Postal Rate Commission
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BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

POSTAL RATE AND FEE CHANGES, 2006	Docket No. R2006-1

RESPONSES OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO INTERROGATORIES OF DAVID B. POPKIN (DBP/USPS-276, 278-279, 282, 290, AND 292) (July 28, 2006)

The United States Postal Service hereby provides its institutional responses to interrogatories DBP/USPS-276, 278-279, 282, 290, and 292.

Each interrogatory is stated verbatim and is followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

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RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO
INTERROGATORY OF DAVID B. POPKIN

DBP/USPS-276. Please refer to your response to Interrogatory DBP/USPS-125. Please list all of the places/methods by which a mailer may enter Post Office to Addressee Express Mail into the system including but not limited to, retail windows, carriers, collection boxes, pick-ups, etc.

RESPONSE:

A mailer can enter PO-Addressee Express Mail over the retail window, by giving it to carriers or collection employees during their normal delivery and collection duties, by putting it in a Express Mail collection box, by scheduling a pick-up, by using an APC, or, if the piece is manifested, at the locations specified in the Express Mail Manifesting agreement.

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DBP/USPS-278.
[a] May Express Mail be deposited in any blue collection box or is it limited to depositing in specifically designated Express Mail boxes?
[b] Please discuss the rationale for your response.

RESPONSE:

(a) – (b) Nothing prevents a mailer from depositing Express Mail in a blue collection box, though the mailer runs the risk of not receiving the service guarantee that would have applied if it were placed in an Express Mail collection box.

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DBP/USPS-279.
[a] Please advise how the time[s] are selected for collecting an Express Mail collection box.
[b] Must the time[s] be selected so that the mail will arrive back at the post office at such time as to be able to meet all of the service guarantees for the earliest cut-off time of the day at the retail service window?
[c] If not, why not?
[d] If an article is mailed prior to the collection time at the blue Express Mail collection box will it receive the same service guarantee as it would have if it was mailed at the retail service window prior to the earliest cut-off time of the day?
[e] If not, why not?
[f] Please explain how the postal clerk who is entering in an Express Mail article that was collected from a collection box will determine the proper service guarantee if it is already after the cut-off time by time the article is brought back to the post office and processed [i.e. the computer is now advanced to the point that the article was mailed after the cut-off time].

RESPONSE:

(a) Collection schedules are set so as to provide the latest possible collection consistent with local acceptance and dispatch capabilities.

(b) – (e) The collection time for an Express Mail collection box does not necessarily correspond to the cut-off times for window service operations. The locations and collection schedules for Express Mail collection boxes are set by the field in a manner consistent with the response to part (a), and should assure that the Express Mail dropped in those boxes before the last scheduled collection receives a service commitment based on the deposit date. That commitment, however, may not correspond to the earliest commitment available for that date.

(f) The retail computers (POS ONE and IRTs) allow the acceptance associate to roll back the mailpiece's acceptance time to the collection box tap time.

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DBP/USPS-282. Please refer to your response to Interrogatory DBP/USPS-138.
[a] Is this listing of PO-PO Express Mail claim locations available on line to mailers who wish to use the service and evaluate the listing to determine the most convenient location to choose?
[b] If not, why not?

RESPONSE:

(a) No, this listing is not available on USPS.com.

(b) The Postal Service has not deemed it to be necessary to place such a listing on USPS.com.

RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO
INTERROGATORY OF DAVID B. POPKIN

DBP/USPS-290.
[a] If a mailer wants to mail a double post card, is it preferred to have the fold at the top or the bottom of the mailpiece?
[b] Please explain the rationale for your response to subpart a.
[c] If your response to subpart a is the bottom of the mailpiece, please explain why the double stamped card sold by the Postal Service has the fold at the top.

RESPONSE:

(a) Neither is preferred over the other. See DMM section 101.6.3.10c.

(b) Because there has been no determination to impose a preference.

(c) N/A

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DBP/USPS-292 This interrogatory refers to the orange RBCS ID tag that appears on the reverse side of a letter.

[a] What is the purpose of this code?

[b] What data fields are contained in the code?

[c] When, where, and on what types of mail is this code affixed?

[d] Is there a way to manually decode this code?

[e] If so, please provide the information.

[f] If a mailpiece is forwarded or returned to sender, will the original coding cause a problem?

Response:

[a] The unique ID tag code is used to keep track of each mailpiece throughout RBCS.

[b] The ID tag fields are as follows:

1. Machine identification		
2. Day of month	D: D1, D0	1-31
3. Time of day	T: T1, T0	0-47
4. Sequence number	S: S4, S3, S2, S1, S0	1-25000
5. Mail class	C: C0	0, 1
6. RBCS site		

[c] The ID tag is affixed on any mail piece that does not have a prior ID tag and is processed though the MLOCR, DIOSS, CIOSS, or AFCS.

[d] Yes.

[e] Please see the attached.

ATTACHMENT

EXPLANATION, ID TAG AND CODE

INTRODUCTION

The term "ID tag" refers to a bar code that is printed on the back of each mailpiece being sent through the RBCS Input Sub-System (ISS). This code is different from the POSTNET coding. An ID tag is generated for each letter with a unique coded number so no two mailpieces will have the same ID tag. This unique ID tag code is used to keep track of each mailpiece throughout the RBCS.

An ID tag code is generated by the ISS system computer. The ID tag is printed on the mailpiece as it passes through the ISS.

The system computer sends the ID tag information to the STP where ID tag data, along with the image scan data is stored. For mailpieces where the 9/11-digit or unique 5-digit ZIP codes could not be resolved, the information along with the image data is sent to the Image Processing Sub-System (IPSS) when requested.

The Remote Encoding Center (REC) site processes the image data to find a 9/11-digit ZIP code result. This ZIP code result, along with the ID tag code, is sent back to the postal site and stored in the Decision Storage Unit (DSU).

The OSS receives the mail from the ISS that did not have a 9/11-digit or unique 5-digit ZIP code resolved. As the mail is sent through the OSS the ID tag data is read from the back of the mailpiece and sent to the DSU to look up the POSTNET code for this mailpiece. The DSU sends back the POSTNET code to the computer and it is sprayed on the front of the mailpiece.

ID TAG CODE

The LAT-772 ID Tag Scanner serves to read and verify the bar code imprinted on the mailpiece.

The ID tag printer prints a fluorescent orange ID tag on the back of each mailpiece without an ID tag as it passes through the ISS. The ID tag consists of five numeric fields: machine identification, day of month, time of day, sequence number, and mail class. The ID tag fields are as follows:

1.	Machine identification	M: M3, M2, M1, M0	1-3999
2.	Day of month	D: D1, D0	1-31
3.	Time of day	T: T1, T0	0-47
4.	Sequence number	S: S4, S3, S2, S1, S0	1-25000
5.	Mail class	C: C0	0, 1

The ID tag fields are further described as follows:

1. Each ISS machine has a machine number assigned to it. No two machines have the same number assignment.

2. The day of the month is the calendar date, 01 (first day) through 31 (thirty-first day).

3. The time of day is broken up into 48 one-half hour intervals. This number is incremented each half hour. Midnight is "00", 0030 is "01", 0100 is "02", up through 2330, which is "47".

4. The sequence number is set to zero each half hour. Each mailpiece passing through the machine is given a sequence count starting at "1" and continuing up to "25000" in that half hour.

5. The mail class is "1" for first class mail and "0" for third class mail.

With this method of tagging each mailpiece, no two will have the same ID tag.

Single character numbers in the ID tag code are represented by a modified binary coded decimal (BCD) code. In order to have a minimum of code positions, numbers that do not require the whole range of values from 0 to 9 are coded with less than four bits. Moreover, C0 and M3 are combined in a 3-bit code word. The result is the required number of user bits as follows (also, see Figure 1):

C + M3	3 bits
M2, M1, M0	12 bits
D1	3 bits
D0	4 bits
T1	3 bits
T0	4 bits
S4	2 bits
S3, S2, S1, S0	16 bits
TOTAL	47 bits

To protect the ID tag code from possible errors, 13 redundancy bits (R0 - R12) are inserted. By means of these bits, 2-bit errors can be corrected and 3-bit errors recognized. By inserting the redundancy bits between the user characters, it is guaranteed that there will be no more than four consecutive gaps.

Each ID tag consists of one start bit, one stop bit, 47 ID-coding bits, and 13 redundancy bits for a total of 62 bits. Refer to Figure 1 for the formatting and dimensions of a proper ID tag.

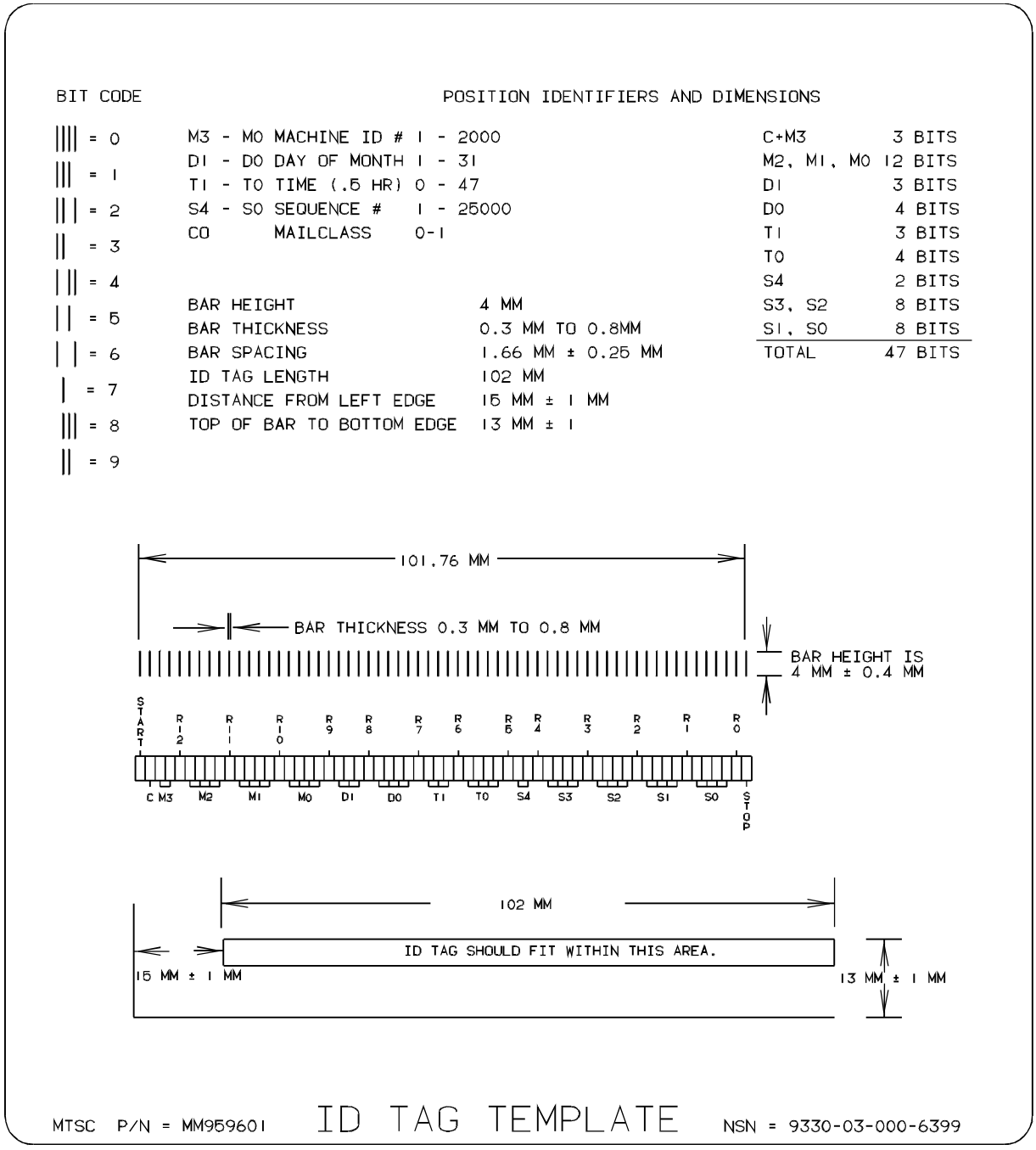

Figure 1. ID Tag Template for RBCS

[f] In a non-PARS site, if the ID tag is not obliterated and the new POSTNET barcode for the forwarding or return address applied in CFS cannot be read, then the sorting machines will query ICS for delivery information and the piece will go back to the original delivery address. In PARS sites, it will not cause a problem, since the existing ID tag will be re-used and the ID Code Sorting system will be updated with the new delivery code for any mail forwarded or returned.