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CASS™ CYCLE N ~ Functionalities for Improved Address Quality

Mailers often say, "I have to CASS my list." What they might mean is that as part of meeting the requirements for an automation-price mailing, they must process their address data base through a CASS-certified software solution.

Regulations state that for automation-price mailings, addresses must be matched using a CASS (or MASS) certified process within 180 days before mailing (for Carrier Route, it's 90 days).

CASS stands for Coding Accuracy Support System and the USPS defines it as a service offered to mailers, service bureaus, and software vendors that improves the accuracy of matching to delivery point codes, ZIP+4 codes, 5-digit ZIP Codes, and carrier route codes on mailpieces. CASS provides a common platform to measure the quality of address matching software and to diagnose and correct software problems.

The reason why this certification program was put in place in the late 1980's was to reduce the Postal Service's costs (millions of dollars each year!) associated with handling undeliverable as addressed mail. With the CASS program in place, the USPS knew that the vast majority of addresses were coded according to their expectations, thus reducing UAA mail.

To mailers, CASS-certified means that the software they are using to prepare their automation-price (barcoded) mailings is certified by the Postal Service to correctly perform the task of standardizing the addresses and assigning a delivery point barcode according to USPS requirements. Knowing that your software is "certified" is important for at least two reasons. One, there are technologies such as the envelope addressing feature in Word™ that can create a barcode ~ but such a barcode wouldn't meet USPS requirements for automation-price mailings. Second, using CASS-certified software can significantly reduce mailers costs associated with UAA mail. These might include wasted postage and material costs, or even delayed delivery resulting in unhappy customers and lost opportunities.

With that foundational piece of information, let's transition to the specific topic of CASS Cycles.

The USPS periodically updates the rules and specifications for CASS-certified software; these periods are called Cycles. In fact, over the last 20 years, there has been a lot to work and changes. And with each Cycle, almost yearly, tougher CASS requirements are put in place to further reduce UAA mail. In this current Cycle M, functionalities of CASS certified software must include accuracy in five-digit coding, ZIP + 4/ delivery point coding, carrier route coding, DPV®, DSF2®, LACSLink®, SuiteLink® (optional), eLOT® and RDI™ products.

Each of these are defined at the end of this article, however, the objective of their functionalities is simply to reduce undeliverable mail by providing the most current address information for matches made to these files. This then lowers mailer costs by reducing the number of undeliverable and duplicate mailpieces by using the most current address information and provides the opportunity for faster product/service marketing through accurate mail delivery.

CASS Cycle N takes effect August 1, 2011. And for those inquiring minds that want to know, Cycle N tentatively expires on July 31, 2013. The most significant change with Cycle N is the mandated use of the SuiteLink® product. SuiteLink® enables improved business addressing by adding known secondary (suite) information to business addresses and allows automated delivery sequencing for the Postal Service™. And while SuiteLink will be required, a June 10th DMM® Advisory stated that mailers will NOT be required to show the suite number returned by SuiteLink on the mailpiece to qualify for an automation price. Instead, mailers may generate a delivery point barcode derived by incorporating the suite number indicated by SuiteLink.

USPS® INFORMATION

For additional information, please go to the CASS web page on the Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS®) https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=cassmass
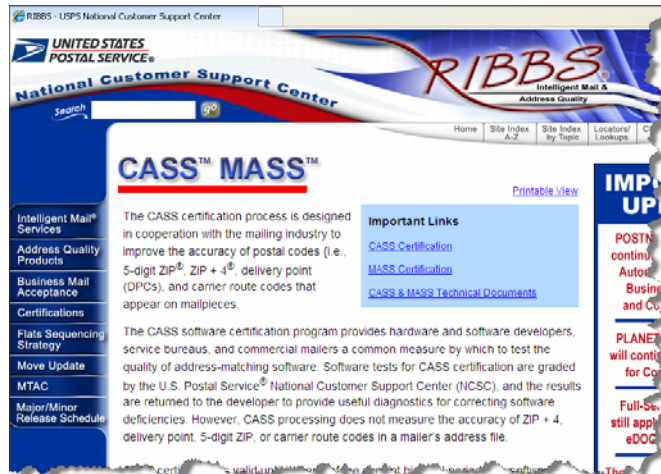
PITNEY BOWES SOLUTIONS

Pitney Bowes solutions are ready for CASS Cycle N. SmartMailer™ included CASS Cycle N certified software in our June 2011 release. AddressRight Pro will include CASS Cycle N certified software in our August release.

For technical questions regarding SmartMailer or AddressRightPro, please see
http://www.pb.com/Support/SupportPageServlet

Definitions:

Carrier route presort mail—Mail sorted by carrier route to qualify for discounted postage. The mail requires no primary or secondary distribution. The term is a general descriptor of the available prices for this type of preparation, which includes Carrier Route Standard Mail, carrier route Periodicals, and carrier route Bound Printed Matter.

eLOT® / Line-of-travel (LOT) sequence—A sequence required for some carrier route prices in which mailpieces are arranged by ZIP+4 codes in the order in which the route is served by the carrier. The mailpieces are sequenced in delivery order.

DPV® - The Delivery Point Validation Product identifies whether a ZIP + 4® coded address is currently represented in the USPS® delivery file as a known address record. The DPV Product allows users to confirm known USPS addresses as well as identify potential addressing issues that may hinder delivery.

DSF2® - The Delivery Sequence File Second Generation Product identifies whether a ZIP + 4® coded address is currently represented in the USPS® delivery file as a known address record. The DSF® Product contains vacant, residential, business or seasonal address information. It also identifies if an address is delivered to a curb-side mailbox or by a door-slot. This information will allow for more targeted mailings.

LACSLink® - The Locatable Address Conversion System Product is a secure dataset of converted addresses that primarily arise from the implementation of the 911 system, which commonly involves changing rural-style addresses to city-style addresses. The LACSLink Product also contains existing city-style addresses that have been renamed or renumbered.

SuiteLink® - The SuiteLink Product enables improved business addressing by adding known secondary (suite) information to business addresses and allows automated delivery sequencing for the Postal Service™.

RDI™ - The Residential Delivery Indicator (RDI) product helps customers reduce shipping costs by verifying whether a delivery type is classified as residential or business. The sole purpose of the RDI Product is to determine parcel shipping rate information or provide analysis of parcel shipping patterns and costs.

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