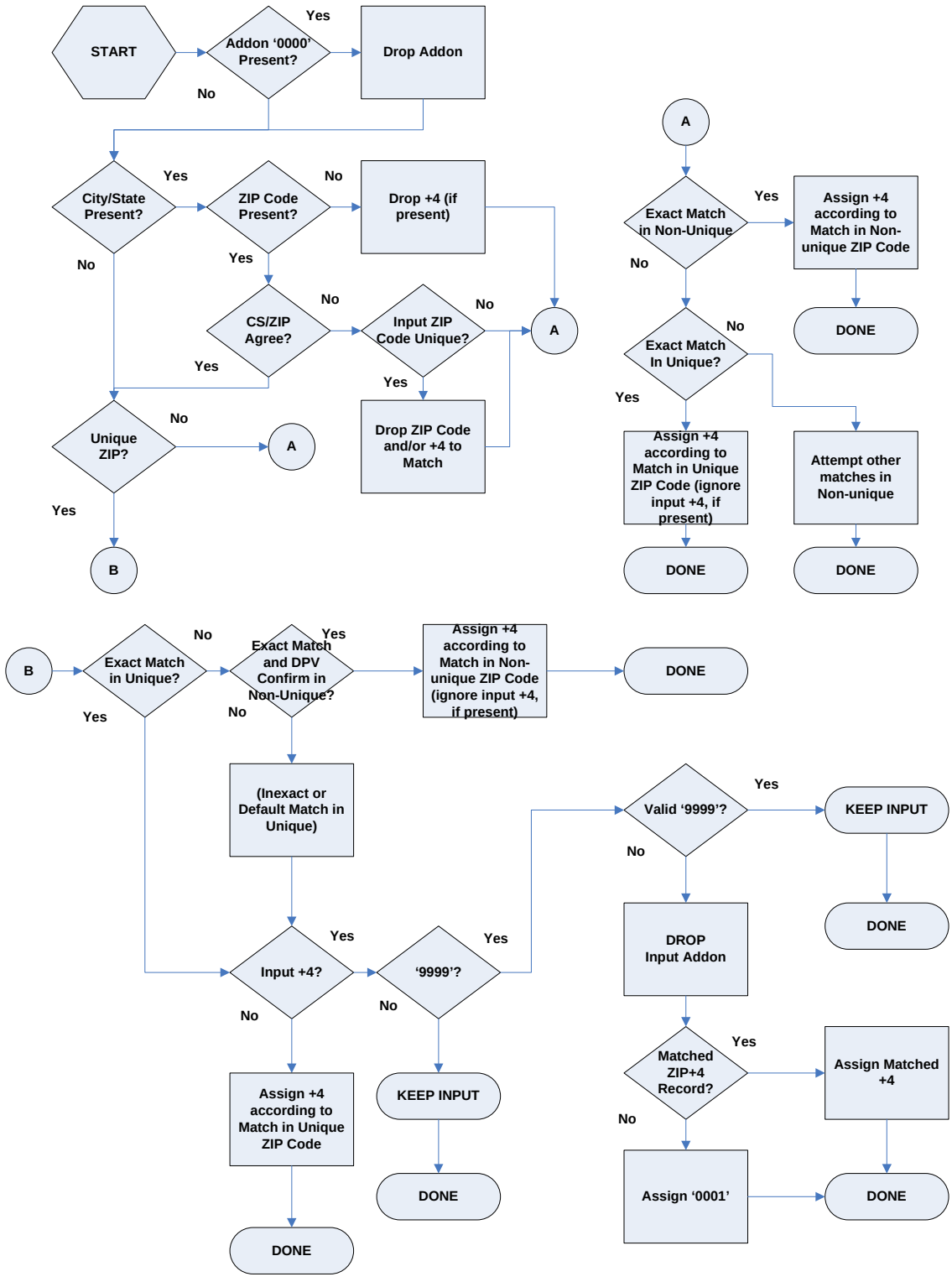
Clarification of Unique ZIP Code Logic

Some anomalies have occurred in the mailing industry that has warranted clarification of the rules for Unique ZIP Code logic. Clarifications were provided on the following topics:

- Flowchart outlining Unique ZIP Code Logic
- Unique ZIP Code Matrix
- '0000' or the return on an invalid '9999' must not be retained
- ZIP Code must match City and State to retain input Unique ZIP Code or ZIP + 4 code

A new flowchart outlining Unique ZIP Code logic has been prepared and provided on the next page. The flowchart is an example of how the USPS would achieve the expected result. Software developer's logic may be different but the end result should be the same as outlined in the flowchart.

Unique ZIP Code Flowchart



Updated Unique ZIP Code Matrix

Carrier Route, Record Type and Delivery Point Assignment Rules within Unique ZIP Codes Only

CONDITION	CRID/RECORD TYPE	DPC
Normal Matching (No Input ZIP or No Input +4 or Input ZIP+4 corresponds to matched record)	Use CRID/Record Type associated with ZIP + 4 Record	Assign Based on Normal DPC Derivation Rules
Input or Assigned ZIP+4 Valid (doesn't correspond to matched record)	Use CRID/Record Type Associated with Input ZIP+4	Assign Based on the Primary Street Number
Input or Assigned ZIP+4 Invalid	Default CRID to 'C000' and Record Type matches the style of input address	Assign Based on the Primary Street Number

Note: Set the Default flag when the assigned ZIP+4® Code matches to a high-rise default or an invalid add-on of '0001' (default for Unique)

Unique Examples

Example 1

Retain the input address ZIP + 4 since it is valid and the city state agree with the input ZIP.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
F	NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS	Y	500	MAIN ST			GROTON	01471	Y	0002-0999	C001

Input: NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS
500 MAIN ST
GROTON MA 01471-0500

Output: NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS
500 MAIN ST
GROTON MA 01471-0500

Q: If the input ZIP+4 is out of the range, do you keep it?

A: If there is an exact match with the Unique ZIP Code for the Primary address, and no match outside the Unique ZIP Code, then you keep the input ZIP+4 code.

Example 2

Input address contains a valid ‘0001’.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
F	MOVE VALIDATION	Y	6060	PRIMACY PKWY	STE	3982	MEMPHIS	38188	Y	3982	C000
F	NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER	Y	6060	PRIMACY PKWY	STE	101	MEMPHIS	38188	Y	0001	C000
H		Y	6060	PRIMACY PKWY			MEMPHIS	38119	N	5745	C008

Input: National Customer Support Center
6060 Primacy Pkwy Ste 101
Memphis TN 38188-0001

Output: NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 101
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001

Example 3

Unique ZIP with input add-on ‘0001’. Since the address does not exist in the Unique, software must look for exact match that DPV confirms in the Non-Unique associated with the city/state.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
S		Y	2108	NW 3RD AVE			MIAMI	33127	N	4700	C012
S		Y	11698	NW 25TH ST			MIAMI	33112	Y	0001	C000
F	INTERNATIONAL SERVICE CENTER	Y	11698	NW 25TH ST			MIAMI	33112	Y	9997	C000

Input: MARY ANDREWS
2108 NW 3RD AVE
MIAMI FL 33112-0001

Output: MARY ANDREWS
2108 NW 3RD AVE
MIAMI FL 33127-4700

Example 4

Unique ZIP with add-on '0001' on input. Add-on '0001' doesn't exist as an exact match in Unique and there is no match to a Non-Unique. Software can retain the Unique Default of '0001'.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
S		Y	633	CLARK ST			EVANSTON	60208	Y	0001	C000
H		n/a	2	ARBOR LN			EVANSTON	60201	N	1968	C076
S		n/a	2 – 98	ARBOR LN			EVANSTON	60201	N	1967	C076

Input: Farmers Bakery
322 Arbor Ln
Evanston IL 60208-0001

Output: FARMERS BAKERY
322 ARBOR LN
EVANSTON IL 60208-0001

Example 5

Add-on "0000" is never valid. Drop the input add-on and perform the lookup based on Unique ZIP Code Logic.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
P		Y	100503	PO BOX			ATLANTA	30384	Y	0101-0999	B001

Input: ABC Company
PO BOX 100503
ATLANTA GA 30384-0000

Output: ABC COMPANY
PO BOX 100503
ATLANTA GA 30384-0503

Example 6

No correlation between city/state and ZIP Code – match to the city

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
S		Y	1200	LOCUST ST			DES MOINES	50391	Y	0001	C000
H		Y	1200	LOCUST ST			DES MOINES	50391	Y	9995	C000
P		Y	2	PO BOX			WINCHESTER CENTER	06094	N	0001-0060	B001

Input: Kings Tire Service
PO Box 2
Winchester Center CT 50391-0001

Output: KINGS TIRE SERVICE
PO BOX 2
WINCHESTER CTR CT 06094-0002

Example 7

Input contains a Unique ZIP Code. If an exact match cannot be made in the Unique ZIP Code, software must make exact match in a non-Unique if one exists that DPV confirms.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
S		Y	1149	1ST PL NW			WASHINGTON	20001	N	1324	C014
S		Y	4600	SILVER HILL RD			WASHINGTON	20233	Y	0001	C000

Input: Sandy Brooks Books Inc
1149 1ST PL NW
Washington DC 20233

Output: SANDY BROOKS BOOKS INC
1149 1ST PL NW
WASHINGTON DC 20001-1324

Example 8

Input contains a Unique ZIP Code that does not correspond to the city state.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
H		Y	3019	SERVICE RD			FORT BRAGG	28310	Y	7102	C352
P		n/a	4400- 4498	BLUFF ST			FAYETTEVILLE	28301	N	1915	C065

Input: Shuffling Shoe Shop Inc
1 Bluff Ave
Fayetteville NC 28310

Output: SHUFFLING SHOE SHOP INC
1 BLUFF AVE
FAYETTEVILLE NC

Q: If Fayetteville NC 28310 was a single coded ZIP Code, can I return the 5 Digit ZIP Code?

A: Yes, you can return the 5 Digit ZIP Code.

Q: If the primary address matches to an outside address and ZIP+4, but does not DPV confirm, do I change to the outside ZIP+4 code?

A: No, since the address does not DPV confirm outside the Unique ZIP Code, you must stay in the Unique ZIP Code.

Example 9

No input ZIP Code, software can make an exact match in a Unique. A firm name match is no longer required.

REC TYPE	FIRM	DPV	PRIM RANGE	STREET INDICIA	UNIT	SECD RANGE	CITY	ZIP CODE	UNIQUE	ZIP+4 RANGE	CRID
S		Y	157	UNIVERSITY OF NC			CHAPEL HILL	27599	Y	6018	C000

Input: Memphis Hog Heaven Bar-B-Que
157 University of NC
Chapel Hill NC

Output: MEMPHIS HOG HEAVEN BAR-B-QUE
157 UNIVERSITY OF NC
CHAPEL HILL NC 27599-6018

Q: Will this clarification to the coding of Unique ZIP Codes have a negative impact in the remittance mail industry? Is there a medium or platform where this clarification can be provided to the industry so they are aware of the “tweaking”?

A: We will forward an FYI to the Remittance Mail Manger at HQ.

General Delivery Clarifications

Effective March 14, 2010, the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, DMM®* 508.6 has been revised to permit the postmaster of a Post Office™ with multiple facilities to designate more than one facility as an office that can provide general delivery service in accordance with customer and operational needs.

General Delivery Examples

Example 1

Input address missing ZIP® Code

ZIP Code	Acceptable City Name	Preferred City	Street Name	ZIP + 4
73110	MIDWEST CITY	OKLAHOMA CITY	GENERAL DELIVERY	9999
73114	OKLAHOMA CITY	OKLAHOMA CITY	GENERAL DELIVERY	9999

Input: John Doe
General Delivery
Midwest City OK

Output: JOHN DOE
GENERAL DELIVERY
MIDWEST CITY OK 73110-9999

Example 2

Input address missing ZIP Code. This is a multiple response since there is more than one candidate record in the ZIP + 4 for the input City/State.

ZIP Code	Acceptable City Name	Preferred City	Street Name	ZIP + 4
73110	MIDWEST CITY	OKLAHOMA CITY	GENERAL DELIVERY	9999
73110	OKLAHOMA CITY	OKLAHOMA CITY	GENERAL DELIVERY	9999
73114	OKLAHOMA CITY	OKLAHOMA CITY	GENERAL DELIVERY	9999

Input: John Doe
General Delivery
Oklahoma City OK

Output: JOHN DOE
GENERAL DELIVERY
OKLAHOMA CITY OK (NO-MATCH)

Q: Early on did we say MERLIN will reject a mailing if there are +4 codes of '9999' on the mail piece(s)?

A: The mailing will be subject to failure only if there is an invalid +4 of '9999' sprayed on the mailpiece.

Intelligent Mail® Barcode

CASS Cycle N marks the end of POSTNET™ barcode certification for MASS testing. All MASS tests for Cycle N must use IMb. Usage of IMb will be required for automation discounts beginning in May 2011.

Q: Currently the IMb is optional, and the request form for a MASS test deck has a check box to indicate what barcode you intend to spray. Will the form be modified now that the IMb is mandatory?

A: Yes, we will modify the form to eliminate the choice of POSTNET or IMb.

Q: If we are ready for our customers to take the MASS test in February, can they get test decks?

A: Yes, if the Manufacturer is certified and has given the permission to release the test decks.

The IMb MASS testing requirements are listed below and will outline the values that must be represented in the bars in the non-ZIP Code locations of the IMb. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in failure of the MASS test.

- Set Barcode ID to "00"
- Set Service Type and any valid 3-digit service type identifier
- Mailer ID can be 6 or 9 digits but cannot be all zeroes. The same Mailer ID must be sprayed on all mailpieces.
- Serial number can be 6 or 9 digits. But cannot be all zeroes. A unique serial number "must" be sprayed on each mailpiece.

Please note: Jim Wilson asked the group if there would be an issue from the MLOCR industry perspective if it were made mandatory for each piece to have a unique Serial number sprayed for MASS testing. There was no immediate objection to this during the meeting and no subsequent messaging to the CASS/MASS department or directly to Jim indicating the industry would experience a problem with this.

Static Cycle N Test Data

New static test data will be provided by the USPS to all software developers to use for Cycle N testing. This data must be used for all tests and must be provided by software developers to end users that are testing for CASS and MASS certification.

The CASS Summary Report (PS 3553) ZIP+4 File Date should be 99/99/2013, which is the date on Cycle N static data. Originally it was stated that we would use all 9's for the date. The gallery asked if we could provide a way to differentiate the static data files between Cycle M and Cycle N, so in response a decision was made to alter the file date to accommodate this request. The "From" and "To" dates are calculated based on the Processed Date in Section B2a.

Q. Did the static test data improve the CASS testing process?

A: Yes, this did improve the process on reviewing CASS and MASS tests.

Q: Can we use static data for the MASS test?

A: It is a requirement to us the static test data when taking a MASS test.

Q: Is it possible to have a two-hour turnaround on CASS results? What about something closer than a week?

A: The turnaround policy for both CASS and MASS is 10 business days. All CASS and MASS tests are graded electronically by a nightly process. All electronic grading results must be manually reviewed. Major reasons that we saw delays this year was due to several CASS and MASS customers were testing at the last possible minute.

The NCSC will look to see if there are ways that the turnaround process can be improved. We would also ask software manufacturers to help us by completing their testing sooner so we do not run into the same issues we had last summer.

MASS Testing

MASS machines must use "X" as the first character of the machine identifier on MASS test mailpieces to represent static test data was used. This is not required for Flat machines that do not spray a machine identifier.

Significant Milestones

CASS/MASS Cycle N Milestones	
Annual meeting	March 2010
Official Rules Released	April 2010
Send Static Data	June 2010
Stage I Release	June 2010
Stage II Release	August 2010
MASS test decks available	November 2010
Devs/Mfrs Certification Completed	March 2011
Begin Software Release	April 2011
Software Released to End Users	May 2011
Expiration of CASS™ Cycle M	July 31, 2011
Implementation of CASS™ Cycle N	August 1, 2011
Expiration of CASS Cycle N	July 31, 2013

What's Next for CASS

Standardized Abbreviations

A mailing industry sponsored initiative has surfaced that we do more around the topic of standardized address abbreviation to reduce address line lengths below 30 characters. No target was set but it was suggested somewhere in the 18 to 20 character range. It was indicated this would provide the benefit of utilizing the data as effectively as possible in their current database environment.

We originally agreed to a 30 character length in previous years, and developed an Abbreviated Alias file into the CASS product as a database driven methodology as opposed to a logic driven methodology to satisfy the needs of the industry. This provided a structured means where a customer could present an address string that exceeded 30 characters to CASS software, and if a match was found, could look up the associated address in the Abbreviated Alias file and return a standardized address that fit into the 30 character parameter. Based on feedback from the industry, this has satisfied a need that greatly simplified their processes.

Upon hearing of an additional need from some mailers to further reduce the address length, we threw the requirement out to the addressing experts here at the NCSC and asked if there is a way to address this expressed concern with a policy. The answer returned was it can be done, but it would be very complicated. Based on this it was determined that this request would not be entertained for CASS Cycle N.

Jim Wilson suggested we continue to review the need for a methodology and evaluate possible solutions to this request beyond Cycle N. A satisfactory solution will have to be a joint venture between the software industry, business customers and the Postal Service to ensure any policy changes to CASS requirements intended to help one portion of the mailing industry does not negatively affect other portions of the mailing industry.

Test File(s) format standardization

Jim Wilson introduced an idea to the group that as an industry, we should commit to a standardization of file format interchange. It was suggested we change over to an XML format for certification products provided by the National Customer Support Center. This will be beneficial to the industry as all product certification activity between business customers and the NCSC would be provided in a standardized data layout, regardless of what product you are using (e.g. NCOA^{Link}, CASS, COAlert, DPV, ACS™, etc).

The first feedback received from the gallery was we should provide both formats in parallel to provide flexibility to the customers.

Jim then introduced that as an industry, we should evaluate the opportunity to incorporate the S-42-6, an International Standardized Address format into our process, and in general the gallery agreed with this. There will need to be further discussion on how the industry should proceed on this initiative. More information on the S-42-6 can be acquired via the link below.

http://www.upu.int/document/2006/an/cep_gn_ep_1-2/d007.pdf

CASS/MASS Cycle Frequency

We next discussed whether there is a continued need for CASS Cycles. The representation participating in the PIT meeting expressed a definite need to continue with mandatory CASS/MASS certification. Some points brought up to support this are:

- It helps the industry to be consistent in releases.
- There is perceived value by the industry
- There is a perceived quality factor by the customers and ensures quality has not degraded.
- Provides equal footing for all vendors

It was suggested we move to a bi-annual schedule for CASS cycles and align it with rate case implementations. The general consensus of the group agreed with the suggestion so we will move to a bi-annual CASS/MASS cycle.