

Election Assistance Commission Standards Board Meeting

Daniel Bentley
Election Mail Program Manager
April 27, 2017

- 2016 Election Cycle
 - Review
 - What Worked Well
 - Challenges
- 2017 Proposed Improvements
- Postal Service Recommendations

Election Community Partnership

- Thank you for making this a successful Vote-By-Mail cycle
 - Election Mail success due to our joint efforts to improve Vote-By-Mail experience
 - Improved communications with Election Officials across the country
 - Improved postal standardized operational processes
 - Significant growth of absentee ballots in many areas

2016 Election Cycle (Oct. 2015-Nov. 8, 2016)

- Postal Service delivered 276 million pieces of outbound Election Mail and 2.3 billion pieces of Political Mail

USPS/Election Community Partnership

- Election Assistance Commission
- Election Center; Joint Election Officials Liaison Committee
- Bipartisan Policy Center
- Military Postal Service Agency
- Federal Voter Assistance Program
- National Association of Secretaries of State
- National Association of State Election Directors
- Local Election Offices
- Counsel of State Governments

Ongoing communications

- Postal Service's Election Mail Coordinators improved their outreach and communications with local Election Officials
- More Election Mail pieces were reviewed by Mailpiece Design Analysts
- Higher use of Official Election Mail logo and Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb)
- Usage of automation-compatible return ballots for higher postmarking percentage
- Used Tag 191 to increase visibility of Election Mail in a processing facility
- Paid First-Class Mail postage to receive 2 to 5 day delivery standards
- Encouraged voters to return ballots one week prior to election
- 2016 Official Election Mail Kit distributed to 7,500 State/Local Election Officials
- Election Mail guidelines sent to Secretaries of State and State Election Directors

Operational focus

- Conducted employee training on Election Mail, including national webinars and employee service talks
- Continuously monitored Election Mail entry, processing and delivery operations
- Implemented new internal measurements and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure ballots processed within service standards
- Implemented daily “all clear” certification at all Post Offices and mail processing plants during weeks before and after local election primaries and Election Day

Issue Resolution

- Quick and direct communications between Election Officials and local Election Mail Coordinator
- Direct communications between Election Mail Coordinators and Election Officials
- Collaborated with Democracy Works to provide an easy-to-use method for Election Officials to report issues through ElectionMail.org
 - Issues automatically sent to local Election Mail Coordinator for resolution
 - Provided national reporting to identify trends and systemic issues

Most Frequently Reported Issues

- Misdelaivered return ballots due to mailpiece design
 - Voter address information and multiple barcodes printed on the back of return ballot envelopes resulted in automation equipment using voter address for delivery
- Postmarking Issues
 - Missing or obscured Facer Identification Marks (FIMs) resulted in mailpiece orientation errors in automation equipment, including postmarking the back of the return ballot
 - Non-automation-compatible return ballots require manual processing for a postmark

Most Frequently Reported Issues

- Delivery Issues
 - Employee scheduling at a plant impacted processing and delivery of ballots in 2 states
 - Despite training, some employees did not always follow standardized processes
 - Mailpieces without unique IMb could not be tracked in mail processing operations
 - Many states have deadlines for requesting absentee ballots that are very close to Election Day
 - ▶ Service standard for First Class Mail 2 - 5 days

Continue Election Community Partnership

- Work with Election Officials to improve Election Mail requirements
 - Outbound and return ballots
 - Identify state level contacts
- Strengthen Election Mail mailing requirements
 - Mailpiece design standards to maximize automation compatibility
 - Official Election Mail Logo
 - FIM
 - IMb
 - Tag 191
- Legislative and Education Efforts
 - Work with State Election Officials to review statutory deadlines and postmarking language for absentee ballots
 - If your state is considering legislative changes, please contact us at electionmailprogrammanager@usps.com
 - Educate federal, state and local Election Officials on the Postal Service processes

Proposed 2017 Changes

Situation:

- ❖ Having addresses, numbers and barcodes printed on both the front and back of the Ballot Return Envelope has been causing ballots to be misdirected and/or delayed!

FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Ballot Envelope Returned: Date _____ Time _____ Received By _____ Ballot No. _____ Precinct No. _____
 I certify that I have checked the signature on this envelope with the signature on file and they agree. X Election Official Election Date _____ Ward No. _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ABSENT VOTER

I assert that I am a United States citizen and a qualified and registered elector of the city, township or village named below. I am voting as an absent voter in conformity with state election law. Unless otherwise indicated below, I personally marked the ballot enclosed in this envelope without exhibiting it to any other person.

I further assert that this absent voter ballot is being returned to the clerk or an assistant of the clerk by me personally; by public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or other common carrier; by a member of my immediate family; or by a person residing in my household.

VOTER SIGNATURE REQUIRED

SIGN HERE: X Signature of Absent Voter Date _____
 THE ABOVE FORM MUST BE SIGNED ON YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED.
 AN ABSENT VOTER WHO KNOWINGLY MAKES A FALSE STATEMENT IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR.

▼ VOTER'S NAME, ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP ▼

1100/2016 01001 1 0000218
Correctly Addressed

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF VOTER IS ASSISTED IN VOTING BY ANOTHER PERSON
 I assisted the herein named absent voter who is disabled or otherwise unable to mark his/her absent voter ballot pursuant to his/her directions. The absent voter ballot was inserted into the return envelope without being exhibited to any other person.

Signature of Person Assisting Voter _____
 Print Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 A PERSON WHO ASSISTS AN ABSENT VOTER AND WHO KNOWINGLY MAKES A FALSE STATEMENT IS GUILTY OF A FELONY

HOLD HERE WHEN OPENING ADDRESS

PRINTING SYSTEMS, INC. • 1-800-95-12345 • FORM NO. 694 (Rev. 10/10)

OFFICIAL ABSENT VOTER'S BALLOT

WARNING
 PERSONS WHO CAN LEGALLY BE IN POSSESSION OF AN ABSENT VOTER BALLOT ISSUED TO AN ABSENT VOTER ARE LIMITED TO THE ABSENT VOTER; A PERSON WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE ABSENT VOTER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY OR RESIDES IN THE ABSENT VOTER'S HOUSEHOLD AND WHO HAS BEEN ASKED BY THE ABSENT VOTER TO RETURN THE BALLOT; A PERSON WHOSE JOB IT IS TO HANDLE MAIL BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER BEING TRANSPORTED BY A PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE, EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE, PARCEL POST SERVICE, OR COMMON CARRIER, BUT ONLY DURING THE NORMAL COURSE OF HIS OR HER EMPLOYMENT; AND THE CLERK, ASSISTANTS OF THE CLERK, AND OTHER AUTHORIZED ELECTION OFFICIALS OF THE CITY, TOWNSHIP OR VILLAGE. ANY OTHER PERSON IN POSSESSION OF AN ABSENT VOTER BALLOT IS GUILTY OF A FELONY.

DO NOT BEND

SIGN BACK OF ENVELOPE
 Deadline for Returning Ballot: 8pm on Election Day

To

1100/2016 01001 1 0000218
Correctly Addressed

FIRST-CLASS MAIL POSTAGE MUST BE APPLIED

Test - Proposed Solution:

- ❖ For Full Service mailpieces Print the same IMb above the address and at the bottom of the envelope. This may improve the likelihood the mailpiece will be oriented correctly if the FIM is illegible.

Full Service IMb Use

2016 Election Mail Volume as Identified by Postage Statement Check Box

	Pieces	Full Service Pieces	% Full Service
Total	300,612,136	178,412,303	59%
USPS Marketing Mail Flats	82,652,066	43,582,557	53%
USPS Marketing Mail Letters	175,226,544	113,875,008	65%
First-Class Mail Flats	1,231,730	487,345	40%
First-Class Mail Letters	41,499,851	20,467,393	49%
First-Class Mail Postcards	1,264	-	0%

Official Election Mail Logo



- When the logo appears on a mailpiece, voters recognize the mail as important and postal workers can distinguish it from the thousands of other mailpieces processed daily

Tag 191 for Ballots

- Domestic and International Ballots only
- Greater visibility during USPS handling and distribution
- Available at Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)



Update Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)

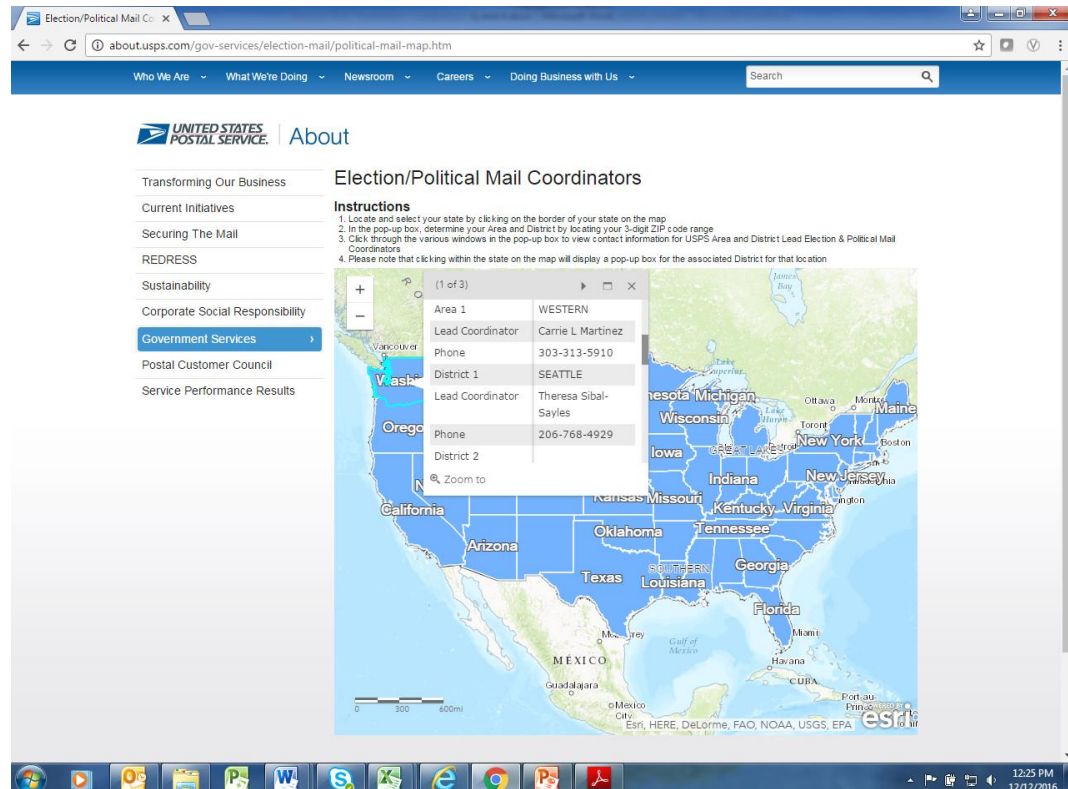
- Require the use of the Official Election Mail Logo on all Official Election Mail
- Require the use of Tag 191 on all Official Election Mail Ballot mailings
- Change the current location of the Facer Identification Mark requirement in the DMM to align with the new requirements stated above

Improvements

- Simplify trouble ticket process
 - During the 2016 election cycle we made significant progress on how we manage issues reported by the election community.
 - Our work is not done.
 - ▶ Through our commitment to continuous improvement we will be implementing several elements this year to collect additional issue details as well as provide additional reporting.
 - Electionmail.org
 - Postal Service SharePoint Ticket System

Improvements contd.

- Create Service Type IDs (STIDs) for Official Election Mail Ballots
- Update Interactive Election and Political Mail Map
 - Include Processing and Distribution Center and Business Mail Entry Unit addresses and phone numbers



The screenshot shows the USPS website's "Election/Political Mail Coordinators" page. The page features a navigation menu on the left with "Government Services" selected. The main content area includes "Instructions" and a map of the United States. A pop-up window is open over Washington state, displaying the following information:

Area 1	
Area 1	WESTERN
Lead Coordinator	Carrie L. Martinez
Phone	303-313-5910
District 1	
District 1	SEATTLE
Lead Coordinator	Theresa Sibal-Sayles
Phone	206-768-4929
District 2	
District 2	

The map also shows other states and their respective coordinators, such as Oregon, California, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, and New York. The website footer includes the date and time: 12:25 PM 12/12/2016.

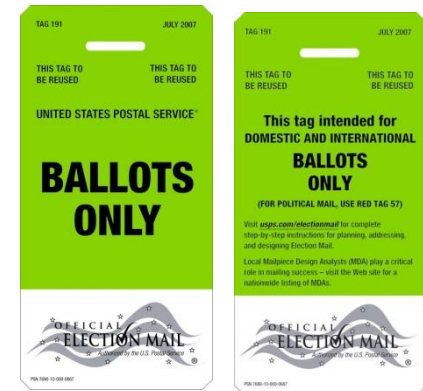
2017 Election Cycle Improvements contd.

APO/FPO/DPO -- Address Maintenance Guidance

- *UOCAVA In partnership with the United States Postal Service and the Military Postal Service Agency, the Federal Voting Assistance Program recommends the following address maintenance efforts:*
 - *Review your address file for voters covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).*
 - *Taking these steps will often improve the efficiency and speed of ballot processing so materials do not require personal handling to overcome address exceptions*
 - *All of the mail will be delivered, but taking these steps increase opportunities for success.*

Recommendations contd.

- Use letter-size reply envelopes
- Board of Elections should use First-Class Mail postage on outbound absentee or Vote-by-Mail ballots
- Design reply envelopes to contain:
 - Official Election Mail logo
- Recommend IMb Tracing® a service which provides near real-time tracking information for your automation-compatible letters and flats
- Tag 191 Domestic and International Ballots
- Official Ballot Mailings - Provide a sample mailpiece with all contents, exceptions (see [DMM 703.8](#))



MDAs are trained to:

- Provide pre-mailing pieces design consultation
- Provide technical assistance to printers, graphic designers, and envelope manufacturers
- Offer guidance regarding automation rate qualification
- Review mailpieces for adherence to USPS standards
- Test paper and mail samples for thickness, color, flexibility, and barcode tolerances
- Analyze readability of actual mailpieces
- Provide assistance with mailpiece design evaluations of Political Mail and Official Election Mail

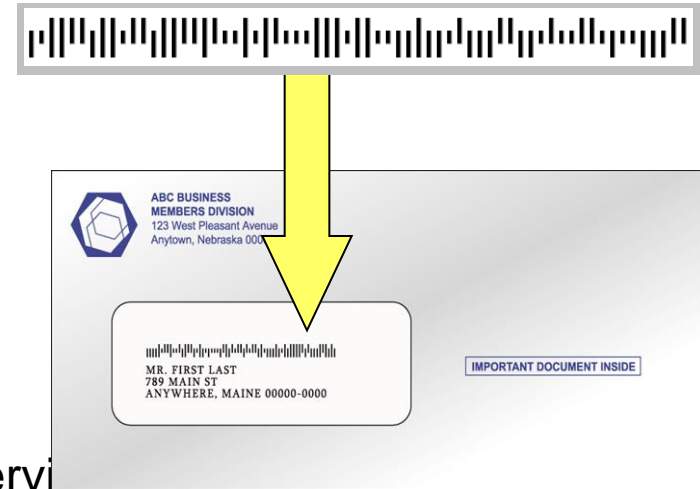
For assistance with mailpiece design, contact a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) by calling the MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 (hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 7 am-5 pm CT) or by sending your request by e-mail to mda@usps.gov

- Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS™) with
 - Delivery Point Validation (DPV®)
 - Locatable Address Conversion System (LACSLink®)
 - SuiteLink®
- Address Element Correction (AEC) I & II
- National Change of Address Link (NCOALink®)
- Address Change Service (ACS™)

To learn more:

https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=address_manage_quality

- IMb is required for automation-compatible pricing
- IMb encodes ZIP code, address correction, and mailer's tracking ID on letters/flats
- Full-Service Benefits
 - Best automation prices
 - Piece-level visibility
 - Free electronic address correction notices (ACS™)
- How to find a Full-Service
- Mail Service Provider (MSP) – Full-Service
https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail/documents/tech_guides/MSP_Mail_OwnerInformationalSheet.pdf



IMb Tracing® is a **free** subscription-based service

- Provides real-time tracking information for your automation-compatible letters and flats, giving advance notice for both incoming and outgoing mail
- Uses Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb)
 - Available for IMb Tracing® with or without ACS™
 - Ability to track different mailing levels
 - Entire mailing can be analyzed

IMb Tracing® provides real-time scan data for letters and flats

❑ **Customers receive the following data:**

1. Facility ID (ZIP)
2. Operation Code
3. Scan Date and Time
4. Routing Code
5. Tracking Code

❑ **Data is received in a comma separated file**

Facility ID (ZIP)	Operation Code	Scan Date & Time	Routing Code	Tracking Code
22081,896		10/03/2010 11:20:50	57401317223	00040012345990019102
22081,896		10/03/2010 11:20:51	57401246401	00040012345990019101
22081,896		10/03/2010 11:20:53	57446009797	00040012345990019103

❑ **The file can be pushed or downloaded**

How do I get started with IMb Tracing®?

To learn more or get started with IMb Tracing™, visit our website or contact our customer support center

Mail	NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE 225 N HUMPHREYS BLVD STE 501 MEMPHIS TN 38188-1001
Telephone	800-238-3150
Email	IMbTracing@usps.gov
Website	https://mailtracking.usps.com/
IMb Tracing	https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=confirm
IMb	https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmailmailpieces

Postal Service Recommendations (*cont'd*)

- Election Mail Coordinators – Support preparation, entry delivery and pickup planning
usps.com/electionmail
- Mailpiece Design Analysts – Support design and compliance review MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 (hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. CT) or by sending your request by email to mda@usps.gov. For more information: pe.usps.com/mpdesign/mpdftr_intro_all.asp
- Find a Business Mail Entry Unit: Learn where to drop off government and Election Mail. ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm
- Election Mail Task Force/ Program Manager:
ElectionMailProgramManager@usps.gov

Thank you!

