

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) FOR PERIODICALS PROCESSING

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

This document establishes policy and procedures for the processing of Periodicals that will strengthen service improvement efforts for this important class of mail. Use of standard operating procedures for Periodicals supports our corporate goal of providing customers with a competitively priced product along with reliable and consistent service. These instructions also support the new mailer preparation of Periodicals that results in the splitting of residual (working) volume into Origin Mixed ADC and Mixed ADC bundles and containers (*Postal Bulletin* October 27, 2005). A proposed rule was printed in the *Federal Register* on March 7, 2006 that would require this new preparation for all Periodicals bundles after July 6, 2006. In addition, starting May 11, 2006, Periodicals customers will no longer have the option to prepare sacks with less than the current minimum of 24 pieces. The sacks, which are costly to process, are prepared for service reasons. Therefore, it is of great importance that standard procedures are followed to protect service before and particularly after May 11.

### Scope

This document will specifically relate to:

1. Minimum requirements for the processing and distribution of Periodicals within the processing and distribution centers (P&DC).
2. Instructions for handling the new preparation of Periodicals in Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) sacks or trays.
3. Routing residual volume (mixed ADC Periodicals flats) to the appropriate L009 consolidation site for distribution.
4. Labeling requirements for minor containers, such as sacks or trays.
5. Placarding requirements for major containers, such as pallets, all purpose containers (APCs), hampers, wiretainers, postal paks, gayloads.
6. Transportation routing policy

### Service Objectives

The Postal Service does not guarantee the delivery of Periodicals within a specified time. Where practicable, publications must receive expeditious distribution, dispatch, transit handling, and delivery. Since March 1, 1984, publications published weekly or more often and labeled "NEWS" must receive newspaper treatment (DMM 707.27.1). NEWS must be routed exclusively on direct highway contract route service or via the Hub and Spoke Project (HASP) network. Unless otherwise noted, when the document references Periodicals mail, it is also referring to NEWS publications.

### Service Commitments

Service commitments for Periodicals are measured from point of entry to delivery to the customer based on the origin and destination 3-digit ZIP codes (refer to <http://ssd/index.cfm>). These commitments range from 1-7 days depending on the entry point. Use signage to communicate these service requirements. The most important factor for a processing employee to understand when handling Periodicals is that all Periodicals received by critical entry time must be dispatched on the next available transportation.

Once "skin" sacks are eliminated on May 11, 2006, it will be even more critical that processing is timely and consistent with the service commitments. Mailers prepare skin sacks, for example less than minimum 5-digit sacks in lieu of a 3-digit sack, to allow sacks to be dispatched directly to offices without requiring upstream dumping and processing at mail processing facilities. Therefore, working sacks (e.g.

3-digit, SCF, and ADC) must be opened and the contents distributed with the same urgency as cross-dock sacks.

### **Operating Plan**

A facility's operating plan provides the framework for efficient processing and distribution of Periodicals from receipt at the originating dock operation to the destinating dock dispatching operation. The operating plan provides an organized and standardized format to move all mail from one processing operation to the next, taking into consideration the facility equipment, capacity, and transportation. In the operating plan, Periodicals that arrive before critical entry time must be processed and dispatched before the clearance time of the next dispatch of value (DOV) for outbound transportation at origin and DOV to delivery units at destination.

## MAILER PREPARATION OF PERIODICALS

### General

Mailers presort Periodicals sequentially, from the lowest (finest) level to the highest level. The required preparation sequence is to sort pieces into carrier-route, Firm, 5-digit/scheme, 3-digit/scheme, and then ADC bundles. These bundles are then placed on 5-digit/scheme, 3-digit, SCF, or ADC pallets, or in carrier-route, 5-digit carrier-routes, merged 5-digit (including carrier-route and 5-digit bundles), 5-digit, merged 3-digit, SCF, or ADC sacks. Residual or working pieces may remain if mailers are unable to sort to ADC or finer level bundles and residual or working bundles may remain if mailers are unable to sort the bundles to ADC or finer level containers.

Optional since October 27, 2005 and required as of July 6, 2006, mailers place any remaining residual pieces into two working bundles. The "ORIGIN MIXED ADC" or OMX bundle will contain pieces for destinations listed in Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) L201, a new labeling list for First-Class Mail (FCM) surface destinations for the origin plant. These destinations are typically within 750 miles of the origin facility and within the FCM surface reach. The balance of the working pieces will be placed in a "MIXED ADC" bundle and the labeled to 34 P&DCs listed in DMM L009. A similar separation will also take place for the residual bundles prepared in sacks (there are no residual pallets for Periodicals at this time). Updated labeling lists are available electronically from [http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/labeling\\_lists.htm](http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/labeling_lists.htm). Splitting the pieces into two separate bundles and the bundles into two separate sacks will allow the origin plant to process the OMX volume, both pieces and bundles, in with First-Class Mail without risk of transporting Periodicals volume on air.

### Presort Indicators

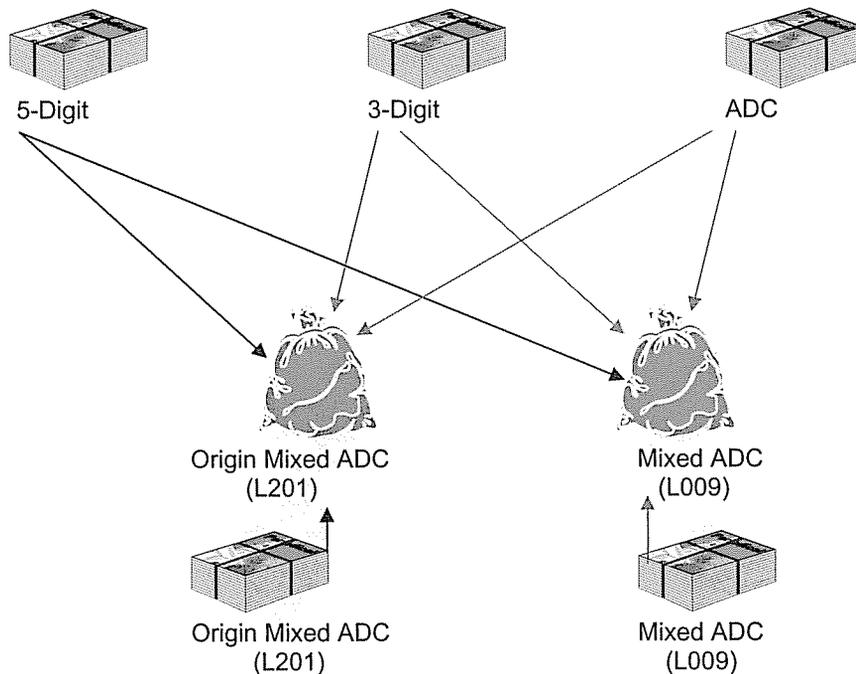
Mailers must identify each Periodicals bundle with either an optional endorsement line or a barcoded pressure sensitive label. When pieces have been bundled, the presort indicator must be visible and not be obscured by strapping or shrinkwrap.

1. Barcoded presort labels have been required since September 1, 2004. The tan Label X can be applied to Mixed ADC and Origin Mixed ADC bundles. The blue Label F designates "Firm". The P&DC must never open a Firm bundle to process enclosed pieces. Dispatch a bundle with a blue F to the 5-digit office so the letter carrier can deliver it intact to the address shown on the top piece.
2. Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) must be in capital letters and printed as the first line of an address line or label. An exhibit of OEL formats can be found in DMM 708.7.1.1.
  - Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) bundles prepared under L201 will bear the word "ORIGIN" in the OEL to distinguish the bundles from Mixed ADC bundles prepared under L009. For example, a bundle with the OEL of \*\*\*\*\*ORIGIN MIXED ADC 640 can contain pieces for any of the 3-digit ZIP Codes in L201, Column B for the 640 entry ZIP Code listing in Column A (*Note: The abbreviations "ORG" and "MXD" may also be used in the OEL.*). If an OMX (L201) bundle is processed on the APPS, the bundle will be sorted the same as a bundle with a Mixed ADC OEL. The APPS cannot currently distinguish between the two bundles through the presence or lack of "ORIGIN" in the OEL. Similarly, data conversion operators at Remote Encoding Centers will key "Origin Mixed ADC" the same as they key "Mixed ADC" bundles.
  - For a Firm bundle, \*\*\*\*\*FIRM 12345 illustrates what could be printed as the OEL. The P&DC must never open a Firm bundle to process enclosed pieces. Dispatch a Firm bundle to the 5-digit office so the letter carrier can deliver it intact to the address shown on the top piece.

### Periodicals Prepared in Sacks

Mailers use brown #2 or #3 plastic sacks or the new semi-transparent sacks for Periodicals. Mailers will place bundles into 5-digit, 3-digit, SCF, and ADC sacks according to current standards. Effective July 6, 2006, mailers must place any remaining bundles into two working (mixed ADC) sacks - one sack based on the new labeling list L201 with a "Origin Mixed ADC" designation, and the other sack based on labeling list L009 with the current "Mixed ADC" designation.

The following illustration shows how the new split for mixed ADC works for the remaining bundles after all direct pallets and/or sacks are prepared:



### Sack Labeling for Origin Mixed ADC (OMX)

The nature of labeling list L201 is somewhat different from other list formats. In order to use this list, mailers need to use the origin and destination of the mail to determine the appropriate bundle or sack preparation. Depending on origin entry location of the mailing as listed in L201, Column A, residual (working) pieces and bundles for any 3-digit ZIP Code destination listed in L201, Column B can be placed in Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) bundles and sacks. All other residual pieces and bundles are placed in Mixed ADC (L009) bundles and sacks. Mailers must print the following information on sack labels for Periodicals:

- Line 1 (Destination Line): Use L201, Column C.
- Line 2 (Content Line): "PER" or "NEWS" as applicable, followed by "FLTS" followed by "WKG W FCM" for flats.
- Line 3 (Office of Mailing or Mailer Information Line): Print city and state.

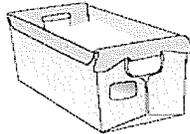
To illustrate, a Periodicals sack that originates in Asheboro NC containing an OMX bundle and 3-digit bundles for delivery to Springfield MA, Bloomington IL, and Lincoln NE would be labeled as follows:

- OMX GREENSBORO NC 270
- NEWS FLTS WKG W FCM
- ABC MAILERS ASHEBORO NC

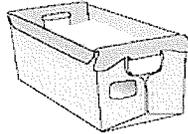
## Periodicals Prepared in Trays

Since October 27, 2005, mailers have the option to place Automated Flat Sorting Machine (AFSM) 100-compatible mailpieces in ADC, Origin Mixed ADC (OMX), and Mixed ADC flat trays with lids in lieu of sacks. The minimum quantity per flat tray will be 24 pieces of mail. Mailers may not secure mail in bundles when placed in flat trays but must group the mail together by bundle presort destinations.

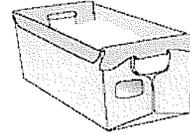
The following illustration shows the three optional tray-based preparation levels which contain loose flats:



ADC  
(L004)



Origin Mixed ADC (OMX)  
(L201)



Mixed ADC  
(L009)

Tray Labeling for ADC (required 24 piece minimum; no overflow tray)

- Line 1: Use L004, Column B.
- Line 2: "PER" or "NEWS" as applicable; followed by "FLTS"; followed by "ADC"; followed by "BC" or "BC/NBC" as applicable.

Tray Labeling for Origin Mixed ADC (no minimum for any remaining pieces for destinations of the origin ZIP Code in L201, and fewer than six pieces at 5-digit, 3-digit, and ADC levels are not permitted)

- Line 1: Use L201, Column C.
- Line 2: "PER" or "NEWS" as applicable, followed by "FLTS WKG W FCM."

Tray Labeling for Mixed ADC (no minimum)

- Line 1: Use L009.
- Line 2: "PER" or "NEWS" as applicable, followed by "FLTS"; followed by "BC WKG", "BC/NBC WKG" or "NON BC WKG" as applicable.

To illustrate, a Periodicals tray that originates in Wausau WI containing a Mixed ADC pieces for delivery to Lake Charles LA, El Paso TX, and Durant OK would be labeled as follows:

- MXD NORTH TEXAS 750
- PER FLTS NON-BC WKG
- WAUSAU WI

## PLANT OPERATIONS for ORIGINATING PERIODICALS (L201 and L009)

### Receipt of Periodicals at the P&DC Platform

All originating Periodicals released by the business mail entry unit (BMEU) to the P&DC for processing must be accompanied by PS Form 3607, *Weighing and Dispatch Certificate*. Platform employees must verify that the information (containers and content) on PS Form 3607 matches the mail, initial and date PS Form 3607, then place the form in a designated receptacle for collection by the BMEU. If discrepancies in the number of containers exist, platform employees can contact the BMEU for resolution. No mailings can be removed from the BMEU acceptance dock/staging areas without appropriate clearance document.

Additionally, originating Periodicals may arrive on the platform on highway contract route (HCR) transportation from smaller plants or associate offices, plant load trips directly from mailers, or motor vehicle service (MVS) transportation from stations and branches with acceptance units. The next handling will be determined based on the information located on placarded containers or labels on sacks or trays.

*Sacks and trays from originating Periodicals mailings must not be dispatched in entirety to another facility (e.g., BMC or L009 site), but rather broken down at origin and the individual sacks, trays, and pallets dispatched accordingly.* Labels on sacks and trays of Periodicals must be read carefully. Pull out and retain sacks and flat trays labeled to the Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) for local processing with First-Class Mail. Mixed ADC sacks and flat trays labeled to the L009 sites must be dispatched on point-to-point transportation to these plants. Dispatch direct containers sorted to the ADC level or finer by means of surface preferential transportation preferably via point-to-point transportation or the HASP network, directly from the origin plant. It is vitally important that these instructions, along with the additional instructions spelled out below, are followed to ensure proper processing and dispatch of this service-sensitive originating Periodicals (including NEWS) volume.

### Example of Sack Labels for Residual (Working) Periodicals

The following chart represents the labeling you can expect to see on Origin Mixed ADC (L201) and Mixed ADC (L009) bundles, sacks, and flat trays dropped by a local mailers at the Kansas City, KS P&DC and local mailers at the Kansas City, MO P&DC, and the proper disposition of these sacks:

	<b>Kansas City, KS P&amp;DC</b>	<b>Kansas City, MO P&amp;DC</b>
Site classification	L201 Only	L201 & L009
OEL on mixed (working) bundle containing destinations <b>inside</b> FCM surface area (L201)	*****ORIGIN MIXED ADC 660	*****ORIGIN MIXED ADC 640
L201 Sack label (L201, Column C)	OMX KANSAS CITY KS 660	OMX KANSAS CITY MO 640
OEL on mixed (working) bundle for destinations <b>outside</b> FCM surface area (L009)	*****MIXED ADC 64240* Send to L009 site i.e. KCMO P&DC	*****MIXED ADC 64240*
L009 Sack label (L009, Column B)	MXD KANSAS CITY MO 64240* (sack sent to KCMO P&DC)	MXD KANSAS CITY MO 64240*

\*ZIP Code for Periodicals labels per L009

### Instructions for origin processing sites identified in Column C of DMM Labeling List L201

All originating Periodicals received by a P&DC's critical entry time must be processed and dispatched before the clearance time of the next DOV.

Dispatch direct pallets and direct containers sorted to the ADC level or finer by means of surface preferential transportation preferably via point-to-point transportation or the HASP network (see attached policy). Dispatch Mixed ADC (L009) containers to the destination indicated on Line 1 of the label. Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) sacks and flat trays *must* remain at the origin plant. It is suggested that sites request

that their local Periodicals mailers segregate the sacks and flat trays that remain at the local plant, including OMX sacks, to prevent these containers from being dispatched out of the local plant.

Open and dump bundles from Origin Mixed ADC sacks (OMX will be printed on Line 1 of the sack label). This distribution should take place within the operation where outgoing FCM mail (e.g., letter and flat bundles or small parcels and rolls) is distributed (e.g. green sack rack, outgoing tub rack). Separate outgoing bundles into containers for appropriate destination ADCs and any incoming bundles into the appropriate 5-digit and 3-digit separations. Distribute Firm bundles to the 5-digit ZIP Code printed on the top mailpiece. Any Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) bundles must be sorted out and directed to the appropriate piece distribution operation. Sort pieces from OMX bundles or flat trays on an outgoing scheme for FCM. Use automated processing to the greatest extent. After processing, label the trays as FCM and dispatch on surface preferential transportation. Route daily and weekly Periodicals (News) exclusively on direct HCR service or via the HASP network.

### **Instructions for 36 consolidation sites identified in DMM Labeling List L009**

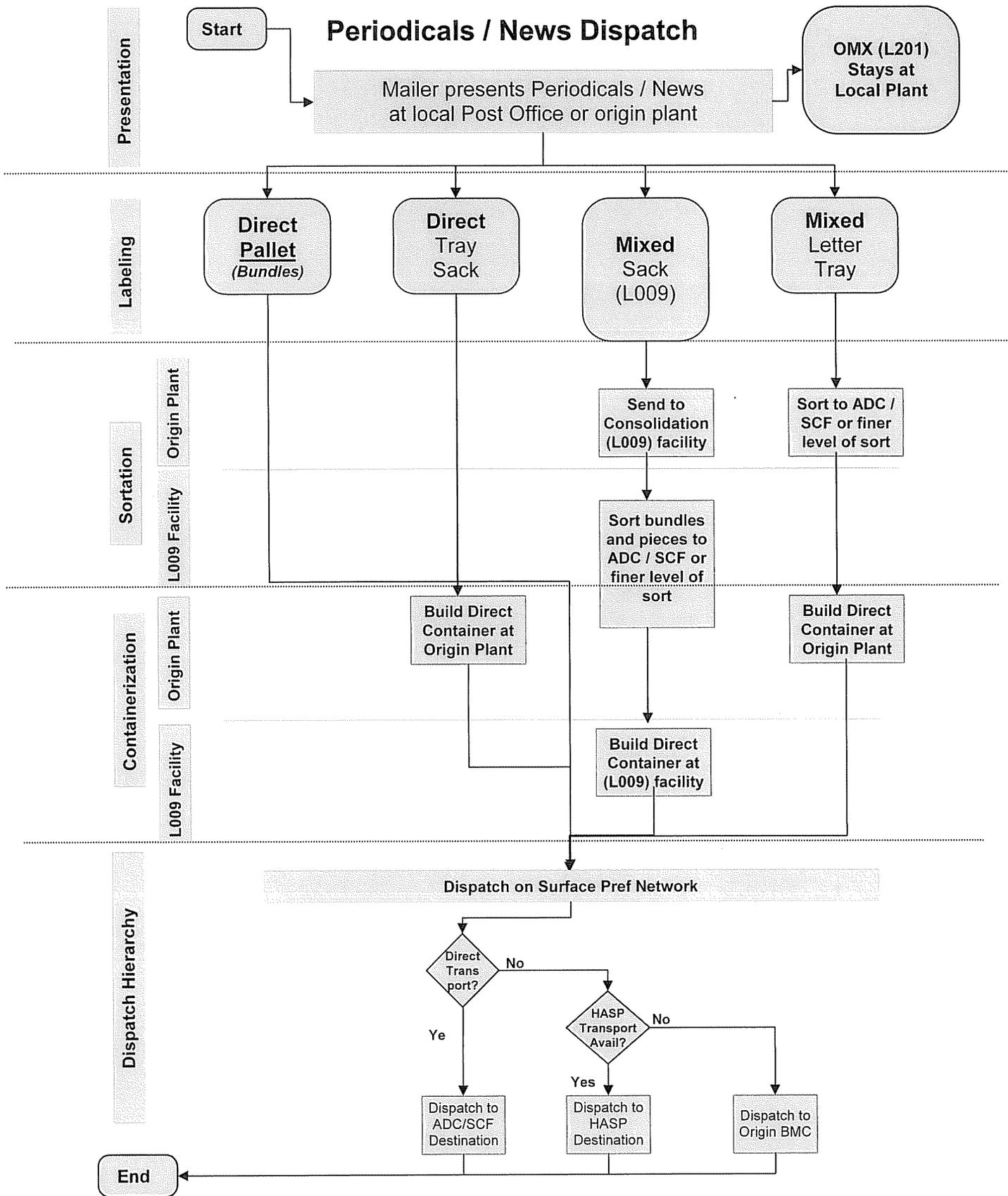
L009 sites will receive both Origin Mixed ADC and Mixed ADC bundles, sacks, and flat trays. To process Origin Mixed ADC Periodicals, follow instructions from the above section.

Rehandling will occur if an L009 site dumps both Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) and Mixed ADC sacks on the same APPS sort plan, since the sortplans will be unable to distinguish between the two and will consequently sort them both to the same run out. OMX and Mixed ADC bundles will be sorted as "mixed" through the barcoded presort label or OEL or by the image keyer and require separation at a later time. To prevent this mixing, the contents of the OMX sacks must be distributed with the outgoing FCM as described above, and the Mixed ADC sacks be distributed in a separate operation as described below.

The L009 sites are responsible for distributing not only outgoing Periodicals bundles in Mixed ADC sacks and outgoing pieces in Mixed ADC bundles but are also responsible for similar operations for Standard Mail flats. The policy is to distribute the Mixed ADC Periodicals/NEWS (L009) bundles and pieces with, *but always in front of*, Standard Mail. In other words, these outgoing operations will contain a mix of both Periodicals/NEWS and Standard Mail in wiretainers for the bundles and in tubs for the pieces. Open and dump Mixed ADC sacks and distribute direct bundles to ADC separations. Automation (APPS) or mechanization (SPBS) must be used to the greatest extent possible to distribute outgoing bundles. Similarly, automation (AFSM 100s and/or UFSM 1000s) must be used to the greatest extent possible to sort outgoing Mixed ADC (L009) pieces prepared in bundles or flat trays. Outgoing containers of the mixed classes must be labeled according to the highest class (Periodicals), and then the containers must be transported to the break-up operation for dispatch. *(Note: Since the outgoing Periodicals sacks and bundles for FCM surface destinations will be retained at the origin plants (see previous section), these combined outgoing operations at the L009 sites will only contain Periodicals bundles and pieces for remote ADCs, typically beyond 750 miles.)*

### **Periodicals' Dispatch**

On the next page is an illustration of how Periodicals will be distributed based on mailer preparation. Direct pallets, sacks, or trays will be dispatched with preferential surface mail via point-to-point or via HASP transportation, if point-to-point surface transportation is not available. *Only* destinations serviced by air in the preferential network and unavailable through the HASP network can be dispatched via inter Bulk Mail Center (BMC) transportation. *As a reminder, sacks and trays from originating Periodicals mailings must not be dispatched in entirety to another facility (e.g., BMC or L009 site), but rather broken down at the origin plant and the individual sacks and trays dispatched accordingly.* Sacks of Mixed ADC (L009) Periodicals will be dispatched from the origin plant directly to the appropriate plant shown in DMM L009 via point-to-point transportation. Sacks and trays of Origin Mixed ADC (OMX) Periodicals will be retained at the origin plant, and the contents inducted, distributed, and dispatched with other outgoing FCM.



## **PLANT OPERATIONS for DESTINATING (INCOMING) PERIODICALS**

### **Receipt of Periodicals at the P&DC Platform**

Destinating (incoming) Periodicals will be received at the P&DC platform from drop shippers, BMCs, and from other P&DCs for distribution to the ZIP Codes designated for their local delivery. Platform personnel must verify contents of arriving vehicles and enter vehicle information into Surface Visibility (SV) or Transportation Information Management System (TIMES).

Mailers are not required to schedule an appointment for drop shipments containing 100% Periodicals. A facility must accept a 100% Periodicals shipment during those hours the facility is open, even if the Periodicals' arrival occurs during a time when no scheduled hours are available for other drop shipments. Because of their time sensitivity, Periodicals must be unloaded as quickly as possible.

However, when Periodicals are transported and drop shipped with Standard Mail or Package Services, an appointment is necessary and must be scheduled in the Facility Access and Shipment Tracking (FAST) under the mail class the Periodicals accompany. Mailers should load Periodicals toward the tail of the vehicle.

*Note: A change will be implemented before the end of 2006 that requires 100% Periodical drop shipments to schedule appointments in FAST.*

Periodicals prepared for DADC or DSCF rates and transported by the mailer must have a PS Form 8125, *PVDS Verification and Clearance*. Platform personnel are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the drop shipment by comparing it with the accompanying PS Form 8125. This includes verifying the mailer's appointment, and that the correct volume, class and type of mail have been dropped at the right destination. Once the unload process is complete, finalize the "Destination Entry" section of PS Form 8125 and note any load condition irregularities in the "Comments" section. Scan any USPS barcodes on PS Form 8125 when the truck has been unloaded. Use the Electronic Mail Improvement Reporting (eMIR) or the Business Service Network (BSN) network to report irregularities with a Periodicals' drop shipment. Comprehensive instructions for handling drop shipments can be found in Publication 804, *Drop Shipment Procedures for Destination Entry*.

Give unloading preference to vehicles containing a Periodicals mailing. Periodicals can arrive palletized, sacked, bundled, or trayed and can be labeled to ADC, 3-digit, SCF, 5-digit, and carrier route destinations. During the unloading procedures, platform personnel must read placards and labels to determine the proper destination for each particular container being unloaded. If the container is a direct 5-digit and requires no additional sortation, then transport it to the appropriate dispatch bay. If the container requires in-house processing, then transport it to the appropriate staging/processing operation. If the container is an ADC, SCF, or 3-digit, then transport to the appropriate break-up area or the appropriate downstream P&DC or P&DF. Use platform signage to indicate which zones will require additional distribution.

### **Bundle Processing for Periodicals**

Incoming Periodicals must not be commingled with other classes of mail in break-up operations. Based on the equipment at the P&DC, separate ADC, 3-digit, and 5-digit (automation zones) bundles as machinable and non-machinable pieces.

Dump pallets and sacks of machinable bundles at the small parcel and bundle sorter (SPBS) or automated package processing system (APPS) for processing. Placard and transport to the dispatch platform 3-digit, 5-digit, Firm, and carrier-route bundles that require no additional in-house distribution. For zones that require secondary distribution, separate flats and letters by zone.

If the P&DC does not have an SPBS or APPS for the distribution of machinable Periodicals, then use the manual break-up for machinable mail. Placard and transport to the dispatch platform 3-digit, 5-digit, Firm, and carrier-route bundles that require no additional in-house distribution. For zones that require secondary distribution, separate flats and letters by zone. Identify each container for next handling with appropriate placards and transport to the appropriate downstream operation.

## **Piece Processing for Periodicals**

- **Flats-Incoming Primary/Secondary Periodicals**

Automated flats - To the greatest extent possible, all incoming Periodicals (***including*** NEWS) that qualify as automated flats must be processed on either the AFSM 100, or a UFSM 1000 in the AFF/OCR mode. The existing automation technology for flats processing benefits the Periodicals network by enabling us to save handlings on preparation and expanding the run time for this class of mail. Plants can commingle incoming Periodicals with other classes of mail in all incoming operations with the service standards defined by the highest class of mail processed in a given incoming operation and the trays labeled accordingly.

The UFSM 1000 can accommodate those Periodicals deemed oversized or outside the physical requirements for the AFSM 100. Any Periodicals processed on the UFSM 1000 can be commingled with other classes of mail with service standards and labeling applied in the same manner as described above.

Manual flats = Commingle all incoming manual Periodicals with other classes of mail and label according to the highest class of mail worked in a given incoming primary manual operation.

- **Letters – Incoming Primary/Secondary Periodicals**

Automated barcoded letters - Create incoming primary and secondary DBCS sort plans to maximize the finalization of non-DPS zones. These zones must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for transport to the tray break-up operation for dispatch. All automated secondary directs must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for merging in with barcoded secondary DPS letter operations. All residued letters from the OCR run must be merged with this run on the DBCS. Commingling of Periodicals with other mail classes is permitted at the DPS level.

Automated non-barcoded letters - Do not commingle incoming Periodicals with other classes of mail in OCR operations. An OCR sort plan should be created to maximize the finalization of non-automated zones on the OCR. These zones must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for transport to the tray break-up operation for dispatch. All automated secondary directs must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for merging in with barcoded First-Class Mail secondary letters operations. All residued letters must be labeled for barcoded primary Periodicals letters operations.

Manual letters - Incoming Periodicals must not be commingled with other classes of mail in primary manual operations. Create a primary distribution case design that would maximize the finalization of non-secondary AOs and city zones. These zones must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for transport to a break-up operation for sortation and dispatch. In-house secondary zones must be trayed, labeled, and placarded for break-up operations to zones.

Manual secondary sortation of Periodicals can be merged with First Class Mail to the carrier route. Proper identification as "First-Class Mail" must occur when Periodicals are commingled at the carrier route level.

## **SERVICE INDICATORS**

### **Mail Condition Reporting System**

The Mail Condition Reporting System (MCRS) (<http://webmcrs.usps.gov/mcrs/>) serves as an important indicator to assess the processing performance of Periodicals. Under the Daily Facility Summary Report, "Outgoing Periodicals" and "Incoming Periodicals" provide specific information about on-hand and delayed volumes.

### **Confirm®**

As an authorized participant in the Confirm® program, a mailer can apply a PLANET Code in the address block of a Periodicals mail piece and obtain scanning information from mail processing equipment. Mailers use the PLANET Code scans, especially from operations identified as "stop-the-clock" to gauge processing and delivery performance. Various reports and diagnostics for Confirm are available electronically through the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), which help in identifying problem areas.

### **Electronic Publication Watch System (ePUBWATCH)**

A web-based Periodicals complaint tracking and resolution system, ePubwatch replaced the paper-based Publication Watch system in post offices with a delivery unit computer. A registered publisher can enter a subscriber's postal related complaint, request an electronic publication watch, or request the assistance of a Periodical Service Improvement team member through the completion of a Systemic Complaint Resolution form. National Monthly Reports are available from the intranet ([http://blue.usps.gov/does/epubwatch/epubwatch\\_overview.htm](http://blue.usps.gov/does/epubwatch/epubwatch_overview.htm)).

### **Red Tag**

Red Tag News Publications is a nonprofit association of consumer and business magazines who have a common interest in improving the delivery of their publications through the Postal Service. Red Tag has developed a network of individuals around the country who receive free magazine subscriptions in return for reporting (by phone or the internet) the day the magazines arrive. Red Tag monitors nearly 838 million copies delivered to over 20 million readers. Red Tag Delivery Reports can be found at <http://www.redtag.org/redtag/USPS/init.asp>.

## **ATTACHMENT 1: POLICY ON PERIODICALS/NEWS THROUGH THE HUB AND SPOKE PROJECT NETWORK (June 20, 2005)**

Currently, both "residual" and direct pallets/containers of Periodicals/News material may be dispatched through the HASP Network where such transportation is service responsible. This update is to further clarify dispatch/processing procedures in view of the residual flats consolidation network (L009) recently established. Furthermore, the requirement to obtain headquarters pre-approval for dispatch of direct containers and pallets through the HASP is rescinded. The following are specific guidelines for the dispatch of Periodicals/News through the HASP Network.

### **HASP Authorized Periodicals/News Volumes**

- 1 Mixed ADC Periodicals flats – residual flats volume that mailers are unable to sort to an ADC or finer level. This volume must be dispatched to a L009 consolidation site for distribution. Note – in some instances mailers may set aside residual volume designating within the origin P&DC service area – this volume may be worked with FCM at origin.
- 2 The relatively small number of sacks resulting from an outgoing Periodicals letter/IPP operation.
- 3 Less than ADC container/pallet volumes generated by L009 sites when processing mailer residual (Mixed ADC) flats.
- 4 Residual mail refers to the relatively small number of sacks that mailers are unable to sort to an ADC or finer level and to less than ADC container/pallet volumes generated by piece or bundle distribution performed by L009 sites processing mailer residual (Mixed ADC) volumes.
- 5 Direct pallets or containers may be dispatched via the HASP Network as backfill volume.
- 6 Daily and/or weekly Periodicals or News must be routed exclusively on direct highway contract route service or via the HASP network. Transport of daily and/or weekly Periodicals or News material may not be transported through the Bulk Mail Center Network.

### **Labeling and Placarding**

- 1 Standardized labeling/placarding format must be utilized.
- 2 Labels and Placards must reflect a 3/5 digit ZIP Code.

### **Dispatch Preparation**

- 1 Sort residual in rolling stock equipment with like-shaped First-Class Mail.
- 2 Route only to those destinations within the HASP network that are service responsive – other destinations will continue to be routed and transported as present unless HASP routing is more responsive than present routing and all other surface options have been exhausted.
- 3 No more than two HASPs may be employed in reaching destination.
- 4 Transported mail will be labeled (at minimum) to an area distribution center (ADC) but may be to a finer depth-of sort.

### **Transportation**

- 1 Transport concurrently with First-Class Mail, but curtail if/when it will place First-Class Mail at risk.
- 2 Individual pallets up to three feet in height may be double stacked. Total height may not exceed six feet.

**Area Distribution Network (DN) – Dispatch Planning Hierarchy**

- 1 HCR – Point-to-point transportation
- 2 HASP Network
- 3 BMC Network (*monthly and bi-monthly publications only*)

Surface Preferential Schemes must reflect planned dispatch routings.

## **ATTACHMENT 2: POLICY ON MAIL TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT LABELER (MTEL) SURFACE TRANSPORTATION DISPATCH & ROUTING (July 2005)**

### **PURPOSE**

Logistics Order Policy, LOP200502, establishes the policy, procedures and requirements for surface dispatch and routing in support of the national on-demand placard generation and clarifies the process for container movement through the Hub and Spoke Program (HASP) and hub networks. On-line access to the policy is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/nom/logistics/trfield/ndistinfo.htm>.

### **SURFACE ROUTING POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Area Distribution Networks Responsibilities**

The National Air & Surface System (NASS) dispatch records are the primary data source from which dispatch and routing information will be extracted for on-demand placard generation by MTEL. The accuracy of the surface dispatch and routing information in the NASS database is essential. Toward this end, Area Distribution Networks (DN) has the following primary responsibilities:

- Building and maintaining the accuracy and integrity of all surface dispatch and routing information within the NASS database for each origin facility that processes and dispatches mail within their respective area.
- Maintaining the accuracy of the information for all area distribution separations declared as "exceptions" (intra-Area/finer depth of sort) to the national distribution labeling lists.

#### **NASS Maintenance Requirements**

As the primary data source for the national placard file, the dispatch and routing information entered in NASS will provide the destination, route, trip, frequency, via points, dispatch times, and distribution requirements that will appear on the MTEL placards. The Distribution Table Maintenance System (DTMS) will access the ZIP Code separations defined by area DNs in the dispatch records and the National Distribution Labeling List (NDLL) system to determine the ZIP ranges that will appear on the placard.

Area Distribution Networks must ensure that:

- NASS dispatch routings are established for each processing facility to support national and area distribution requirements.
- Dispatch records are established for all surface transportation operating between processing facilities to include Highway Contract Routes (HCR), Postal Vehicle Service (PVS), Motor Vehicle Service (MVS), and rail. (*Note: Associate Office dispatches are not required at this time.*)

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#### **Surface Distribution and Routing**

- Dispatch routings must support the national and/or area distribution requirements performed by the origin processing facility.
- The dispatch and routing information entered in NASS will provide the destination, route, trip, frequency, via points, dispatch times, and distribution requirements that will appear on the MTEL placards.
- A surface routing and the container placard terminate at the facility where the container is opened and the contents re-distributed.

- Placards for direct containers must contain routings to the final destinating processing facility.

### **Dispatch Selection Business Rules**

The following dispatch selection business rules apply in determining distribution requirements and routing of containers for MTEL placard generation:

- NASS surface dispatches will use the following mail class codes of First Class Mail (F2), Priority Mail (P1), "Next Day" Express Mail (ND), Bulk Business (BB), Parcel Post (PP), and Surface Preferential (SP) to create placards for MTEL.
- NASS surface dispatches are defined as routes using transportation codes H, I, U, V:
  - H INTER HIGHWAY
  - I INTRA HIGHWAY
  - U INTRA PVS
  - V INTER PVS
- NASS surface dispatch ZIP Spans in conjunction with NDLL (National Distribution Labeling List) will determine the ZIPs generated for MTEL placards.
- Every valid NASS surface dispatch will generate one or more MTEL placards.
- Dispatch changes impacting placards will be applied daily (M-F) after the nightly NASS update processing completes at 10:00 pm central time.
- Changes to NASS dispatch records will be applied immediately to MTEL placard records. The current MTEL placard will be discontinued with the current date. A new placard following the date of the change will be generated with the updated information.

### **MTEL Placard Generation**

A dispatch record in NASS is required for each placard generated. The DTMS process that enables the conversion of NASS dispatch records into placards through MTEL also enables generation of multiple placards from a single dispatch record. The operation defined by Area DNs when creating the dispatch record will be forwarded to the MTEL system allowing for the printing of placards by designated operation.

### **ZIP Assignments**

Valid trigger words enable NASS lookup and validation of ZIP Code ranges in NDLL. These triggers are the label prefixes (ADC, AADC, SCF, AMF etc.) used to identify each mail class. Using a prefix and 3/5 digit suffix will allow NASS to apply the default ZIP range to the placard. (Valid trigger words appear on the next page.)

If a default ZIP range in NDLL is not required, the DN specialist can enter the appropriate ZIP Start/Zip End assignments specific to any destination.

### **National Placard Requirements:**

***All network placards produced by MTEL MUST be printed on white 8.5 by 11 paper.***

- Alternatives to color-coding:
  - Colored paper alongside of MTEL placard
  - Color dots on MTEL placard (do not cover bar code)

**Within the MTEL system, plant managers can type the color (i.e. RED) in the load position box or the stage area box**

## MTEL – VALID TRIGGER WORDS

ZIP Start Trigger	Zip End	Dispatch Mail Class	Definition
AADC	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	F2, BB, SP	Signals system to use the National AADC List for First Class, Standard, Periodical Dispatch Mail Classes. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric or F2, BB, SP trigger ZIP spans.)
ADC	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	F2, BB, SP	Signals system to use the National ADC List for First Class, Standard, Periodical Dispatch Mail Classes. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric or F2, BB, SP trigger ZIP spans.)
AMC	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
AMF	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
APO	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
APO	APO, FPO, or 3/5 characters	F2, BB	Signals the system to print APO, ZIP End on the placard ZIP line. (Can be included with other F2, BB trigger words.)
BMC	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	PP	Signals system to use the National Parcel Post List for Parcel Post dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric or PP trigger ZIP spans.)
CAIR	CAIR or CAIR Carrier Code	F2, BB	Signals system to print CAIR (or CAIR, carrier) on the placard. Multiple ZIP Spans of CAIR, Carrier Code will be accepted with the results being multiple placards. Any other ZIP spans encountered when CAIR is used will be ignored.
CAN	CAN or any 3/5 characters	F2, BB	If both the ZIP Start and ZIP End equal CAN, then Canada will print on the placard ZIP line. If the ZIP End is different than CAN, then Canada, ZIP End will print on the placard ZIP line. Can be combined with other F2, BB trigger words.
DIS	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
FGN	FGN or any 3/5 characters	F2, BB	If both the ZIP Start and ZIP End equal FGN, then Foreign will print on the placard ZIP line. If the ZIP End is different than FGN, then Foreign, ZIP End will print on the placard ZIP line. Can be combined with other F2, BB trigger words.
FPO	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or HASP trigger ZIP spans.)
HASPA(-Z)	HASPA(-Z)	F2, BB, SP, ND, P1, PP	Signals system to print HASPA(-Z) as the first ZIP Code on the placard. HASP trigger must contain a bullpen letter or it will be bypassed.
ISC	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
MTE	MTE	F2, BB, SP, ND, P1, PP	Signals system to print MTE on the placard. Any other ZIP spans encountered when MTE is used will be ignored.
SCF	3/5-digit numeric ZIP Code	P1	Signals system to use the National Priority List for Priority dispatches. (Can be included with other 3 or 5-digit numeric, priority trigger, or P1 trigger ZIP spans.)
THS(#)	THS	F2, ND, P1	Signals system to print THS on the placard. Using the trigger word THS will generate separate placards for each THS dispatch ZIP span. Using the trigger word THS# will append the airstops on a single placard. Any other ZIP spans encountered when THS is used will be ignored.

List Updated: 07-25-2005

## ATTACHMENT 3: MAIL TRANSPORT EQUIPEMENT LABELER (MTEL)

### Function

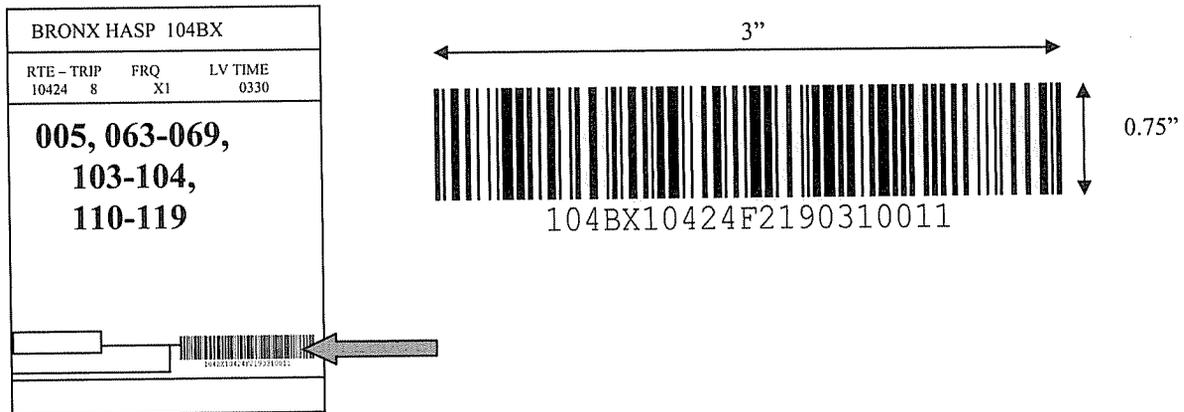
The Mail Transport Equipment Labeler (MTEL) is a web-based program designed to standardize placards across the network. In addition, MTEL placards will provide the destination bar code for scanning as part of the Surface Visibility program.

### Specifications

The Specification section has been divided into two parts: Label Specification and Label Placement. The Label Specification section will provide details on the MTEL bar code content, symbology and paper type. The Label Placement section will provide details on where the placard should be placed.

### **Label Specification**

MTEL printers will print a unique bar code on each placard.



MTEL Placard Bar Code					
Bar Code Symbology: UCC EAN Code 128					
Required x-dimension: 0.013 inches					
Bar Code Digits: 26					
Bar Code Height: Recommended: 0.6875 inches Minimum: 0.45 inches					
Human Readable: 6 pt. Arial Narrow Condensed Font					
Dash used to pad fields					
Bar Code Example: 99P120-1H1HD9NLS-1000001					
Field No.	Field Description	Field Size	Character Position	Logical Values	Allowable Values
1	Application Identifier	2	1-2	99	"99" Only
2	Placard Identifier	1	3	P	"P" Only
3	NASS Destination Code	5	4-8		Letters, Numbers, Dashes
4	Dispatch ID	9	9-17		Letters, Numbers, Dashes
5	Placard Number	2	18-19	1-99	Numbers
6	Serial Number	7	20-26	000001-9999999	Numbers

The function of each field is as follows:

- Application identifier: USPS reserved application identifier 99 for all UCC EAN bar codes
- Placard identifier: identifies the type of USPS bar code
- National Air and Surface System (NASS) origin ID: provides the container's origin NASS code
- NASS destination ID: provides the container's destination NASS code
- Mail class: identifies the type of mail in the container
- Julian day: a format for the date
- Serial number: creates uniqueness for the bar code

### **Placard Placement**

The bar-coded MTEL placard should be placed on the upper right, or left edge near the container opening during container set-up. Upon the completion of container loading, the employee may choose to move the placard to the front end of the container (the end with the handle).

### **Implementation**

The MTEL web application is currently available to all sites with access to the USPS Intranet. A site with a high-quality printer that meets the MTEL requirements may begin printing bar-coded placards. If a site does not have the necessary high quality printer, please see the procurement section below. Logon IDs to MTEL will be provided through eAccess.

### **Procurement**

MTEL is intended to run on the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) at each facility, therefore printers are being purchased by Headquarters, Logistics Systems group, to equip the TACS workstations to print bar-coded placards.

The MTEL printers have the following specifications:

- Xerox Phaser 3450B Printer
- Ethernet Network Card
- 25 Sheets per Minute
- 500-Sheet Input Feeder

No special paper is required.

Headquarters, Logistics Systems group will provide the necessary CPU, printers, monitors and cabinets that make up an MTEL workstation. Logistics Systems procured the number of printers identified by each site in a site survey.

### **Maintenance**

Hewlett Packard will perform printer maintenance on site support under warranty (1-year). Once the warranty has expired, if printer problems are encountered, call the Critical Parts Center (CPC) at 1-800-USPS-HELP to report the problem. CPC will open a help ticket. If necessary, a replacement printer will be shipped, and the broken printer will be returned to the CPC. If the broken printer is not returned within ten days, the site will be charged the cost of the printer.

Two responsible groups will handle maintenance for the MTEL system: Area Network Planning Specialists and Local Maintenance.

- Area Network Planning Specialists will be responsible for maintaining the NASS dispatch routing data and Distribution Table Maintenance System (DTMS) ZIP separation data
- Local maintenance is responsible for ensuring that the printers are operational and that the print heads are clean enough to ensure that a readable bar code is sprayed onto the placard

After one year, all sites will be responsible for the replacement of printer parts that may fail due to normal use. Paper and toner cartridges are the responsibility of each site.

## **ATTACHMENT 4: ELECTRONIC MAIL IMPROVEMENT REPORTING (eMIR)**

### **Overview of eMIR**

The electronic Mail Improvement Reporting (eMIR) is a web-based process for notifying mailers of irregularities in the preparation of mailings they present to the Postal Service. Use eMIR to report quality issues and recurring problems with Periodicals, such as unreadable barcodes, broken bundles, pallet irregularities, etc. The process should be used when there is a quantity of improperly prepared mail that will impact the efficient processing and/or delivery of the mail.

The reported irregularity will be routed to the business mail entry unit (BMEU) and/or the Business Service Network (BSN) identified with the entry point of the mail. The BMEU will then research the problem, initiate the customer contact if necessary, and enter the results of their actions back into the eMIR program database. When the identified deficiency is routed to the BSN, the customer contact and resolution will be documented in the integrated Business Service Network (iBSN) application and electronically transmitted back into the eMIR program database. The status of reports, including the action taken, will be accessible online to the postal employee who reported the problem, and to those responsible for its resolution.

In order to access PostalOne!, eAccess approval is required. An Operations Stand-up Talk and online training for eMIR is available from the intranet (<http://blue.usps.gov/postalone/emir/programinfo.htm>).

### **Data Collection for eMIR**

When operations employees identify a problem with the preparation of a mailing, they must complete a short data collection form so information can be entered into the PostalOne! system. Special emphasis must be placed on identifying the nature of the problem, a description of the mailing, including total volume and percent in error, the "mail owner", "mail preparer", "mail transporter" or post office of origin. If possible, include pictures of PS Form 8125, pallet placard/container, mailpiece and problem.

Having *PostalOne!* access, one can obtain the data collection form from [https://www.uspspostalone.com/postal1/mail\\_irreg/data\\_entry/DataCollection.pdf](https://www.uspspostalone.com/postal1/mail_irreg/data_entry/DataCollection.pdf). The data collection form is located in eMIR Problem Entry. The link is located at the top of the page: [Printable Data Collection Form](#).

## ATTACHMENT 5: CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL PERIODICALS ASSESSMENT

		Yes	No
1	Has your operating plan been updated to reflect processing of Origin Mixed ADC bundles?		
2	Are employees aware of the clearance time for Periodicals?		
3	Are Periodicals received by CET dispatched on the next available transportation?		
4	Are employees aware of the dispatch of value for Periodicals?		
5	Does your office dispatch Periodicals for air transport?		
6	Is signage posted to indicate the service commitments for NEWS and other Periodicals?		
7	Does your plant use the incorrect terminology, "2C", when referring to Periodicals?		
8	Does your facility dispatch Periodicals on direct transportation to ADCs and the HASP?		
9	Are sacks of Mixed ADC Periodicals dispatched to destinations listed in DMM L009?		
10	Does PS Form 3607 accompany mail released from the business mail entry unit?		
11	Is your office listed as a destination in DMM L009?		
12	If yes, are mixed ADC and origin mixed ADC bundle dumped together on APPS or SPBS?		
13	Are Origin Mixed ADC bundles processed with First-Class Mail?		
14	Are Periodicals frequently curtailed when transportation for First-Class Mail exceeds capacity?		
15	Are outgoing Periodicals flats processed on automation?		
16	Are incoming Periodicals co-mingled with Standard Mail in the break-up area?		
17	Are 100% Periodicals drop shipments unloaded quickly from the mailer's vehicle?		
18	Is destination entry information completed on PS Form 8125 for Periodicals' drop shipments?		
19	Are your local mailers using the Origin Mixed ADC preparation for Periodicals?		
20	Is surface preferential transportation used for the dispatch of Periodicals?		
21	Do dispatch labels reflect the highest class when Periodicals are sorted with other classes?		
22	Are barcoded MTEL placards placed on containers?		
23	Are irregularities in the preparation of Periodicals mailings reported to eMIR?		
24	Does your district have more than twenty publications tracked by ePUBWATCH?		