UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System

Handbook F-75 October 2003
Transmittal Letter 4

A. Purpose. This handbook is a training aid and reference for employees at districts and Post Offices who conduct the Origin Destination Information System and Revenue, Pieces and Weight (ODIS-RPW) tests. The new procedures are part of the Postal Service's continual effort to improve annual productivity through benchmarking and standardization of best practices as outlined in the *Transformation Plan.*

B. Distribution.

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D. Comments. Please refer all questions and suggestions about the content, clarity, organization, and editing of this document in writing to:

MANAGER STATISTICAL PROGRAMS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 1830
WASHINGTON DC 20260-1830

E. Effective Date. This handbook is effective October 2003, and includes information previously published in Statistical Programs correspondence up through and including Policy Memo *Statistical Programs Letter #6, FY 2003*, dated February 10, 2003.

Donna M. Peak
Vice President
Finance, Controller

Summary of Changes

Revisions to this October 2003 issue of Handbook F-75, *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement Systems* render the following publications obsolete:

Handbook F-75: *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement Systems* (September 1999)

All changes contained within this revision are effective October 1, 2003.

All changes to definitions, software navigation instructions, and recording rules reflect changes in the software. In every case, software screen examples have been updated and descriptions given to reflect those changes.

The following revisions have been made:

Overview

The user's guide for the ODIS and the RPW systems is consolidated into one chapter which reflects the software change of combining the two systems into the ODIS-RPW system.

Updated instructions reflect the new Windows XP navigation of the ODIS-RPW system software.

Globals

Standard Mail (A) is changed to Standard Mail.

Standard Mail (B) is changed to Package Services.

MEP DBMS is changed to MEP System.

MEP History System is changed to MEP History Reports.

MEP HS is changed to MEP History Reports.

MEP DBMS Listing is changed to MEP System Listing.

Special Instructions/MEP Memo field is changed to Special Instructions.

Preface

Updated list of handbook conventions.

Updated list of acronyms.

Chapter 1

Section 1.1.1 describes the survey design changing from a separate ODIS and RPW to a combined ODIS-RPW system. The ODIS-RPW sampling process for MEPS is divided into two stages instead of into three stages as was for RPW in the past. COU testing (COU-days) remains in panel offices.

Section 1.1.3 replaces the CODES Base Unit with the CODES Web Base Unit.

Section 1.1.4 describes that ODIS-RPW data have moved to support of Workload Flex Budgets instead of the discontinued EVA program. Also, more detail reporting categories are provided.

Section 1.2 describes ODIS-RPW data collectors now recording RPW and ODIS characteristics during laptop data entry. Discussion of the distribution of tests and the estimation process is moved to Appendix I.

Chapter 2

Section 2.1 combines information on how to access sample files on the CODES Laptop and from the CODES Web Base Unit.

Section 2.2 incorporates information on rescheduling or canceling ODIS-RPW tests, previously found in Section 2.3.

This section also outlines steps needed to prepare for calling the test site the day before the test. Prior references did not outline the importance of preparation for the call. The steps now include a specific reference to explaining the cutoff times to the postmaster or designee and removes a question to ask about carrier departure time.

Chapter 3

As noted above, software changes reflect changes in the navigation of the newly developed ODIS-RPW system using the Windows platform. Changes in policy are summarized below:

Section 3.1 includes guidelines for MEP cutoff times.

Section 3.2 includes an exception for sampling reprocessed Detached Mailing Cards.

Section 3.3 no longer references COU sampling. This information has been moved to Section 3.10.

Section 3.4 includes no substantive changes since the last publication.

Sections 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 are Census, Mailpiece Skip and Container Skip Subsampling Procedures. RPW data collectors are now following ODIS sampling instructions with minor changes. References to noncountable mail are removed. Also, COU sampling instructions are removed in Sections 3.5 and 3.6.

Section 3.5 provides step by-step instructions for conducting a census as in the last publication; however, the information has been re-organized for ease in following.

Sections 3.6 and 3.7 updates references to Multiple Identical Mailpieces (for examples, see section 3.6.1, step 2).

Section 3.6 provides guidelines for mailpiece skip subsampling procedures as in the last publication.

Section 3.7 provides guidelines for container skip subsampling procedures. This section also refers to separating out Accountable/BRM mail containers which will be new for ODIS data collectors, but not for RPW data collectors. Also, instructions are given for sampling Detaching Mailing Cards that have been returned through automation.

Section 3.8 combines information on attaching the electronic scale and on special fields and screens found in sections 3.8 and 3.9 in the previous publication. The current section provides information on preparing to enter mailpiece data and on navigating the header screens on the CODES Laptop. This section also discusses the change in recording Multiple Identical Pieces (MIPs).

Section 3.8.2 revises the definition of a MIP as an easily isolatable group(s) of 200 or identical (all characteristics) mailpieces identified *before* applying the skip. Software message screens are new that instruct the data collector about the skip intervals before, during, and after a MIP entry.

Section 3.9 includes guidelines for recording semi-postal stamps. In addition, requirements to scan mailpieces with IBIP indicia are rescinded, and Manifest Mailing Codes are updated. This section also includes updated guidelines for recording mailpieces with multiple meters as well as new guidelines for recording meter manufacturer and meter number. In addition, Section 3.9 includes new guidelines for recording the marking identification for Priority Mail.

Section 3.10 provides instruction for recording information on Delivery Destination Unit (DDU) parcels.

Section 3.11 distinguishes between signature capture and signature confirmation, as well as updates on retail and electronic label identification is included.

Related Materials: Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines Table and Inspection Service mailpiece Photocopy Transmittal Form are added to the Related Materials as RM 3–2 and RM 3–22 respectively.

The Mail Shape Dimension tables are updated. The table named *No Endorsements/ Marking* is included and is updated.

Related Materials 3–2, Noncountable Mail, is now Excluded Mail, RM 3–4. RM 3–7 Drop Ship Endorsements for Standard Mail (B) Zone Rated Parcel Post, RM 3–15 X-Categories Options Menu, RM 4–5 Identifying Foreign Air Mail Classes and RM 4–16 Hazardous Material Labels Examples are deleted.

The remaining Related Materials from Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of the September 1999 publication of the F-75 handbook are combined into the October 2003 list of RMs.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4, which was previously Chapter 5, is rewritten to include instructions for using the data transfer option which includes uploading test data and downloading test samples and software.

Appendix A

Appendix A is updated to reflect current organizational responsibilities.

Appendix B

Appendix B is updated to reflect current MIP procedures and to exclude noncountable mail.

Appendix C

PS Form 8126 is updated to the current version.

Appendix D

Cutoff times have been updated in all examples to reflect current field practice.

Appendix E

No changes were made since last publication.

Appendix F

Appendix F has been revised to delete references to using the scanner.

Appendix G

Operating Policies is revised to reflect operational changes due to the merger of ODIS and RPW.

Section II. Instructions for maintaining reasons for rescheduling and canceling on the Web Base Unit are provided.

Section II A. The list of situations that require rescheduling is expanded.

Section II B. Rescheduling procedures have been modified and changes incorporated to reflect the FY2004 monthly reporting changes.

Section II D. Delinquent test definition is clarified as it relates to the CODES Web Base Unit.

Section II E. Zero Volume Test section is added.

The order of priority for scheduling data collection resources amongst RPW, Cost System and ODIS program tests is eliminated.

Instructions for handling RPW and ODIS test conflicts with City Carrier Cost System tests are eliminated.

The policy concerning the release of the ODIS sample selection listing is eliminated.

Section IV B, Test Data Review instructions are updated, including steps for reconciling records discovered as incorrect (step 3) and tests taken in error (step 4).

Section V (Training and Process Review) updates the previous Monitoring and Training section.

Appendix H

Video Ink Jet Cancellations (VIJCs) and Other Video Ink Jet Uses includes new examples and updated rules.

Appendix I

Appendix I contains information on sampling and estimation formerly in Chapter 1.

Appendix J

Appendix J contains information on the MEP System that was previously found in Chapter 6 of the September 1999 edition. Sections related to MEP DBMS are eliminated.

Section II A, Essential Characteristics, removes the requirement that a MEP can only have mail for one finance number.

Sections II B.1.d, and II B.3 update the definition of a PM MEP.

Section II B.1.e, Accountable Mail MEPs, has been modified to include instructions for including Registered, Insured, and COD mail in MEPs.

Section II B.2.a, Mandatory COUs, now include instructions for coding POS and non-POS separately by MEP type, and indicating if the COU is a Contract Postal Unit by coding the MEP Group.

Section II B.3, Special MEP Type instructions for Unstable MEPs has been revised.

Section III D. refererence has been dropped refering to registered mail MEPs.

Table J-1 is updated to reflect changes to MEP Type Codes, and MEP Group Codes.

Section IV.B relating to MEP History test and external data averages is revised.

Glossary

New terms added, glossary updated.

Log of Revisions

No changes were made since last publication.

Text Messages

No changes were made since last publication.

DCT Notes

No changes were made since last publication.

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Preface

The *Data Collection User's Guide for, Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System* introduces the user to the data collection system which collects revenue, volume, and performance measurement data and spells out official Postal Service policies governing these processes. This step-by-step instruction guide will assist the data collectors in preparing for and conducting the ODIS-RPW test and will also explain how to electronically transfer data from the CODES Laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit once a test is completed.

This guide updates and combines material previously referenced from several sources. It combines all ODIS-RPW regulations and test instructions in a single accessible reference for managers of Statistical Programs (MSPs), Statistical Programs Specialists (SPSs), and ODIS-RPW data collectors.

Where appropriate, this book refers to other Postal Service publications.

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Who Should Read This Book

Data collectors are to use this guide as a learning tool during their training period. This book is also to be used as a reference source. Postmasters and other related Postal Service personnel use this guide for background reference.

To use this guide effectively, it is helpful to have a strong knowledge of Postal Service operations and terminology. A list of acronyms appears on pages xxxv through xxxvi.

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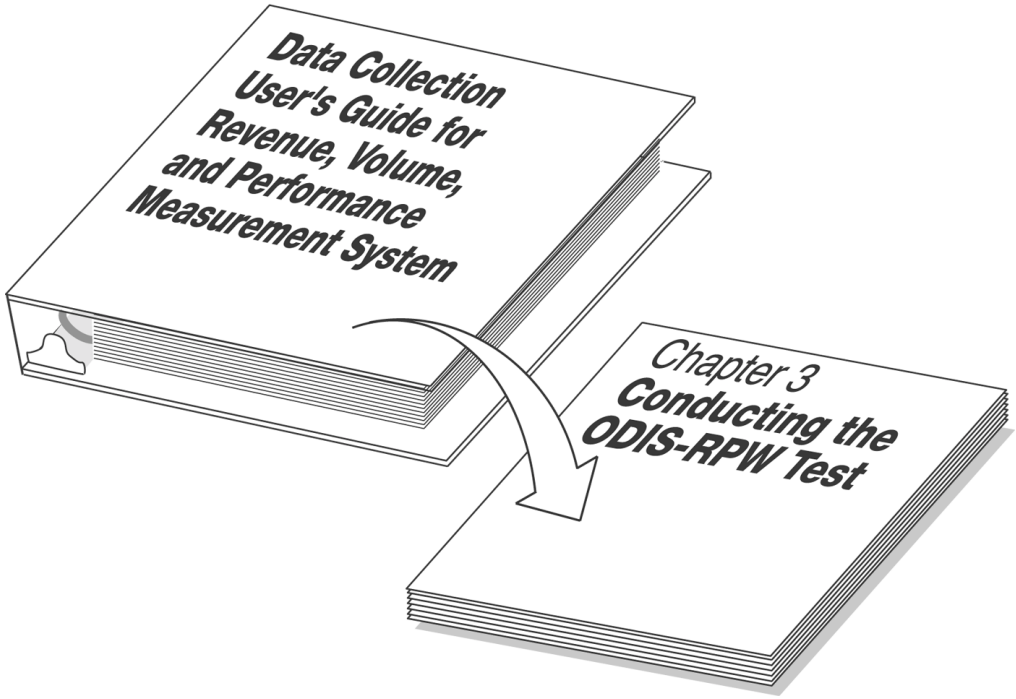
How to Use This Book

The *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System* is divided into four chapters. Each chapter can be read and used separately. Chapter 3 may be removed to conduct an ODIS-RPW test or perform MEP/COU related activities without having to take the entire guide.



The *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System* contains the following chapters:

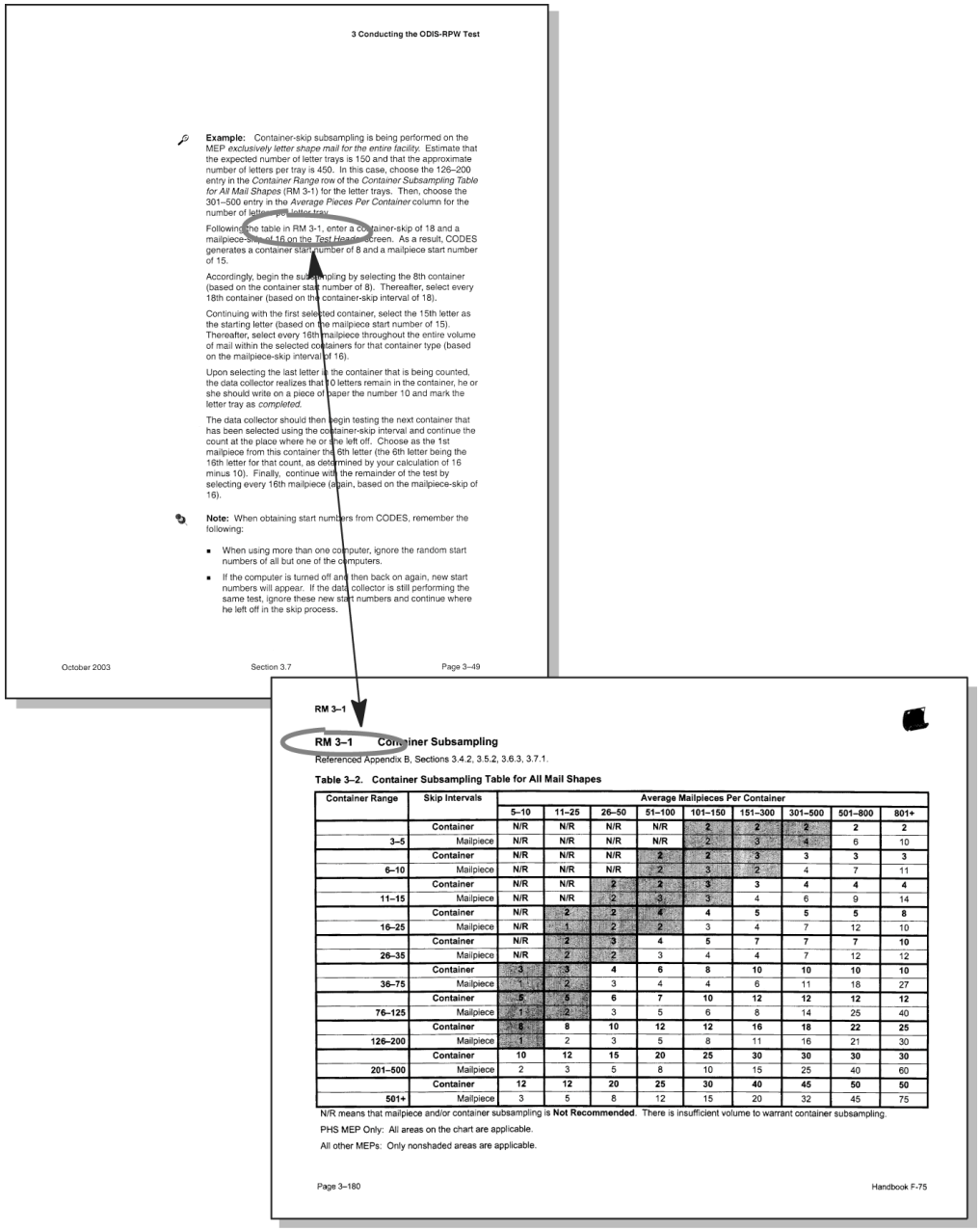
Chapter 1: "Introduction" explains the Postal Service data collection process. It provides an understanding of the entire data collection cycle and the importance of following data collection procedures.

Chapter 2: "Preparing for the ODIS-RPW Test" explains what is needed to be done before conducting the ODIS-RPW test. It also explains how this test is developed, the scheduling process, and some important testing techniques.

Chapter 3: "Conducting the ODIS-RPW Test" explains how to locate the MEP, communicate with the facility manager, sample the mail, and enter mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop. Chapter 3 also contains:

- Complete subsampling guidelines for conducting a test.
- Complete instructions on how to follow the MEP description when performing an ODIS-RPW test.

- A section that consolidates all special rules.
- A *Related Materials* section for detailed information.



3 Conducting the ODIS-RPW Test

Example: Container-skip subsampling is being performed on the MEP *exclusively letter shape mail for the entire facility.* Estimate that the expected number of letter trays is 150 and that the approximate number of letters per tray is 450. In this case, choose the 126–200 entry in the *Container Range* row of the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3-1) for the letter trays. Then, choose the 301–500 entry in the *Average Pieces Per Container* column for the number of letters per letter tray.

Following the table in RM 3-1, enter a container-skip of 18 and a mailpiece-skip of 16 on the *Test Header* screen. As a result, CODES generates a container start number of 8 and a mailpiece start number of 15.

Accordingly, begin the subsampling by selecting the 8th container (based on the container start number of 8). Thereafter, select every 18th container (based on the container-skip interval of 18).

Continuing with the first selected container, select the 15th letter as the starting letter (based on the mailpiece start number of 15). Thereafter, select every 16th mailpiece throughout the entire volume of mail within the selected containers for that container type (based on the mailpiece-skip interval of 16).

Upon selecting the last letter in the container that is being counted, the data collector realizes that 10 letters remain in the container, he or she should write on a piece of paper the number 10 and mark the letter tray as *completed.*

The data collector should then begin testing the next container that has been selected using the container-skip interval and continue the count at the place where he or she left off. Choose as the 1st mailpiece from this container the 6th letter (the 6th letter being the 16th letter for that count, as determined by your calculation of 16 minus 10). Finally, continue with the remainder of the test by selecting every 16th mailpiece (again, based on the mailpiece-skip of 16).

Note: When obtaining start numbers from CODES, remember the following:

- When using more than one computer, ignore the random start numbers of all but one of the computers.
- If the computer is turned off and then back on again, new start numbers will appear. If the data collector is still performing the same test, ignore these new start numbers and continue where he left off in the skip process.

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RM 3–1

RM 3–1 Container Subsampling

Referenced Appendix B, Sections 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.3, 3.7.1.

Table 3–2. Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes

Container Range	Skip Intervals	Average Mailpieces Per Container								
		5–10	11–25	26–50	51–100	101–150	151–300	301–500	501–800	801+
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
3–5	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	4	6	10
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	3	3
6–10	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	2	4	7	11
	Container	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
11–15	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	2	3	3	4	6	9	14
	Container	N/R	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	8
16–25	Mailpiece	N/R	1	2	2	3	4	7	12	10
	Container	N/R	2	3	4	5	7	7	7	10
26–35	Mailpiece	N/R	2	2	3	4	4	7	12	12
	Container	3	3	4	6	8	10	10	10	10
36–75	Mailpiece	1	2	3	4	4	6	11	18	27
	Container	5	5	6	7	10	12	12	12	12
76–125	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	6	8	14	25	40
	Container	8	8	10	12	12	16	18	22	25
126–200	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	8	11	16	21	30
	Container	10	12	15	20	25	30	30	30	30
201–500	Mailpiece	2	3	5	8	10	15	25	40	60
	Container	12	12	20	25	30	40	45	50	50
501+	Mailpiece	3	5	8	12	15	20	32	45	75

N/R means that mailpiece and/or container subsampling is **Not Recommended**. There is insufficient volume to warrant container subsampling.

PHS MEP Only: All areas on the chart are applicable.

All other MEPs: Only nonshaded areas are applicable.

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The Related Materials section of Chapter 3 offers tables and detailed descriptions of each rate category.

Chapter 4: "CODES Laptop Data Communications" explains how to transfer data electronically from the CODES Laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit. It also explains how to download samples and software from the CODES Web Base Unit.

These chapters are followed by appendices, a glossary of terms, and an index.

Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System

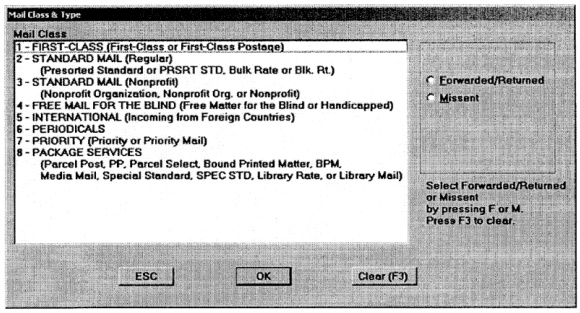

Figure 3.9.2-1 *Mail Class & Type* Screen.

1. **Determine if the mailpiece has been Forwarded, Returned or Missent.**
   - Select the radio button or press <*F*> if the mailpiece was *Forwarded/ Returned.*
   - Select the radio button or press <M> if the mailpiece is *Missent.*
   - Select the radio button or press <M> if the mailpiece is *Missent*, and if the mailpiece was also forwarded or returned.
   - Press <*F3*> to clear the radio buttons.

All radio buttons should be clear if the mailpiece has not been *Forwarded*, *Returned*, or *Missent.*

2. **From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, select *Standard Mail (Regular)* or *Standard Mail (Nonprofit)* by highlighting the correct option.**

   Standard Mail (Regular) includes all Presorted Standard or PRSRT STD, Bulk Rate or Blk Rt. mail. Standard Mail (Nonprofit) includes all mail that is marked or has the endorsement, Nonprofit organization, Nonprofit Org. or Nonprofit.

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Easy to follow instructions will help you perform the ODIS-RPW test.

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Conventions Used in This Book

The *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System* uses certain conventions to make it easy for you to identify different types of information. This section describes these conventions.

Icons

This book contains small images, called icons, to help you recognize distinct types of information at a glance. Each icon fits a particular type of information. Each time that type of information is given you will see the icon. Icons do not appear if the corresponding type of information is not present.

The following graphic displays are the icons used in the *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System.* You might see the first three icons at the beginning of a chapter and the remaining icons in the chapter sections.

ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

This icon appears when there is a discussion about which Postal Service staff are involved in a task.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

This icon appears when information about the materials needed to complete a task is given.

ASSOCIATED TASKS

This icon appears indicates subtasks related to the main task will follow.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This icon appears when information needed to complete a task is provided.

PROCEDURES

This icon indicates steps to complete the task will follow.

EXCEPTIONS

This icon appears when there is an exception to a task or tasks explained in a previous section, or if the exception applies only to the previous task.

RELATED MATERIALS

This icon appears on the top of each page of the Related Materials section. Related Materials contain additional information that may help in performing tasks.

Note: This shows how a note is displayed.

Notes are reminders about the effect of particular actions. They also provide alerts to possible changes in procedure or special recording rules.

Example: Illustrates the text that comes before the particular actions. Usually, examples describe a situation that might appear on the job and illustrate how to handle the situation.

Procedures

All step-by-step instructions are numbered in bold text, as in the following example:

1. **Enter the number of Mailpieces for the class, subclass, and type you have selected.**

Additional information about the step may follow the instruction, as shown below:

Bullets

Lines beginning with a bullet in step-by-step instructions indicate alternative steps as in the following example:

1. **To indicate if the information is correct, type the appropriate letter.**
   - **<Y>** The information is correct.
   - **<N>** The information is incorrect.

OR:

1. **To indicate that the information is correct, select the appropriate button.**
   - ***Yes*** The information is correct.
   - ***No*** The information is incorrect.

Bullets are also used to emphasize items in a list.

Screen Names and Options

All screen names and options are listed in italics as shown in the following example:

1. **From your *Main Options Menu*, select *First-Class*.**

   CODES displays one of two *Main Options Menu* screens. Select *First-Class*.

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Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout this book:

AADC	Automated Area Distribution Center
ADC	Area Distribution Center
AMC/AMF	Airport Mail Center/Air Mail Facility
AO	Associate Office
AP	Accounting Period
APC	All Purpose Container
BBM	Bulk Business Mail
BMC	Bulk Mail Center
BMEU	Business Mail Entry Unit
BOG	Board of Governors
BPM	Bound Printed Matter
BRM	Business Reply Mail
CAG	Cost Ascertainment Group
CCSC	CODES Computer Support Center
CODES	Computerized On-Site Data Entry System
COU	Consolidated Originating Unit
CRM	Courtesy Reply Mail
CSSD	Customer Service and Sales District
DCT	Data Collection Technician
DMM	Domestic Mail Manual
DPS	Delivery Point Sequence
D/S MEP	Drop Shipment Parcel MEP
EXFC	External First-Class
GMF	General Mail Facility
GPMC	General Purpose Mail Container
IBI	Information Based Indicia
IMM	International Mail Manual
IOCS	In Office Cost System
IPP	Irregular Parcels and Pieces
MEP	Mail Exit Point
MEPS	Mail Exit Point System
MIP	Multiple Identical Mailpiece
MSP	Manager, Statistical Programs
MUTS	Meter Utilization Tracking System
ODIN	Origin-Destination Information Network
OTR	Over The Road Container
P&DC	Processing and Distribution Center
P&DF	Processing and Distribution Facility

PETE	Priority End-to-End
PHS	Predominantly Heavy Sample
POS	Point of Sale
PRC	Postal Rate Commission
SESS	Service Enhancement Support System
SP	Statistical Programs
SPR	Small Parcels and Rolls
SPS	Statistical Programs Specialist
SPSC	Statistical Programs Service Center
USPS	United States Postal Service

Where To Go for More Information

In addition to the *Data Collection User's Guide for Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System,* you may want to refer to the following resources:

- *The Mailers Companion.*
- *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM)*.*
- *International Mail Manual* (IMM)*.*
- *Postal Bulletin.*

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The primary probability sampling system used to assist in estimating the Postal Service revenue, volume flow, weight, and performance measurement is the ODIS-RPW System. Information collected from this system is used to develop proposals for new Postal Service rates, assist in budget preparation, conduct management studies, and support management decisions concerning mail flow and service performance in transportation and operations.

Historically, the data derived from the ODIS-RPW test was collected by two separate tests, the RPW (Revenue, Pieces, and Weight) test and the ODIS (Origin-Destination Information System) test. The RPW test collected information relating to the total revenue, volume, and weight of many classes, subclasses, and special services of domestic mail. The ODIS test collected data regarding mail characteristics, volume flows, and transit time information on the major categories of mail.

With the combination of the two tests, a more efficient analysis of the data is achieved. The information gathered from this test not only is used to estimate the volume of mail by category and class which aides the Postal Service in its rate setting process, but also is used to plan for transportation and mail processing operations; to design and develop mail processing facilities and equipment requirements; to quickly identify and correct service problems; and to support revenue protection. By continuing to provide the quality of service demanded in a more economically responsible manner, the Postal Service continues to improve its efficiency.

The Postal Reorganization Act requires the Postal Service to “break even” financially over a period of years. That is, total revenue must equal total cost for each mail class. Rates for each mail service are determined using costs as a basic reference point. Rates must be high enough to ensure that the revenue from a class equals or exceeds the cost associated with that class. As part of the effort to achieve this legal requirement, the Postal Service continually collects information about the revenue, pieces, and weight as well as transit time of the mail.

Furthermore, the Postal Service uses ODIS-RPW test data to advise senior management on budgeting and planning issues, and to plan the Postal Service budget based on forecasts of mail volume, workloads, and overall productivity. The data are also used to monitor productivity increases associated with automation programs, assess deviations of actual volume from projected volume, and to analyze other major Postal Service activities affecting costs and revenue.

This chapter provides an overview of the Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System. It introduces the ODIS-RPW system, and reviews the organizational responsibility of all offices participating in this program. The remaining chapters provide detailed instructions for performing ODIS-RPW tests.

1.1 Understanding the Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System

This section describes the whole process of the Postal Service Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System. It explains who does what and why consistent, accurate data collection is essential.

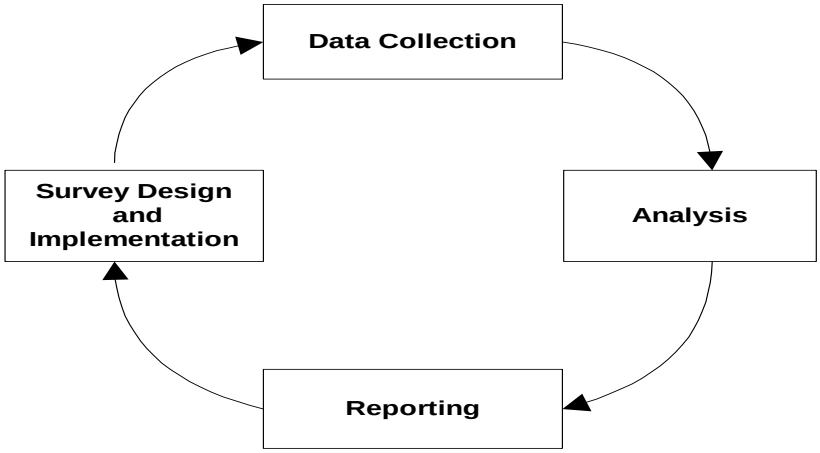

Exhibit 1.1.0–1. The Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement System Process

1.1.1 Survey Design and Implementation

In the *survey design and implementation phase*, the ODIS-RPW MEP-based frame sampling methods and data collection procedures are developed or revised.

Since it is not practical to count all the mail, the ODIS-RPW system uses probability sampling techniques based on principles of mathematical statistics. These techniques make it possible to measure the characteristics of the total mail volume by examining only a small fraction of that volume at Mail Exit Points (MEPs).

For a sampling system to be successful, each piece of mail must have a *known chance* of being selected for examination. The managers of Statistical Programs (MSPs) in the field have partitioned the universe of all the mail into MEPs so that each piece of mail is associated with one, and only one, MEP. This ensures that each piece of mail has only one opportunity to be sampled.

The ODIS-RPW sampling process is divided into two stages:

1. In the first stage, MEP-days are randomly selected from each stratum in each geographic area. The geographic area, called the Sample Area, is defined by one or more three-digit ZIP Codes.
2. In the second stage, pieces of mail are randomly selected for recording.

Over 32,000 MEP-days, and 1,500 COU-days are randomly selected for testing each quarter. These tests are then distributed to their respective districts.

Note: Approximately two weeks before the beginning of each quarter, sampling units and dates are randomly selected for the ODIS-RPW test.

1.1.2 Data Collection

In the *data collection phase*, trained data collectors use laptop computers to record data for the ODIS-RPW test. ODIS-RPW records data on the revenue, volume, and weight of various classes and subclasses of mail, special services mail, and also records data on mail characteristics, volume flow, and transit time for major categories of mail. This information is transmitted to the CODES Web Base Unit.

Data collection is the cornerstone on which Postal Service rate changes are based. Quality data, and ultimately the ability to make accurate revenue, volume, and transit time projections, depend on proper data collection techniques. It is imperative that data are collected in the same way, no matter who performs the test. For this reason, the test questions and procedures are written to ensure that the data are gathered consistently and in a manner that will not introduce error or bias. To ensure the reliability of the data, it is imperative that data collectors follow the procedures exactly and review them periodically to ensure that they do not deviate from them or forget any small details.

Note: If you have questions that are not answered in this guide, direct them to your MSP. The data collector reports user's guide problems through the MSP to the Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC) which acts as a Revenue, Volume, and Performance Measurement field liaison that decides on solutions. Any resulting procedural revisions are then channeled through the SPSC to the MSP, who then provides them to you. This ensures that all data collectors with the same question will receive the same instructions and collect data consistently.

1.1.3 Analysis

In the *analysis phase*, the data are analyzed for accuracy at two levels. At the first level the MSP or designee checks in the tests to the CODES Web Base Unit, and reviews Web Test Reports which provide summary feedback. Once these data have been approved by the MSP or designee, the MSP or designee releases the test for further processing. This further processing is the second level of analysis, whereby the data are transferred to the mainframe computer, scrutinized individually, and then aggregated or grouped with test data from other locations and further analyzed.

1.1.4 Reporting

In the *reporting phase*, reports, analyses, and data files are prepared which are used internally and externally by the Postal Service and its stakeholders. These ODIS-RPW products, in combination with other data, support various Postal Service functions:

- **Rate Case**

  Requests to change existing or implement new Postal products and rates are submitted to the Postal Rate Commission (PRC) by the Postal Service Board of Governors. These requests use revenue, volume and cost data derived, in part, by statistical sampling systems. ODIS-RPW data provide key components of official Postal revenues and volumes that are used in rate case forecasting, unit cost calculations, and development of Postal billing determinants. Additionally, various special studies and analyses used in the rate requests depend on mail characteristics data obtained from ODIS-RPW. After a request is filed at the Commission, an interrogatory phase occurs when the Postal Service is asked detailed questions by rate case interveners. Answers to these interrogatories frequently can only be obtained by querying the ODIS-RPW data.

- **Workload-Flex Budget**

  ODIS-RPW data are used, in conjunction with PERMIT and Accounting data, to develop District and Area volume estimates used in the Workload-Flex Budget Process. This system combines volume, cost and other data to estimate field hours needed to perform workload and is an input into the field budget setting process.

- **Service Diagnostics**

  ODIS-RPW feeds a mix of transit time information and other mail characteristics data to the ODIN (Origin-Destination Information Network) System. ODIN is a web-based system that permits the user to generate both standard and customized reports using ODIS-style data from the ODIS-RPW system. ODIN also allows managers to pinpoint problems at the five-digit ZIP Code level by day-of-week, shape, level of barcoding, ZIP Codes of origin, etc.

- **Revenue Protection**

  ODIS-RPW provides meter number and other mail characteristics data to the MUTS (Meter Usage Tracking System) which, with the use of additional data from the Central Meter Licensing System and the Meter Account Tracking System, is used by the Postal Inspection Service for revenue protection purposes.

- **Statistical Programs Support**

  ODIS-RPW test data are provided to Statistical Programs, Field Support for their analysis and support of the district Statistical Programs function. Uses include providing such things as summary volumes as input in the MSP Statistical Programs Information Book, reports on the location and number of tests within the district, reports on skip intervals and average numbers of pieces entered, and margin of error reports. In total, these reports support the SPSC in their efforts to assist the district Statistical Programs staff.

- **Miscellaneous**

  ODIS-RPW reporting is used for a variety of functions including, but not limited to planning for transportation and mail processing operations, assisting in the design and development of mail processing facilities and equipment requirements, supporting EXFC and PETE, supporting audits, and many other miscellaneous projects.

1.2 Understanding the ODIS-RPW Test

1.2.1 Overview

The ODIS-RPW system was developed to more efficiently and economically gather information that was previously collected by two separate systems, the ODIS system and the RPW system. The ODIS system was created in response to a recommendation from the 1960 President's Commission on Postal organization (Kappel Commission) which recommended to Congress that the Postal Service be established on a corporate model and that it institute a system of measuring mail volume flow. The RPW system, on the other hand, was created in response to the Postal Service's legal obligation to price each class of mail and special service to cover its respective costs while incurring little or no profit and to supply Postal Service management with mail volume flow information.

In order for the Postal Service to accomplish these requirements, revenues, volumes, weight, transit time, and mail characteristics of each mail class, subclass, and special service must be determined. The data provided by the Postal Service's accounting systems do not often coincide with, or specifically identify, individual categories of mail or services. Therefore, the Postal Service relies on statistical systems such as the ODIS-RPW system to provide data about the various categories of mail.

The ODIS-RPW test requires data collectors to systematically select Mailpieces using a random start for all of the mail available on the randomly selected COU-day or MEP-day (which are explained later in this chapter). Data collectors record various mailpiece characteristics including revenue, weight, shape, indicia, barcode, postmark time, postmark origin, mail class, etc. The ODIS-RPW test is performed potentially in all Postal facilities throughout the country.

The population of interest that the ODIS-RPW estimates is a subset of special service mail entering the Postal Service and all mail (excluding this subset of special services mail mentioned earlier) exiting the Postal Service in a quarter. The population that represents the subset of special service mail entering the Postal Service is partitioned into originating sampling units called Consolidated Originating Unit-days (COU-days). Every facility which provides retail window services to the public will generally have one originating sampling unit. The population of mail exiting the Postal Service is partitioned into Mail Exit Point-days (MEP-days). Every facility generally has one or more MEPs.

ODIS-RPW is designed to produce national revenue, volume, and weight estimates for various rate categories with specific targets of precision for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail, and special services mail on a quarterly basis. This system has also been designed to measure mail volume flow between P&DCs with specific targets of precision for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Parcel Post on a quarterly basis.

ODIS-RPW is a multi-stage design survey. The primary sampling unit is a finance number (generally corresponding to a specific post office) in the case of COU sampling, and the Mail Exit Point in the case of designating mail sampling.

1.2.2 COU Structure

A COU is a physical location where clusters of mail can be subsampled as they *enter* the Postal Service.

The *first stage* sampling unit is a finance number. A panel of finance numbers has been established. The *second* stage sampling frame is the list of all COU-days.

The *third stage* is the subsampling of all registered, insured, COD, and certificates of mailing mailpieces available to the COU on the test day which may involve a systematic random selection of a subset of mail available on the COU-day. COU-day tests are usually conducted in conjunction with a census.

The MSP in each Customer Service and Sales District (CSSD) is responsible for the design and maintenance of COUs using specific guidelines. The district's COUs are maintained in the MEP System. Associated within each COU are mail characteristic volumes referred to as *reference volumes*. They include letter and card, flat, IPP, parcel shape, Priority Mail, and Accountable/ BRM mail volumes. Also associated with each COU are test and travel times.

1.2.3 MEP Structure

A MEP is a physical location where clusters of mail can be sampled as they exit the Postal Service.

The *first stage* sampling unit is the MEP-day. The first stage sampling frame is the list of all MEP-days.

The *second stage* is subsampling all mail available at the MEP on the test day which usually further involves a systematic, random selection of a subset of mail available on the MEP-day.

The MSP in each CSSD is responsible for the design and maintenance of MEPs using specific guidelines. The district's MEPs are maintained in the MEP System. Associated within each MEP are mail characteristic volumes referred to as *reference volumes*. They include letter and card, flat, IPP, parcel shape, Priority Mail volumes, and Accountable/BRM volumes. Also associated with each MEP are test and travel times.

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Chapter 2
Preparing for the ODIS-RPW Test

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once Headquarters selects the dates, Mail Exit Points (MEPs), and Consolidated Originating Units (COUs) to be tested, the manager, Statistical Programs (MSP) or designee performs several activities to prepare for the tests. This chapter describes the preparatory tasks for these tests and gives step-by-step instructions for completing them. It also introduces many of the participants and policies involved in the data collection process. For more information on these items, see the related sections where referenced and Appendices A through J.

ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

With the help of the postmaster or designee at the selected site, the data collector may be requested by the MSP to help prepare for an ODIS-RPW test.

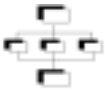
- The MSP may ask the data collector to notify the test site and/or determine an appropriate arrival time for the ODIS-RPW test.
- The participants at the test site will help by answering preliminary questions over the phone.

RELATED MATERIALS

ODIS-RPW test preparation, obtain the following materials:

- Header Sheet/Test Schedule: Sample record(s) showing the Test ID, Test Date, ZIP Code, Office, and MEP.
- MEP History Report: Report showing test history for the MEPs to be tested.
- Special Testing Instructions: Includes the *Special Instructions* field maintained in the MEP System.
- MEP System Listings (including MEP and COU description).
- Telephone.
- CODES Laptop.

ASSOCIATED TASKS



To prepare for the ODIS-RPW test, perform the following tasks as necessary:

- After receiving test schedules, examine the schedule and/or sample selection file for location, date, and type of ODIS-RPW test.
- Notify the test site managers of the date, MEP/COU, and type of mail to be tested. Obtain updated information on the facility, the MEP/COU and determine the appropriate time to perform the test. Do this the day before the test is to be conducted, within 24 hours of the time the test is scheduled to begin.

Note: Remember, all the necessary pieces of mail must be available during the time scheduled for the test, and the test must not delay mail delivery.

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this chapter discuss the preliminary tasks of the data collector in more detail. Each section explains the purpose of the task, gives any background information, and provides step-by-step instructions for performing the task.

Section 2.3 discusses a variety of important testing techniques that data collectors and MSPs should know.

2.1 Receiving the Test Schedule

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ODIS-RPW tests are scheduled daily on a quarterly basis. About two weeks prior to the quarter, a mainframe computer randomly selects MEP/COU units to be tested. Headquarters downloads the sample selection list of MEP/COU-days from the mainframe to the CODES Web Base Unit. This list is called the *sample selection file*. The MSP may then develop a daily or weekly schedule based upon the sample selection file. The MSP or designee then assigns trained ODIS-RPW data collectors to conduct each of the tests.

The MSP or designee places the sample selection list of MEP/COU-days to be tested on a diskette and transfers this information to a CODES Laptop. Data collectors at remote sites may download the sample selection list to their CODES Laptop (section 4.1). The data collector reports to the postal facility where the MEP/COU unit is to be sampled early enough so that the ODIS-RPW test being conducted can be completed without delaying the delivery of the mail.

Because the volume and mix of mail vary depending upon the day of the week, ODIS-RPW tests are performed every delivery day all across the country. Smaller offices are sampled less frequently. Within ODIS-RPW, approximately 450 MEPs/COUs throughout the nation are scheduled for testing each delivery day. Daily testing avoids biased results. Generally, test sampling takes place 6 days a week. At APO/FPO MEP units, test sampling may take place 7 days a week.

The quarterly ODIS-RPW test schedules are an important part of nationwide revenue, volume, and transit time measurement system testing. These test schedules may be obtained from two places:

- From the schedule developed by the MSP. This schedule is based upon the quarterly ODIS-RPW sample selection files taken from the CODES Web Base Unit.
- On the sample selection file available on the CODES Laptop.

The ODIS-RPW sample selection files show the following information:

- The names and locations of the MEPs/COUs to be tested during the quarter.
- The date when each test must be performed.
- Administrative information, such as finance and test identification numbers. The data collector needs this information at the beginning of every test.

PROCEDURES

This section explains how to access the ODIS-RPW sample selection files on the CODES Laptop. The MSP, or designee, will also print the sample selection files from the CODES Web Base Unit.

Accessing the ODIS-RPW Sample Files on the CODES Laptop

The ODIS-RPW sample selection files on the CODES Laptop contain test schedule information, such as testing locations and types of tests, for the entire quarter. This information may be obtained either for the entire quarter, or for just one test date. Sample selection files contain entries such as the following for each site to be tested: Test Date, Test ID, MEP/COU Type, and Facility Name.

To display information from the sample selection file on the CODES Laptop, complete the following steps:

1. **Turn on the CODES Laptop, enter your login name and password, and then press <Enter>.**

   CODES displays the *CODES Main Menu* screen.

2. **Choose *ODIS-RPW* from the *CODES Main Menu*.**

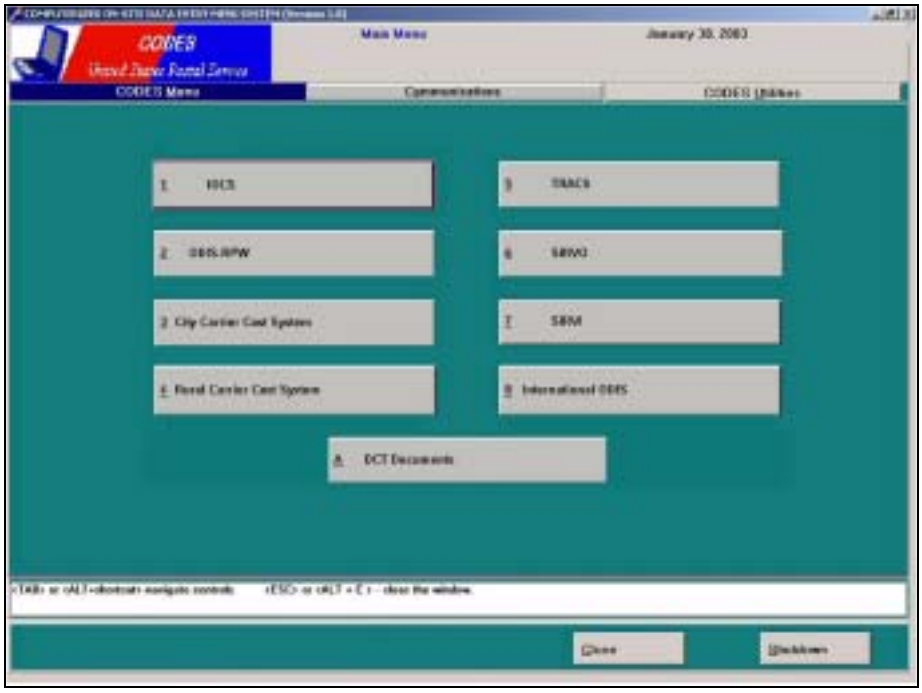


Figure 2.1.0–1. CODES *Main Menu* Screen

CODES displays the ODIS-RPW *Main Options Menu*.

3. Select *Conduct Test* from the *ODIS-RPW* Main Options Menu.

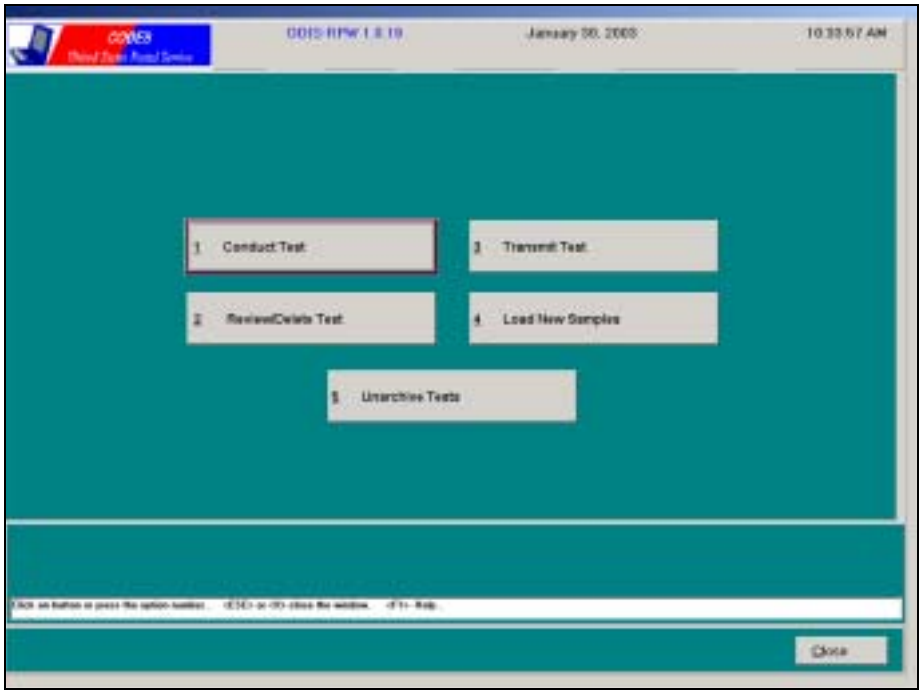


Figure 2.1.0–2. *ODIS-RPW* Main Options Menu Screen

After selecting *Conduct Test*, CODES displays the *Select a Test* screen (Figure 2.1.1-3).

4. *Select a Test* from the *Conduct Test* Screen.

The *Select a Test* screen displays a complete list of all the ODIS-RPW sample files currently stored on the laptop. Use the laptop's <↑↓> and <PgUp/PgDn> keys to highlight the record that corresponds to the MEP or COU that is being tested.

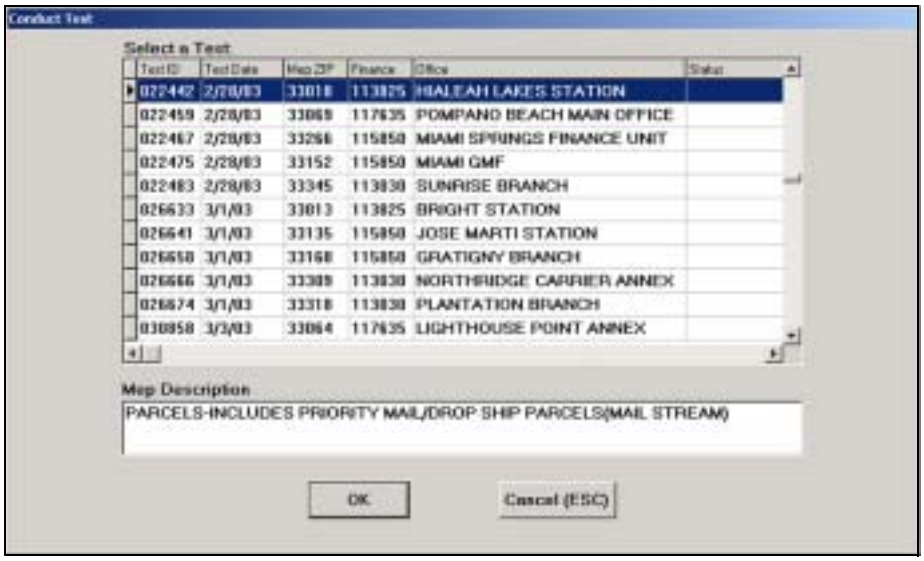


Figure 2.1.0–3. *Conduct a Test* Screen

Once the appropriate record is selected, press <Enter>. CODES automatically enters the corresponding test ID, test date, and MEP Description on the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen. Now, simply enter the user ID number and select the sampling method.

2.2 Contacting the ODIS-RPW Test Site

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Within 24 hours of the time before conducting an ODIS-RPW test, the data collector should contact the test site to notify the postmaster or manager of the office that a test will be performed. The data collector should ask the postmaster or manager of the facility for information that will help in conducting the test.

Note: Cadre offices may receive quarterly sample selection lists at the beginning of each calendar quarter.

To reduce travel costs, the MSP may arrange to have ODIS-RPW tests performed upstream. These tests may be conducted as far upstream as the destination mail processing facility. To test the mail upstream, first verify that all Mailpieces can be easily identified and captured for sampling. If the mail cannot be easily identified and captured for sampling, the test must be taken at the destinating office.

2.2.1 Preparation Before Calling the Test Site

The data collector should contact the test site to set up the test. Preparation for the call is important since the data collector will want to be knowledgeable about the MEP/COU to be tested and communicate this in the telephone call.

PROCEDURES

Preparation for calling should include reviewing:

- Sample listing pertaining to the test date, test location, finance number, and other information about the sampled MEP/COU.
- MEP description relating to what mail flow(s), or mail stream is to be included in this test. This information may also be found in the Special Instructions.
- Beginning and ending times (cutoff times) for the test. Cutoff times are established in the MEP System and must be strictly followed. Cutoff times cannot be modified until the following quarter, and only after consultation with the MSP.
- MEP description and Special Instructions for information specific to the MEP to be tested (such as bypass mail, reprocessed mail, PM mail, drop shipment special comments).
- Reference volume and other volume history about the MEP (MEP History Report).

2.2.2 Calling the Test Site

As a data collector, call the test site no more than 24 hours before the test is to begin. (Remember, the test normally starts on the day before the date listed in the quarterly schedule.) Find the phone number in the local phone directory. Speak to the postmaster or designee, and complete the following steps.

1. **Introduce yourself. Explain the purpose of the call.**

   As a data collector, call to inform or remind the postmaster or manager that an ODIS-RPW test will be performed on a particular MEP/COU at the facility.

2. **If the postmaster or designee is unfamiliar with the ODIS-RPW test, explain the purpose of the test.**

3. **Find out when the facility opens.**

4. **Explain which MEP/COU is being tested. Describe the mail associated with this MEP/COU.**

5. **Describe the beginning and ending cutoff times for the test.**

6. **Ask for an estimate of the expected mail volume (for the MEP/COU that is being tested) for that delivery day.**

7. **Find out when the first mail arrives at the test site.**

8. **Ask the facility to identify, flag, and isolate the incoming/originating mail that is to be tested.**

   Usually, the ODIS-RPW test requires all the sampled mail for a 24-hour period. For instance, if an incoming letter mail processing stream test were scheduled for Wednesday with a 10 a.m. cutoff time, the site manager or designee would need to begin flagging all appropriate incoming letter mail after 10 a.m. on Tuesday.

9. **Ask for the time schedule of the final distributions or arrival of the mail to the MEP/COU.**

10. **If the MEP to be tested is defined after distribution to the individual delivery units, ask the manager if there will be any curtailed or delayed mail from the previous day.**

    If a MEP is being tested which is defined after distribution to the individual delivery units, ask the manager to mark and isolate curtailed mail from the previous day. Curtailed mail is normally Standard Mail from the previous day that was marked or available for delivery but, for some reason, has not been delivered. For more information on curtailed mail, see section 3.2.2 and Appendix E.

11. Ask about bypass mail, reprocessed mail, PM mail, drop shipment parcels, and missent mail.

Also see section 3.2.2 for more information on bypass, reprocessed, and PM mail.

- **Bypass Mail:** Bypass mail is any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing flow at a facility. Bypass mail is often bulk rate Standard Mail. Bypass mail includes office-to-office mail, dock-transfer, and BMC-to-facility mail. Ask the appropriate facility personnel about the kinds of bypass mail that the facility receives. Then determine, based on the MEP/COU description in the MEP and/or *Special Instructions* field, whether the bypass mail should be recorded with the other Mailpieces of the MEP/COU being tested.
- **Reprocessed Mail:** Reprocessed mail is mail that will be sent back to the plant for sortation that day. Reprocessed mail is then returned to the site the same day or the next day. Because the ODIS-RPW test does not test reprocessed mail, let the manager or designee know that mail to be reprocessed must be isolated from the test. Do not test reprocessed mail.
- **PM Mail:** Some facilities receive afternoon or PM dispatches of mail that may or may not be available for delivery the next day. This mail is sometimes cased in the evening and usually consists of Standard Mail and Periodicals. Ensure that if the facility receives PM mail and is not its own separate MEP, this mail will be available for sampling when the data collector arrives on site.
- **Drop Shipment Parcels:** Drop shipment is a special service offered by the Postal Service that allows the mailer to bypass normal upstream mail processing. Under this service the mailer or a private (nonpostal) carrier transports their parcels to be delivered to a postal facility that is closer to the final destination. The Postal Service then completes the delivery of the parcels at a lower cost to the mailer. Ask the manager or designee if any parcel drop shipments are scheduled or if they have any mailers who bring in unscheduled drop shipment parcels. If any parcel drop shipments are scheduled, ask the manager or designee about PS Form 8125 information that may be available for these shipments and if these forms may be isolated and held for review on the next day. The MEP Description and *Special Instructions* field document which MEP(s) would include this mail when tested.
- **Missent Mail:** Missent mail is mail that has been sent to the wrong facility. Containers, such as an APC or letter tray, may hold only missent mail. Because this mail has not reached its correct facility, it has an opportunity to be selected more than once for testing (double-counting). Therefore, containers holding only missent mail must be isolated from containers correctly dispatched to the facility. Inform the manager or designee that whole containers of missent mail must be isolated from the test. If it cannot be determined that a container of mail is missent, assume that it is correct for the facility.

12. **Find out whether there have been any recent changes to the facility's mail processing stream.**

    Ensure that there have been no changes that might affect the MEP/COU that is being tested.

13. **Answer any questions the postmaster or manager might have.**

14. **Thank the manager or postmaster for his or her time and assistance.**

Note: For more information on the type of questions to ask, see Section 3.2, Communicating with the Facility Manager.

Note: If an ODIS-RPW test must be rescheduled or cancelled, contact the MSP. See Appendix G for more information.

2.3 ODIS-RPW Testing Techniques

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section provides alternatives for handling unique situations that may be encountered during a test or may result in a test not being taken. This section allows for tests to be conducted in less than optimum conditions with minimal impact. If you have any additional questions, see Appendix G.

Location: At local option, an ODIS-RPW test may be taken upstream to reduce travel costs. On small facilities where the location is far from any data collector's domiciled facility, define the MEP/COU(s) at the plant and perform the test at the plant. Ensure first that all mail can be captured for sampling.

Tests covering more than one tour: Do not test a MEP/COU if multi-tour coverage is required but cannot be provided. Reschedule the test or administratively cancel it. Consider redesigning the MEP/COU based on tours.

Tests normally requiring two (or more) data collectors: Testing of MEPs/COUs normally requiring two or more data collectors can be performed by one data collector if other data collectors are not available. Select a larger skip interval from the tables. For more information, see section 3.6 for mailpiece subsampling or section 3.7 for container subsampling.

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Chapter 3
Conducting the ODIS-RPW Test

The ODIS-RPW test consists of samples of mail taken by data collectors on randomly selected days at randomly selected Mail Exit Points (MEPs) or at Consolidated Originating Units (COUs). The information the data collector gathers is used to estimate the national volume, transit time, performance, revenue, pieces, weight and mailpiece characteristics of the mail by class and by subclass.

This chapter describes the procedures for conducting an ODIS-RPW test. Each section within the chapter provides step-by-step instructions on how to enter both administrative and mailpiece sample data.

ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

Two people conduct the ODIS-RPW test, a trained data collection technician (DCT) and a post office manager or designee.

- The data collector is responsible for identifying, isolating, counting, sampling, and recording the necessary mailpieces at the appropriate Mail Exit Point (MEP).

  The data collector randomly selects a portion of the mail and then records the sample's count and other identified characteristics. This procedure is called *subsampling*.

- The post office manager is responsible for providing the data collector with a work area and for answering the data collector's questions about the facility and the mail flows.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The data collection technician should always take the following materials to the test site:

- CODES Laptop computer with fully charged battery pack and AC power pack (with a power cord).
- Electronic scale with cable for power source and cable for computer connection. The scale must be accurate to one tenth of an ounce. To ensure accuracy, check the scale and balance/level before using (Appendix F).
- Extension cord (three-pronged safety).
- The 3.5-inch data diskette with the ODIS-RPW sample file.
- Two blank, formatted 3.5-inch data diskettes for backup saving of test data.
- This handbook (or remove Chapter 3, *Conducting the ODIS-RPW Test*, and take to the test site). The handbook is also available electronically on the CODES Laptop.

- Sample selection printout (for header information required for the laptop). This information may be obtained from the laptop's *Main Options Menu* under *Conduct Test*.
- Header Sheet/Test Schedule.
- MEP History Report printout obtained from the MEP System for the MEP to be tested.
- Special testing instructions which include the *Special Instructions* field maintained in the MEP System.
- *Container Subsampling Table for all Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1).
- Marking slips to mark trays, bins, APCs, and all containers to be tested.
- Tape measure for tests with parcels.
- Paper and pens or pencils.

Note the following:

- The *Header Sheet/Test Schedule* is also used during subsampling to record expected test day volumes, skip intervals and where the data collector left off with the skip interval(s) while waiting for more mail to arrive, such as between dispatches.
- The *MEP History Report* is used to assist in establishing skip intervals (sections 3.6 and 3.7).

ASSOCIATED TASKS

Information and step-by-step instructions are given in the remaining sections of this chapter on conducting the ODIS-RPW test. The following tasks should be performed as appropriate:

- Locate the facility and the MEP within the facility.
- Review the *MEP Description* and *Special Instructions* fields in the MEPS to determine the exact types and locations of mailpieces to be tested.
- Speak with the facility manager to determine facility processes such as dispatch times, expected mail volumes, bypass mail, PM mail, drop shipment parcels, containers holding missent mail only, mail that will be reprocessed, curtailed mail (Appendix E), and changes in the mail processing stream.
- Determine a sampling method.
- Enter header and sampling data.
- Separate containers and/or mailpieces and perform the selected sampling procedure.
- Review special recording rules.
- Enter mailpiece data on the CODES Laptop.

3.1 Locating the MEP and Following the MEP Description

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The importance of locating the correct Mail Exit Point (MEP) and following the MEP description cannot be overstated. Good statistical data depends first and foremost on obtaining the correct mailpieces for the test.

To locate the correct MEP and the correct mail for the test, follow the MEP description and the instructions given within this section. Locating the correct MEP involves identifying the facility and MEP within the facility. Locating the correct mail for the test involves following the MEP description and Special Instruction.

Obtain the MEP description from the sample selection file listing, in the CODES Laptop under ODIS-RPW test options, or in the MEPS. For instructions on obtaining this information from the sample selection file and from CODES.

Beginning the ODIS-RPW test involves the four-step process given below:

- Locating the facility.
- Locating the MEP within the facility.
- Following the MEP description.
- Avoiding double-counting and missed mail.

3.1.1 Locating the Facility

The *Header Sheet/Test Schedule*, should be obtained from the manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) or from the CODES Laptop in accordance with the procedures given in this handbook listing the name of the test facility and the date of the test. Within 24 hours before beginning the test, the data collection technician should contact the test facility's manager or the manager's designee. This person can answer any questions about the facility. He or she can also give directions to the facility (however, maps, directions and test location instructions available in the Statistical Programs office should be used whenever possible). The data collector should refer to the guidelines in section 2.2 for questions to ask the facility manager or designee.

In some instances, the MEP may not be tested on-site, or the test may be started upstream and off-site. Review the *Header Sheet/Test Schedule* and/or *Special Instructions* field to determine if the MEP is tested on-site, off-site, or a combination of both.

3.1.2 Locating the MEP within the Facility

In planning for the test, the data collector should locate the proper MEP within the facility. In most cases, the ZIP Code and MEP description identify the MEP. This information may be obtained from the *Header Sheet/Test Schedule*, the CODES Laptop under *ODIS-RPW Test Options*, and from the MEPS.

In some instances, two MEPs may have the same MEP description (such as *flat mail processing stream (all mail shapes)* for a multizone facility). In such instances, identify the proper MEP to test by looking at the MEP ZIP Code.

The MSP should be contacted to answer any questions about the MEP that is scheduled to be tested.

3.1.3 Following the MEP Description

The MEP description lists the location of the MEP to be tested and the *Special Instructions* field provides key details about the MEP. The *Special Instructions* field includes information such as cutoff times, bypass mail, PM mail, drop shipment parcels, and mail to be excluded from the test. The *MEP Description* and *Special Instructions* fields also include whether a MEP is defined along a mail processing stream or exclusively along a single mail shape, the location along the mail processing stream where the MEP will be tested, and standard operating procedures for testing containers holding more than one mail shape.

3.1.3.1 MEP Cutoff Times

The beginning and ending cutoff times for the test are listed in the MEP description. All mail between the beginning and ending cutoff times must be considered; however, this does not mean that the data collector must be on site at the cutoff times.

Note: Cutoff times are established with the guidelines of ensuring that all mail has one and only one chance of selection, and is usually determined by the time the mail arrives at the facility. Cutoff times cannot be changed once the frame is closed for sample selection. Each MEP has a beginning and ending cutoff time.

Only mail received at the sampling unit after the test start time and prior to the test end time is included in the test.

24-Hour MEP: The cutoff times for 24-Hour MEPs are listed in the *MEP Description* field for the MEP. They are often determined based on mail availability or dispatch schedule.

Example: Cutoff times based upon mail availability at 24-hour mail processing facilities. At 24-hour mail processing facilities, the cutoff times for a MEP are often determined according to when the mail is first made available and when the mail is last made available at a MEP for the given test date. A MEP at which the mail is sorted until midnight can have a 12:00 a.m. (midnight) cutoff time. Accordingly, all the mail at that MEP from 12:00 a.m. on the test date until midnight of the test date would be sampled.

Example: Cutoff times based upon the dispatch schedule. Cutoff times are often based on the facility dispatch schedule. For instance, Station A's normal dispatch times are 3 a.m., 5 a.m., and 7:30 a.m. The MSP establishes 8:00 a.m. as the cutoff time to allow for trucks that are slightly late. A test is scheduled for Tuesday. Include all letter mail received at the station after 8:00 a.m. on Monday. This is the beginning cutoff time. Then continue to sample all the letter mail until 8:00 a.m. on the test date. Tuesday 8:00 a.m. is the final cutoff time.

For all Monday tests (except APO/FPO Sunday tests), include all mail made available since the cutoff time on Saturday. Likewise, after a holiday, a test of mail from the last delivery day should include all mail made available after the cutoff time before the holiday. When the holiday falls on a Monday, a Tuesday test must include all mail received after the cutoff time on Saturday. Sunday's mail must also be included (Appendix D). However, any mail that was actually available to a customer on Saturday or on the last delivery day before a holiday (regardless of whether this mail was actually picked up) must not be included on Monday's test or on the day-after-a-holiday test.

Partial Day MEP (PM MEP or Multi-Tour MEP): The cutoff times for partial day MEPs are listed in the MEP Description field for the MEP and have been determined by the MSP as follows:

PM MEP: Some facilities receive afternoon or PM dispatches for mail that may or may not be available for delivery the next day. Therefore, a PM MEP is a less than 24 hour MEP defined around post-AM cutoff time dispatches to stations, branches and associate offices of all classes of mail, but usually associated with Standard Mail and/or Periodicals. A PM MEP isolates this particular mail processing stream for testing.

The testing of PM MEP mail is conducted as follows:

- The test begins at the beginning cutoff time the day **before** the test date.
- The test ends at the ending cutoff time on the day **before** the test date.

Example: An MSP has defined a PM MEP at a facility that receives a large volume of Standard Mail and Periodicals in the late morning or afternoon.

Example: The afternoon/late morning dispatches to a facility are 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The departure time for letter carriers is 9:30 a.m. With the first dispatch, start sampling the Standard Mail and Periodicals at 10:00 a.m. the day before the test date. The sampling would end after 2:00 p.m. on the day before the test date.

Sometimes this mail is cased by routers and/or letter carriers later in the afternoon for delivery the next day. Sometimes it is not cased until the following morning with the morning dispatches of mail. It is advantageous to test the mail before it is cased. Therefore, the data collector should consult with facility staff to determine an arrival time that will enable him or her to conduct the test while the mail is still staged and not yet distributed to carriers.

Sometimes, such as in the example above, there is a long time lag between dispatches. If the 10:00 a.m. dispatch is not staged until the 2:00 p.m. dispatch arrives, different data collectors would probably be used to complete the test because of the data collectors' schedules.

If the PM MEP is created to cover the afternoon dispatches of mail, then separate MEPs have been created to cover the morning dispatches (e.g., letter MEPs, flat MEPs, etc.). For the MEPs covering the morning dispatches, the MEP Description will be annotated to say, *Exclude PM mail*.

Multi-Tour MEP: Some MEPs correspond to facility tours and are, therefore, defined for a period of less than 24 hours. For example, a facility might process the mail for a very large firm that has a unique ZIP Code. Over a 24-hour period, this ZIP Code's mail might be separated into three MEPs so that each MEP's cutoff time is based upon one of the three facility tours.

An example of a MEP based on the facility's second tour is listed in the MEPs in the following manner: *Letter mail processing stream and flat mail processing stream mailpieces (all shapes), Tour 2 — 0800 to 1600.*

Example: A test is scheduled for a letters only MEP at a facility. The MEP cutoff times are based upon a facility tour. Start and end the test at the time listed in the MEPs. If the tour were to begin at 7:30 a.m., the data collector would start sampling all letters at the MEP at 7:30 a.m. on the test date. Likewise, if the tour were to end at 4:00 p.m., he or she would finish sampling letters at 4:00 p.m. on the test date.

The *MEP Description and Specials Instructions* fields listed in the MEPs display the cutoff times and any special details about the MEP to be tested. In addition, these fields should also indicate whether the MEP is defined along the mail processing stream or according to one exclusive mail shape (single mail shape MEP).

Note: If the data collector has trouble understanding the MEP description (such as whether the MEP is a mail processing stream MEP that includes all shapes or a single mail shape MEP that includes one exclusive shape), contact the MSP.

Mail Not Available after the Starting Cutoff Time: If mail received after the starting cutoff time was not or will not be available for testing, follow the instructions given in Appendix G, *Operating Policies*. These instructions direct the manager of Statistical Programs to reschedule if possible, or if rescheduling is not an option, to notify the Statistical Programs Service Center. Situations may arise in a number of ways that would lead to mail not being made available for testing. The following are three examples:

Example: When scheduling a test for the following day by phone, the Post Office contact explains that mail arrived after the beginning cut-off time for tomorrow's test and that this mail will be delivered today. This is mail volume that will be missed for tomorrow's test. Follow Appendix G, *Operating Policies* instructions.

Example: While on-site conducting a test, a container(s) of mail was worked, distributed to the carriers, and cannot be identified to be included in the test. Follow Appendix G, *Operating Policies* instructions.

Example: The cutoff time for the MEP to be tested is 10 a.m. to 10 a.m. The data collector arrives at the Associate Office at 3 a.m. when it opens and no trucks for today have yet arrived. He observes mail on the dock that arrived from a prior day. No tag indicates when the mail arrived and the staff at that office also does not know the arrival time. The data collector does not know if this mail arrived after the starting cutoff time for today's test (after 10 a.m. yesterday). Follow Appendix G, *Operating Policies* instructions.

Mail Arriving Immediately After Ending Cutoff Time: If mail arrives immediately after the ending cutoff time for today's test that will be delivered today and the data collector is still on-site for the test, do not include this mail in today's test. Situations may arise in a number of ways that will lead to the exclusion of this mail for testing. For example:

Example: You are expecting the last dispatch to arrive for today's test, but the truck is held up. It arrives after the ending cutoff time for today's test. Exclude from sampling for today's test.

Example: A test is scheduled Friday with cutoff times of 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on a Letter Shaped Mail MEP. The truck arrives at 11:31 a.m. on the day of the test (Friday) with the majority of the letter mail. This mail would be excluded from the test since it arrived after the ending cutoff time of 11:30 a.m.

3.1.3.2 PM Mail, Bypass Mail, and Drop Shipment Parcels

The MEP description provides critical information for properly testing PM mail (where no PM Mail MEP exists), bypass mail, and drop shipment parcels.

PM Mail: In facilities receiving afternoon or PM dispatches, and where no PM mail exists, this mail must be included in one and only one MEP on a consistent basis. The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* fields identify whether this mail is known to exist. If it does exist, the location in the facility is also identified and isolated, as well as which MEP to include this mail.

Bypass Mail: Bypass mail is any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing flow at a facility. Bypass mail is often bulk rate Standard Mail and Periodicals. Bypass mail includes mail dispatched from the BMC to the back door of the facility either in the AM or PM, mail direct from the mailer (e.g., drop shipment parcels), office-to-office mail, and dock-transfer mail. Based on the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* fields, the data collector will be able to determine whether the bypass mail is to be tested with the MEP that is being tested.

Drop Shipment Parcels: In facilities receiving drop shipment parcels, this mail must be included in one and only one MEP on a consistent basis. The *MEP Description* and *Special Instructions* fields identify whether this mail is known to exist, if so, where in the facility it can be identified and isolated, and with which MEP to be included.

3.1.3.3 Mail Processing Stream MEPs and Single Mail Shape MEPs

Most MEPs are designed on the basis of mail shape in one of two ways: mail processing stream or single mail shape. To identify the correct MEP, the data collector will need to know how to recognize the difference between mail processing stream MEPs and single mail shape MEPs. The *MEP Description* field should clearly indicate whether the MEP is a mail processing stream MEP or a single mail shape MEP.

Mail Processing Stream MEPs: A mail processing stream has a mail flow of one *predominant* mail shape. A processing stream of flats, for example, is considered a mail processing stream for flat-shape mail. However, unlike a single mail shape MEP, a mail processing stream MEP may contain more than one mail shape. For example, a mail processing stream for flats arriving at a station in hampers might also contain parcels.

Note: The MSP must have a written S.O.P. to ensure sample selection consistency whenever a data collector is testing containers holding mailpieces of multiple shapes at a mail processing stream MEP.

For instance, a flat MEP defined as a mail processing stream MEP may be tested in a facility that also has letter and parcel MEPs. If, while isolating the required mailpieces to test at this MEP, the data collector located a hamper containing both flats and parcels, he or she would have to decide whether that hamper belongs with the flat MEP or with the parcel MEP.

To make the correct decision, the data collector will need to know the MSP's guidelines for these situations. Assume for this example that the MSP has a rule that states that any mixed-shape container holding flats must be tested with the flat MEP.

When testing a MEP defined along a mail processing stream, the data collector will normally test all mail shapes found in the stream. Even if a test of a mail processing stream for parcels were to have 100 flats and only 2 parcels, the data collector would still include in the test all flats and other mailpieces found in the mailstream.

Example: In performing an ODIS-RPW test on a MEP defined as a mail processing stream for flats, 90 percent of the mailstream is flat-shape mail and 10 percent is letter-shape mail.

Because mail processing streams based upon shape are expected to contain other types of mail, the data collector should count and record letters and all other types of mail found in this stream.

The following is an example of a MEP description for a mail processing stream MEP: *Letter mail processing stream for entire station — include all mail shapes in stream.*

Single Mail Shape MEPs: If a MEP is defined along a single mail shape, the MEP description should list the shape and describe the details of this MEP. When testing a single mail shape MEP, the data collector will often sweep all mail shape processing streams to isolate all the appropriate mail to be tested. For instance, in testing a MEP defined as *exclusively letter-shape mail for the entire station*, sweep the parcel and flat mail processing streams as well as the letter mail processing stream for any letter-shaped mail.

Note: If the MSP has established an exclusively letter-shape mail MEP far enough downstream so that any letter-shape mail commingled in other mail streams can be culled and directed to the letter mail processing stream, it is not necessary to sweep flat, parcel, and other mail streams for letter-shape mail.

The following is an example of a MEP description for a single mail shape MEP: *Exclusively letter-shape mail for entire station.*

3.1.3.4 Where in the Mail Processing Stream to Test the MEP

The *MEP Description* and *Special Instructions* fields identify where in the mail processing stream the MEP will be tested. Where to test the mail is often determined by whether the MEP is defined as a mail processing stream or as a single mail shape MEP. The documentation for the MEP should indicate if the mail is to be tested in the following locations:

- On the dock as it is unloaded.
- After primary distribution.

- After secondary distribution.
- At a staging area.
- For one or more zone(s).
- Other specific location(s) or combination(s) of the above.

3.1.3.5 Standard Operating Procedures for Testing Containers Holding More than One Mail Shape

The MSP has developed standard operating procedures (SOP) for testing containers holding more than one mail shape. The SOP describes how to associate mailpieces and/or containers with an appropriate mail processing stream MEP or single mail shape MEP. Containers of this kind include those holding loose mailpieces and other smaller containers such as tubs, trays, and bundles.

The procedure for sampling containers holding more than one mail shape depends on the type of MEP that is being tested. For a *single mail shape MEP*, the data collector must sort the mailpieces to include only those mailpieces for the mail shape MEP being tested.

For a *mail processing stream MEP*, use the SOP to determine how to associate the mailpieces and/or containers with the appropriate mailstream.

Example: A MEP description might indicate to define mixed containers of parcels and IPPs (that will be tested) with the parcel mail processing stream MEP; whereas a mixed container of flats and IPPs (that will be tested) is defined with the flat mail processing stream MEP.

3.1.4 Double-counting and Missed Mail

Always avoid double-counting and ensure that all the mailpieces required for the test are counted. Each mailpiece that is tested by the data collector represents thousands of other similar pieces of mail from around the country that are not tested. If a mailpiece has the potential to be selected more than once, or if it never has the chance to be selected, the integrity of the test data will be threatened. Accordingly, follow the MEP description closely, ask the MSP to clarify any potential inconsistencies in the MEP description, and identify any potential for double-counting or for missing test mail by becoming familiar with the facility's mail processing stream.

3.1.4.1 To Help Prevent Double-counting, Consider these Two Questions

- If there were tests on every other MEP on the same day, could any mailpiece for this MEP possibly be counted in any of the other tests?
- Could any of this mail being tested have the potential to be tested on more than one day?

When looking for any mailpiece that has the potential to be double-counted, look for mail that will be reprocessed, that is mail that will be sent back to the plant for sortation and returned the same day or the next day. Also look for containers holding only missent mail which is mail dispatched to the wrong facility.

3.1.4.2 To Avoid Missing any mailpiece, Ask Yourself This Question

- Could there be any mailpieces belonging to this MEP that might never be included in my sample?

When looking for any mailpiece that belongs to the MEP to be tested but that has the potential to be skipped, pay close attention to both bypass mail (dock transfer, office to office, BMC to facility mail, and mailer drop shipment to a local office) and afternoon dispatches.

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3.2 Communicating with the Facility Manager

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before performing an ODIS-RPW test, learn as much as possible about the mail processing stream at the test facility by speaking with the MSP, the delivery supervisors, the facility managers, the clerks, and the mailhandlers. The advice and cooperation of the facility personnel will be invaluable in helping the data collector isolate, count, and record the appropriate mailpieces. Questions such as those listed below are a guide for some that might be asked.

- What are the dispatch times? What are the expected mail volumes?
- Will any mail be reprocessed by sending it back to the parent plant for resortation? Is there any curtailed mail that must not be sampled because it was available for delivery the previous day (Appendix E)?
- Have any containers of mail been erroneously dispatched to the facility? An example of this might be containers holding only missent mail.
- Is there any bypass mail or PM mail that must be located and tested?
- Is there any parcel drop shipment mail? If so, is there PS Form 8125 information available to review?
- Are there any mailers that bring in unscheduled drop shipment parcels?
- Are there any overlaps in the mail processing stream? For instance, will some types of mail such as large parcels be diverted after being counted and re-entered in another mail processing stream?
- How does the mail processing stream change during the day? How does it change between tours?
- Are there any variations on Monday or the day after a holiday?
- Where does jammed or missorted mail go?

This section addresses these questions. The data collector should know the answers to these questions before performing an ODIS-RPW test and should discuss these questions with the facility manager or designee *twice*, on the day before the ODIS-RPW test begins and upon arrival at the test site on the day of the test. The information given to the facility personnel enables them to know exactly what kind of mailpieces will be tested.

3.2.1 Dispatch Times and Expected Mail Volume

Ask the facility manager or designee about dispatch times and the expected volume of mail.

Dispatch Times: A data collector will need to know the dispatch schedule for all the mail at the MEP being tested. Upon arrival at the test facility, determine if any mail for the MEP being tested has arrived. Also determine the time of the final dispatch leaving the facility and the time of any early dispatches.

Keep informed about any dispatches and late-arriving mail by communicating with the facility employees. This is important because it will prevent mail such as dispatch mail and late-arriving mail from bypassing the chance to be sampled.

Expected Mail Volume: Using the MEPs, determine prior to beginning the test the expected volume of mail to be tested. Verify this expected volume by considering the mail volume from past tests and by contacting the facility manager or designee the day before the test to request an estimate of the expected mail volume.

Once the data collector arrives at the test site and views the first dispatch, the expected mail volume may be approximated with the help of facility personnel. Without an accurate estimate of the expected mail volume, the data collector will have a difficult time selecting a sampling method.

3.2.2 Mail Processing Stream Questions

Ask the facility manager or designee about bypass, missent, commingled, missent, PM, drop shipment parcels, curtailed, and mail that will be reprocessed.

Before performing the ODIS-RPW test, speak with the facility manager or the manager's designee to ask about the following special types of mail.

- Bypass mail, PM mail, and drop shipment parcels must be located and tested.
- Mail to be reprocessed must not be tested.
- Curtailed mail normally is not tested, but there are some circumstances when curtailed First-Class Mail and Priority Mail must be tested (Appendix E).
- Missent mail containers must be isolated and not tested. Because these types of mail are usually not clearly marked, the data collector will need the help of facility personnel.

Bypass Mail: Bypass mail is any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing stream at a facility. Bypass mail is most often regular Standard Mail and Periodicals but can also include drop shipment parcels. Bypass mail includes office to office mail, dock transfer mail, BMC to facility mail, and mailer drop shipment to a local office. Ask the appropriate facility personnel about the kinds of bypass mail that the facility receives and then determine, based upon the MEP description, whether the bypass mail is part of the MEP to be tested.

Missent Mail: Missent mail is test-day incoming mail that has been sent to the wrong facility. Missent mail may be sent to a facility in two different ways:

1. Containers holding only missent mail can be sent to a facility. For example, an APC of letter trays or flat tubs could have erroneously arrived at Facility A but should have been sent to Facility B. If the mailpieces within these containers are tested at Facility A, they will have another chance to be tested at Facility B, which would result in double-counting. These containers should have labels for the destinating facility attached to them and, therefore, be easy to identify.
2. Missent mailpieces may also be found commingled within containers of mail predominantly holding mail correctly sent to the facility. Identifying these mailpieces requires someone with knowledge of the route scheme for the facility and, therefore, may be more difficult.

The data collector must ask facility personnel to identify any containers or mailpieces erroneously sent to the facility on the test day.

Containers of missent mail should be isolated and not tested.

Commingled Missent Mail: The data collector is not expected to identify *commingled* missent mailpieces before testing. However, any commingled missent mailpieces must be included in the skip interval(s), and must be recorded.

PM Mail: If no separate PM MEP exists, locate all mail dispatched in the afternoon of the previous day that is part of the MEP. This mail must be eligible for testing (section 3.1.3).

Drop Shipment Parcels: If no separate drop shipment parcel MEP exists and the MEP covers parcels, locate all drop shipment parcels that came in the previous day after the mail went out. These additional parcels must be included in the MEP defined to include drop shipment parcels.

Curtailed Mail: Curtailed mail is mail from any *previous* day that was available for delivery but was not delivered. Curtailed mail is to be identified if a MEP is defined after distribution to delivery units. Curtailed mail is often Standard Mail and would have had a chance to be tested on a previous day and, therefore, should not be included in the test. For curtailed First-Class Mail and Priority Mail, (Appendix E).

If a MEP is defined after distribution, after the mail has been sorted manually, mechanically, or automatically, curtailed mail may be found. If this curtailed mail is Standard Mail, it must be isolated and not tested. Communication with the facility personnel will help the data collector identify and isolate curtailed mail. During the initial phone call to the facility office, the data collector should ask the facility manager to isolate curtailed mail. Upon arrival at the test site, follow up with the appropriate manager to determine where the employees have been placing curtailed mail from the previous day.

Reprocessed Mail: *Reprocessed mail* is test day incoming mail that will be sent back to the plant for sortation that day. Reprocessed mail is then returned to the site the same day or the next day. Because the testing of mail that will be reprocessed leads to double-counting, do not test this mail.

Exception: Detached mailing cards that will be returned for reprocessing must be sampled with their parent piece on the first day that both are present at the test facility.

3.2.3 Changes in the Mail Processing Stream

Ask if any changes have been made in the mail processing stream.

Before performing the test, take a moment to consider the mail processing stream. Does the mail processing stream change during the day or between tours? Are there any differences in the mail processing stream on Monday or on the day after a holiday? Are there any possible overlaps in the mail processing stream that might cause double-counting? For instance, can one shape of mail exit the stream after it has been counted and re-enter the stream at another location where a MEP has been defined? If any inconsistencies in the mail processing stream are found that could lead to double-counting, contact the MSP.

Postal Service facilities sometimes change their mail processing streams. If the data collector is unaware that a facility's change in its mail processing stream has affected a MEP that is being tested, the integrity of ODIS-RPW system test data may be harmed. Therefore, before testing a MEP, discuss the facility's mail processing stream with the facility manager or the manager's designee. Ask whether there have been any recent changes in the mail processing stream. If changes have occurred, decide whether these changes could affect the MEP selected for testing. If there have been changes that could affect the test results, contact the MSP.

Example: While designing the MEPs at a post office, an MSP observed that the facility had two separate mail processing streams for two different ZIP Codes. The MSP decided to create separate MEPs for each one of the ZIP Codes. However, because of a mechanical problem at the plant, mail processing did not sort the mail by zone on the day of the test.

The integrity of ODIS-RPW system test data may be harmed if the data collector is unaware that the facility has combined these two ZIP Codes. Contact the MSP if any change is discovered.

3.3 Sampling Guidelines for the ODIS-RPW Test: When to Subsample

The Postal Service has designed Mail Exit Points (MEPs) broadly. This provides flexibility in sampling and makes better use of data collection resources (Appendix J). Depending on the volume of mail being tested, the data collector may need to select a subsampling method, which selects only a portion of the entire mail volume available for testing. This sample statistically represents every mailpiece in the MEP. Apply the skip intervals throughout all the mailpieces in the MEP in order to select and record as many mailpieces as the test time window will allow.

Knowledge of the subsampling procedures will produce accurate statistical data, while inattention to the guidelines may produce data with deviations and biases. This is because every mailpiece that is selected and recorded through a subsampling method represents thousands of similar mailpieces from around the country that are not being tested.

Be sure to review section 3.3.3 to determine the best method for sampling.

3.3.1 Introduction to Sampling

Before determining the appropriate sampling method and skip interval, estimate the volume of mail expected on the day of the test. To obtain this information, refer to section 3.2.1.

The ODIS-RPW test uses a census and one basic form of subsampling, counted subsampling:

- **Census**

  This method selects and records the entire volume of mail.

- **Counted Subsampling**

  Two methods of counted subsampling are used in the ODIS-RPW test, mailpiece skip subsampling and Container Skip subsampling:

  Mailpiece Skip Subsampling: This method uses a skip interval number to systematically select mailpieces and record a fraction of the entire volume of mail. For instance, using a skip interval of 5, the data collector may systematically select and record every fifth mailpiece.

  Container Skip Subsampling: This method employs a skip interval number to systematically select containers such as letter trays and flat tubs. Once the containers have been selected for testing using this container skip interval, the data collector may either record all the mailpieces in the containers or use the mailpiece skip interval approach to subsample further.

3.3.2 Sampling Method Order of Preference

The three methods for selecting mailpieces for the ODIS-RPW tests are arranged below in descending order of preference. For conducting any particular test, choose the highest listed alternative that can be employed in order to record the maximum number of mailpieces in the available time window. All three methods will give unbiased estimates as long as the proper procedures are followed.

- Conduct a census (i.e., select and record all mailpieces).
- Conduct mailpiece skip subsampling.
- Conduct container skip subsampling.

3.3.3 Choosing a Sampling Method

To choose a sampling method, use the following recommended criteria that applies to all ODIS-RPW tests:

Total Volume at the MEP

The total volume indicated here *excludes* all mail that will be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolated containers of missent mail.

- **100 mailpieces or fewer:** Perform a census.
- **101–3,000 mailpieces:** Perform mailpiece skip subsampling.

  When performing mailpiece skip subsampling, separate the mail into shape groups. If any of the following shape groups has a mailpiece volume less than the volumes listed below, perform a census on that particular shape group:

  - Letter-sized mail volume under 101 mailpieces.
  - Parcel volume under 101 mailpieces.
  - Flat/IPP combined volume under 101 mailpieces.
- **Predominately Heavy Samples test greater than 500 mailpieces *and* at least 3 or more containers:** Perform container skip subsampling.

  If mailpiece skip subsampling is possible in the available time window, perform mailpiece skip subsampling.
- **More than 3,000 mailpieces *and* at least 3 or more containers:** Perform container skip subsampling.

  If mailpiece skip subsampling is possible in the available time window, perform mailpiece skip subsampling.

Note: For more than 3,000 mailpieces but fewer than 3 containers, perform mailpiece skip subsampling.

3.4 Entering Header and Sampling Information on the CODES Laptop

To begin the ODIS-RPW test, CODES will request the input of header information and the selection of a sampling option. This section will demonstrate how to enter test header information and how to make a sampling selection.

PROCEDURES

When entering header information or sampling information into the CODES software, observe the following guidelines:

- If two or more data collectors are performing an ODIS-RPW test on different computers, each data collector must use a unique user ID (this user ID is assigned by the MSP). If this is not done, it is possible that the mainframe will drop identical records as duplicates.
- To change the container or mailpiece skip intervals because of unexpected volume changes or shortened time windows, see the appropriate procedures on subsampling contained in sections 3.6 and 3.7 of this chapter.

3.4.1 Accessing the ODIS-RPW Test

1. Select ODIS-RPW from the CODES Main Menu on the desktop.

After turning on the computer and entering your logon ID and password, the *CODES Main Menu* is displayed. Select *ODIS-RPW* from the *CODES Main Menu*.

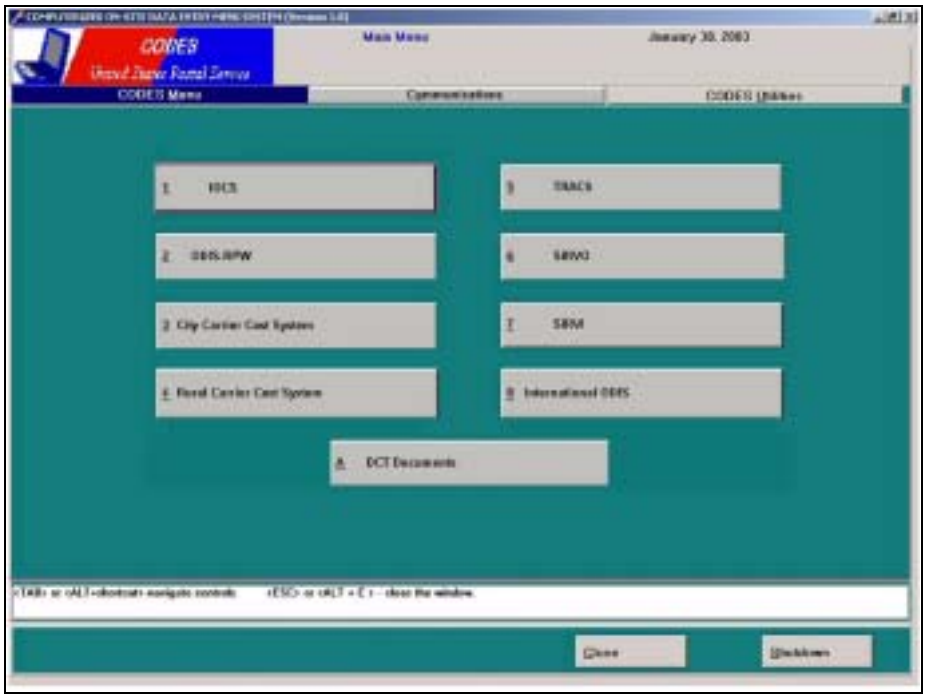

Figure 3.4.1–1. *CODES Main Menu* Screen

CODES displays the *CODES Main Menu* screen.

2. Select *Conduct Test*

Select *Conduct Test* from the *CODES Main Menu* to choose a test from the *Select a Test* screen.

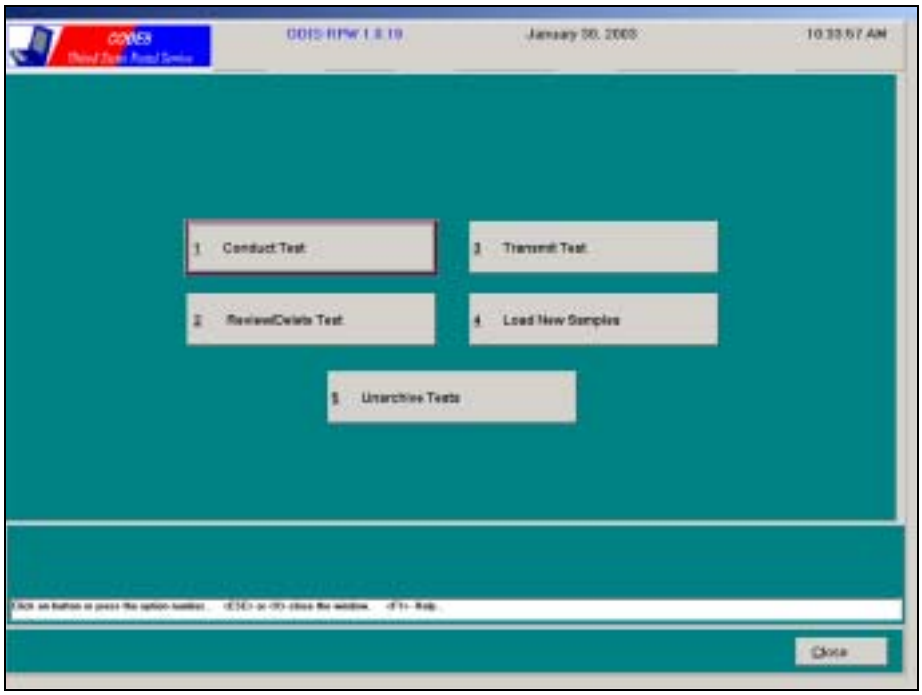

Figure 3.4.1–2. Main Options Menu Screen

3. Highlight and Select a Test

- Select a test from the *Conduct Test* screen by highlighting the appropriate test.

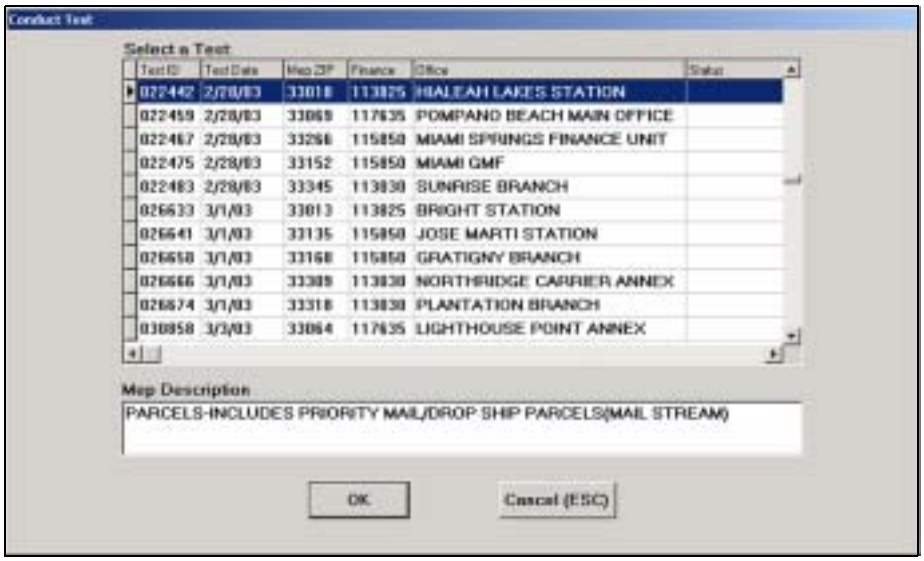

Figure 3.4.1–3. *Conduct Test* Screen

- Press <Enter> to display the chosen test.

- To scroll through the list of tests on the *Conduct Test* screen, simply use the up <↑> and <↓> arrow keys.

Note: Read the MEP type and ZIP carefully to ensure that the correct MEP and the correct mail for that MEP is being selected.

3.4.2 Completing the Test Header and Options Menu Screens

1. On the *Test Header* screen enter the required header information.

On the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen, the cursor will be blinking in the *User ID* field, indicating that this field must be completed first.

Enter your *User ID* number in the *User ID* field. The *Test ID* number, and the *Test Date* fields will already be filled. The *Test ID* number and the *Test Date* may also be obtained from the MSP. The highlighted Test Date may be changed if necessary.

Explanations of each item on the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen are provided below:

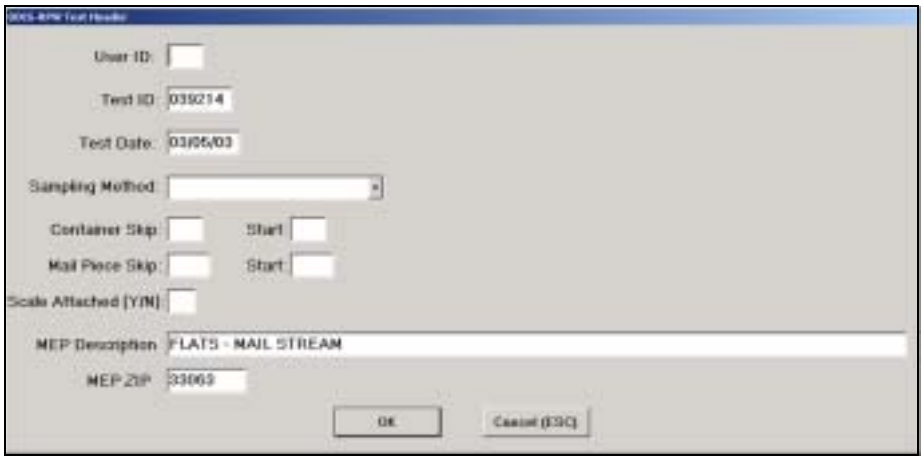

Figure 3.4.2–1. ODIS-RPW *Test Header* Screen.

- **User ID:** This is a 3-digit number provided to each data collector. This number is issued by the MSP.
- **Test ID:** This is a 6-digit number that identifies the ODIS-RPW test that CODES automatically enters in the *Test ID* field. CODES also enters the MEP Description and the 5-digit MEP ZIP Code in the *MEP ZIP* field at the bottom of the screen. If all fields are not properly completed, CODES displays the message, *Invalid Entry* or *Entries* in a pop-up screen. The user will be prevented from continuing with the test until the error is corrected. If the information is correct, press *Enter* or click the *OK* button at the bottom of the screen.

- **Sampling Method:** For the *Sampling Method*, select from the drop down menu, *Census*, *Mailpiece Subsampling,* or *Container Subsampling*. For information on subsampling guidelines and for selecting the appropriate subsampling method, refer to section 3.3 in this chapter.
- **Container Skip and Start Number:** Enter the appropriate container skip from the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes*, RM 3–1, and press <Enter>. CODES generates a random start number. Before selecting this option, become familiar with the procedures described in section 3.7.
- **Mailpiece Skip and Start Number:** Enter the appropriate mailpiece skip number from the *Mailpiece Skip Intervals Table by Shape*, RM 3–2, and press <Enter>. CODES generates a random start number. Be familiar with the procedures described in section 3.6.
- **Scale Attached (Y/N)?:** Enter <Y> *Yes* or <N> *No* depending on whether or not there is an electronic scale attached to the laptop. Insure the scale is level before continuing with the test.

If a mistake is made while entering header information, place the cursor in the field to be corrected, highlight the incorrect information, and enter the corrected data.

- **MEP Description**

  As a data collector, you may see entries such as the following:

  - Letter mail processing stream for ZIP Codes 55501 and 55502.
  - Parcel mail processing stream for unique firm ZIP Code 99999.
  - Exclusively automated letter shape.
  - All accountable mail including CERTS, REDS, BRS, PD, etc.
  - Consolidated Originating Unit Test, Combined Orig. Ins/Reg/COD Mail.
  - PHS Zones 55508 and 55509.
  - Flat mail processing stream ZIP Code 55510.
  - Box section flat mail processing stream only.

Once you verify that the header information is correct, CODES displays the *OPTIONS Menu* screen.

2. On the Options Menu screen, select the appropriate action.

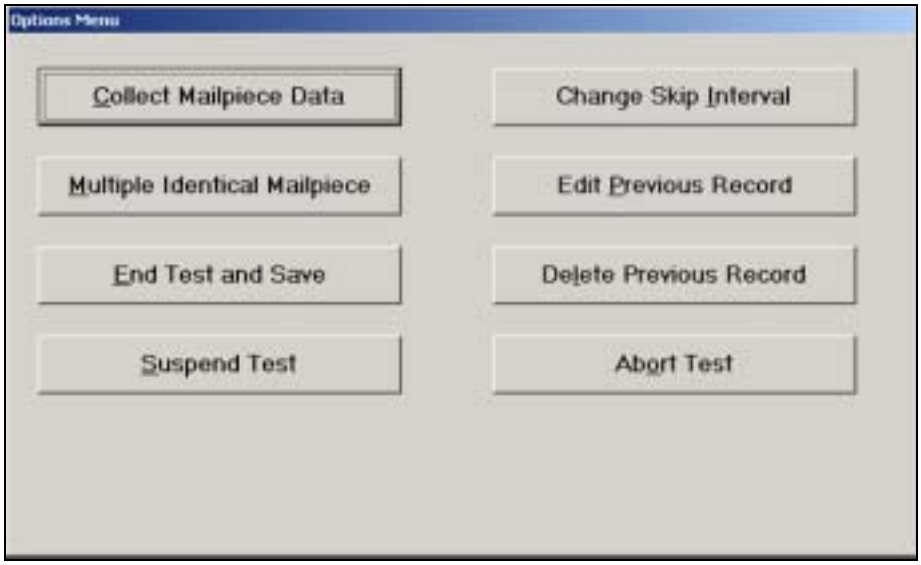

Figure 3.4.2–2. *Options* Menu Screen.

Go to one of the following sections, depending on the option selected from the *OPTIONS Menu* screen:

***Collect Mailpiece Data* (section 3.8.1).**

***Change Skip Interval*:**

- Changing skip during a census (section 3.5.2).
- Changing skip during mailpiece skip subsampling (section 3.6.3).
- Changing skip during container skip subsampling (section 3.7.4).

***Multiple Identical Mailpiece*, (section 3.8.2).**

Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIPs) are defined as an easily isolatable group of 200 or more mailpieces identified *before* applying the skip interval.

Note: *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* is NEVER to be used for IBI mailpieces.

3.5 Census Procedure

PROCEDURES

This section provides step-by-step instructions for conducting a census. When using this procedure, perform the following tasks:

- Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed and curtailed mail, if applicable (Appendix E).
- Exclude easily isolated containers of missent mail.
- Prepare mailpieces for recording by separating them into groups of similar mailpieces or selecting them individually.
- Record mailpieces.

3.5.1 Destinating Mail Test

The census procedure for performing a destinating mail test includes the following steps:

1. **Separate the mail into groups according to shape.**

   Exclude all reprocessed mail, curtailed mail, and easily isolated containers of missent mail by performing the following substeps:

   - Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed (section 3.2.2).
   - Exclude curtailed mail (section 3.2.2 and Appendix E).
   - Exclude missent mail containers by dispatch. If this mail is in containers that may be pulled aside (either easily identifiable or with the help of mail processing), isolate and release it to mail processing (RM 3–4).
   - Exclude Express Mail and Mailgram mailpieces.

Note: Throwback and Misthrown Mail: When a MEP is defined downstream at the delivery point, a data collector may encounter misthrown and throwback mail. Include misthrown mail, and commingled throwback mail in your count.

The terms misthrown and throwback mail refer to mail that has been erroneously distributed within the post office or finance number area. Misthrown mail has not yet been returned to the correct delivery unit. Throwback mail, often placed in hot cases, has been returned to the correct delivery unit. Including throwback mail in an ODIS-RPW test leads to double-counting because it was once misthrown mail.

Misthrown and throwback mail are not often relevant to MEPs because MEPs tend to be defined upstream along a mail processing stream. Moreover, MEP-based testing is usually performed as mail *arrives* at the facility.

2. **Use one of the following two methods to gather mailpieces for recording:**
   - **Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) Mail:** DPS mail must be kept in its walk-sequence order unless local operations permit otherwise.
   - **Non-DPS mail:** It is not necessary to keep this mail in strict order.
3. **Record the mailpieces.**

   Use the procedures outlined in sections RM 3.8 through RM 3.11 to record the mailpieces in the CODES Laptop.
4. **After recording the mailpieces, end the session, and save according to the procedures outlined in section 3.12.3.**

3.5.2 Selecting a Subsampling Method During the Test

Under the following conditions, change from a census to a counted subsampling method.

- Unexpected volume changes.
- Shortened time windows.

When a situation arises that requires selecting a subsampling method while performing a census, complete the following:

1. **Wait for a natural break in mail processing, such as between dispatches.**
2. **Select *Change Skip(s) Interval* from the *Options Menu* screen.**

   CODES displays the *Change Skip(s) Interval* screen.

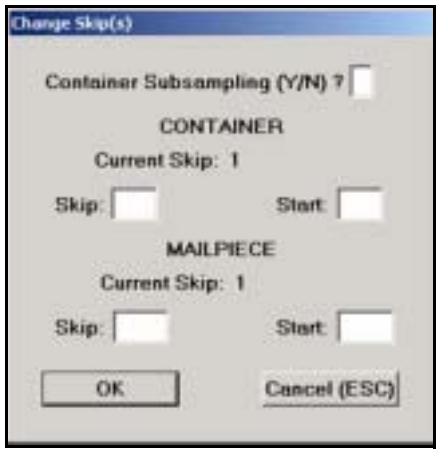

Figure 3.5.2–1. *Change Skip(s)* Interval Screen.

Note: To change the *Current Skip,* change the number shown in the *Skip* fields in the center of the screen.

1. **Decide which subsampling method will allow completion of the test in the time remaining. Then enter the required information.**

   a. **Container Subsampling (Y/N)?:** Enter <Y> *Yes* or <N> *No*, depending on whether container skip subsampling is being performed. The data collector should already be familiar with the subsampling guidelines in this chapter and know what subsampling method is being used. Refer to section 3.3.3 for help in deciding which subsampling method to use.

      - ***Yes*** Indicates that container subsampling will be used. The cursor will move to the *Container Skip* field (Figure 3.5.2–1).
      - ***No*** Indicates that container subsampling will not be used. The cursor will move to the *Mailpiece Skip* field at the bottom of the screen (Figure 3.5.2–1).

   b. **Container Skip and Start Number:** Before selecting this option, become familiar with the procedures described in section 3.7.

      - Insert the appropriate container skip and mailpiece skip numbers from the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes*, RM 3–1.
      - Press <Enter> to generate a random start number.

   c. **Mailpiece Skip and Start Number:** If entering <N> No in response to the Container Subsampling (Y/N) become familiar with the procedures described in section 3.6.

      - Insert the appropriate mailpiece skip number from the mailpiece skip Intervals Table by Shape (RM 3–2).
      - Press <Enter> to generate a random start number.

2. **Complete the test using a mailpiece skip interval and/or the container skip interval, depending on which is selected.**

Note: Remember to apply the random start numbers to the remainder of the mail being tested.

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3.6 Mailpiece Skip Subsampling Procedures

PROCEDURES

This section gives step-by-step instructions for conducting mailpiece skip subsampling. When using this procedure, perform the following tasks:

- Exclude curtailed mail and all mail that will be reprocessed, if applicable (Appendix E).
- Exclude easily isolated containers of missent mail.
- Separate the mail into shape groups.
- Isolate any multiple identical mailpieces of 200 or more for each shape group (section 3.8.2).
- Determine whether a census should be performed on a particular shape group.
- Determine the mailpiece skip interval and the random start number.
- Select the appropriate mailpieces and record the information.
- Repeat these steps for other shape groups.

If the mailpiece skip subsampling method is appropriate, perform the following procedures:

- Destinating Mail Test (section 3.6.1).
- Selecting the Mailpieces (section 3.6.2).
- Adjusting the Mailpiece Skip Interval or Sampling Method (section 3.6.3).

3.6.1 Destinating Mail Test

To complete the mailpiece skip subsampling procedures for a destinating mail test, follow the following guidelines:

1. **Separate the mail into groups according to shape.**

   Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolated containers of missent mail by performing the following substeps:

   a. Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed (section 3.2.2).

   b. Exclude curtailed mail (section 3.2.2 and Appendix E).

   c. Exclude missent mail containers by dispatch. If this mail is in containers that may be pulled aside (either easily identifiable or with the help of mail processing), isolate and release it to mail processing (RM 3–4). Do not include this mail in your volume estimate for determining the mailpiece skip interval.

   d. Exclude Express Mail and Mailgram mailpieces.

e. Separate the test-day mail into three shape groups: one group for letters and cards, one group for parcels and IPPs (if the IPPs are processed with the parcels), and one group for flats and IPPs (if the IPPs are processed with the flats). If parcels, flats, and IPPs are processed together, create one group for parcels and one for flats and IPPs.

Exception: Priority Mail and PHS Tests: If separating into shape groups will be labor intensive such that it would result in container subsampling for one or more groups, then perform mailpiece skip subsampling for the entire mailstream. Also, choose the smallest mailpiece skip possible.

Note: Throwback and Misthrown Mail: When a MEP is defined further downstream at the delivery point, a data collector may encounter misthrown and throwback mail. Include misthrown mail and commingled throwback mail in the count.

The terms misthrown and throwback mail refer to mail that has been erroneously distributed within the post office or finance number area. Misthrown mail has not yet been returned to the correct delivery unit. Throwback mail, however, has been returned to the correct delivery unit and is often placed in *hot cases*. Including throwback mail in an ODIS-RPW test leads to double-counting because it was once misthrown mail.

Misthrown and throwback mail are not often relevant to MEPs because MEP-based testing is usually performed as mail *arrives* at the office and tend to be defined upstream.

2. Isolate multiple identical mailpieces.

Before applying the mailpiece skip to mail available for the test day, that is mail available in the first dispatch, determine if one or more shape groups contain 200 or more identical pieces. These mailpieces will belong to the same mail class, mail preparation and sortation marking, mail type, type of mailer, indicia, meter information, weight, postmark date, origin ZIP Code, barcode size, barcode source, total mailpiece revenue, and any other characteristics that are class specific. Isolate these pieces from the shape group and use the special *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* (MIP) procedure on the *Options* Menu to record these mailpieces (section 3.8.2).

Example: A flat mail processing stream MEP is to be tested, and on the first dispatch to the facility, in addition to usual flat tubs, a pallet of Standard Mail with identical mailpieces and a mailing statement of 5,000 pieces arrives. Isolate the pallet and record the total 5,000 pieces using the MIP procedure.

Note: IBI mail should never be treated as identical mailpieces.

3. Determine whether any shape groups require a census.

- If the letter-sized mail volume is fewer than 101, perform a census.
- If the parcel or parcel and IPP combined volume is fewer than 101, perform a census.
- If the flat and IPP combined volume is fewer than 101, perform a census.

Note: There is a possibility that a census will be required on all of the above groups, even though there may be more than 100 total mailpieces.

4. Estimate the expected volume of mailpieces for the shape group, note the start and skip intervals, and press <Enter>.

Obtain an estimate by multiplying the *number of containers* in the selected shape group together with the estimate of the *average number of mailpieces per container* in this group.

Note: The MEP History Report for the tested MEP provides information about the variation in total test volume over the life of the MEP. When the skip interval is determined in advance of the first dispatch and for the entire test day, this test history may prove useful.

Select the appropriate skip interval, depending on mail shape, from the *Mailpiece Skip Intervals Tables by Shape* (RM 3–2). Enter the skip interval in the *Mailpiece Skip* field of the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen. Then, press <Enter>.

The start number is randomly generated. Use the start number to select the first mailpiece for sampling. If the random start number is ignored or misapplied, biased results may occur.

Note the following:

- If the computer is turned off and then turned on again, CODES generates a new random start number automatically. The data collector should continue where the skip process was stopped if the same test is still being performed.
- If more than one computer is being used for an ODIS-RPW test, ignore the random start numbers from all but one of the computers.

5. **Go to section 3.6.2 to select mailpieces.**

   Repeat section 3.6.1, step 4, for all other shape groups if the mail has been separated into more than one shape group. When selecting mail for sampling, observe the following guidelines:

   - **Multiple dispatches:** Always keep track of the residual mailpieces between dispatches for each shape group. Residual mailpieces are those left over after applying the mailpiece skip. Continue to apply the same mailpiece skip through the next dispatch starting with the residual mailpiece count in the respective shape group.
   - **Marking containers:** To help ensure accurate data by not sampling mailpieces twice, mark all containers that have been counted using the mailpiece skip interval.

   Note: If the mailpiece skip interval needs to be adjusted for a different shape group, because of test time constraints, or because of an unexpected increase in mail volume, refer to section 3.6.3.

3.6.2 Selecting the Mailpieces

Once a mailpiece skip interval has been selected and a start number generated, begin selecting and recording the mailpieces for the shape group by performing the following steps:

1. **Use the mailpiece *start* number to select the first mailpiece.**

   For example, if the CODES Laptop were to display a random mailpiece start number of 8, select the 8th mailpiece as the first mailpiece for recording.

2. **Select the required mailpieces by applying the mailpiece skip interval throughout all mail relevant to the test.**

   Using the random start number, apply the mailpiece skip interval to all mailpieces after selecting the first mailpiece.

   Example: To perform the mailpiece skip subsampling method on flat mail in which estimates of expected volume of flats were approximately 1,500 mailpieces, choose the *1,001–2,500* entry in the *Expected Volume* column of the *Flats or Flats and IPPs Table* of the *Mailpiece Skip Intervals Tables by Shape* (RM 3–2). Then, the *Expected Volume of 1,001–2,500* row, would show a skip interval of 10. After entering the skip interval of 10 in the CODES Laptop, CODES might generate a random start number of 3. In this case, begin recording by sampling the 3rd flat first, based on the start number of 3. Thereafter, select every 10th flat for recording, based on the mailpiece skip interval of 10 (3, 13, 23, 33, etc.).

When selecting mailpieces using the mailpiece skip interval, ensure that the mailpiece skip interval is applied to every container that contains mail relevant to the test. If a commingled missent mailpiece is selected, do not substitute another mailpiece in its place. This will create biased results.

Example: When applying a mailpiece skip of 5 through a letter tray with a random start of 1, the 6th letter is a missent mailpiece. The missent mailpiece *must* be selected. *Do not substitute the missent mailpiece with any other mailpiece.* Continue the mailpiece skip of 5 starting with the 7th letter. To record the mailpiece during data entry, select the radio button, *Missent,* as described in section 3.9 (Figure 3.9.1–1).

After counting the mailpieces within one container, the data collector may want to mark the container with a tag and carry over the mailpiece skip interval to the next container. To avoid errors in applying the mailpiece skip interval, the data collector should write on a piece of paper or the Header Sheet/Test Schedule the number of mailpieces following the last selected mailpiece from the just-completed container. This option is most important between breaks in the mail processing flow, such as between dispatches.

Example: If the mailpiece skip interval were 6, and the last selected letter from a letter tray were followed by 4 letters, write down the number 4 on a piece of paper. Then, mark the tray as ODIS-RPW *completed*. Begin testing the next tray by selecting as the 1st mailpiece the 2nd letter (the 2nd letter being the 6th letter for that count, as determined by your calculation of 6 minus 4). Then continue the test by selecting every 6th mailpiece.

Exception: Detached mailing cards are sometimes returned to the plant for reprocessing through automation. When a detached mailing card is encountered in DPS mail, do not consider these in the mailpiece skip count. Treat these commingled Detached Mailing cards as though they are not in the tray and do not count or select the piece for recording.

When applying a mailpiece skip interval of 5, through a letter tray with a random start of 3, and the second and sixth mailpiece are Detached Mailing cards, the random start would begin on the 4th mailpiece. The 2nd mailpiece that is a detached mailing card would be ignored. Continue with a mailpiece skip of 5, starting with the 5th mailpiece. Ignoring the 6th mailpiece that is a detached mailing card, would result in the selection of the 10th mailpiece, 15th mailpiece, etc.

3. **Use one of the following two methods to gather mailpieces for recording:**

   a. **Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) Mail:** DPS mail must be kept in its walk-sequenced order. Several techniques have been employed by data collectors to test DPS mail while maintaining the mail sequence order. The following is one such presentation: As each mailpiece is selected for recording, mark the place of the selected mailpiece in the tray or container by turning the mailpiece that follows it up on end. If the last mailpiece in the tray or container is selected, mark its place with a card or other marker. After the data collector finishes skip-counting the DPS mail, the selected mailpieces should be recorded individually. Return each mailpiece to its place in the tray before recording the next one.

      Marking the DPS mailpiece's position will ensure that mailpieces are not counted out of sequence and, therefore, limits the risk of double-counting. It also ensures that the quality of the statistical data is not threatened by miscounting.

   b. **Non-DPS mail:** Because it is not necessary to keep this mail in strict order, these mailpieces may be placed to the side as they are selected.

4. **Record selected mailpieces.**

   Perform the procedures outlined in section 3.8 and section 3.9 to record selected mailpieces in the CODES Laptop.

5. **After recording one group of mail, repeat guidelines listed in section 3.6.1, step 4, and section 3.6.2 to record other groups.**

   If necessary, use the *Change Skip Interval* option in the *Options Menu* (Figure 3.4.2–2) to change the skip interval before recording the mail for the next shape group.

6. **After recording all mailpieces, end the session by saving it according to the procedures in section 3.12.3.**

3.6.3 Adjusting the Mailpiece Skip Interval or Sampling Method

Under the following conditions, the mailpiece skip interval or the sampling method may need to be changed:

- Unexpected volume changes.
- Shortened time windows.

To adjust the mailpiece skip interval or to select another sampling method during a test:

1. **Wait for a natural break in mail processing, such as between dispatches.**

2. From the *Options Menu,* select *Change Skip Interval*.

The *Change Skip Interval* screen is displayed.

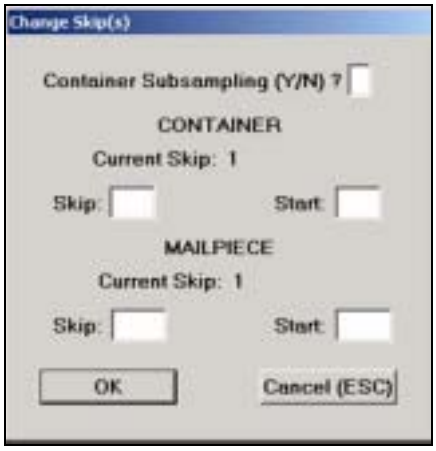

Figure 3.6.3–1. *Change Skip(s)* Interval Screen

Note: The section *Current Skip* under *Container* and under *mailpiece* displays the current skip interval. The *Skip* field allows the data collector to change the skip interval or change to a different sampling method, such as changing from mailpiece skip subsampling to container skip subsampling or vice versa.

3. Determine the appropriate sampling method.

Based on the time allocated to complete the test, determine the sampling method to be used and perform the following substeps:

a. Select a mail shape group.

b. Ignore residual mailpieces from any former session.

That is, if 4 mailpieces remain from a session using a mailpiece skip interval of 6, ignore these 4 remaining mailpieces.

c. Select a mailpiece skip interval that is practical within the given time window and generate a new random start number by:

i. Estimate the volume of mail.

ii. Divide the estimate by the number of mailpieces that can be selected and recorded in the time available.

iii. Enter the new mailpiece skip interval into the CODES Laptop and generate a new start number by performing steps 2 and 3 above. Then, perform the mailpiece skip subsampling procedure in accordance with section 3.6.

Example: Two trays of letter mail arrive ten minutes before the carriers are scheduled to depart. The data collector estimates that there are about 600 total pieces (300 pieces/tray x 2 trays) and judges that no more than 20 letters can be selected and recorded in the time available. An approximate skip interval of 30 should be selected by dividing 600 by 20. Enter the skip interval of 30 into the CODES Laptop and generate a new random start number.

d. Perform container skip subsampling if the largest mailpiece skip interval has already been selected.

To perform container skip subsampling use Adjustment 1 of section 3.7.4. Then, subsample the mail in accordance with the guidelines listed in sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2.

e. Perform a census if a very small volume of mail arrives (section 3.5).

f. Enter the new skip intervals into the CODES Laptop.

- **Container Subsampling (Y/N)?:** Enter <Y> Yes or <N> No, depending on whether container skip subsampling is being performed. The data collector should already be familiar with the subsampling guidelines in this chapter and know what subsampling method is being used. Refer to section 3.3.3 for help in deciding which subsampling method to use.
  - ***Yes*** Indicates that container subsampling will be used. The cursor will move to the *Container Skip* field (Figure 3.5.2–1).
  - ***No*** Indicates that container subsampling will not be used. The cursor will move to the *Mailpiece Skip* field at the bottom of the screen (Figure 3.5.2–1).
- **Container Skip and Start Number:** Before selecting this option, become familiar with the procedures described in section 3.7.
  - Insert the appropriate container skip and mailpiece skip numbers from the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1).
  - Press <Enter> to generate a random start number.

g. Mailpiece Skip and Start Number: If entering <N> No in response to the Container Subsampling (Y/N) become familiar with the procedures described in section 3.6.

- Insert the appropriate mailpiece skip number from the *Mailpiece Skip Intervals Table by Shape* (RM 3–2).
- Press <Enter> to generate a random start number.

4. Complete the test using a mailpiece skip interval, the container skip interval, or census depending on which is selected.

3.7 Container Skip Subsampling Procedures

Primary containers must be identified when performing container skip subsampling. A *primary* container is a container that holds loose pieces of mail to be tested. For instance, a sack holding parcels is considered a primary container. Likewise, a letter tray holding letters and an OTR holding IPPs are considered primary containers. However, an APC holding 30 letter trays is not a primary container. In this case, only the letter trays are primary containers because the letter trays, not the APCs, are the containers holding the loose mailpieces.

PROCEDURES

This section gives step-by-step instructions for conducting container subsampling. When using this procedure, perform the following:

- Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed and curtailed mail, if applicable (Appendix E).
- Exclude easily isolated containers of missent mailpieces.
- Identify primary containers.
- Isolate multiple identical mailpieces of 200 or more (section 3.8.2).
- Separate Priority Mail containers.
- Separate Accountable/BRM Mail containers.
- In testing multiple primary container types, decide whether to containerize mailpieces in order to produce one primary container type or treat each primary container as an independent group.
- Determine the container skip interval, the mailpiece skip interval, and the random start number.
- Make any necessary skip interval adjustments when testing multiple primary container types.
- Select the appropriate containers and mailpieces and record the information.

Perform the following procedures when using the container skip subsampling method:

- Select primary containers and mailpieces by performing one of the following:
  - Only one type of primary container is being tested (sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2).
  - More than one type of primary container is being tested (section 3.7.3).
- If time constraints or unexpected volume changes occur while performing container skip subsampling, refer to section 3.7.4.

Note: Examples of container skip subsampling are found in Appendix B.

3.7.1 Container Skip Subsampling for One Primary Container Type

1. **Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolated containers of missent mail by performing the following substeps:**

   a. Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed (section 3.2.2).

   b. Exclude curtailed mail (section 3.2.2 and Appendix E).

   c. Exclude missent mail containers by dispatch. If this mail is in containers that may be pulled aside (either easily identifiable or with the help of mail processing), isolate and release it to mail processing (RM 3–4). Do not include this mail in your volume estimate for determining the mailpiece skip interval.

   d. Exclude Express Mail and Mailgram pieces.

   Note: Misthrown and Throwback Mail: When a MEP is defined downstream at the delivery point, a data collector may encounter misthrown and throwback mail. Include misthrown mail and commingled throwback mail in the count.

   The terms misthrown and throwback mail refer to mail that has been erroneously distributed within the Post Office or finance number area. Misthrown mail has not yet been returned to the correct delivery unit. Throwback mail, however, has been returned to the correct delivery unit and is often placed in hot cases. Including throwback mail in an ODIS-RPW test leads to double-counting because it was once misthrown mail.

   Misthrown and throwback mail are not often relevant to MEPs because MEPs tend to be defined upstream along a mail processing stream. Moreover, MEP-based testing is usually performed as mail *arrives* at the office.

2. **Identify primary containers.**

   Containers should be primary. When performing container skip subsampling, it is essential to recognize primary containers. That is, they should hold only the loose mailpieces that will be tested and recorded such as letters, parcels, flats, etc.

Note: A *primary* container is a container that holds loose pieces of mail to be tested. For instance, a sack holding parcels is considered a primary container. Likewise, a letter tray holding letters and an OTR holding IPPs are considered primary containers. However, an APC holding 30 letter trays is not a primary container. In this case, only the letter trays are primary containers (because the letter trays, not the APCs, are the containers holding the loose mailpieces).

When identifying primary containers, keep in mind the MEP description. If, for instance, the MEP was defined to test *the flat mail processing stream for the entire station,* afternoon *all mail shapes*, any parcels and non-flat-shaped mail found in the flat tubs would be included in the test. If, however, the MEP was defined to test exclusively flat-shaped mail for the entire facility, any parcels or other non-flat mail would need to be removed from the flat tubs.

Note: To insure an accurate count, ask the following question: *If all other MEPs in this facility were tested today, would any mailpiece be double-counted or missed?*

3. Separate easily isolated multiple identical mailpieces.

Before applying the container skip to all mail available for the test day or a subset of the total, that is mail available in the first dispatch, one or more containers may have 200 or more identical mailpieces. These mailpieces will belong to the same mail class, mail preparation and sortation marking, mail type, type of mailer, indicia, meter information, weight, postmark date, origin ZIP Code, barcode size, barcode source, total mailpiece revenue, and any other characteristics that are class specific. Isolate these pieces and use the special *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* (MIP) option on the *Options Menu* to record these mailpieces (section 3.8.2).

4. Separate Priority Mail Containers.

Separate containers holding *predominantly* Priority Mail, that is the container is either marked *Priority Mail* or its contents consist of at least 75 percent Priority Mail — determine this amount by observation, not by calculation. Test this mail as an independent group using the following guidelines:

- If container mail volumes are 250 mailpieces or less, use mailpiece skip subsampling (section 3.6).
- If container mail volumes are greater than 250 mailpieces and there are fewer than three containers, use mailpiece skip subsampling (section 3.6).
- If container mail volumes are greater than 250 mailpieces and there are three or more containers, use container skip subsampling.

5. **Separate Accountable/BRM Mail Containers.**

   If you find containers with accountable or Business Reply Mail (BRM only (in any MEP), separate these containers. Test this mail as an independent group using the following guidelines:

   - If the accountable/BRM mail volume is 250 mailpieces or less, use mailpiece skip subsampling.
   - If accountable/BRM mail volume is greater than 250 mailpieces and there are 3 or more containers, use mailpiece skip subsampling.
   - If the accountable/BRM mail volume is greater than 250 mailpieces and there are 3 or more containers, use container skip subsampling.
   - **Special Case:** If you are sampling a bundle with an attached Facing Slip (Address Correction) and all the necessary information is listed on the slip (e.g., ZIP Code, etc.), use the census option.

   Note: Step 4 above, applies to Priority Mail containers isolated prior to application of the container skip interval at the start of test or by dispatch, if separate skips are applied by dispatch. For Priority Mail containers found during the application of the container skip interval, follow the instructions described in steps 6 through 8 below.

6. **Determine the average number of mailpieces per container.**

   The following average volume per container estimates are recommended:

   - Letter Tray: 301– 500.
   - Flat Tub: 51–100.

7. **Estimate the number of primary containers that will be tested** (letter trays, flat tubs, mail sacks, etc.).

8. **Determine the container and mailpiece skip intervals.**

   The following substeps are a guide to completing this task:

   a. Determine the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals.

   Use the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1), as follows:

   - Under the column heading *Container Range*, find the row that corresponds to the approximate number of containers to be tested.
   - Under the heading, *Average Mailpieces per Container*, find the column that corresponds to the approximate number of mail-pieces per container to be tested.
   - The two numbers in the table at the intersection of this row and column gives the container skip and the mailpiece skip intervals.

Example: All letter mail for Zone 99999 is scheduled to be tested. The site manager expects 150 letter trays of mail. The site manager's estimate agrees with the estimate of the data collector who estimates that the average number of mailpieces per tray is 500 letters.

Looking at the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1), the data collector finds that the container skip interval will be 18 and that the mailpiece skip interval will be 16.

b. Enter the container and mailpiece skip intervals into the CODES Laptop.

Enter the skip intervals in the *Container Skip* and *Mailpiece Skip* fields of the *Test Header* screen. CODES generates the start number randomly. The start number will be used to select the first container and the first mailpiece for sampling. Biased results may occur if the random start number is ignored or misapplied.

c. Annotate the skip intervals and random start number on the Header Sheet/Test Schedule.

Carefully note the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals and start numbers on the *Change Skip(s)* screen. Use these numbers as the skip intervals and start numbers, as explained in the next subsection. Only use the start number to select the first container and the first mailpiece in that container for sampling. Biased results may occur if the random start number is ignored or misapplied.

When selecting mail for sampling, observe the following:

Marking containers: To help ensure accurate data, mark all containers that have been sampled. Also mark all containers that have been skipped through and released. This will help ensure that containers and mailpieces are not sampled twice.

Adjustments: Test time constraints or an unexpected increase in mail volume may necessitate an adjustment in the container skip interval. If this occurs, refer to section 3.7.4.

3.7.2 Selecting the Containers and Mailpieces

Once the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals have been selected and start numbers have been generated, begin selecting and recording the mailpieces.

When physically selecting containers and mailpieces, observe the following guidelines:

- Keep track of the number of containers that are included in each dispatch.

- Have a consistent method of counting through and choosing containers, when selecting containers using the container skip interval.

  This is especially necessary for primary containers that are transported in larger containers such as flat tubs in all purpose containers (APCs) or general purpose mailing containers (GPMCs). The data collector might, for example, choose to begin applying the container skip interval from the top left container on a GPMC. Then the count could be continued in a consistent manner from left to right and from top to bottom throughout the remaining containers.

1. **Use your container start number to select the first container.**

   Use the container start number from the laptop screen to select the first container. If, for instance, the container skip interval were 10 and the container start number were 9, the container skip subsampling would begin by selecting the 9th container.

2. **Select the required containers by applying the container skip interval.**

   If, for example, the container skip interval were 10, select every 10th container after selecting the 1st container using the container start number.

   When selecting containers using the container skip interval, ensure that the container skip interval applies to all containers relevant to the test. A container of easily isolated or missent mail that is *not* easily isolated before beginning the test *must* have the container skip applied to it. *Do not substitute another container in its place.* This will create biased results.

   Example: When applying a container skip of 6 through flat tubs with a random start of 4, the data collector finds that the 10th tub is missent to the facility. He or she *must* select the missent tub. *Do not substitute the missent tub with any other tub.* Continue the container skip of 6 starting with the 11th tub.

3. **Use the mailpiece start number to select the first mailpiece within the first container that has been selected.**

   If, for instance, the mailpiece skip interval were 6 and the mailpiece start number were 4, begin mailpiece skip subsampling by first selecting the 4th mailpiece within the first selected container.

4. **Select the required mailpieces by applying the mailpiece skip interval through all the containers that have been selected using the container skip interval.**

   For example, if using a mailpiece skip interval of 6, choose every 6th mailpiece for recording after selecting the starting mailpiece.

When selecting mailpieces using the mailpiece skip interval, ensure that the mailpiece skip interval is applied throughout all containers that are selected using the container skip interval (step 3).

At the end of a container, mark the container with a tag and carry over the skip interval to the next selected container. Write down on a piece of paper the number of mailpieces following the last selected mailpiece from the just-completed container. Also mark all selected containers that have been sampled to help in remembering which containers have already been sampled. Marking containers and mailpieces is most important between breaks in the mail processing flow, such as between dispatches.

Example: Container skip subsampling is being performed on the MEP *exclusively letter shape mail for the entire facility*. Estimate that the expected number of letter trays is 150 and that the approximate number of letters per tray is 450. In this case, choose the 126–200 entry in the *Container Range* row of the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1) for the letter trays. Then, choose the 301–500 entry in the *Average Pieces Per Container* column for the number of letters per letter tray.

Following the table in RM 3–1, enter a container skip of 18 and a mailpiece skip of 16 on the *Test Header* screen. As a result, CODES generates a container start number of 8 and a mailpiece start number of 15.

Accordingly, begin the subsampling by selecting the 8th container (based on the container start number of 8). Thereafter, select every 18th container (based on the container skip interval of 18).

Continuing with the first selected container, select the 15th letter as the starting letter (based on the mailpiece start number of 15). Thereafter, select every 16th mailpiece throughout the entire volume of mail within the selected containers for that container type (based on the mailpiece skip interval of 16).

Upon selecting the last letter in the container that is being counted, the data collector realizes that 10 letters remain in the container, he or she should write on a piece of paper the number 10 and mark the letter tray as *completed.*

The data collector should then begin testing the next container that has been selected using the container skip interval and continue the count at the place where he or she left off. Choose as the 1st mailpiece from this container the 6th letter (the 6th letter being the 16th letter for that count, as determined by your calculation of 16 minus 10). Finally, continue with the remainder of the test by selecting every 16th mailpiece (again, based on the mailpiece skip of 16).

Note: When obtaining start numbers from CODES, remember the following:

- When using more than one computer, ignore the random start numbers of all but one of the computers.
- If the computer is turned off and then back on again, new start numbers will appear. If the data collector is still performing the same test, ignore these new start numbers and continue where he left off in the skip process.
- If a session is ended and later began again, the same container and average pieces per container ranges will be chosen. The message *In Use* will then appear in the start number fields. The same skip interval should be used.

Exception: Detached mailing cards are sometimes returned for reprocessing through automation. When you encounter a detached mailing card in DPS mail, do not consider these in the mailpiece skip count. Treat these commingled detached mailing cards as though they are not in the tray and do not count or select the piece for recording.

You are applying a mailpiece skip interval of 5 through a letter tray with a random start of 3. The 2nd and 6th mailpiece are detached mailing cards. The random start would begin on the 4th mailpiece as the 2nd mailpiece is ignored because that is a detached mailing card. Continue with a mailpiece skip of 5, starting with the 5th mailpiece. Ignoring the 6th mailpiece that is a detached mailing card, would result in the selection of the 10th mailpiece, 15th mailpiece, etc.

5. **Use one of the following two methods to gather mailpieces for recording:**

   - **Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) Mail:** Keep DPS mail in its walk-sequenced order. Several techniques have been employed by data collectors to test DPS mail while maintaining the mail sequence order. The following is one such technique: Select each mailpiece for recording and *mark* the place of each selected mailpiece in the tray or container by turning the mailpiece which follows it on end. If the last mailpiece in the tray or container is selected, mark its place with a card or other marker. After skip-counting the DPS mail is finished, record the selected pieces individually. Then return each one to its place in the tray before recording the next one.

     Marking the DPS mailpiece's position will ensure that mailpieces are not counted out of sequence and risk double-counting. This also ensures that the quality of the statistical data is not threatened by miscounting.

- **Non-DPS mail:** Since it is not necessary to keep this mail in strict order, these mailpieces may be placed to the side as they are selected.

6. **Record the selected mailpieces.**

   Use the appropriate procedures outlined in sections 3.8 through 3.11 to record selected mailpieces in the CODES Laptop.

7. **After recording the mailpieces, end the session and save it according to the procedures given in section 3.12.3.**

8. **If testing multiple container types, go to section 3.7.3 to determine the random start number and begin entering mailpiece data on another group.**

3.7.3 Container Skip Subsampling: Multiple Primary Container Types

Several types of primary containers may be available for sampling such as letter trays, flat tubs, OTRs, hampers, etc. These containers may arrive grouped in larger containers, such as GPMCs. Under these circumstances, it may be difficult to complete an entire test within its given time window.

The container skip subsampling procedure outlined in section 3.7.1 may not be practical for each type of primary container. Therefore, choosing to use the procedure outlined in section 3.7.1 alone, may allow too many mailpieces to be selected and not enough time to complete the entire test.

Below are four options that may be used in conjunction with section 3.7.1. These options will enable the data collector to choose skip intervals that allow the sampling of the most mail possible while completing the test within its given time window.

1. **Perform the steps listed in items 1 through 4 of section 3.7.1.**

   - Identify primary containers.

   Note: Bundles of flat mail may be considered primary containers.

   - Exclude all mail that will be reprocessed and curtailed mail (if applicable) (section 3.2.2 and Appendix E).
   - Exclude easily isolatable containers of missent mail.
   - Isolate multiple identical pieces of 200 or more.
   - Separate containers holding predominantly Priority Mail.

2. **Perform either Option 1 or Option 2 as listed below.**

   If testing loose flats and/or flat bundles on a flat shape mail processing stream or exclusively flat shape MEP, then consider performing Option 3 or 4.

Option 1: Place in containers all mailpieces in a manner that results in one primary container type.

a. Choose one type of primary container that will be used for the entire volume of mail.

b. Physically place all mailpieces that are not in the chosen primary container type into the chosen primary container.

Example: The data collector chooses flat tubs as the single primary container type, and your test volume includes a hamper of loose flats. Apply the container skip to the hamper by physically placing the flats from the hamper into flat tubs.

c. Go to step 6 of section 3.7.1 and continue with the container skip subsampling procedure for one primary container type.

Option 2: Treat each primary container type as an independent group to be tested and go to step 4.

3. **Use Option 3 or Option 4 only if, while performing a container skip through flat tubs, large containers of loose flats and/or flat bundles are encountered.**

Option 3: Physically arrange the loose flats and/or flat bundles into stacks and consider each 1 foot increment within these stacks as a primary container. (Use only for flat shape mail processing stream or exclusively flat shape MEPs.)

a. For *each* large primary container, arrange the loose flats and/or flat bundles into stacks.

- These large primary containers include such equipment as hampers, wiretainers, and Postal Paks containing loose flats and/or bundles of flats.
- Stack the mail either inside or outside the large mail containers.

Example: Within a hamper arrange the mail into stacks. Or, if the mail is being removed from the large containers by operations and then placed on nutting trucks, stack the mail on this equipment.

b. Consider the flat tubs and each 1 ft. increment within these arranged stack(s) as primary containers for subsampling.

c. Go to step 6 of section 3.7.1 and continue with the container skip subsampling procedure for one primary container type.

Option 4: Physically arrange the loose flats and/or flat bundles into stacks of *equal* height, with the number of stacks equal to the container skip interval for the flat tubs. Consider each stack as a primary container. (Use only for flat shape mail processing stream or exclusively flat shape MEPs.)

a. For each large primary container, arrange the mail into stacks of equal height with the total number of stacks equal to the container skip interval established for the flat tubs.

   - These large primary containers include such equipment as hampers, wiretainers, and Postal Paks containing loose flats and/or bundles of flats.
   - Stack the mail either inside or outside the large mail containers.

Example: Within a hamper arrange the mail into stacks. Or, if the mail is being removed from the large containers by operations and then placed on nutting trucks, stack the mail on this equipment.

b. Consider the flat tubs and each stack as primary containers for subsampling.

c. Go to item E below and continue with the container skip subsampling procedure for one primary container type.

In all cases when using Option 4, select *only* one stack of mail in each large primary container. The stack of mail selected will depend on where the count of the other primary container type (for example, flat tubs) was ended.

Example: A container skip of 4 is selected with a container random start of 2, and there are seventeen flat tubs and one wiretainer. First, select the 2nd, 6th, 10th, and 14th flat tubs. At the end of the count, there are three flat tubs left. Now, open the wiretainer and arrange the mail into four equal stacks (the number of stacks equals the container skip interval of 4). Continue applying the container skip of 4. This is done by considering the three flat tubs left over as a count of three, and the 1st stack as a count of four. Select this 1st stack. After the 1st stack, no additional stacks of mail may be selected.

Example: A container skip of 6 is selected with a container random start of 5, and there are 39 flat buckets and two hampers. First, select the 5th, 11th, 17th, 23rd, 29th, and 35th flat buckets. At the end of the count, four flat tubs are left. Now open each hamper and arrange the mail in each into six equal stacks (the number of stacks equals the container skip interval of 6). Continue applying the container skip of 6. This is done by considering the four flat buckets left over as a count of four, the first stack from the first hamper as five, and the second stack as number six. Select the second stack within the hamper. Continue the count through the stacks in the first hamper (with one, two, three, four) and then through the stacks from the second hamper (with five, six) and select the second stack. After the second stack, no additional stacks are selected.

4. **Determine the average number of mailpieces per container in one group of primary containers.**

   The following average volume per container estimates are recommended:

   - Letter Tray: 301–500.
   - Flat Tub: 51–100.

5. **Estimate the number of primary containers that will be tested in item 4.**

6. **For Option 2 only, make the primary container group adjustment.**

   Follow the procedures in section 3.7.4.1, step 1 to adjust the skip-intervals for each primary container group.

7. **Repeat steps 4 through 6 for each of the other primary container types.**

3.7.4 Adjustments to the Container Skip Subsampling Interval

The testing of multiple container groups is not the only time that adjustment to the container skip interval may be necessary. Conditions such as the following may also indicated that an adjustment is necessary:

- Unexpected volume changes.
- Shortened time windows.

When a situation arises that requires a change in the container skip interval, use one of the following adjustment options:

- **Subsection A:** Use Subsection A if containers for subsampling have not yet been selected.
- **Subsection B:** Use Subsection B if at least one container for subsampling has been selected.

3.7.4.1 Adjustments for Container Skip Subsampling *Before* Any Containers are Selected for Subsampling

The following are listed in order of preference; therefore, select Adjustment 1 whenever possible.

Adjustment 1: Adjust the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals to accommodate:

1. **More mail than expected or within short time windows:**

   a. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the right of the intersection of the original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1) (i.e., same row, next column to the right).

b. If the skip intervals are already located in the far-right column of the table, select the container and mailpiece skip intervals in the row immediately below your current row (i.e., same column, next row).

c. If moving over one cell as explained in 1 and 2 is not sufficient for the time window and volume, move to the intersection of the row and column that will maximize the number of mailpieces available for recording.

d. Enter the new container and mailpiece skip intervals in the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen as described in section 3.7.1, step 8.

e. CODES generates new start numbers. Begin sampling in accordance with the procedures outlined in sections 3.7.1 through 3.7.3.

2. Less mail than expected:

a. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the left of the intersection of the original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1) (i.e., same row, next column to the left). If the skip intervals are already located in the far-left column of the table, select the container and mailpiece skip intervals in the row immediately above the current row (i.e., same column, next row).

b. If a large time window exists, move to the intersection of any row or column that maximizes the number of pieces available for recording.

c. If the time window allows, change to mailpiece skip subsampling (section 3.6).

d. Enter the new container skip and mailpiece skip intervals on the *ODIS-RPW Header Test* screen as described in section 3.7.1, step 8.

e. CODES generates new start numbers. Begin sampling according to sections 3.7.1 through 3.7.3.

3.7.4.2 Adjustments for Container Skip Subsampling: *After* at Least One Container Has Been Selected for Subsampling and *Between* Dispatches.

Select either Adjustment 2, 3, or 4 when at least one container has been selected for subsampling.

Adjustment 2: Adjust the mailpiece skip interval and use the same container skip interval.

a. Using the ODIS-RPW *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1), and using the same container skip interval, select a new mailpiece skip interval that will allow recording of the maximum number of mailpieces for the situation.

b. Change the mailpiece skip interval by selecting *Change Skip Interval* from the Options Menu (section 3.6.3).

c. Ignore residual mailpieces from the previous container.

d. Beginning with the next container (selected using the original container skip), apply the new random start and new mailpiece skip interval. Continue applying the new mailpiece skip interval through the remaining selected containers.

e. Go to Adjustment 3, if the largest mailpiece skip interval possible is already being used.

Adjustment 3: Adjust both the mailpiece and the container skip intervals. Consider this adjustment under the following conditions:

- Increasing or decreasing the mailpiece skip interval using Adjustment 2 does not suffice for the time window or changing mail volumes.
- Adjustment 2 cannot be used because the largest or smallest mailpiece skip interval possible is already being used.

Wait for a natural break in mail processing (such as between dispatches). Then, perform the following substeps:

a. Ignore residual containers and mailpieces from the former session.

That is, if 6 containers remain from a session using a container skip interval of 8, ignore these 6 remaining containers.

b. Using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1), select other container skip and mailpiece skip intervals that are practical within the given time window.

c. Enter the required information into the Options Menu.

d. The Change Skip Interval screen (Figure 3.6.3–1) will then be displayed.

Note: The section *Current Skip:* on the center of the screen displays the current skip interval for both containers and mailpieces. The *Skip* field allows the tester to change the skip interval or change to a different sampling method (such as changing from mailpiece skip subsampling to container skip subsampling or vice versa).

Container Subsampling (Y/N)?: Enter <Y> *Yes.* You should already be familiar with the subsampling guidelines in this chapter and know which subsampling method you will be using.

Container Skip and Start Number: Enter the appropriate container skip interval from the *Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1). CODES generates a random start number.

Apply the random start numbers and the skip intervals to the remaining mailpieces and containers in accordance with the procedures outlined in sections 3.7.1 through 3.7.3.

Adjustment 4: Changes to a mailpiece skip interval or census sampling procedure. Consider this option when:

- Mail volumes are considerably less than expected on subsequent dispatches.
- There is an adequate time window on subsequent dispatches.

  Wait for a break in mail processing (such as between dispatches). Then perform the following steps:

  a. End the current session and save it. Refer to section 3.12 for information on how to end and save your session.

  b. Ignore residual containers and mailpieces from the former session.

     That is, if 6 containers remain from a session using a container skip interval of 8, ignore these 6 remaining containers.

  c. Choose either the census or mailpiece skip subsampling method.

  d. Follow the procedures for using the census method (section 3.5) or mailpiece skip subsampling method (section 3.6).

When performing container skip subsampling, it is essential to recognize *primary* containers.

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3.8 Preparing to Enter Mailpiece Data into the CODES Laptop

After entering the sampling method into the CODES Laptop, and selecting some or all of the necessary mailpieces, begin recording the requested mailpiece data.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Depending on the mailpiece that is selected, the recordings will consist of some of the following questions or categories:

- Forwarded/Returned.
- Missent.
- Mail Class (First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, Free Mail for the Blind, International, Periodicals, Priority Mail, or Package Services).
- Subclass.
- Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking.
- Mail Type (letter, flat, etc.).
- Type of Mailer (Private, Federal Government or USPS).
- Indicia (Stamp, Semipostal Stamp, Precanceled Stamp, Stamped Envelope, Meter, Postal Validation Imprint, Permit Imprint, or Information Based Indicia).
- Number of Pieces.
- Weight.
- Mailability.
- Postmark Date.
- ZIP Code Lookup.
- FIM (yes or no).
- Does Date Exceed Normal Range? (for a late single piece First-Class Mail with a stamp, meter, or an IBI as an indicia).
- Barcode Size (5-digit, 9-digit, or 11-digit).
- Address handwritten.
- Special Services.
- Total mailpiece Revenue.
- Verify (Y/N).
- Comment (for failed single piece First-Class Mail letters and cards).

This section gives directions on how to enter data into the CODES Laptop by accessing the *Options Menu* screen (Figure 3.8.0–1). Use the *Collect Mailpiece Data* option to enter data on a single mailpiece and the *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* option to enter data on multiple identical mailpieces.

The following section provides the procedures for entering mailpiece data for each of the categories and questions mentioned above.

Exception: Express Mail and Mailgram mailpieces selected through a census or by a subsampling procedure and easily isolatable containers of missent mail are not to be recorded in the ODIS-RPW data entry software. These particular mailpieces can be immediately released to operations for further processing.

Record commingled missent mailpieces selected through a census or by a subsampling procedure by pressing the <M> key on the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.8.1–1).

PROCEDURES

After verifying that the information on the header screen is correct, CODES displays the *Options Menu* screen (Figure 3.8.0–1).

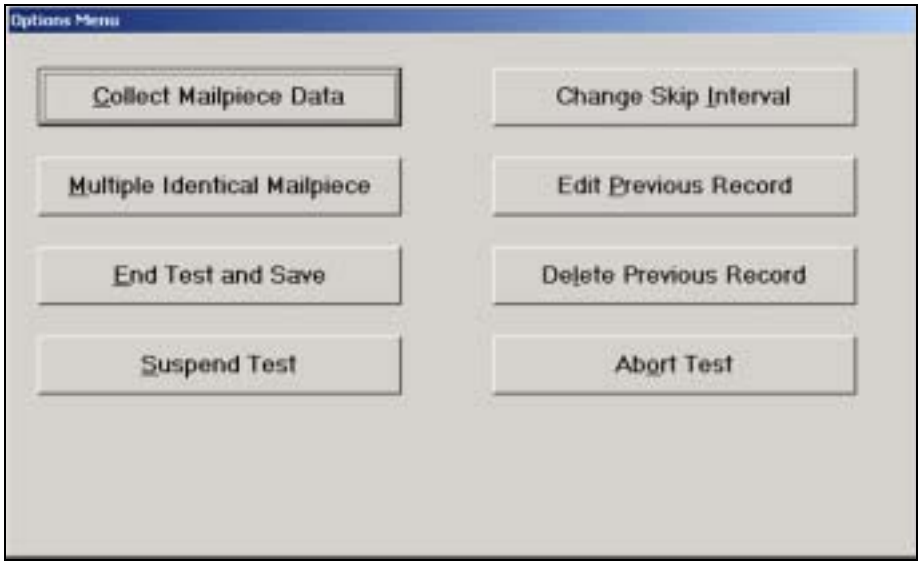

Figure 3.8.0–1. *Options Menu* Screen

3.8.1 Collect Mailpiece Data

Select *Collect Mailpiece Data* to begin recording information from the selected mailpiece. CODES immediately displays the *Mail Class & Type* (Figure 3.8.1–1) screen. For instructions on making selections from that screen, proceed to section 3.9. If you plan to use the multiple identical mailpiece (MIP) procedure, select *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* and continue with section 3.8.2.

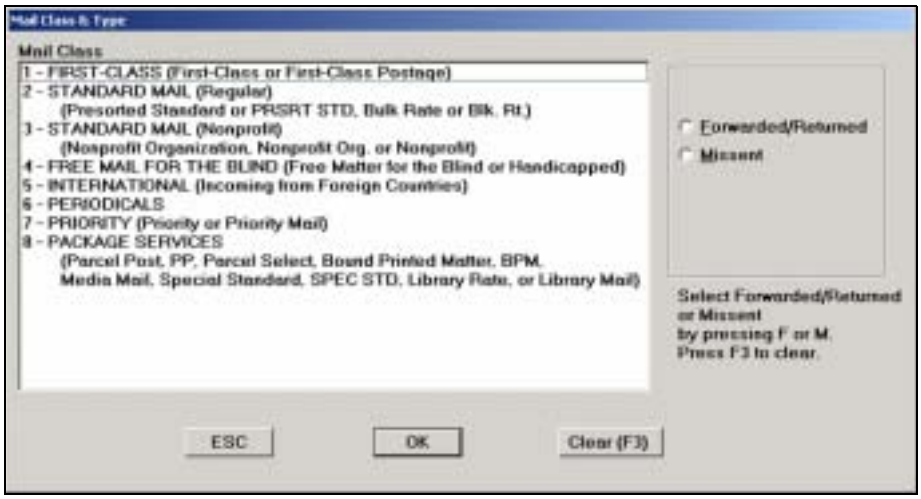

Figure 3.8.1–1. *Mail Class & Type* Screen

3.8.2 Multiple Identical Mailpieces

Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIPs) are defined as an easily isolatable group of 200 or more mailpieces identified *before* applying the skip interval. The mailpieces must be **identical in all the recorded characteristics**. That is, the pieces must have the same mail class, mail preparation and sortation marking, mail type, type of mailer, indicia, meter information, weight, postmark date, origin ZIP Code, barcode size, barcode source, total mailpiece revenue, and any other characteristics that are class specific (for example, FIM and address handwritten for First-Class). This includes instances where postmark date and origin ZIP Code are all *Cannot Be Read.*

Exception: For Standard Mail (NOT Forwarded or Returned), international mail, Periodicals (NOT Forwarded or Returned), and Package Services Bound Printed Matter Permit Imprint (NOT Forwarded or Returned), weight is not recorded. Therefore, the mailpieces are not required to have identical weight in order to apply the MIP procedure.

The following MIP procedure may be used more than once if two or more different groups of 200 or more identical pieces per group are present:

1. **Determine the total number of identical mailpieces by actual count or by weight.**
   - Count the number of identical pieces that make up one pound if the weight method is used.
   - Multiply this number by the weight (in pounds) of the entire group of identical mailpieces. This will determine the total number of identical mailpieces within the group.

2. **Select *Multiple Identical Mailpiece* from the *Options Menu* screen (Figure 3.8.0–1).**
3. **Press *Yes* or *No* to proceed in recording the MIPs (Figure 3.8.2–1).**

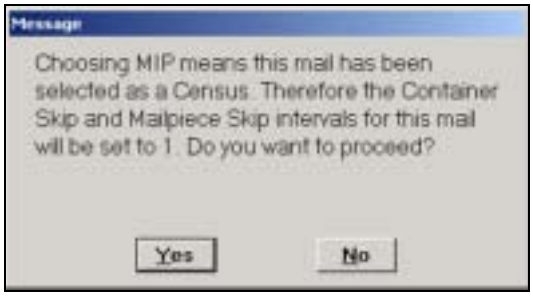

Figure 3.8.2–1. MIP *Message* Screen

To verify that a MIP is being entered, CODES displays the screen shown above.

- **<Y>** Yes, indicates that the mail is selected as a Census and displays the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.8.1–1).
- **<N>** No, indicates that the mail is not selected as a Census and returns the user to the *Options Menu* screen (Figure 3.8.0–1).

4. **Enter MIP data.**

- Enter mailpiece characteristics in accordance with sections 3.8 and 3.9. If the number of MIPs is greater than 9,999, make more than one entry.
- Enter the number of MIPs on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.8.2–2).

Figure 3.8.2–2. MIP *Pieces* Screen

5. Confirm *Message* screen regarding resetting of skip intervals.

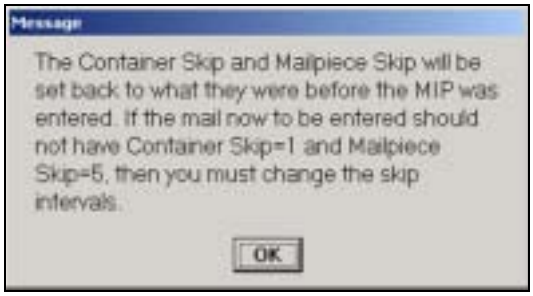

Figure 3.8.2–3. Confirm *Message* Screen

After all mailpiece characteristics are entered, the above screen is shown. This screen reminds the user that the mailpiece skip and container skip are set back to the skip intervals entered on the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen (Figure 3.4.2–1) or on the *Change Skip(s)* screen (Figure 3.8.3–1). If there is another group of 200 or more identical mailpieces to be entered, then repeat steps 1 through 5 above.

- ***OK*** returns the user to the *Options Menu* (Figure 3.8.0–1) screen.

Note: The MIP procedure may be used on later dispatches or at natural breaks in mail processing when there is an easily isolatable group of 200 or more mailpieces identified *before* applying the skip interval on that dispatch of mail. The MIP procedure may *not* be used once mailpiece skip subsampling or container skip subsampling has begun. If a block of 200 or more pieces with identical characteristics is encountered, apply the container skip and mailpiece skip through all containers and all mailpieces in the containers, treating this mail just like any other mail during your count. Using the MIP procedure after mailpiece skip subsampling or container skip subsampling has begun will severely bias the test day volumes.

3.8.3 Changing Skip Interval

To change the skip interval, perform the following steps:

1. Select *Change Skip Interval* from the Options Menu screen (Figure 3.8.0–1).

Note: *Current Skip* in the center of the screen displays the current skip intervals. Entering a Skip for the container or for the mailpiece will allow the skip to be changed. CODES will automatically enter a start number. To change the skip interval or to change to a different sampling method (such as changing from mailpiece skip subsampling to container skip subsampling or vice versa), enter the information on the *Change Skip(s*) screen.

2. Complete the requested information on the *Change Skip(s)* screen.

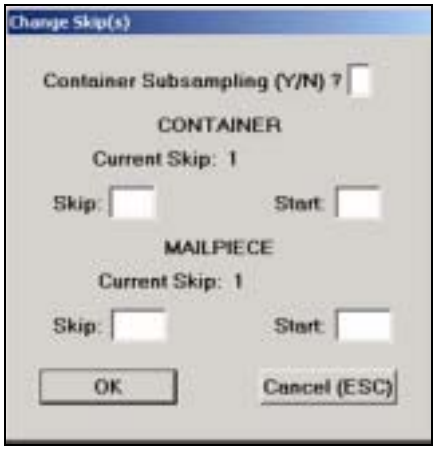

Figure 3.8.3–1. *Change Skip(s)* Screen

a. Determine whether container subsampling is necessary.

b. Enter the skip for the container and/or for the mailpiece. CODES will automatically generate a start number.

c. Click OK to return to the Options Menu screen.

3. Proceed with the recording procedures as described in section 3.9 for the mail class that has been selected.

3.9 Entering Mailpiece Data into the CODES Laptop

To enter mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop select *Conduct Test* from the ODIS-RPW Main Menu shown below, and choose the necessary mailpieces for sampling. In preparation for entering mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop, review the special recording rules in section 3.1.3.

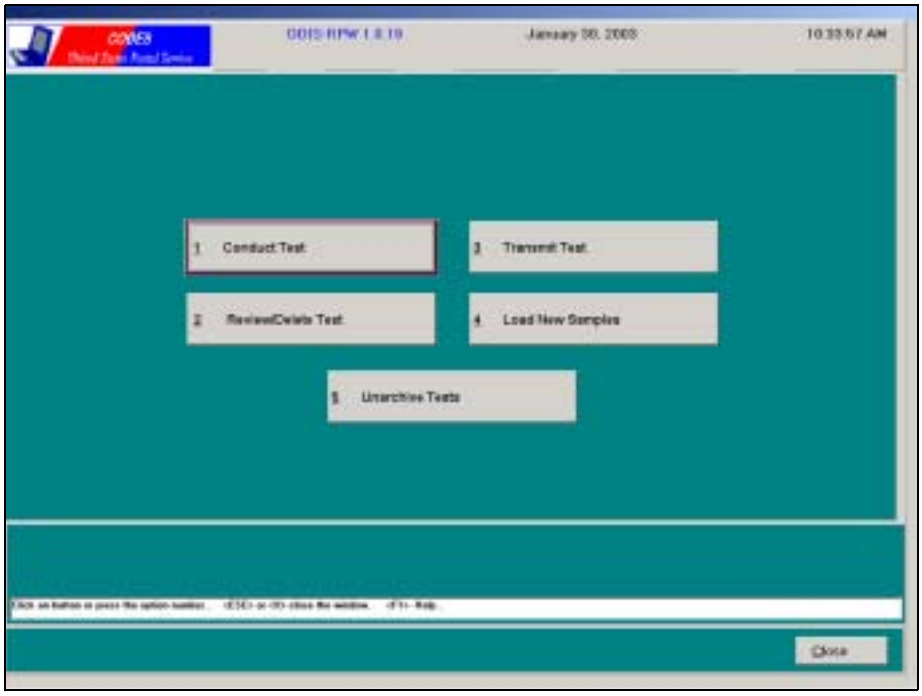

Figure 3.9.0–1. ODIS-RPW *Main Menu* Screen.

Select *Conduct Test* from the *Main Menu* screen, and the *Options Menu* screen, Figure 3.9.0–2, is displayed.

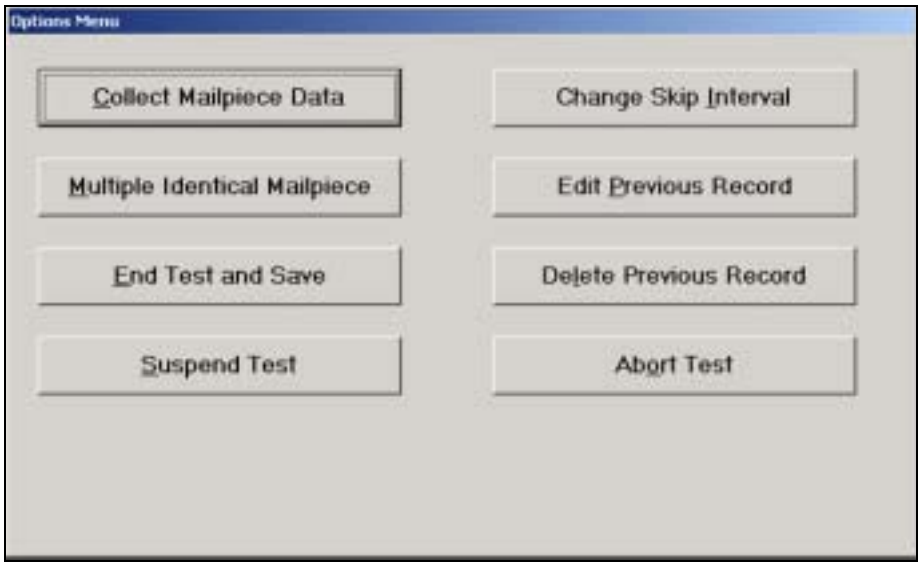

Figure 3.9.0–2. *Options Menu* Screen.

Once the *Options Menu* screen is selected, the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.0–3) is displayed, identifying the various mail classes.

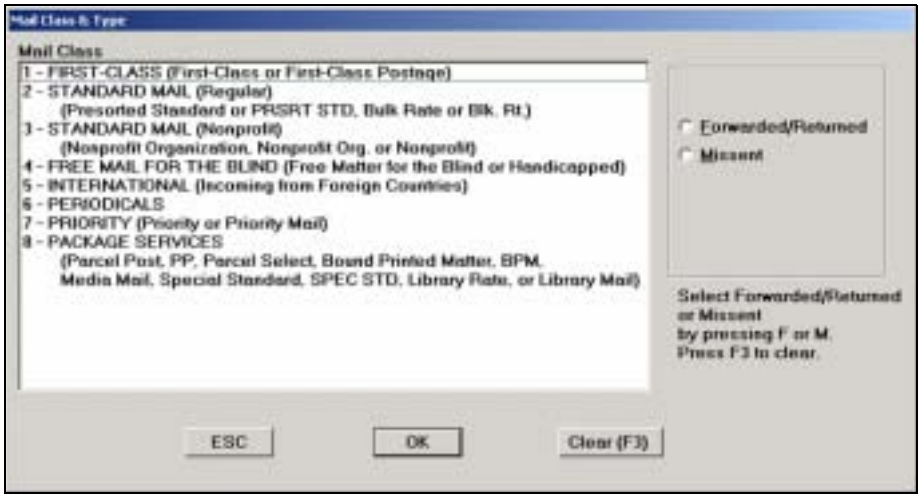

Figure 3.9.0–3. *Mail Class & Type* Screen

PROCEDURES

The ODIS-RPW test procedures described below are presented according to mail class.

- *First-Class Mail* (section 3.9.1).
- *Standard Mail* (section 3.9.2).
- *Standard Mail, Nonprofit* (section 3.9.2).
- *Free Mail for the Blind* (section 3.9.3).

- *International Mail,* (section 3.9.4).
- *Periodicals Mail,* (section 3.9.5).
- *Priority Mail*, (section 3.9.6).
- *Package Services*, (section 3.9.7).

As data is entered into the CODES Laptop, a record of each entry appears on the right side of the screen. After all the data for a mailpiece has been entered, the data collector must verify that the information is correct by answering the prompt.

Note: Before entering any mailpiece data, it is critical to correctly identify the class of mail and mail markings on each mailpiece selected for testing. For descriptions of mail classes, see RM 3–5 and for descriptions of mail markings, see RM 3–6 and RM 3–7.

Note: Before entering any mailpiece data, ensure that the scale is attached, functioning properly, and is balanced/leveled.

Forwarded/Returned/Missent Mail: If the mailpiece is forwarded, returned, or missent, select the appropriate radio button.

- **Forwarded/Returned Mail:** Press <*F*> to select the radio button beside *Forwarded/Returned.*
- **Missent Mail:** Press <*M*> to select the radio button beside *Missent*.
- **Forwarded or Returned, and Missent:** Record as *Missent*.
- **Clear Radio Button:** To clear the radio buttons, press <F3>.

Enter the appropriate option based on what service the mailpiece has received. Then be certain to record all information that appears on the mailpiece regardless of whether it is forwarded, returned, or missent. See RM 3–21 for guidelines on specific characteristics of forwarded or returned mailpieces.

Next, select the appropriate class from the options listed on the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–1).

3.9.1 First-Class Mail

First-Class Mail weighs 13 ounces or less. This class includes letters, cards, flats, IPPs, and small parcels.

To record data from First-Class Mail, complete the following steps:

1. **Select the option First-Class (First-Class or *First-Class* Postage) from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–1).**

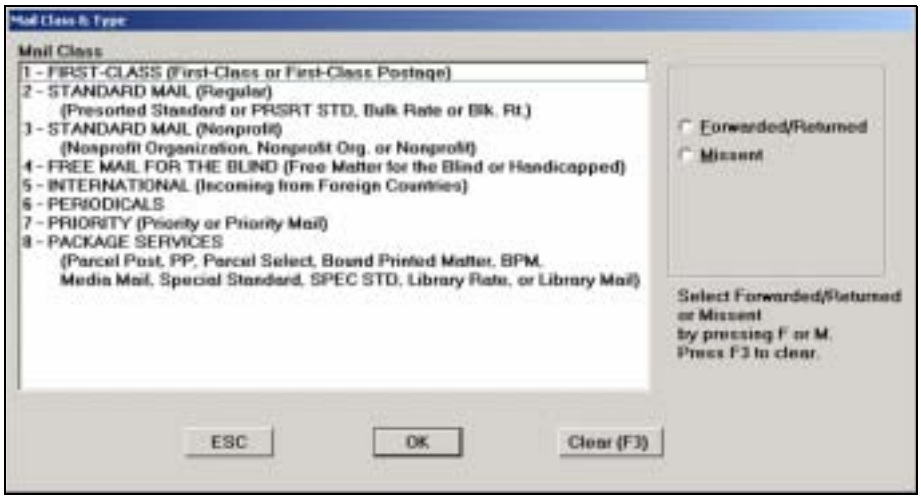

Figure 3.9.1–1. *Mail Class & Type* Screen.

Record all unendorsed mail less than 13 ounces as First-Class Mail.

Note: If postage for unendorsed mail weighing less than 13 ounces has been paid at the Priority Mail rate, do not record as First-Class Mail (section 3.1.3).

Upon selecting *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen, the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.9.1–2) is displayed.

2. Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.

Endorsements (Markings) may be found in a number of places on the mailpiece, such as in the indicia, next to the indicia, above the address label, in the address label, or at the bottom of the mailpiece.

The data collector must start at the top of the mailpiece with the option, *AUTO*, *A???, A?????? through L??????, AB, AT, AV, or MB* and work downward. For example, if a First-Class Mail mailpiece has a *Presorted First-Class* endorsement in the indicia at the top of the mailpiece and *AUTO* in front of the barcode at the bottom of the mailpiece, select *AUTO* since it appears first on the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.9.1–2).

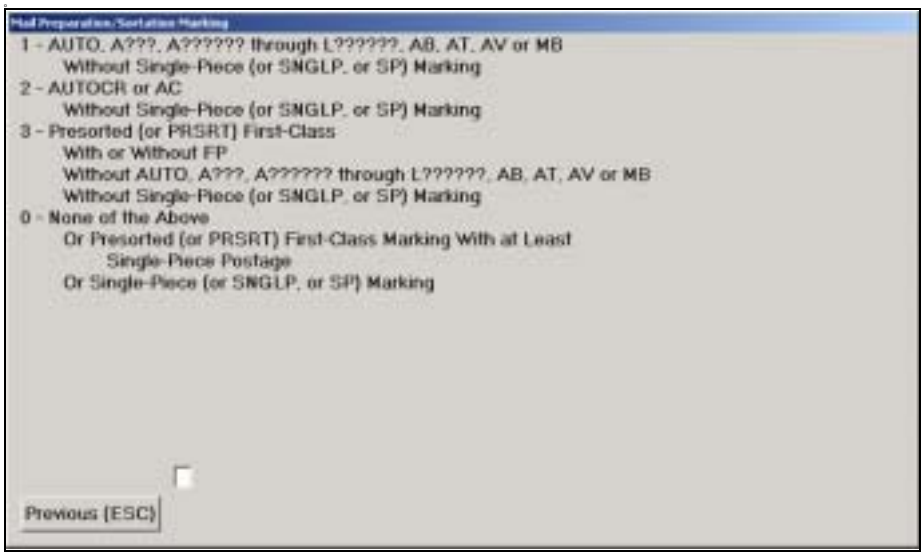

Figure 3.9.1–2. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen

All mail marked *Carrier Route Presort* or *CAR-RT-SORT* without either *AUTO, A???, AUTOCR,* or *single piece* must be recorded as *Presorted (or PRSRT) First-Class.* If the mailpiece has no endorsements, or has a marking of *Single Piece*, record as *None of the Above.* See RM 3–6 for more information.

3. Enter the shape of the mailpiece at the *Mail Type* screen.

Select the type of mail that is being recorded from the list given on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3). *Mail Type* refers to the actual shape of the mailpiece. For definitions of mail type/shape, (RM 3–12).

- Select the type of mail that is being recorded by entering the number in the field at the bottom of the screen.
- Upon entering the number, the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–4) is displayed.

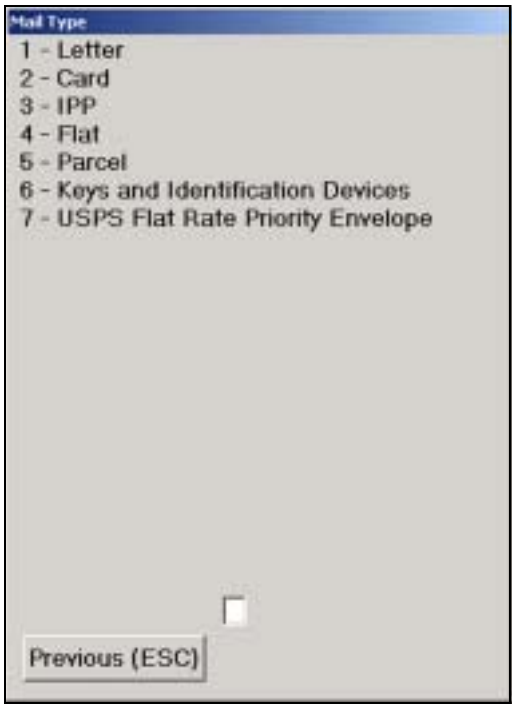

Figure 3.9.1–3. *Mail Type* Screen.

4. Choose the type of mailer at the *Type of Mailer* screen.

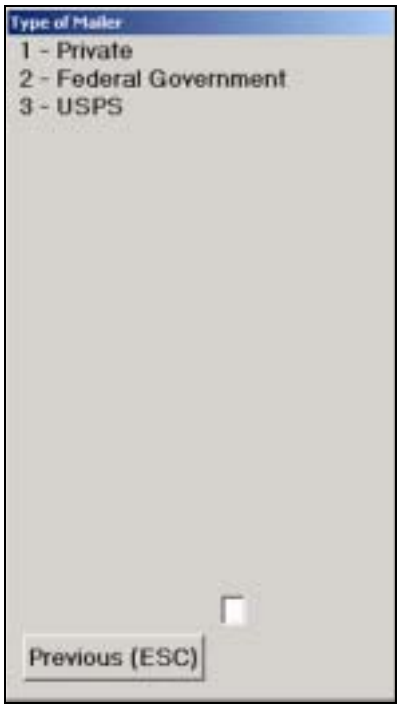

Figure 3.9.1–4. *Type of Mailer* Screen

- Determine if the type of mailer is *Private, Federal Government,* or *USPS.*
- Enter in the field at the bottom of the screen the option number that corresponds to the type of mailer.

Upon entering the option number, the *Indicia* screen is displayed (Figure 3.9.1–5).

5. Enter all Indicia found on the mailpiece.

Indicia refers to the postage payment on the mailpiece (i.e., stamp, semi-postal stamp, precanceled stamp, stamped envelope, meter, PVI, Permit Imprint, IBI, or none). Determine the correct indicia on the mailpiece and enter the appropriate information.

Note: Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece by selecting all that apply from Figure 3.9.1–5.

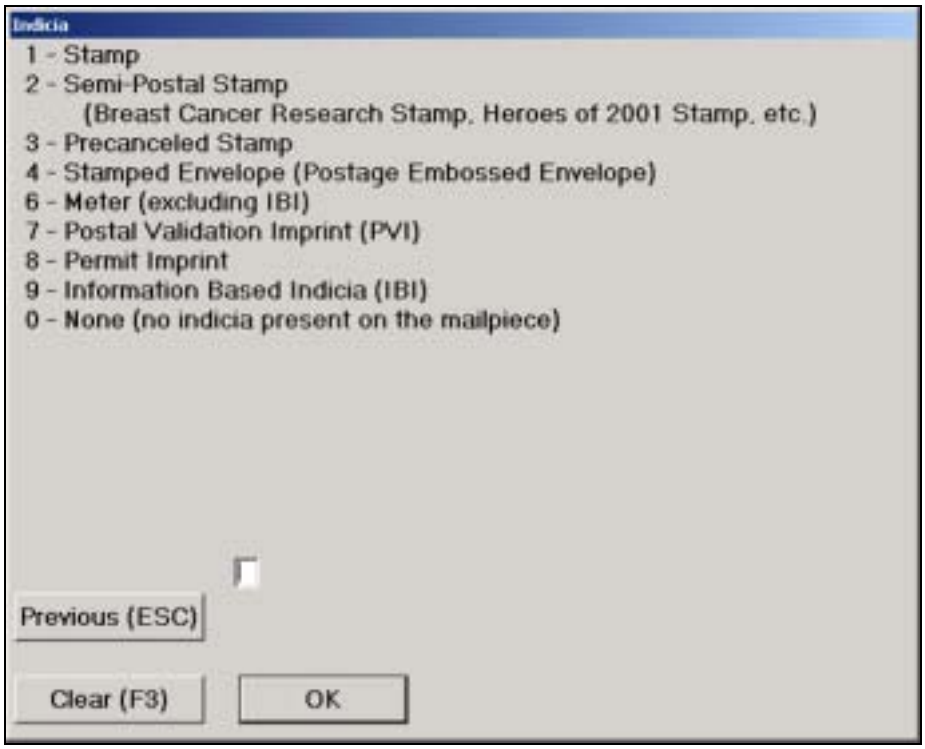

Figure 3.9.1–5. *Indicia* Screen.

Examples of the following indicia may be found in RM 3–18.

- **Stamp:** Adhesive stamps are affixed in the upper right corner of the address side of the mail cover.
- **Semi-Postal Stamp:** Stamps such as the Breast Cancer Research stamp and the Heroes of 2001 stamp are included in this category. Record these stamps at the First-Class Mail postage rate.
- **Precanceled Stamp:** Precanceled stamps are stamps which have been canceled prior to mailing.
- **Stamped Envelope:** This category includes a precanceled stamped envelope (typically, but not limited to measuring 4 1/8 X 9 1/2 inches), where the precanceled stamp is embossed on the envelope. This envelope is also referred to as a Postage Embossed Envelope.
- **Stamped Card:** This category includes a precanceled stamped card where the precanceled stamp is embossed on the card. This card is also referred to as a Postage Embossed Card.
- **Meter:** If the postage payment is made by meter, and Meter is selected on the *Indicia* Screen, the *Meter Manufacturer* screen (Figure 3.9.1-6) is displayed.

a. Select the appropriate option from the *Meter Manufacturer* screen (Figure 3.9.1-6) that corresponds to the information found on the mailpiece.

The meter manufacturer's name is usually listed as an abbreviation above the meter number or in the meter imprint or strip. See RM 3–19 for examples.

Once the appropriate option has been selected from the *Meter Manufacturer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–6), the *Meter Number* screen (Figure 3.9.1–7) is displayed.

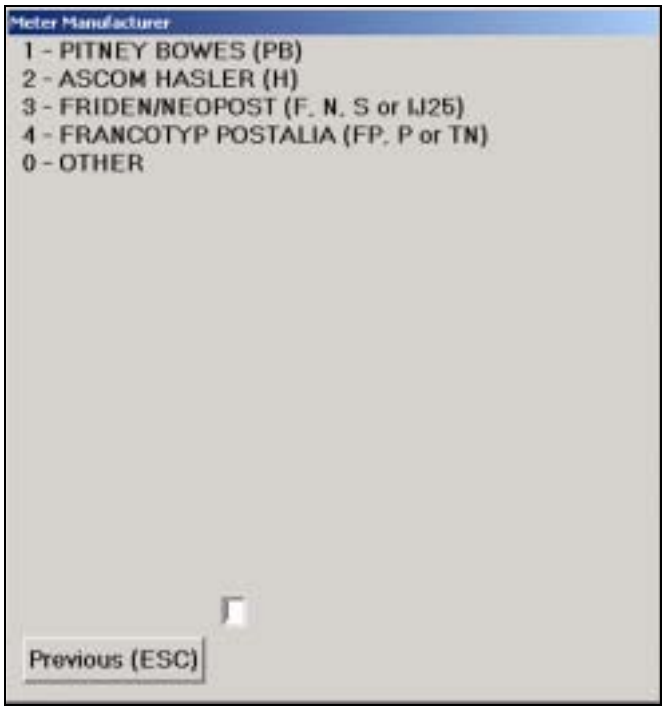

Figure 3.9.1–6. *Meter Manufacturer* Screen

b. Enter the meter number from the indicia on the *Meter Number* screen.

Generally, the meter number is located to the left of or below the postage and just to the right of the ring stamp.

Guidelines for keying meter numbers:

- Exclude leading zeros.
- Enter an <X> for each digit that is not readable.
- Never key a leading letter or meter manufacturer name.
- Select <-> *Cannot Be Read* when the entire meter number is unreadable.

Example: Meter number reads PB00123545. Key 123545, excluding leading zeros.

Example: The long meter number is NO46J00000045. The last alpha character to the right is the letter 'J'. Key only 45 (excluding leading zeros).

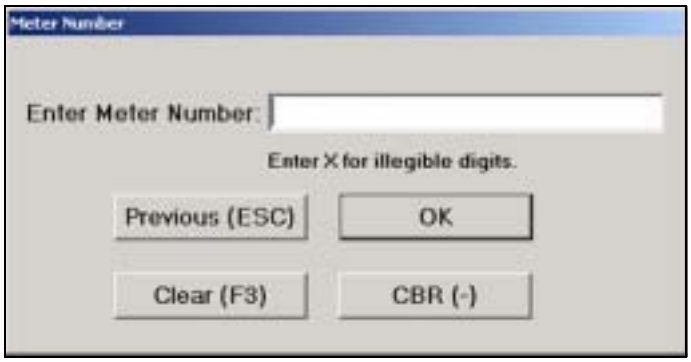

Figure 3.9.1–7. *Meter Number* Screen

Note: As a part of the Postal Service's revenue protection effort, a "hot list" file of meter numbers, provided by the Postal Inspection Service, is included in the software. When an inserted meter number matches a number on the *hot list*, the data collection software will ask that the mailpiece be photocopied. When this occurs, the following procedure should be followed:

- Photocopy the mailpiece.
- Complete the *Inspection Service Mailpiece Photocopy Transmittal* Form.
- Mail the photocopy of the mailpiece with the transmittal form to the Inspection Service. See RM 3–22 for the transmittal form.

- **Postal Validation Imprint (PVI):** A PVI or Postal Validation Imprint is printed at a postal retail service unit.
  - Private is the type of mailer for PVI indicia.
  - Record origin ZIP Code "000" that is sometimes seen in PVI indicia as *Cannot Be Read*.

Exhibit 3.9.1–1. PVI Example

- **Permit Imprint:** Permit indicia usually displays the words *Permit No*. and the mail class of the mailpiece (e.g., *Bulk Rate, Presorted Standard, Nonprofit Org.,* or *First-Class Mail).*

  Occasionally, mailpieces will not contain the words *Permit No*. and instead show only the class of mail (e.g., Bulk Rate) and the words *U.S. Postage PAID XYZ Firm*.

- **Information Based Indicia (IBI):** Information Based Indicia is a type of *postage security device (PSD) meter*, categorized under the *Generation 2* evidencing systems. IBI can be applied as an indicia to any class of mail except Periodicals. IBIs are digital indicia that include human-readable information and a Postal Service approved two-dimensional barcode or other Postal Service approved symbology, with a digital signature and other required data fields (revenue, postmark date, origin city and state, and origin ZIP Code). Human-readable information pertaining to revenue is optional. IBI as a type of metered mail is entitled to all privileges and is subject to all conditions applying to the various classes of mail.

- *Press OK* or <Enter> on the *Indicia* screen. The *Pieces* screen is displayed.

6. Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen.

The number of pieces of mail that have the same mail class, same mail type and has the same endorsements, revenue, weight, postmark date, postmark time, postmark of origin, and indicia is entered on the *Pieces* screen.

Figure 3.9.1–8. *Pieces* Screen

- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen.
- Select ***OK*** or press **<Enter>** to move to the *Weight* screen.

7. Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen.

Entering a <Y> for *Yes* on the *Test Header* screen to indicate that a scale is attached to the laptop, displays the *Weight* screen below, Figure 3.9.1–9.

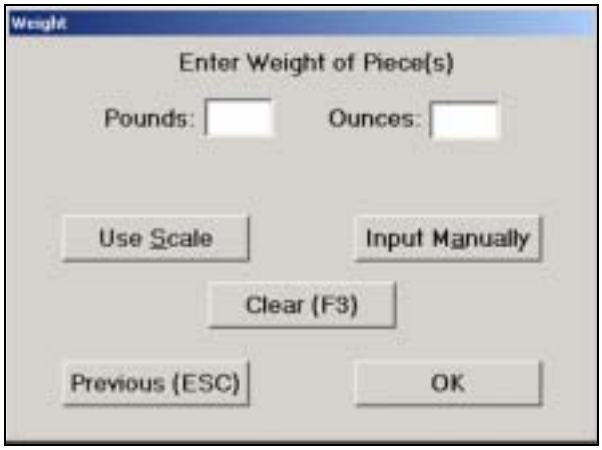

Figure 3.9.1–9. *Weight* Screen

- Select ***Use Scale*** to automatically send weight to the laptop.
- Select ***Input Manually*** to enter pounds and ounces in the appropriate fields on the screen.

If there is an electronic scale attached to the CODES Laptop, place the mailpiece(s) on the scale. When the electronic reading stabilizes, press <S>. If you prefer to use the manual weight option here, press <A>.

If there is no electronic scale attached to the CODES Laptop, weigh the mailpiece(s) using a separate scale. Enter the weight on the screen using the number keys at the top of the keyboard or the alphanumeric keys at the right side of the keyboard. Press <Enter> to move from *Pounds* to *Ounces.* Press <Enter> again to input the weight.

After completing all entries, select *OK.* The *Mailability* screen is displayed.

8. Enter the machinability of the mailpiece on the *Mailability* screen.

Except for Priority Mail, any piece of First-Class Mail (including keys and identification devices) weighing 1 ounce or less and not claimed at a card rate, is subject to a nonmachinable surcharge. For letter-size mailpieces, the nonmachinable surcharge most often applies if:

a. The aspect ratio (length divided by height) is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5, or

b. The mailpiece is polybagged, polywrapped or enclosed in any plastic material.

For nonletters (IPPs, flats or parcels), the nonmachinable surcharge applies if:

a. The mailpiece is greater than 1/4-inch thick.

b. The length is more than 11-1/2 inches or the height is more than 6-1/8 inches.

c. The aspect ratio is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5.

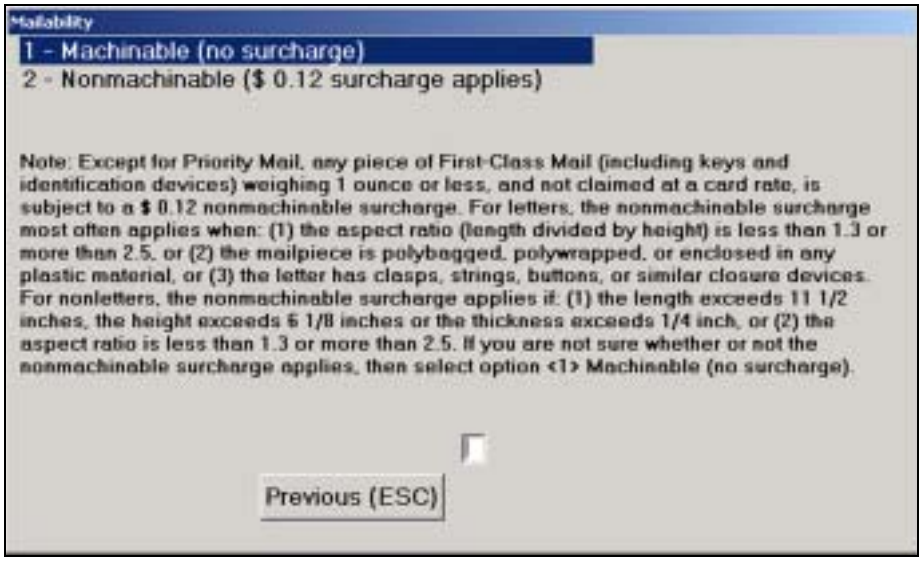

Figure 3.9.1–10. *Mailability* Screen

- Select the option *Nonmachinable (surcharge applies)* when the mailpiece is subject to the nonmachinable surcharge.
- Select the option *Machinable* when the mailpiece is not subject to the surcharge.

Note: If you are unsure of a mailpiece's mailability, select *Machinable*.

After completing the field on the *Mailability* screen, the *Postmark Date* screen is displayed.

9. Enter the date of the mailpiece on the *Postmark Date* screen.

The postmark date may be found in the following locations:

Stamp: The postmark date is found in the cancellation mark ignore video ink jet cancellations on stamped mail.

Meter: The postmark date is found in the meter strip or the Postal Service applied or Mailer-applied video ink jet overcancellation. When there is a video ink jet cancellation on metered mail, follow the rules set forth in Appendix H.

If the month/day on the mailpiece is not readable, enter <-> *Cannot Be Read*.

Figure 3.9.1–11. *Postmark Date* Screen

- Enter the date of the mailpiece, using 2 digits for the month and 2 digits for the year.
- Select OK or press <Enter> to display the ZIP Code Lookup screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).

Note: Postal Service postmark dates are in month/day/year format. Most foreign postal administrations, however, use the day-month-year format. Foreign postmarks may also spell out the month, for example, *25 May 03* or simply use Arabic numerals, for example, 25.5.03. For example, the Postal Service may use a postmark of Dec. 13, 2003, a foreign postal administration may use a postmark date of 13.12.03. If you enter this date as *13-12*, the record will be rejected because there is no 13th month.

10. Enter the ZIP Code of the mailpiece on the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).

CODES displays the *ZIP Code Look-up* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12). The 3-digit ZIP Code of origin can be found in one of several places on the mailpiece depending on the type of indicia:

Stamp: The ZIP Code of origin may be found in the cancellation mark.

Meter: The ZIP Code of origin may be found in the meter imprint or in some cases the video ink jet cancellation. See Appendix H for special rules governing video ink jet cancellations.

Permit: The ZIP Code of origin can be found in the city/state or ZIP Code in the indicia.

Drop Shipped Mail: The ZIP Code of origin can be found in the ZIP Code of origin ad plate or in the mailer-applied video ink jet cancellation (Appendix H).

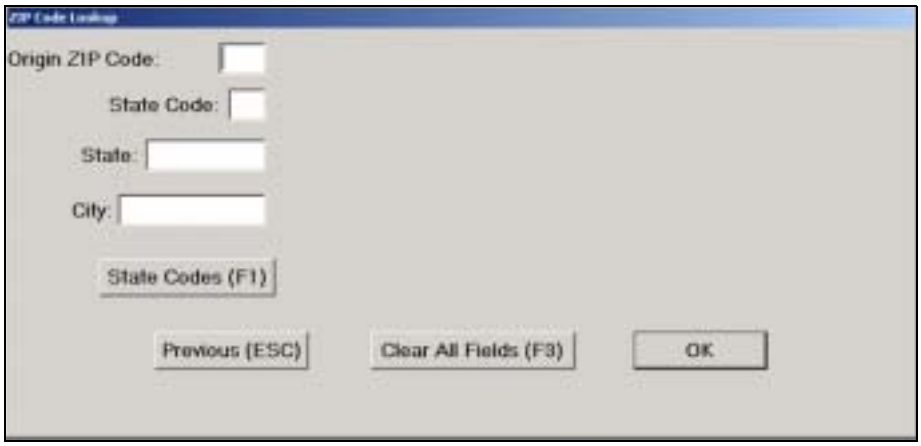

Figure 3.9.1–12. *ZIP Code Lookup* Screen.

- Enter the first 3 digits of the ZIP Code into the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen.

If the origin postmark ZIP is not known or if it is not readable, enter <-> *Cannot Be Read.* Then enter the state code and select the city from the display of cities with the selected state in order to determine the ZIP Code.

- Enter the correct origin state abbreviation if it is known, in the field provided. CODES automatically displays a list of cities that corresponds to the origin state entered.
- Select <F1> for CODES to display a list of state abbreviations, if the correct origin state abbreviation is not known. Use the <PgUp>, <PgDn>, or <↑> and <↓> keys to scroll through the list. When the correct state is located, press <Enter> to select it. The correct abbreviation is displayed in the state field.

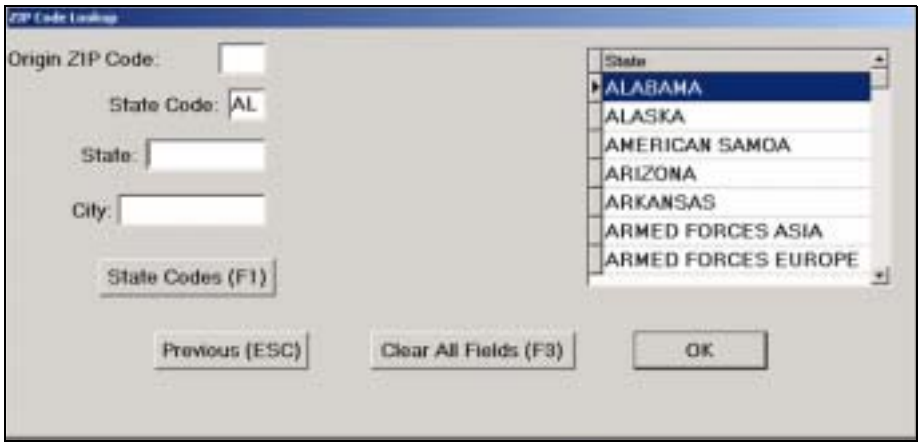

Figure 3.9.1–13. *ZIP Code Lookup State* Screen

- Enter <-> *Cannot Be Read,* if the origin state is not readable. CODES displays the entire Origin City pop-up list.

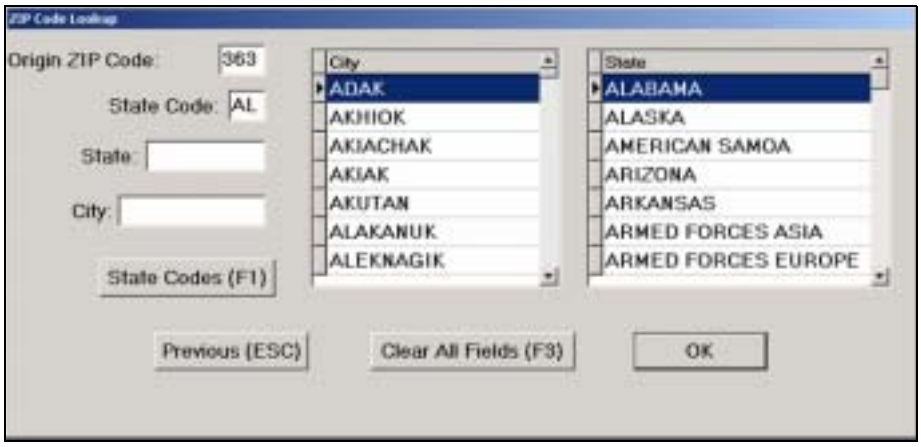

Figure 3.9.1–14. *ZIP Code Lookup City* Screen

If <-> *Cannot Be Read* is entered for the Origin State screen, the correct origin city for the Origin City screen must be manually entered. If the correct origin city is known, enter the information in the field provided.

- Enter <-> *Cannot Be Read,* if the origin city is not known or is not legible.

After data is entered into the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen, CODES displays the *FIM* screen (Figure 3.9.1–15).

11. Enter the number beside the appropriate option in the field at the bottom of the *FIM* screen.

The FIM (Facing Identification Mark) is located at the top of the mailpiece to the left of the indicia. Determine the presence or absence of a FIM.

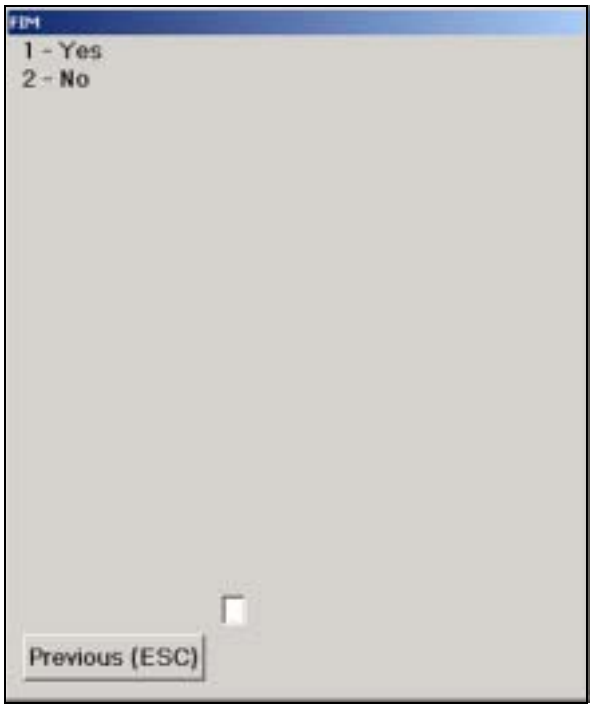

Figure 3.9.1–15. *FIM* Screen

- ***Yes*** Indicates that a FIM is present.
- ***No*** Indicates that a FIM is not present.

For examples of FIMs, see RM 3–16.

Note: You are only being asked to determine the presence or absence of a FIM, not the FIM type.

Once the selection is entered in the *FIM* screen, the *Barcode Size* screen (Figure 3.9.1–16) is displayed.

12. Enter the barcode size on the *Barcode Size* (POSTNET Only) screen.

A POSTNET barcode is made up of full and half bars. These POSTNET barcodes can be found in the address block (either above or below the address), at the bottom of the mailpiece, in both the address area and at the bottom of the mailpiece. Barcode examples may be found in RM 3–17.

POSTNET barcodes have very different characteristics than PLANET Code barcodes. To identify the type of barcode on a mailpiece, observe the following:

a. A five-digit POSTNET Barcode will have 14 long bars. A five-digit PLANET Code barcode will have 20 long bars.

b. A ZIP+4 (9-digit) POSTNET barcode will have 22 long bars. The same length PLANET Code will have 32 long bars.

c. A delivery point POSTNET barcode (11-digit) will have 26 long bars. The same length PLANET Code will have 38 long bars.

If a POSTNET barcode is present, determine if the barcode is 5-digit, 9-digit, 11-digit, or if it has been crossed out.

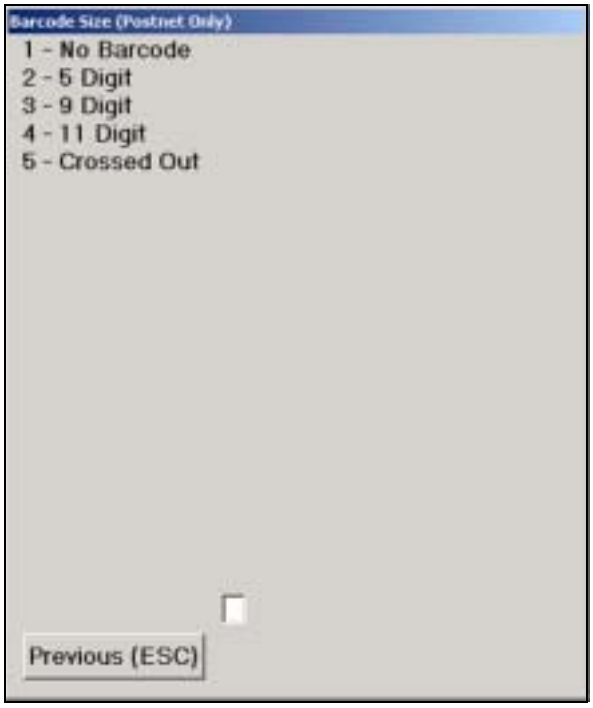

Figure 3.9.1–16. *Barcode Size* (POSTNET Only) Screen

Note: If two or more POSTNET barcodes are present on the mailpiece use the *longest* barcode regardless of where it appears on the mailpiece.

If multiple barcodes appear on a mailpiece, observe the following rules:

a. A 5-digit POSTNET barcode with a 4-digit add-on is to be recorded as a 9-digit POSTNET barcode.

b. A 9-digit POSTNET barcode with a 2-digit add-on is to be recorded as an 11-digit POSTNET barcode.

13. Enter the source of the barcode on the *Barcode Source* screen.

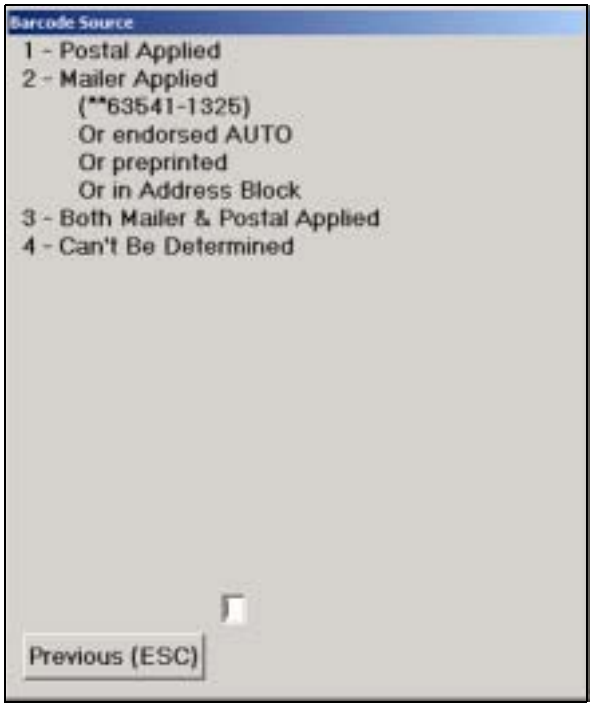

Figure 3.9.1–17. *Barcode Source* Screen

From the mailpiece, determine the source of the barcode.

- Select *Postal Applied* if the barcode has been applied by the mailer.
- Select *Mailer Applied* if the barcode has been endorsed *AUTO*, preprinted, or in Address Block.
- Select *Both Mailer & Postal Applied*, if the barcode has been applied by both of the listed applications.
- Select *Can't Be Determined*, if the source of the barcode cannot be determined.

Note: Postal Service applied barcodes may include additional barcodes not listed in Postal Barcode examples.

A list of Postal Service barcode examples includes: 22553-0001, 22553=0001, 22553/0001, 22553+0001, 22553>0001, 22553X0001, 22553%0001, and 22553:0001.

After entering the barcode source, the *Address Handwritten* screen (Figure 3.9.1–18) is displayed.

14. Indicate if the address is handwritten on the *Address Handwritten* screen.

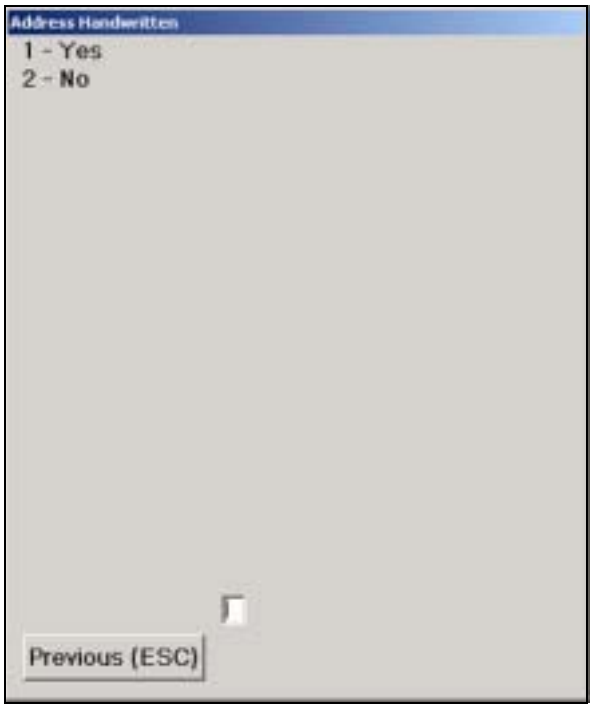

Figure 3.9.1–18. *Address Handwritten* Screen

Enter the option number of the appropriate choice in the field at the bottom of the screen.

- ***Yes*** Indicates that the address is handwritten, regardless of whether the handwriting is script or if it is machine writing designed to resemble handwritten lettering (i.e., script).
- ***No*** Indicates the address is not handwritten.

15. Indicate if the mailpiece has a special service on the *Special Service Indicator* screen.

Special Service is a mail service for a fee in addition to required postage that includes Registered Mail, Certified Mail, insured mail, Collect on Delivery, etc.

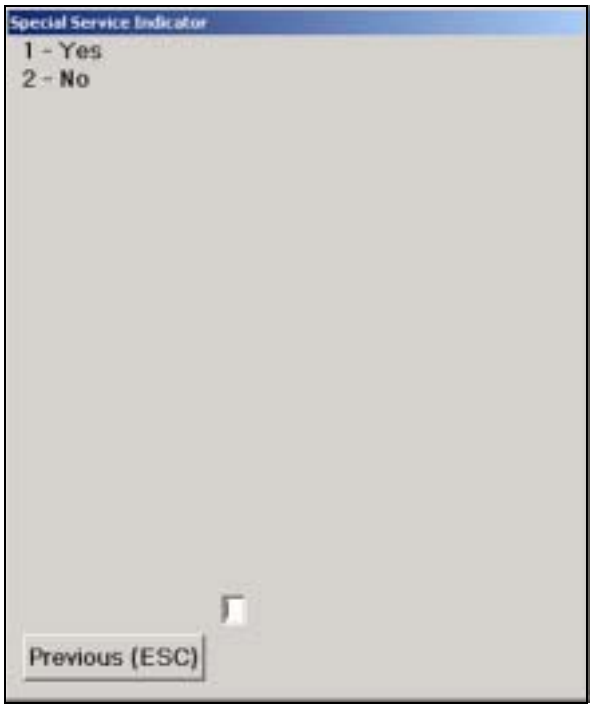

Figure 3.9.1–19. *Special Service Indicator* Screen

Enter the appropriate choice in the field at the bottom of the *Special Service Indicator* screen.

- ***Yes*** Indicates that the mailpiece has a Special Service marking and displays the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.9.1–20).
- ***No*** Indicates that the mailpiece does not have a Special Service marking.

16. Enter the special service on the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.9.1–20).

The *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.9.1–20) will then appear.

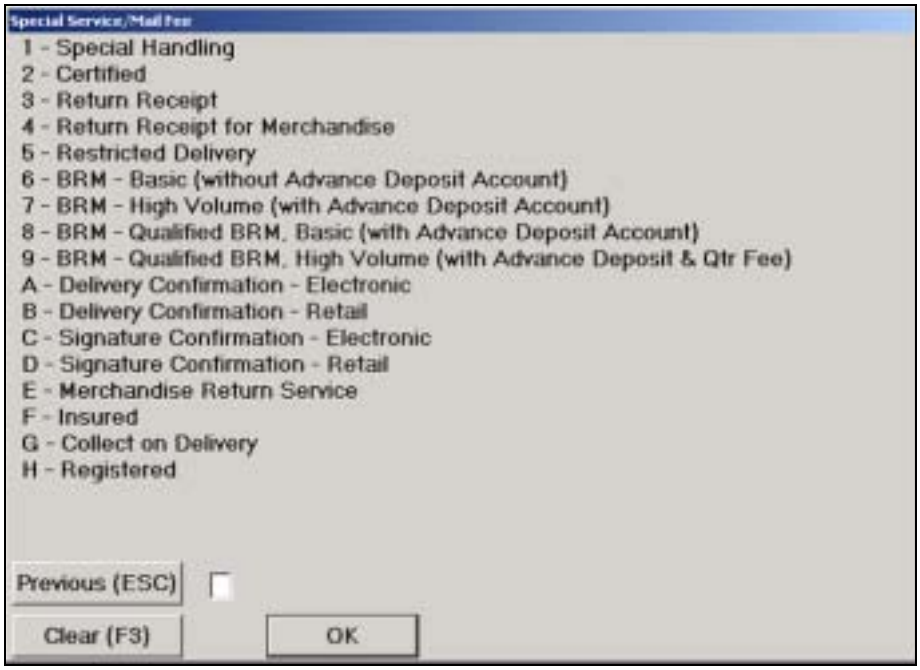

Figure 3.9.1–20. *Special Service/Mail Fee* Screen

- Enter the number or letter beside each type of special service or mail fee in the field at the bottom of the screen.

  As each number or letter is entered, the special service/mail fee will be highlighted. Remember that each special service that appears on the mailpiece must be entered.

- Select ***OK*** or **<Enter>** to display the *Total Mailpiece(s) Revenue* screen (Figure 3.9.1–21). See RM 3–15 for a description of each of the special services.

17. Enter the total revenue of the mailpiece on the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.9.1–21).

The total mailpiece revenue will be the mailpiece revenue for a single mailpiece (including special service revenue) and will be automatically displayed. When more than one piece with identical characteristics is entered, the total mailpiece revenue is computed automatically.

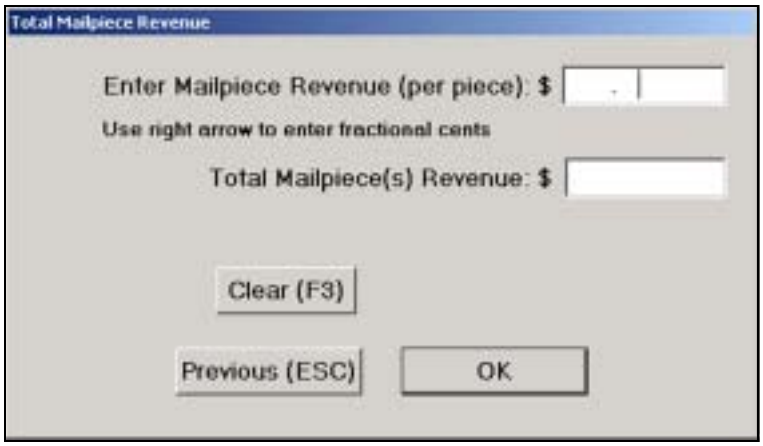

Figure 3.9.1–21. *Total Mailpiece Revenue* Screen

- Enter the total revenue on the mailpiece and press <Enter>.
- Enter 00 postage if revenue is not visible on the mailpiece, such as with certain IBI mailpieces.

  If the revenue amount includes fractional cents, first enter the whole number amount and then press <→> to move the cursor to the far right of the field and enter the fractional cents amount.

  A warning screen may be displayed when the postage entered exceeds the maximum value or is less than the minimum value.

  Yes Confirms revenue on the mailpiece.

  No Allows the user to re-enter revenue.

  <F3> clears the field and the amount may be re-entered if an error is made.

- Press **<Enter>** and CODES automatically enters the revenue amount in the *Mailpiece Data* section on the right side of the screen.

18. Enter Mail Service Qualifier information, if appropriate.

When single piece First-Class Mail meets certain criteria, then that mail is then checked for service times. The following screens request additional information before making service achievement calculation:

a. *Postmark Time* Screen.

Figure 3.9.1–22. *Information* Postmark Time Screen

This screen records the time of the postmark cancellation.

- ***Yes*** -PM cancellation is found in the postmark.
- ***No*** -PM cancellation is not found in the postmark.
- ***Can't Be Determined*** The time of the cancellation cannot be determined.

b. Correct Destinating 5-Digit ZIP Code: The following screen will appear when you answer *No* to the question, *Is the Postmark Time - PM?*

Note: This screen will also appear for failed Priority Mail mailpieces.

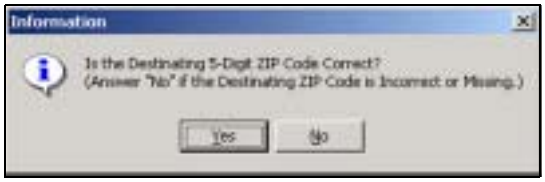

Figure 3.9.1–23. *Information* ZIP Code Screen

Answer whether the first five digits of the destination ZIP Code are all correct.

- ***Yes*** Indicates that the destinating ZIP Code is correct.
- ***No*** Indicates that the destinating ZIP Code is incorrect or missing.

If a single piece First-Class Mail with either a stamp or meter (including PVI and IBI) indicia *DOES NOT MEET* the Postal Service's service standard, then the mailpiece is considered late, and the *Comment - FAILED MAILPIECE* screen (Figure 3.9.1–24) is displayed.

For definitions of failed mailpiece options, see RM 3–14.

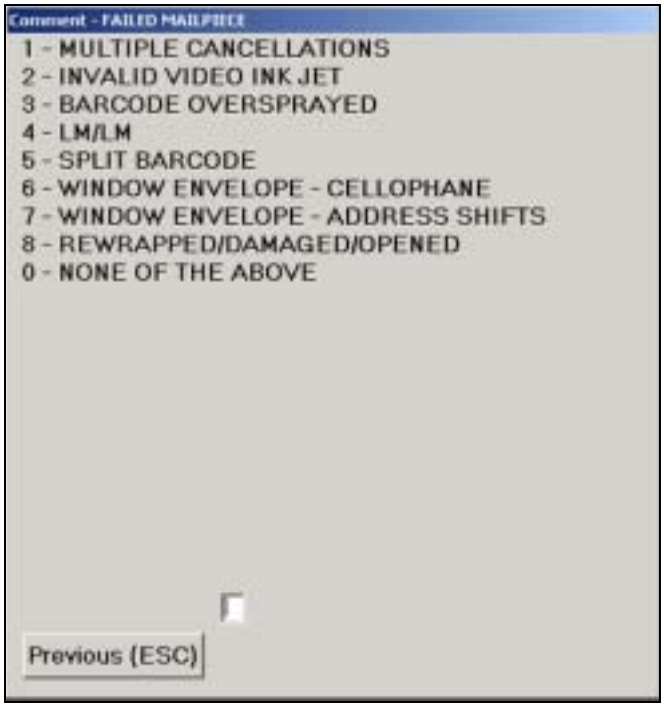

Figure 3.9.1–24. *Comment — FAILED MAILPIECE* Screen.

The *Comment - FAILED MAILPIECE* screen for single piece First-Class Mail provides a prioritized list of those mail characteristics that mail processing managers determine most often cause failure.

- Select the first option that describes the information that appears on the mailpiece. In selecting the options, begin at the top of the screen.
- Press <Enter> to display the next screen.

Example: If the late mailpiece has a barcode oversprayed, a window envelope with cellophane, and is rewrapped/damaged or opened, enter *Barcode Oversprayed*.

19. Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen.

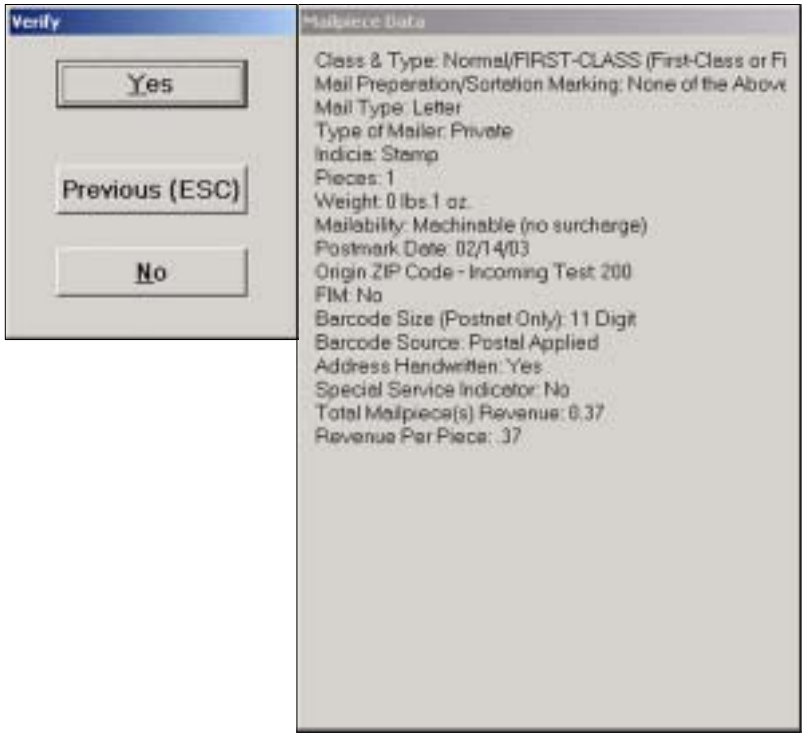

Figure 3.9.1–25. *Verify* Screen

After the mailpiece data displayed on the *Verify (Y/N)?* screen is thoroughly checked, verify that all entries are correct by pressing <Y> on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25). A new *Mail Class & Type* data entry screen is then displayed.

- **<Y>** Verifies the entries are correct and returns the data collector to the *Mail Class & Type* screen.
- **<N>** Discards the entire record due to incorrect entries. The *Delete Record* screen is displayed (Figure 3.9.1–26).

Figure 3.9.1–26. *Delete Record Information* Screen

Complete verification of mailpiece data by answering yes or no to the *Information* screen.

- **<Y>** Deletes the entire mailpiece record and displays a new *Mail Class & Type* screen.

- **<N>** Accepts the record as it has been entered and CODES displays the *Verify* screen, indicating that the mailpiece data is correct.

Note: To correct only one entry, press the <↑> key until the item that needs to be changed is reached.

3.9.2 Standard Mail

Standard Mail is neither mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail nor entered as Periodicals. Each Standard Mail mailpiece must weigh less than 16 ounces and includes two subclasses with its own unique indicia and mail markings or endorsements as identified below:

Standard Mail (Regular): This mail class is easily identified by the words *Presorted Standard*, *PRSRT STD*, *Bulk Rate*, or *Blk.Rt.* printed in the indicia. If a precanceled stamp is used, the words *Bulk Rate* or *Presorted Standard* appear on or near the precanceled stamp. When a meter is used, the words *Bulk Rate* or *Blk.Rt.* may appear in the meter imprint or next to the meter imprint.

Standard Mail (Nonprofit): This mail class is easily identified by the words Nonprofit (or Nonprofit Org. or Nonprofit Organization) printed in the meter imprint, on the precanceled stamp, or in the permit imprint.

Note: Mail markings, which are also called endorsements, may be found in a number of places on the mailpiece, such as in the indicia, next to the indicia, above the address label, in the address label, or at the bottom of the mailpiece.

As data is recorded, a record of the entry is displayed in the *Mailpiece Data* section at the far right portion of the screen.

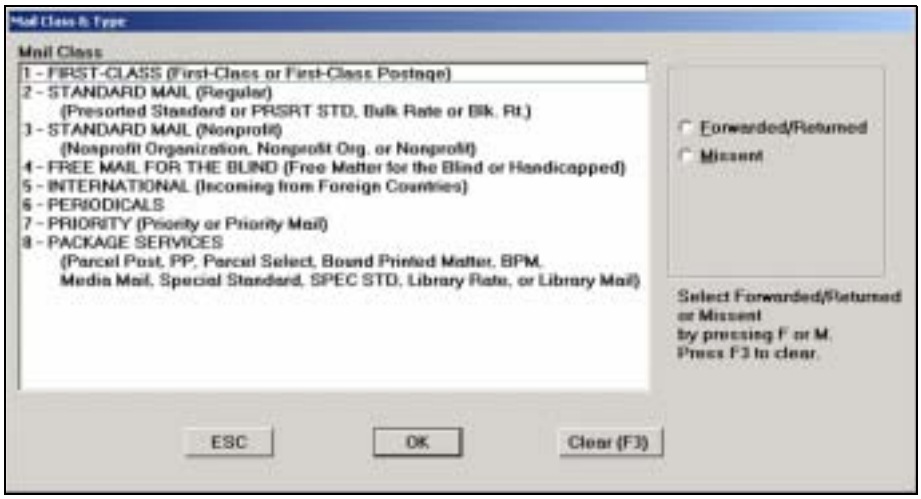

Figure 3.9.2–1. *Mail Class & Type* Screen

1. **Determine if the mailpiece has been Forwarded, Returned or Missent.**
   - Select the radio button if the mailpiece was *Forwarded/Returned.*
   - Select the radio button if the mailpiece is *Missent*.
   - Select the radio button if the mailpiece is *Missent*, and if the mailpiece was also forwarded or returned.
   - Press ***<F3>*** to clear the radio buttons.

All radio buttons should be clear if the mailpiece has not been *Forwarded*, *Returned*, or *Missent*.

2. **From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, select *Standard Mail (Regular)* or *Standard Mail (Nonprofit)* by highlighting the correct option.**

   Standard Mail (Regular) includes all Presorted Standard or PRSRT STD, Bulk Rate or Blk Rt. mail. Standard Mail (Nonprofit) includes all mail that is marked or has the endorsement, Nonprofit organization, Nonprofit Org. or Nonprofit.

   From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, select the appropriate Standard Mail option.

3. **Press <Enter> or select *OK* at the bottom of the screen to move to the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.**

   From the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen, choose the appropriate endorsement.

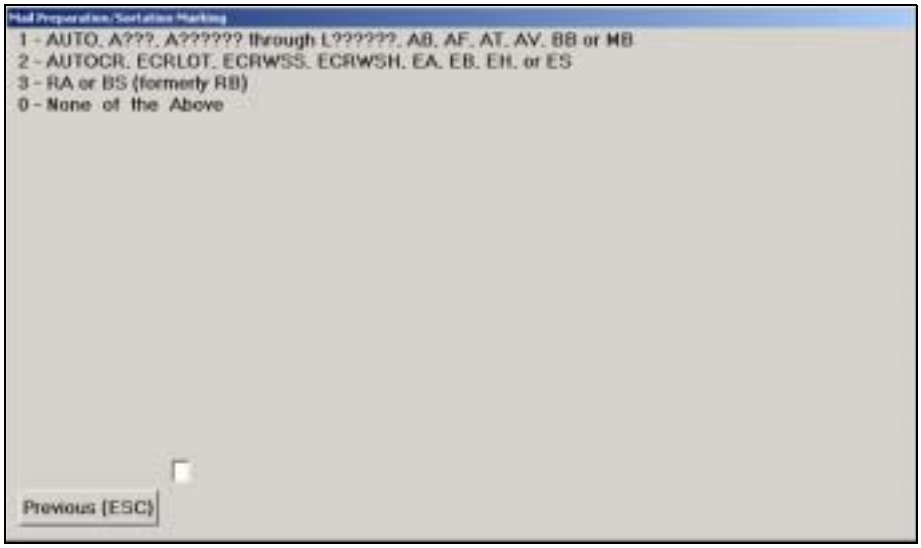

Figure 3.9.2–2. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen.

Note: All letter and nonletter mailpieces marked PRESORTED STANDARD/PRSRT. STD., BULK RATE/BLK.RT, or Nonprofit and not bearing one of the above presort endorsements, must be recorded as *None of the above*.

For more information on mailpiece endorsements, see RM 3–7.

4. **Follow the steps 3 through 18 in section 3.9.1 for First-Class Mail to complete the remaining data entry screens.**

   Depending on the option selected, one (or all) of the following prompts may be displayed:

   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–4).
   - Enter all Indicia (stamp, permit, etc.) found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.9.1–5).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
   - Enter the ZIP Code of the mailpiece on the *ZIP Code Look-up* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).
   - Enter the barcode size on the *Barcode Size* screen (Figure 3.9.1–16).
   - Enter the source of the barcode on the *Barcode Source* screen (Figure 3.9.1–17).
   - Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

     Note: For screen descriptions and option information return to section 3.9.1, First-Class Mail and follow the screen progression beginning with instructions for completing the *Mail Type* screen.

3.9.3 Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped

Mail included in this class will contain the marking, *Free Mail for the Blind*.

If the mailpiece is free matter for the blind or handicapped, select *Free Mail For the Blind.*

Follow the steps 3 through 18 given for First-Class Mail to complete the remaining data entry screens.

Depending on the option selected, one (or all) of the following prompts may be displayed:

- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).
- Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–4).

- Enter all Indicia (stamp, permit, etc.) found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.9.1–5).
- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
- Enter the ZIP Code of the mailpiece on the *ZIP Code Look-up* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).
- Enter the barcode size on the *Barcode Size* screen (Figure 3.9.1–16).
- Enter the source of the barcode on the *Barcode Source* screen (Figure 3.9.1–17).
- Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

Note: For screen descriptions and option information return to section 3.9.1, First-Class Mail and follow the screen progression beginning with *Mail Type*.

3.9.4 International Mail (Incoming from Foreign Countries)

From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, determine if the mailpiece is Forwarded, Returned, or Missent, and select the appropriate class for the mailpiece from the options listed. If the mailpiece is Forwarded or Returned, and Missent, select Missent.

3.9.4.1 General Rules for Identifying Foreign Origin Mail

Some general rules to follow in identifying foreign origin mail are listed below:

- Identify whether the foreign mailpiece is *air*, *surface, or unknown*. If the foreign mailpiece has one of the following markings, it is airmail:
  - *Par Avion*.
  - *Mit Luftpost*.
  - *Airmail*.
  - *Aero*.
  - Blue and red airmail border.
- Record mailpieces with the service *Xpresspost-USA*. Although these mailpieces are introduced into the domestic Priority Mail processing stream for handling, they are categorized as incoming international mail.

To record data from an international mailpiece, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *International* from the *Mail Cl*ass & Type screen (Figure 3.9.1–1).**

   CODES displays the *Foreign Country* screen (Figure 3.9.4–1).

2. **Enter the foreign code on the *Foreign Country* screen.**

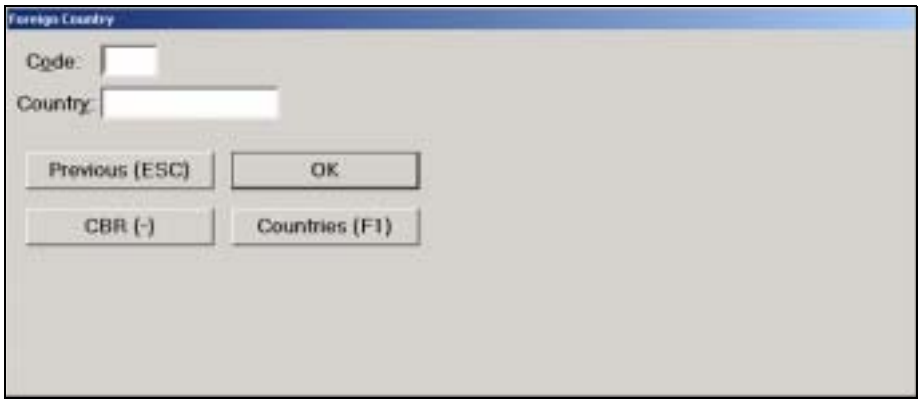

Figure 3.9.4–1. *Foreign Country* Screen

If the code is not known, press <F1> to display a list of foreign countries. The country may be selected from the drop-down list. Once the appropriate country is selected, the Code for the chosen country is displayed.

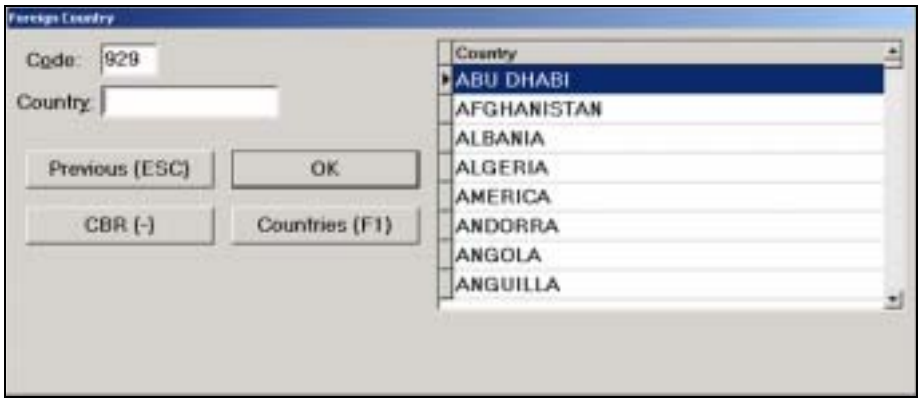

Figure 3.9.4–2. *Foreign Country* (Country) Screen.

Enter <-> *Cannot Be Read*, if the country code cannot be read.

Once the foreign code is entered, CODES displays the postage due screen for international mail.

3. Record postage or fees due on the international mailpiece.

Figure 3.9.4–3. Postage Due - International Mail Screen.

- ***Yes*** Postage is due on the mailpiece. The *Special Services/Fees* screen is displayed.
- ***No*** Postage is not due on the mailpiece. The *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed.
- ***Can't Be Determined*** The data collector is unable to determine if any fees are due on the international mailpiece. The *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed.

Figure 3.9.4–4. *Special Services/Fees* Screen.

4. Select the special service (or fee) that applies to the mailpiece.

- Selecting *Postage Due - Foreign Origin* from the *Special Services/ Fees* screen displays the *Mail Subclass* screen (Figure 3.9.4–5).
- Selecting *Customs Clearance and Delivery Fees* displays the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
- Selecting *Undeliverable International Parcel Post (Returned International)* displays the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
- Selecting *International Business Reply Service* displays the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).

5. **Enter the mail subclass that applies to the mailpiece on the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

Figure 3.9.4–5. *Mail Subclass* Screen

Selecting any option from the *Mail Subclass* screen will display the *Mail Type* screen.

6. **Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).**
7. **Enter all Indicia (stamp, permit, etc.) found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.9.1–5).**
8. **Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).**
9. **Enter the postmark date on the *Postmark Date* screen (Figure 3.9.1–11).**

Note: Determining Postmark Date: Postal Service postmark dates are in the month-day-year format. Most foreign postal administrations however, use the day-month-year format. Foreign postmarks may also spell out the month, for example, 25 May 03; or simply use Arabic numerals, for example, 25.5.03.

For example, where the Postal Service uses a postmark of Dec. 13, 2003, a foreign postal administration may use a postmark date of 13.12.03. If you enter this date as 13-12, the record will be rejected because there is no 13th month.

10. Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

Note: The guidelines governing Steps 6 through 10 are the same as those for First-Class Mail discussed in section 3.9.1.

3.9.5 Periodicals Mail

After determining whether or not the mailpiece is Forwarded/Returned/Missent, select the appropriate class for the item from the options listed.

Identification of Periodicals:

Some general rules to follow in identifying Periodicals mailpieces are:

a. The mailpiece will have no indicia or postage.

b. The mailpiece will usually be a newspaper, magazine, or other publication.

c. If the mailpiece has the words Bulk Rate or Blk Rt. present on it, it is not a Periodicals mail.

d. If the mailpiece has the words Bound Printed Matter, Special Standard, Library Rate, or Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped present on it, it is not a Periodicals mail.

To record a Periodical, complete the following steps:

1. Select *Periodicals* on the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.2–1).

2. Beginning with step 3 for First-Class Mail, follow the guideline to complete the remaining data entry screens.

Depending on the option selected, one (or all) of the following prompts may be displayed:

- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).
- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
- Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

Note: For screen descriptions and option information return to section 3.9.1, First-Class Mail and follow the screen progression beginning with *Mail Type*.

3.9.6 Priority Mail

After determining whether or not the mailpiece is Forwarded/Returned/ Missent, select the appropriate class for the mailpiece from the options listed.

Priority Mail is First-Class Mail that weighs more than 13 ounces but less than or equal to 70 pounds. Priority Mail may also include mail that weighs 13 ounces or less and was paid for at the Priority Mail rate at the option of the mailer. It *should* bear the endorsement *Priority Mail* or *First-Class Mail*, although at times it may not. If you encounter a piece of unendorsed mail that has been paid at the *Priority Mail* rate, record the piece as Priority Mail. See section 3.13 for guidelines on unendorsed mail.

To record Priority Mail, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *Priority* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–1).**
2. **Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.**

   From the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (section 3.9.6–1), select whether the mailpiece is presorted or has no marking. Place the number beside the selection in the box at the bottom of the screen.

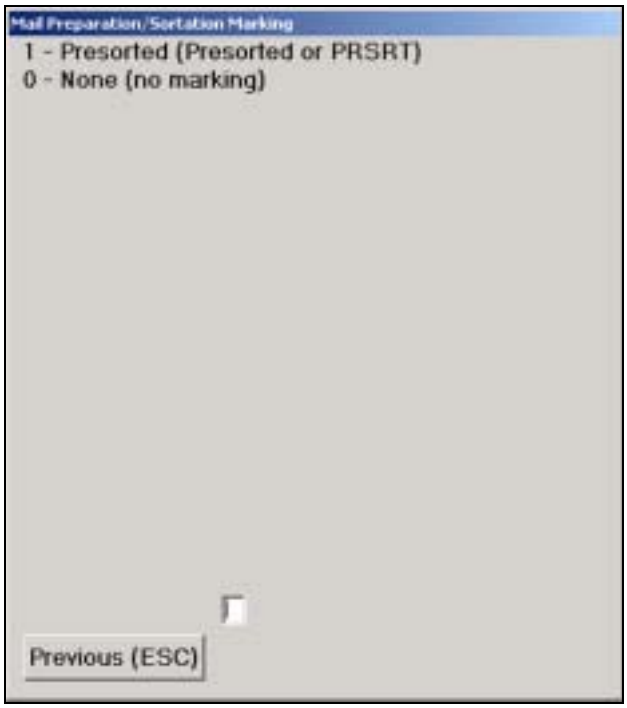

Figure 3.9.6–1. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen

Selecting either option will display the *Marking Identification* screen.

3. Select the marking identification that applies to the Priority mailpiece from the *Marking Identification* screen.

The *Marking Identification* screen (Figure 3.9.6–2) requires the data collector to determine if the mailpiece is identified as Priority by a USPS copyright logo.

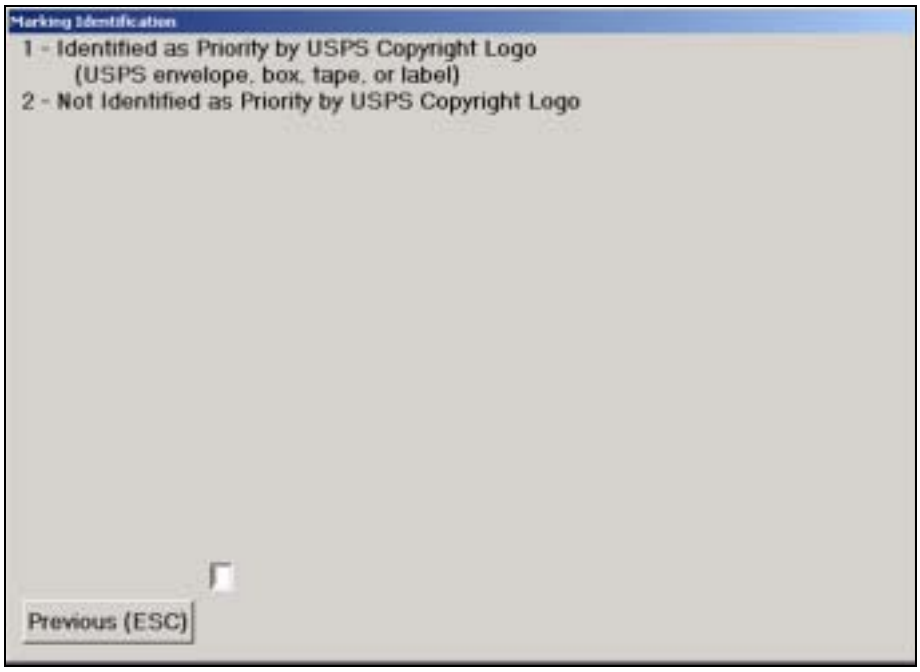

Figure 3.9.6–2. *Marking Identification* Screen

The marking source should be identified as:

- ***Identified as Priority by USPS Copyright Logo*:** This logo will be indicated by a USPS envelope, a USPS box, or USPS tape or label.
- ***Not Identified as Priority by USPS Copyright Logo*:** The mailpiece does not have USPS marking identification.

Private companies have been given permission by the Postal Service to produce their own envelopes (or boxes) with the USPS copyright logo *Priority Mail*, and a red and blue border on the edge of the envelope or box. Treat these mailpieces as *Identified as priority by USPS Copyright Logo* (*USPS envelope, box, tape, or label)*.

Example: When recording a Priority Mail mailpiece that has both a USPS Priority Mail Tape and the word *Priority* written on the piece, select *Identified as priority by USPS Copyright Logo* (USPS envelope, box, tape, or label).

4. **Follow steps 3 though 19 given for First-Class Mail to complete the remaining data entry screens.**

   Depending on the option selected, one (or all) of the following prompts may be displayed:

   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–4).
   - Enter all Indicia (stamp, permit, etc.) found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.9.1–5).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
   - Enter the ZIP Code of the mailpiece on the *ZIP Code Look-up* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).
   - Indicate if the address is handwritten on the *Address Handwritten* screen (Figure 3.9.1–18).
   - Indicate if the mailpiece has a special service on the *Special Service Indicator* screen (Figure 3.9.1–19).
   - Enter the special service on the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.9.1–20).
   - Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

     Note: For screen descriptions and option information return to section 3.9.1, *First-Class Mail* and follow the screen progression beginning with *Mail Type*.

3.9.7 Package Services

This class of mail can be identified by the following endorsements and characteristics:

a. DBMC Parcel Post/DBMC PP, Media Mail, Drop Shipment (D/S), Bound Printed Matter, Special Standard, Library Rate/Library Mail or Parcel Post (no other markings).

b. Parcel with no endorsements.

If *DBMC* (or no endorsement) appears on a flat or a parcel, record it as a *Package Services* Parcel Post mailpiece.

After determining whether or not the piece is Forwarded/Returned or Missent, select the appropriate class for the mailpiece from the options listed.

To record Package Services Mail, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *Package Services* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–1).**

2. **Select the type of package service from the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

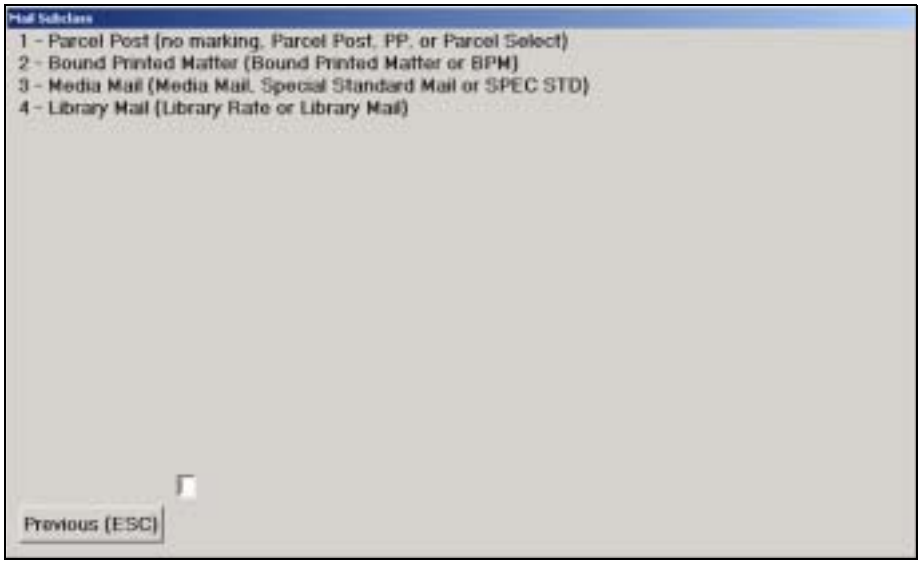

Figure 3.9.7–1. *Mail Subclass* Screen

For definitions of Package Services markings, see RM 3–8.

Mailpieces endorsed with the markings *DBMC Parcel Post*, or *DBMC* should be recorded as *Parcel Post* (no marking, Parcel Post, PP, or Parcel Select). Parcels with no endorsement should be recorded under *Parcel Post*.

Selecting any option from the *Mail Subclass* screen will display the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.

3. **Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.9.1–2).**

4. **Follow the steps 3 through 7 given for First-Class Mail to complete the following data entry screens:**

   Depending on the option selected, one (or all) of the following prompts may be displayed:

   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–3).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.9.1–4).
   - Enter all Indicia (stamp, permit, etc.) found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.9.1–5).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.9.1–8).
   - Enter the weight of the mailpiece on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.9.1–9).

5. **Enter the mail enclosures on the *Mail Enclosure* screen.**

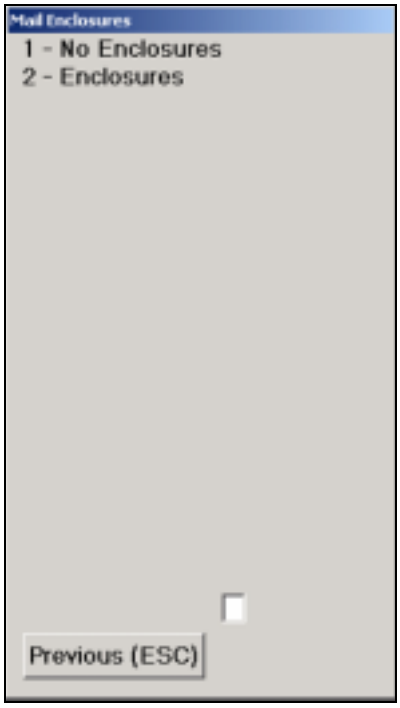

Figure 3.9.7–2. *Mail Enclosure* Screen

6. **Follow the steps 9 and 10 given for First-Class Mail to complete the following data entry screens:**
   - Enter the date of the mailpiece on the *Postmark Date* screen (Figure 3.9.1–11).
   - Enter the ZIP Code of the mailpiece on the *ZIP Code Look-up* screen (Figure 3.9.1–12).

7. **Enter the dimensions of the package on the *Parcel Dimensions* screen.**

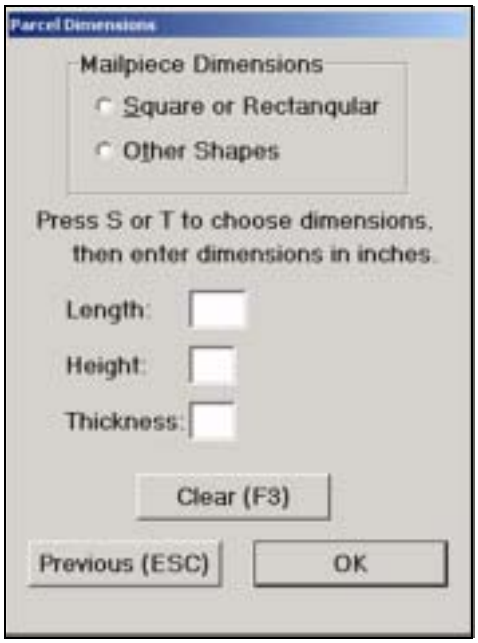

Figure 3.9.7–3. *Parcel Dimensions* Screen

When inserting the dimensions of the parcel into the *Parcel Dimensions* screen, determine whether the parcel is *Square or Rectangular*, or *Other Shapes*. Measure the parcel using a tape measure. For square and rectangular shaped parcels, use the parcel's longest dimensions in your measurements for the length. Round off to the nearest inch. Half-inch or more increments are rounded up. Less than half-inch increments are rounded down. For parcels not square or rectangular, measure the length, girth, and thickness of the parcel and insert those dimensions where indicated. See RM 3–9 for guidelines on measuring.

For example, if the parcel height is 5 1/2 inches, round the dimension up to 6 inches. If the height were 5 1/4 inches, round that dimension down to 5 inches.

If measurement is less than an inch enter one inch.

8. **Follow the steps 14 through 19 given for First-Class Mail to complete the following data entry screens:**

- Indicate if the address is handwritten on the *Address Handwritten* screen (Figure 3.9.1–18).
- Indicate if the mailpiece has a special service on the *Special Service Indicator* screen (Figure 3.9.1–19).
- Enter the special service on the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.9.1–20).

- Enter the total revenue on the mailpiece on the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.9.1–21).
- Confirm the data displayed on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.9.1–25).

The rules governing screen descriptions and option information are the same as those for First-Class Mail discussed in section 3.9.1.

3.10 COU Mail Test: Special Procedural Rules

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Consolidated Originating Unit (COU) tests capture data on four special services during an originating ODIS-RPW test. The following are the special services that are tested.

- **Insured:** In the event insured mail is lost or damaged, a payment is made to the customer who pays a fee for this service in advance. In a COU test, insured mail may be First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Package Services, Free Mail for the Blind, or international mail.
- **COD (Collect on Delivery):** COD service is for customers who mail an article for which money is due. The Postal Service collects from the addressee the postage as well as an additional fee used to pay for the money order that transmits the collected money to the sender. In a COU test, COD mail may be First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Package Services.
- **Registered Mail:** Registered Mail, the most secure service the Postal Service offers, uses a system of receipts to monitor the movement of a mailpiece from the point of entry to delivery. This service also provides indemnity in case of loss or damage. A registered mailpiece may be First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or international Mail in a COU test.
- **Certificates of Mailing:** For this type of mail, the window clerk or mailer prepares a receipt to show evidence of mailing. Eligible mailpieces for certificates of mailing include First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail, Package Services, or international mail in a COU test.

A COU test counts mail which originates at a Postal Service facility or contract office. A COU test, therefore, samples the mail before it enters into the mail processing stream for distribution.

PROCEDURES

After a sampling option for a COU test is selected, CODES displays the *Originating Special Services* screen. The data collector must then choose the special service that applies to the mailpiece that is being tested and enter the number of that selection in the field provided.

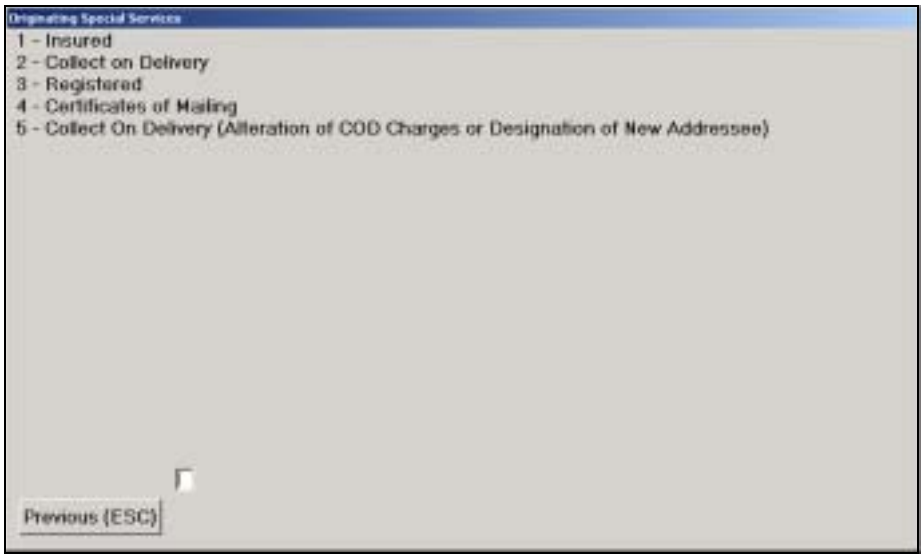

Figure 3.10.0–1. *Originating Special Services* Screen

3.10.1 Sampling Methods for the COU Test

Census *must* be conducted for Certificates of Mailing. Mailpiece skip subsampling is not an option.

Apply separately the census or mailpiece skip procedures for registered mail, insured mail, and COD.

- Separate registered mail, insured mail, and COD mailpieces into their own groups.
- Estimate the mail volume for each group of mail.
- Apply the census procedure (section 3.5) to each group whose volume is 250 mailpieces or less.
- Apply the mailpiece skip procedure (section 3.6) to each group whose volume is over 250 mailpieces using the RM 3–3 COU mailpiece skip interval table.

Example: Five certificates of mailing, twenty registered mail, and 300 insured mailpieces constitute the COU test. Record the certificates of mailing as a census. Record the registered mailpieces as a census. Since the insured mailpieces are more than 250, go to the COU mailpiece skip interval table in RM 3–3 to obtain the skip interval. The mailpiece skip interval for 251-500 pieces is a skip of 5.

3.10.2 Special Rules for the Consolidated Originating Unit Test

When testing originating mail, the following rules apply:

1. **Insured Mail**
   - **a.** Include insured mail from mailers who deposit such mail at platforms or at business mail entry units.
   - **b.** Include insured mail from self-service units whenever it is collected and delivered to the facility being tested.
   - **c.** Include all insured mail, including insured international mail, when recording insured mail.
2. **COD Mailpieces**
   - **a.** Record registered COD as registered mail, not COD mail. See below, under registered.
   - **b.** Include COD mail from mailers who deposit such mail at platforms or at business mail entry units.
3. **Registered Mail**
   - **a.** Include all registered mail, including international mail, when recording registered mail.
   - **b.** Record registered COD as registered mail. When registered mail is tested, COD appears as a special service.
   - **c.** Count sealed pouches, when registered, as one piece.
   - **d.** Include registered mail from mailers who deposit such mail at platforms or at business mail entry units.
4. **Certificates of Mailing**
   - **a.** Certificates of mailing cannot be subsampled.
   - **b.** Include certificates of mailing generated by mailers who deposit such mail at platforms or at business mail entry units.

3.10.3 Conducting the COU Mail Test On-site with a Data Collector

Ordinarily, a data collector should be available to conduct a test at any main office, station, branch, contract station, or associate office.

The data collector should complete the following steps:

1. Contact the test site(s) at least one day in advance.
2. Explain the test to the appropriate manager at the test site.
3. Make certain the site has a sufficient quantity of *Consolidated Originating RPW Test*, *PS Form 8126* (Appendix C).
4. Brief the test site supervisor, window clerks, and contract station manager about the COU test and its importance.
5. Make arrangements for the collection of the test mailpieces at all appropriate points.
6. Verify that all collection points (such as window units, back docks, bulk mail entry units, or any other locations) for originating mail have a special container ready to collect the test mailpieces.
7. Make certain each special container has a sign such as *PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING MAILPIECES* (Appendix C). Use a copy of this sign, if needed.
8. Post information concerning the type of mail being tested as well as the duration of the test.
9. Determine if the volume of mail for testing is too heavy.

   If it is, the data collector should ask the appropriate manager whether the test mail can be held until a later dispatch time.
10. Arrive to record all the necessary mailpieces and to close the test before the last dispatch.

3.10.4 Conducting the COU Test Without an On-site Data Collector

If a data collector is not available to conduct a COU test at a test site, the MSP must make arrangements with the test site supervisor or contract station manager to conduct the test. The MSP must observe the following guidelines:

- Ensure that the supervisor or manager is completely familiar with the test procedure.
- Collect all test mailpieces in a special container that carries a sign such as *PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING MAILPIECES* (Appendix C). Include on the sign any information on the type of mail.

At the end of the day, a data collector must obtain the container and record the data. If the data collector is not available, the test site manager or supervisor may dispatch the container to the main office's back dock so that it may be transferred to the data collector.

Before dispatching the container, the supervisor or manager should:

- Ensure that no other mail is mixed with the test mailpieces.
- Ensure that any container with test pieces inside is clearly marked.

The MSP must make arrangements to receive information concerning the exact location and arrival time of the truck from the test site.

3.10.5 Processing of COU Mail Test Mailpieces

Window clerks and contract station managers process COU mail test mailpieces by performing the following:

- Window clerks *must* use PS Form 8126 to capture postage and fee data accurately from any test mailpieces accepted from customers. A supply of PS Form 8126 should be provided by the MSP.
- Enter the necessary information onto PS Form 8126 as mailpieces are accepted from customers.
- Determine the correct insured mail, registered mail, or COD fee by examining the mailpiece.

Note: Since the data collector cannot determine the correct fees by examining the mailpiece, this information must be provided by the window clerks or station manager. If the window clerk or contract station manager fails to provide this information, the data collector must contact the MSP. The MSP should then contact the Window Unit Supervisor to review ODIS-RPW originating test procedures.

The Window Clerk's Instructions for Recording Originating Mail Fees using the PS Form 8126 are as follows:

- Enter the class, subclass, postage, fees, enclosure fees, and any additional special services fees for each mailpiece to be tested.
- Affix the form to an area of the mailpiece that will not obscure the address block or hinder mail processing. If the mailpiece is too small for the form, the mail clerk may use paper clips, but *never use a stapler*.
- Record the appropriate fee in Item 5 for certificates of mailing. Before placing PS Form 8126 for a certificate of mailing in the special container, the window clerk should place the certificate of mailing's form in an envelope marked PS *Form 8126 - CERTIFICATE OF MAILING DATA ENCLOSED*.

Note: The data collector is responsible for obtaining all other information. This information includes the dimensions of Parcel Post pieces. Before weighing the mailpiece, the data collector must remove the PS Form 8126 from the mailpiece because the weight of the form may alter the actual weight of the mailpiece. After the test, the data collector should ensure that no mailpieces enter the mail stream for processing with PS Form 8126 attached. An attached PS Form 8126 could cause unnecessary delays in the processing of these mailpieces.

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3.11 COU Mail Test: Entering Mailpiece Data into the CODES Laptop

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before selecting the originating mailpieces to be tested or entering mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop, the data collector should review the special procedural and recording rules listed in sections 3.10 and 3.13.

From the *ODIS-RPW* Main Menu screen, select *Conduct Test* as shown on Figure 3.11.0–1 below.

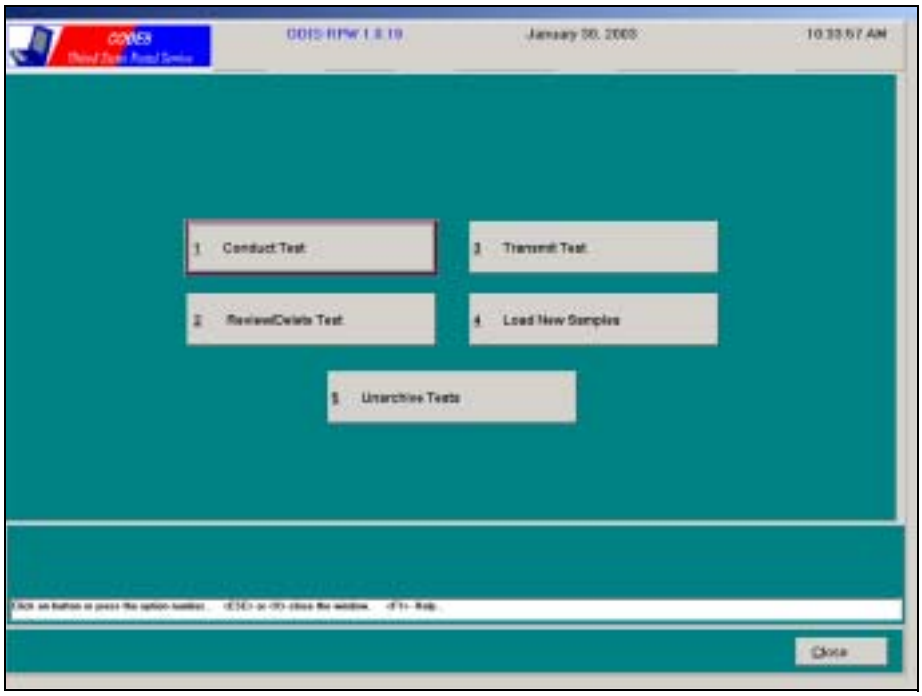

Figure 3.11.0–1. *ODIS-RPW* Main Menu Screen

The *Select a Test* screen is displayed upon selecting the *Conduct Test* option (Figure 3.11.0–2).

The following steps are a guide for recording an originating test:

1. **Select an originating test from the *Conduct Test* screen.**

   When selecting a test, make certain that the *MEP Description* at the bottom of the screen indicates that the test selected is an originating test.

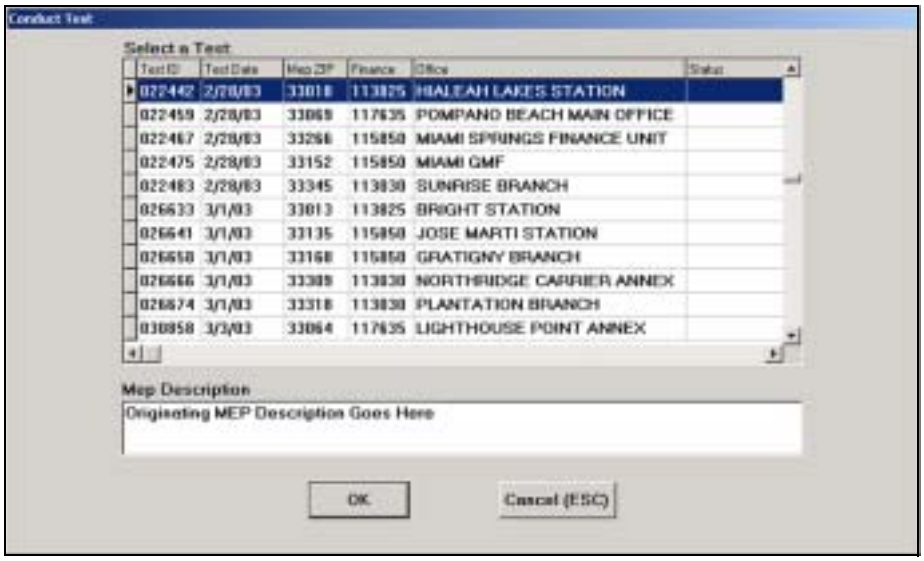

Figure 3.11.0–2. *Conduct a Test* Screen

Once an originating test is selected, the data collector selects the sampling method from the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen (Figure 3.11.0–3).

Note: For additional information on how to determine the sampling method, refer to section 3.10.1.

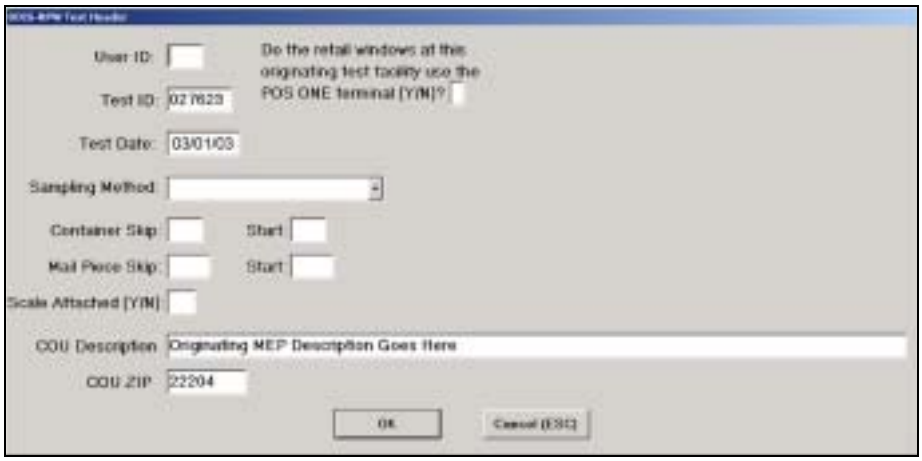

Figure 3.11.0–3. *ODIS-RPW Test Header* Screen

2. Enter the required header information on the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen.

On the *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen, the cursor will be blinking in the *User ID* field, indicating that this field must be completed first.

The data collector enters his or her ID number. The *Test ID* number and the *Test Date* fields will automatically be filled. The test identification number and the test date may be obtained from the MSP. The highlighted test date may be changed if necessary.

The *ODIS-RPW Test Header* screen is completed by following the steps given below:

- **User ID:** The data collector inserts his/her User ID into the field provided. This is an unique 3-digit number provided to each data collector and is issued by the MSP.
- **Test ID:** This is a 6-digit number that identifies the ODIS-RPW test that is automatically entered in the Test ID field. CODES also enters the COU Description and the 5-digit MEP ZIP Code in the COU ZIP field at the bottom of the screen. The COU Description must indicate that the test is an originating test.
- **Sampling Method:** From the drop down menu, select the Sampling Method: Census, Mailpiece Subsampling, or Container Subsampling. For information on subsampling guidelines and for selecting the appropriate subsampling method, refer to section 3.3 in this chapter.
- **Container Skip and Start Number:** Enter a container skip of *1* for mailpiece skip subsampling.
- **Mailpiece Skip and Start Number:** Enter the appropriate mailpiece skip number from the *COU Mailpiece Skip Intervals Table*, RM 3–3, and press <Enter>. CODES generates a random start number. Be familiar with the mailpiece skip subsampling procedures described in section 3.6.
- **Scale Attached (Y/N)?:** Enter <Y> *Yes* or <N> *No* depending on whether or not there is an electronic scale attached to the laptop. Insure the scale is level before continuing with the test.
- **POS ONE terminal (Y/N)?:** Enter <Y> *Yes* or <N> *No* depending on whether or not the retail window at the originating test facility use the POS ONE terminal. This field is located at the top center of the screen and is answered last before selecting *OK* to indicate that all header information has been entered.

If a mistake is made while entering header information, place the cursor in the field to be corrected, highlight the incorrect information, and enter the corrected data.

If all fields are not properly completed, CODES displays the message, *Invalid Entry* or *Entries* in a pop-up screen. The user will be prevented from continuing with the test until the error is corrected. If the information is correct, press <Enter> or select the *OK* button at the bottom of the screen.

Once the data collector verifies that the header information is correct by selecting *OK,* the *Options Menu* is displayed (Figure 3.11.0–4).

3. On the *Options Menu* screen, select *Collect Mailpiece Data*.

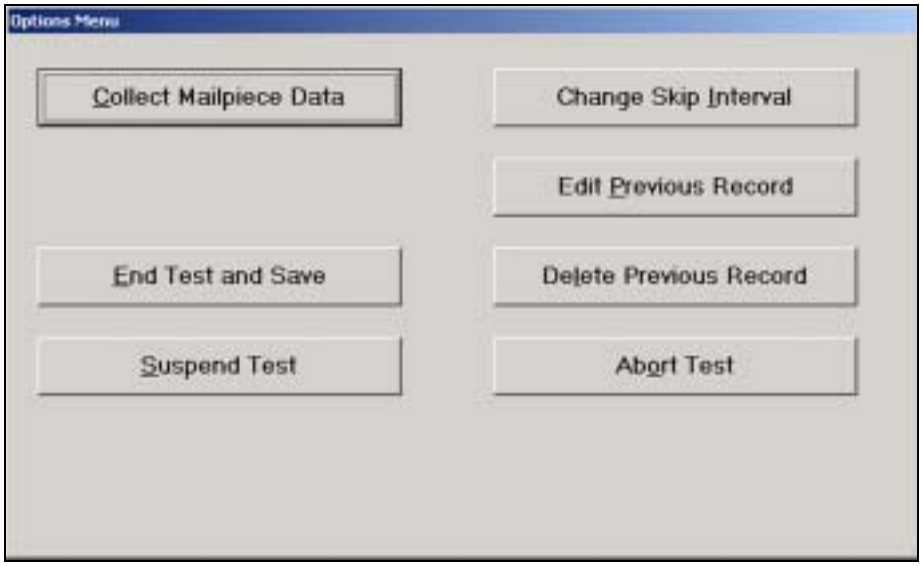

Figure 3.11.0–4. *Options Menu* Screen

To enter test data from selected originating mail, select *Collect Mailpiece Data*. The *Originating Special Services* (Figure 3.11.1–1) screen is then displayed allowing the data collector to choose the type of originating mail that is being tested.

PROCEDURES

The procedures for entering data into the COU test are described in this section. These procedures are described according to the four special services that are tested during a Consolidated Originating Unit test.

- Insured Mail (section 3.11.1).
- Collect on Delivery (section 3.11.2).
- Registered (section 3.11.3).
- Certificates of Mailing (section 3.11.4).

As data is entered into the CODES Laptop, a record of each entry appears on the right side of the screen. After all the data for a mailpiece is entered, the data collector verifies that the information is correct by answering the prompt. If the entered information is incorrect, the information may be re-entered for the selected mailpiece.

The procedures described in this section are presented according to the special service provided. Within the special service, guidelines for recording each mail class are then described. Screen prints are shown and detailed descriptions of screen functions are given the first time a screen appears in the test guideline. Thereafter, a reference will be made to the original description of the screen.

3.11.1 Insured Mail

Although insured mail is dispatched and handled in transit as ordinary mail, insured mail is one of the special services provided by the Postal Service. Insured mail may be First-Class Mail, Free Mail for the Blind, international mail, Priority Mail, or Package Services.

Note: If data collectors plan to subsample insured, COD, or registered originating mail, they may only record the selected type of originating mail. No other type of originating mail may be recorded during the session.

To record data from insured mail, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *Insured* from the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1)**.

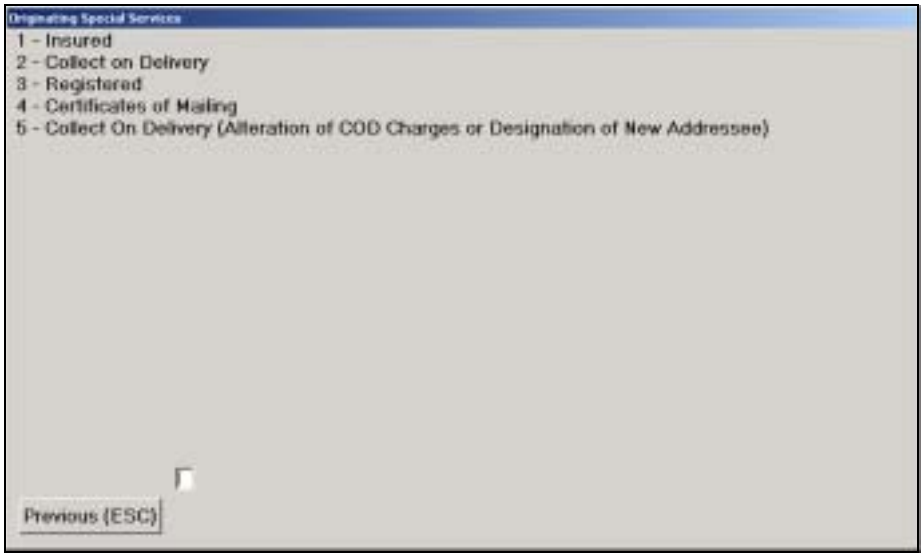

Figure 3.11.1–1. *Originating Special Services* Screen

Upon selecting *Insured* from the *Originating Special Services* screen, the *Mail Class & Type* screen is displayed. The data collector records the class of mail for the selected mailpiece.

2. **Select the class of the insured mailpiece that is being recorded from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).**

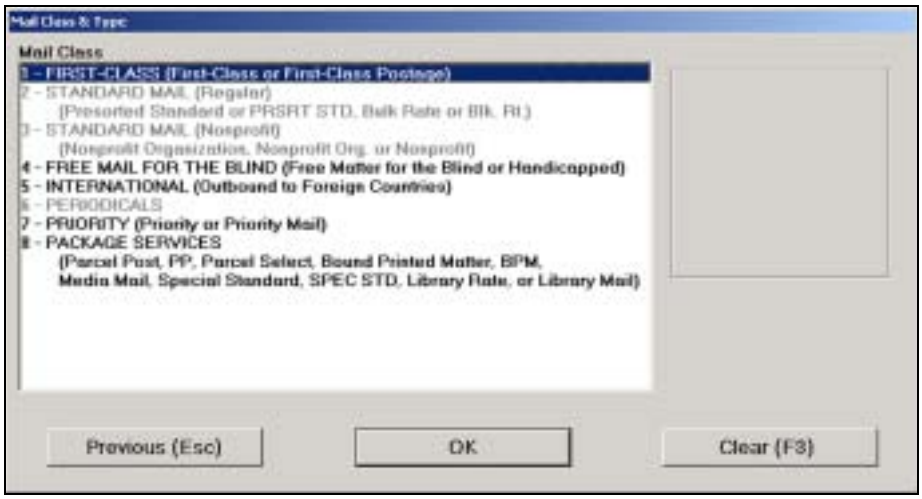

Figure 3.11.1–2. *Mail Class & Type* Screen

3.11.1.1 Insured: First-Class Mail

First-Class Mail weighs 13 ounces or less. This class includes letters, cards, flats, IPPs, small parcels, and rolls.

Note: Unendorsed Mail. Record all unendorsed mail weighing less than 13 ounces or less as First-Class Mail, unless this mail has been paid for at the Priority Mail rate. For more information on unendorsed mail, see section 3.13.

To record data for insured First-Class Mail, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.**

   For insured mail that weighs 13 ounces or less, select the option *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen shown above.

   Upon selecting First-Class, the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen is displayed.

2. Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.

Endorsements or markings may be found in a number of places on the mailpiece, such as in the indicia, next to the indicia, above the address label, in the address label, or at the bottom of the mailpiece.

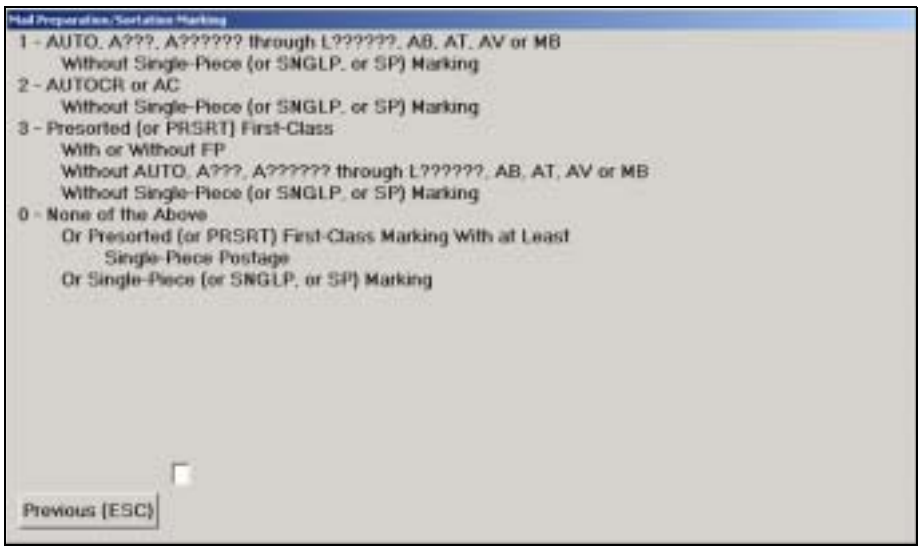

Figure 3.11.1–3. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen

In the field at the bottom of the screen, enter the number of the mail preparation or sortation marking that applies to the selected mailpiece or highlight your selection and press <Enter>.

Record as *None of the Above* if the mailpiece has no endorsements, PRSRT, or has a marking of *Single Piece*. Once the marking selection has been entered in the field, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

Note: If any option on the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen is selected other than *None of the Above,* the *Weight* screen, the *Machinability* screen, and the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen will not be shown.

3. Enter the shape of the mailpiece at the *Mail Type* screen.

Select the type of mail that is being recorded from the list given on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4). Mail type refers to the actual shape of the mailpiece, and is described in RM 3–12.

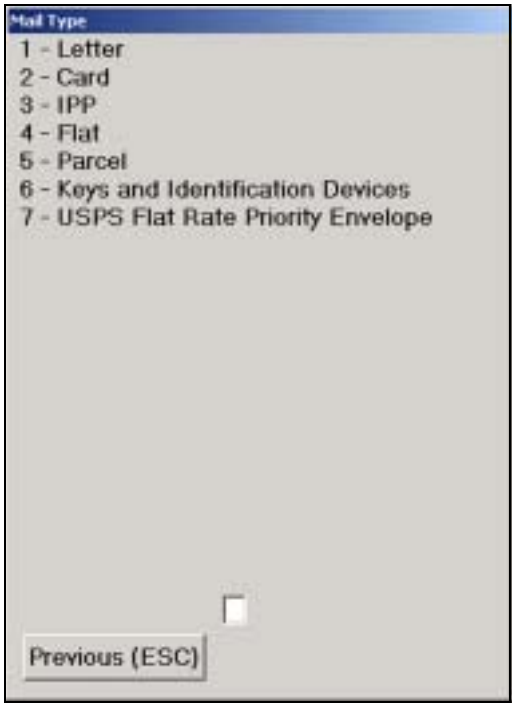

Figure 3.11.1–4. *Mail Type* Screen

For insured mail, choose *Letter, IPP, Flat*, or *Parcel* from the *Mail Type* screen. Upon entering the number of your choice in the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5) is displayed.

4. Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen.

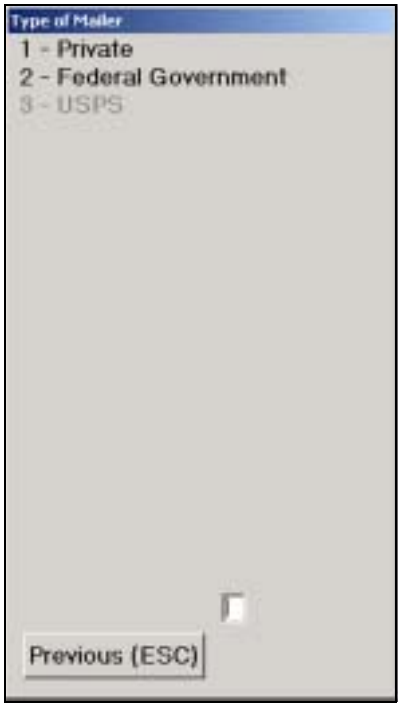

Figure 3.11.1–5. *Type of Mailer* Screen

Determine if the type of mailer is Private or Federal Government. Enter in the field at the bottom of the screen the option number that corresponds to the type of mailer, or highlight your selection and press <Enter>. Upon entering the option number, the *Indicia* screen is displayed (Figure 3.11.1–6).

5. Enter all Indicia found on the mailpiece.

Indicia refers to the postage payment on the mailpiece (i.e., stamp, semi-postal stamp, precanceled stamp, stamped envelope, meter, PVI, Permit Imprint, IBI, and none). Examples of indicia may be found in RM 3–18.

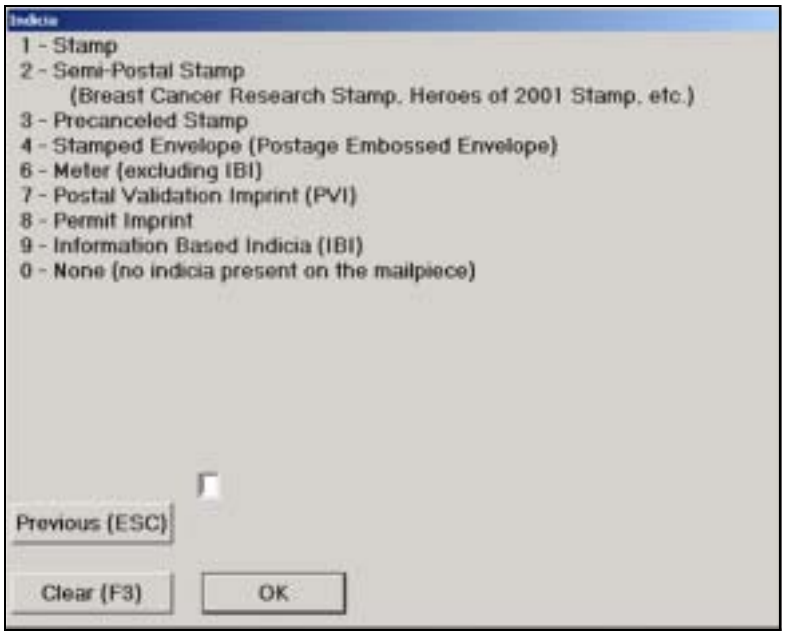

Figure 3.11.1–6. *Indicia* Screen

Determine the correct indicia on the mailpiece and enter the appropriate information in the field at the bottom of the screen. Press *OK* or <Enter> to move to the *Pieces* screen.

6. Enter the number of mailpieces at the *Pieces* screen.

The number of pieces of mail that belongs to the same mail class, same mail type and has the same endorsements, revenue, weight, postmark date, postmark time, postmark of origin, and indicia is entered on the *Pieces* screen.

Figure 3.11.1–7. *Pieces* Screen

Once the number of mailpieces has been entered in the *Pieces* screen, press *OK* or <Enter> to move to the *Weight* screen.

7. Enter the weight of the pieces at the *Weight* screen.

Enter the weight of the mailpiece(s) either electronically or manually.

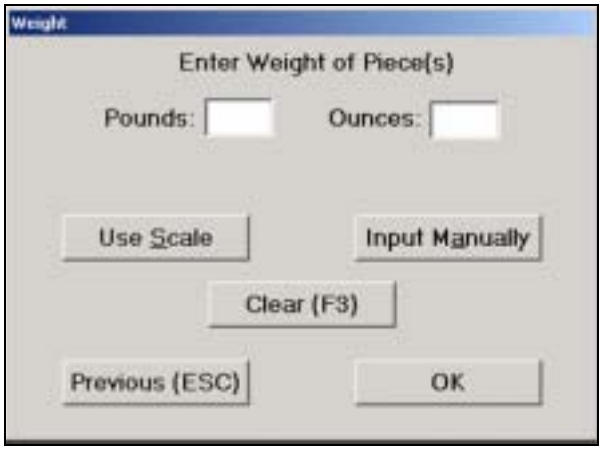

Figure 3.11.1–8. *Weight* Screen

Electronically: Place the mailpiece(s) on the scale attached to the CODES Laptop. When the electronic reading stabilizes, press <S>, or click on *Use Scale*.

Manually: Press <A> or click on *Input Manually* to use the manual weight option. After weighing the mailpiece(s) using a separate scale, enter the weight on the screen using the number keys at the top of the keyboard. Press <Enter> to move from *Pounds* to *Ounces*. Press <Enter> again when the weight has been entered.

After entering the correct weight for the mailpieces, the *Mailability* screen (Figure 3.11.1–9) is displayed.

8. Enter the machinability of the mailpiece at the *Mailability* screen (Figure 3.11.1–9).

Except for Priority Mail, any piece of First-Class Mail (including keys and identification devices) weighing 1 ounce or less and not claimed at a card rate, is subject to a nonmachinable surcharge. For letter-size mailpieces, the nonmachinable surcharge most often applies if:

- The aspect ratio (length divided by height) is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5, or
- The mailpiece is polybagged, polywrapped, or enclosed in any plastic material.

For nonletters (IPPs, flats or parcels), the nonmachinable surcharge applies if:

- The mailpiece is thicker than 1/4-inch thick.
- The length is more than 11-1/2 inches or the height is more than 6-1/8 inches.

- The aspect ratio is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5.

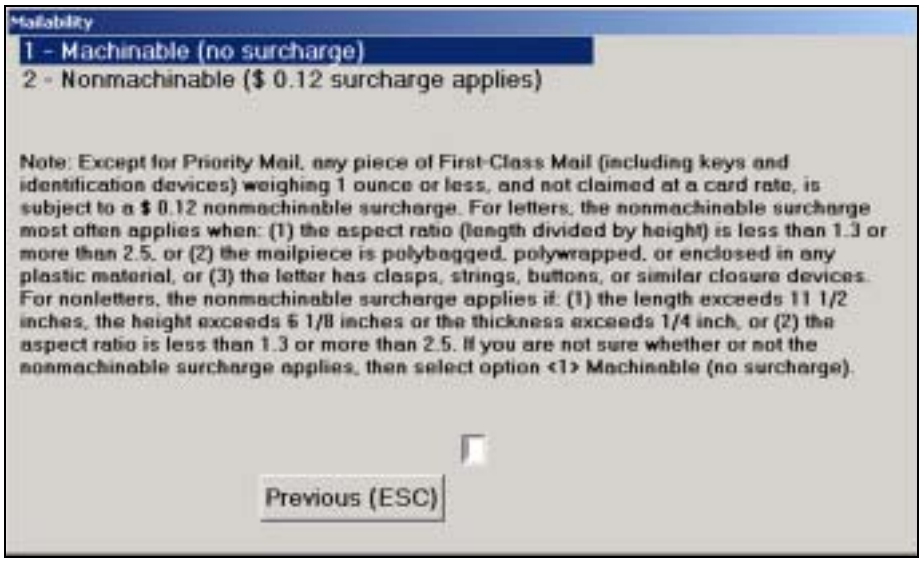

Figure 3.11.1–9. *Mailability* Screen

Determine if the mailpiece is machinable.

- *Nonmachinable (surcharge applies):* The mailpiece is subject to a surcharge.
- *Machinable:* The mailpiece is not subject to a surcharge.

Note: If you are unsure of a mailpiece's mailability, select *Machinable.*

After completing the field on the *Mailability* screen, the *Total Insurance Fee* screen is displayed.

9. Enter the fee for each insured piece at the *Total Insurance Fee* screen.

The insurance fee for each mailpiece is found on PS Form 8126 which is attached to the mailpiece.

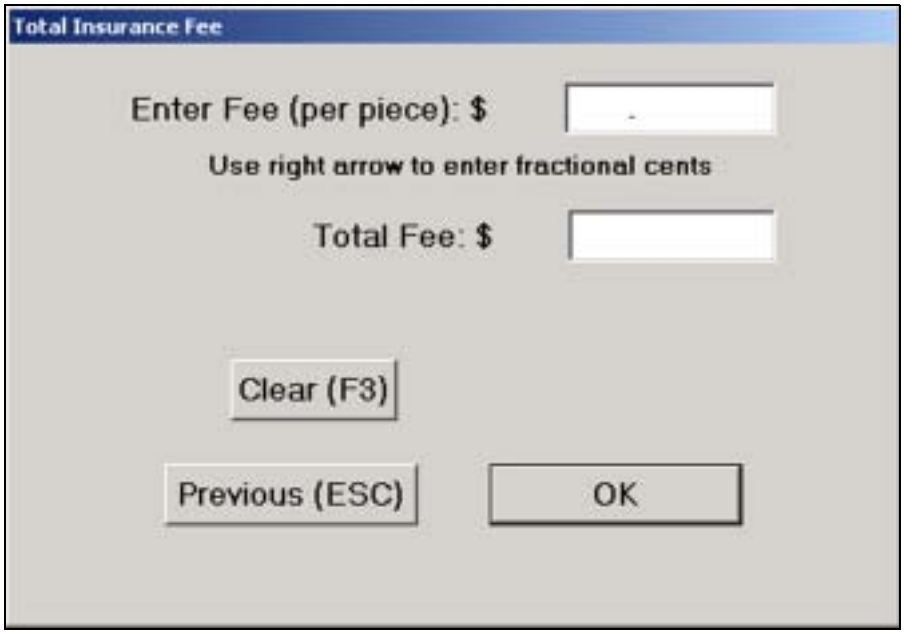

Figure 3.11.1–10. *Total Insurance Fee* Screen

Enter the insurance fee for each mailpiece in the field provided. If more than one piece is entered on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7), the total fee is calculated and automatically entered in the *Total Fee* field.

Press *OK* or click <Enter> when all the fields are complete. The *Special Service Indicator* screen is then displayed.

10. Enter the appropriate number to indicate if the mailpiece has special services.

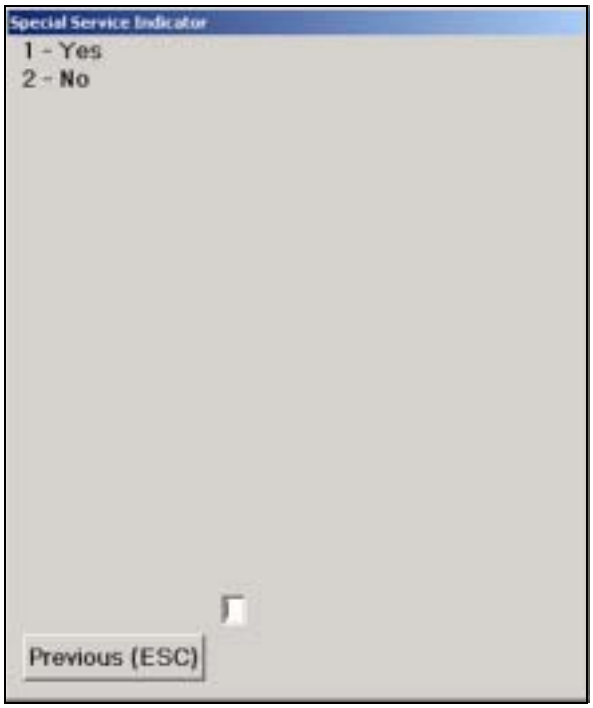

Figure 3.11.1–11. *Special Service Indicator* Screen

To indicate if a special service is attached to the mailpiece, make the appropriate selection:

- ***Yes*** Indicates that a special service is present on the mailpiece. Selecting *Yes,* displays the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.1–12).
- ***No*** Indicates that the mailpiece does not have a special service. Selecting *No,* displays the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–13), which is described in step 12.

11. Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate.

If the insured First-Class Mail mailpiece has any of the nine special services identified, enter the number of that service in the field at the bottom of the screen. For additional information regarding each special service, refer to RM 3–15.

Note: Since multiple selection is allowed, enter all special service options that apply.

Figure 3.11.1–12. *Special Service/Mail Fee* Screen

Upon entering the type of special service or mail fee in the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Total Mailpiece(s) Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–13) is displayed.

12. Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered.

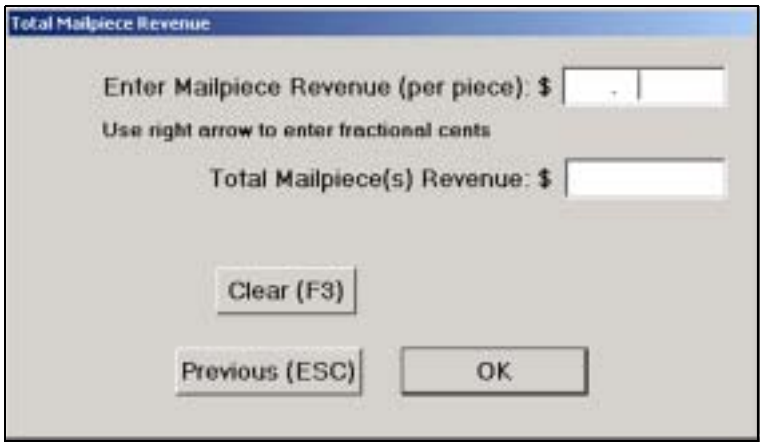

Figure 3.11.1–13. *Total Mailpiece Revenue* Screen

Enter the amount of revenue for each mailpiece that includes postage and all fees, which is listed on line one of Form 8126 that is attached to the mailpiece. The total mailpiece revenue will be automatically calculated and inserted in the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* field. Select *OK* or press <Enter> to display the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.11.1–14).

13. Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection.

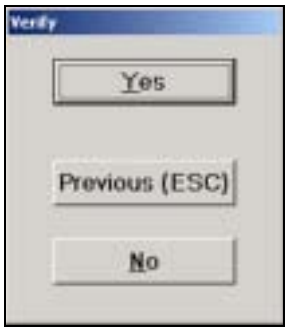

Figure 3.11.1–14. *Verify* Screen

Select the appropriate button to confirm that the information on the *Mailpiece Data* screen, which appears beside the *Verify* screen, is correct.

- **<Y>** Indicates that the information is correct and returns the data collector to the *Originating Special Services* screen.
- **<N>** Indicates that the information is incorrect and must be re-entered. A message screen is displayed asking the user if the record is to be deleted.
- ***Previous*** Returns the user to the previous screen for correction. Previous may be selected on each preceding screen for additional corrections.

Figure 3.11.1–15. Delete Record *Information* Screen

Selecting *Yes* on the *Information* screen will delete the record and return the user to the *Originating Special Services* screen. Selecting *No* on the *Information* screen will return the user to the *Verify* screen.

Upon selecting the appropriate button on the *Verify* screen, the user is returned to the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1).

3.11.1.2 Insured: Free Mail for the Blind

Mail included in this class will contain the marking, *Free Mail for the Blind (Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped)*.

As mailpiece data is entered, CODES displays a record of entries on the *Mailpiece Data* screen (Figure 3.12.2–1) on the right of the CODES Laptop.

1. **Select *Free Mail for the Blind (Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped)* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).**

   Upon selecting *Free Mail for the Blind*, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

2. **Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen.**

   Select the type of mail that is being recorded from the list given on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4). Mail type refers to the actual shape of the mailpiece which is described in RM 3–12.

   Upon entering the number of your choice in the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Pieces* screen is displayed.

3. **Enter the number of mailpieces in the field on the *Pieces* screen.**

   The number of pieces of mail that belongs to the same mail class, same mail type and has the same endorsements, revenue, weight, postmark date, postmark time, postmark of origin, and indicia is entered on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).

   Once the number of mailpieces has been entered in the *Pieces* screen, press *OK* or <Enter> to move to the *Weight* screen.

4. **Enter the weight of the mailpiece on the *Weight* screen.**

   Enter the weight of the mailpiece(s) either electronically or manually in the field on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).

   After entering the correct weight for the mailpieces, the *Total Insurance Fee* screen is displayed.

5. **Enter the fee for each insured piece on the *Total Insurance Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.1–10).**

   The insurance fee for each mailpiece is found on PS Form 8126 which is attached to the mailpiece.

   Enter the insurance fee for each mailpiece in the field provided. If more than one piece is entered on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7), the total fee is calculated and automatically entered in the *Total Fee* field.

   After entering the correct insurance fee(s) for the mailpieces, the *Verify* screen is displayed.

6. **Verify the *Mailpiece Data* screen by selecting the appropriate button.**

   Select the appropriate button to confirm that the information on the *Mailpiece Data* screen, which appears beside the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.11.1–14), is correct.

   - ***Yes*** Indicates that the information is correct, and the user is returned to the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1).
   - ***No*** Indicates that the information is incorrect and must be re-entered.

3.11.1.3 Insured: International Mail

From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, select *International* if the mailpiece destination is a foreign country.

As mailpiece data is entered, CODES displays a record of entries on the *Mailpiece Data* screen on the right of the CODES Laptop screen.

1. **Select *International (Outbound to Foreign Countries)* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).**

   The *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed (Figure 3.11.1–16).

2. **Select *Economy* or *Airmail Parcel Post* from the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

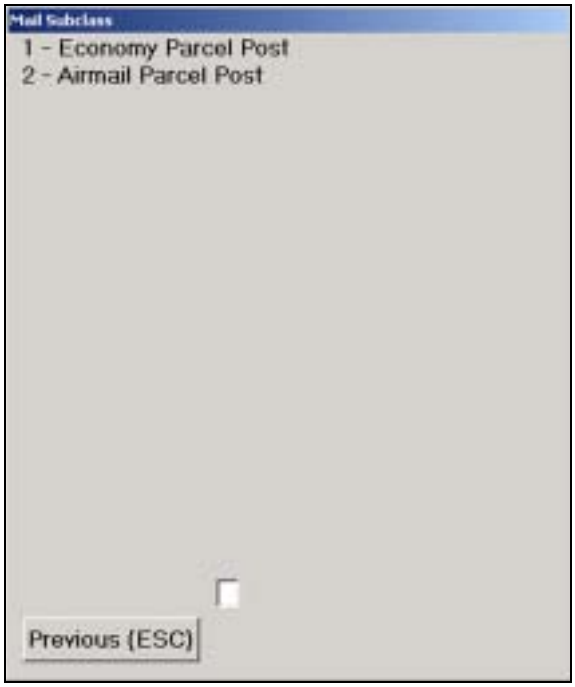

Figure 3.11.1–16. *Mail Subclass* Screen

Choose *Economy Parcel Post* or *Airmail Parcel Post* from the *Mail Subclass* screen and insert the number of the selection in the field provided.

Note: Record all *international mail* as *Economy Parcel Post* unless the mailpiece is marked *Airmail* or *Airmail Parcel Post*.

Once the subclass is selected, the *International Country* screen is displayed.

3. **Select the international country of the mailpiece that is being recorded.**

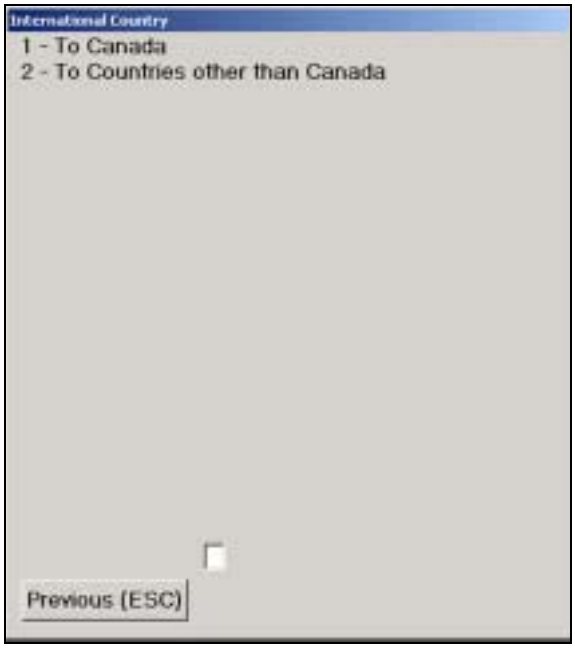

Figure 3.11.1–17. *International Country* Screen

From the *International Country* screen select the appropriate destination of the mailpiece.

- ***To Canada*** Select if the mailpiece is going to Canada.
- ***To Countries other than Canada*** Select if the mailpiece is going to countries other than Canada.

Once the selection is inserted into the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

4. **Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen.**

Select the type of mail that is being recorded from the list given on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4). For international mail, choose IPP, Flat, or Parcel, and enter the selected type in the field at the bottom of the *Mail Type* screen.

The *Type of Mailer* screen is then displayed (Figure 3.11.1–5) and select *Private* or *Federal Government*.

5. **Follow the steps given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail, steps 5 through 13.**

   To complete the recording of an international mailpiece follow the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, step 5 and following:

   - Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.11.1–6).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces in the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
   - Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).
   - Enter the fee for each insured piece on the *Total Insurance Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.1–10).
   - Enter *Yes* or *No* to the Special Service Indicator (Figure 3.11.1–11).
   - Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).
   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered (Figure 3.11.1–13).
   - Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   Upon verifying the steps in recording the international mail, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.1.4 Insured: Priority Mail

As mailpiece data is entered, CODES displays a record of entries on the *Mailpiece Data* screen on the right of the CODES Laptop screen.

Priority Mail is First-Class Mail that weighs more than 13 ounces but less than or equal to 70 pounds. Priority Mail may also include mail that weighs 13 ounces or less, at the option of the mailer. It *should* bear the endorsement, *Priority Mail* or *First-Class Mail*, but in practice, it may not. If a piece of unendorsed mail is encountered that has been paid at the *Priority Mail* rate, record the piece as Priority Mail. For more information on unendorsed mail, (section 3.13).

When recording unendorsed Priority Mail, refer to the guidelines on unendorsed mail in Table 3–1, section 3.13, *Special Data Recording Rules*.

To record Priority Mail, observe the following guidelines:

1. **Select *Priority (Priority or Priority Mail)* from the *Mail Class & Type* Screen.**

   Upon selecting *Priority* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2), the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen is displayed.

2. **Select the appropriate marking or endorsement from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.**

   Endorsements or markings may be found in a number of places on the mailpiece, such as in the indicia, next to the indicia, above the address label, in the address label, or at the bottom of the mailpiece.

   From the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.11.1–3), select one of the following:

   - Presorted (Presorted or PRSRT).
   - None (no marking).

   Once the marking selection has been entered in the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

3. **Follow the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail, steps 2 through 6.**

   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
   - Enter all Indicia found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.11.1–6).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces in the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
   - Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).

   Upon entering the weight of the mailpiece in the field provided, the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.11.1–18) is displayed.

4. **Enter the first three digits of the *destinating* ZIP Code.**

   CODES displays the *Destinating ZIP Code* screen.

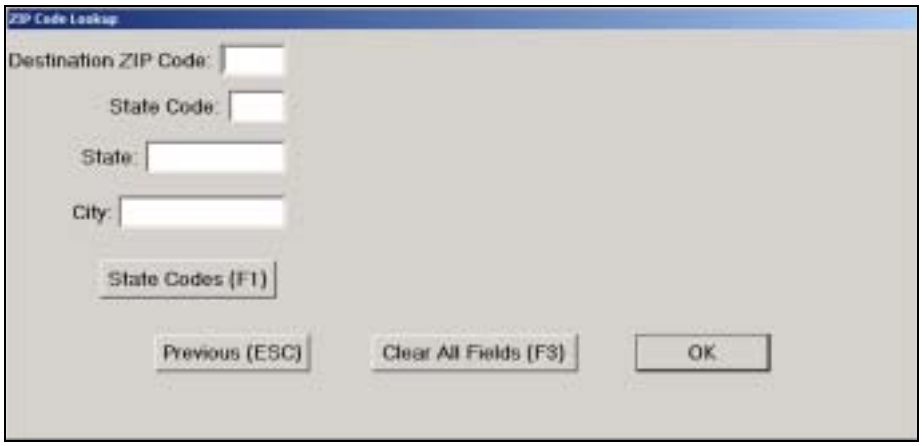

Figure 3.11.1–18. *ZIP Code Lookup* Screen

If the ZIP Code is unknown, press <F1> and a pop-up list of states will be displayed (Figure 3.11.1–19). If the first three digits of the ZIP Code cannot be read, press <->.

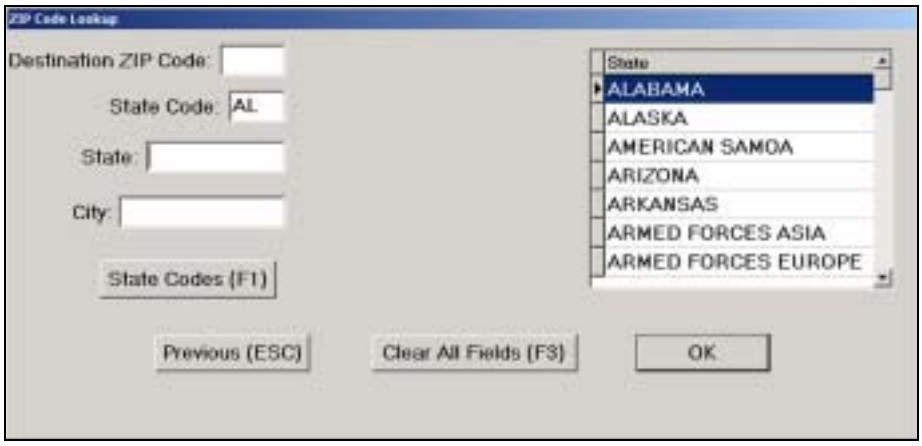

Figure 3.11.1–19. *ZIP Code Lookup* Screen with State Pop-up Menu

Upon selecting the appropriate state, the city pop-up list will also be shown (Figure 3.11.1–20).

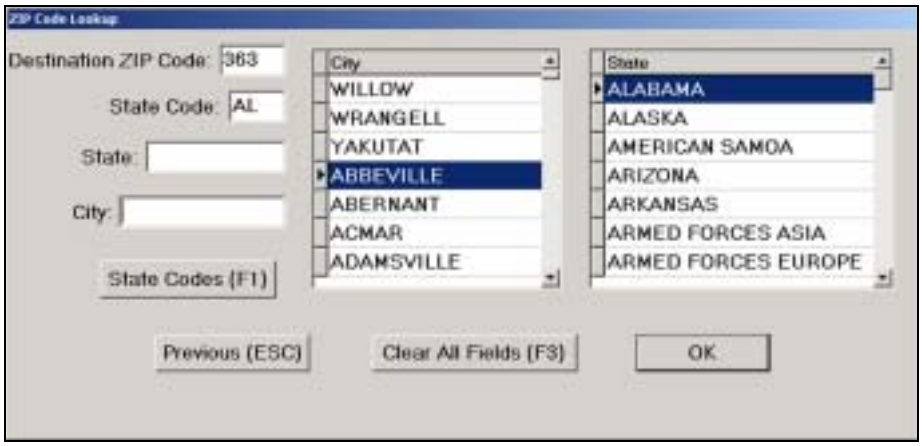

Figure 3.11.1–20. *ZIP Code Lookup* Screen with City Pop-up Menu

Making a city selection will fill the Destination ZIP Code field. Use the laptop's arrow keys to make your selection for both lists (if applicable) and press <Enter>.

5. **Return to the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail, and follow steps 9 through 13.**

   - Enter the fee for each insured piece on the *Total Insurance Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.1–10).
   - Enter *Yes* or *No* to the Special Service indicator (Figure 3.11.1–11).
   - Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).
   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered (Figure 3.11.1–13).
   - Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   Once the mailpiece data is verified, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.1.5 Insured: Package Services

With the exception of Library Mail and Special Mail, Package Services weighs 16 ounces or more. Each Package Service mailpiece may not exceed 70 pounds with the exception of Bound Printed Matter which may weigh up to 15 pounds. The combined length and girth of a mailpiece may not exceed 130 inches. See section 3.11 for more information.

To record a Package Services mailpiece, complete the following steps:

1. **Select *Package Services* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.**

   Package Services includes the following endorsements: Parcel Post, PP, Parcel Select, Bound Printer Matter, BPM, Media Mail, Special Standard, SPEC STD, Library Rate, or Library Mail.

Once *Package Services* is selected from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2), the *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed.

2. **Select the appropriate package service from the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

   Choose one of the following subclasses:

   - Parcel Post (no marking, Parcel Post, PP, or Parcel Select).
   - Bound Printed Matter (Bound Printed Matter or BPM).
   - Media Mail (Media Mail, Special Standard Mail or SPEC STD).
   - Library Mail (Library Rate or Library Mail).

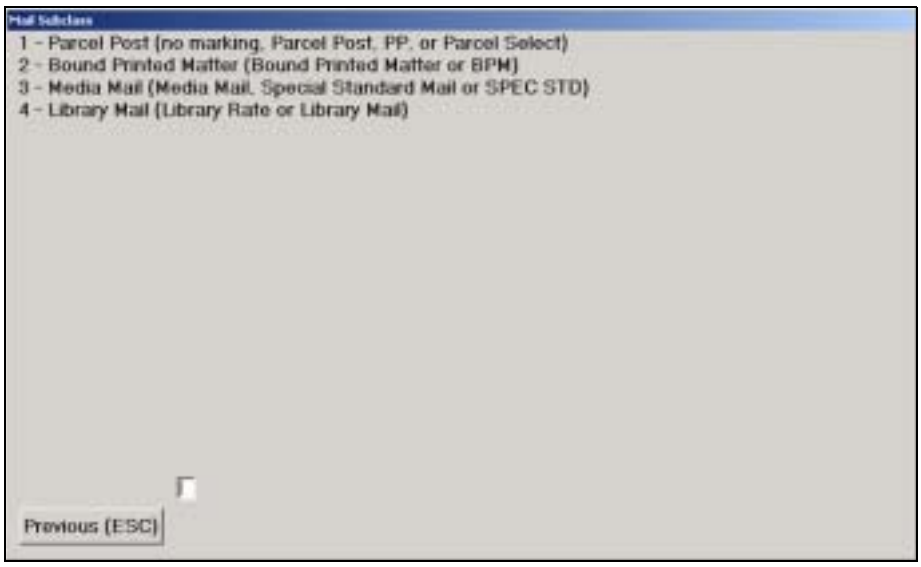

Figure 3.11.1–21. *Mail Subclass* Screen

Upon entering any one of the four subclasses in the field at the bottom of the *Mail Subclass* screen, the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen is displayed.

3. **Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.**

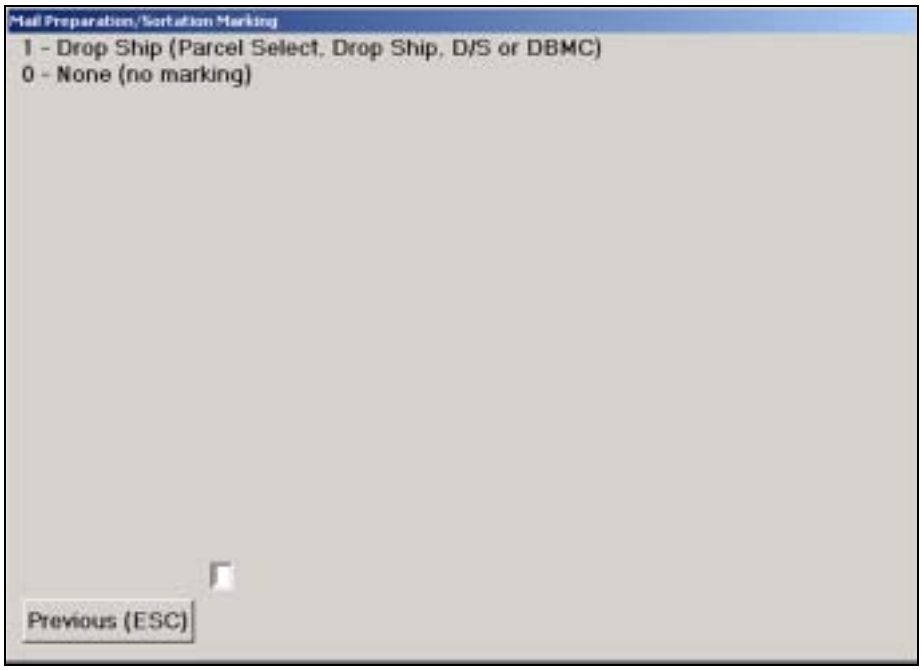

Figure 3.11.1–22. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen

After making the selection from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

Follow the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail, steps 3 through 7.

- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
- Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
- Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece (Figure 3.11.1–6).
- Enter the number of mailpieces in the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
- Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).

After entering the weight of the mailpiece in the field on the *Weight* screen, the *Mail Enclosures* screen (Figure 3.11.1–23) is displayed.

4. For *all* Package Services mailpieces, select *enclosures or no enclosures*.

CODES displays a screen that requires enclosure information.

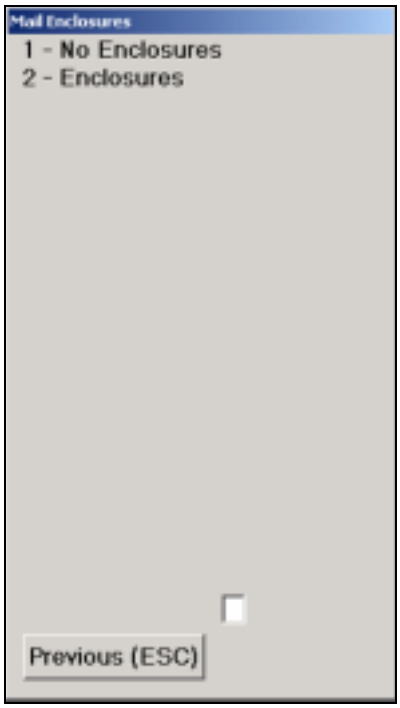

Figure 3.11.1–23. *Mail Enclosures* Screen

Determine if the mailpiece contains enclosures and select the appropriate response.

Note: Enclosures are recorded for Package Services only, not Standard Mail.

- ***No Enclosures*** This indicates that no enclosure is included with the mailpiece. Refer to section 3.11 for more information on enclosures.

  If *No Enclosures* is selected, the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.11.1–18) is displayed.

  Once the ZIP Code is inserted into the appropriate fields, the *Parcel Dimensions* screen is displayed.

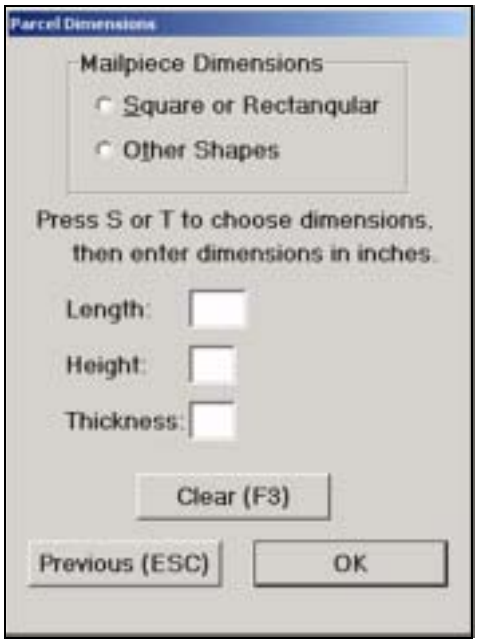

Figure 3.11.1–24. *Parcel Dimensions* Screen

Upon entering the dimensions of the mailpiece in the appropriate fields, the *Total Insurance Fee* screen is displayed as described in Step 6 below.

- ***Enclosures*** This indicates that enclosures are included with the mailpiece. Refer to section 3.11 for more information on enclosures.

  If enclosures are included, CODES displays the *Total Enclosure Revenue* screen.

5. Enter the amount of revenue for each enclosure on the *Total Enclosure Revenue* screen.

Enter the revenue of the enclosures and press <Enter>. When entering an amount in this revenue screen, enter the sum as cents per piece. For example, enter a revenue of $1.50 as 150. Likewise, enter 37 cents as 37.

CODES automatically calculates the total revenue for the number of pieces selected and enters it in the *Total Revenue* field.

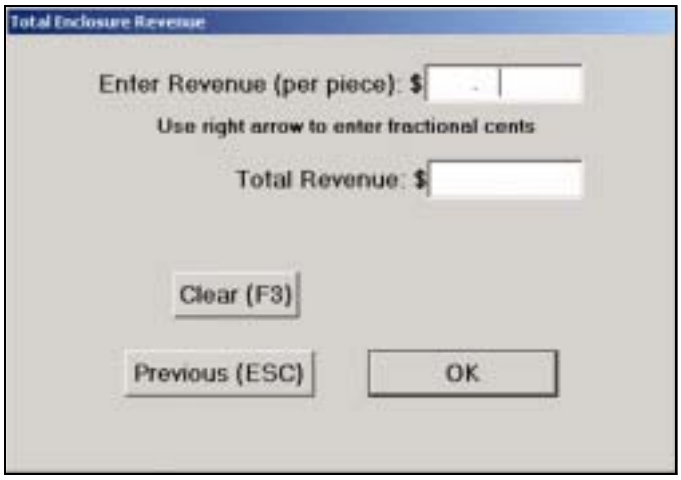

Figure 3.11.1–25. *Total Enclosure Revenue* Screen

6. **Follow the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail, steps 8 through 12.**

   - Enter the first three digits of the destinating ZIP Code (Figure 3.11.1–18).
   - Enter the dimensions of the mailpiece on the *Parcel Dimensions* screen (Figure 3.11.1–24).
   - Enter the fee for each insured piece on the *Total Insurance Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.1–10).
   - Enter *Yes* or *No* to the Special Service indicator (Figure 3.11.1–11).
   - Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate.
   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered on the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–13).
   - Confirm the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection on the *Verify* Screen (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   After verifying the *Mailpiece Data* screen, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.2 Collect on Delivery (COD) Mail

Any mailer may use collect on delivery (COD) service to mail an article for which the mailer has not been paid and have its price and the cost of the postage collected from the recipient. If the recipient pays the amount due by check payable to the mailer, the Postal Service forwards the check to the mailer. If the recipient pays the amount due in cash, the Postal Service collects the money order fee(s) from the recipient and sends a postal money order(s) to the mailer. The maximum COD fee collected from the recipient

may not exceed $1,000. COD service provides the mailer with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record is maintained by the Postal Service. The COD service may be used for Express Mail, First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, or Package Services.

The applicable COD fee must be paid in addition to the correct postage and fees for other services requested. The amount to be collected or the amount of insurance coverage desired, whichever is higher, determines the COD fee. The other services which are available for COD mailpieces are return receipt, restricted delivery, delivery confirmation, registered mail, signature confirmation, and special handling.

3.11.2.1 COD: First-Class Mail

To record First-Class Mail COD mailpieces, complete the following steps:

1. **Select First-Class from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.**

   For COD Mail that weights 13 ounces or less, select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).

2. **Follow steps 1 through 8 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.**

   - Select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).
   - Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.11.1–3).
   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
   - Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
   - Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).
   - Enter the machinability of the mailpiece on the *Mailability* screen (Figure 3.11.1–9).

   After completing the fields on the *Mailability* screen, the *Total COD Fee* screen is displayed.

3. **Enter the COD fees in the appropriate fields on the *Total COD Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.2–1).**

   Enter the amount of the total COD fee for the mailpiece. This amount may be found on PS Form 3816 which is attached to the mailpiece.

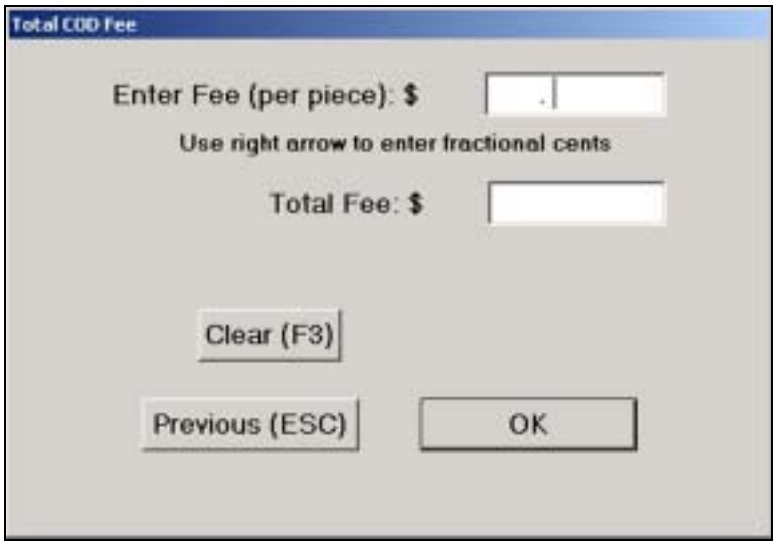

Figure 3.11.2–1. *Total COD Fee* Screen

The total COD fee for the mailpiece is automatically calculated and entered in the *Total Fee* field. Once the fields are filled, press <Enter> and the *Special Service Indicator* screen is displayed. Instructions for completing this screen are found in section 3.11.1, step 10.

4. Follow steps 10 through 13 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.

- Enter the appropriate number to indicate if the mailpiece has special services (Figure 3.11.1–11).
- Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).
- Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail selected (Figure 3.11.1–13).
- Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

After verifying the *Mailpiece Data* screen, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.2.2 COD Mail: Priority Mail

1. Upon selecting Priority Mail from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2), the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen is displayed.

2. Follow steps 1 through 7 as described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.

- Select *Priority* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).

- Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen.

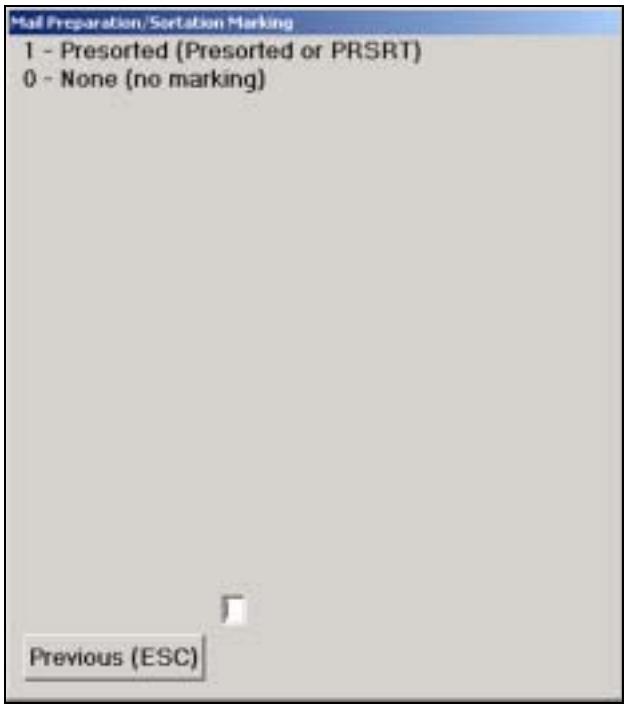

Figure 3.11.2–2. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen

- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
- Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
- Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
- Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).

3. Enter the destinating ZIP Code on the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.11.1–18).

4. Enter the COD fee on the *Total COD Fee* screen.

Enter the amount of the total COD fee for the mailpiece as shown in Figure 3.11.2–1. This amount may be found on PS Form 3816 which is attached to the item.

The total fee for the mailpiece is automatically calculated and entered in the *Total Fee* field. Once the fields are filled, press <Enter> and the *Special Service Indicator* screen is displayed.

5. **Return to the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail and follow steps 10 through 13.**

   - Enter *Yes* or *No* to the Special Service indicator (Figure 3.11.1–11).

     Yes The *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen is displayed. Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).

     No The *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–13) is displayed.

   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered.
   - Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   Once the *Mailpiece Data* is verified, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.2.3 COD Mail: Package Services

1. **Select Package Services from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.**

   Upon selecting Package Services from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2), the *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed.

2. **Select the appropriate Package Service from the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

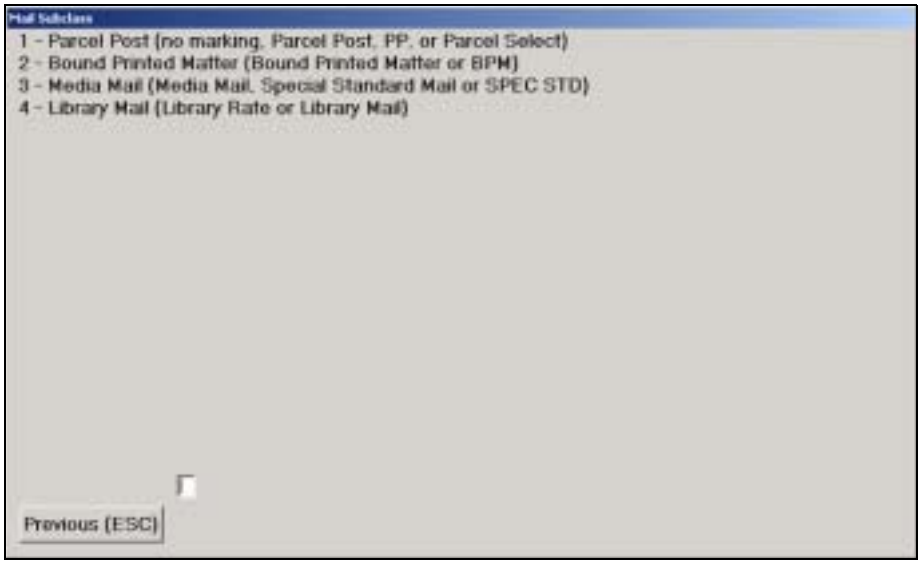

Figure 3.11.2–3. *Mail Subclass* Screen

3. **Follow steps 2 though 7 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.**
   - Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.11.1–3).
   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
   - Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
   - Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).
4. **Select *No Enclosures* or *Enclosures* from the *Mail Enclosures* screen (Figure 3.11.1–23).**

   If *Enclosures* is chosen, the *Total Enclosure Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–25) is displayed.
5. **Enter the ZIP Code into the destination *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.11.1–18).**
6. **Enter the parcel dimensions into the *Parcel Dimensions* screen (Figure 3.11.1–24).**
7. **Enter the fee for each mailpiece on the *Total COD Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.2–1).**
8. **Enter the appropriate number on the *Special Service Indicator* screen (Figure 3.11.1–11) to indicate if the mailpiece has special services.**
9. **Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).**

   Enter the special service in the field on the *Special Service/Mail Fee* screen. The *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen is then displayed.
10. **Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail selected.**

    Enter the amount of revenue on the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.11.1–13) for each mailpiece which is listed on PS Form 8126 that is attached to the mailpiece. The total mailpiece revenue will be calculated automatically and inserted in the *Total Mailpiece(s) Revenue* field. Press *OK* or <Enter> to display the *Verify* screen.

11. Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection.

Upon selecting the appropriate button on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.11.1–14), the user is returned to the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1).

3.11.3 Registered Mail

Registered mail incorporates a system of receipts to monitor the movement of the mail from the point of entry to delivery. It also provides the sender with a mailing receipt and a delivery record is kept at the post office of address.

3.11.3.1 Registered: First-Class Mail

First-Class Mail weighs 13 ounces or less. This class includes letters, cards, flats, IPPs, small parcels, and rolls.

1. Select First-Class from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.

For registered mail that weighs 13 ounces or less, select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).

2. Follow steps 1 through 8 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.

- Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.11.1–3).
- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
- Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
- Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
- Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).
- Enter the machinability of the mailpiece on the *Mailability* screen (Figure 3.11.1–9).

3. Enter the fee for each registered mailpiece at the *Total Registered Fee* screen.

Figure 3.11.3–1. *Total Registered Fee* Screen

4. **Follow steps 9 through 12 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.**
   - Enter the appropriate number to indicate if the mailpiece has special services (Figure 3.11.1–11).
   - Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).
   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail selected (Figure 3.11.1–13).
   - Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   After verifying the *Mailpiece Data* screen, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.3.2 Registered: International Mail

From the *Mail Class & Type* screen, select *International* if the mailpiece destination is a foreign country.

1. **Select *International (Outbound to Foreign Countries)* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.**

   The *Mail Subclass* screen is displayed.

2. **Select *Economy Letter-Post* or *Airmail Letter-Post* from the *Mail Subclass* screen.**

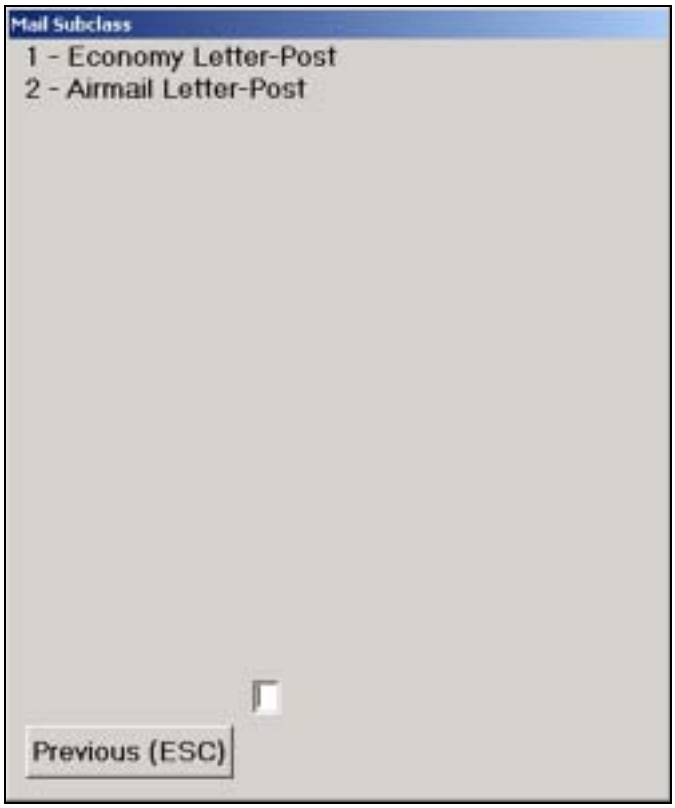

Figure 3.11.3–2. *Mail Subclass* Screen

Choose *Economy Letter-Post* or *Airmail Letter-Post* from the *Mail Subclass* screen and insert the number of the selection in the field provided.

Record all international mail as *Economy Letter-Post* unless the mailpiece is marked *Airmail* or *Airmail Letter-Post*.

Once the subclass is selected, the *International Country* screen is displayed.

3. Select the destination country of the mailpiece that is being recorded.

From the *International Country* screen (Figure 3.11.1–17) select the appropriate destination of the mailpiece.

Once the selection is inserted into the field at the bottom of the screen, the *Mail Type* screen is displayed.

4. Follow steps 3 through 7 of section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.

- Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).

- Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
- Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
- Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
- Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).

5. **Enter the fee for each registered piece on the *Total Registered Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.3–1).**
6. **Enter *Yes* or *No* to the *Special Service Indicator* (Figure 3.11.1–11).**
7. **Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).**

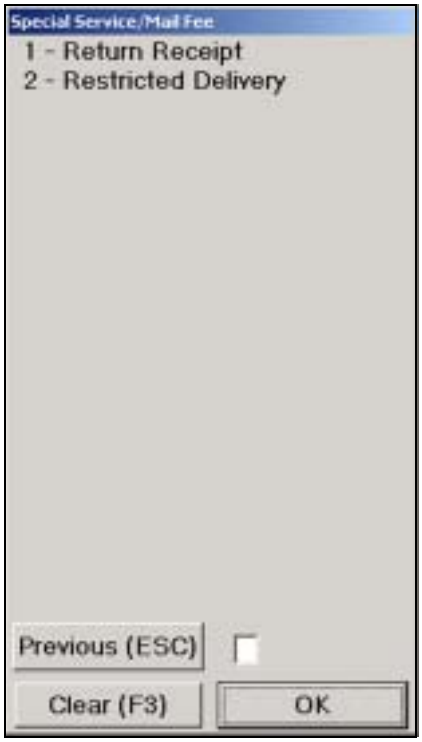

Figure 3.11.3–3. *Special Service Mail Fee* Screen

Select the type of special service that is applicable to the mailpiece and insert its number in the field at the bottom of the screen. The *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen is displayed.

8. **Follow steps 13 and 14 of section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.**
   - Enter the total mailpiece revenue (Figure 3.11.1–13) for each piece of mail entered.
   - Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection on the *Verify* screen (Figure 3.11.1–14).

   Upon verifying the recorded data for *international mail*, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.3.3 Registered: Priority Mail

Priority Mail is First-Class Mail that weighs more than 13 ounces but less than or equal to 70 pounds. Priority Mail may also include mail that weighs 13 ounces or less, at the option of the mailer. It *should* bear the endorsement, *Priority Mail* or *First-Class Mail*, but in practice it may not. If a piece of unendorsed mail is encountered that has been paid at the *Priority Mail* rate, record the piece as Priority Mail (section 3.13).

To record Registered Priority Mail, observe the following guidelines:

1. **Follow steps 1 through 7 described in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail.**
   - Select *Priority* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).
   - Select the marking or endorsement that applies from the *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* screen (Figure 3.11.1–3).
   - Enter the shape of the mailpiece on the *Mail Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–4).
   - Choose the type of mailer from the *Type of Mailer* screen (Figure 3.11.1–5).
   - Enter all indicia found on the mailpiece on the *Indicia* screen (Figure 3.11.1–6).
   - Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen (Figure 3.11.1–7).
   - Enter the weight of the pieces on the *Weight* screen (Figure 3.11.1–8).
2. **Enter the first three digits of the *destinating* ZIP Code on the *ZIP Code Lookup* screen (Figure 3.11.1–18).**
3. **Enter the fee for each registered mailpiece on the *Total Registered Fee* screen (Figure 3.11.3–1).**
4. **Return to the guidelines given in section 3.11.1.1, Insured: First-Class Mail and follow steps 10 through 13.**
   - Enter *Yes* or *No* to the *Special Service Indicator* screen (Figure 3.11.1–11).
   - Choose the type of special service or mail fee that is appropriate (Figure 3.11.1–12).

- Enter the total mailpiece revenue for each piece of mail entered (Figure 3.11.1–13).
- Verify the mailpiece data by making the appropriate selection (Figure 3.11.1–14).

Once the *Mailpiece Data* is verified, the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1) is displayed.

3.11.4 Certificates of Mailing

The Certificate of Mailing service provides evidence of mailing. For this type of mail, the window clerk or mailer prepares a receipt to show evidence of mailing. The mailpiece may be First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail, Package Services, or international mail.

3.11.4.1 Certificates of Mailing: First-Class Mail

1. Select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen.

For Certificate of Mailing Mail that weighs 13 ounces or less, select *First-Class* from the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.11.1–2).

Upon selecting *First-Class*, the *Certificates of Mailing Subgroup* screen is displayed.

2. Select the appropriate type of Certificate of Mailing for the mailpiece.

The *Certificates of Mailing Subgroup* screen gives four options, each of which defines a specific type of mailing certificate as described below:

- *Certificate of Mailing - Basic (PS Form 3817)*: This form is used for an individual certificate for ordinary mail of any class.
- *Certificate of Mailing - Bulk (PS Form 3606)*: This form is used for a bulk mailing as a certificate to specify the number of pieces mailed. This certificate is provided only for a mailing of identical pieces of First-Class Mail and Standard Mail matter.
- *Duplicate Copies (PS Form 3606):* This form is used for duplicate copies of a single mailpiece and specifies the number of pieces mailed.
- *Firm Mailing Books (PS Form 3877):* This form is used when requesting a certificate of mailing for three or more pieces of mail presented at one time.

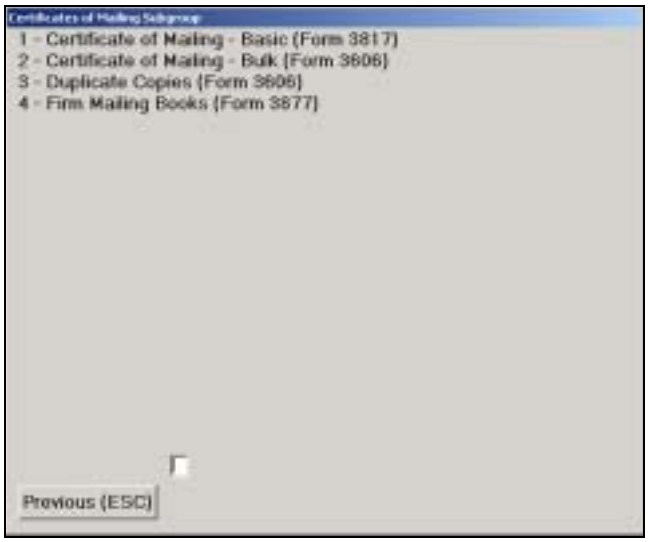

Figure 3.11.4–1. *Certificates of Mailing Subgroup* Screen

- Selecting the option *Certificate of Mailing - Basic (Form 3817)* displays the *Certificate of Mailing-Basic Fee* screen.

Figure 3.11.4–2. *Certificate of Mailing - Basic Fee* Screen

Upon entering the total revenue of the *Certificate of Mailing*, the *Verify* screen is displayed.

- Selecting the option *Certificate of Mailing - Bulk (Form 3606)* displays the *Certificate of Mailing-Bulk Fee* screen.

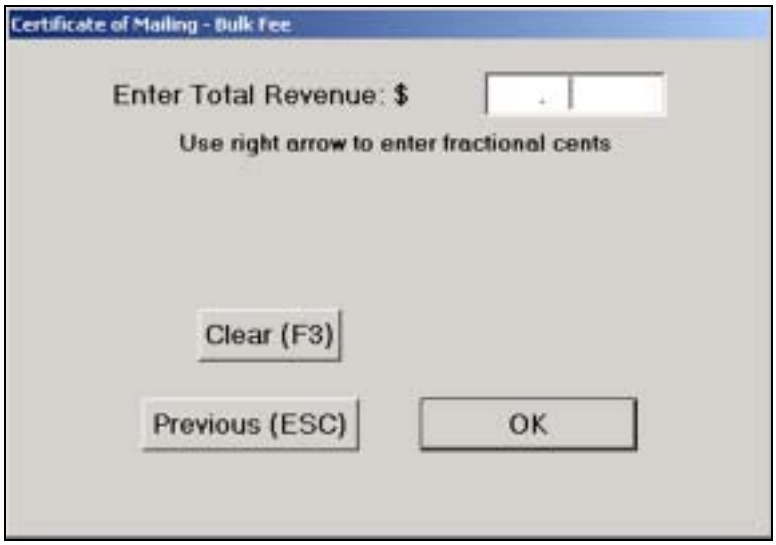

Figure 3.11.4–3. *Certificate of Mailing - Bulk Fee* Screen

Upon entering the total revenue of the *Certificate of Mailing*, the *Verify* screen is displayed.

- Selecting the option *Duplicate Copies (Form 3606)* displays the *Duplicate Copies Fee* screen.

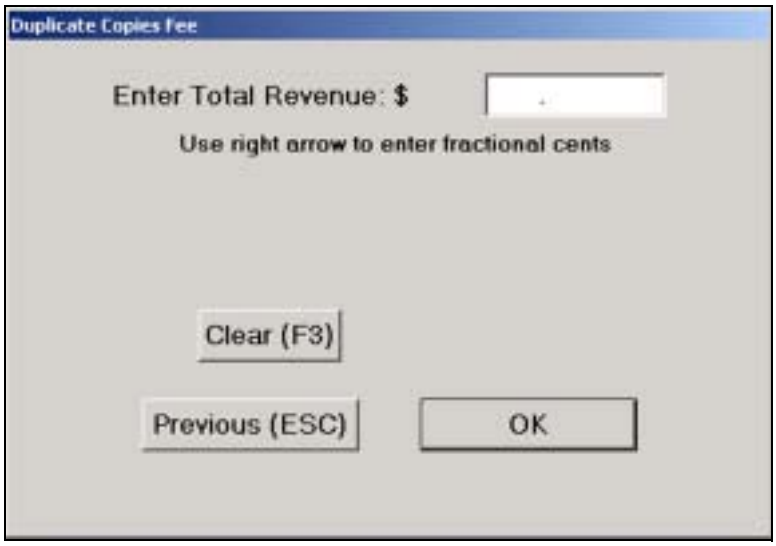

Figure 3.11.4–4. *Duplicate Copies Fee* Screen

Upon entering the total revenue of the *Certificate of Mailing*, the *Verify* screen is displayed.

- Selecting the option *Firm Mailing Books (Form 3817)* displays the *Firm Mailing Books Fee* screen.

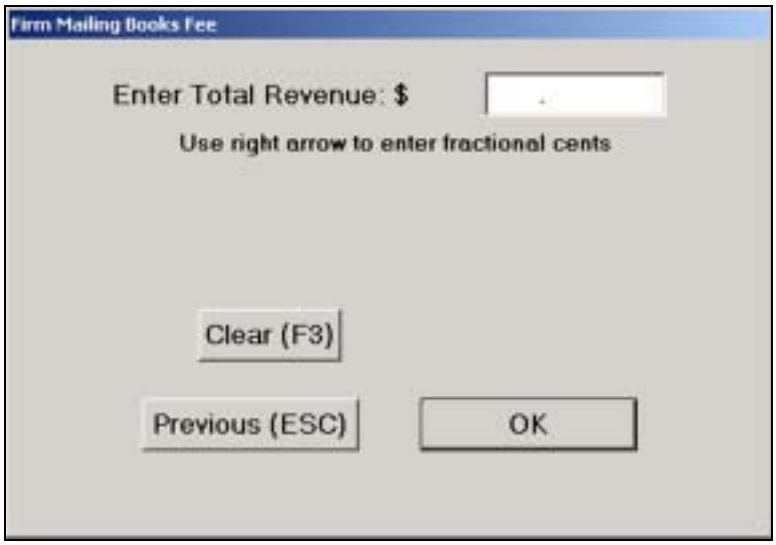

Figure 3.11.4–5. *Firm Mailing Books Fee* Screen

Upon entering the certificate of mailing fee(s) in the *Enter Total Revenue* field, the *Verify* screen is displayed.

3. Verify the data by making the appropriate selection.

Select the appropriate button to verify the information on the *Mailpiece Data* screen that appears beside the *Verify* screen.

- ***Yes*** Indicates that the information is correct.
- ***No*** Indicates that the information is incorrect and must be re-entered.

Upon selecting the appropriate button on the Verify screen, the user is returned to the *Originating Special Services* screen.

3.11.4.2 Certificates of Mailing: Standard Mail, International Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services

Certificates of Mailing for Standard Mail, international mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services follows the same path as described above in section A for First-Class Certificates of Mailing.

3.11.5 Collect on Delivery (Alteration of COD Charges)

The mailer of a COD package may alter the COD charges or direct delivery to a new addressee by filing a request with the postmaster at the office of address and paying the applicable fee. The request must show the Post Office and date of mailing, the COD number, the name and address of addressee shown on form, the name and address of new addressee if applicable, and the new COD charges or delivery to be made without collecting COD charges.

The COD mailer files a Form 3849-D (card). Postage is affixed directly to the card to pay the altering fee.

To record a COD mailpiece (Alteration of COD Charges or Designation of New Addressee) complete the following steps:

1. **Select *Collect On Delivery* (Alteration of COD Charges or Designation of New Addressee) from the *Originating Special Services* screen (Figure 3.11.1–1).**

   Upon selecting *Collect On Delivery* from the *Originating Special Services,* the *Pieces* screen is displayed (Figure 3.11.1–7).

2. **Enter the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen.**

   Upon entering the number of mailpieces on the *Pieces* screen, the *Verify* screen is displayed (Figure 3.11.1–14).

3. **Confirm the information on the *Verify* screen,**

   The *Originating Special Services* screen is displayed (Figure 3.11.1–1).

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3.12 Ending the ODIS-RPW Test and Saving Test Data

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once the final mailpiece has been recorded, the ODIS-RPW test must be ended and the data that has been collected saved. However, before ending a test, sometimes the test data must be edited or even deleted. The data collector may be forced to suspend a test for a period of time or in some circumstances even abort a test. This section will give guidelines on how to do all of these functions which are identified on the *Options Menu* shown below (Figure 3.12.0–1).

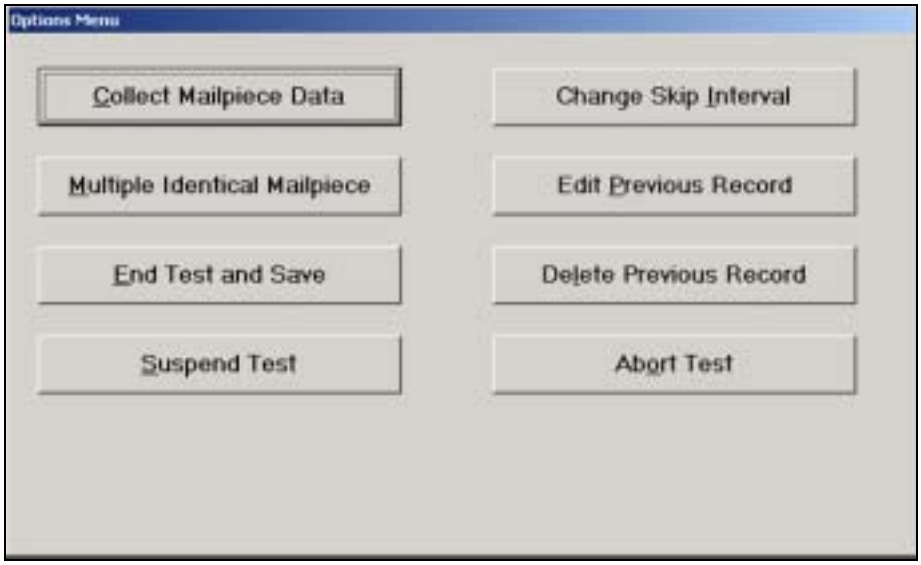

Figure 3.12.0–1. *Options Menu* Screen

3.12.1 Reviewing and Editing Mailpiece Recordings

Once the ODIS-RPW mailpiece has been verified, the data collector may review the last entry by selecting *Edit Previous Record* from the *Options Menu*. Selecting this option will produce an *Editing Record* that allows the data collector to once again verify the entered information (Figure 3.12.1–1).

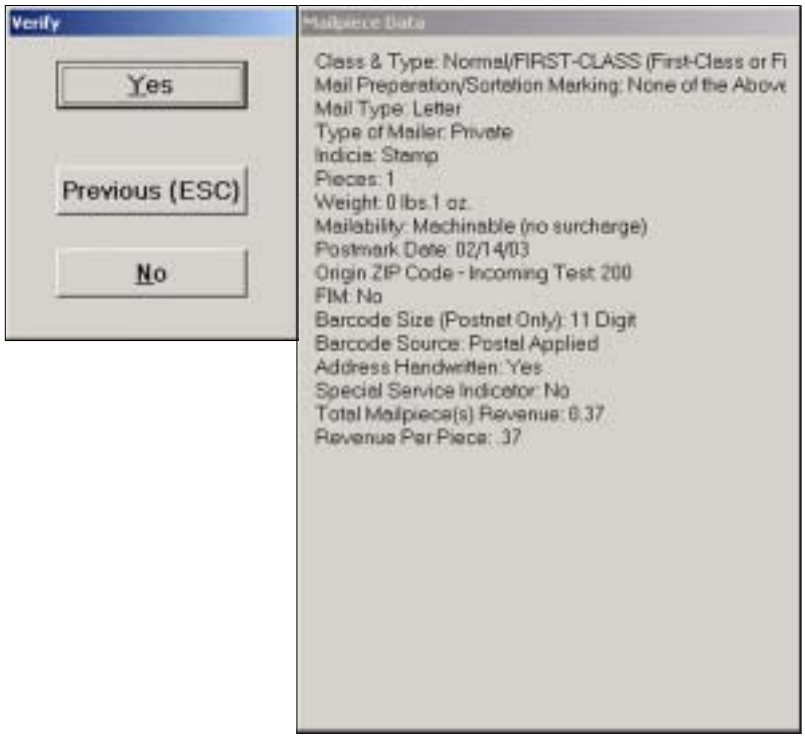

Figure 3.12.1–1. *Verify* Screen

1. **To indicate if the information displayed on the *Mailpiece Data* screen is correct, type the appropriate letter.**
   - ***Yes*** Selecting *Yes* from the *Verify* screen will acknowledge that the entered data is correct and return the user to the *Options Menu*.
   - ***No*** Selecting *No* from the *Verify* screen will produce an *Information* screen that asks if the data collector would like to delete the record.
2. **To indicate that the record should be deleted, type the appropriate letter in response to the *Information* screen (Figure 3.12.1–2).**

Figure 3.12.1–2. *Information* Screen

- ***Yes*** Selecting *Yes* from the *Information* screen deletes the test record.

- ***No*** Selecting *No* from the *Information* screen returns the data collector to the *Verify* screen. The record will not be deleted.

3.12.2 Deleting Mailpiece Recordings

If any of the test data is incorrect, the record should be deleted. To delete the record, select *Delete Previous Record* from the *Options Menu* (Figure 3.12.0–1).

Upon selecting *Delete Previous Record*, the *Mailpiece Data* screen is displayed (Figure 3.12.2–1).

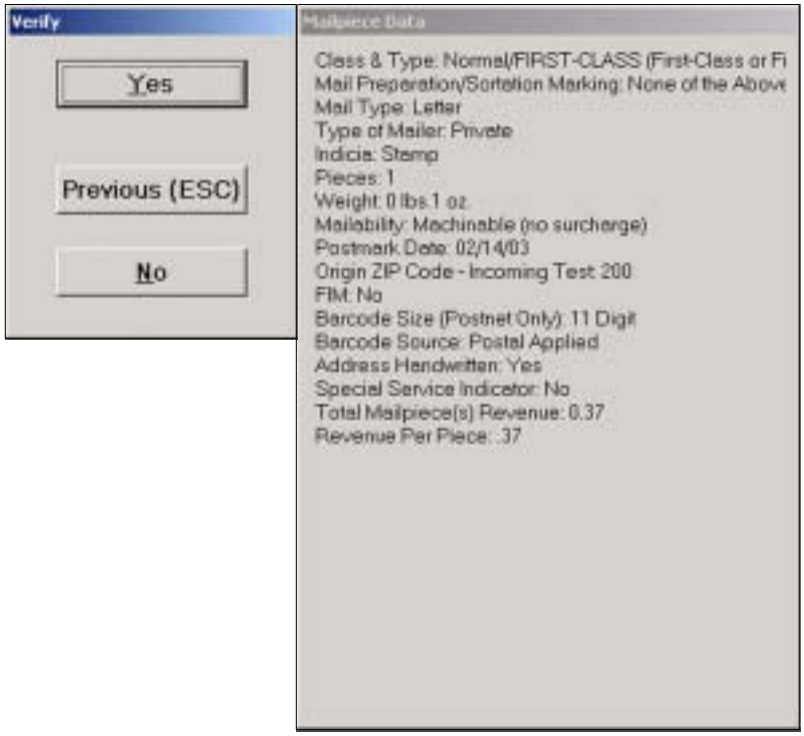

Figure 3.12.2–1. *Mailpiece Data* Screen

An *Information* screen is also displayed, asking if the record is to be deleted (Figure 3.12.2–2).

Figure 3.12.2–2. *Information* Screen

To indicate that the information is incorrect and that the entry should be deleted, type the appropriate letter.

- ***Yes*** Selecting *Yes* will delete the mailpiece data and return the data collector to the *Options Menu*.
- ***No*** Selecting *No* will return the data collector to the *Verify* screen. The mailpiece data will not be deleted.

3.12.3 Ending the Test and Saving Test Data

At the conclusion of an ODIS-RPW test, save the test data to the CODES Laptop's hard drive.

To save the data to the CODES Laptop's hard drive, perform the following steps:

1. **Press <Esc> to exit the ODIS-RPW recording screens.**

   After verifying the last mailpiece, press <Esc> to return to the *Options Menu.*

2. **From the *Options Menu*, select *End Test and Save*.**

   Selecting *End Test and Save* from the *Options Menu* displays the *End Test* screen (Figure 3.12.3–1), which indicates that the test is ended.

Figure 3.12.3–1. *End Test* Screen

- ***OK*** confirms that the test is to be ended. Note that the *Conduct Test* screen (Figure 3.4.1–3) will now show *Complete* in the test *Status* column.

3.12.4 Aborting the Test Session

If the incorrect test was selected from the *Select a Test* screen, and data was recorded in the incorrect selection, the test must be aborted in order to select the correct test. The CODES software stores all aborted test data.

1. **To abort the session, choose *Abort Test* from the *Options Menu*.**

   If the incorrect test was selected from the *Select a Test* screen, and data was recorded in the incorrect selection, the test must be aborted in order to select the correct test.

   A screen which warns that the test data will be lost is displayed (Figure 3.12.4–1).

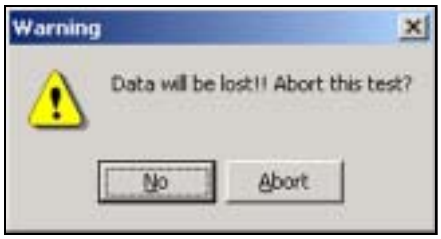

Figure 3.12.4–1. *Warning* Screen

2. **To indicate if the test session is to be aborted, type the appropriate response to the *Warning* screen.**
   - ***Abort*** will remove all test data from the laptop.
   - ***No*** displays the *Option Menu* from which another selection may be chosen.

3.12.5 Suspending an ODIS-RPW Test

A test is suspended when any of the following occur: waiting for the next dispatch, going to lunch, or sharing the laptop with another DCT performing the same test on another tour.

Choose *Suspend Test* from the *Options* Menu.

Upon choosing *Suspend Test*, a screen denoting that the test has been suspended is displayed (Figure 3.12.5–1).

Figure 3.12.5–1. *Suspend Test* Screen

- ***OK*** confirms that the test is suspended.
- The *CODES Main Menu* screen is then displayed (Figure 3.4.1–1).

Upon suspending a test, the data collector may return to that test to complete entering test data at a later time. To return to a suspended test, select the test from the *Conduct a Test* screen (Figure 3.4.1–3). Notice that in the status column of that screen, suspended will be indicated, and all previously entered data will be saved.

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3.13 Special Data Recording Rules

Special Data Recording Rules give background information for entering data into the CODES Laptop. This section groups these rules according to common distinguishing features as identified below. Note that a complete discussion of recording mailpiece characteristics is found in section 3.9 of this handbook.

3.13.1 Mail Class

The following recording rules address questions regarding mail class characteristics that the data collector might encounter while entering mailpiece data into the laptop.

3.13.1.1 Unendorsed Mail

The table below is used for determining mail class based on postage and weight when the mailpiece is unendorsed.

Table 3–1. Mail Class Based on Postage and Weight

	Postage Rate (PR)	Weight (W)	Mail Class
1	PR < FCM* Rate	W ≤ 13 oz.	First-Class Mail
2	PR = FCM* Rate	W ≤ 13 oz.	First-Class Mail
3	FCM* < PR < Priority Rate	W ≤ 13 oz.	First-Class Mail
4	PR < Priority Rate	W > 13 oz.	Package Services Parcel Post
5	PR = Priority Rate	Any Weight	Priority Mail
6	PR > Priority Rate	Any Weight	Priority Mail
7	CBD or None**	W ≤ 13 oz.	First-Class Mail***
8	CBD or None**	W > 13 oz.	Package Services Parcel Post

* FCM – First-Class Mail
** CBD – Cannot be determined, e.g., permit, unreadable meter.
*** Based on weight and zone
< Less than
> Greater than
≤ Less than or equal to
= Equals

3.13.1.2 Handwritten Endorsement for Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped

Free matter for the blind or other disabled persons must have the endorsement *Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped* in the upper right corner of the address side of the mailpiece. The endorsement may be handwritten or printed, and should, therefore, be recorded on the *Mail Class & Type* screen (Figure 3.9.1–1) as *Free Mail For The Blind.*

3.13.1.3 *SmartMail* Exemption

SmartMail is a mailing service product provided by SmartMail, Incorporated. To take advantage of destination entry, *SmartMail* packages and mails First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Standard Mail using Express Mail Drop Shipment. All *SmartMail* is permit indicia. The name *SmartMail* is inscribed in the Permit Imprint, with the class endorsement marking to the left of the permit imprint. The marking designations are: *First-Class Mail* for First-Class Mail, *Priority Mail* for Priority Mail, and *Standard Auto* for Standard Mail.

3.13.2 Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking

Special recording rules may apply to endorsements or markings on a mailpiece.

3.13.2.1 Manifest Mailing (Keyline) Code Information

Manifest Mailing (Keyline) Code information takes precedence over mailpiece endorsement when recording mail preparation/sortation marking.

3.13.2.2 Priority Mail Logo on Nonpostal Containers

Private companies have been given permission by the Postal Service to produce their own envelopes (or boxes) with the Postal Service copyright logo Priority Mail and a red and blue border on the edge of the envelope or box. These mailpieces are to be treated as Priority Mail boxes (Figure 3.9.6-2).

3.13.3 Mail Type

Card Shape Being Paid at Letter-Rate because of its physical characteristics must be recorded as a *Letter* at the *Mail Type* screen for First-Class Mail.

3.13.4 Type of Mailer

Recording various types of mailers requires specialized instructions. Below are some of the types of mailers that have rules that should be noted before entering mailpiece data.

3.13.4.1 Identifying Postal Service (USPS) Mail

Record a mailpiece that has a Postal Service return address as a USPS mailpiece, regardless of the type of indicia used.

3.13.4.2 Damaged Mail Enclosed in a USPS Transparent Cellophane Envelope

Record damaged private or federal government mail that has been enclosed in a USPS transparent cellophane envelope, where the entire piece shows through the cellophane window, as if it were not enclosed in the USPS envelope. Do not record this as a USPS piece.

3.13.4.3 Definition of *Federal Government* Mail

Federal Government mail refers to Federal Agency Mail, U.S. Congressional Franked Mail, and the rare category of Other Franked Mail (for example, mail originated by ex-presidents and their spouses). Do not record state and local government mail as *Federal Government*; record as *Private*. Do not record U.S. Postal Service Mail as *Federal Government*; record as *USPS*.

Armed Forces Free Mail is recorded as *Armed Forces Free Mail* at the *Indicia* screen. The Type of Mailer is *Federal Government*, and the applicable Mail Classes are: First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services.

3.13.4.4 Absentee Ballots, Federal Government

Record federal government absentee ballots as *Federal Government* on the *Type of Mailer* screen followed by Absentee Ballots at the *Indicia* screen.

3.13.4.5 Absentee Ballots, State and Local

State and local absentee ballots require prepaid postage and must be recorded as *single piece First-Class Mail*, *Private*.

3.13.5 Indicia

Indicia refers to the postage payment on the mailpiece i.e., stamp, semi-postal stamp, precanceled stamp, stamped envelope, meter, PVI, Permit Imprint, IBI, or none.

3.13.5.1 More than One Indicia

The recording of multiple indicia is allowed. Select all indicia that are on the mailpiece.

3.13.5.2 *SmartMail*

All *SmartMail* is permit indicia.

3.13.6 Postmark Date, Time, and Origin

The postmark date is usually found in the cancellation mark on the stamp or in the meter strip or the Postal Service applied or mailer applied video ink jet overcancellation. Many times, however, multiple indicia or multiple cancellations are present. In these cases, review the special recording rules given below.

3.13.6.1 Multiple Indicia and Multiple Cancellations

When there are two or more types of indicia or cancellations, the following rules apply:

- **Stamp and Other Indicia (excluding PVI):** When there are two or more types of indicia and one of them is a stamp, take the postmark date, time, and origin from the stamp.
- **PVI and Other Indicia:** When there are two or more types of indicia, and one of them is a PVI, record the postmark date and origin from the PVI. Record the total revenue from all indicia.
- **Stamp and Business Reply Permit:** If a business reply permit mailpiece has a stamp affixed to it, record the postmark date, time, origin and total mailpiece revenue from the stamp.
- **Meter and Permit:** When there are two indicia, and they are metered and permit, record the postmark date, time, and origin from the metered indicia.
- **Multiple Meters:** When a mailpiece has multiple meters, record the meter manufacturer and meter number with the greatest revenue. Record the total revenue from all meters and record the postmark date and origin from the meter with the most recent date.

  If a mailpiece includes a validation imprint (PVI), then record both the metered and PVI indicia. Record the meter manufacturer and number from the meter with the greatest revenue. Record the total revenue from both the metered and PVI indicia, and record the postmark date and origin from the PVI.
- **Multiple Permits:** When there are two indicia and they are both permit, record the origin data from the last permit printed on the mailpiece. If the two different permits are Presorted Standard (or Bulk) and Nonprofit, and you cannot determine which permit was printed last, take the data from the permit marked Presorted Standard (or Bulk).
- **Video Ink Jet Cancellations:** When there are two or more cancellations and one of them is a video ink jet cancellation, follow the rules set forth in Appendix H, section I.
- **Multiple Postmarks:** If there is more than one postmark, record the postmark date, time, and city of origin from the earliest cancellation mark.
- **Federal Government Mail with Stamp Affixed:** If the stamp is canceled, record the postmark date, time, and origin from the cancellation. If there is no origin in the indicia or if the stamp is not canceled, record the postmark date as *Cannot Be Read*.

  Armed Forces Free Mail is recorded as *Armed Froces Free Mail* at the *Indicia* screen. The Type of Mailer is Federal Government, and the applicable Mail Classes are: First-Class, Preparation/Sortation marking is "single piece" or "none."

3.13.6.2 Special Cases

The following rules guide the data collector in recording special cases:

- **Drop Shipment Authorization:** When a metered mailpiece has a drop shipment authorization, record the postmark date and the time from the meter. Record the origin from the city and state in the ad plate or the mailer-applied video ink jet (Appendix H, section II).
- **Postage Due Business Reply (Permit Imprint):** Record the date, time, and origin from the cancellation mark. If there is no cancellation mark record as *Cannot Be Read*.
- **Metered Reply Mail (metered, bearing the legend *Postage Has Been Paid By…*):** If there are cancellation marks in addition to the meter imprint, record the date, time, and origin from the earliest cancellation mark, not from the meter imprint. If there is no cancellation mark, record as *Cannot Be Read.*
- **Business Reply Mail:** The meter imprint should not be used to record the postmark date, time, or origin. If there are no cancellation marks, record as *Cannot Be Read.*
- ***SmartMail:*** The 3-digit postmark of origin is recorded from the 5-digit ZIP Code reference, found to the left of the permit indicia block and directly below the SmartMail tracking number.
- **Delayed Delivery:** The Postal Service may receive mail with today's date in the meter strip, but the piece is marked not to be delivered until some future date. Record the date as <-> *Cannot Be Read.*

3.13.6.3 *Known* Originating ZIP Codes Versus *Cannot Be Read* Originating ZIP Codes

To determine the originating ZIP Code of a mailpiece, *never* use the return address, as the city, state, or ZIP Code reference. This includes using the return addresses for federal government mailpieces and USPS mailpieces. The one exception to this rule applies to mailpieces using Merchandise Return Service.

- **Merchandise Return Service:** Use the following rules for recording the originating ZIP Code when Merchandise Return Service is used. If there is no postmark, then use the ZIP Code given in the customer's return address. The return address is provided in the upper left corner of the merchandise return service label. If there is no return address, then record the origin ZIP Code as *Cannot Be Read.*
- **Federal Government and USPS:** Mailpieces with G-series permit will not have a known originating ZIP Code. Remember not to associate the agency name in the permit indicia with the return address in order to assign an originating ZIP Code.

3.13.6.4 Package Services Parcel Post Destination Delivery Unit Mailpieces

The originating 3-digit ZIP Code for destination delivery unit (DDU) mailpieces is taken from the physical ZIP Code of the facility where the contractor entered the mailpieces. In some instances this ZIP Code will be the same as the MEP being tested, but it can also be different from the MEP that's located in a multi-ZIP facility. Also, the 3-digit ZIP Code from the permit imprint block may not be the same as the DDU 3-digit ZIP Code.

3.13.7 Destination ZIP

District Realignment Changes 3-digit ZIP Code: If the realignment of districts changes a 3-digit ZIP Code, the old ZIP Code is honored for a period of six months following implementation. For ODIS-RPW both the old and new ZIP Codes are deemed correct during this time period and should be recorded as *Yes* for the *Is the Destinating 5-digit ZIP Code correct?* (Figure 3.9.1–23) question. After the six month period, the old ZIP Code is considered incorrect and should be recorded as *No* for this question.

3.13.8 Barcode Size

If multiple barcodes appear on a mailpiece, observe the following rules:

- A 5-digit POSTNET barcode with a 4-digit add-on is to be recorded as a 9-digit POSTNET barcode.
- A 9-digit POSTNET barcode with a 2-digit add-on is to be recorded as an 11-digit POSTNET barcode.

3.13.9 Special Services

Special Services provided by the Postal Service include special recording rules for Business Reply Mail, Postage Due Mail, Notice to Mailer of Correction in Address and notification for undeliverable Standard Mail, Package Services and Periodicals.

3.13.9.1 Business Reply Mail (Including Qualified Business Reply Mail)

Record domestic Business Reply Mail (BRM) fees as a special service associated with First-Class Mail or Priority Mail. With one exception, a total mailpiece revenue will be recorded with a BRM Service mailpiece. The exception is when a BRM mailpiece has stamped or metered postage affixed.

Stamped or metered postage affixed to the BRM mailpiece: Select all indicia that apply. Answer *Yes* at the *Special Service Indicator* screen, then select the applicable BRM Special Service option. At the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen, enter the amount of postage indicated by the stamp or meter. Do not include the BRM fee with total revenue.

Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) is First-Class Mail that is letter sized and meets all the BRM standards referenced in the DMM. There is no special mail marking or endorsement to uniquely identify QBRM mailpieces, so you will have to obtain a listing of QBRM firms and associated fees from the postage due unit (PDU) or the accountable mail section.

The DCT is responsible for recording the proper BRM fees and should either keep a list of BRM fees, or obtain the fees from the PDU or the accountable mail section. If for some reason, the correct BRM fee cannot be determined, record as *BRM - Basic (without Advanced Deposit Account)*. Treat missent BRM as you would any other missent mailpiece.

3.13.9.2 Postage Due Mail

Postage Due Mail is defined as Business Reply Mail, Merchandise Return Service Mail, address corrections, keys and identification devices, and all other mail *marked* postage due. For all *Postage Due Mail,* enter the correct postage for the mailpiece on the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.13.11–2) even though the amount of the postage may not actually appear on the mailpiece.

3.13.9.3 Form 3547, *Notice to Mailer of Correction in Address*

Form 3547 is used to notify First-Class Mail, Standard Mail and Package Services mailers of address corrections. Form 3547 is the *manual notification component* of the address correction service used for the collection of address correction service fees by hard-copy reference. Do not confuse this with ACS (Address Change Service), which is an automated electronic enhancement program for the collection of fees associated with address change notification. These electronic fees are not recorded on the ODIS-RPW test. Form 3547 fees are recorded under *USPS Special Services* as a special service attached to a parent USPS mailpiece.

- **Form 3547s inside a USPS envelope:** Even if two or more cards are enclosed in an envelope, enter this item as a First-Class single piece mailpiece (letter or flat) with the USPS option, or as a Priority mailpiece with the USPS option. Select Form 3547 Revenue Only under *Special Services.* DO NOT record the per piece fees at the prompt even though the screen will prompt you to do so. Instead, enter the *total* Form 3547 revenue that is due to the Postal Service from all the cards inside the envelope.
- **Form 3547 found separately as cards, flats, or photocopies**: Enter the number of mailpieces under *single piece First-Class Mail.* Select the mail type (letter, card or flat), followed by USPS for the type of mailer. Then, select Form 3547 Revenue Only under *Special Services*. Enter the *per piece*, address correction fee when prompted.

3.13.9.4 Form 3579, *Undeliverable Standard Mail, Package Services and Periodicals*

Form 3579 is most often used as a tool for notifying Periodicals mailers about address corrections associated with undeliverable as addressed pieces. Similar to Form 3547, Form 3579 serves as the "manual notification" component of the address correction service used for the collection of address correction service fees. Address correction service is mandatory for all Periodicals publications, and the address correction service fee must be paid for each notice issued. Form 3579 fees are recorded under *Special Services* as a special service attached to a parent USPS mailpiece.

- **Form 3579 inside a USPS envelope:** Even if two or more cards are enclosed in an envelope, enter this item as a single piece First-Class Mail (letter or flat) with the USPS option, or as a Priority mailpiece with the USPS option. Select *Form 3579 Revenue Only* under *Special Services*. DO NOT record the per piece fees at the prompt even though the screen will prompt you to do so. Instead, enter the *total* Form 3579 revenue that is due to the Postal Service from all the cards inside the envelope.
- **Form 3579 found separately as cards, flats, or photocopies:** Enter the number of mailpieces under *single piece First-Class Mail*. Select the mail type (letter, card or flat), followed by *USPS* for the type of mailer. Then, select *Form 3579 Revenue Only* under *Special Services*. Enter the *per piece*, address correction fee when prompted.

Note: Form 3579 is most often used to notify Periodical mailers about address corrections for undeliverables. In some cases, for expediting reasons and services, Form 3579 may be used for Standard Mail and Package Services.

3.13.9.5 Bundled Address Correction Forms (3547 and 3579)

When a census is being conducted on accountable mail, and a bundle of address correction forms is encountered, information from the facing slip (if present) may be used to determine the revenue and the volume information for all the address correction forms in the bundle.

3.13.10 USPS Logo with Private Meter

For private postage meters and other postage evidencing systems placed in main offices, stations or branches of the Postal Service, the indicia must include the capital letters *USPS.* These meters will indicate a meter manufacturer, meter number, postmark date, postmark origin and revenue. The recording for *Type of Mailer* is *Private* (or possibly *Federal Government*), but not *USPS*. An example of a private postage meter indicia is found in Exhibit 3.13.10–1.

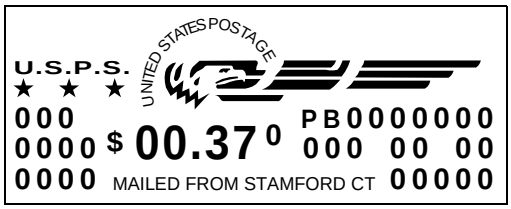


Exhibit 3.13.10–1. Private Postage Meter Example

3.13.11 Total Mailpiece Revenue

First-Class Mail enclosure (or attachment) revenue is recorded for non-permit imprint Package Services mail (Bound Printed Matter, Library Mail, Media Mail and Parcel Post). The markings for an enclosure (or attachment) are *First-Class Mail, First-Class*, or *Letter Enclosed*.

If a marking indicating an attachment or enclosure is present, but the postage for both the parent mailpiece and the attachment or enclosure has been paid together with, for example, a single meter strip, then you will need to use the RATEFOLD (Notice 123) to compute the correct postage for the mailpiece. To determine the correct enclosure revenue:

1. **Determine the correct postage rate by considering the mailpiece's rate category, weight, and if necessary the zone.**
2. **Determine the attachment or enclosure revenue by subtracting this postage from the total postage affixed to the mailpiece.**
3. **Record the parent mailpiece.**
4. **Enter the attachment or enclosure revenue at the *Total Enclosure Revenue* screen (Figure 3.13.11–1).**

Note: If the enclosure revenue cannot be determined, then assume this revenue to be equal to the current one ounce, First-Class Mail single piece rate.

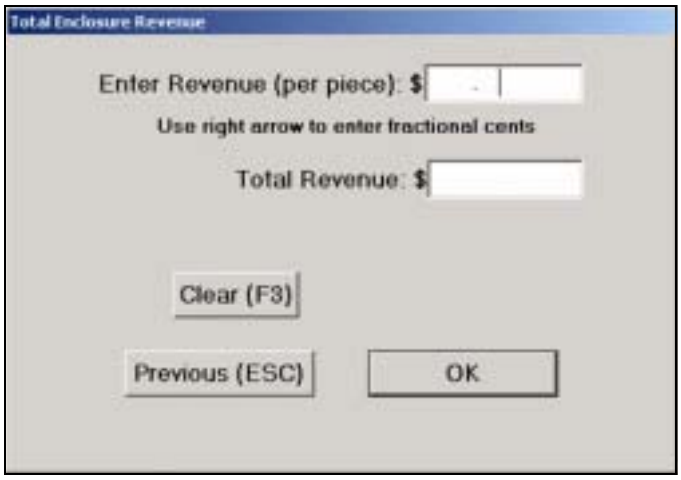


Figure 3.13.11–1. *Total Enclosure Revenue* Screen

5. Enter the total revenue shown on the mailpiece, including the enclosure revenue at the *Total Mailpiece Revenue* screen (Figure 3.13.11–2).

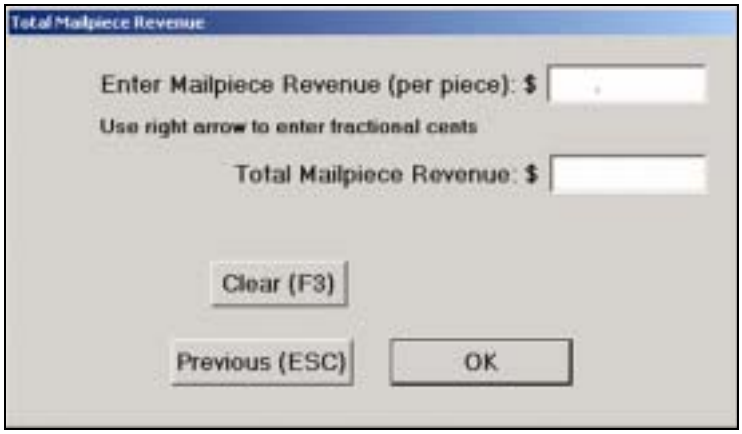


Figure 3.13.11–2. *Total Mailpiece Revenue* Screen

3.13.12 Forwarded and Returned

See RM 3–21 for Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines.

Standard Mail Revenue: If the postage due is the weighted fee, then the fee is the appropriate First-Class Mail single piece or Priority Mail rate multiplied by 2.472 and rounded up to the next whole cent.

FASTforward mail: Do not record FASTforward mail as Forwarded/Returned.

3.13.13 Other

Other miscellaneous types of recording rules should be reviewed before beginning to enter mailpiece data.

3.13.13.1 FASTforward Mail

FASTforward is a computerized system developed as an additional method of meeting the move update requirements of Presorted (nonautomation and automation) First-Class Mail. Record mail that has been processed through the *FASTforward* system as you would normally record mailpieces entering the Postal Service for the first time. Rules for recording indicia do not change.

3.13.13.2 Parcel Dimensions

Use your judgment as to whether the mailpiece is square, rectangular, or of another shape. Usually, a square or rectangular parcel will have three definite dimensions with distinct hard edges. You may encounter some mailpieces that appear square or rectangular, but have rounded or tapered edges; for example, soft goods wrapped in paper or plastic bags. The preferred method for measuring these items is to select the option for *Other Shapes,* and then measure the length and girth. See RM 3–9 for measurement guidelines.

3.13.13.3 Weight for Pieces with Certified/Return Receipt Affixed

While computing postage, you should exclude the weight of the return receipt portion of a Certified/Return Receipt for special service from the weight of the mailpiece to which it is attached. Failure to observe this rule may result in incorrect weight recordings. For example, if the weight of the mailpiece is close to the upper limit of its weight interval (for rate computation), the extra weight of the Return Receipt may cause the CODES Laptop to compute the postage at the next higher weight interval. This is because the CODES edit software will recognize the postage based on the combined weight of the mailpiece *and* the Return Receipt. This would make the mailpiece appear to be shortpaid, because the postage showing on the mailpiece would be for the lower weight interval.

If this occurs, the following manual adjustment should be used. First, assume the weight of a Return Receipt is always 0.2 ounce. Second, manually subtract 0.2 ounce from the combined weight of the piece and the Return Receipt. Finally, re-enter this computed weight and proceed. This should bring the postage on the piece in line with the software's computed postage.

3.13.13.4 Detached Mailing Cards (Marriage Mail)

Sampling and recording of detached mailing cards and their associated parent mailpieces (Marriage Mail) depend on when the pieces arrive at the test facility and how the detached cards are processed. These pieces are to be sampled only on the first day that both the parent mailpiece and the detached cards are present and are to be entered as a MIP. All information

except mail shape is determined from the detached card. The shape is determined from the parent mailpiece. Detached mailing cards found commingled in DPS letter trays must not be included in the count when applying the skip interval process, nor recorded.

3.13.13.5 Philatelic Mail — Postmark Date and Origin ZIP Code

Record the postmark date and origin ZIP Code as *Cannot-Be-Read* (CBR) for individual, first day cover mailpieces. First day covers can have cancellation dates other than the actual date that they are entered in the mailstream, and they can also have an origin ZIP Code other than the ZIP Code shown in the indicia block of the mailpiece.

Related Materials for the ODIS-RPW Test

This section includes all the definitions, tables, and related information that you may need to complete an ODIS-RPW test.

- RM 3–1 Container Subsampling
- RM 3–2 Mailpiece Skip Intervals by Shape
- RM 3–3 COU Mailpiece Skip Intervals
- RM 3–4 Excluded Mail
- RM 3–5 Mail Classes
- RM 3–6 Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking: First-Class Mail
- RM 3–7 Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking: Standard Mail
- RM 3–8 Mail Subclass: Package Services Markings
- RM 3–9 Measuring Girth
- RM 3–10 Certificates of Mailing Options Menu
- RM 3–11 Type of Mailer
- RM 3–12 Mail Type Definitions
- RM 3–13 Identifying Indicia
- RM 3–14 Comment Screen
- RM 3–15 Special Service Mail Fee
- RM 3–16 FIM Examples
- RM 3–17 POSTNET Barcode Examples (not actual size)
- RM 3–18 Indicia Examples
- RM 3–19 Meter Manufacturer Examples
- RM 3–20 Nondenominated Stamp Examples
- RM 3–21 Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines Table
- RM 3–22 Inspection Service Mailpiece Photocopy Transmittal Form

RM 3–1 Container Subsampling

Referenced Appendix B, sections 3.4.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.3, 3.7.1.

Table 3–2. Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes

Container Range	Skip Intervals	Average Mailpieces Per Container								
		5–10	11–25	26–50	51–100	101–150	151–300	301–500	501–800	801+
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
3–5	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	4	6	10
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	3	3
6–10	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	2	4	7	11
	Container	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
11–15	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	2	3	3	4	6	9	14
	Container	N/R	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	8
16–25	Mailpiece	N/R	1	2	2	3	4	7	12	10
	Container	N/R	2	3	4	5	7	7	7	10
26–35	Mailpiece	N/R	2	2	3	4	4	7	12	12
	Container	3	3	4	6	8	10	10	10	10
36–75	Mailpiece	1	2	3	4	4	6	11	18	27
	Container	5	5	6	7	10	12	12	12	12
76–125	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	6	8	14	25	40
	Container	8	8	10	12	12	16	18	22	25
126–200	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	8	11	16	21	30
	Container	10	12	15	20	25	30	30	30	30
201–500	Mailpiece	2	3	5	8	10	15	25	40	60
	Container	12	12	20	25	30	40	45	50	50
501+	Mailpiece	3	5	8	12	15	20	32	45	75

N/R means that mailpiece and/or container subsampling is **Not Recommended**. There is insufficient volume to warrant container subsampling.
PHS MEP Only: All areas on the chart are applicable.
All other MEPs: Only nonshaded areas are applicable.

RM 3–2 Mailpiece Skip Intervals by Shape

Referenced sections 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7.

Table 3–3. Letter-size Mailpiece Skip Subsampling

Expected Volume	Skip Interval
101 – 2,000	5
2,001 – 4,000	10
4,001 – 8,000	15
8,001 – 15,000	30

Table 3–4. Parcels or Parcels and IPPs Mailpiece Skip Subsampling

Expected Volume	Skip Interval
101 – 300	3
301 – 500	5
501 – 1,000	10
1,001 – 2,000	20
2,001 – 4,000	35

Table 3–5. Flats or Flats and IPPs Mailpiece Skip Subsampling

Expected Volume	Skip Interval
101 – 1,000	5
1,001 – 2,500	10
2,501 – 5,000	15
5,001 – 7,500	25
7,501 – 13,500	45
13,501+	70

RM 3–3 COU Mailpiece Skip Intervals

Referenced section 3.10.1, 3.11.

Table 3–6. COU Mailpiece Skip Intervals by Shape

Expected Volume	Skip Interval
251 – 500	5
501 – 1000	10
1,001 – 2,000	20
2,001 – 4,000	40
4,001+	80

RM 3–4 Excluded Mail

Referenced sections 3.5.1, 3.6.1, and 3.7.1.

The types of mailpieces listed below are excluded from an ODIS-RPW test. These mailpieces are not to be recorded in the ODIS-RPW data entry software with the exception of commingled missent mailpieces — see the exception given below.

Exception: When containers of missent mail cannot be excluded before applying the skip intervals at the beginning of a test, or the beginning of a dispatch within the test, they must be included in the counting process when selecting mailpieces using mailpiece skip subsampling or container skip subsampling.

Excluded Mail	Description
Missent Mail (Containers isolated prior to sampling)	Missent mail is mail that has been erroneously dispatched to a facility and can be found in separate containers or commingled with other mail. Exclude missent mail containers by dispatch prior to skip selection process. If this mail is in containers that might be pulled aside (either easily identifiable or with the help of mail processing), isolate and release to mail processing. **Note:** If you have begun the container skip selection process and encounter a missent mail container, include and count in the container selection process. Failure to include missent mail containers found after application of the container skip selection process could severely bias the test results. **Note:** If you encounter missent mailpieces that you find during your skip interval selection process (i.e., not isolated prior to applying the skip intervals), you *must* record them. All data for the mailpieces must be included in your recording. These mailpieces are generally commingled missent mailpieces, but may also be missent mailpieces selected from a missent mail container which for some reason could not be excluded before applying the skip intervals at the beginning of the test, or the beginning of a dispatch within the test.
Express Mail	An Express Mail label is affixed to this mailpiece.
Mailgram	Western Union Mailgram messages are enclosed in window envelopes that bear the Mailgram imprint in the upper right corner of the address side. The envelopes also have a blue background with the registered trademark *Western Union Mailgram* and the USPS emblem to the right.

RM 3–5 Mail Classes

Referenced sections 3.8.1, 3.9.1 through 3.9.7.

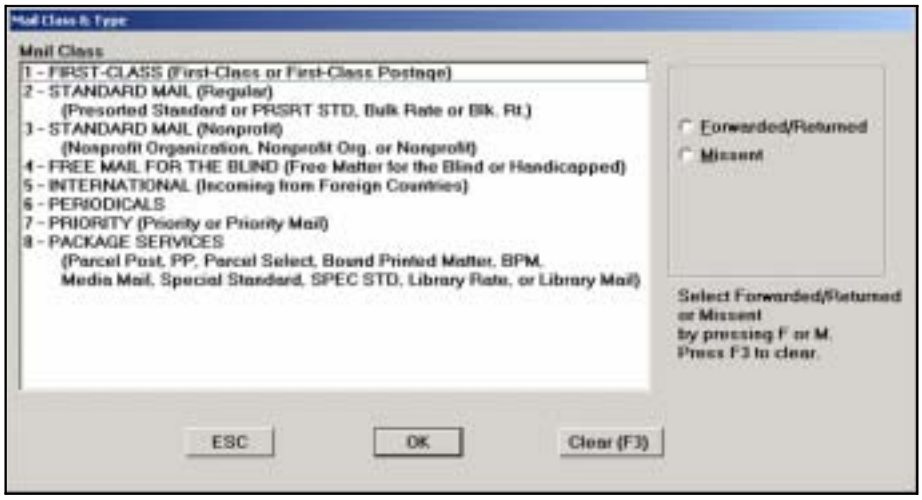


Figure RM 3–1. *Mail Class & Type* Screen

Mail Class	Description
First-Class	First-Class Mail (domestic) includes all letters, cards, IPPs, flats, and parcels that weigh up to and including 13 ounces, unless the mailpiece has been paid for at the Priority Mail rate. A mailpiece is First-Class Mail if it has a stamp (including official stamps), a meter imprint, or an information based indicia (IBI), and postage is paid at First-Class Mail rates. If the mailpiece has a permit indicia or a Federal Government indicia, it is considered First-Class Mail unless otherwise endorsed.
Standard Mail (Regular)	Standard Mail can easily be identified by the words *Bulk Rate/Blk.Rt.* or *Presorted Standard/PRSRT STD* printed in the indicia area. If a precanceled stamp is used, the words *Blk. Rate* or *Presorted Standard* appear on or near the precanceled stamp. When a meter is used, the words *Presorted Standard (or PRSRT STD), or Bulk Rate (or Blk. Rt.)* may appear in the meter imprint or next to the meter imprint.
Standard Mail (Nonprofit)	The Standard Mail (Nonprofit) mailpiece must bear the endorsement *NONPROFIT, Nonprofit Organization,* or *Nonprofit Org.*
Free Mail for the Blind	The mailpiece must bear the endorsement *Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped.*
International Mail	International Mail is incoming mail from foreign countries. International Mail bears the endorsement *Air Mail* or *Par Avion,* if airmail, and/or does not bear U.S. postage.
Periodicals	Periodicals are usually newspapers, magazines, or other publications. Periodicals mailpieces with no indicia or postage should be recorded as *Periodicals*.

Mail Class	Description
Priority	Priority Mail is First-Class Mail weighing more than 13 ounces but less than or equal to 70 pounds and, at the mailer's option, other mail weighing 13 ounces or less paid at the Priority Mail rate. The following markings may be observed on this mail: *Priority* or *Priority Mail*. If these markings are not present on the mailpiece, but the mailpiece's postage is greater than or equal to the appropriate Priority Mail rate, then the mailpiece is considered to be Priority Mail.
Package Services	Package Services mail consists of mailable matter that is neither mailed or required to be mailed as First-Class Mail, nor entered as Periodicals (unless permitted or required by standard). Package Services mail includes matter formerly classified as Standard Mail (B). There are four subclasses of Package Services: Parcel Post, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail (formerly Special Standard Mail), and Library Mail. There is no minimum weight for Package Services. A single piece of Parcel Post, Media Mail, and Library Mail can weigh no more than 70 pounds. A single piece of Bound Printed Matter can weigh no more than 15 pounds. The following markings are identified with Package Services: *Parcel Post* (or *PP*), *Parcel Select*, *Drop Ship* (or *D/S*), *DBMC*, *Bound Printed Matter* (or *BPM*), *Media Mail*, *Special Standard Mail* (or *SPEC STD*), *Library Mail*, and *Library Rate*.

RM 3–6 Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking: First-Class Mail

Referenced section 3.9.1.

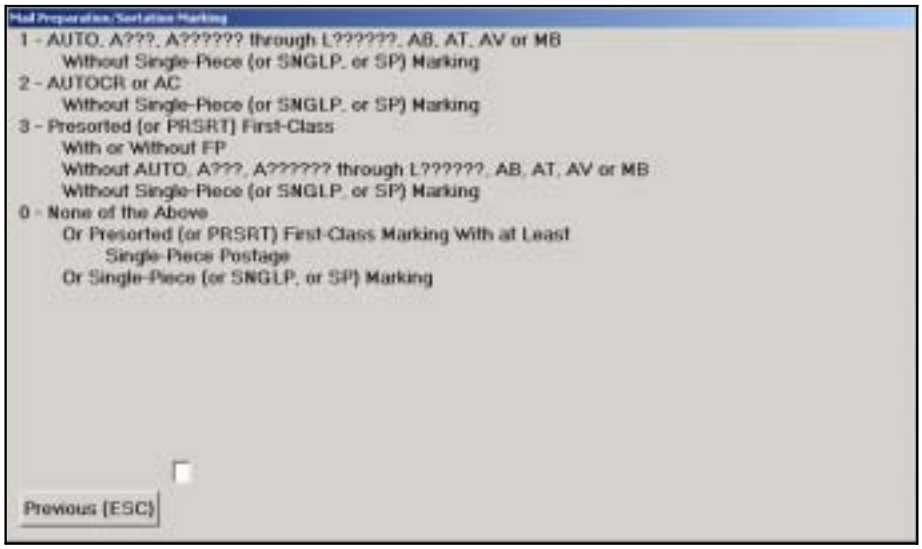


Figure RM 3–2. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen — First-Class Mail

Mail Preparation/Marking	Description
AUTO	Record as *AUTO* or *A???*, *A?????? through L??????* if the mailpiece is endorsed *AUTO* or the Manifest Mailing Code *AB*, *AT*, *AV*, or *MB* is present.
AUTOCR	Record as *AUTOCR* if the mailpiece is endorsed *AUTOCR* or *AC* without any *Single Piece*/*SNGLP* endorsements on the mailpiece.
Presorted First-Class	All First-Class Mail bearing the endorsements *Carrier Route Presort* or *CAR-RT SORT* without any *AUTO, A???*, *AUTOCR,* or *SinglePiece*/*SNGLP* endorsements, must be recorded as *Presorted* (or *PRSRT) FIRST-CLASS*. **Note:** When *AUTO* and *PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS* both appear on a mailpiece and there are no *Single Piece*/*SNGLP* endorsements, record the mailpiece as *AUTO or A???, A?????? through L??????, AB, AT, AV, or MB*.
None of the Above	If the mailpiece is endorsed *PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS* and shows at least single piece postage or is endorsed *Single Piece* or *SNGLP*, record the mailpiece as *None of the Above.* If the mailpiece has none of the above or no markings, also record as *None of the Above*.

RM 3–7 Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking: Standard Mail

Referenced section 3.9.2, step 1.

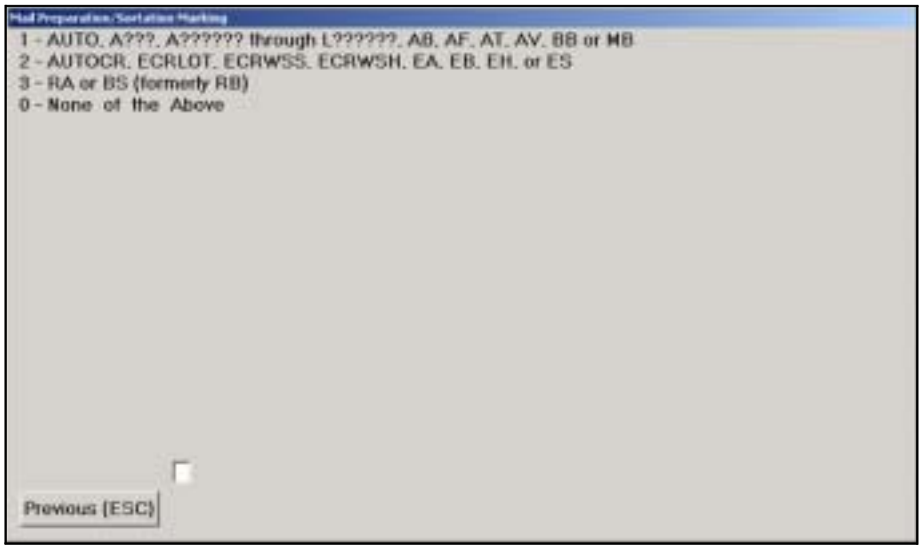


Figure RM 3–3. *Mail Preparation/Sortation Marking* Screen - Standard Mail

Mail Preparation/Marking	Description
Auto, A???, A??????...L??????, AB, AF, AT, AV, BB, or MB	Record as *AUTO or A???, A?????? through L??????* if the mailpiece is endorsed *AUTO* or the Manifest Mailing Code *AB, AF, AT, AV, BB, or MB* is present.
AUTOCR, ECRLOT, ECRWSH, or ECRWSS, EA, EB, EH, or ES	All letters and nonletters bearing the endorsements *AUTOCR*, *ECRLOT*, *ECRWSH*, or *ECRWSS*, EA, EB, EH, or ES must be recorded under the Enhanced Carrier Route options.
RA or BS (formerly RB)	All letters and nonletters with the Manifest Mailing Code RA or BS for nonautomation must be recorded as *RA or BS (formerly RB)*.
None of the Above	If the mailpiece is endorsed *Presorted Standard (or PRSRT STD), Bulk Rate* (or *BLK. RT.*), or *Nonprofit Organization (or Nonprofit Org. or Nonprofit),* and if there is no other endorsement or marking, then record the mailpiece as *None of the Above*.

RM 3–8 Mail Subclass: Package Services Markings

Referenced section 3.9.7.

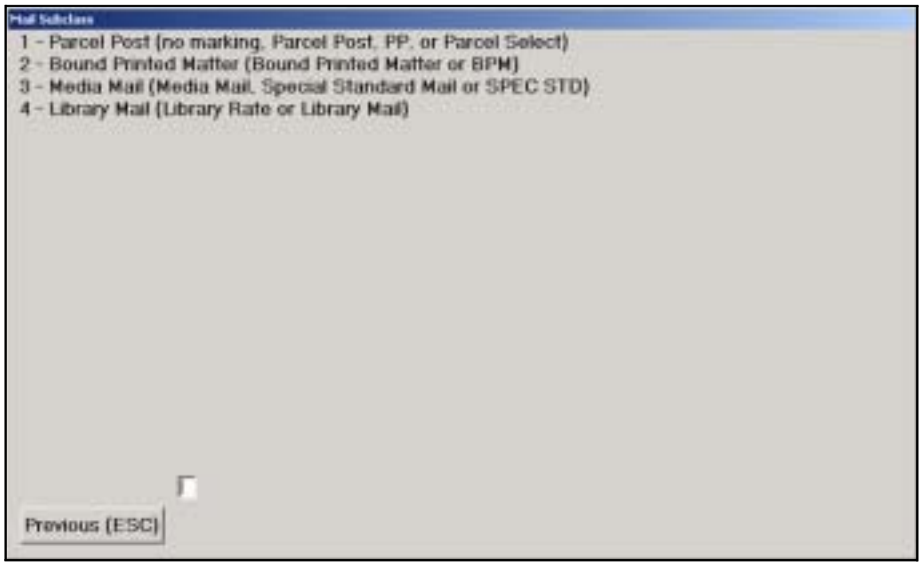


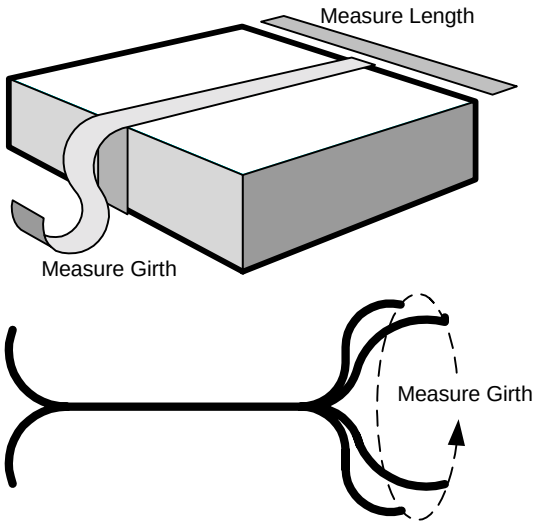
Figure RM 3–4. *Mail Subclass* - Package Services

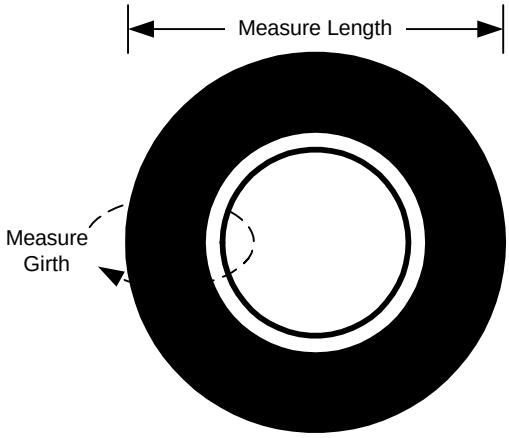
Mail Subclass	Description
Parcel Post (no marking, Parcel Post, PP, or Parcel Select)	The mailpiece is marked *Parcel Post (or PP)* or *Parcel Select*. If the mailpiece is unendorsed and the postage rate cannot be determined, and the mailpiece weighs more than 13 ounces, record the mailpiece as *Parcel Post*.
Bound Printed Matter (Bound Printed Matter or BPM)	The mailpiece is marked *Bound Printed Matter (or BPM),* with or without *Presorted (or PRSRT)* or *Carrier Route Presort (or CAR-RT Sort)*.
Media Mail (Media Mail, Special Standard Mail or SPEC STD)	The mailpiece is marked *Media Mail*, or *Special Standard Mail*, with or without *Presorted (or PRSRT).*
Library Mail (Library Rate or Library Mail)	The mailpiece is marked *Library Rate* or *Library Mail*, with or without *Presorted (or PRSRT).*

RM 3–9 Measuring Girth

Referenced section 3.10.4, step 14; and section 3.12.3, step 14.

How to Measure Length and Girth





Maximum Measurements

Length + Girth	108 inches
Weight	70 pounds

RM 3–10 Certificates of Mailing Options Menu

Referenced section 3.12.4, step 5 and step 6.

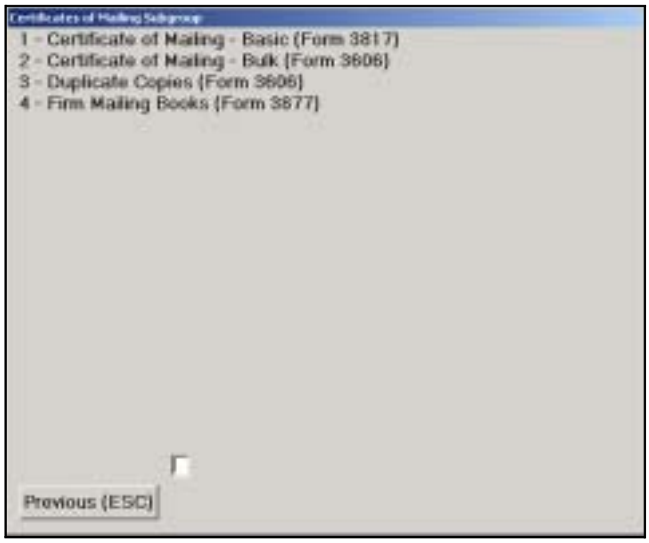


Figure RM 3–5. Domestic and Government *Certificates of Mailing Subgroup* Screen

Note: Use the PS Form 8126, *Consolidated Originating RPW Test* (Appendix C) to select domestic and government certificate of mailing options. During an originating mail test, this form is normally completed by the window clerk (section 3.11).

Certificate of Mailing	Description
Certificate of Mailing — Basic (Form 3817)	This is an individual piece that has been paid for at the individual article certificate of mailing rate. PS Form 3817 is used as the certificate.
Certificate of Mailing — Bulk (Form 3606)	Bulk certificates of mailing are sent in groups of 1000 or less. One form, PS Form 3606, covers this service. This certificate states the total number of articles mailed. A special flat rate fee covers the purchase.
Duplicate Copies (Form 3606)	An additional fee is paid for copies of either PS Form 3817, PS Form 3877, or a mailing bill.
Firm Mailing Books (Form 3877)	These pieces are normally sent in groups of three or more. They are paid at the special firm mailing book rate. PS Form 3877 or a privately printed facsimile is used as the certificate.

RM 3–11 Type of Mailer

Referenced section 3.10.5, step 1.

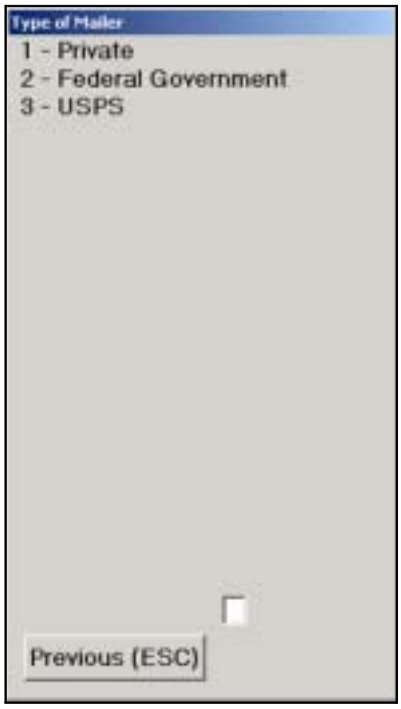


Figure RM 3–6. Private, Government, USPS *Type of Mailer* Options

Type of Mailer	Description
Private	A private mailpiece contains a stamp, meter, precanceled stamp, information based indicia (IBI), or permit imprint, or is a stamped envelope. The mailpiece is not Federal Government or USPS.
Federal Government	Federal Government mail will bear indicia that refer directly to the United States government. There may be a marking that reads *Official Mail USA or Armed Forces Free Mail* across the top. Or, it may have the endorsement *U.S. Official Mail* or *Official Business* as well as other markings such as penalty *for Private Use* and *Postage and Fees Paid*. This mailpiece may also be a *Franked* piece of mail (that is, the piece bears no indicia but does bear the signature of a member of or member-elect to Congress or a delegate, delegate-elect, resident commissioner, or resident commissioner-elect to the House of Representatives). **Note:** Federal agency (government) mail paid with commercial postage (that is, without official stamps/meter/permit) must be recorded as *Private* mail.

Type of Mailer	Description
USPS	In the upper left corner, this piece displays the Postal Service corporate signature above the name and return address of the Postal facility. This mailpiece may bear the embossed Postal Service emblem. Do not count pieces with this emblem on a stamp or meter strip, unless the return address indicates that the mailpiece was sent by the Postal Service.

RM 3–12 Mail Type Definitions

Referenced section 3.9.1, step 2.

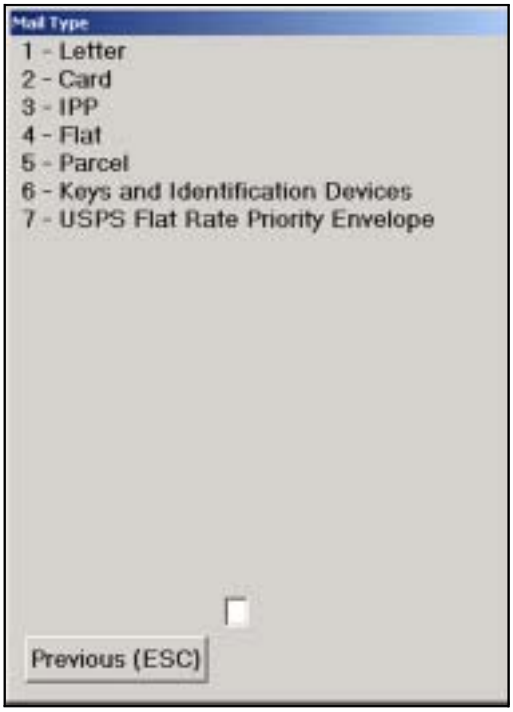


Figure RM 3–7. *Mail Type* Screen

Background Information

All mail tested in ODIS-RPW is assigned to one and only one of seven mail type definitions. These definitions are based on the physical dimensions of the mailpiece, regardless of the placement (orientation) of the delivery address on the mailpiece. The seven mail type definitions are: Letter, Card, IPP, Flat, Parcel, Keys and Identification Devices, and USPS Flat Rate Priority Envelope.

Using the definitions provided here as a sequential decision rule, the ODIS-RPW data collector must categorize mailpieces into a specific mail type beginning with the *Card* and ending with the *IPP* definition. Therefore, when determining a mailpiece's type, first determine if the mailpiece is a *Card*. If it is not a *Card*, then determine if it is a *Letter*. If it is not a *Letter*, then determine if the mailpiece is a *Flat*, *Parcel*, or if it is best categorized within the *IPP* mail type definition.

In determining mailpiece dimensions, always consider the *length* as the longest side of the mailpiece, regardless of the placement of the delivery address. The *height* is measured perpendicular to the length. The *thickness* is measured perpendicular to the length and height measurements, on the side of the mailpiece, when it is of uniform thickness. Otherwise the thickness is measured at the thickest point of the mailpiece. Thickness measured at its *thickest point* refers to such items as irregularly shaped objects and enveloped matter that are packaged so that the thickness is greater towards the middle than near the edge of the mailpiece. It is important to note that irregularly shaped objects are not always categorized within the ODIS-RPW *IPP* mail type definition.

Note: As a general rule, ODIS-RPW data collectors *should not* use rulers, tape measures, or templates during tests to determine mailpiece dimensions except for parcels. This slows down data entry and limits the number of mailpieces recorded and available for diagnostics. Instead, ODIS-RPW data collectors should use rulers and templates during their training to enhance their ability to judge mailpiece physical dimensions.

Mail Type	**Definition**		
Card	Any rectangular shaped mailpiece of uniform thickness and made of card stock (single and double cards) with the following dimensions:		
	Dimension	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
	Height	**3-1/2"**	**4-1/4"**
	Length	**5"**	**6"**
	Thickness	**0.007"**	**0.016"**

Mail Type	**Definition**		
Letter	Any mailpiece not categorized as a card with the following dimensions:		
	Dimension	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
	Height	**3-1/2"**	**6-1/8"**
	Length	**5"**	**11-1/2"**
	Thickness	**0.007"**	**0.250" (1/4")**

Mail Type	**Definition**		
Flat	Any mailpiecemailpiece not categorized as a card or letter with the following dimensions:		
	Dimension	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
	Height	**6-1/8" ***	**12"**
	Length	**11-1/2" ***	**15"**
	Thickness	**0.250" (1/4") ***	**0.750" (3/4")**

**Must exceed at least one of the letter-size maximums.*

Mail Type	**Definition**		
Parcel	Any mailpiece not categorized as a card, letter, or flat with the following dimensions:		
	Dimension	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
	Height	**3" ***	**17"**
	Length	**6" ***	**34"**
	Thickness	**0.250" (1/4") ***	**17"**

***Exclude any roll, triangular, or cylindrical shaped object.*

Mail Type	Definition
IPP	Any mailpiece not categorized as a card, letter, flat, or parcel.

Type	Definition
Keys and Identification Devices	Keys and identification devices (identification cards or uncovered identification tags) bearing, containing, or having securely attached the name and complete address of a person, organization, or concern, with instructions to return the piece to that address and a statement guaranteeing payment of postage due on delivery.

Mail Type	Definition		
USPS Flat Rate Priority Envelope	A card stock envelope available from the United States Postal Service (EP-14F) bearing the markings, “FLAT RATE ENVELOPE,” “FLAT RATE POSTAGE REGARDLESS OF WEIGHT,” “DOMESTIC USE ONLY,” and “PRIORITY MAIL.”		
	Dimension	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
	Height	**9.5"**	**9.5"**
	Length	**12.5"**	**12.5"**
	Thickness	**N/A**	**N/A**

RM 3–13 Identifying Indicia

Referenced section 3.9.1, step 5 and 3.11.1.1, step 5.

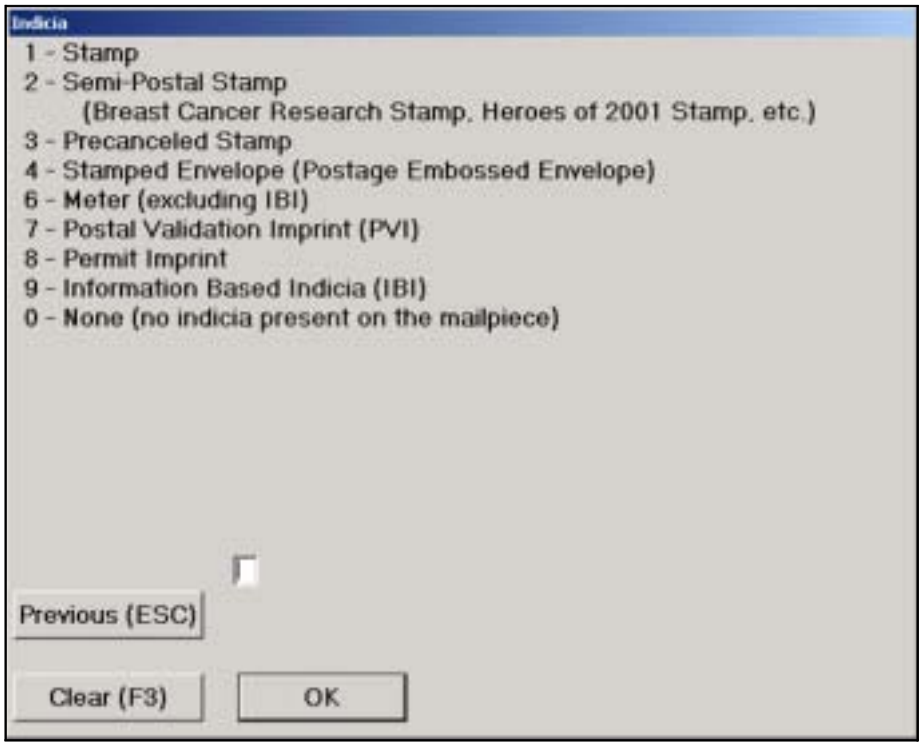


Figure RM 3–8. *Indicia* Screen

Indicia	Description
Stamp	The U.S. stamp can be an ordinary stamp, a precanceled stamp, or an official stamp. If it is apparent from the cancellation that a postage stamp has been wholly or partially lost, treat the piece as paid at full postage.
Semi-Postal Stamp (*Breast Cancer Research* Stamp, *Heroes of 2001* Stamp, etc.)	This U.S. stamp includes a contribution to a nonprofit cause such as breast cancer research or the family of victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedy in addition to the First-Class Mail Nonautomation single piece Rate.
Precanceled Stamp	These are stamped envelopes or stamped cards (Postal) bearing adhesive stamps that were canceled before mailing. Precanceling is authorized for local Post Offices using electroplated or hand stamping and for local Post Offices that have requisitioned them. **Note:** Most (but not all) precanceled stamps will be on Standard Mail and have the words Bulk Rate, Presorted Standard, or PRSRT STD printed on them.
Stamped Envelope (Postage Embossed Envelope)	These are stamped envelopes bearing indicia that are imprinted, not affixed, on the envelope.

Indicia	Description
Meter (excluding IBI)	Metered indicia bears an impression denoting payment of postage. The impression is imprinted by a meter stamp device directly onto the mailpiece or on a meter strip affixed to the mailpiece. The metered indicia can easily be recognized by the postage strip or imprint bearing the word *Meter* and showing a meter number. Metered mail can be used for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail, Package Services, and international mail.
Postal Validation Imprint (PVI)	The postal validation imprint (PVI) is a meter strip with the correct postage, the origin ZIP Code, the date of mailing, the 5-digit POSTNET of the destination ZIP Code, as well as the five-digit destination ZIP Code.
Permit Imprint	Permit Indicia most of the time will contain the words *Permit No.* and the mail class of the mailpiecemailpiece (e.g., *Bulk Rate*, *Nonprofit Org.*, or *First-Class Mail*).
Information Based Indicia (IBI)	Information Based Indicia (IBI) is digital indicia that includes human-readable information and a Postal Service-approved two-dimensional barcode or other Postal Service-approved symbology with a digital signature and other required data fields that include: postmark date, origin city, origin state and a 5-digit origin ZIP Code. Postage revenue may not be included in the indicia. Mail classes may include First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Express Mail, Standard Mail, and Package Services. PC Postage products and services (Stamps.com, Endicia.com, ClickStamp by Pitney Bowes) are the products that print an IBI as the postage mark. PC Postage is an application of secure technology (Postal Security Device) that allows customers to purchase and print postage using personal computers (software, web access, SSL, PSD, etc.). PC Postage is recorded in ODIS-RPW as an IBI indicia.
None (no indicia present on the mailpiece)	This mail has no imprinted designation denoting payment of postage on the top right corner. There is no stamp, precanceled stamp, meter strip, imprint, or permit imprint. Congressional Mail must bear a signature or specified marking (DMM, section E050). Armed Forces Free Mail must be marked “Free” written in the sender’s handwriting (DMM, section E030).

RM 3–14 Comment Screen

Referenced section 3.9.1, step 18.

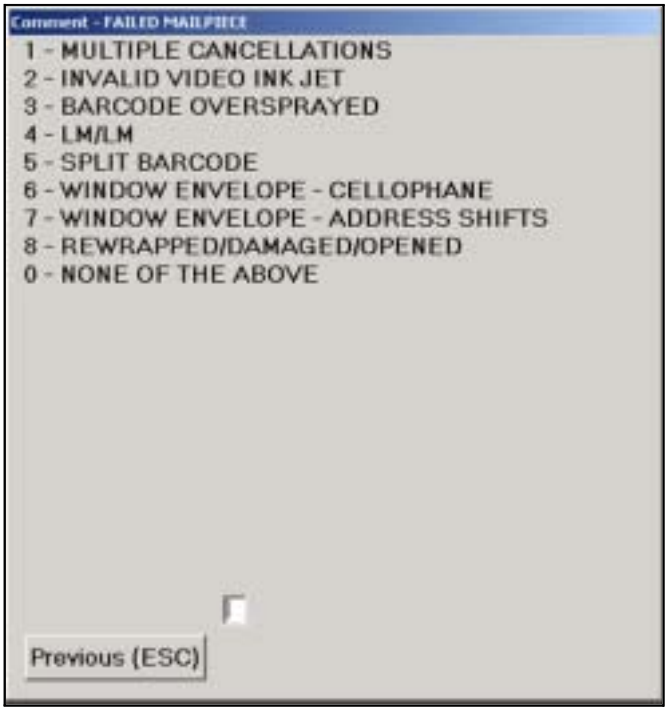


Figure RM 3–9. *Comment — FAILED MAILPIECE* Screen

Note: The *Comment* screen for First-Class Mail was developed in cooperation with mail processing management and staff. The *Comment* screen provides a prioritized list of those mail characteristics mail processing would look for first when a mailpiece fails the service standard. Therefore, starting at the top of the *Comment* screen, select the first option that describes the information that appears on the mailpiece.

Once mail processing has developed *Comment* screens for Priority Mail and Package Services, they will be incorporated into future versions of ODIS-RPW data entry software.

Comment	Description
Multiple Cancellations	Multiple cancellations can occur often and in many different places on the mailpiece (including on the back). Be sure that you check the piece thoroughly before ruling this option out.
Invalid Video Ink Jet	Usually an invalid Video Ink Jet Cancellation does not contain sufficient information to apply the “both inside or both outside” cancellation rules or involves multiple service standards. See Appendix H for more information.
Barcode Oversprayed or Unreadable	Use this option if the mailpiece has a barcode that appears to be oversprayed or is unreadable.
LM/LM (Letter Mail Label Machine)	LMs are applied on a mailpiece to cover an existing barcode.

Comment	Description
Split Barcode	Split barcodes indicate that the Postal Service has either upgraded a mailer's five digit barcode or upgraded a previously applied Postal Service barcode.
Window Envelope - Cellophane	Envelopes with cellophane windows may cause OCR readability problems.
Window Envelope - Address Shifts/Obscured	Window envelopes (without cellophane): Enclosures may shift in processing causing the address to become obstructed.
Rewrapped/Damaged/ Opened	Use this option if the mailpiece appears to have been rewrapped, damaged, or opened, and does not contain any of the other characteristics listed above on the screen.
None of the Above	Use this option only after you have ruled out the other characteristics listed on the screen and no other explanation is available.

RM 3–15 Special Service Mail Fee

Referenced section 3.10.5, step 4.

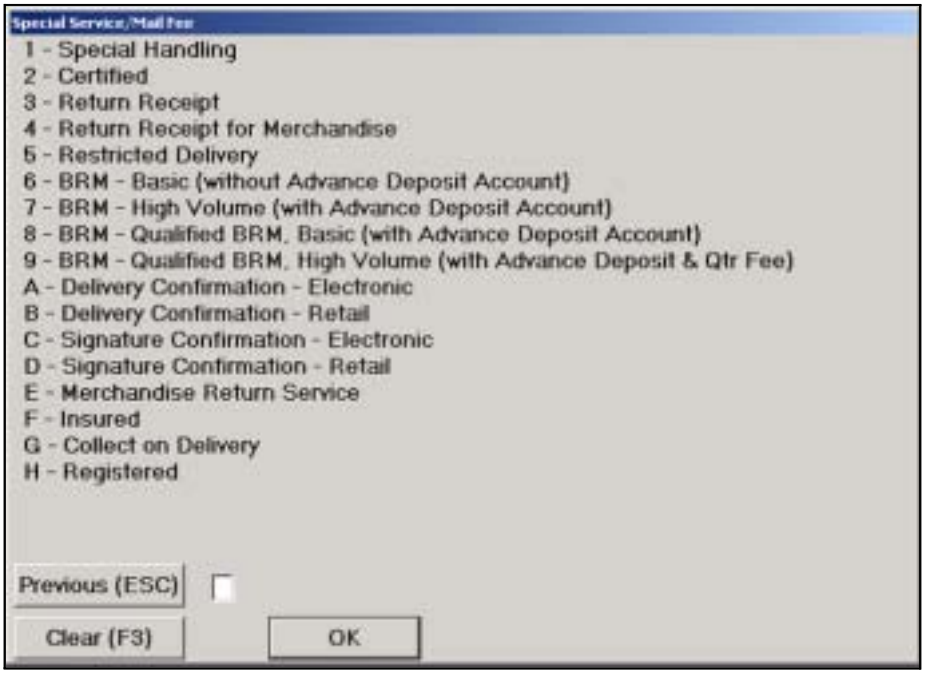


Figure RM 3–10. *Special Service Mail Fee* Screen

Special Service	Description
Special Handling	Special Handling service provides preferential handling, but not preferential delivery, to the extent practicable in dispatch and transportation. Special Handling service is available only for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services. The following special services may be combined with Special Handling: COD, Delivery Confirmation, Insured Mail, Parcel Airlift Service (PAL), Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt for Merchandise, and Signature Confirmation.
Certified	Certified Mail service provides the sender with a mailing receipt, while a delivery record is maintained by the USPS. No insurance coverage is provided. Only mailable matter on which postage is paid at a First-Class Mail rate (including Priority Mail) may be accepted as Certified Mail. The following special services may be combined with Certified Mail: Restricted Delivery and Return Receipt.
Return Receipt	Return Receipt service provides a mailer with evidence of delivery (to whom the mail was delivered and the date of delivery). Return Receipt is available First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services when purchased a the time of mailing with one of the following services: Certified Mail, COD, Insured Mail, and Registered Mail.

Special Service	Description
Return Receipt for Merchandise	Return Receipt for Merchandise service is a form of return receipt service that provides the sender with a mailing receipt and a return receipt. After delivery, the return receipt is mailed back to the sender. A delivery record is maintained by the Postal Service. Return Receipt for Merchandise is available for merchandise sent as First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail (residuals, but not recorded at the laptop level), and Package Services. The following special services may be combined with Return Receipt for Merchandise: Delivery Confirmation, Insured Mail, Merchandise Return Service, PAL, and Special Handling.
Restricted Delivery	Restricted Delivery service permits a mailer to direct delivery only to the addressee or addressee's authorized agent. Restricted Delivery service is available for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services. The following special services may be combined with Restricted Delivery: Certified Mail, COD, Delivery Confirmation, Insured Mail, PAL, Registered, Signature Confirmation and Special Handling.
Business Reply Mail (BRM)	Business Reply Mail service enables a permit holder to receive First-Class Mail and Priority Mail back from customers and pay postage, and a per-piece charge only for the pieces returned. No other special services can be combined with BRM.
Delivery Confirmation (Electronic or Retail)	Delivery Confirmation service provides the mailer with information about the date and time an article was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt. Delivery Confirmation service is available for First-Class Mail parcels, Priority Mail, Standard Mail mailpieces subject to the residual shape surcharge (electronic option, but not collected at the laptop level), and Package Services parcels. Two service options are available — electronic and retail. Service labels for these options vary in format as to whether they are USPS or mailer prepared. Label 314 serves as a Postal Service label, and it identifies the electronic option. Label 314 begins with a ‘01’ in its article number series, and it also has a small caption ‘e’ at the upper, left corner of the label. PS Form 152 identifies the retail option, and it begins with an article number series of ‘03.’ Various label formats for both options are also prepared by a mailer. Typically, a mailer applied electronic label is identified with an ‘e /’ (lower caption e with a slash), and reads, ‘e/ USPS DELIVERY CONFIRM’ or ‘e/ USPS DELIVERY CONFIRMATION.’ The article number series usually begins with a ‘91.’ A mailer applied retail label is similar in appearance to the PS Form 152, and it begins with an article number series of ‘03’ or ‘04.’ The following special services may be combined with Delivery Confirmation: COD, Insurance, Registered Mail, Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt, Return Receipt for Merchandise, and Special Handling. Refer to section 3.10.5.

Special Service	Description
Signature Confirmation	Signature Confirmation service provides the mailer with information about the date and time an article was delivered and, if delivery was attempted but not successful, the date and time of the delivery attempt. A delivery record, including the recipient's signature, is maintained by the Postal Service and is available upon request. Signature Confirmation service is available for First-Class parcels, Priority Mail and Package Services parcels. Two service options are available, electronic and retail. Service labels for these options vary in format as to whether they are Postal Service or mailer prepared. Label 315 serves as a USPS label, and it identifies the electronic option. Label 315 begins with a ‘21’ in its article number series, and it also has a small caption ‘e’ at the upper, left corner of the label. PS Form 153 identifies the retail option, and it begins with an article number series of ‘03.’ Various label formats for both options are also prepared by a mailer. Typically, a mailer applied electronic label is identified with an ‘e /’ (lower caption e with a slash), and reads, “e/ USPS SIGNATURE CONFIRM.” The article number series usually begins with a ‘91.’ A mailer applied retail label is similar in appearance to the PS Form 153, and it begins with an article number series of ‘03.’ The following special services may be combined with Signature Confirmation: COD, Insured Mail, Registered Mail, Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt, and Special Handling.
Merchandise Return Service	Merchandise Return Service allows an authorized permit holder to pay the postage and special service fees on single piece rate First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services parcels that are returned to the permit holder by the permit holder's customers via a special label produced by the permit holder. It is recommended, but not required that permit holders preprint a rate marking on the Merchandise Return Service label they distribute. Regardless of weight, all unmarked parcels are treated as Parcel Post, and charged Parcel Post rates. The following special services may be combined with Merchandise Return Service: Delivery Confirmation (retail), Insured Mail, Registered Mail, Return Receipt for Merchandise, and Special handling.

Special Service	Description
Insured	Insured mail is covered by First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail (bulk insurance for residual shape surcharge pieces, but not collected at the laptop level), and Package Services. Retail Insured Mail provides up to $5,000 indemnity coverage for a lost, rifled or damaged article, subject to the standards for the service and payment of the applicable fee. An insured marking for the mailpiece is determined by the insurance amount. If the mailpiece is insured for $50 or less, an elliptical Insured marking will be stamped on the address side of the mailpiece. The marking should be placed above the delivery address and to the right of the return address. If the mailpiece is insured for more than $50, then a barcoded PS Form 3813-P, Insured Mail Receipt, (or mailer-printed label) must be affixed to the mailpiece. This form should be placed above the delivery address and to the right of the return address. All insured mailpieces, regardless of the insurance amount, must be postmarked, unless a meter or permit imprint is used to pay postage. The following special services may be combined with Insurance: Delivery Confirmation, PAL, Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt, Return Receipt for Merchandise, Signature Confirmation, and Special Handling.
Collect on Delivery (COD)	COD may be used for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services. Any mailer may use COD service to mail an article for which the mailer has not been paid, and have its price and the cost of the postage collected from the recipient. If the recipient pays the amount due by check payable to the mailer, the Postal Service forwards the check to the mailer. If the recipient pays the amount due in cash, the Postal Service collects the money order fee(s) from the recipient and sends a postal money order(s) to the mailer. The amount collected from the recipient may not exceed $1,000. COD service provides the mailer with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record is maintained by the Postal Service. The following special services may be combined with COD: Delivery Confirmation, Registered, Return Receipt, Signature Confirmation, and Special Handling.
Registered	Registered Mail is the most secure service that the Postal Service offers. It incorporates a system of receipts to monitor the movement of the mail from the point of acceptance to delivery. Registered Mail service provides the sender with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record is maintained by the Postal Service. Only matter prepaid at First-Class Mail postage rate (including Priority Mail) may be accepted as Registered Mail. The following special services may be combined with Registered: COD, Delivery Confirmation, Merchandise Return Service, Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt, and Signature Confirmation.

RM 3–16 FIM Examples

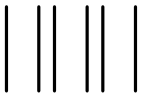
Reference section 3.9.1, step 11.

Below are examples of the four types of FIM:

FIM A

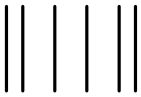
FIM A is found on courtesy reply envelopes with a POSTNET barcode.

FIM B



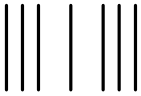
FIM B is found on business reply envelopes, penalty, or franked mail without a POSTNET barcode.

FIM C



FIM C is found on business reply, penalty, or franked mail with a POSTNET barcode.

FIM D



FIM D is found on OCR (optical character recognition) compatible mail without a POSTNET barcode (usually on courtesy reply window envelopes).

RM 3–17 POSTNET Barcode Examples (not actual size)

Referenced section 3.9.1, step 5.

5-Digit ZIP Code

12345

ZIP+4 Code (Record as 9-Digit Barcode)

12345-6789

11-Digit Barcode

12345-6789

RM 3–18 Indicia Examples

Referenced sections 3.9.1, step 5 and 3.11.1.1, step 5.

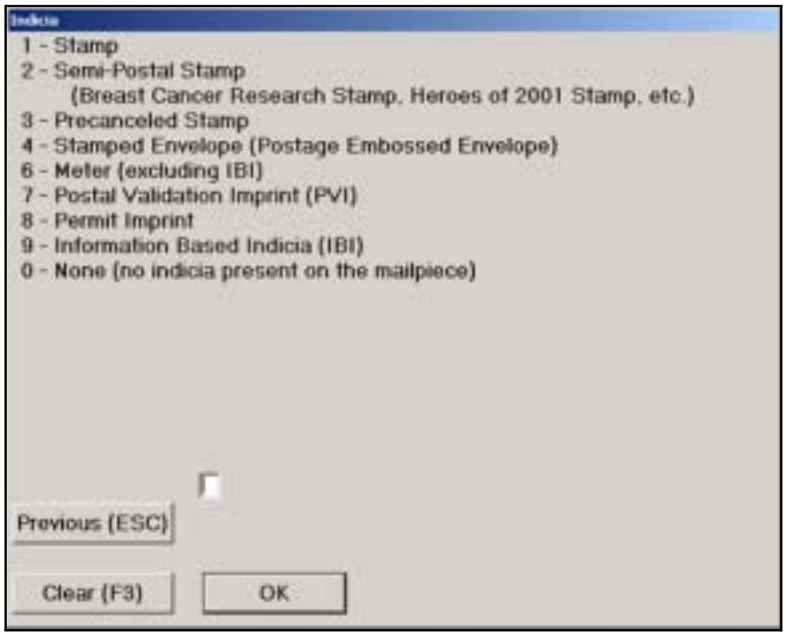
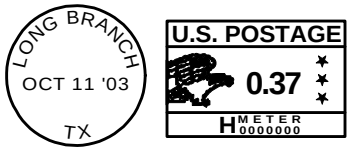
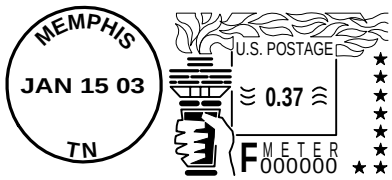
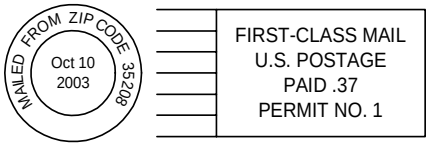
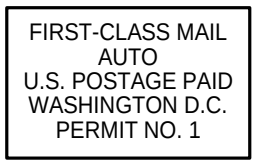


Figure RM 3–11. *Indicia* Screen

Indicia	Examples	
Stamp		
Semi-Postal Stamp (Breast Cancer Research Stamp, Heroes of 2001 Stamp, etc.)		
Precanceled Stamp		

Indicia	Examples
Stamped Envelope (Postage Embossed Envelope)	
Stamped Card	
Meter (excluding IBI)	 
Postal Validation Imprint (PVI)	
Permit Imprint	 
Information Based Indicia (IBI)	

RM 3–19 Meter Manufacturer Examples

Reference section 3.9.1, step 4a.

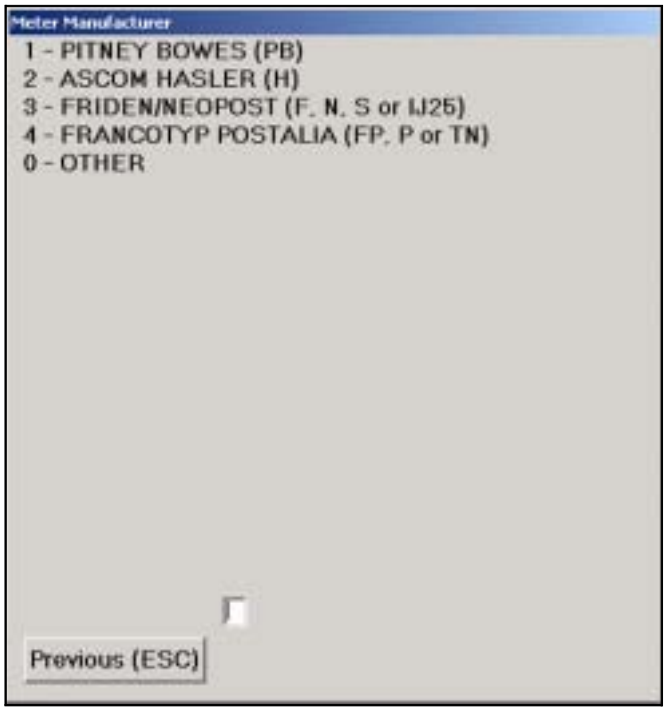
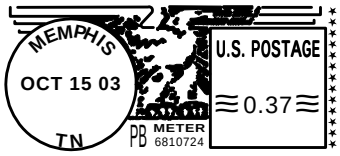
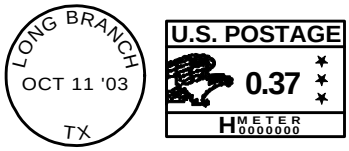
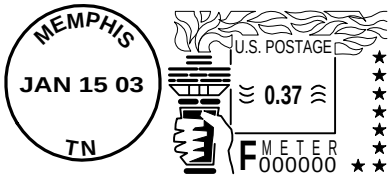
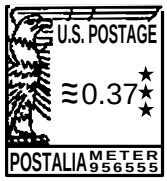


Figure RM 3–12. *Indicia* Screen

Meter	Examples
Pitney Bowes (PB)	
ASCOM Hasler (H)	
Friden/Neopost (F, N, S, or IJ25)	

Meter	Examples
Francotyp Postalia (FP, P or TN)	

RM 3–20 Nondenominated Stamp Examples

Farm Flag **(Non-denominated First-Class)**
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.

Heroes of 2001
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.

Woody Wagon
© 2001 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.

U.S. Flag **(Non-denominated, First-Class)**
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.

Antique Toys: Locomotive
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.
Toy Courtesy of Strong Museum.

Antique Toys: Taxicab
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.
Toy Courtesy of Strong Museum.

Antique Toys: Fire Truck
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.
Toy Courtesy of Strong Museum.

Antique Toys: Mail Truck
© 2002 U.S. Postal Service.
All Rights Reserved.
Used with Permission.
Toy Courtesy of Strong Museum.

RM 3–21 Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines Table

Referenced sections 3.8.2, and 3.13.12

Table 3–7. Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines

Characteristics	First-Class Mail	Standard Mail	Periodicals	Priority Mail	Package Services	Free Mail for the Blind	International Mail
Revenue	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece
Postmark Date	From CFS label, else CBR	Not recorded	Not recorded	From CFS label, else CBR	From CFS label, else CBR	Not recorded	From CFS label, else CBR
Postmark Origin	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	Not recorded	Not applicable
All Other Characteristics	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece
Additional							If forwarded, at *Foreign Country* screen, select Code 900 for United States. If returned, select the foreign country of origin in the original destinating address.

Mailpieces with the following special services are not to be recorded as Forwarded or Returned:

- Business Reply Mail (BRM) for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail
- Merchandise Return Service (MRS) for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services
- PS Form 3547/3579 Revenue for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail

For Standard Mail revenue, if the postage due is the weighted fee, then the fee is the appropriate single piece rate for First-Class Mail or Priority Mail service rate multiplied by 2.472 and rounded up to the next whole cent.

RM 3–22 Inspection Service Mailpiece Photocopy Transmittal Form

Use this form and follow these procedures when photocopying mailpieces for the Inspection Service.

1. Only follow these procedures when a copier machine is readily available and photocopying the mailpiece would not delay it.
2. Complete the information on this form and attach the photocopy to it.
3. Return the mailpiece to the mailstream as soon as possible. Do not delay the mailpiece from making a dispatch of value or cause it to miss the cutoff time for the route or firm delivery.
4. Send this form and photocopy directly to:

   INSPECTOR IN CHARGE
   REVENUE AND ASSET PROTECTION PROGRAM
   475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW, RM 3521
   Washington DC 20260-2166

5. Please complete the following:

   ODIS-RPW/IODIS Test ID: Test Date:_____

   ODIS-RPW/IODIS Test Location (City/State/ZIP):_____

The following page may be used for duplicating this form.

Inspection Service Mailpiece Photocopy Transmittal Form

Use this form and follow these procedures when photocopying mailpieces for the Inspection Service.

1. Only follow these procedures when a copier machine is readily available and photocopying the mailpiece would not delay it.
2. Complete the information on this form and attach the photocopy to it.
3. Return the mailpiece to the mailstream as soon as possible. Do not delay the mailpiece from making a dispatch of value or cause it to miss the cutoff time for the route or firm delivery.
4. Send this form and photocopy directly to:

   INSPECTOR IN CHARGE
   REVENUE AND ASSET PROTECTION PROGRAM
   475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW, RM 3521
   Washington DC 20260-2166

5. Please complete the following:

   ODIS-RPW/IODIS Test ID: Test Date:_____

   ODIS-RPW/IODIS Test Location (City/State/ZIP):_____

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Chapter 4
CODES Laptop Data Communications

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once a test is completed and data are reviewed, the test data must be immediately transferred from the CODES Laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit. Test data can be transferred to the CODES Web Base Unit with either of the following methods:

- By dialing the CODES Web Base Unit and transmitting the data via modem.
- By using a diskette to transfer the test data to a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection, from which the data can be uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit.

Periodically, it is necessary to install or update CODES application software and load test samples onto the CODES Laptop. These software updates and samples can be downloaded from the CODES Web Base Unit via a modem dial-up connection, or by using a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection. Software updates can be downloaded onto a diskette and installed on a CODES Laptop.

After software updates are installed on the CODES Laptop, the laptop's new system information must be sent to the CODES Web Base Unit.

This chapter provides instructions for performing these tasks as well as information on how to update and process downloaded files.

ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

The data collection technician (DCT) is responsible for transferring the test data, downloading sample files and software updates, and sending CODES Laptop system information to the CODES Web Base Unit.

The manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) or designee is responsible for review and approval of the uploaded data.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Ensure the following materials are accessible before transmitting data:

- The CODES Laptop or a 3.5" diskette containing the test data.
- A blank, formatted 3.5" diskette.

To transmit data from a remote location, you will also need the following:

- Remote location single-line telephone line. (Multi-line telephone lines do not work with the CODES Laptop modem; however, a fax line may also be used.)
- All appropriate telephone numbers.
- Your CODES Laptop modem connected to the remote location's single-line telephone line.

ASSOCIATED TASKS

Use one of the following methods to transfer data to the CODES Web Base Unit:

- Move data via a modem dial-up connection.
- Move data via diskette to a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection, where it can then be transferred to the CODES Web Base Unit via the postal intranet.

The DCT has access to the following functions available through CODES Laptop transmission utilities:

- Transferring test data to the CODES Web Base Unit.
- Receiving sample files and software updates.
- Sending CODES Laptop system information.

PROCEDURES

The remainder of this chapter discusses each of these transfer methods in detail as well as how to update sample files and system software using CODES Laptop transmission functionality. Each section gives step-by-step instructions for performing these tasks.

4.1 Transferring Test Data to the CODES Web Base Unit

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CODES uses a modem dial-up connection to transmit data from a CODES Laptop to the CODES Web Base Unit. Data can also be transferred to a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection using a 3.5" diskette, then uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit.

4.1.1 Initiate Data Transfer

Use the following steps to begin the data transfer process, then refer to the appropriate section that corresponds to the task you wish to perform:

1. **The CODES *Main Menu* screen displays after the CODES Laptop boots up (Figure 4.1.1–1).**

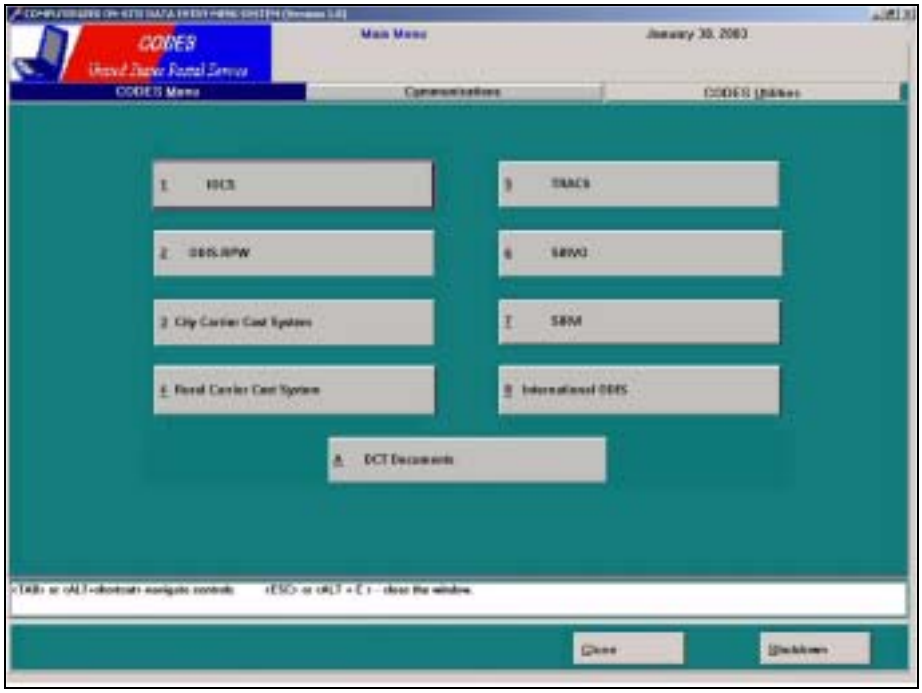

Figure 4.1.1–1. CODES *Main Menu: CODES Menu* Tab

2. **Choose the *CODES Menu* tab.**
3. **To open the ODIS-RPW *Main Menu* screen, click the *ODIS-RPW* button.**

   The ODIS-RPW *Main Menu* screen displays (Figure 4.1.1–2).

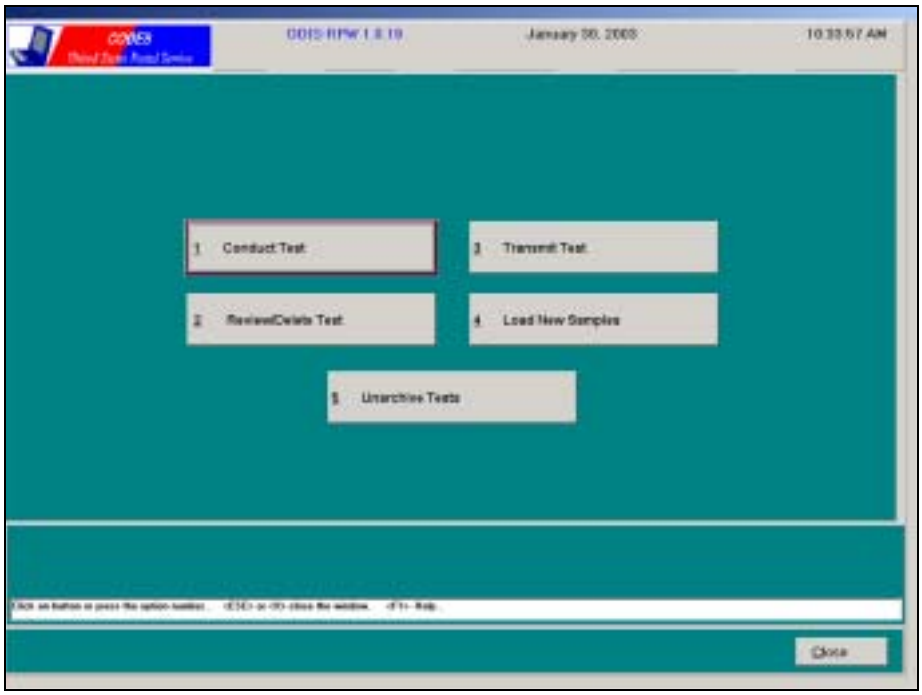

Figure 4.1.1–2. ODIS-RPW Main Menu Screen

4. Click the *Transmit Test* button.

The *Destination* screen displays.

Figure 4.1.1–3. *Destination* Screen

Refer to one of the sections listed below for information on how to complete test data transmission using the following available options:

- Transfer Data via Diskette (section 4.1.2).
- Transfer Data via Web (section 4.1.4).

4.1.2 Transfer Test Data via Diskette

Sending data to a diskette moves test data from the CODES Laptop to a specially formatted file on the diskette. Use this option to move test data via diskette to the CODES Web Base Unit.

Example: Transfer ODIS-RPW test data from a CODES Laptop to a diskette, and then move the files from that diskette to a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection for transmission to the CODES Web Base Unit.

If *Diskette* is selected from the *Destination* screen, the *Disk Transfer* screen displays (Figure 4.1.2–1). Before a test can be transferred, the test must be completed.

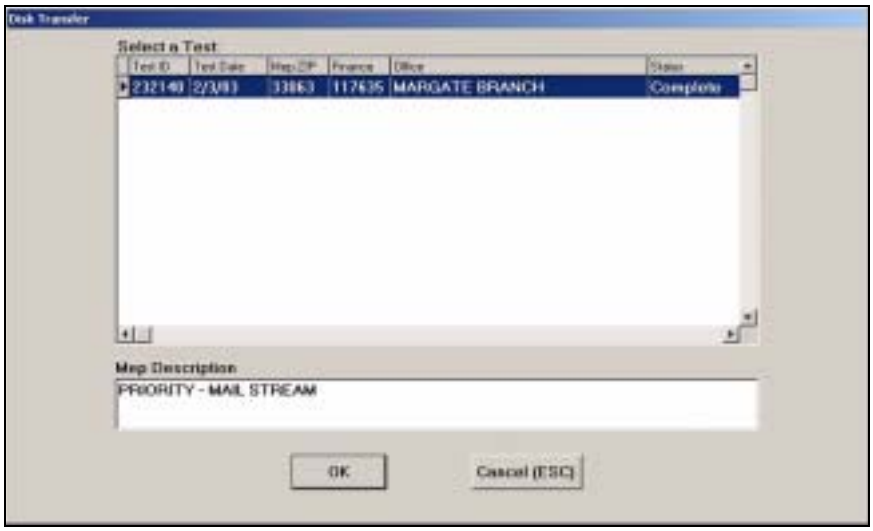

Figure 4.1.2–1. *Disk Transfer* Screen

1. **Insert a formatted blank 3.5" diskette into the CODES Laptop diskette drive (drive A:\).**
2. **Highlight the test intended for transfer in the *Select a Test* field from the *Disk Transfer* screen.**
3. **Click the *OK* button on the *Disk Transfer* screen.**

   CODES displays the *diskette DCT ID login* screen shown in Figure 4.1.2–2.

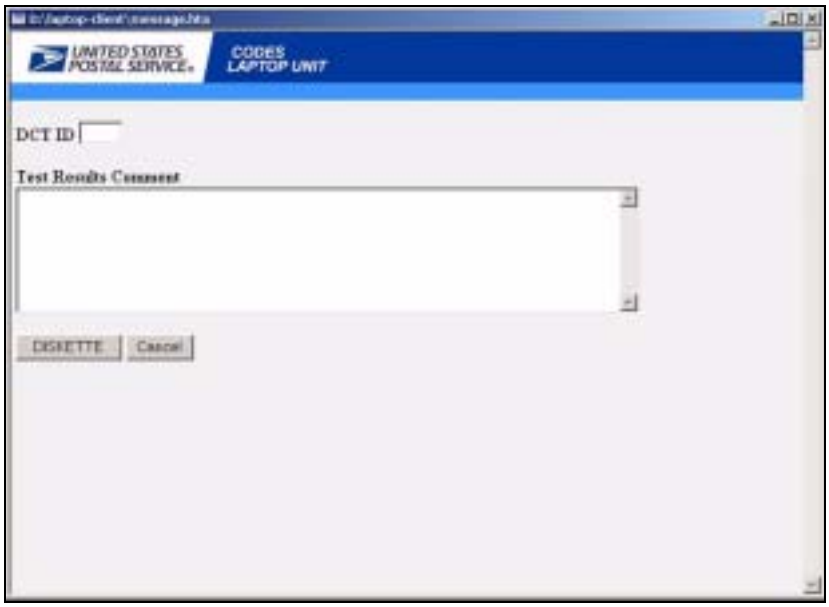

Figure 4.1.2–2. Diskette DCT ID Login Screen

4. **Ensure that a formatted blank 3.5" floppy diskette is in the A:\ drive.**
5. **Type your DCT login ID into the *DCT ID* field and add any comments or information pertaining to the test intended for upload into the *Test Result Comment* field, then click the *Diskette* button.**

Note: If the test data did not successfully copy to the diskette, the message shown in Figure 4.1.2–3 displays. Click the *OK* button. CODES returns the user to the ODIS-RPW Main Menu. Refer to section 4.3.1 for information on 3.5" diskette failure.

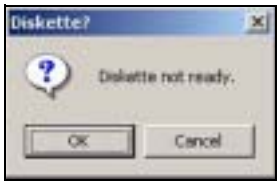

Figure 4.1.2–3. *Diskette?* Screen

If the test data successfully copied to the diskette, the message shown in Figure 4.1.2–4 displays.

Figure 4.1.2–4. File Copied Message Screen

6. **From Windows Explorer or My Computer, view the A:\ drive and ensure that the files are on the diskette.**

Note: My Computer can be opened by double clicking on the icon on the desktop, and Windows Explorer can be opened by right-clicking the *Start* menu button, and choosing *Explore* from the pop-up menu (Figure 4.1.2–5).

To open Windows Explorer, right-click the Windows *Start* menu and chose *Explore*.

OR

Double-click the *My Computer* icon on the desktop.

Figure 4.1.2–5. Open Windows Explorer

Once all of the tests are loaded onto the diskette, the diskette can be taken to any standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection, and uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit (section 4.1.3).

4.1.3 Test Data Transmission from a Standard Postal Service Computer to the CODES Web Base Unit

Once all of the ODIS-RPW tests have been transferred to a diskette, use the following steps to upload the ODIS-RPW tests from any standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection to the CODES Web Base Unit:

1. **Insert the diskette containing the ODIS-RPW test(s) into the A:\ drive (3.5" diskette drive) of a standard Postal Service computer with a LAN connection.**
2. **Open Windows Explorer (Figure 4.1.2–5).**

   The test filenames will begin with the word “tests,” followed by a 13-digit number, and an .html file extension, as shown in Figure 4.1.3–1.

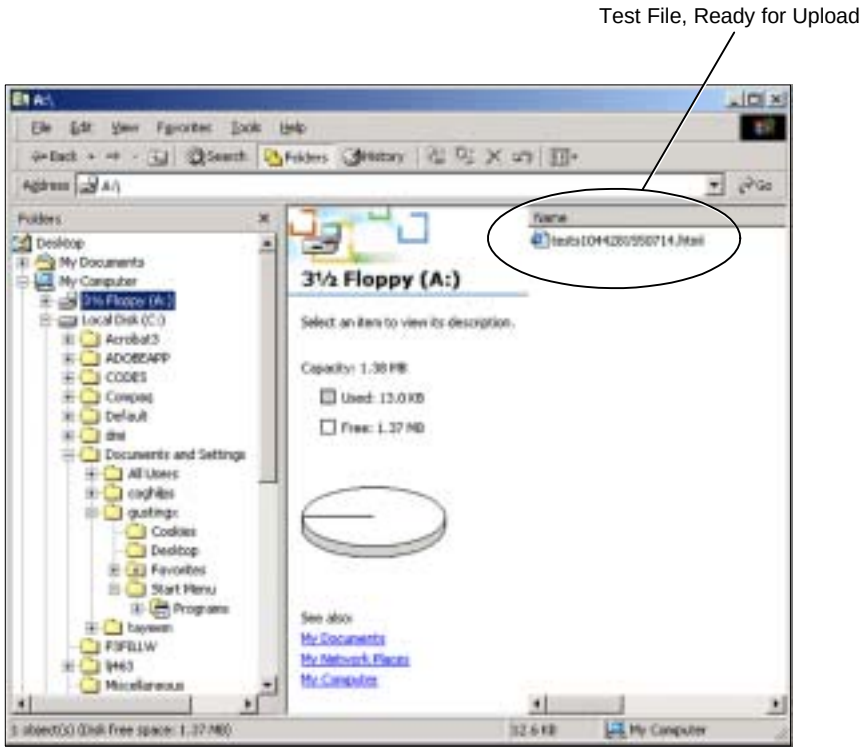

Figure 4.1.3–1. Windows Explorer Screen

3. From the A:\ drive, double-click the file intended for upload to the CODES Web Base Unit.

The file automatically sends the test data to the CODES Web Base Unit. An interim screen displays (Figure 4.1.3–2), indicating the file transfer is processing, followed by a screen indicating that the test was successfully uploaded (Figure 4.1.3–3).

Figure 4.1.3–2. Interim Diskette Upload Screen

Figure 4.1.3–3. Test Successfully Uploaded

4.1.4 Test Data Transmission via Web

Prior to uploading the test data via the web, ensure the CODES Laptop's modem is securely connected to a single-line telephone line.

If *Web* was selected from the *Destination* screen (Figure 4.1.1–3), the *Web Transfer* screen is displayed (Figure 4.1.4–1). Before a test can be transferred, the test must be complete.

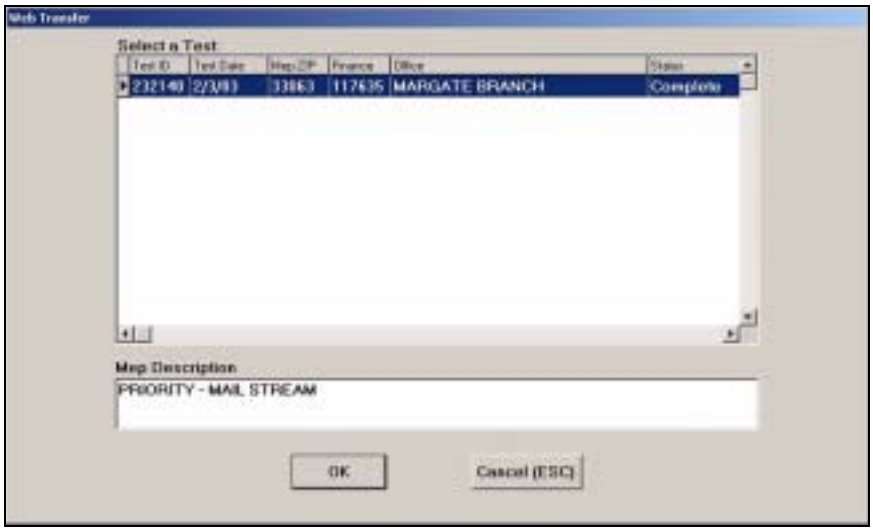

Figure 4.1.4–1. *Web Transfer* Screen

1. **With the desired test highlighted in the *Select a Test* field, click the *OK* button.**

   CODES displays the Web DCT login screen shown in Figure 4.1.4–2.

2. **Type your DCT ID number and any comments or information pertaining to the test being transferred.**
3. **Ensure the phone number, including the outside access number and/or authorization code are correct, then click the *Web* button.**

   For additional information on entering the dial-up number sequence, see section 4.3.2.

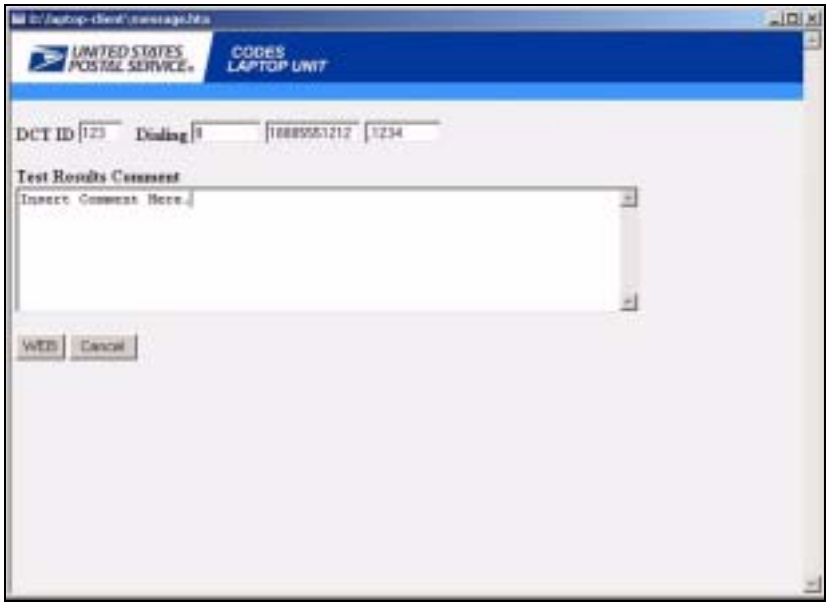

Figure 4.1.4–2. *Web DCT Login* Screen

CODES briefly displays a *Transmit in progress* screen (Figure 4.1.4–3), followed by a test confirmation screen showing that the test successfully uploaded (Figure 4.1.4–4).

Figure 4.1.4–3. Interim Test Upload Screen

4. **To close the upload confirmation screen and return to the ODIS-RPW *Main Menu*, click on either the word *Exit* or the blue page icon in the upper right-hand corner of the screen (Figure 4.1.4–4).**

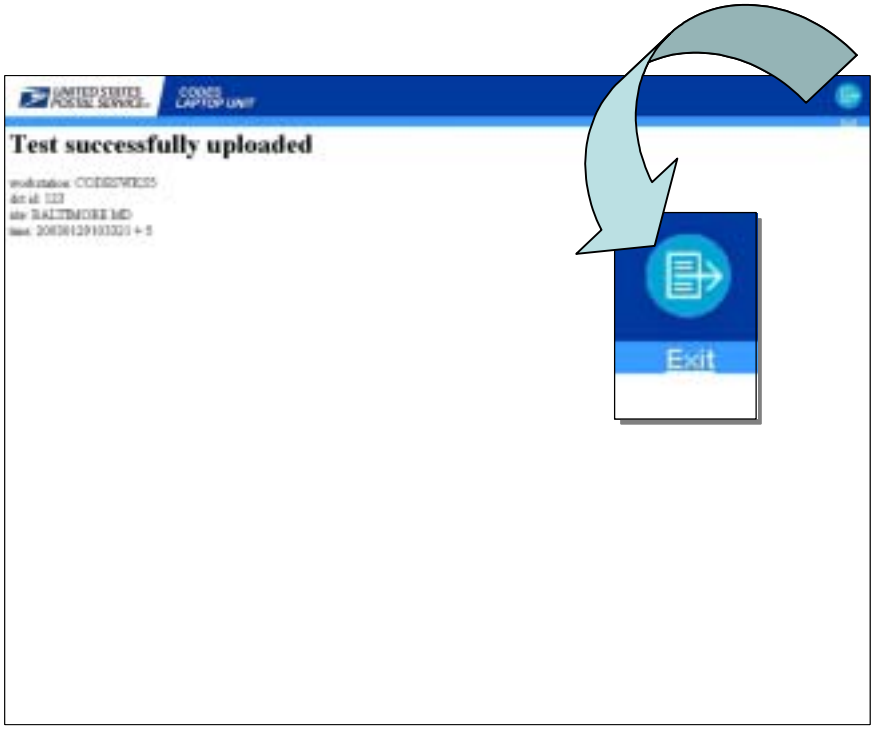

Figure 4.1.4–4. Test Upload Confirmation Screen

A *Microsoft Internet Explorer* message screen displays (Figure 4.1.4–5).

5. **Click the *Yes* button.**

Figure 4.1.4–5. *Microsoft Internet Explorer* Message Screen

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4.2 Receiving Sample Files and Software Updates

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Software updates and sample files can be downloaded directly from the CODES Web Base Unit to a CODES Laptop, allowing the user to receive software updates and sample selection files via data transfer.

The MSP may still download samples and software updates onto a diskette and mail it to the user.

PROCEDURES

Figure 4.2.0–1 shows the *Communications* menu tab options on the CODES *Main Menu*. The DCT may use the *Download Samples*, *Download Software*, and *Upload Laptop System Information* options.

Refer to one of the following sections, depending on the desired option.

- Download Samples (section 4.2.1).
- Download Software (section 4.2.2).
- Upload Laptop System Information (section 4.2.2.2).

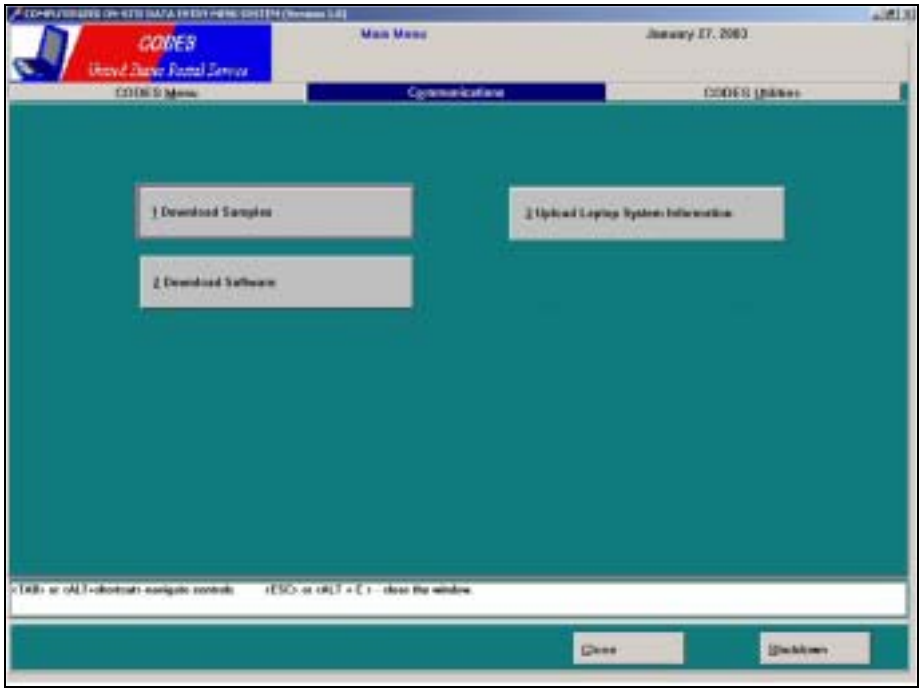

Figure 4.2.0–1. CODES *Main Menu*: *Communications* Tab

4.2.1 Download Samples

1. **To download samples, from the CODES *Main Menu Communications* option window, click the *Download Samples* button.**

CODES displays the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen (Figure 4.2.1–2).

Figure 4.2.1–1. *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* Screen

2. Click the *Connect* button on the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen.

The screen shown in Figure 4.2.1–2 displays.

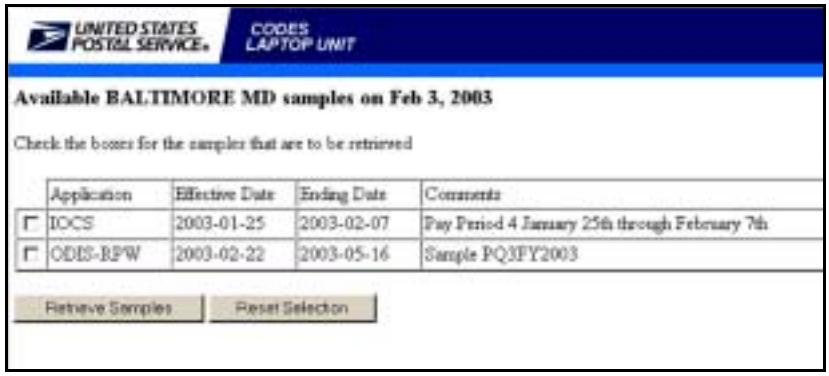

Figure 4.2.1–2. Application Selection Screen for Sample Downloads

3. Select the CODES application(s) associated with the desired samples (more than one application may be selected).

Note: Ensure that at least one application is selected. If no application is selected, the screen shown in Figure 4.2.1–3 displays.

Figure 4.2.1–3. *No Samples Requested* Screen

4. **Click the *Retrieve Samples* button on the application selection screen.**

   The samples for the selected CODES application(s) are downloaded to the CODES Laptop. CODES displays the screen shown in Figure 4.2.1–4. For information on how to load the samples, see section 4.2.1.1.

Figure 4.2.1–4. Samples Download Screen

4.2.1.1 Load Samples

To load new samples, from the ODIS-RPW *Main Menu* (Figure 4.1.1–2), click the *Load New Samples* button.

CODES presents the user with options for either Web or Diskette transfer (Figure 4.2.1–5). The following steps explain the process used for loading samples from a diskette or after the Web download described in section 4.2.1:

1. **From the Load Samples *Information* screen click the *Diskette* button. (For the Web option, click the Web button.)**

With the *Diskette* option, CODES prompts the user to insert the diskette containing the sample files (Figure 4.2.1–6). (For the Web option, the process skips to step 4.)

Figure 4.2.1–5. Load Samples *Information* Screen

Figure 4.2.1–6. Insert Floppy *Information* Screen

2. **Insert the diskette containing the sample files.**
3. **Click the *OK* button.**

   CODES presents the user with a message acknowledging that the samples were successfully loaded (Figure 4.2.1–7).

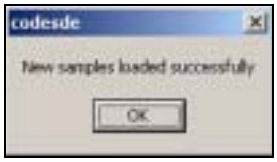

Figure 4.2.1–7. New Samples Loaded Successfully Message

4. **Click the *OK* button.**

4.2.2 Download Software

1. **To download or update software, from the CODES *Main Menu Communications* tab option, click the *Download Software* button.**

   CODES displays the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen (Figure 4.2.1–2).

2. **Click the *Connect* button on the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen.**

   CODES displays a screen showing the selection of available software updates (Figure 4.2.2–1).

3. **Select all desired software update files, then click the *Download* button.**

Note: Ensure that at least one available software update option is selected. If no option is selected, the screen shown in Figure 4.2.2–2 displays.

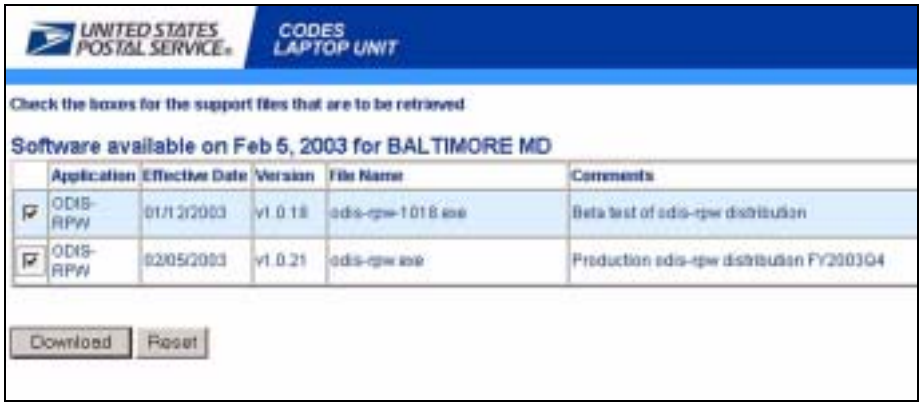

Figure 4.2.2–1. Available Software Updates Screen

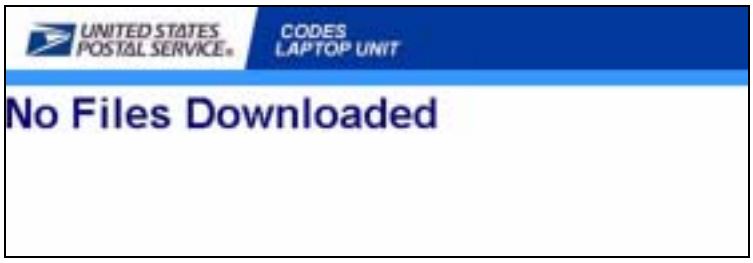

Figure 4.2.2–2. *No Files Downloaded* Screen

4.2.2.1 Software Installation and Updates

If the message screen shown in Figure 4.2.2–3 displays when the CODES Laptop boots up, it is time to install the current software updates. Click the *OK* button, then upload any remaining tests to the CODES Web Base Unit (section 4.1).

Figure 4.2.2–3. Software Update *Warning* Message

Once all tests have been uploaded, open the *CODES Utilities* tab on the CODES *Main Menu* (Figure 4.2.2–4).

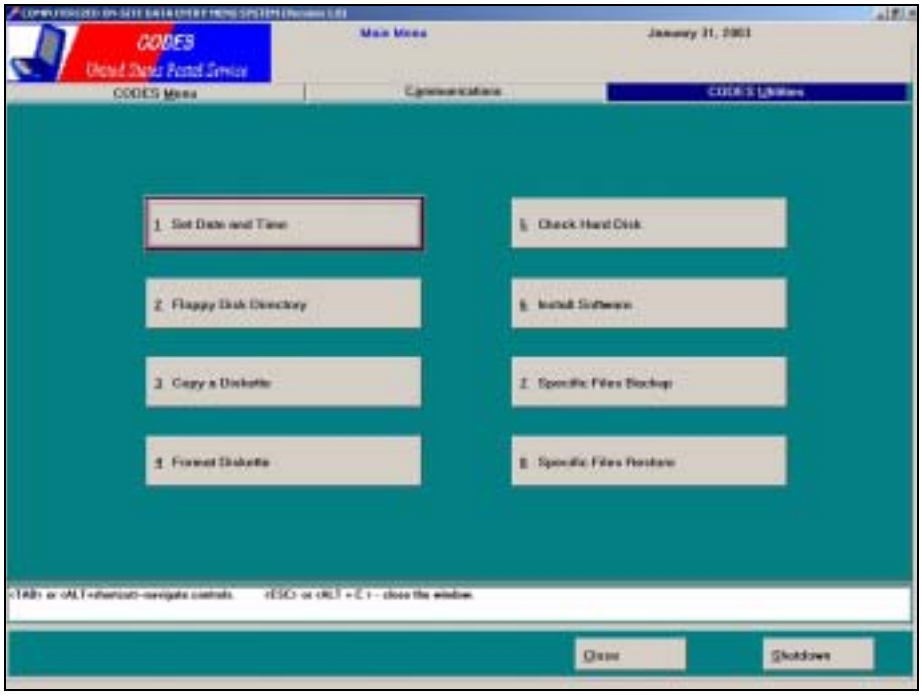

Figure 4.2.2–4. CODES *Main Menu Utility* Tab Options

1. Click the *Install Software* button.

CODES runs the installation process. Figures 4.2.2–5 through 4.2.2–7 show the sequence of screens displayed as the software installs.

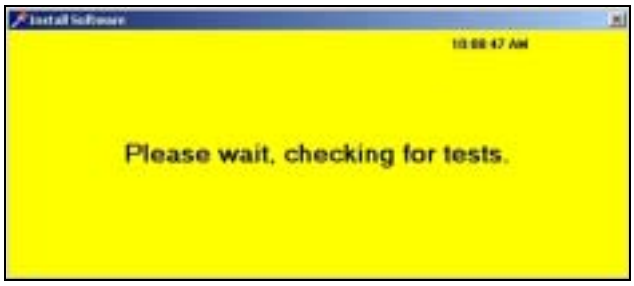

Figure 4.2.2–5. *Install Software*: Checking for Tests Screen

Figure 4.2.2–6. *Install Software*: Installation Complete Screen

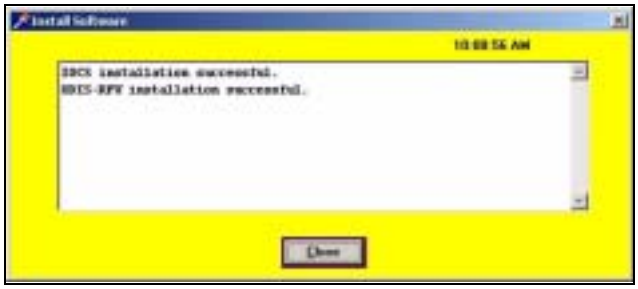

Figure 4.2.2–7. *Install Software*: Installation Successful Screen

Click the Close button to return to the CODES *Main Menu*.

Once the software is loaded, the DCT must upload the new CODES Laptop system information to the CODES Web Base Unit. Refer to section 4.2.2.2 for information on uploading CODES Laptop system information.

4.2.2.2 CODES Laptop System Information Upload

Once software or software updates are downloaded to the CODES Laptop, the CODES Laptop system information must be uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit.

To send the CODES Laptop system information to the CODES Web Base Unit, from the CODES *Main Menu Communications* tab option, complete the following steps:

1. **Click the *Upload Laptop System Information* button.**

CODES displays the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen (Figure 4.2.1–2).

2. **Click the *Connect* button on the *Dial-up Parameter Maintenance* screen.**

   CODES displays the *Transmitting System Information* screen shown in Figure 4.2.2–8 followed by the *Received System Information* screen shown in Figure 4.2.2–9.

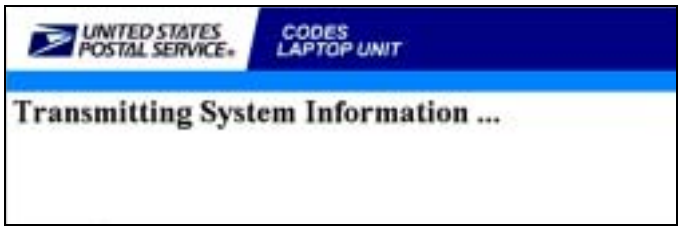

Figure 4.2.2–8. *Transmitting System Information* Screen

The process is complete when the *Received System Information* screen (Figure 4.2.2–9) displays the following four lines of text:

- *Received System Information - processing...*
- *Processed Operating System Information*
- *Received (###) program records*
- *Processing complete*

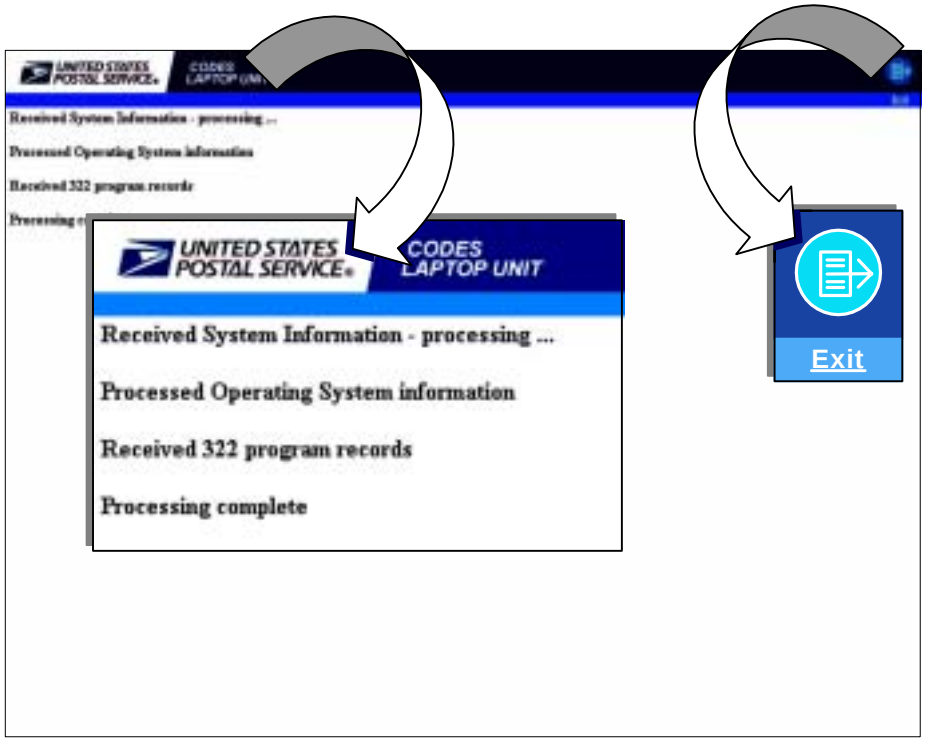

Figure 4.2.2–9. *Received System Information* Screen

To exit from the *Received System Information* screen, click on the word *Exit* or the blue page icon at the top right-hand corner of the *Received System Information* screen.

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4.3 Troubleshooting Failed Transmissions

CODES data communications rely on a complex means of sending data from one source to another; therefore, at times, transmission problems may occur.

Follow the steps below to ensure proper cable connections and configuration of the CODES Laptop:

- Make sure the CODES Laptop is connected to a a single-line (voice) telephone line. Multi-line (digital) telephone lines will not work with the CODES Laptop modem.
- Ensure all modem and laptop connections (e.g., power supply, modem cord, telephone jack, etc.) are secure.
- Check all of the tests and/or applications for which you wish to transfer or receive files to ensure they are properly prepared for transmission according to the procedures outlined in this chapter.

For more detailed instructions, or if the problem you are experiencing is not addressed above, consult your MSP for further assistance.

4.3.1 3.5" Diskette Failure

If the test data did not successfully copy to a 3.5" diskette, the message shown in Figure 4.1.2–3 displays. Usually, the reason for this message is that the computer cannot read the disk in the drive. The user could have forgotten to insert the diskette, the diskette might not have engaged in the drive properly, the diskette could be damaged, or the drive could be malfunctioning.

- Check the A:\ drive to ensure the diskette has been inserted and properly engaged into the drive.
- Replace the diskette with a new blank formatted diskette.

For more detailed instructions, or if the problem you are experiencing is not addressed above, consult your MSP for further assistance.

4.3.2 Modem Dial-up Input

There are three fields available to input digits for phone numbers, including outside access numbers and authorization codes. The first field is generally for dialing an outside line number (usually, the number 9) to get an outside line. The second field is used to input the phone number, and the third field is normally used to input an access number or authorization code.

Only numbers (0 through 9), the asterisk (*), the pound symbol (#), and commas (,) can be used in these fields. Use the comma to insert a two-second pause in the number sequence.

Example: Refer to Exhibit 4.3.2–1 below. If the phone system of the facility requires an authorization code (234) after the outside access number (9), but before the phone number (1 (888) 555-1212), the user can insert one or two commas between the outside access number and the authorization code, in the first field. Because the authorization number is required prior to dialing the telephone number, the authorization code is placed after the outside access number in the same field, with a comma to separate them. There are also two commas inserted after the authorization code to insert a 4-second pause to give the telephone connection time to obtain a dial-tone. The third field is blank because the authorization code is required prior to dialing the telephone number.

Telephone dialing setup

9,234,,	18885551212	

Pause

Exhibit 4.3.2–1. Telephone Dialing Setup Example

Note: The user must become familiar with the phone system of the facility, and have use of any access or authorization codes or numbers necessary to dial an outside number.

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Appendix A
Organizational Responsibilities for the ODIS-RPW Test

Many organizations within the Postal Service work together to ensure the quality and accuracy of ODIS-RPW data. This section explains the responsibilities of each organization.

I. Headquarters — Finance

Finance provides technical and managerial guidance for the operation of ODIS-RPW consistent with sound economic and statistical theory. Two organizations within Finance share this responsibility:

A. Statistical Programs

Statistical Programs (SP) provides managerial guidance and administrative operation of statistical programs. SP provides the statistical sampling design, data collection software requirements, data collection policy and procedural guidelines, and training programs. SP also provides the interface between Information Systems and Corporate Finance Planning on the development of computer software programs.

- The **Field Support** team develops data collection handbooks, policy guidelines, and training programs.
- The **Statistical Programs Service Centers (SPSCs)** — Northern Virginia (Washington, DC) and Bay Area (Richmond, California) — have the following responsibilities:
  - Provide technical guidance to all appropriate Customer Service and Sales District personnel. This guidance includes answering questions about the proper administration and performance of ODIS-RPW functions.
  - Provide on-site review and evaluation of ODIS-RPW-related activities to help resolve problems, offer suggestions for improvement, and assess training needs.
  - Assist the district manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) in implementing new or revised procedures.
  - Inform Revenue and Volume Reporting of technical policy matters that require resolution.
  - Provide on-site technical consultation or instruction, including consulting on how to solve staffing problems.
  - Check the quality of ODIS-RPW data.
  - Act as a liaison in services and expertise to the area offices and the districts on all aspects of ODIS-RPW.

B. Corporate Finance Planning

The Revenue and Volume Reporting (RVR) unit within Corporate Finance Planning uses ODIS-RPW test data to support proposed changes in Postal Service rates, fees, and classifications. RVR analyzes and processes ODIS-RPW data and develops the Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (RPW) report. The RPW report presents the official U.S. Postal Service estimates of its revenue, volume, and weight by mail class, subclass and major special service. The ODIS-RPW data are also used to support flex budget initiatives, service diagnostics, and other management activities.

II. Headquarters — Information Systems

A. Finance Business Systems Portfolio

The Finance Business Systems Portfolio staff are responsible for the following tasks:

- Programming the data collection software requirements.
- Testing and maintaining the software.
- Providing telephone hot-line technical support for CODES software and hardware.

B. Computer Operations Service Centers

The San Mateo Computer Operations Service Center (COSC) processes the programs that randomly select the locations, test types, and dates for the quarterly ODIS-RPW tests. Approximately two weeks before the beginning of the quarter, the schedule information is made available to the MSP on the CODES Web Base Unit. After the ODIS-RPW tests are conducted, the tests are uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit which resides on the mainframe at the San Mateo COSC. After the MSP reviews the tests, they are approved and released to the mainframe for aggregation with the nation's tests and further mainframe processing.

III. Area Offices

Through its manager of Finance, the area office emphasizes the importance of ODIS-RPW tests for the development of proposals for new Postal Service rates, service diagnostics, flex budget activities, and for other management studies, to the Customer Service and Sales district managers and postmasters.

IV. Customer Service and Sales District Offices

The following positions in the Customer Service and Sales district offices participate in the implementation of ODIS-RPW:

A. District Manager

Through the manager of Finance and the MSP, the District Manager implements ODIS-RPW in all offices within the district's jurisdiction. The district manager also informs the MSP about changes in automation and distribution that could affect ODIS-RPW procedures.

B. Human Resources

Human Resources personnel provide assistance, as requested, in the implementation of ODIS-RPW training programs. Human Resources personnel also maintain contact, as needed, with employee organizations.

C. Manager of Finance

The manager of Finance has the following responsibilities in the accurate implementation of ODIS-RPW:

- Supporting the MSP in the administration of ODIS-RPW activities. This support includes helping the MSP maintain the integrity of the district's ODIS-RPW data, correcting significant problems that might compromise data quality, and helping district supervisory personnel, such as operations managers and postmasters, understand the importance of ODIS-RPW.
- Ensuring that ODIS-RPW tests are conducted according to approved procedures.
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels for statistical programs.
- Offering guidance and direction to all facilities in the district, including the district home office, associate offices, bulk mail centers, Priority Mail processing centers, and air mail centers.

D. Manager of Statistical Programs

The MSP coordinates and administers the district-wide collection of ODIS-RPW data. The MSP has the following responsibilities:

- Manages district-wide statistical programs; coordinates, administers, and supervises the collection of statistical data involving several national statistical sampling systems.
- Implements all guidelines for district-wide statistical programs in accordance with policies and procedures.
- Manages district-wide monitoring and training programs to ensure proper sampling and reporting techniques are being used.
- Manages the district mail exit point sampling frame to ensure all mail or other sampling populations are sampled in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- Conducts tests and provides analysis of various reports using national systems.
- Implements a quality assurance system to ensure consistency, accuracy, and compliance with policies and procedures.

- Provides technical guidance, direction, and assistance to other managers, postmasters, and employees throughout the district on statistical data collection.
- Prepares and monitors annual workhour requirements and statistical programs expenditures.
- Manages a small staff of employees performing statistical sampling and systems related activities.

E. Statistical Programs Specialist

The statistical programs specialist (SPS) assists the MSP (as necessary) in fulfilling organizational responsibilities such as, training, monitoring, and any other requirements listed above. The SPS is specifically responsible for the district's monitoring and training programs. In doing so, the SPS has the following responsibilities:

- Performs district-wide on-site monitoring of statistical programs' data collection operations to ensure proper sampling and reporting techniques; identifies improvement opportunities; recommends corrective actions; and follows up to ensure the resolution of all irregularities, the continued application of corrective measures, and ongoing performance improvement.
- Evaluates data collection performance to determine training needs and identifies specific training requirements necessary to improve the performance of statistical programs data collection employees.
- Prepares demonstrations and provides training on proper sampling and reporting techniques to DCTs and other employees involved in statistical programs data collection.
- Prepares testing schedules and assignments and maintains control reports to ensure that tests have been conducted.
- Performs edit and review activities to ensure consistency, accuracy, and compliance with statistical programs sampling instructions.
- Analyzes data collection quality measurement and control reports; takes action to correct identified problems; and provides remedial training to reduce sampling and reporting errors.
- Reviews and updates sampling frame lists to ensure that all mail or other sampling populations are sampled in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- Has occasional contact with mailer representatives regarding sampling data, and with postmasters and other postal managers on statistical programs data sampling issues.
- Supervises a very small to small size group of statistical programs data collection employees.

F. Data Collection Technician

The data collection technician (DCT) or other trained data collector is responsible for performing the ODIS-RPW tests. In doing so, the DCT performs the following:

- Collects, records, and analyzes statistical data under any number of national data collection systems.
- Operates computer equipment to enter data; recognizes diagnostic messages and takes appropriate actions; and performs data transfer functions through telecommunications systems.
- Reviews input and output data to determine accuracy and compliance with national programs. Analyzes and edits data to detect and correct errors.
- Updates national databases; maintains and updates records and files.
- Participates in data collection activities in support of special studies or national programs.
- Reads and interprets reference manuals and other written materials.
- Protects the integrity of ODIS-RPW data.
- Refers to supervisory personnel any matters that are not covered by instructions or that require resolution. This includes raising questions on matters that require clarification.

G. Senior Plant Manager

The senior plant manager has the following responsibilities:

- Providing space and facilities to perform ODIS-RPW tests.
- Providing personnel to train as ODIS-RPW data collectors to conduct tests whenever statistical programs personnel are unavailable.
- Promptly informing the MSP about changes in mail processing operations that affect ODIS-RPW.

H. Associate Office Postmaster or Station Manager

The associate office postmaster or station manager has the following responsibilities:

- Providing the space and assistance required to conduct ODIS-RPW tests within the office.
- Ensuring that the integrity of ODIS-RPW data is not sacrificed for operating expediency.
- Informing the MSP of problems that might compromise ODIS-RPW tests.
- Promptly informing the MSP about any operational changes that could affect ODIS-RPW tests.

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Appendix B
ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Examples

This appendix presents the following three examples of container subsampling:

- One mail shape.
- Two mail shapes.
- More than two mail shapes.

I. One Mail Shape

The MEP is composed of letter-shape mail only.

- The mail arrives in APCs holding letter trays.
- The expected number of APCs is 3.
- The average number of letter trays in each APC is 30.
- The expected number of mailpieces per letter tray is approximately 500.

1. **Identify primary containers.**

   The primary container is the letter tray. The larger container is the APC. If possible, remove the letter trays from the APCs to make the selection of specific containers for sampling using your skip interval easier.

2. **Exclude mail to be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolatable containers of missent mail.**

3. **Isolate Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIPs) and use the MIP procedure to record these mailpieces (section 3.8.2).**

4. **Separate Priority Mail containers.**

   Since Priority Mail items are rare in this processing stream and will probably be commingled if present, you do not need to find and separate Priority Mail mailpieces.

5. **Separate containers composed of accountable mail and BRM.**

   Assume that in this example accountable mail and BRM arrive in separate trays and can be isolated.

6. **Determine the average number of mailpieces per container.**

   The average volume of mailpieces per container for the letter tray is 500.

7. **Estimate the number of primary containers you will be testing.**

   The **expected number of letter trays** for the test is 90 (3 APCs X 30 letter trays). Therefore, the estimated number of primary containers to be tested is 90.

8. Determine your container and mailpiece skip intervals.

The **expected number of letter trays** for the test is 90 (3 APCs X 30 letter trays). If the number of larger containers or primary containers is not easily determined, choose the container range in the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1) that best represents the number of primary containers you expect.

The **expected number of mailpieces per letter tray** is 500.

Using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1), perform the following:

a. On the left-hand side of the table (under Container Range), find the container range that includes 90 (container range row 76–125).

b. On the top of the table (under Average Mailpieces Per Container), find the average mailpieces per container range that includes 500 (average mailpieces per container range column 301–500).

c. Find the intersection of the above row and column (the container range and average mailpieces per container range). The two numbers in the table at the intersection of this row and column give you both your container and mailpiece skip intervals. In this example, you will use a container skip interval of 12 and a mailpiece skip interval of 14.

d. Consider decreasing the container and/or mailpiece skip intervals if the time window allows. The goal is to record the maximum number of mailpieces within the available time window following the skip interval selection process.

9. Determine the random start number.

Using the CODES data entry software, enter the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals and then press <Enter>. CODES automatically generates your container and mailpiece random start numbers and displays them in the *Start* field.

10. Apply the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

Using the above container skip interval of 12 and mailpiece skip interval of 14, perform the following:

a. Using your container random start number, select the starting letter tray from the APC. For example, if your random start number is 5, select the 5th letter tray from the APC.

b. Select every 12th letter tray thereafter as determined by your container skip interval of 12.

c. From the first letter tray you selected, use your mailpiece random start number to select your first letter for recording. For instance, if your mailpiece random start number is 10, select the 10th letter from the tray.

d. Select every 14th mailpiece thereafter as determined by your mailpiece skip interval of 14.

e. Record your selected mailpieces. End session and save.

11. **Record separated accountable mail and BRM.**

    Record separated accountable mail and BRM independently. End session and save.

II. Two Mail Shapes

The MEP is composed of letter mail (in letter trays) and flats (in flat tubs) only.

- The expected number of letter trays is between 40 and 50.
- The number of mailpieces within any tray is generally over 500 but under 600.
- The expected number of flat tubs is between 7 and 10.
- The number of mailpieces within any tub is generally over 100 but under 125.

Note: Since the MEP has multiple container type groups (letter trays and flat tubs), you will need to make an adjustment to the basic skip interval selection procedure.

1. **Identify primary containers.**

   The primary containers are the letter trays and flat tubs. If necessary, remove the letter trays from any larger containers so that you can select specific letter trays for sampling using your skip interval.

2. **Exclude mail to be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolatable containers of missent mail.**

3. **Isolate Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIPs) and use the MIP procedure to record these mailpieces (section 3.8.2).**

4. **Separate Priority Mail containers.**

   Since Priority Mail items are rare in letter tray mail and will probably be commingled if present, you do not need to find and separate Priority Mail mailpieces from the letter trays.

   From the flat tubs, separate flat tubs holding Priority Mail. These are flat tubs marked “Priority Mail” (not too likely) **and** flat tubs consisting of at least 75 percent Priority Mail mailpieces.

5. **Separate containers composed of accountable mail and BRM.**

   Assume that in this example accountable mail and BRM arrives separated in letter trays.

6. **Group primary containers.**

   Treat each primary container type as an independent group to be tested by separating the primary containers into two container type groups: letter trays and flat tubs. For more information on containerizing, see section 3.7.3.

7. Determine the container and mailpiece skip intervals for the first group, the letter trays.

Starting with the letter tray container group, find the appropriate container range and average mailpieces per container range using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1). In this example, the appropriate container range is 36–75 (for your expected letter trays of 40–50). The appropriate average mailpieces per container range is 501–800 (for expected average pieces per container of 501–600). The intersection of this row and column shows a container skip interval of 10 and a mailpiece skip interval of 18.

Because there are multiple container type groups for this test, the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals may be adjusted. This adjustment will usually ensure that you have sufficient time to sample all selected mailpieces.

Adjustment:

a. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the right of the intersection of your original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3–1) (i.e., same row, next column to the right). For this example, from the intersection (row and column) that results in a container skip interval and mailpiece skip interval of 10 and 18 respectively, the resulting adjusted skip intervals are 10 for containers and 27 for the mailpieces.

b. Enter the new container and mailpiece skip intervals in the CODES laptop as described in step 8.

c. CODES will generate new start numbers.

d. Other adjustments may be possible. If the time window allows for additional mailpieces to be recorded, move to the intersection of the row and column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (RM 3-1) that maximizes the number of mailpieces recorded.

8. Determine the random start number.

Using the CODES data entry software, enter the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals and then press <Enter>. CODES automatically generates your container and mailpiece random start numbers and displays them in the *Start* field.

9. Apply the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

Using the above container skip interval of 10 and mailpiece skip interval of 27, perform the following:

a. Using your container random start number, select the starting letter tray. For example, if your container start number is 5, select the 5th letter tray.

b. Select every 10th letter tray thereafter as determined by your adjusted container skip interval of 10.

c. From the first selected letter tray container, use your mailpiece random start number to select your first letter for recording. For example, if your mailpiece start number is 8, select the 8th letter.

d. Select every 27th mailpiece thereafter as determined by your mailpiece skip interval of 27.

e. Record the selected mailpieces. End session and save.

10. Repeat Steps 7 through 9 for the flat tub container group. Perform the following steps:

a. Determine the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

For the flat tub container group, find the appropriate container range and average mailpieces per container range using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2). In this example, the appropriate container range is 6–10 (for your expected flat tubs of 7–10). The appropriate average mailpieces per container range is 101–150 (for expected average pieces per container of 101–125). The intersection of this row and column shows a container skip interval of 2 and a mailpiece skip interval of 3.

Adjustment:

i. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the right of the intersection of your original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2) (i.e., same row, next column to the right). For this example, from the intersection (row and column) that results in a container skip interval and mailpiece skip interval of 2 and 3 respectively, the resulting adjusted skip intervals are 3 for flat tub containers and 2 for the mailpieces contained in the flat tubs.

ii. Enter the new container and mailpiece skip intervals in the CODES Laptop as described in step 8.

iii. CODES will generate new start numbers.

iv. Other adjustments may be possible. If the time window allows for additional mailpieces to be recorded, move to the intersection of the row and column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2) that maximizes the number of mailpieces recorded.

b. Determine the random start numbers as described in step 8.

Using the CODES data entry software, enter your container skip and mailpiece skip intervals and then press <Enter>. CODES automatically generates your container and mailpiece random start numbers and displays them in the *Start* field.

c. Apply the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

Using the above container skip interval of 3 and mailpiece skip interval of 2 for the flats, perform the following:

i. Using your container random start number, select the starting flat tub. For example, if your container random start number is 2, select the 2nd flat tub.

ii. Select every 3rd flat tub thereafter as determined by your adjusted container skip interval of 3.

iii. From the first selected flat tub, use your mailpiece random start number to select your first flat for recording. For instance, if your mailpiece start number is 2, select the 2nd flat.

iv. Select every 2nd mailpiece thereafter as determined by your mailpiece skip interval of 2.

v. Record the selected mailpieces. End session and save.

11. Record separated Priority Mail items.

Record separated Priority Mail mailpieces independently. End session and save.

12. Record separated accountable mail and BRM.

Record separated accountable mail and BRM independently. End session and save.

III. More than 2 Mail Shapes

The MEP is a PHS MEP. You expect to test 7 containers.

- There are 3 OTRs and 4 APCs.
- The OTRs contain only loose parcel and IPP-shape mailpieces. Each OTR contains approximately 200 mailpieces.
- The APCs contain mail sacks. There are 28 mail sacks total. Two of these mail sacks are Priority Mail sacks. Each of the 28 mail sacks contains between 5 and 8 mailpieces.

1. Separate all containers.

The primary containers are the OTRs and mail sacks. Because the APCs are *larger* containers (they are not holding loose mail but other containers — the sacks), separate the sacks from the APCs.

2. Exclude mail to be reprocessed, curtailed mail, and easily isolatable containers of missent mail.

3. Isolate Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIPs) and use the MIP procedure to record these mailpieces (section 3.8.2).

4. **Separate Priority Mail containers.**

   Separate the two Priority Mail sacks to form their own group for testing. You are not asked to open every sack to determine if there is at least 75 percent Priority Mail items. Assume that none of the OTRs are composed of at least 75 percent Priority Mail items. Therefore, you do not need to separate any of the OTRs in this step.

5. **Separate containers composed of accountable mail and BRM (not applicable usually for a PHS MEP).**

6. **Group primary container types.**

   Treat each primary container type as an independent group to be tested by separating the primary containers into two container type groups: OTRs and sacks. For more information on *containerizing*, see section 3.7.3.

7. **Determine the container and mailpiece skip intervals for your first group, the OTR container group.**

   Starting with the OTR container group, find the appropriate container range and average mailpieces per container range using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2). In this example, the appropriate container range is 3–5 (for your expected OTR of 3). The appropriate average mailpieces per container range is 151–300 (for expected average pieces per container of approximately 200). The intersection of this row and column shows a container skip interval of 2 and a parcel and IPP-shape mailpiece skip interval of 3.

   Because there are multiple container type groups for this test, the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals may be adjusted. This adjustment will usually ensure that you have sufficient time to sample all selected mailpieces.

   Adjustment:

   a. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the right of the intersection of your original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2.) (i.e., same row, next column to the right). For this example, from the intersection (row and column) that results in a container skip interval and mailpiece skip interval of 2 and 3 respectively for the OTR group, the resulting adjusted skip intervals are 2 for OTR containers and 4 for the parcel and IPP-shape mailpieces.

   b. Enter the new container and mailpiece skip intervals in the CODES Laptop as described in step 8.

   c. CODES will generate new start numbers.

   d. Other adjustments may be possible. If the time window allows for additional mailpieces to be recorded, move to the intersection of the row and column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2) that maximizes the number of mailpieces recorded.

8. Determine the random start number.

Using the CODES data entry software, enter your OTR container skip interval and parcel and IPP-shape mailpiece skip intervals and then press <Enter>. CODES automatically generates your container and mailpiece random start numbers and displays them in the *Start* field.

9. Apply the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

Using the above container skip interval of 2 and mailpiece skip interval of 4, perform the following:

a. Using your OTR container random start number, select the starting OTR. For example, if your container start number is 2, select the 2nd OTR.

b. Select every 2nd OTR thereafter as determined by your adjusted container skip interval of 2.

c. From the first selected OTR container, use your mailpiece random start number to select your first parcel or IPP-shape mailpiece for recording. For instance, if your mailpiece start number is 3, select the 3rd parcel or IPP.

d. Select every 4th parcel or IPP-shape mailpiece thereafter as determined by your mailpiece skip interval of 4.

e. Record the selected mailpieces. End session and save.

10. Repeat Steps 7 through 9 for the sack container group. Perform the following steps:

a. Determine the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

For the sack container group, find the appropriate container range and average mailpieces per container range using the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2). In this example, the appropriate container range is 26–35 (for your expected non-Priority Mail sacks of 26). The appropriate average mailpieces per container range is 5–10 (for expected average pieces per container of 5–8). The intersection of this row and column shows that container skip and mailpiece skip subsampling are not recommended.

Adjustment:

i. Select the container skip and mailpiece skip intervals immediately to the right of the intersection of your original container row and average mailpieces per container column on the *ODIS-RPW Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes* (Table 3–2) (i.e., same row, next column to the right). For this example, from the intersection (row and column) that results in a container skip interval and mailpiece skip interval of 2 and 2 respectively for the non-Priority Mail sack container group, the resulting adjusted skip intervals are 2 for the sacks and 2 for the mailpieces contained in the sacks.

ii. Enter the new container and mailpiece skip intervals in the CODES Laptop as described in step 8.

iii. CODES will generate new start numbers.

b. Determine the random start numbers as described in step 8.

c. Apply the container and mailpiece skip intervals.

Using the above container skip interval of 2 and mailpiece skip interval of 2 for the sacks, you would perform the following:

i. Using your container random start number, select the starting sack. For example, if your container start number is 1, select the first sack.

ii. Select every 2nd sack thereafter as determined by your adjusted container skip interval of 2.

iii. From the first selected sack, use your mailpiece random start number to select your first mailpiece for recording. For example, if your mailpiece start number is 2, select the 2nd mailpiece.

iv. Select every 2nd mailpiece thereafter as determined by your mailpiece skip interval of 2.

v. Record the selected mailpieces. End session and save.

11. Record separated Priority Mail items.

Record separated Priority Mail mailpieces independently. End session and save.

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Appendix C
Sign for the COU Test and PS Form 8126, *Consolidated Originating RPW Test*

The materials on the following pages pertain to the *Special Rules For The Consolidated Originating Unit Test* in Chapter 3, Section 3.10.1. This appendix provides examples of the following materials:

- Please Hold All Originating Registered mailpieces for the RPW Test and Insured Mail, COD, Certificates of Mailing.
- PS Form 8126, *Consolidated Originating RPW Test*.

CONSOLIDATED
ORIGINATING UNIT TEST

ATTENTION: POSTMASTER, SUPERVISORS, WINDOW CLERKS, REGISTRY CLERKS, BMEU CLERKS, BACKDOCK CLERKS, AND CONTRACT STATION MANAGERS

STATION/BRANCH: _____

ZIP CODE: _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING *REGISTERED* MAILPIECES IN A SECURE LOCATION FOR THE TEST.

DATE: ____/____/____

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT THE MANAGER, STATISTICAL PROGRAMS OR STATISTICAL PROGRAMS SPECIALIST.

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____

(This setup removed by Statistical Programs Personnel Only)

Exhibit C–1. Hold All Originating Registered Mailpieces

The following page may be used for duplicating this form.

CONSOLIDATED
ORIGINATING UNIT TEST

ATTENTION: **POSTMASTER, SUPERVISORS, WINDOW CLERKS, REGISTRY CLERKS, BMEU CLERKS, BACKDOCK CLERKS, AND CONTRACT STATION MANAGERS**

STATION/BRANCH: _____

ZIP CODE: __ __ __ __ __ - __ __ __ __

PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING *REGISTERED* MAILPIECES IN A SECURE LOCATION FOR THE TEST.

DATE: ____/____/____

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT THE MANAGER, STATISTICAL PROGRAMS OR STATISTICAL PROGRAMS SPECIALIST.

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____

(This setup removed by Statistical Programs Personnel Only)

CONSOLIDATED
ORIGINATING UNIT TEST

ATTENTION: POSTMASTER, SUPERVISORS, WINDOW CLERKS, REGISTRY CLERKS, BMEU CLERKS, BACKDOCK CLERKS, AND CONTRACT STATION MANAGERS

STATION/BRANCH: _____

ZIP CODE: __ __ __ __ __ - __ __ __ __

PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING *INSURED*, *COD* AND *CERTIFICATES OF MAILING* MAILPIECES IN THIS CONTAINER FOR THE TEST. ALSO HOLD REGISTERED MAILPIECES IN A SECURE LOCATION FOR THIS TEST.

DATE: ____/____/____

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT THE MANAGER, STATISTICAL PROGRAMS OR STATISTICAL PROGRAMS SPECIALIST.

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____

(This setup removed by Statistical Programs Personnel Only)

Exhibit C–2. Hold All Originating Insured, COD, and Certificates of Mailing Mailpieces

The following page may be used for duplicating this form.

CONSOLIDATED
ORIGINATING UNIT TEST

ATTENTION: **POSTMASTER, SUPERVISORS, WINDOW CLERKS, REGISTRY CLERKS, BMEU CLERKS, BACKDOCK CLERKS, AND CONTRACT STATION MANAGERS**

STATION/BRANCH: _____

ZIP CODE: __ __ __ __ __ - __ __ __ __

PLEASE HOLD ALL ORIGINATING *INSURED*, *COD* AND *CERTIFICATES OF MAILING* MAILPIECES IN THIS CONTAINER FOR THE TEST. ALSO HOLD REGISTERED MAILPIECES IN A SECURE LOCATION FOR THIS TEST.

DATE: ____/____/____

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT THE MANAGER, STATISTICAL PROGRAMS OR STATISTICAL PROGRAMS SPECIALIST.

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____

(This setup removed by Statistical Programs Personnel Only)

Consolidated Originating RPW Test

(This tag to be removed by Statistical Programs personnel only.)

Check Service:

☐ Insured ☐ COD ☐ Registered ☐ Certificate of Mailing

Domestic:

☐ First-Class ☐ Package Services

☐ Keys/ID Devices ☐ Parcel Post ☐ Media Mail

☐ Priority Mail ☐ Bound Printed Matter ☐ Library Mail

☐ Standard Mail

International: ☐ **Canada** ☐ **Other Countries**

☐ Air ☐ Parcel Post

☐ Economy ☐ Letter-post

Complete the Following as Applicable

	Dollars	Cents	Mills
1. Total Mailpiece Revenue *(including fees)*			
2. Insurance/COD/Registered Fees			
3. Enclosure Fees			
4. Special Services *(Enter revenue for each)*			
Delivery Confirmation			
Signature Confirmation			
Return Receipt			
Return Receipt for Merchandise			
Restricted Delivery			
Special Handling			
COD Collection Charge *(Registered Mail only)*			
Parcel Airlift Service			
5. Certificate of Mailing			
Individual Certificate *(Form 3817)*			
Duplicate Copy *(Form 3817)*			
Firm Mailing Book *(Form 3877)*			
Bulk Mailing Certificate *(Form 3606)*			
Duplicate Copy *(Bulk Form 3606)*			

PS Form **8126**, September 2001 *(Previous editions are obsolete)*

Exhibit C–3. Consolidated Originating RPW Test

Appendix D
Cutoff Time Examples

Appendix D provides data collection and cutoff time examples for 24-hour and Partial Day MEPs, and situations for covering mail on Monday's and days after a holiday. Data collection time is the time the data collector is on-site for the test, while the cutoff times define when the test begins and ends and what mail to include and exclude. Some of the examples describe situations where the data collector is on-site the entire time between beginning and ending cutoff times. Other examples, there is not this one-to-one correspondence. In either case, all mail within the cutoff times must be captured. Note that cutoff times are established in advance of the Postal Quarter and cannot change depending on such things as early or late-arriving dispatches.

I. 24 Hour MEP

Example 1a: The test is scheduled for the letter mail processing stream MEP for a facility on Thursday. There are no late morning or afternoon dispatches to this facility. The first dispatch arrives at the facility at 3:00 a.m., and the last dispatch arrives at 7:00 a.m. The cutoff time was set by the MSP at 10 a.m. to correspond to when the carriers usually depart from the facility to the street. The data collector should arrive at the facility in time to test the first dispatch of mail. The data collector finishes the test after testing the last dispatch of mail to the MEP.

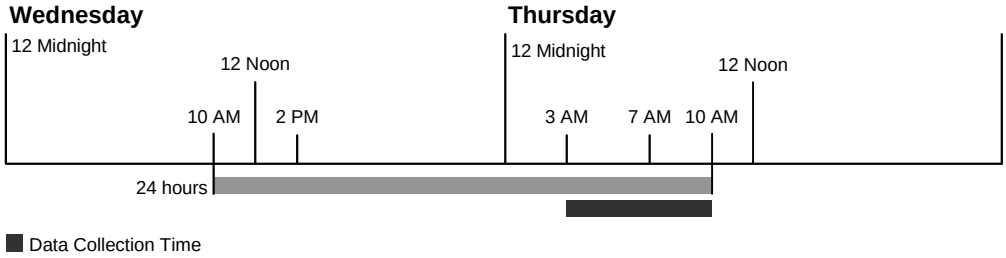

Exhibit D–1. Example 1a

Example 1b: The situation in example 1a applies in this case, with 2 exceptions:

1. There is an afternoon dispatch to the facility at 2:00 p.m. and this PM mail has the potential to be distributed prior to a data collector’s arrival on the test day.
2. There is no PM MEP for this facility.

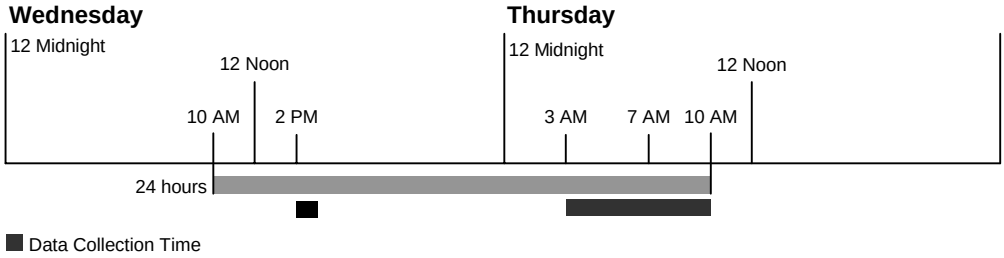

Exhibit D–2. Example 1b

Example 1c (DPS MEP): The test is scheduled for the DPS letter mail processing stream MEP for a facility on Thursday. There is only one dispatch of DPS mail to this facility at 8:00 a.m. The MSP set the cutoff time to 10 a.m. in case the DPS mail arrives later than 8 a.m. The data collector should arrive at the facility in time to test the DPS mail. The mail arrives at 8 a.m., and the data collector finishes the test after testing the DPS mail.

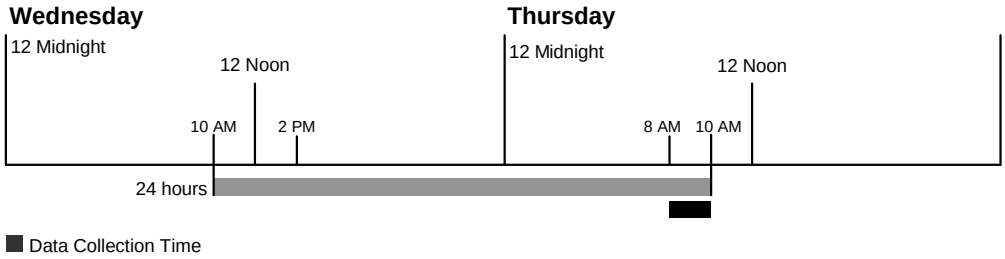

Exhibit D–3. Example 1c

II. Partial Day MEP

Example 2a (Partial Day MEP): In the partial day PM MEP scenario, the test is scheduled for the PM mail processing stream MEP for a facility on Thursday. The cutoff time was set by the MSP to 9 a.m. to correspond to the time the carriers normally leave the office to begin delivery, and 5 p.m. when the office closes. There is an afternoon dispatch at approximately 2:00 p.m. It is important to note that the test is conducted on the day **before** the test day, in this case, Wednesday.

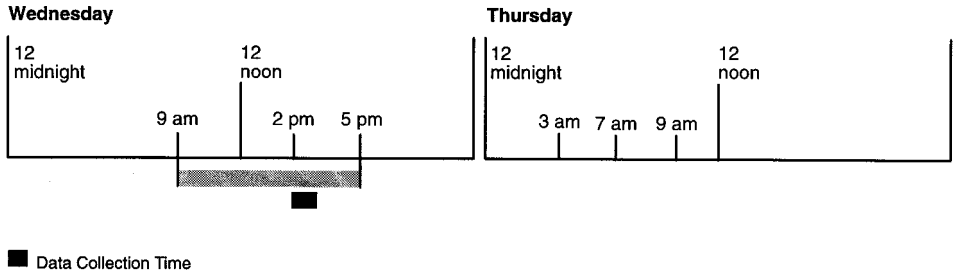

Exhibit D–4. Example 2a

Example 2b (Multi-tour MEP): In the partial day Multi-tour MEP scenario, the test is scheduled for the letter mail processing stream for a facility on Thursday. There are three tour MEPs for letter mail in a facility. The test is scheduled for **Tour 1**, which lasts from 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. In this case, the data collector arrives at the facility at 12:00 a.m. and samples the mail until 8:00 a.m., or the end of tour 1.

Also displayed are 2 MEPs covering Tours 2 and 3. Tour 2 lasts from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Tour 3 lasts from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. If these MEPs were scheduled for a test on Thursday, the data collector should arrive at the facility at 8:00 a.m. for Tour 2 and 4:00 p.m. for Tour 3 the day **before** the test day (i.e., Wednesday).

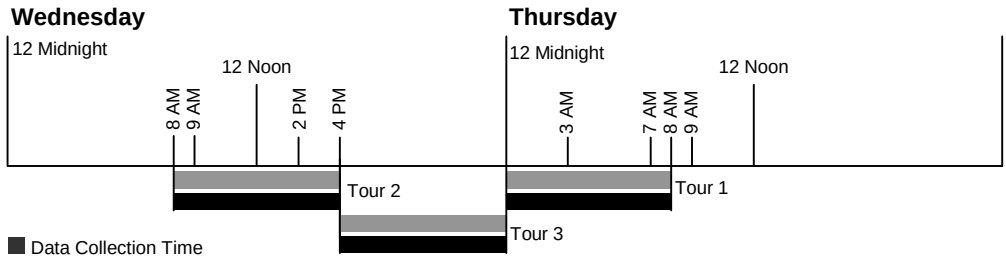

Exhibit D–5. Example 2b

III. Monday and Day After Holiday Test

Example 3: A Monday test is scheduled for a MEP defined as XYZ Design Corporation. The scheduled first distribution is 3:00 a.m., and the final distribution of the mail to the MEP unit is 7:00 a.m. The MSP set the cutoff time to 6 p.m. to correspond to when the lobby closes for mail pick-up. Mail for Saturday was available to the company until 6:00 p.m., but the company did not pick up the Saturday mail. Since Sunday is not considered a delivery day, you must include all mail from cutoff on the previous delivery day (Saturday). However, you must be careful to exclude mail that was available on Saturday. Since mail is not sorted all the time, it is only necessary to count mail during those periods when mail is sorted.

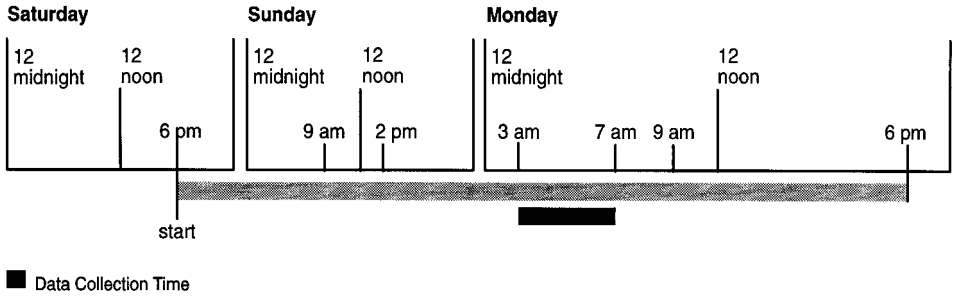

Exhibit D–6. Example 3

Example 4: The situation in Example 3 above applies here; however in this case a test is scheduled for Tuesday and Monday was a holiday. Since Monday was a holiday, it is not considered a delivery day. Thus, for a test on Tuesday, all mail made available since cutoff on the last delivery day, Saturday, must be included in the test on Tuesday. You must also be careful to exclude any mail that was available on Saturday before cutoff but not picked up by the customer.

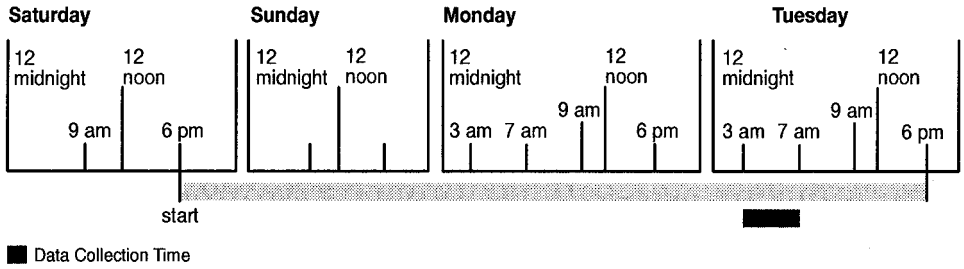

Exhibit D–7. Example 4

Appendix E
Recording Curtailed Mail with MEP Defined After Mail is Distributed to Delivery Units

The sampling location for some MEPs is in delivery units after upstream mail processing. For these MEPs, any First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail item which was delayed from delivery the previous day MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE FOR TESTING.

Example: You are performing an ODIS-RPW test on a carrier route (or cluster of carrier routes) and discover that there is a mail container set aside that was marked for delivery the *previous* day, and it contains First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail items. You consult the Postmaster about the mail and are told that the mail was unable to be delivered the day before; however, it is to be delivered on the current test day. You isolate *only* the First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail items from the mail that is set aside and include it with mail that has just arrived as part of the sample.

Note: The DCT has the option to enter comments about the specific session (i.e., “Curtailed First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail included for testing,” etc.) in a remarks field. The field is accessed prior to or after the test by selecting *Comment On Session*, or after recording mailpiece characteristics by pressing <F7>.

For all other MEPs the identification and recording of curtailed First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail items is not practical. These tests are conducted upstream within the mail flow, on mailpieces that are arriving on the test day either before or during the time that the mail is being distributed to the delivery units. These tests should not include any curtailed mail. Identification and sampling of any curtailed downstream mail would add too much time to the data collection process.

Example: You are performing an ODIS-RPW test using container subsampling on a MEP defined as *Letter-Shape Mail* for the entire facility. The physical location for testing the MEP is the area where the clerks and mailhandlers are distributing the mail to the delivery units. Clerks are pulling letter trays from an APC and walking them over to the carrier routes and the box section. The data collector is identifying which letter trays are to be set aside so that a mailpiece skip can be applied at the same point where the clerks are extracting the letter trays from the APC. Curtailed letter mail that is First-Class Mail and/or Priority Mail will be located further downstream at the delivery units and in some situations the mail may already be cased already. It is unreasonable to expect a data collector to include such mail in the sample from each delivery unit.

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Appendix F
CODES Laptop and Scale

Introduction

This appendix provides basic information and instructions for understanding and operating your CODES Laptop and scale. For information on how these items are used in conjunction with data entry procedure, see the appropriate data collection user's guide that corresponds to the tests or related tasks you perform.

I. CODES Laptop

Data collection technicians (DCTs) use laptop computers for data entry, online editing, automated test control, and the electronic transmission of statistical data to the CODES Web Base Unit. The data DCTs collect are transferred to the CODES Web Base Unit for final processing.

Before you attempt to perform any CODES testing, you should become acquainted with the laptop. This appendix provides information regarding some of the most basic parts and functions of your laptop. Please refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide for more explicit explanations regarding the laptop.

A. How the CODES Laptop Works

The laptop computer has a single purpose: to process data. The computer can sort and process data quickly. In seconds, the laptop computer can perform tasks accurately that may take people days or weeks and, accounting for human error, may not be as precise or as accurate.

The laptop computer can store data more conveniently and compactly than paper and pencil. Inside the laptop computer is internal memory that stores data while it is being sorted or used. This internal memory is called random access memory (RAM). RAM is a storage medium that loses its data once the system power is turned off. Therefore, if you must unexpectedly stop data recording, it is imperative that you follow the procedures for ending a CODES test and saving data. For information on ending a test and saving your data, see the appropriate data collection user's guide that corresponds to the tests or related tasks you perform.

The CODES Laptop itself is composed of many parts both basic and complex. Described below are the basic parts that make up your CODES Laptop. Before you attempt to perform a test or other related task, familiarize yourself with the following items and their relationship to CODES.

Liquid Crystal Display Screen

The Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screen is adjustable and should be set at an angle that provides for comfortable viewing. The screen display is a color monitor and permits the user to receive instructions and to view the information entered.

Keyboard

The keyboard allows the user to input test data. You should become familiar with the keyboard before you attempt to perform a test or other related task with your CODES Laptop.

The CODES Laptop keyboard consists of 87 keys and is equipped with the following features:

- **Function Keys:** The function keys are usually <F1> through <F12>, <Esc>, <PgUp>, and <PgDown>. These keys work in conjunction with the "Fn" key to perform special functions.
- **Alphabet and Number Keys:** The keyboard consists of alphabet keys (one for every letter of the alphabet) and numerical keys (0–9). These keys permit the user to input data.
- **Embedded Numeric Keypad:** Most laptop computers contain an embedded numeric keypad because of space limitations. *Embedded* means that the keypad is contained within the alphabet and number keys. In order to activate the embedded numeric keypad, the user must press the <Fn> key followed by the <Num Lock> or <Num Pad> key. To deactivate the keypad, press the <Num Lock> or <Num Pad> key again; the keys will revert to their normal function.
- **Control Keys:** The control keys for most laptop computers are <Ctrl>, <Alt>, <Fn>, and <Shift>. The aforementioned keys are used in conjunction with other keys to perform a specified function.

In addition to these standard keyboard features and function keys, you should also familiarize yourself with the many command/function keys CODES uses to collect data and perform related tasks. Table F–1 describes many of the common command/function keys used in CODES data entry programs:

Table F–1. CODES Laptop Command/Function Keys

Command/ Function Keys	Directions
<ESC>	Press the <Esc> key to quit the current function.
<F1>	Press <F1> to display the help file.
<ENTER>	CODES Laptop's designation for <Enter>. Use the <Enter> key whenever you see this.
<F3>	Press <F3> to clear selections whenever Clear <F3> is displayed.

For a comprehensive guide to the CODES tests please refer to the appropriate data collection user's guide for the tests or related tasks you perform.

Mouse or Pointing Device

Most laptop computers come equipped with some sort of pointing device. The majority of laptops currently in the field have a flat pad-like device located just below the keyboard. This device allows you to use your fingers to control the pointer on the screen by simply sliding them across the pad's surface. The left and right mouse buttons located below the pad operate the same as most desktop mouse buttons.

Disk Drive and Diskettes — Proper Handling

The standard disk drive for all CODES Laptops is a 3.5 inch 1.44 MB disk drive. The location of the disk drive will vary depending on the laptop. For more specific information on where the disk drive is located on the laptop, please refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide.

There are certain steps that you can take to protect your disk drive and the diskettes you use. Common sense is always the best tool, but listed below are some suggestions for disk drive care, diskette use, and storage:

- Never insert or remove a diskette when the drive light is on. Doing so can physically damage the diskette and render any information on that disk unreadable and therefore useless. (Please refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide for information regarding the location of the drive light.)
- Never force a diskette or other object into the disk drive.
- Do not slide the metal slide back and forth, this can allow dust and other foreign objects to come into contact with the diskette rendering it unreadable.
- Be sure to place the diskette into a cabinet or drawer when not in use.
- Diskettes should be protected from extreme temperatures.
- Take reasonable care to insure that diskettes are not exposed to magnetic or electromagnetic fields. This includes, but is not limited to, magnets, magnetic paper clips, telephones, x-ray machines, etc. These fields can erase a diskette.
- Always protect diskettes from smoke, dust, and moisture.

Power Supplies

The CODES Laptop is equipped with the following two separate power supplies:

- **AC Adapter:** The AC Adapter can be plugged into an electrical outlet to provide power for the laptop. Whenever possible, the AC adapter should be used.
- **Battery Packs:** The laptop comes equipped with a rechargeable battery pack. The battery pack is easy to install. The system can operate for approximately four hours with the rechargeable battery pack installed. The battery pack is the *second* power option and should not be the only power source used. The battery pack should be installed in case AC power is lost. Use this option alone ONLY IF there is no AC power source available. Please refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide for more information and instructions on recharging the battery pack. Always make sure that your battery pack is fully charged before use.

Software

The laptop computer is referred to as hardware, and the instructions that tell the computer what to do are called *software*. These instructions, when grouped together to do a specific job such as collecting data, are called *application programs*.

The application programs that you will be working with are data entry programs. The data entry programs provide you with a series of menus that prompt you to input information that satisfies the test data entry requirements. For more information about the application programs you normally use, refer to the appropriate data collection user's guide that corresponds to the tests or related tasks you perform.

B. Caring for Your CODES Laptop

As with any electronic equipment, there are certain precautions you can take to preserve the integrity of the laptop. Common sense is the best tool for keeping the laptop in top shape. The following is a short and by no means complete list of things you can do to help prevent damage to the laptop:

- Keep the battery away from excessive heat sources, such as direct sunlight, fire, hot car in the summer, etc.
- Do not disassemble the battery.
- Do not disassemble the laptop (doing so will void the warranty).
- Do not use a damaged battery.
- Only use batteries that are specified in the manufacturer’s user's guide.
- Keep the battery away from sources of water.
- Do not use a frayed or otherwise damaged power supply.
- Do not place heavy weights or objects on the laptop.
- It is extremely important that you are conscious of the power source voltage (only use 120 volt AC power sources).
- Do not eat or drink in the vicinity of the laptop.
- Never use an abrasive cleaning agent on the display of the laptop.
- Never use harsh cleaning agents on the case or any other portion of the laptop.
- Avoid dropping the laptop.
- Avoid dropping the AC Adapter.
- Avoid dropping the battery.

For more information regarding care of your laptop, as well as storage requirements and routine cleaning suggestions, refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide.

C. What to Do if the Laptop Power Source Fails

Most CODES programs save data while you are conducting the test, such as after completing a mailpiece recording, or at the completion of the test or test session. However, unsaved data at the time of a power loss must be rekeyed. For example, if you are conducting an ODIS-RPW test and a power loss occurs during the entry of a mailpiece, you must re-key that mailpiece once you re-enter the test software. Use the following procedures to resume a test and recover data after an AC power or battery failure.

If the laptop stops working due to an *AC power* failure, perform the following steps:

1. Re-establish the power to the laptop by either inserting a charged battery or correcting the AC power problem (e.g., reconnect AC power supply, etc.).
2. Press the power button on the laptop to re-start the laptop.
3. Re-enter the software for the test you were conducting via the CODES menu, and watch for a message that indicates if data are on the hard drive and resume the test.

If the laptop stops working while operating on *battery power* or enters *suspend mode* and the screen goes black, perform the following:

1. Do not remove the battery from the laptop.
2. Properly connect the AC power adapter to the laptop.
3. Press the power button on the side of the laptop and watch for a message that indicates if data are on the hard drive.
4. Resume the test where you left off before the power failure.

Note: If you remove the battery, the laptop may not resume the test where it left off. If this happens you must perform the steps for recovering after an AC power failure to resume the test.

II. CODES Scale

Data collection technicians (DCTs) use electronic scales in conjunction with laptop computers to collect accurate weight data on test mailpieces. You should become acquainted with the CODES scale before you attempt to use it in testing. This section provides information regarding some of the most basic parts and functions of the CODES Scale and how its proper calibration is essential to accurate weight measurement.

A. How the CODES Scale Works

Except for a few differences, the CODES Scale operates much like any other electronic scale. The scale uses a built-in computer to measure, balance, and compute the weight of objects placed on the weighing platter and then transfers these data to the CODES Laptop via a serial input/output (I/O) port connection. CODES then processes these data and displays the weight reading on the LCD laptop screen.

B. Installing the CODES Scale

The CODES Scale connects easily to the CODES Laptop via a serial I/O port. To install the CODES Scale, perform the following steps:

1. Before you begin installing the scale, make sure that the serial cable is securely connected to the CODES Scale.
2. With the back of the laptop facing you, view the rear access panel for a series of computer port connections.
3. Connect the female end of the serial cable to the male serial I/O port on the CODES Laptop. Verify that all connections are secure.
4. Plug the CODES Scale's AC power cord into an AC power outlet and turn the power switch on the right-hand side of the scale ON.

The CODES Scale is now ready to weigh mailpieces and transfer data to the CODES Laptop.

Always connect the CODES Scale to the CODES Laptop *before* you begin a test, or the scale will not work. In addition, always make sure before you begin a test that the scale is properly balanced and calibrated according to the procedure outlined in subsection C.

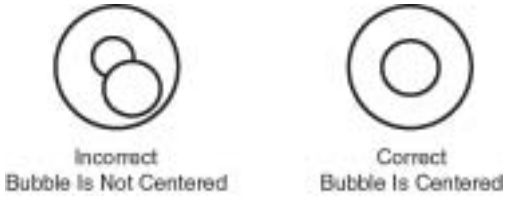
C. Leveling and Calibrating the CODES Scale

To ensure accurate weight recordings, always level the scale before you begin a test. Also, calibrate the scale (Toledo Model No. 8571 only) at least once per month.

To level your scale, perform the following steps:

1. Place both the CODES Scale and Laptop on a flat level surface.
2. Connect the CODES Scale to the CODES Laptop as indicated in subsection B.
3. Unplug the CODES Scale's AC power supply from the AC power outlet.
4. Remove the weighing platter by lifting upward and locate the level bubble.

You may adjust the feet on the bottom of the scale base by turning them in or out. First, adjust the feet so that the scale does not rock. Then, using the leveling "bubble" as a guide, adjust the scale's feet until the water bubble stops moving and is centered within the circle. You may need to move the scale to another location in order to find a level surface. Once the scale is level, continue with step 6.



Replace the weighing platter, plug in the CODES Scale's AC power supply and turn the scale ON.

To calibrate your scale (Toledo Model No. 8571 only), perform the following:

1. With the CODES Scale ON, press <0> on the scale's keyboard to zero the scale. An (*) will appear at the far left of the scale's display indicating that the scale is zeroed.
2. Using the standardized weights included with the scale, calibrate the scale. Start with the first weight increment and place it on the weighing platter. Observe the value that appears on the scale's display. If the value displayed is incorrect, remove the sample weight and press <0> again. Re-weigh the standardized weight until the proper value is displayed. Repeat this process with your other standardized weights to ensure that all values are correct. If the scale will not calibrate, continue the test with a different scale and contact your MSP later for repair instructions.
3. Remove the standardized weights and verify that the scale's display returns to zero weight.

If you are using Toledo Model No. PS6L, the scale is sealed and may only be calibrated by authorized personnel. For more information, consult your MSP.

D. Caring for Your CODES Scale

As with any electronic equipment, you can take certain precautions to preserve the integrity of the scale. Common sense is the best tool for keeping the scale in top shape. The following is a short and by no means complete list of things you can do to help prevent damage to the scale:

- Keep the scale away from excessive heat sources, such as direct sunlight, fire, hot car in the summer, etc.
- Do not disassemble the scale.
- Keep the scale away from sources of water.
- Do not use a frayed or otherwise damaged power cord or connection cable.
- Do not place excessively heavy weights or objects on the scale.
- Do not eat or drink in the vicinity of the scale.
- Never use an abrasive cleaning agent on any part of the scale.

- Never use harsh cleaning agents on the case or any other portion of the scale.
- Avoid dropping the scale.

For more information regarding care of your scale as well as storage requirements and routine cleaning suggestions, refer to the specific manufacturer's user's guide.

III. CODES Equipment Security

The CODES Laptop and Scale are valuable, full function pieces of computer equipment. As such, they are prime candidates for theft. Always take reasonable precautions to secure your CODES equipment when you leave your work area or while out in a public place. Never leave your equipment unattended in public.

As an additional precaution, make sure to record all the associated serial numbers that accompany your equipment, in case of theft or loss. This information greatly assists Statistical Programs and other Postal Service organizations in locating and retrieving lost and stolen equipment.

IV. Conclusion

This appendix is an overview and should be used in conjunction with your specific laptop and scale manufacturer's user's guides. For more precise information on CODES test programs, refer to the appropriate data collection user’s guide that corresponds to the tests or related tasks you perform.

Appendix G
Operating Policies

Introduction

This appendix provides guidelines for the manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) for administering ODIS-RPW tests. This appendix covers the policies for scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, and zero volume ODIS-RPW tests, management involvement in statistical programs tests, data security and integrity, and training and process review.

I. Scheduling Tests

The MSP accesses the ODIS-RPW sample file on the CODES Web Base Unit. The sample file contains the sampled MEP information and scheduled test dates. The MSP or designee assigns data collectors to conduct the tests and have them download the sample to the laptop.

II. Rescheduling, Canceling, Delinquent, and Zero Volume Tests

It is the MSP's responsibility to ensure that all ODIS-RPW tests are conducted as originally scheduled. Rescheduling tests is not an optional procedure, and must not be used as a means of managing data collection resources. Every effort must be made to conduct ODIS-RPW tests as originally scheduled. The MSP is required to keep a pool of trained data collectors (i.e., DCTs, cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc.). When scheduling problems arise, such as routine lack of trained data collectors, the MSP must reevaluate staffing requirements, employee work schedules, and MEP designs. The MSP must then make the necessary changes that will correct any scheduling problems. If help is needed in any of the above areas, contact your Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC).

Note: Adequate backup personnel should be trained and ready in case of unexpected absences. Employee illness is not justification for missing an ODIS-RPW test.

If circumstances are such that the rescheduling or canceling of a test cannot be avoided, follow the procedures in this appendix.

It is the MSP's responsibility to maintain the status of ODIS-RPW tests on the CODES WEB Base Unit. This includes rescheduling, canceling, delinquent, and zero volume status. The reason for rescheduling and canceling must also be coded.

A. Situations Requiring Tests to be Rescheduled

The MSP is required to review all tests prior to approving the data for release to the mainframe. MSPs should take special care to identify any test with missing or incorrect data or other evidence that requires tests to be rescheduled. In the following situations, the ODIS-RPW test is to be rescheduled:

- The test is incomplete due to missing a substantial amount of mail (e.g., missing a complete dispatch of mail or missing bypass mail).
- The test was taken on the wrong MEP (e.g., letter mail processing stream instead of flat mail processing stream, etc.).
- Included or excluded a substantial amount of mail in error.
- There was an equipment failure (e.g., the CODES Laptop failed during a test and you were unable to complete the test, etc.).
- No trained data collector to take the test.
- The test was not taken.
- Extraordinary weather or environmental conditions (see section F. below).
- Test data was corrupt and not recoverable by CODES Support.

If resources are not available to reschedule the test, call your SPSC.

B. Rescheduling Procedures

ODIS-RPW tests are critical to transit time analysis, performance measurement systems, flex budgeting process, and the rate setting process. Analyses of historical revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems data show that mail class volumes by day of the week are significantly different. Therefore, rescheduling a test to a different day of the week may either overestimate or underestimate some classes of mail. Every attempt must be made to conduct tests as originally scheduled.

If a test needs to be rescheduled, the MSP must reschedule it as follows:

- For the same day of the week and within the same month in which the test was originally scheduled.
- If a test that is scheduled for the last week of the month needs to be rescheduled, reschedule it to the same day of the week in the first week of the next month.
- If a test that is scheduled during the last 7 days of the quarter needs to be rescheduled, it may be rescheduled to any day within the last 7 days of the quarter.
- If a test cannot be rescheduled in the preferred manner, try to reschedule the test so as to avoid an administrative canceled test.

Note: Ensure that the rescheduled test does not result in an "empty cell" that results when no tests are taken in a group or strata of MEPs within a sample area or plant (P&DC).

- Do not reschedule a test to a day that would result in another test being rescheduled.
- Do not reschedule tests to the Quarterly Training Day.

C. Canceling Procedures

The MSP must avoid cancellations whenever possible. The CODES Web Base Unit software provides two types of test cancellations: Unit No Longer Exists and Administrative. It is important to select the correct option because the inflation factors are adjusted differently for each option. Select the correct option as outlined below:

- **Unit No Longer Exists:** Use this canceling option whenever a MEP or COU unit no longer exists. Record this type of cancellation as a *unit no longer exists* cancellation. If the MEP/COU has been changed in the MEP System after the sample selection was generated for the quarter, continue to take the test based on how the MEP/COU unit had been listed at the time the sample selection was generated.
- **Administrative:** Use this canceling option whenever a test cannot be taken or rescheduled within the aforementioned rescheduling guidelines. Record any such cancellation as an *administrative* cancel.

D. Delinquent Tests

A delinquent test is a test that has not been approved (either not taken, or taken but not approved). A test that cannot be taken or rescheduled within the aforementioned rescheduling guidelines is to be canceled using the *administrative* cancel option. The MSP must review the reasons for delinquent tests, correct the causes, and reschedule the test if necessary.

E. Zero Volume Tests

A zero volume test is a test on a MEP or COU for which there was no mail volume on the day of the test. A zero volume test is reported on the CODES Web Base Unit. Typically, MEPs and COUs should be designed as large as possible to minimize the occurrence of zero volume tests. The MSP must review the reason for the zero volume test to determine if a change in MEP design is warranted.

F. Extraordinary Weather or Environmental Conditions

To protect the validity of the systems and not introduce bias, tests must be taken as scheduled even when there are extraordinary weather or environmental conditions. The general rule is that if a unit scheduled to be tested has mail available for delivery, then that mail must be tested. If the data collector cannot get to the test location, the test must be rescheduled. If the unit to be tested has no mail available for delivery on the day of the test, then a zero volume test is submitted. If you test a unit on a day after the occurrence of an extraordinary weather or environmental event, the test must include all mail from the ending cutoff time of the day before the test day through the cutoff time of the test day (test day mail).

Example: After cutoff time on June 9, severe weather results in the flooding of your city; no mail is processed or is available for delivery on June 9 when MEP Unit A is scheduled to be tested. Complete the test by following the procedures for submitting a zero volume test. On June 10, MEP Unit B is to be tested but operations have yet to resume and no mail is available for delivery. Again, submit a zero volume test. On June 11, MEP Unit C is to be tested and operations have resumed. All mail for this unit received since the ending cutoff time June 10 through the ending cutoff time June 11 must be included in the test. The volume for this test will be large since it includes all mail held upstream.

The MSP should contact their SPSC if in doubt about the application of these guidelines to the specific situation.

III. Management Involvement in Statistical Programs Tests

Trained non-craft employees may be used to conduct statistical programs tests when: (a) No trained craft employees are within a 3-hour round-trip travel time to the test site, or (b) if trained cadre/ad hoc data collectors are not available because they are already assigned to other Statistical Programs work such as testing, training, or monitoring.

Note: The trained non-craft employee must be available at the test site or within a 3-hour round trip travel to the test site.

IV. Data Security and Integrity

Since accurate and consistent data collection is important, there are several rules all statistical programs personnel must follow in order to ensure that the data are accurate and free from bias or any other kind of tampering. This section outlines and explains specific rules and policies for securing data.

A. Test Notification

Always notify the facility to be tested 24 hours prior to any testing. Advance test notification should never be given more than 24 hours prior to the cutoff time that signals the start of the test. However, only a minimum sufficient time needed to isolate the mail for the test should be given.

B. Test Data Review

ODIS-RPW test data are to be reviewed prior to approving it for headquarters processing. For every test perform the following steps:

1. **Summary and Test Detail Reports Review.**

   Summary Report: The following information is contained in this report.

Skip Interval Summary: A report that shows the skip intervals used by each data collector and number of pieces.

Review the report for the following:

- Data collector IDs recorded correctly (each data collector must use their own ID).
- Skips that are not consistent with what the data collector(s) actually used.
- Number of pieces entered that are not consistent with what the data collector(s) entered.
- Total pieces that are not consistent with the test day volume.

Volume Summary: This report shows test volume by class and shape. Whenever possible, compare these volumes with previous tests on this same MEP.

Review the report for the following:

- Shape volumes not consistent with MEP (for example, a significant amount of letters in a parcel test).
- Class volumes not consistent with MEP (for example, Parcel Post in letters only test).
- Shape volumes inconsistent with class volumes (for example, a significant amount of letters for the periodicals class).
- Differences in volume compared against previous tests for the same MEP.

Reference Volume Analysis: Shows test volume by shape, corresponding reference volume, and indicates large discrepancies between the two by displaying three asterisks (***). Generally, asterisks appear when shape volume from the test and its corresponding reference volume vary by a factor of three or more.

Review the large discrepancies (***) very closely. They indicate the following:

- Legitimate differences caused by normal daily volume fluctuations. Remember, the reference volume is an average, and the test may be unusually heavy or light in volume on that day.
- Legitimate differences for small reference volume mail shapes. For example, flats on a letter test occur occasionally in a letter mail stream test. Combined with large skip intervals, the flat test volume could be much larger than the flat reference volume.
- Potential problems of testing the wrong MEP, including mail from other MEPs or excluding mail normally included in this MEP.
- Skip intervals entered incorrectly (e.g., used one interval, but then keyed in a different one).

High Proportion of First-Class Mail Single Piece Flats to Flat Reference Volume: Prints a report when First-Class Mail single piece flat test volume is more than 30 percent of the current MEP System flat reference volume for that MEP. Review this particular test closely; especially when the MEP is normally not expected to receive this large a proportion of First-Class Mail single piece flat mail volume. This report can indicate:

- Legitimate volumes — that is, MEPs with a high proportion of First-Class Mail single piece flat mail defined around a business(es), BRM mail MEPs, and MEPs in business districts receiving predominantly First-Class Mail.
- Out-of-date reference volumes.
- Substitution of First-Class Mail containers for other mail containers or pieces.
- Skip intervals entered incorrectly (used one interval, but then keyed in a different one).

Test Report Detail: This report shows detailed information about each laptop entry.

Potential uses are many, including such things as identifying possible revenue entry errors, missing special services, indicia not consistent with the type of test, MIP entry errors, etc.

2. **Reconcile all flags on these reports by communicating with everyone involved (e.g., MSP, DCT, etc.).**
3. **Records discovered incorrect:** The MSP has the option to modify an entry or entries. If the specific field or record cannot be modified, contact your SPSC and provide the relevant information regarding the incorrect fields and records. An audit trail is maintained for changes to record entries.
4. **Tests taken in error:**

   Before Approval: Delete all sessions and reschedule the test. Upload the rescheduled test, and approve after review.

   After Approval: Remove the approved status, delete all sessions, and reschedule the test. Upload the rescheduled test, and approve after review.

   Audit records are kept of all status changes.

C. Prohibition Against the Release of National or Subnational Test Data

Data printouts containing actual volumes and/or actual service achievement information or any other national or subnational data are not to be distributed outside of the Postal Service without the written authorization of Statistical Programs. This information is proprietary and must remain guarded at all times.

D. Use of Proper Equipment in Testing

All ODIS-RPW tests must be taken on the CODES Laptop with a functioning scale attached. All data must be recorded directly on the CODES Laptop. Manual worksheets are not to be used to record test data.

E. Uploading of Test Data from CODES Laptop to CODES Web Base Unit

All ODIS-RPW tests must be uploaded to the CODES Web Base Unit immediately after completion of the test. Duplicating completed tests before disk transfer or transmission of the raw data to other than the CODES Web Base Unit is prohibited. Only Statistical Programs personnel should handle diskettes and laptops containing test data.

F. CODES Equipment Security

CODES equipment is exclusively for the use of approved Headquarters Statistical Programs activities. Portable computers may be a target for theft; they must be stored in a locked area when not in use. If the data collector leaves the work area, they must always take precautions to secure the CODES Laptop and other equipment. Passwords must only be issued to authorized Statistical Programs personnel.

G. Prohibition Against Duplicate Recording of Mailpieces

Mailpiece data are to be entered immediately into the CODES Laptop. Recording mailpiece information on a separate worksheet or log is prohibited. After entering mailpiece data into the CODES Laptop, the sampled pieces are to be immediately returned to the unit from which they were taken. When returning mailpieces to the mailstream, be sure that mailpieces are replaced in such a way as to avoid delivery delay. If the data collector is uncertain about how to return them, the mailpieces should be given to a supervisor or to a knowledgeable employee. Only the trained data collector conducting a test is permitted to examine the test pieces, except for the personnel listed in the next section.

H. Prohibition Against Over-the-Shoulder Monitoring

Over-the-shoulder monitoring of a test is limited to the following personnel:

- MSP.
- Statistical Programs Specialist (SPS).
- SPSC personnel.
- Headquarters and Headquarters-authorized personnel.
- Postal Inspection Service.
- Postal Service independent auditors and Office of Inspector General (OIG) personnel.

Over-the-shoulder monitoring of tests by any other individuals is considered a serious compromise of the integrity of the systems and is prohibited. However, notwithstanding the policy stated above, MSPs may still partner with authorized management improvement teams to identify mail processing problems.

I. Prohibition Against Other Personnel Hindering a Data Collector from Conducting a Test

Nonauthorized personnel (section H.) outside of Statistical Programs are prohibited from hindering the data collector from collecting, isolating, or sampling the mail to be tested. Anyone's direct or indirect interference in the data collection process seriously compromises the independence and integrity of the systems. Avoid even the perception of interference. However, this prohibition should not be construed to mean that other personnel such as local management are to have no contact. Data collectors should maintain good working relationships with local managers and supervisors to ensure data integrity. Data collectors must contact the manager, supervisor, or designee at the MEP unit to be briefed on where the mail to be tested can be found.

J. Necessity for Data Collection Personnel

Only a trained data collector under the direction of Statistical Programs is permitted to conduct a test. All other personnel are strictly prohibited from conducting a test.

V. Training and Process Review

Statistical Programs recognizes the need to support and promote quality data collection. In its attempt to maintain the quality of data collection, Headquarters has established policies regarding training and process review for all data collection personnel on all statistical programs. This section outlines the specific policies and discusses the tools to support it.

A. Training

- Only trained personnel may conduct a statistical programs test in any of the domestic and international revenue, volume, performance measurement, and cost programs. Only trained personnel may be used to isolate mail for testing, select sample containers and pieces, and record test data, including isolating the mail and selecting containers and test pieces for recording later by a trained data collector.
- Each quarter, every district must conduct at least one day of statistical programs training for DCTs, cadre, ad hoc, and backup data collectors. Station, AO, or mail processing personnel who isolate and tag mail for sampling, or who are IOCS telephone readings respondents should receive any relevant update information provided during the quarterly training. To facilitate accomplishment of this training, districts have the option of rescheduling or not conducting all statistical programs tests for one day each postal quarter. If a district decides not to conduct statistical programs tests for a day to conduct comprehensive training, the The

manager of Statistical Programs (MSP), must adhere strictly to the guidelines provided each quarter with the nontraining days report (available on the Statistical Programs web site) showing the days “blocked out” as a test sensitive day. Selection of any training day must be coordinated through your Statistical Programs Service Center, if tests will be rescheduled or not conducted. Those ODIS-RPW tests not rescheduled are to be canceled using the *administrative* cancel option.

- All new data collectors are to be taught the Process Activated Training System (PATS) processes for a specific statistical program prior to conducting a test on their own in that program. For example, new ODIS-RPW data collectors, cadre or ad hoc as well as full-time, are to be taught the PATS ODIS-RPW processes before they conduct an ODIS-RPW test. The ODIS-RPW Data Collector Training Program and the ODIS-RPW Cadre Data Collector Training Program, which are posted on the Training section in the Statistical Programs Field Support (SPFS) section of the Statistical Programs web site, provide guidelines to managers and trainers on the training of new data collectors in ODIS-RPW. In the future, a recommended training curriculum will be developed for each of the other statistical programs.
- All data collector training must be entered into the National Training Database (NTD).

B. Data Collector Process Review

Headquarters has established a minimum requirement for data collector process reviews. The intent is to provide the MSP the flexibility to conduct data collector process reviews more frequently for those data collectors who require it. Every person involved with collecting statistical programs data is to be reviewed on all processes he/she regularly performs. Included are DCTs, cadre, ad hoc, and backup data collectors. The minimum requirement is as follows:

- A data collector with less than one year of experience in a program is to be reviewed at least twice during the first year in that program.
- A data collector with more than one year of experience in a program is to be reviewed at least once during the fiscal year in that program.

C. Administration Process Review

The manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) is to perform a self-audit of the administrative procedures used in the statistical programs unit at least once each fiscal year. If the district has a subordinate unit with statistical programs administrative responsibilities, then the subordinate unit should also be reviewed at least once each fiscal year.

D. Frame Review

When a data collector review is conducted, the frame for the facility (MEP) where the data collector review is conducted is to be reviewed.

E. Process Review Tools

There are three tools — a Process Review Guide, the Process Support and Tracking System, and Planning Process Review forms.

- **Process Review Guide:** This guide provides information on how to conduct process reviews.
- **Process Support and Tracking System (PSTS):** MSPs are required to use PS Form 1444 (A-P), *Statistical Programs Process Review*. These forms may be found in PSTS, which is used for administering the Process Review Program. These forms can be downloaded and reprinted locally or used as Excel spreadsheets. Once a process review is completed, the results must be entered in PSTS. Entry is to be completed within 5 business days after the close of the quarter. PSTS also provides reports to be generated on a quarterly basis and used to identify training opportunities. PSTS can be accessed on the Statistical Programs Home Page in the SPFS area under Assessment. A PSTS user's guide is available on the PSTS page.
- **Planning Process Reviews:** MSPs are required to maintain data collector training records and process review planning schedules. The following two forms may be useful:
  - PS Form 8215, *Statistical Programs Employee Training Profile*, is available as an aid for the MSPs in tracking a data collector's training. However, its use is not required.
  - PS Form 8216, *Statistical Programs Planning Calendar for Process Review*, is available as an aid for MSPs in planning their process reviews; however, its use is not required.

Note: If the training profile or planning calendar is not used, then some locally designed record or system must be used to track this information.

Appendix H
Video Ink Jet Cancellations and Other Video Ink Jet Uses

Introduction

The Postal Service and various mailers use video ink jet technology to apply cancellations, spray barcodes, indicate or change presort level, show drop shipment, and print requests for special services. Although the technology used by the Postal Service and its customers are similar, there are rules that differentiate how Postal Service-applied and mailer-applied Video Ink Jet Cancellations (VIJCs) are recorded in ODIS-RPW tests.

This appendix describes each of these types of uses and the different rules governing them. Section I explains VIJCs and the rules for recording them. Section II explains VIJCs used with drop shipped metered mail and stamp mail and the rules for recording them. Section III explains other video ink jet uses and the rules for recording them. If you have any additional questions, contact your MSP.

A VIJC quick reference guide, which includes a decision flow diagram for Postal Service-applied VIJCs, can be found at the back of this appendix.

I. VIJCs and Recording Instructions

There are both Postal Service-applied and mailer-applied VIJCs. It is very important that the DCT be able to recognize *who* applied the cancellation and the elements that make up a valid VIJC.

A. Postal-Applied VIJCs

A valid Postal Service-applied VIJC for ODIS-RPW testing purposes must have the minimum following characteristics:

1. A valid cancellation date (cancellation time is not required), and
2. Only one 3-digit ZIP Code and/or P&DC designation and/or city/state.

Exhibit H–1 shows examples of valid P&DC designation, including city, state, and 3-digit ZIP Codes; OCR designation; time of VIJC; and date of VIJC are displayed in the VIJC.

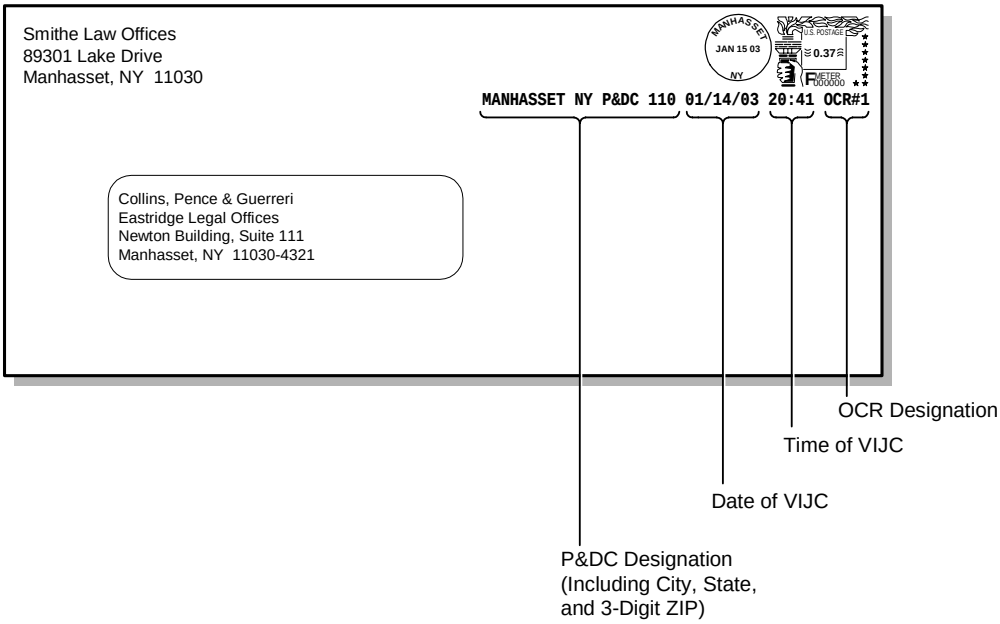


Exhibit H–1. Example of Valid VIJC P&DC Designation, Date of VIJC, Time of VIJC, and OCR Designation

Exhibits H–1a through H–1c depict *valid* Postal Service-applied VIJCs.

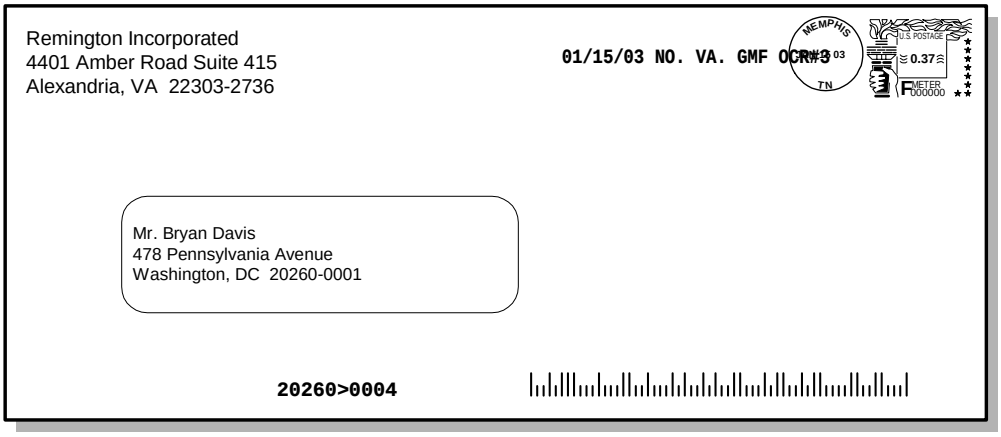


Exhibit H–1a. Valid Postal Service-applied VIJC

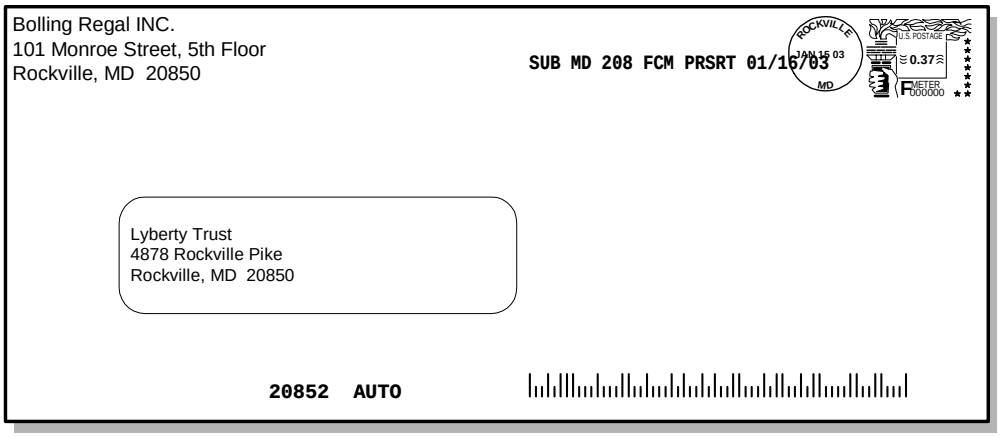


Exhibit H–1b. Valid Postal Service-applied VIJC

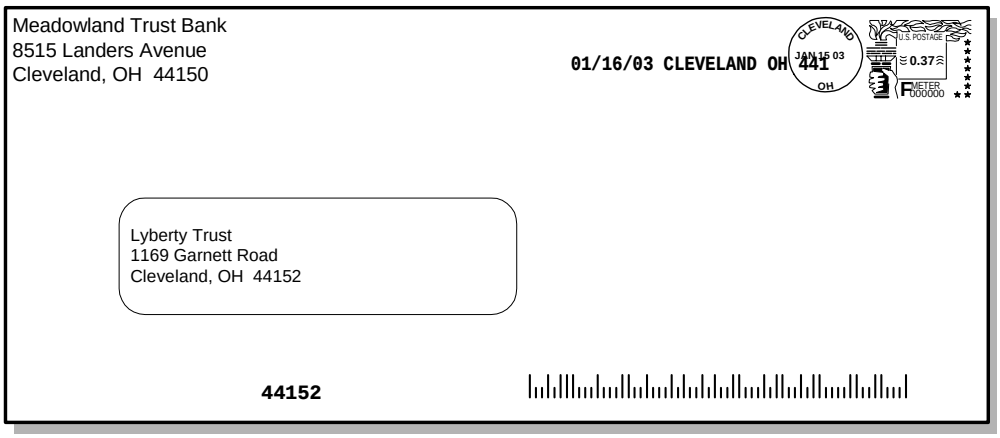


Exhibit H–1c. Valid Postal Service-applied VIJC

B. Invalid Postal Service-applied VIJCs

Invalid VIJCs do not contain sufficient data to apply the “both inside or both outside” cancellation rules or involve multiple service standards. Exhibits H–1d and H–1e depict invalid VIJCs.

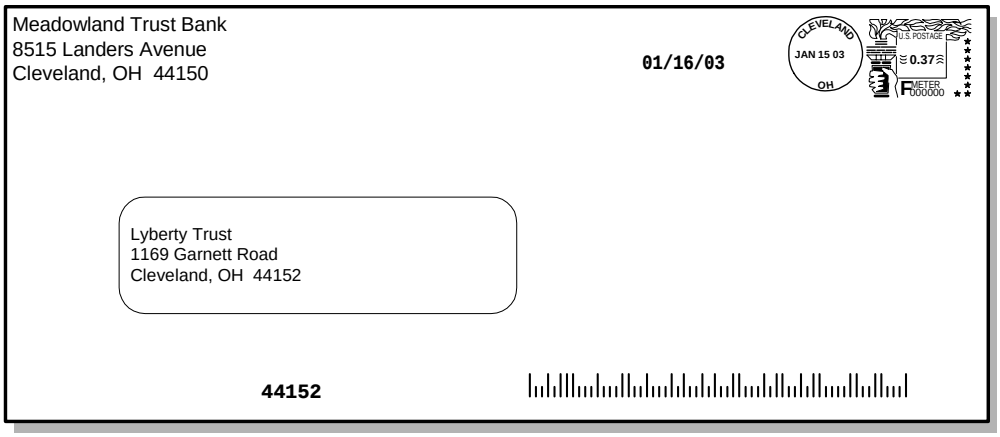


Exhibit H–1d. Invalid Postal Service-applied VIJC

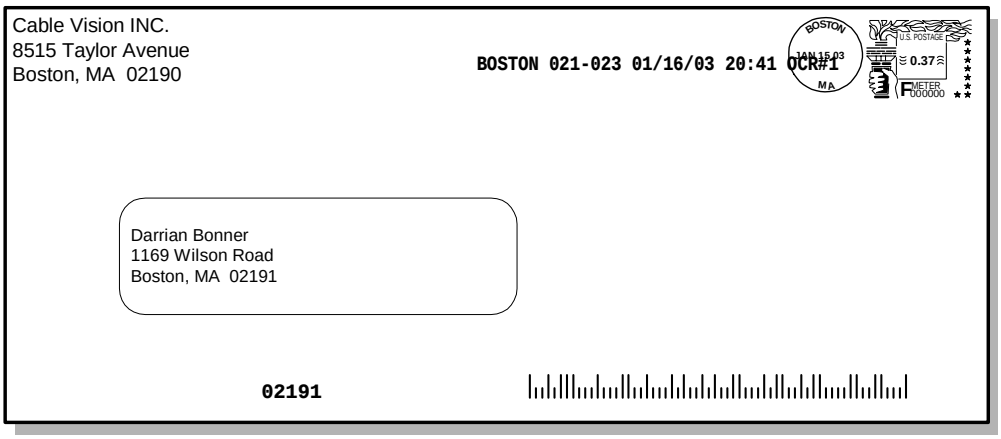


Exhibit H–1e. Invalid Postal Service-applied VIJC

C. Mailer-applied VIJC

The Postal Service allows mailers to use the video ink jet technology to correct their stale meter dates and thus eliminate the need to meter their mail with zero postage and a correct meter date. A mailer-applied VIJC is normally used to correct a stale meter date and, according to DMM P030.10.1a (issue 57), must have the following characteristics:

1. The text of the cancellation is preceded by two asterisks. (In addition, there may be two asterisks at the end of the text.)
2. The VIJC shows the actual date of deposit.
3. The VIJC shows the city, state, and 3-digit ZIP Code of the mailing office.
4. The VIJC is located above the address block and below the meter impression.

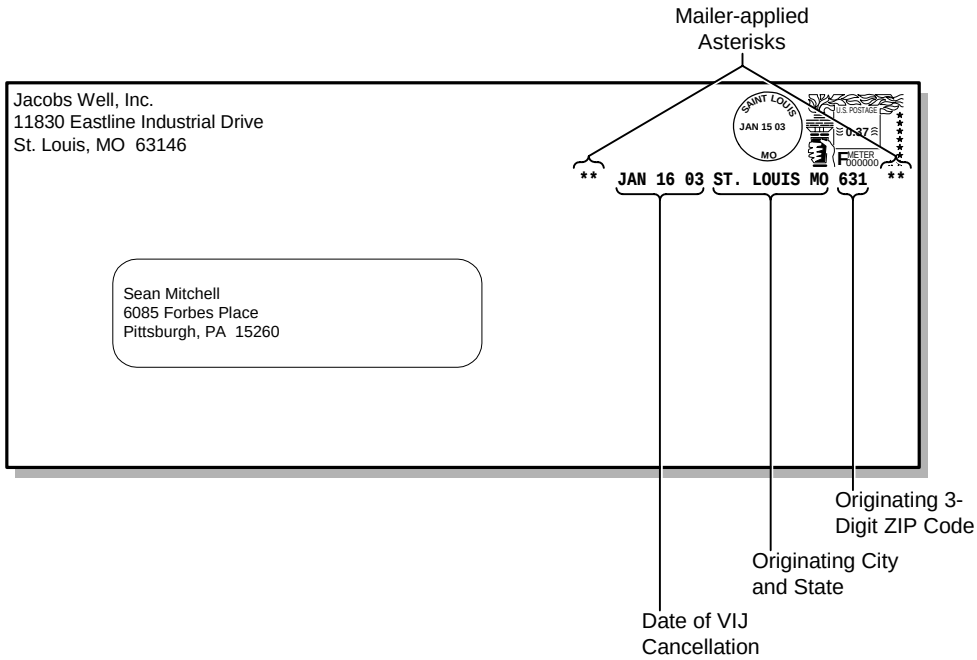


Exhibit H–2. Mailer-applied VIJC

D. Instructions for Recording Postal-applied VIJCs

For metered mail that has been overcanceled or ring stamped or has a valid VIJC, the data collector *must* record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin data from the *earliest* cancellation mark or ring stamp subject to the following conditions:

- If the meter and the cancellation (including a valid VIJC) are both from within your mail processing area, you *must* take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest over-cancellation or the valid VIJC (Exhibit H–3).

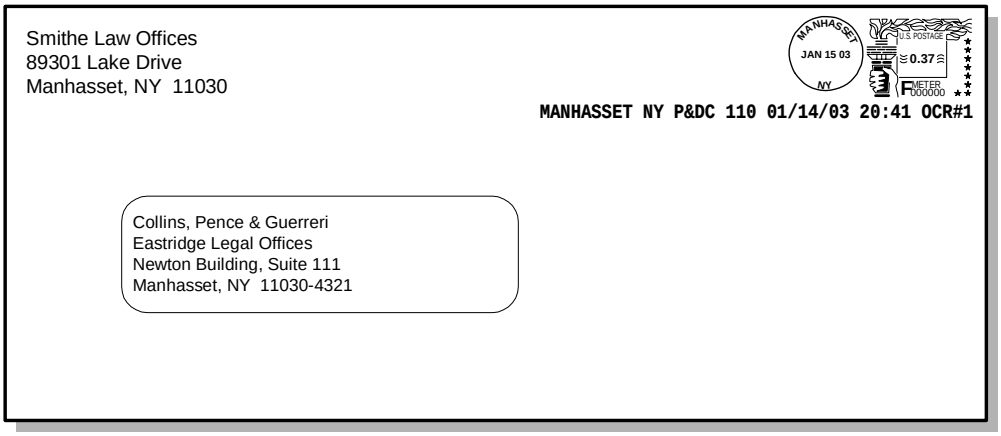


Exhibit H–3. Meter and Cancellation *Both within* Processing Area (Postal Service-applied VIJC)

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/14/03
	PMARK ORIGIN: 110

- If the meter and the cancellation (including VIJC) are both from outside your mail processing area, you *must* take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest over-cancellation or VIJC (Exhibit H–4).

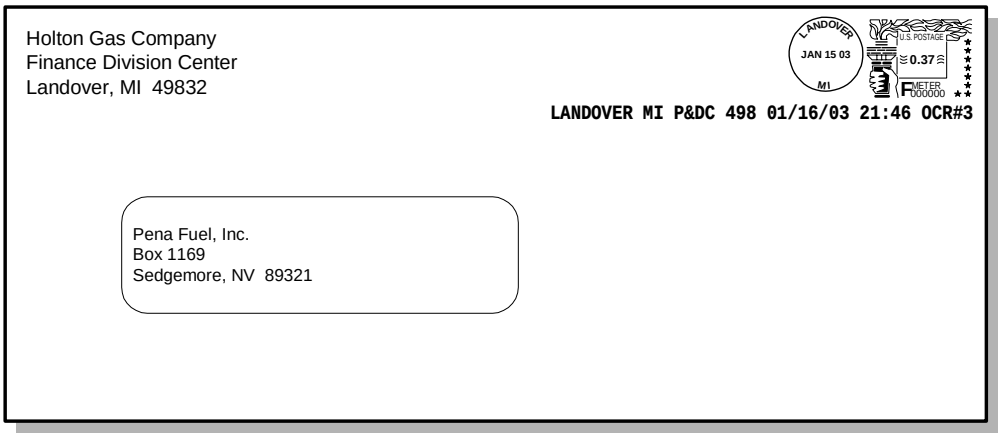


Exhibit H–4. Meter and Cancellation *Both Outside* Processing Area (Postal Service-applied VIJC)

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/16/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: 498

- If the meter is from another processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from within your mail processing area, take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the meter (not from the overcancellation or the VIJC) (Exhibit H–5).

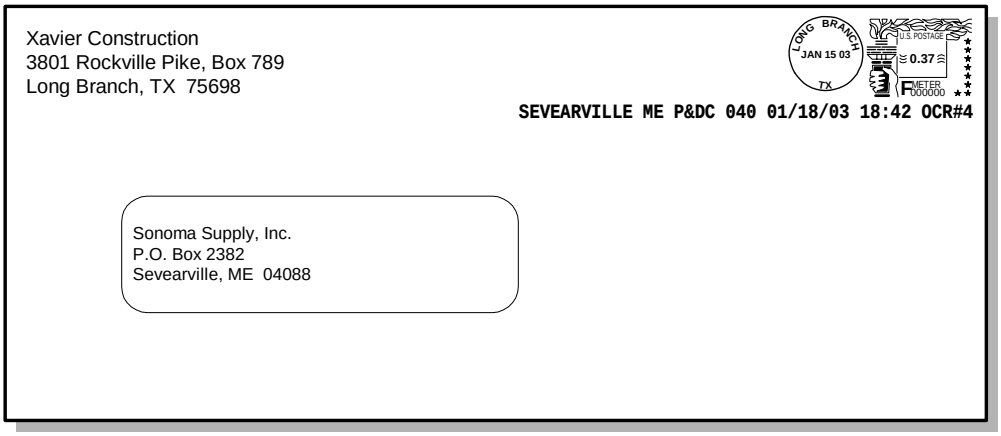


Exhibit H–5. Meter *Outside*/Cancellation *within* Processing Area (Postal Service-applied VIJC)

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/15/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: CBR
	ORIGIN STATE: TX
	ORIGIN CITY: LONG BRANCH

- If the meter is from within your processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from outside your mail processing area, take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest overcancellation or the VIJC (Exhibit H-5a).

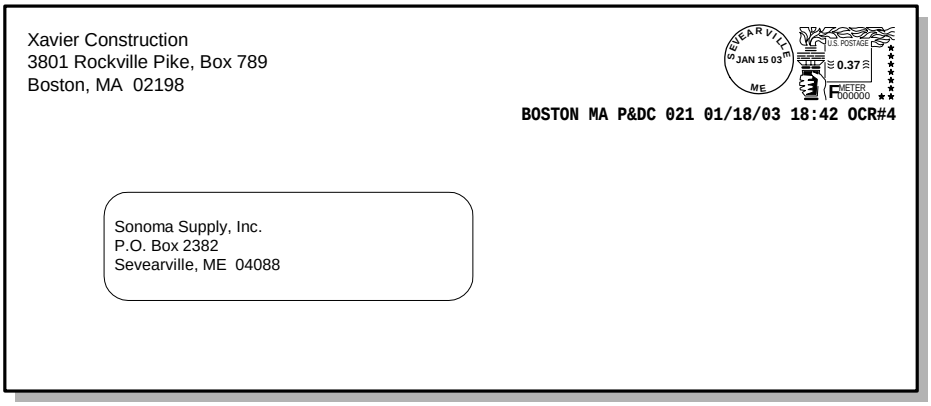


Exhibit H–5a. Meter *within*/Cancellation Outside Processing Area

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/18/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: 021
	ORIGIN STATE: MA
	ORIGIN CITY: BOSTON

- If the VIJC contains a range of 3-digit ZIP Codes, ignore the VIJC and take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the meter strip (Exhibit H–6). You may need to use the ODIS-RPW software's lookup table to determine the correct 3-digit ZIP Code. In the following example (Exhibit H–6), the correct 3-digit ZIP Code is unknown. To determine the correct 3-digit ZIP Code, you must enter the origin state abbreviation and origin city from the meter strip (in this case, Eugene, OR). The ODIS-RPW software will then automatically enter the correct 3-digit ZIP Code of *974.*

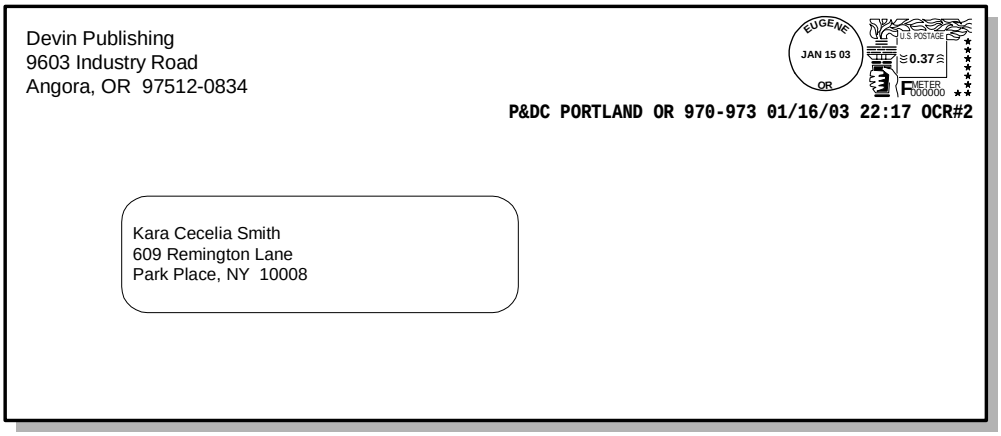


Exhibit H–6. VIJC with Range of 3-Digit ZIP Codes (Postal Service-applied VIJC)

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/15/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: 974

E. Instructions for Recording Mailer-Applied VIJCs

For metered mail with a *valid* mailer-applied VIJC in place of a zero postage meter strip (Exhibit H–7), the data collector *must* record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the mailer-applied VIJC.

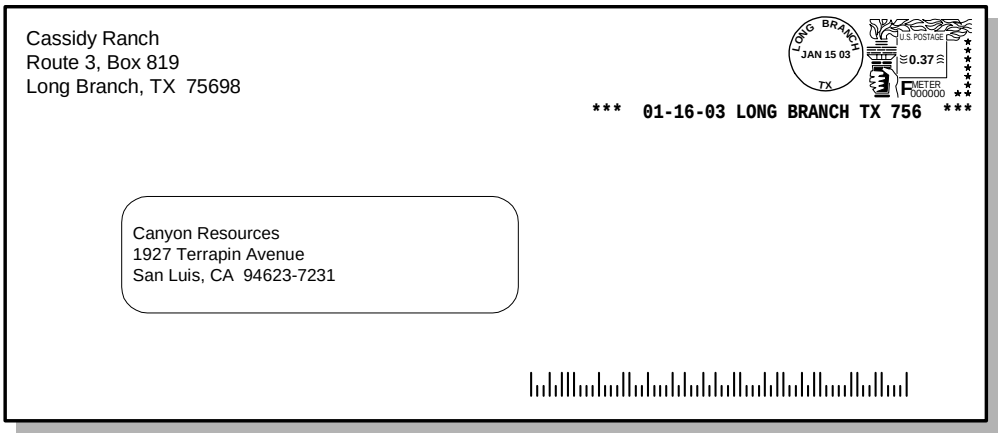


Exhibit H–7. Mailer-applied VIJC

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/16/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: 756

II. Drop Shipped Metered Mail

A. Drop Shipped Metered Mail in AD Plate

Metered mail may be entered at offices other than the licensing post office. The name of the licensing post office appears in the meter with the postmark date, while the name of the entry post office and the drop shipment authorization appear in either the adjacent ad plate or optional endorsement line.

If the origin in the ad plate or optional endorsement shows a city name, record the origin postmark ZIP as <-> CANNOT BE READ. When the ZIP Code is available, use the ZIP Code in the ad plate or optional endorsement as the origin postmark ZIP (Exhibit H–8).

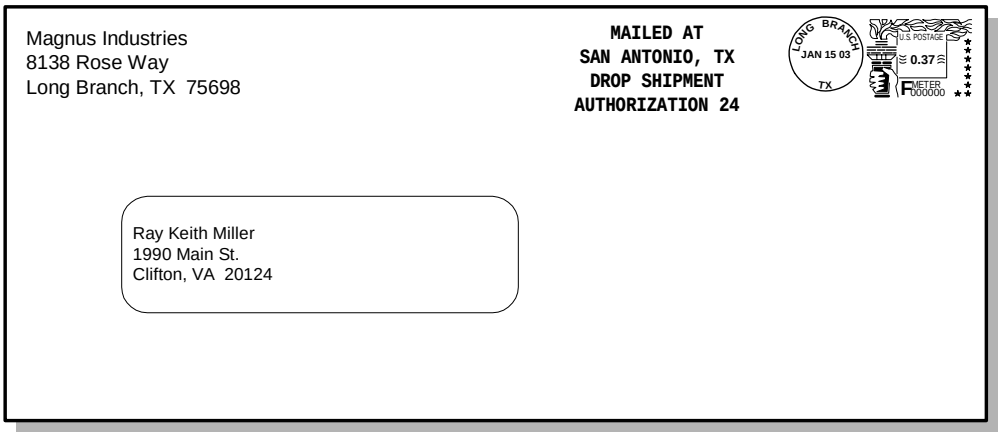


Exhibit H–8. Drop Shipment *without* VIJC

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/15/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: CBR
	ORIGIN STATE: TX
	ORIGIN CITY: SAN ANTONIO

B. Instructions for Recording Drop Shipped in the VIJCs

When recording data for video ink jet canceled drop shipment metered mail (i.e., mailer-applied VIJC with one of the endorsements shown below), the data collector *MUST* take the date and ZIP Code of origin from the VIJC (Exhibit H–9).

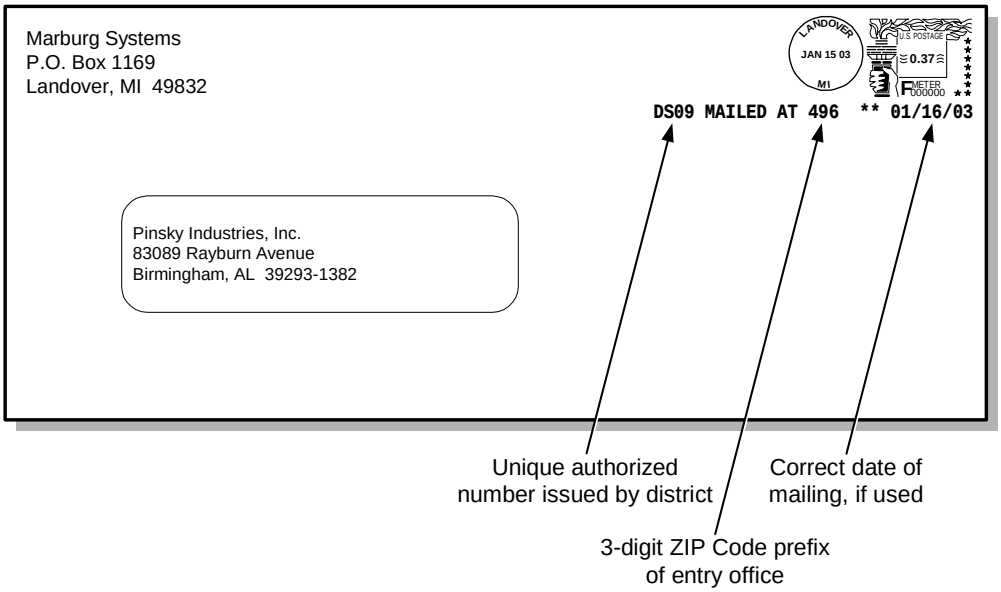


Exhibit H–9. Drop Shipment *with* VIJC (Mailer-applied VIJC)

Enter the following:	**PMARK DATE:** 01/16/03
	ORIGIN PMARK ZIP: 496

C. Stamp Mail *with* VIJC

When recording data for stamp mail that also contains a VIJC, the ODIS-RPW data collector must *never* record postmark date, time, and ZIP Code of origin from the VIJC. Instead, record this information from the ring stamp (Exhibit H–10).

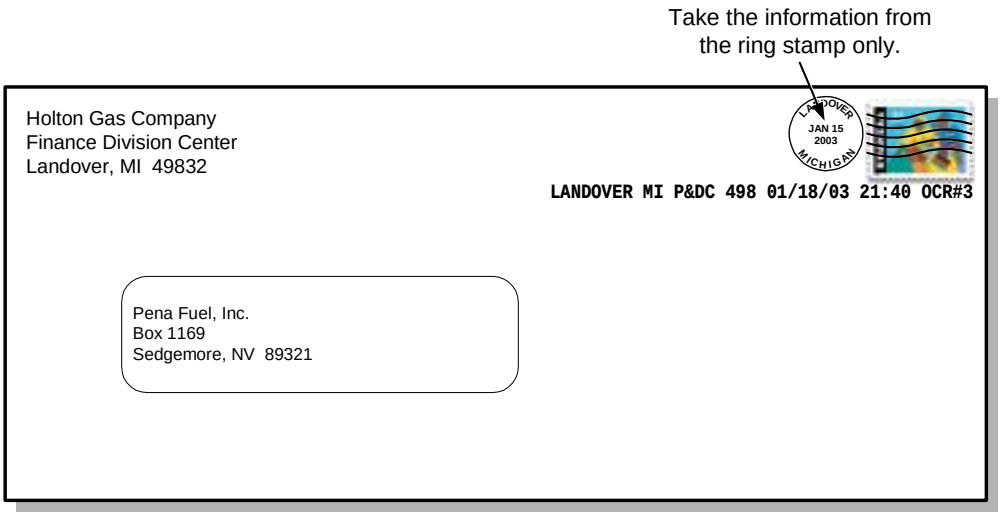


Exhibit H–10. Stamped Mailpiece *with* VIJC (Postal Service-applied VIJC)

III. Other Video Ink Jet Uses and Recording Instructions

Video ink jet usage is not limited to cancellations. There are many other uses for this medium. For instance, the Postal Service uses video ink jet technology to apply POSTNET barcodes to all classes of mail. Mailers use the technology to apply POSTNET barcodes, indicate POSTNET barcode source, indicate or change presort levels, and request special service. Likewise with VIJCs, it is essential that you be able to identify the differences between postal-applied and mailer-applied video ink jet markings because it will make a huge difference in what information you should enter in the ODIS-RPW test.

Postal Service-applied Video Ink Jet Usage to Apply POSTNET Barcodes

Postal Service-applied POSTNET barcodes have the following characteristics (Exhibit H–11):

1. Contain no asterisks within any part of the VIJC.
2. Never contain any presort level markings on the barcode line.
3. Usually contain a human readable barcode on the barcode line with one of the following markings: -, =, /, +, >, or x.

Note: When the three conditions stated above are met, the data collector knows that the Postal Service-applied the POSTNET barcode.

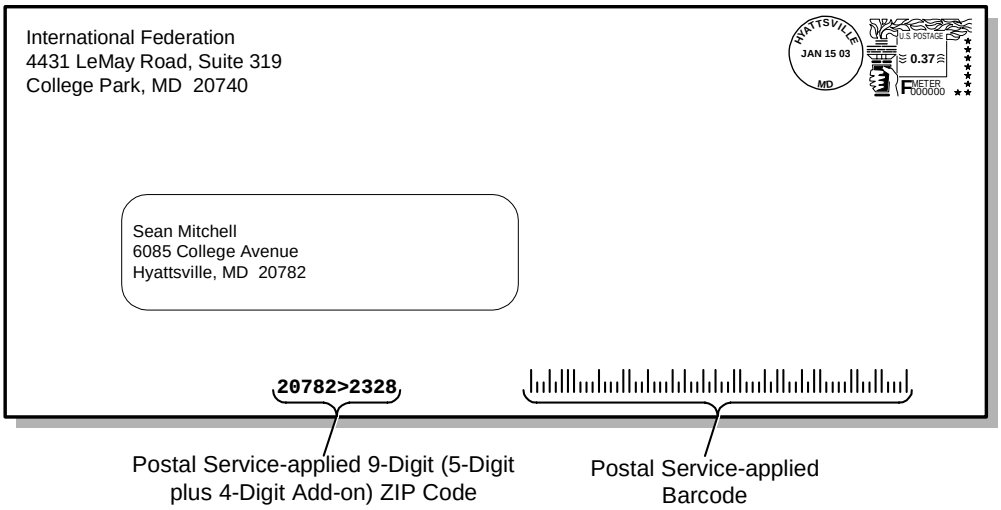


Exhibit H–11. Postal Service-applied VIJCs

Mailer-applied POSTNET Barcodes: Used to apply POSTNET barcodes and to indicate level of presorting (and sometimes date of mailing).

Mailer-applied POSTNET barcodes have one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Contain two asterisks printed at the beginning, end, or both ends of the application.
2. Have a presort level marking on the same line as the POSTNET barcode.

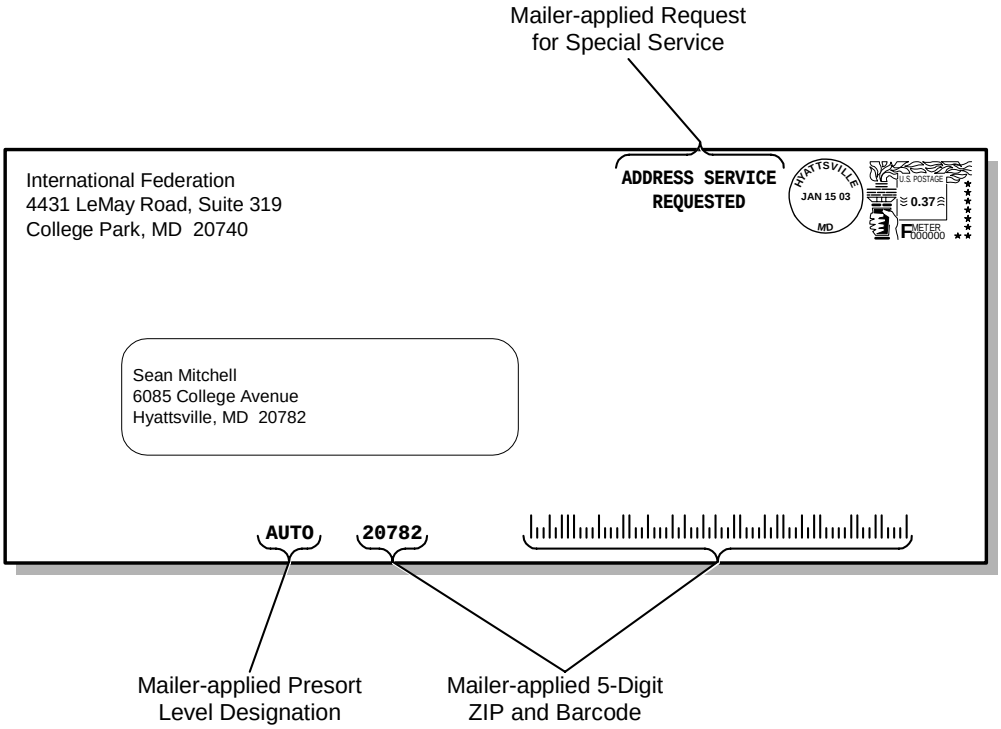


Exhibit H–12. Mailer-applied POSTNET Barcode

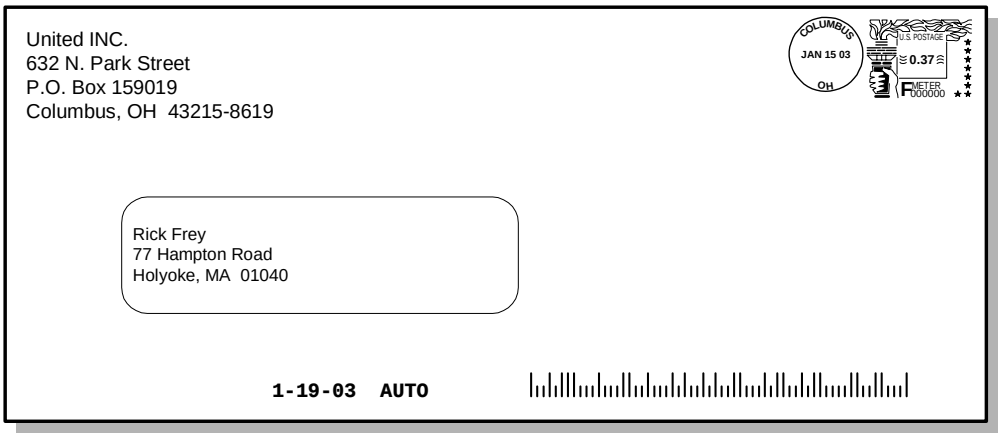


Exhibit H–12a. Mailer-applied POSTNET Barcode

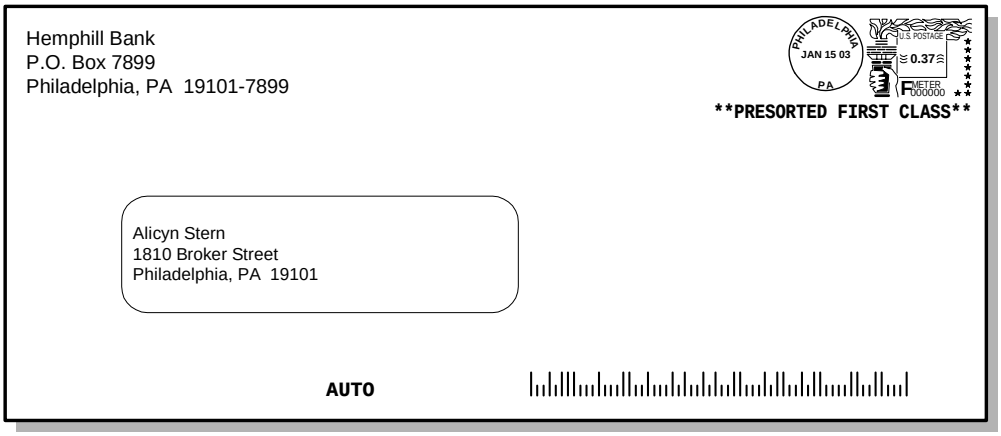


Exhibit H–12b. Mailer-applied POSTNET Barcode

Video Ink Jet Cancellations *Quick* Reference Guide

Postal-applied VIJC

For metered mail that has been overcanceled, ring stamped, or has a valid VIJC, the DCT MUST record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin data from the earliest cancellation mark or ring stamp subject to the following conditions:

- If the meter and the cancellation (including a valid VIJC) are both from within your mail processing area, you must take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest overcancellation or the valid VIJC.
- If the meter and the cancellation (including VIJC) are both from outside your mail processing area, you MUST take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest overcancellation or VIJC.
- If the meter is from another processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from within your mail processing area, take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the METER, not from the overcancellation or the VIJC.
- There are instances when mail will be metered locally (inside) but will be processed in another processing area (outside). This can happen when processing operations are consolidated during weekends and holidays. This should be a consideration when applying the inside/outside rule. if the meter is from within your processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from outside your processing area you must take the postmark date and ZIP Code from the earliest overcancellation or VIJC providing the cancellation is from a facility that MAY process mail for your facility.
- If the VIJC contains a range of 3-digit ZIP Codes, ignore the VIJC and take all data from the meter.

See F-75 Appendix H for additional examples, applications and information.

Mailer-applied VIJC

The Postal Service allows mailers to use video ink jet technology to correct stale meter dates. According to the DMM P030.4.12, they must have the following characteristics:

- The text of the cancellation is preceded by two asterisks. In addition, there may be two asterisks at the end of the text.
- The VIJC shows the actual date of deposit.
- The VIJC shows the city, state and 3-digit ZIP Code of the mailing office.
- The VIJC is located above the address block and below the meter impression, or just above the barcode clear zone.
- For metered mail with a valid mailer-applied VIJC, the data collector MUST record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the mailer-applied VIJC.

Mailer-applied Drop Shipment VIJC

When recording data for video ink jet canceled drop shipment metered mail (mailer-applied with one of the endorsements shown in the list below), the data collector MUST take the date and ZIP Code of origin from the VIJC:

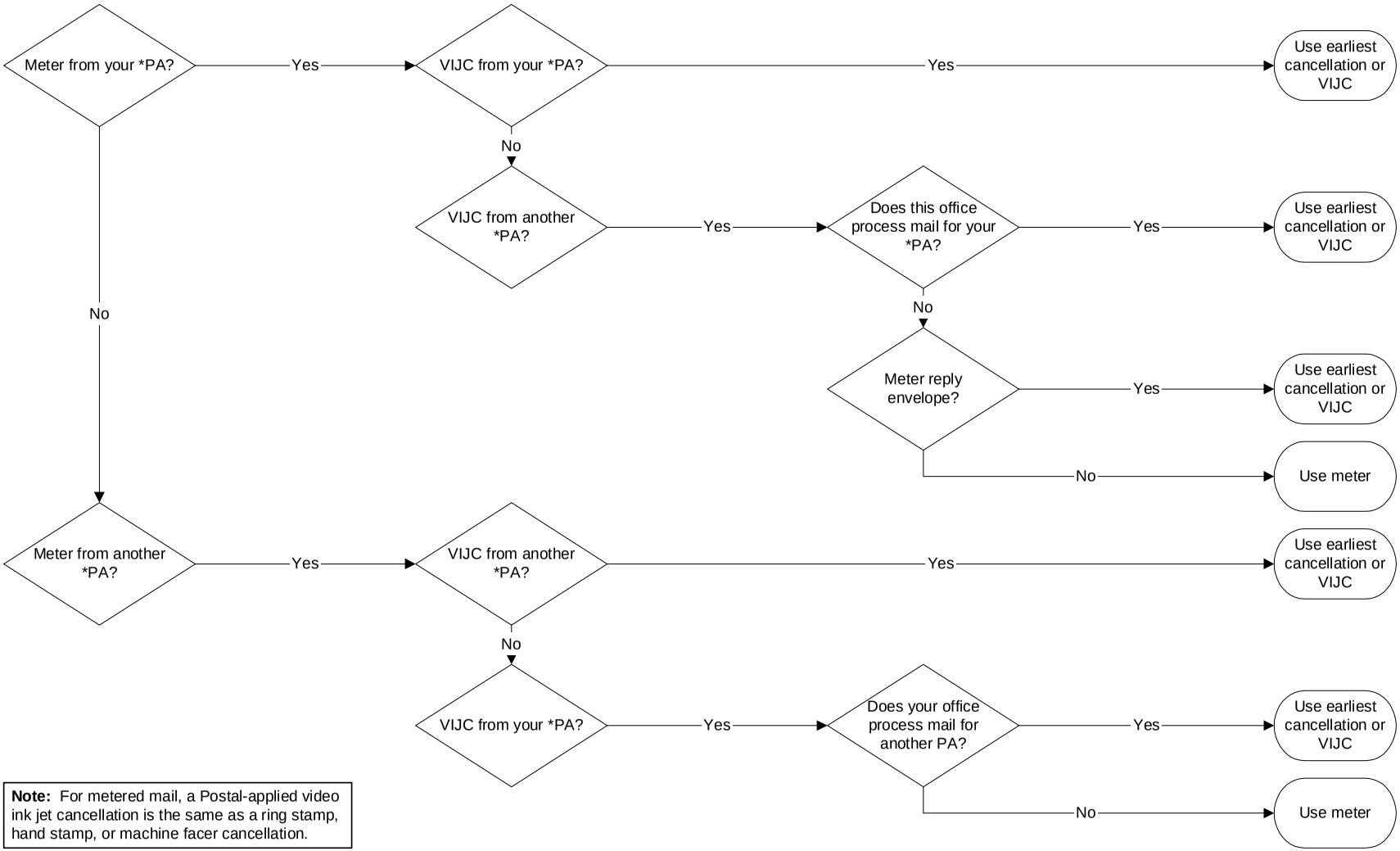
- D/Snn Mailed At zzz – mm/dd/yy
- Mailed at zzz D/Snn – mm/dd/yy
- D/Snn Mailed At zzz
- Mailed At zzz D/Snn

nn = unique authorized number
zzz = 3-digit ZIP Code prefix or entry office
mm/dd/yy = correct date of mailing, if used

Decision Flow Diagram for Postal-applied Video Ink Jet Cancellations

To be used for Meter Mail only

*PA = Processing Area



Note: For metered mail, a Postal-applied video ink jet cancellation is the same as a ring stamp, hand stamp, or machine facer cancellation.

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Appendix I
Sampling and Estimation Methodology

Appendix I describes the sampling methodology for destinating ODIS-RPW tests, and how estimates of mail volume are generally constructed. Samples are randomly drawn within strata within each of approximately 197 sample areas. After data collectors record mail characteristics and test data is available for each test, the estimation process is used to provide a statistical estimate of average daily volume. This estimate is constructed in each stratum in each sample area and then aggregated. The estimation process is described in detail for one example strata, and the weight (inflation factor or blow-up factor) is described to be six divided by two (or 3.0). Example stratum weights are also provided for sample area 303.

I. Sample Areas

Within each Customer Service and Sales District (CSSD) are one or more *sample areas*. Sample areas are independently targeted for testing. Generally, these sample areas encompass the Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) geographic area. Sample areas are defined by one or more three-digit ZIP Codes (the first three digits of the five-digit ZIP Code). Nationally, there are approximately 197 sample areas. An example of a sample area listing is shown below.

Table I–1. Sample Area Listing

Customer Service and Sales District Code	Sample Area Code	Sample Area Name	ZIP Prefix
300	301	North Metro GA	300, 301, 302, 305, 306
300	303	Atlanta GA	303, 311, 399

II. Distribution of Tests

A Stratification and Sample Size

For each sample area the collection of MEPs is grouped so that within each group the MEPs have similar mail characteristics. This process of grouping MEPs is referred to as stratification. Each group is referred to as a stratum.

Stratification provides better efficiency in sampling. For instance, if a stratum of MEPs is similar in every mailpiece characteristic, few tests would be required in the group to estimate the total mailpiece characteristics within the entire stratum. Generally, each sample area has between 4 to 18 strata depending on the number and types of MEPs. The MEP reference volumes are used to determine all strata.

A special algorithm is used to analyze multiple constraints in order to determine an appropriate sample size (number of tests or MEP-days) for each stratum in each sample area. The distribution of tests among the strata is based on the desired sample area's target level of precision for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Standard Mail, and workload constraints. Workload constraints is the fixed number of total ODIS-RPW tests that the district's staffing can accommodate. The fixed number of tests per sample area and staffing requirements have been determined so that each district can have approximately the same precision in all major mail class volume estimates.

There are over approximately 34,000 ODIS-RPW tests scheduled nationally in a three-month-period.

Test Scheduling and Data Processing

Once the sample size is determined for the strata within the sample area, MEPs are systematically selected using a random start and then assigned a randomly drawn day such that for every stratum in the sample, at least one test is scheduled each month.

Once the ODIS-RPW tests (specific MEP-days) have been identified, schedules are downloaded to the respective districts. The MSP assigns data collectors to cover the ODIS-RPW tests for the quarter. The data collectors perform ODIS-RPW tests using specific subsampling procedures to collect mailpiece characteristics. They record the mailpieces using specially designed data entry software on laptop computers. The mailpiece data from tests are then uploaded daily or weekly to the mainframe computer.

The data are processed and edited for accuracy on a daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis. There is also a fiscal year process. The data are gathered to produce sample area estimates for a variety of mailpiece characteristics. Sample area estimates are added together to produce higher level administrative estimates such as at the CSSD, area, and national levels.

Typical Estimation Process for Average Daily Mail Volume Reporting

The estimation process that produces average daily volume estimates is based at the stratum level within each sample area. The procedure for determining a total volume estimate for the sample area begins by first determining the average volume across the number of tests taken in the reporting period of interest within the stratum. For instance, in the example that follows the total volume for each test taken in the stratum is added together and then divided by the total number of tests. This average is then multiplied by the total number of MEP-days in the stratum (the total number of MEPs within the stratum multiplied by the number of delivery days in the reporting period of interest).

Sample Area	
Stratum 1	Stratum 3
Stratum 2	Stratum 4: M_1, M_2, M_3, M_4, M_5, M_6

Note: Stratum 4 has 6 MEPs, M_1–M_6. Two are tested in a quarter MEP 3 and MEP 4. MEP 3 volume stands for the test day volume (number of pieces items the skip interval added together for all laptop entries) for MEP 3. Similarly, MEP 4 volume stands for the test day volume for MEP 4. Assume that the quarter has 74 delivery days.

Total Volume of Stratum 4 =

$$\frac{\text{MEP 3 Volume} + \text{MEP 4 Volume}}{2\,(\text{Tests})} \text{ X } (6 \text{ Total MEPs X } 74 \text{ Delivery Days})$$

The average daily volume for the stratum is then determined by dividing this final product by the number of days in the reporting period.

Average Daily Volume (ADV) =

$$\frac{\text{MEP 3 Volume} + \text{MEP 4 Volume}}{2} \text{ X } (6 \text{ X } \cancel{74 \text{ Delivery Days}}) \text{ X } \frac{1}{\cancel{74 \text{ Delivery Days}}}$$

The Delivery Days cancel each other out leaving:

Average Daily Volume (ADV) =

$$\frac{\text{MEP 3 Volume} + \text{MEP 4 Volume}}{2} \text{ X } (6) \quad \textit{Or}$$

$$\frac{6}{2}[\text{MEP 3 Volume} + \text{MEP 4 Volume}] = \left(\frac{6}{2} \text{ X } (\text{MEP 3 Volume})\right) + \left(\frac{6}{2} \text{ X } (\text{MEP 4 Volume})\right)$$

The example above gives an intuitive approach to the estimation process. As illustrated above, another way to look at how to calculate an average daily volume is that for every test taken in the stratum, a weight (inflation factor or blow-up factor) is applied to each test to represent other MEP-days not tested in the stratum within the PQ. This weight is the total number of MEPs in the stratum divided by the number of tests taken in the stratum.

The following table provides an example of the stratum weights that would be assigned to the data collected in Sample Area 303 if every test were completed:

Table I–2. Sample Area

Sample Area 303			
Stratum	**Total Units**	**Total Tests**	**Assigned Weight**
101	19	21	0.9048
102	7	21	0.3333
103	6	6	1.0000
104	2	6	0.3333
105	8	15	0.5333
106	5	6	0.8333
107	7	15	0.4667
108	11	9	1.2222
109	37	9	4.1111
110	6	6	1.0000
111	23	15	1.5333
112	2	6	0.3333
113	10	6	1.6667
114	3	15	0.2000

Using ODIS-RPW Figures

ODIS-RPW is a sampling system and its report figures are estimates. These estimates are approximations of the *true unknown figure*. The *true unknown figure* is found by counting 100 percent of all mail, usually termed a *census* of the mail. Because ODIS-RPW is based on probability sampling, it is possible to compute, mathematically, an interval about the estimate that will contain the *true unknown figure* with a specific level of assurance. Such an interval, when associated with a level of assurance, or probability, is called a *confidence interval*.

Example: Let us assume that the estimate of the average daily volume for an ODIS-RPW sample area is 200,000 mailpieces and that a 95 percent *confidence interval* about the estimate of 200,000 mailpieces is the interval from 196,080 to 203,920 mailpieces. This particular confidence interval enables us to infer that we are 95 percent sure that the *true unknown figure* is contained in the interval of 196,080 to 203,920 mailpieces, or equivalently, the margin of

error due to sampling at a 95 percent probability level is 3,920 pieces or 1.96 percent of the estimated volume. The smaller the interval about the estimate, or the smaller the margin of error at a particular probability level, the better the estimate.

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Appendix J
Mail Exit Point and Consolidated Originating Unit

This appendix provides information and policies for the manager, statistical programs (MSP) to administer the Mail Exit Point (MEP) and Consolidated Originating Unit (COU) frame. This appendix covers the policies for designing MEPs and COUs, identifying sampling units, examples of MEPs, and the frame maintenance policy.

MEPs are the foundation of the Postal Service's probability-based revenue, volume, and performance measurement sampling system, the Origin-Destination Information System-Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (ODIS-RPW) system. Because we divide the universe of domestic mail exiting the Postal Service into many different sampling units, each MEP-day acts as one building block of this probability-based sampling system. Each MEP-day represents one sampling unit, one part of this universe of domestic mail exiting the Postal Service.

COUs are the foundation used for measuring registered, insured, COD, and certificates of mailing entering the Postal Service. Each COU-day represents one sampling unit, one part of the universe of specific domestic mail mentioned earlier, entering the Postal Service. The procedure for designing and setting up COUs is specific. A COU is required for every panel office that has a window retail unit.

This appendix consists of four sections. Section I introduces the *MEP*, the *MEP-day*, the *sampling unit*, and the *sampling frame*. Section II explains the characteristics of MEPs, the types of MEPs, and the basic principles behind MEP design. Section III gives a variety of basic MEP examples, and section IV covers frame maintenance policies. Since there is very little flexibility in designing COUs, they are explained later in section II B, *Mandatory Consolidated Originating Units, APO/FPO MEPs, and Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs (D/S MEPs)*. The goal of this appendix is to present guidelines, principles, rules, and examples for designing and creating MEPs and COUs.

I. MEPs, MEP-Days, Sampling Units and Frames

Mail Exit Point: A Mail Exit Point (MEP) is a physical place in the mail processing stream. The MEP may be found in three areas:

- At a destination mail processing plant.
- At a final delivery unit.
- Anywhere between the destination mail processing plant and the final delivery unit.

A MEP at a facility might be described as follows: *Letter shape mail only — for ZIP Codes 55551, 55552, and 55553.* At a MEP such as this one, the data collector must be able to isolate and count all letter shape mailpieces within these ZIP Codes. The data collector may then record information about these mailpieces.

MEP-day and the Sampling Unit: For the revenue, volume, and performance measurement system, a sampling unit is *always* a MEP-day. As explained above, a MEP is a physical place. By itself, a MEP does not allow us to define precisely what volume of mail we should capture and record. In addition, since mail processing is an around-the-clock operation, we need to associate every MEP with a specified time frame (normally one day, but sometimes a specific part of a day). A MEP-day at a facility might be described, for example, as follows: *Letter shape mail only — for ZIP Codes 55551, 55552, and 55553 on January 14th*.

By associating every MEP with a specified time frame and using *cutoff times* to define when the test begins and when the test ends, the universe of mail can be divided into *sampling units*. By testing sampling units, we can statistically estimate the characteristics of all the mail. Sampling units of MEP-days allows coverage of every mailpiece required by the revenue, volume, and performance measurement system test. For more information on cutoff times, see Appendix D.

The Sampling Frame: A sampling frame is a list of sampling units. Each sampling unit represents a part of all the mail that the Postal Service delivers in a given time period (such as in a given quarter). The number of sampling units in the frame is equal to the number of MEPs in the MEP System multiplied by the number of delivery days in a given time period. Accordingly, as described above, the sampling unit is always a MEP-day.

II. Designing MEPs

The procedure for designing and setting up MEPs and COUs is flexible. MEPs are designed to adapt easily to technological developments and changes in mail processing and delivery procedures.

A. Essential Characteristics

Two essential traits that characterize MEPs should be considered before designing MEPs:

- MEPs adhere to the four critical *Golden Rules* listed below.
- Mail associated with any MEP must be at or near its final destination. A MEP must be located no further upstream from the final delivery unit than the *destination* mail processing facility.

1. The MEP Golden Rules

Each MEP must meet the following four *Golden Rules*:

- **Every mailpiece must be associated with one and only one MEP.**
- **Every mailpiece in each MEP should be easily isolated for testing.**
- **MEPs should remain relatively stable through time.**
- **The cost-effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.**

When designing and maintaining MEPs, ensure that each of the four Golden Rules are met, as described below.

Golden Rule 1: Every mailpiece must be associated with one and only one MEP.

Biased estimates occur whenever a mailpiece is excluded from any MEP or whenever a mailpiece belongs to more than one MEP. To avoid biased data, ensure that every mailpiece belongs to one and only one MEP. In addition, make certain that no mailpiece has the chance of being *double-counted*.

For instance, even if a data collector has not *actually* recorded a particular mailpiece twice, double-counting may still have occurred if the data collector *could have* counted the mailpiece twice. The key to understanding the concept of double-counting can be found in the word *potential.* Double-counting results whenever any mailpiece has the *potential* to be counted twice.

To help prevent double-counting, ask these two questions:

- If there were tests on every other MEP at this location on the same day, could any mailpiece for this MEP possibly be counted in any of those other tests?
- Could any of this mail have the potential to be tested on more than one day?

Make sure that the exact procedures are followed for isolating mail when testing a MEP at a facility, even if it is the only MEP tested on that day. Remember, mail included in one MEP must always be excluded from every other MEP.

When designing MEPs, avoid missing MEPs, duplicate MEPs, MEPs that no longer exist, and inaccurate MEP information.

Note: Statisticians at Headquarters use the following terminology to help formulate MEP guidelines dealing with missing and duplicate MEPs, MEP definition error, and surplus MEPs (e.g., MEPs originally defined around a mail processing stream correctly, but operations have now changed resulting in the elimination of the original mail processing stream. The original MEP however, is still listed.).

Coverage: Coverage is defined as maintaining a collection of MEPs that allows every mailpiece *one and only one* chance of being included in a test.

Coverage Error: Coverage error refers to a bias in ODIS-RPW estimates. This bias may occur whenever a mailpiece *has more than one chance* or *no chance* of being selected for recording.

Missing MEPs: Missing MEPs may be caused by the omission of a MEP from sources used to update the MEP System. They may also result from the lack of frame maintenance. The omission of MEPs leads to the underestimation of total mail volume and revenue.

MEP omission may also be due to new locations in the destination mail processing stream. These new locations are called *births*. The opening of a new facility, for instance, is considered a birth. If you expect a birth in the upcoming quarter, add MEPs that include the mail for the birth in the MEP System. These new MEPs must be added to the MEP System prior to the sample selection process for the upcoming quarter.

Duplicate MEPs: Duplicate MEPs can occur whenever a mailpiece has more than one chance of being selected because the MEP that the mailpiece belongs to is listed more than once in the MEP System. Carelessness in checking the MEPs in the MEP System may result in MEP duplication. Duplicate MEPs may lead to the overestimation of mail volume, revenues, weights, and other mail characteristics. Moreover, duplicate MEPs promote unnecessary increased frame maintenance and the inefficient use of staff resources.

MEP No Longer Exists: If a facility has closed, but the manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) has not updated the MEP System by deleting the closed facility's MEPs, *zero volume* tests will result. Zero volume tests will decrease the precision, thereby increasing the variance of our estimates.

MEP Definition Error: Although the MEP system may contain a complete set of MEPs, certain MEPs within the MEP System may be poorly defined. A poorly defined MEP can lead to missed or double-counted mailpieces. The following example illustrates this type of error.

Example: A MEP defined at a facility represents all mail shapes for 3 ZIP Codes. A second MEP (a predominately heavy sample (PHS) MEP) is defined to include all parcel and IPP shapes for the entire facility.

This MEP definition violates Golden Rule 1. Parcel and IPP shape mail for any of these 3 ZIP Codes has the potential to be sampled in both MEPs.

Golden Rule 2: Every mailpiece in each MEP should be easily isolated for testing.

Mailpieces within a MEP must be easily isolated. Mail should be sampled and recorded without delaying mail delivery.

For example, a MEP that combines all the mail for a larger office (thirty carrier routes) *may* pose a problem for a data collector trying to sweep the mail in every physical location of the facility. Such a MEP would force the data collector to search for and find every letter, flat, parcel, IPP, postage due and accountable mailpiece within this office within the time window available for testing.

Golden Rule 3: MEPs should remain relatively stable through time.

To maximize statistical efficiency, MEP volume should remain as stable as possible from day to day. To minimize required changes to MEPs, observe the following:

Births and Deaths: The terms *births* and *deaths* are used to mean the creation and termination of MEPs. Whenever possible, the births and deaths of MEPs should occur less frequently than the quarter. It is not good practice, for instance, to define MEPs in terms of bins on machines because mail processing frequently changes the types of mail that go into these various bins.

Stratification Information: Stratification information is used to form groups of MEPs with similar volumes and mail mix to create more precise estimates for the same cost or number of tests. The stratification data that are collected will include information such as MEP volume by shape.

Stratification information collected for each MEP should remain relatively stable through time. Units that frequently contain *zero volume* are poor MEP candidates. In contrast, larger units are generally better MEP candidates. A large MEP will usually have less day-to-day volume fluctuation.

Golden Rule 4: The cost effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.

In order to promote good cost management, observe the following guidelines:

One Data Collector: Define MEPs so that, in general, only one data collector is required to conduct a test per tour.

Appropriate Time Window: Maintain an adequate time window to conduct a test with the available resources.

Appropriate Size: The MEP size should be large enough to ensure reasonably stable mail volumes. However, keep in mind that the size of the MEP should be small enough to utilize the data collectors in an effective manner.

Low Travel Costs: When designing MEPs, consider methods to reduce travel costs associated with conducting the tests.

2. At or Near the Final Destination

Define all MEPs at or near the final destination point. Avoid the originating point (mail entry point) of the mail processing stream. Testing at or near the destination point supports the corporate requirement for estimating mailpiece transit time between plants. A MEP may be defined upstream as far as the destination mail processing plant (such as the general mail facility (GMF)) as long as the mail is *expected* to arrive at the destination facility on the date of the test.

When performing upstream testing, ODIS-RPW transit time information will not always reflect the time required for a mailpiece to reach the final delivery unit. Nevertheless, transit time analysis will still help field managers who seek to diagnose plant-to-plant transportation and mail processing problems.

Upstream testing may help reduce travel costs. Make sure, however, that any upstream MEP testing does not violate any of the four Golden Rules. For instance, unless special care is taken, the first Golden Rule is easily violated when a MEP is being defined upstream. Double-counting may occur if a MEP has been defined upstream for mailpieces that are later processed into many potential MEPs.

B. Types of MEPs

Besides knowing the essential traits that characterize MEPs, the data collector should also know the fundamental types of MEPs before beginning to design a MEP. This section introduces the fundamental types of MEPs that an MSP might use to capture the volume of mail at a facility. This section also discusses COUs and the types of MEPs that are considered mandatory for each facility, and the types of MEPs that are considered special MEPs. Since some of these topics are presented in greater detail in other sections, references to the appropriate sections are provided, where applicable.

1. General

(Mail Processing Stream MEPs, DPS MEPs, Single Mail Shape MEPs, Less than 24-hour MEPs, Accountable Mail MEPs, and Delivery Unit MEPs)

a. Mail Processing Stream MEPs: There is a strong relationship between mail category and mail shape. We can use this strong relationship to improve the precision of our statistical estimates for the ODIS-RPW system. We accomplish this by defining MEPs along one or more mail processing streams that are based on mail shape. In addition, during a test, it will be easier for a data collector to locate and count the mail within only one stream. They do not have to sweep all the letter, flat, parcel, and accountable mailstreams in search of all the mailpieces required for the test.

A typical mail processing stream has a mail flow composed of one predominant mail shape. A processing stream of flats, for instance, is considered a flat-based mail processing stream. However, a mail processing stream *can* contain more than one mail shape. For example, a mail processing stream for flats arriving at a station in hampers might also contain letter bundles.

When testing a MEP defined along a mail processing stream, include *all* mail shapes. For instance, if performing an ODIS-RPW test on a MEP defined as a flat-based mail processing stream that includes all possible mail shapes, count and record letters and all other types of mail found in this flat-based stream. Likewise, creating a mail processing stream MEP, note in the *MEP Description* field of the MEP System that *all mail shapes* in this stream should be tested. The following is an example of such an entry: *Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes (possible) in stream*.

b. Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) MEPs: A delivery point sequence MEP (DPS MEP) is a special type of mail processing stream MEP. A DPS MEP is composed of machinable letters sorted according to the sequence of delivery by the carrier. An 11-digit barcode enables a barcode sorter (BCS) to sequence mail in the exact order of delivery. This process eliminates the need for carriers to sort these letters manually prior to delivery.

Whenever possible, do not define DPS MEPs before the first pass. Before the first pass there is a high potential for double-counting DPS mailpieces that have been jammed in, or rejected from, a machine and sent to other operations. Create a DPS MEP before the first pass only if certain that there are no missorted, jammed, or rejected mail that will be included in any other MEP.

Redefine a DPS MEP whenever the time window is too small or the potential for double-counting cannot be eliminated. Consider the following locations for a DPS MEP:

- Between the first and second pass.
- After the second pass, while the DPS mail is waiting to go to the station or associate office.
- After the DPS mail has arrived at the station or associate office.

For more information on mail processing stream MEPs, refer to section II C, *Large Single Shape*, and section III A.

c. Single Mail Shape MEPs: Like mail processing stream MEPs, *single mail shape MEPs* take advantage of the strong relationship between mail category and mail shape.

A single mail shape MEP is defined entirely as one shape of mail. When testing a single mail shape MEP, the data collector sweeps all mail processing streams to isolate all the appropriate mail to be tested. For instance, when testing a single mail shape MEP defined as *letter-shape mail only*, a data collector sweeps the parcel and flat mail processing streams for any letter shape mail.

If an MSP establishes a letter-shape mail only MEP far enough downstream so that any letter-shape mail commingled in other mailstreams can be culled out and directed to the letter mail processing stream, the data collector will not need to sweep flat, parcel, and other mailstreams for letter-shape mail. When entering a MEP consisting entirely of one mail shape, the MSP should note the exclusion of all other mail shapes. The following is an example of such an entry*: Letter-shape mail only — for entire station*. For more information on single mail shape MEPs, refer to section II C , *Large Single Shape*, and section III B.

d. MEPs Defined for Less Than 24 Hours (Multi-tour MEPs and PM MEPs): Most often, our sampling unit is a MEP-day based upon a 24-hour time frame. However, there are times when a MEP-day can represent a portion of a 24-hour day (such as a tour) as long as all other mail at the facility is accounted for in other MEPs.

Some facilities are good candidates for setting up MEPs defined for less than 24 hours. A good example of such a facility is one where mail for large volume firms can exit the facility around the clock. At such a facility, an MSP might decide to create more than one MEP to cover a 24-hour period.

Example: The MSP is creating MEPs for a large volume firm. The MSP discovers that one can easily isolate and test all the mail during three time windows: 1:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. The MSP can therefore define three MEPs. Each MEP would correspond to one of these three time windows.

To create a MEP that is defined for less than 24 hours, perform the following:

- Define the cutoff times that will make up the MEPs. Select each cutoff time at a time when a low volume of mail is being processed. The MEP cutoff times do not need to coincide with facility tours.
- Obtain mail volume and other stratification information separately for each MEP.
- Ensure that the mail volume for each MEP remains stable from day to day (Golden Rule 3). If the MEP volume from day to day is unstable, redefine the MEP.
- Ensure that data collectors will be available for any tour or for any other *less than 24-hour MEP*.

The PM MEP is another example of a MEP defined for less than 24 hours. Some stations, branches, and associate offices receive afternoon dispatches from other facilities. These dispatches usually consist of Standard Mail and/or Periodicals. Such mail may or may not be available for delivery the next day.

A PM MEP can isolate this mail processing stream for testing. A PM mail MEP is a less than 24 hour MEP defined around post-AM cutoff time dispatches to stations, branches, and associate offices of all classes of mail, but usually associated with standard mail and/or periodicals.

Note: Special MEPs for Drop Shipment Parcels (D/S MEPs): If a PM MEP is created, check the amount of drop shipment parcels the MEP's facility receives. If it receives more than 100 drop shipment parcels consistently, add a special MEP to account for drop shipment parcels.

Drop shipment is a service option offered by the Postal Service that allows the mailer to bypass normal upstream mail processing. The mailer, or a private (non-postal) carrier using this service, transports parcels from the point of production to a Postal Service facility located closer to the final destination. The Postal Service then completes the delivery of the parcels at a lower cost to the mailer. For more information on D/S MEPs, see section II B, 2, *Mandatory Consolidated Originating Units, APO/FPO MEPs, and Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs (D/S MEPs)*.

For more information on the Multi-tour MEP and the PM MEP, see the examples in section III C.

e. Accountable Mail MEPs: Accountable mail MEPs generally consist of mail incoming to the postage due unit (PDU) or accountable mail unit (AMU). Accountable mail is normally postage due mail, business reply mail (BRM), and other special service mail such as Merchandise Returns, Certified Mail, and Registered Mail.

Accountable mail MEPs provide the following benefits:

- Accountable mail MEPs easily target large concentrations of accountable mail, which occur relatively infrequently in the mailstream. Targeting accountable mail through accountable mail MEPs will improve sampling efficiency.
- Accountable mail MEPs permit the exclusion to remove accountable mail from other MEPs. This will allow a data collector to better meet time window requirements.
- Accountable mail MEPs improve the accuracy of accountable mail estimates by removing these mailpieces from MEPs that are located outside the PDU or AMU. The testing of accountable mail outside the PDU or AMU can make proper rate category identification difficult.

The MSP may define accountable mail MEPs in accordance with local conditions. All facilities should have accountable mail MEPs whenever the following apply:

- The facility receives at least 100 accountable mailpieces per day on average.
- Accountable mail is easily identified and isolated in the incoming mail processing stream on a consistent basis.

When defining an accountable mail MEP, observe the following:

- All accountable mail indirectly brought to the AMU or PDU, such as from carriers, should be excluded. This mail has a chance of selection in other incoming mail MEPs.
- Ensure that the proper mailpiece characteristics can be recorded at the accountable mail MEP. For instance, avoid defining a BRM MEP upstream at the plant if the data collector cannot easily obtain the proper BRM fees.

Accountable mail MEPs for an incoming office may include all or part of such mail for the office. Large business reply firms are ideal candidates for accountable mail MEPs.

Note: Registered mail, insured mail, and COD mail must be covered in the MEP design — that is, included as part of the MEP(s). In fact, depending on the volume, accountable mail MEP(s) can be set up for one or more of these special service mailstreams. At the same time, panel office COUs include this mail as it enters the Postal Service. This is not double-counting; do not confuse this with double-counting. COUs are a specific instance where there

is a need for revenue reporting to separate special services from the mailpiece revenue, and to improve the estimates of registered mail, insured mail, COD and certificates of mailing from the mail origin. This same mail must be defined in the MEP(s) and sampled at the destination.

For more information on accountable mail MEPs, see section III.

f. **Delivery Unit(s) as MEP(s):** Because the definition of a MEP is flexible, an MSP may create a single MEP out of any of the following delivery units or delivery unit combinations:

- More than one delivery unit (such as five city carrier routes).
- A combination of parts of more than one delivery unit (such as all letter mail for five city carrier routes).
- A part of a delivery unit (such as a partition of a box section).
- A single delivery unit (such as a city carrier route).

2. **Mandatory Consolidated Originating Units, APO/FPO MEPs, and Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs (D/S MEPs)**

The following COUs and MEP types are required for each facility.

a. **Consolidated Originating Units (COUs):** COUs are required for window retail units in ODIS-RPW panel offices. COUs are defined to include all insured mail, registered mail, COD, and certificates of mailing mailpieces originating from a window retail unit. A MEP type code of 1 identifies all originating COUs. These retail units must be further categorized as either point of sale (POS) or non-POS offices. POS offices are identified by MEP Group Code 2 and non-POS offices are identified by MEP Group Code 3.

Contract Postal Units (CPUs) for panel offices are to be listed separately and identified by MEP Type Code 3. Due to the special nature of these units, the mail may be captured upstream at the parent office or the main office and then only if all the mailpiece characteristics can be recorded properly. In these situations, the contract office is listed under the panel office main office and the MEP Description/Special instructions annotated to ensure the mail is captured. If multiple CPUs are listed under a finance number they may be combined for sampling purposes.

Note: Required with every COU is similar stratification information required with MEPs. The types of information required are travel time, test time, and shape volumes.

b. **APO/FPO MEPs:** APO/FPO MEPs are required for all military gateway mail and are subject to testing 7 days per week, unless Headquarters is notified otherwise.

Avoid creating a separate MEP for each APO or FPO unit. APO/FPO units should be consolidated to the greatest extent possible so that these MEP units are appropriately large (and meet the conditions of Golden Rule 4). Although these MEPs should have volumes well over 500 mailpieces, consider 500 pieces the minimum for an APO or FPO MEP.

In the *MEP Description* field of the MEP System, identify which APO/FPO units are associated with the MEP. This will let the data collectors know which mail should be isolated and tested. A MEP type code of *2* is used to identify APO/FPO MEPs.

c. **Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs (D/S MEPs):** Drop shipment parcel MEPs (D\S MEP) are required if you are separately listing PM MEPs and the facility receives more than 100 drop shipment parcels consistently. If the facility receives less than 100 D/S parcels, this mail may be captured in the PM MEP or the AM MEP.

The MEP that will account for the D/S parcels must be identified as a PM MEP with MEP Group Code 1 in the MEP System. Include the words *D/S MEP* as part of the *MEP Description and/or Special Instructions* field(s).

By listing large volumes of D/S parcels as a separate MEP, Package Services estimates of mail volumes and associated characteristics will be improved.

3. Special Types of MEPs

The following three types of MEPs have reserved codes in the MEP System. These special codes will facilitate the identification and proper stratification of these MEP types.

- **Almost exclusively (approximately 95%) First-Class Mail:** A MEP type code of 4 is reserved for these MEPs in the MEP System. Examples of these MEPs may include large business reply units and some payment processing firms.
- **Almost exclusively (approximately 90%) Standard Mail and Periodicals:** A MEP type code of 5 is reserved for these MEPs in the MEP System. Examples may include the PM MEP.
- **Unstable MEPs:** A MEP type code of 6 is reserved for unstable MEPs in the MEP System. Unstable MEPs are tested frequently; at least once per month.

  The requirements for an unstable MEP are:

  - No more than two in any sample area without Service Center approval.
  - Volume changes by a factor of 10 or more from day-to-day, or changes of more than 50,000 mailpieces from one day to another.

The type "unstable" is designed to indicate large volume MEPs, ones where volumes fluctuate drastically in any given day. Generally, these have large amounts of letter mail, such as certain kinds of firms (e.g., promotional and sweepstakes return units), or even IRS related units. Do not code as unstable MEPs for fluctuations due to Standard Mail mailings, or normal fluctuations in office mailstream MEPs (such as "letter mailstream," or "flat mailstream," or "parcels").

When designing MEPs, good candidates for "unstable" would include mail flows that would be too large, when tested, to be included with other mailstreams. That is, Golden Rule 4 on cost effectiveness of testing would be violated.

- **PM MEPs:** A MEP group code of 1 is reserved for these MEPs in the MEP system. A PM MEP is a less than 24 hour MEP defined around post-AM cutoff time dispatches to stations, branches and associate offices of all classes of mail, but usually associated with standard mail and/or periodicals.

C. Other Important Characteristics for MEPs

When preparing to design a MEP, you should not only know the essential characteristics and types of MEPs, but also understand MEP requirements that concern MEP volume, stratification data, and the designing of MEPs around a large single shape.

1. Large Single Shape

MEPs should be large. MEPs should also be composed of mailpieces of one predominant shape.

Because mail processing streams are not identical, no single rule exists for creating large, single-shape based MEPs. Sometimes, inadequate time windows or the threat of violating one of the Golden Rules will prevent an MSP from creating large single-shape based MEPs.

Nevertheless, *whenever possible*, try to create large MEPs that are based on a single shape. Large, single-shape based MEPs contribute substantially to accurate estimates of smaller mail class volumes such as Priority Mail and Parcel Post.

As discussed in section II B, *General*, a strong relationship exists between mail category and mail shape. Because of this strong relationship, MEPs are designed to meet the definitions of one of the following MEP types.

- **Mail processing stream MEP (of predominantly one single shape):** A mail processing stream has a mail flow of one *predominant* mail shape. A processing stream of flats, for example, is considered a mail processing stream for flat-shape mail. However, unlike a single mail shape MEP (see below), a mail shape processing stream MEP *can* contain more than one mail

shape. For example, a mail processing stream for flats arriving at a station in hampers might also contain letter bundles. You might find such a MEP entitled *Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes in stream.*

When a data collector tests a mail processing stream MEP, the data collector counts and records *every* mailpiece in the mail processing stream, regardless of whether the mailpiece fits the shape of the majority of the mail in the MEP. Mail processing stream MEPs of one shape are normally found *before* distribution.

- **Single mail shape MEP (of one exclusive shape):** MEPs based exclusively on one mail shape are composed of one, and only one, shape of mail. For instance, if a data collector were to test a *letter-shape mail only* MEP, he or she would collect all the letter-shape mailpieces within the MEP to be tested and exclude all non-letter-shape mail. Single mail shape MEPs are often found *after* distribution.

  The mailpieces that are excluded by the data collector must be accounted for in another MEP. For this reason, if a facility has a *letter shape mail only* MEP, it might also have a *flat shape mail only* MEP and an *IPP shape mail only* MEP.

Note: Large single-shape MEPs can be based upon either a mail processing stream of one predominant shape or upon one single exclusive shape. Therefore, ensure that all data collectors know, through the *MEP Description* field in the MEP System, exactly what mail should be included and what mail should be excluded from a MEP.

2. Volume Requirements

As stated above, MEP volume should be as large as possible. If, however, you cannot avoid creating a MEP with a small volume, try to exceed a minimum average daily volume of *approximately* 500 pieces. Keep in mind, however, that the following MEPs are exceptions to the 500 mailpiece guideline: accountable mail, PHS, COU, and APO/FPO.

In addition, observe the following guidelines for exceptional MEPs:

- In the event that you have a multi-shape based MEP averaging less than 2,500 mailpieces a day, do not break this MEP down into smaller, single-shape MEPs. Examples of such MEPs may include the delivery unit MEP or a MEP that is a small facility.
- Accountable mail MEPs that average less than 100 mailpieces a day should not be broken down into smaller, single-shape MEPs.

Note: Golden Rule integrity is more important than having a large-volume MEP. Do not create a large-volume MEP if that MEP will violate a Golden Rule. Because the integrity of the Golden Rules always has priority over MEP volume, you may design a MEP with a volume under 500 mailpieces if this is the only possible way to meet the requirements of the Golden Rules.

Too many small MEPs will reduce the efficiency of sampling and increase MEP unit maintenance, and zero volume tests. Always create MEPs as large as possible without violating the Golden Rules. Create MEPs with average volumes of fewer than 500 mailpieces per day only when you cannot test the mail any other way.

3. Accurate Stratification Information

Defining a MEP requires stratification information. Statisticians use stratification information to form groups of MEPs with similar volumes and mail mix and to create more precise estimates for the same cost or number of tests.

Stratification information includes volume by shape, on-site test time, travel time and MEP-type indicator. Estimates based on samples drawn from stratified populations are more precise than estimates drawn from samples using un-stratified designs. Inaccurate stratification information in the MEP System will create inefficient MEP groupings (strata with dissimilar MEPs). Consequently, inaccurate stratification information can increase sampling error and decrease the precision of our estimates.

The MEP System requires the following volume, test-time, and MEP-type information for all MEPs.

a. Volume: No requirement exists for an exact mailpiece count in the MEP System. The MEP System volume measurements are designed to *help* group together MEPs sharing similar characteristics.

Note: When obtaining approximate volumes in linear feet or weight, calculate the piece volume using the most applicable conversion rate. Offices without local conversion rates may use Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data System,* for MOD 1 Offices, section 4-2.9, National Conversion Rates.

Observe the following guidelines for obtaining MEP volume for the MEP System.

- **Average daily volume by mail shape:**
  - Letters/Cards: record to the nearest *hundred* pieces.
  - Flats: record to the nearest *hundred* pieces.
  - IPPs: record to the nearest *ten* pieces.
  - Parcels: record to the nearest *ten* pieces.

- **Average daily volume of Priority Mail to the nearest *ten* pieces:** Priority Mail volumes are also included in the estimated average daily volumes by mail shape fields described above.
- **Average daily volume of accountable mail:** Postage Due Unit (PDU) or Accountable Mail Unit (AMU), to the nearest *ten* pieces. Accountable mail volumes are also included in the estimated average daily volumes by mail shape fields described above.

b. On-site Test Time: The estimated time to conduct a test on a MEP begins with the actual arrival of the data collector at the facility. The estimated time ends when the data collector is prepared to leave the MEP test location. Total time includes equipment setup, isolating and recording mailpieces, down time (such as waiting for another mail dispatch), and time to repack test equipment. If more than one data collector must conduct the test, add both data collectors' test times together.

Example: If two data collectors start the test, and one leaves after one hour while the other works four hours, the total on-site test time will equal five hours.

When determining on-site test time, consider the following:

- For telephone tests, record only the caller's time spent conducting the test.
- Obtain times in hours and fractions of hours. For example, an on-site test time of one hour and 20 minutes is represented in the MEP system as 1.3.
- Average test times are recorded for multiple tests on the same MEP (exact calculations are not required).

c. Travel Time: Travel time to and from a facility is recorded in the MEP System in half-hour increments. For instance, if the total travel time to and from the facility is two hours and forty minutes, the MSP should record this travel time in the MEP System as 2.5 hours.

Travel time may vary due to differences in the departure points of the available data collectors. If this is the case, use the most frequent or the most typical travel times.

d. MEP Type and Group Indicator: The following table shows reserved MEP type codes (codes 1–9) and reserved MEP group codes (codes 1–3). MEP units of these types must be assigned the corresponding codes. These codes must not be used for MEPs of any other type.

Table J–1. MEP Codes

MEP Type Code	MEP Type Description
A–Z	Local Use
0	Undefined
1	Consolidated Originating Unit Panel Office (not Contract Postal Unit)
2	APO or FPO
3	Contract Postal Unit (CPU) Consolidated Originating Panel Office
4	MEPs that are almost exclusively (approximately 90%) First-Class Mail. Examples may include large business reply units and some payment processing firms.
5	MEPs that are almost exclusively (approximately 90%) Standard Mail and Periodicals. Examples may include PM mail or afternoon dispatches to facilities.
6	The requirements for an unstable MEP are: ■ No more than two in any sample area without Service Center approval. ■ Volume changes by a factor of 10 or more from day-to-day, or changes of more than 50,000 mailpieces from one day to another. The type "unstable" is designed to indicate large volume MEPs, ones where volumes fluctuate drastically from day to day. Generally, these have large amounts of letter mail, such as certain kinds of firms (e.g., promotional and sweepstakes return units), or even IRS related units. Do not code as unstable for fluctuations due to Standard Mail mailings, or normal fluctuations in office mail stream volume (such as *letter mail stream*, or *flat mail stream*, or *parcels*.) When designing MEPs, good candidates for "unstable" includes mail flows that, when tested, would be too large to be included with other mailstreams, which would violate Golden Rule 4.
7–9	Reserved for future use.
MEP Group Code	**MEP Group Description**
A–Z	Local Use
1	PM MEP
2	POS office, applies only to COU — MEP Type of '1'
3	Non-POS office, applies only to COU — MEP Type of '1'
4–9	Reserved for future use

D. MEP Description Documentation Requirements

To ensure the accurate testing of a MEP, the characteristics that make up a MEP must be fully described and properly documented. The MEP description and corresponding documentation should provide detailed information about cutoff times, bypass mail, PM mail, drop shipment parcels, and mail that must be excluded from the test. The MEP description and related documentation should also include whether the MEP is defined along a mail processing stream or exclusively along a single mail shape, the location along the mail processing stream where the MEP will be tested, and standard operating procedures for testing containers holding more than one mail shape.

All required documentation of these MEP characteristics must be maintained in the MEP description and/or *Special Instructions*. See section II D, *Applications* for information on the applications you must use to maintain required MEP documentation and section II D, *Documented MEP Characteristics* for descriptions of the MEP characteristics stated above.

1. Applications

The following applications must be used to maintain the MEP description and corresponding documentation:

a. MEP Description Field: The MEP System *MEP Description* field allows you to enter up to 80 characters of information. The information entered into this field is uploaded to the mainframe at the time of the close of the frame for sample selection and then downloaded to the CODES Web Base Unit along with the sample selection file.

Note: The *Header Sheet/Test Schedule* displays all information entered in the *MEP Description* field available at the time of the close of the frame for sample selection. Therefore, if you change the MEP description, or any other information within the *MEP Description* field after the close of the frame, this new information will not be displayed until the following quarter.

b. Special Instructions: The MEP System *Special Instructions* must be used as a supplement to the *MEP Description* field. This option allows you to enter detailed MEP information and instructions that exceed the 80 character limit of the *MEP Description* field.

2. Documented MEP Characteristics

The following describes those characteristics which must be documented for each MEP:

a. Test Location

The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* must indicate whether the test is to be conducted off-site (for example, upstream at the destination P&DC or SCF) or started off-site and finished on-site (for example, at the destination facility or Post Office). The documentation must include the location of the off-site test facility and a list of instructions for the data collector to follow when testing the MEP. MEPs are assumed to be entirely tested on-site (that is, physically and entirely conducted at the facility listed in the *Header Sheet/Test Schedule*) unless otherwise documented.

Example: In some large geographically dispersed locations, MEPs are tested entirely upstream at the destination P&DC. In this case, you would call the test facility downstream to inquire about local and bypass mail. In your documentation for this MEP, you would need to indicate that the test is conducted at the P&DC. It may also be important to indicate that the data collector will need to call the test facility downstream to follow up about local and bypass mail.

b. MEP Cutoff Times

Partial day and 24-Hour MEP cutoff times must be documented in the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions*.

Examples:

- DPS Letters: 1st truck arrival at 10 a.m.
- *Exclusively PM flat and letter shape mail only from 0900 until 1600.*

c. Bypass Mail

The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* documentation for bypass mail must include which MEP(s) is (are) to include this mail, and where the mail is to be tested. Bypass mail is any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing flow at a facility. It includes mail dispatched from the BMC to the back door either in the AM or PM (often bulk rate Standard Mail and Periodicals), mail direct from the mailer (for example, drop shipment parcels), office-to-office mail, and dock-transfer mail.

d. PM Mail

When PM mail is delivered to a Post Office, and there is no PM MEP, document which MEP(s) is (are) to include this mail, and where the mail is to be tested.

e. The Location in the Mail Processing Stream where the MEP will be Tested

The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* must identify where in the mail processing stream the mail for a given MEP will be tested. The location to test this mail is often determined by whether the MEP is defined as a mail processing stream or as a single mail shape MEP. The documentation for the MEP must indicate if the mail is tested:

- On the dock as it is unloaded.
- After primary distribution.
- After secondary distribution.
- At a staging area.
- For one or more zone(s).
- Other specific location(s) or combination(s) of the above.

f. Mail Processing Stream MEPs or Single Mail Shape MEPs

The *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* must indicate whether the MEP is a mail processing stream or single mail shape MEP. See section II C, *Large Single Shape*.

g. Standard Operating Procedures for Testing Containers Holding More than One Mail Shape

The district must develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) for handling MEPs where mail flow includes containers holding more than one mail shape. The SOP must describe how to associate mailpieces, and/or containers with the appropriate mail processing stream MEP or single mail shape MEP.

Regardless of whether the MEP is a single mail shape or a mail processing stream MEP, the documentation of SOPs for these MEPs is vital. The following examples outline the required information to include in the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* for both types of MEPs.

- **Single Mail Shape MEPs:** The documentation must describe how to associate each mail shape (mailpieces and/or containers) in *mixed* mail shape containers with the appropriate single mail shape MEP.

Example: The documentation for a letter mail shape MEP might instruct the data collector to search the parcel mailstream and all other mailstreams for letter trays, bundles, and/or loose letter mail. This would be in addition to the usual letter trays arriving from the plant in APCs. In this case, the *MEP Description* and/or *Special Instructions* might be modified to say, *Include all containers and bundles of letters in parcel containers.*

- **Mail Processing Stream MEPs:** The documentation must indicate which MEP is to include containers holding more than one mail shape.

Example: A MEP description might indicate to include mixed containers of parcels and IPPs (that will be tested) with the parcel mail processing stream MEP; whereas a mixed container of flats and IPPs (that will be tested) is included with the flat mail processing stream MEP.

III. MEP Examples (Basic)

This section provides basic examples of how an MSP might design MEPs for a facility. The first two examples reflect the basic MEP structure that can be found in most facilities:

- A type of letter MEP.
- A type of flat MEP.
- Some type of PHS, parcel, IPP, and/or Priority Mail MEP such as any of the following:
  - PHS MEP.
  - IPP/Parcels MEP.
  - IPPs/Parcels/Priority Mail/Acct. MEP.

Note: This section will not discuss the following mandatory MEPs: APO/FPO MEPs, Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs, and COUs. All facilities that have APO/FPO, D/S MEPs, and/or originating mail (panel offices only) must also have these required frame units (see section II B, *Mandatory Consolidated Originating Units, APO/FPO MEPs, and Drop Shipment Parcel MEPs (D/S MEPs)*).

A. MEPs Based Upon the Mail Processing Stream

MSPs often create MEPs based solely upon a facility's mail processing streams. These MEPs usually work well when testing will be performed *before or during* distribution to delivery units in facilities where there is a high degree of automation.

When a MEP based upon a mail processing stream is tested, data collectors must count and record *all mailpieces* in the MEP's mail processing stream. For instance, if an MSP has defined a MEP at a facility as a *letter mail processing stream MEP for entire station — all mail shapes*, data collectors must include in the test all flats, IPPs, and other mailpieces found in this letter mail processing stream. If these mailpieces were not included in the test, the Golden Rules would be violated. Every mailpiece must have one and only one chance to be counted and recorded.

If you are defining MEPs based upon the mail processing stream at a facility where there is a high degree of automation, you might, for example, create three MEPs:

- Letter mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.
- Flat mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.
- IPP (including Priority Mail and parcels) mail processing stream for entire station — all mail shapes.

When a mail processing stream MEP is defined, ensure that the MEP description clearly indicates that the MEP is based upon a mail processing stream and that it therefore includes every mailpiece found in the mail processing stream, regardless of the mailpiece's shape.

B. MEPs Based Upon Mail Shape Only

An MSP may also create MEPs based solely upon mail shape. Because data collectors will collect mailpieces for recording based only upon shape, these MEPs usually work best when defined *after* distribution to delivery units.

When a MEP based solely upon mail shape is created, data collectors will have to exclude all mailpieces that do not fit the requirements of the MEP mail-shape definition. For instance, if a data collector were to find a letter while testing a *flat shape mail only* MEP, the data collector would exclude this letter from the test.

Mail shape only MEPs defined *before* distribution to delivery units are often difficult to manage. Data collectors would generally have to sweep all incoming mail streams (letters, flats, parcels, etc.) looking for that shape.

If you are defining MEPs after distribution to the delivery units, you might create three MEPs that will cover every mailpiece once:

- Letter shape mail only.
- Flat shape mail only.
- IPPs/Parcels/Priority Mail only.

After you have defined a mail shape only MEP, ensure that your MEP description clearly indicates that the MEP is based upon one exclusive mail shape and that every other mail shape found must be excluded from the test.

C. Less than 24-Hour MEPs: the PM MEP and the Multi-tour MEP

When designing a *less than 24-hour MEP*, the MSP should ensure, as always, that every mailpiece is accounted for in one, and only one, MEP. When defining a *less than 24-hour MEP*, ensure that no mailpiece has escaped either the *less than 24-hour MEP* or one of the other MEPs.

When defining a *less than 24-hour MEP*, observe the following guidelines:

- Define cutoff times when a low volume of mail is being received at the MEP. MEP cutoff times do not need to coincide with facility tours.
- Obtain mail volume and other stratification information separately for each tour.
- Ensure that the mail volume for each MEP remains stable from day to day (Golden Rule 3). If the MEP volume from day to day is unstable, redefine your MEP, if possible.
- Ensure that data collectors will be available for any test on each tour or PM MEP.

PM MEP: The PM MEP is one example of a MEP defined for less than 24 hours. This type of MEP often works well with facilities that receive afternoon or PM dispatches. These dispatches usually consist of Standard Mail and Periodicals. Such mail may or may not be available for delivery the next day.

A PM MEP can isolate this mail processing stream for testing. Because PM Mail MEPs are usually defined to test mail arriving at a facility in the late-morning or afternoon and being cased in the afternoon or evening on the day prior to the test date, both the beginning and ending cutoff times for PM MEPs usually fall on the *day before* the test date.

For instance, you might wish to define a PM MEP at a facility that receives a large volume of Standard Mail in the late morning and afternoon. After casing this mail between 0900 and 1600, this facility usually has this mail ready for delivery on the next day. You determine that this Standard Mail is composed predominantly of letter-size and flat-size mailpieces. You might therefore create the following 4 MEPs to capture every mailpiece at this facility:

- PM flat shape mail *only* and PM letter shape mail *only*: from 0900 until 1600 (on preceding day).
- Letter shape mail *only* (excluding PM mail).
- Flat shape mail *only* (excluding PM mail).
- Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail *only* (all dispatches).

Multi-tour MEP: Testing mail for a large volume firm over a 24-hour period can be difficult. An MSP might solve this problem by creating MEPs that correspond to tours.

For example, if there is a very large firm with a unique ZIP Code (such as, for this example, ZIP Code 99999). The firm, or its agent, picks up its mail several times a day. The firm receives approximately 100,000 mailpieces per day composed mainly of letter mail, flats, and parcels.

Observing the *less than 24-hour MEP* guidelines above, you might divide the 24-hour day into 3 tours and further sub-divide each tour into 3 separate MEPs based upon a mail processing stream. Accordingly, the design might create a total of 9 MEPs with characteristics such as the following:

- **Tour 1 (Midnight–0800):**
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPP, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
- **Tour 2 (0800–1600):**
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPP, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
- **Tour 3 (1600–2400):**
  - Letter mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Flat mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.
  - Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail mail processing stream MEP for firm ZIP Code 99999 — all mail shapes.

D. Accountable Mail MEP

When designing an accountable mail MEP, exclude all mail that arrives from sources other than the incoming accountable mailstream. Any mail brought from carriers or from other indirect sources may already have had the chance to be tested with other incoming mail MEPs (such as letter MEPs). Also, consider the following question: Can a data collector record the proper mailpiece characteristics from an accountable mail MEP's location? For instance, creating a BRM MEP upstream of a plant may pose problems if a data collector cannot determine the proper BRM fees during an ODIS-RPW test.

If the accountable mail volume is less than the recommended minimum of 100 mailpieces per day, do not create an accountable mail MEP. Instead, test the accountable mail together with one of the other MEPs at the facility. *To alert data collectors that accountable mail is tested at a specified MEP, the MEP Description field of that MEP in the MEP System should note that the MEP includes accountable mail.* In this way, you might design the following set of MEPs at a facility with under 100 accountable mailpieces per day:

- Letter mail processing stream (*including accountable mail*) — for entire station.

- Flat mail processing stream — for entire station.
- IPP, parcels, and Priority Mail mail processing stream — for entire station.

Accountable Mail MEPs for Medium Volume Accountable Mail

If the volume of accountable mail at a facility is over 100 mailpieces, an MSP should consider creating a separate accountable mail MEP for the facility. You might, for instance, create the following set of MEPs:

- Letter shape mail only (excluding accountable mail).
- Flat shape mail only.
- Parcels, IPPs, and Priority Mail only.
- Incoming accountable mail (excluding hand-offs from carriers).

To ensure that accountable mail is not tested with the other MEPs at the facility, include in the *MEP Description* fields of these other MEPs a message for the data collectors. This message should remind data collectors that accountable mail is only tested in the accountable mail MEP.

Accountable Mail MEPs for Large Volume Accountable Mail

Some facilities may have very large volumes of accountable mail. For example, you might have a facility that receives over 20,000 business reply mailpieces and over 2,000 registered mailpieces each day. Other accountable mail might represent over 5,000 mailpieces each day. In such a case, consider creating the following 3 accountable mail MEPs (in addition to the other required and necessary MEPs):

- A business reply mail MEP.
- A registered/certified mail MEP (excluding registered mail in ODIS-RPW tests).
- An *other* accountable mail MEP.

You should also include a message in the MEP description fields of other MEPs. This message should alert data collectors to exclude accountable mail from all nonaccountable mail MEPs.

IV. Frame Maintenance Policy

The MEP System supports the entire sample selection process for the ODIS-RPW system; therefore, the MEP System must be kept accurate and current. The integrity of the revenue, volume, and performance measurement systems depends on the continuous review, management, and upkeep of MEPs and the MEP System. Therefore, a failure to update the MEP System can result in MEPs missing from the frame, duplicate and overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurately defined administrative information (e.g., MEP description, MEP type, ZIP Codes, special instructions, etc.). All of these factors can lead to the under-reporting or over-reporting of mail volumes. The reporting of inaccurate reference volume information

leads to widely fluctuating mail volumes which in turn affect the precision of the sample estimate. The following frame maintenance policies, when followed and used consistently, will limit the frequency with which these kinds of errors can occur in the MEP System. The frame maintenance policies include:

- On-site Review of All MEPs in a Facility Where ODIS-RPW Tests Are Conducted (section IV A).
- Weekly Reference Volume Updates (section IV B).
- Frame Review Process For Sample Selection (section IV C).
- Drop/Add Policy (section IV D).

A. On-site Review of All MEPs in a Facility Where ODIS-RPW Tests Are Conducted

In order to maintain a complete frame there must be a continuous review of MEPs. This involves checking for duplicate and missing MEPs, overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurate administrative information. The on-site review of MEPs is a critical component because MEPs are regularly defined along mail flows where mail processing is dynamically changing to adapt to new technology and products. Therefore, existing MEPs for a facility must be continuously compared to current mail flows.

Note: Constant communication with knowledgeable post office staff is an important key in the on-site review process.

Maintaining a complete frame requires the following policies:

1. **All MEPs in a facility must be reviewed, at least once per quarter, if an ODIS-RPW test is conducted in that facility.**

   MEPs in a facility are required to be reviewed if an ODIS-RPW test is conducted there during the quarter. The review of the MEPs may be in conjunction with an ODIS-RPW test, but that is not required. The frame review begins anew each quarter, and depends on which MEPs (and their corresponding facilities) are selected for testing in ODIS-RPW. All MEPs in a facility must be reviewed at least once when there are multiple tests conducted in that facility within the quarter.

   It is up to the discretion of the MSP to schedule a review of the frame in these facilities. MSPs may voluntarily schedule additional reviews, particularly if this process routinely accompanies data collectors as they conduct tests.

   Not all facilities are tested each quarter; however, large volume facilities rarely experience consecutive quarters without ODIS-RPW tests. Smaller facilities may receive only one test per year, or only one test over several years. These smaller facilities will generally have simple mail flows covered by only a few MEPs, and therefore there is less concern about such things as duplicate or missing MEPs.

2. **The review of all MEPs in a facility must be conducted on-site.**

   The on-site review of the MEP frame is critical for ensuring that the collection of MEPs allows each mailpiece exiting the Postal Service to have one, and only one, chance of being tested. Without an on-site review the study of mail flows would be impossible, and effective communication with knowledgeable facility personnel would be difficult to establish.

   Small facilities with only a few MEPs still require an on-site review when an ODIS-RPW test is conducted. If all the MEPs are defined upstream at the parent plant, the on-site review at the small facility is waived. However, a call to the facility is required to ensure all mail flows are covered within the upstream MEPs.

3. **The review of facility MEPs may be conducted by data collectors in conjunction with ODIS-RPW tests.**

   Data collectors conducting ODIS-RPW tests may also conduct a review of all MEPs while at the facility on the test day. Such practices may not be possible in all situations, particularly where the time windows do not exist. *In no case should the isolation, sampling, or data recording be compromised by the review of the facility MEP frame.* However, if the time windows exist, and the data collector understands and can apply procedures for reviewing the frame, the review may be performed in conjunction with the test.

4. **The reviewer must bring a printout of the facility's frame listing.**

   Frame listings must be printed from the MEP System for the facility and be provided to the reviewer for use during the on-site visit. The listing should include all information about the MEP from the MEP System (i.e., ZIP Codes, finance number, MEP type, MEP description, facility name, Headquarters Code, and the extended MEP description from the Special Instructions). These listings form the basis from which to compile notes that can be used later to update the MEP System and Special Instructions.

5. **The review must include a check for missing, duplicate, overlapping MEPs, and MEPs with inaccurate administrative information.**

   Missing MEPs: The reviewer must check for missing MEPs. Missing MEPs occur when mail consistently misses all MEPs in a facility, and, therefore, could not be included in any existing MEP. The identification of missing MEPs requires an on-site investigation of mail flows (get help from knowledgeable facility personnel). Missing MEPs must be added to the MEP System.

   Duplicate MEPs: The reviewer must inspect the frame listing for duplicate MEPs. Duplicate MEPs are alike in all respects. They have the same MEP description, ZIP Codes, administrative information, and MEP reference volumes. Determining if duplicate MEPs exist does not require an inspection of mail flows, only a careful review of the facility frame listing. Duplicate MEPs must be deleted from the MEP System.

Overlapping MEPs: The reviewer must check for overlapping MEPs. When mail is eligible to be tested in more than one MEP, it means that the MEPs are incorrectly defined and overlapping. Since most MEPs are defined along mail processing streams that consist predominantly of one mail shape, overlapping MEPs often mean that two MEPs cover the same or portions of the same mail processing flows. The identification of overlapping MEPs requires an on-site investigation of mail flows working in conjunction with knowledgeable facility personnel. Corrections to the MEP description in the MEP System and to the Special Instructions can often solve these problems. Use the *MEP Description* and Special Instructions to specifically identify which mailstream and type of containers go with which frame unit, cutoff times, etc.

MEPs with inaccurate administrative information: The frame listings must be reviewed for inaccurate administrative information such as: incorrect MEP descriptions, MEP type and group codes, ZIP Codes, and *Special Instructions*. This information is extremely critical to testing consistently from day to day and ensures an accurate sample selection file each quarter. The identification of inaccurate administrative information requires a combination of examining the frame listing and an on-site investigation of mail flows (working in conjunction with knowledgeable facility personnel). Ensure that:

- The ZIP Codes are accurate and associated with the correct finance number. This includes the main office, facility, and MEP ZIP Codes.
- The MEP description is complete. It must contain information about such things as cutoff times for less than 24-hour MEPs and whether the MEP is based upon mail processing stream or mail shape. Refer to section II D for information on what to include in the MEP description.
- The *Special Instructions* properly supports the MEP description. This field allows room for storing other information about the MEP that is helpful in testing the MEP in a consistent manner.
- The MEP type and group are correct. The MEP type and group are crucial in software development for CODES data entry. Programmers use these to navigate the data collector through CODES data entry software. The MEP type is also used in stratification, or the grouping of like MEPs for sample selection.

Examples:

- MEP Description and Special Instructions that do not clearly spell out how containers of mixed shaped mail are to be sampled may lead one data collector to test using one method one day, and another data collector to test using another method another day. Even the same data collector may not sample mixed shaped mail containers consistently from one day to the next.

- Consolidated Originating Units (COUs) must be coded with MEP type = 1 or 3. The ODIS-RPW data entry screens follow the MEP type for COU and destination tests. Incorrect coding of the MEP type causes the wrong screens to appear and results in tests which cannot be taken. This is just one of many situations where the proper coding of the MEP type is critical.

6. **Communicate with knowledgeable facility personnel.**

   Always communicate with knowledgeable facility personnel to discuss changes in mail flows, mail processing, dispatch schedules, and any other changes which may lead to missing and overlapping MEPs, confusing MEP descriptions, etc. Effective communication is best achieved through on-site visits to mail facilities.

7. **Collect reports (where necessary), such as CLASS reports, automated machine counts, and rural route listings.**

   In some instances it may be useful to gather such reports as CLASS reports, rural route listings, case diagrams, and information from the Engineering Technical Unit (ETU). These reports are helpful in reviewing MEPs that are defined in a *similar* manner, such as carrier routes defined as MEPs.

B. Weekly Reference Volume Updates

The MEP System should be the primary tool used to maintain the reference volumes. It is required that the MEP History Report be generated and reviewed at the end of each week for all MEPs where an ODIS-RPW test has been taken within the given week. The information gathered from the MEP History Report is then used to update MEP System reference volumes. Use the following process to update MEP System reference volumes on a weekly basis:

1. **Generate and Review the MEP History Report**

   It is required that the MEP History Report be generated and reviewed at the end of each week. While certain MEPs that are tested frequently might be updated several times during the quarter, this practice assures a concerted and dedicated effort to maintain accurate reference volumes. Therefore, in order to provide timely and accurate reference volume updates, the following guidelines must be met:

   - The MEP History Report *must* be generated and reviewed at the end of each week and include all historical data.
   - All historical data must be used.
   - After a careful review of the MEP History Report, determine whether or not report averages need to be adjusted following the guidelines established in step 2.

2. Adjust Test Data Averages if Necessary

The MEP History Reports generates reports that contain an average of the historical test and external data. This average is used to update MEP reference volumes. In some instances there may be a need to adjust the average. In these special cases where it is necessary to make the adjustment, use the following guidelines:

a. Evaluating whether an adjustment to the average is necessary.

Any adjustment to the MEP History Report should only be made after a careful review of the individual tests and external records. Always accept the given average, unless the average contains bad tests (for example, wrong skip intervals used, mail not isolated properly, wrong MEP tested, etc.) or bad external data. Recalculate the average excluding the suspect test(s).

b. Adjust Test Data Averages if Necessary.

Test data records can only be adjusted manually on the MEP History Report itself.

3. Weekly Reference Volume Updates Using the MEP History Report

After a careful review of the MEP History Report, and considering the calculated test and external data average, update the MEP System reference volumes.

It is not an acceptable practice to update the MEP System reference volumes to the exact test volume for the given test day without considering the reference volume averages from the MEP History Report. The only case where individual test volumes should be considered is when no other test and/or external data are available.

C. Frame Review Process for Sample Selection

The on-site facility review of MEPs and the weekly reference volume updates are continuous frame maintenance processes. In addition, a final review process must be conducted prior to the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sample selection.

Two weeks prior to the close of the frame, the following activities are required:

1. Check transactions (Adds/Deletes/Changes) for accuracy before the close of the frame for sample selection.

Prior to the close of the frame for sample selection processing (see the dates listed in number 4) all adds, deletes, and changes must be reviewed. The review must ensure that these modifications have not resulted in missing, duplicate, or overlapping MEPs. After the review, check the MEP System to ensure that MEPs are listed correctly where transactions have occurred.

It is important that the MSP keeps a record of all MEPs that have changed (this helps to determine if MEPs that have received transactions are listed correctly in the MEP System). However, because there is no CODES Web Base Unit program available at this time to record these transactions, it is up to the MSP to

choose a method by which he or she can record this information. The ideal way to keep track of this information is to construct a log, using a notebook or electronic spreadsheet, that contains those MEPs that have received transactions and the types of transactions that were performed (i.e., adds/deletes/changes). Whatever method the MSP chooses to use, it is the careful recording of transaction information that ensures accurate updates to the MEP System.

2. **Review Headquarters generated Frame Maintenance and Advancement/ Relegation Reports.**

   Each quarter, Headquarters sends out the *Advancements and Relegation, and Frame Maintenance for Qxx, Fyy, Sampling Report* which lists potential MEPs that need updating.

   The advancements/relegation tables in this report deal with aligning the MEP System district frame with the financial accounting systems' official list of finance numbers and their Cost Ascertainment Group (CAG). The table titled *Frame Maintenance Report* lists other potential problems with the district's frame.

   Each table must be reviewed and the necessary corrections made to the MEP System per the processing deadlines for the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sample selection (number 4).

3. **Completely review the frame listing for accuracy before the close of the frame for sample selection.**

   An in-office review of the entire MEP System is a critical final step prior to the close of the frame for sample selection. It is recommended that all MEPs be listed (on hard copy or electronically on screen) by facility and reviewed one last time.

   Once the frame is closed and ODIS-RPW tests scheduled, the tests must be performed on the MEPs which existed at the time of sample selection. While updates can be posted continuously, they do not take effect for testing until the following quarter.

4. **Make any necessary corrections on the MEP System and process all transactions by the processing deadlines for the close of the frame for ODIS-RPW sampling (Sample Selection Processing).**

   Make any necessary corrections to the MEP System and process all transactions by the processing deadlines given below. Information from your MEP System transmissions is used in creating ODIS-RPW sample selections for your district. *All additions, changes, and deletions to the MEP System must be completed by 4:00 p.m. eastern time on the following dates:*

   - November 21st for quarter 2 Sample Selection Processing.
   - February 21st for quarter 3 Sample Selection Processing.
   - May 21st for quarter 4 Sample Selection Processing.
   - August 21st for quarter 1 Sample Selection Processing.

D. Drop/Add Policy

For updates that change the basic definition of the MEP, the MEP must first be deleted and then the new one added.

This ensures that the new MEP has a unique Headquarters Code (HQCD) and hence is a unique sampling unit. If the MEP's finance number, main office ZIP or facility ZIP, MEP ZIP, or fundamental MEP definition changes, the original MEP should be deleted and the new or modified MEP added.

Example: An original MEP is defined as an all letter and flat mail processing stream to a facility. It is decided to replace this MEP with 2 MEPs, one a letter mail processing stream to the facility and the other a flat mail processing stream to the facility. DO NOT MODIFY THE ORIGINAL MEP TO ONE OF THE NEW MEPS; it will not be associated with a unique HQCD. Delete the original MEP and add the 2 new MEPs.

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Glossary

This glossary contains official postal terms and definitions for ODIS-RPW. A thorough understanding of all the terms in this glossary will be useful for data collectors, SPSs, and MSPs. Please refer to *Publication 32, Glossary of Postal Terms,* for more definitions.

Accountable Mail	Mail that requires the signature of the addressee or addressee's agent upon receipt to provide proof of delivery or indemnification for loss or damage. This includes Express Mail and special service mail such as certified mail, collect on delivery, insured mail for more than $50, registered mail, and return receipt for merchandise. Accountable mail also includes postage due mail and business reply mail (BRM).
Accounting Period (AP)	A four week period that forms one-thirteenth of the postal fiscal year. The accounting period begins on a Saturday and ends at the close of business Friday, 4 weeks later. This term will be obsolete effective FY 2004.
Advanced Flat Sorting Machine (AFSM)	The AFSM processes all flat size mail and has three high-speed feeders that are capable of feeding two flat mailpieces each second which translates into a maximum throughput rate of 21,600 pieces fed per hour. The AFSM has 253 buckets that have 3 pockets each. These 759 pockets are where flat mailpieces are injected. The AFSM has Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Bar Code Reader (BCR) capability that allows it to read an address or bar code to determine the proper sort location.
Airmail	A service by which international mail receives First-Class Mail service domestically, is dispatched by the most expeditious transportation, and receives air or priority handling in the destination country.
Airport Mail Center/ Facility (AMC/F)	A postal unit, located at or next to an airport, that concentrates, transfers, receives, distributes, and dispatches mail transported principally by air.
Algorithm	A procedure for solving a mathematical problem in a finite number of steps that frequently involves repetition of an operation.
Ancillary Service	Forwarding, return, or address correction service included within a mail class. Depending on the mail class, these services are performed at a charge or at no additional charge, if and when the service is actually rendered.
Ancillary Service Endorsement	A marking used by a mailer to request the new address of an addressee and to provide the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle mail that is undeliverable as addressed.
Application(s)	Software designed by the Postal Service for the specific use of data collection personnel to perform specific data processing tasks.
Area Distribution Center (ADC)	A mail processing facility that receives, processes, and distributes mail destined for specific ZIP Code areas under the Managed Mail Program (MMP). This facility is one point within the national MMP distribution network and covers a specific service area.

Armed Forces Free Mail	This free mailing privilege may be used only by memebers of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty who are either assigned to military duty in certain designated overseas areas or are hospitalized in a facility under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Armed Forces. These Mailpieces must be addressed to a military post office or a place in the United States served by a U.S. post office and must be marked "FREE" in the upper right corner.
Army/Air Force Post Office (APO)	A branch of a designated Postal Service civilian post office which falls under the jurisdiction of the postmaster of either New York or San Francisco. It is operated by the Department of Defense to serve military personnel overseas or aboard ships where the Postal Service does not operate and a military situation requires service. APO serves the Army and the Air Force.
Associate Office (AO)	(obsolete) A post office that reported to a larger post office or that was within the service area of a sectional center facility. It usually received and dispatched all mail classes from and to the sectional center facility.
Automated Area Distribution Center (AADC)	This is an area distribution center (ADC) that uses multiline optical character readers (MLOCRs), barcode sorters (BCSs), and other equipment designed for processing automation-compatible mail.
Automation Rate Barcode (ARB)	For a letter, the ARB is an 11-digit barcode that appears in the address block, or in a window in the barcode clear zone. For a flat, the ARB is a 9-digit barcode in the address block, or in a window in the barcode clear zone.
Autres Objets (AO)	Also known as other articles. In ODIS-RPW tests, *autres objets* indicates international mail that consists of printed matter, small packets, and matter for the blind.
Barcode (BC)	A series of vertical bars and half bars representing the ZIP Code information for the delivery address on a mailpiece. The barcode facilitates automated processing by barcode reader equipment. For information on specific types of barcodes, see POSTNET barcode and Planet barcode. Each numeric digit is represented by a series of five bars (always a combination of two full bars and three half bars). A complete barcode contains two bars framing the code; the five, nine, or eleven digits containing ZIP Code and address information; and a final correction digit that allows the machine to check its reading of the ZIP Code.
Barcode Reader (BCR)	A component of a barcode sorter that reads and interprets an imprinted barcode previously applied to a mailpiece. (Also called *wide area barcode reader* and *barcode scanner*.)
Barcode Sorter (BCS)	A computerized machine that sorts letter size mail by using a barcode reader to interpret an imprinted barcode. This machine consists of a mail feed and transport unit, barcode reader, stacker module, and associated electronic equipment that can sort into a large number of separations.

Bias

A type of error which, when committed repeatedly, does not tend to cancel out. Rather, bias has the effect of increasing (positive bias) or decreasing (negative bias) the estimates, regardless of the size of the sample. The following are possible sources of bias:

- When the sampling frame differs from the population of interest. This will occur if some parts of the population are not included on the frame. It may also occur if some parts of the population are included on the frame twice.
- When the required subsampling skip interval is different from the skip interval used.
- When the mail is incorrectly recorded in the same manner repeatedly.

Birth of MEP

A new unit established within the mail processing stream that did not previously exist as a MEP.

Blow-up Factor

This number is either one of the following:

- The piece skip interval for simple mailpiece skip subsampling.
- The product of the container skip interval and mailpiece skip interval for container subsampling.

Once this multiplication is done, the sampled mail is “expanded or blown up” to represent the full base of the mail for the test.

Bound Printed Matter (BPM)

A subclass of Package Services that weighs not more than 15 pounds and that consists of permanently bound sheets of which at least 90 percent are printed with advertising, directory, editorial matter, or combination of these.

Boxholder Firm

A customer who has an assigned box/caller or phantom box number. The customer’s incoming mail must be regularly distributed by name on the primary or secondary distribution operation(s) or the box section primary. If the mail is distributed to a number series separation on the box primary case, it is not a direct boxholder firm. Therefore, the customer is not a firm.

Box Section

The part of a Postal Service facility having caller service or lock boxes.

Branch (classified)

A unit of a main post office that is outside the corporate limits of the city or town of the main post office.

Bulk Business Mail (BBM)

Periodicals and Standard Mail submitted in bulk to business mail entry units or other designated facilities. The term includes samples, ordinary paper, and circulars.

Bulk Mail Center (BMC)

A highly mechanized mail processing plant that is part of the National Bulk Mail System. This facility distributes Standard Mail and Periodicals in bulk form and Package Services in piece.

Bulk Rate	The postage rate for mailpieces that are part of a large-volume mailing and that meet minimum volume and preparation requirements. The term is most often applied to Standard Mail mailings, which usually consist of a per piece rate plus a per pound rate. As of January 10, 1999, the Postal Service now allows mailers to use the endorsements *PRESORTED STANDARD* and *PRSRT STD* in the place of *BULK RATE* and *BLK. RT.* Record these new endorsements using the same established procedures.
Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)	The area of a Postal Service facility where a mailer presents for acceptance bulk mail or presorted mail. It includes dedicated platform space, office space, and a staging area on the workroom floor.
Business Reply Mail (BRM)	Specially printed postcards, envelopes, cartons, and labels that may be mailed without postage prepayment. Postage and fees are collected when the mail is delivered back to the original sender. This domestic service enables authorized mailers to receive First-Class Mail, without prepaid postage, back from customers by paying the postage and fee on receipt of mailpieces. (See also *Courtesy Reply Mail*.)
Bypass Mail	Any mail that has not been processed according to the normal mail processing flow at a facility. Generally, bypass mail is Standard Mail. Bypass mail includes office to office mail, dock transfer, and BMC to facility mail. You should ask the appropriate facility personnel about the kinds of bypass mail that the facility receives. You can then determine, based on the MEP description in the MEPS System, whether the bypass mail should be recorded with the other mailpieces of the MEP being tested.
Cadre Staff	A group of trained data collection personnel who are designated by the district's MSP to conduct statistical programs tests when a district data collection technician is not available.
CAG K and L Offices	Includes cadre, ad hoc, backup, etc. Data are obtained by treating such offices as hold outs of the designated processing center. The sampling unit is a CAG K office-day or a CAG L office-day.
Cancellation	A postmark that contains the post office name, state, ZIP Code, and month, day, and year that the mail was canceled.
Card	Any rectangular-shaped mailpiece of uniform thickness and made of card stock (single and double cards). See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Carrier Route Presort Mail	Mail that the mailer arranges by carrier route to qualify for discount postage rates. The mail requires no primary or secondary distribution. The term is a general descriptor of the available rates for this type of preparation, including Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail, automation carrier route First-Class Mail, carrier route Periodicals, and carrier route Bound Printed Matter. Except for automation rates, this mail usually does not bear a barcode.
Carrier Sequence Barcode Sorter (CSBCS)	An automated machine that sorts mail for an individual carrier route, allowing the mail to go directly from the machine to the carrier for delivery to Postal Service customers. The CSBCS is a smaller barcode sorter designed for delivery units with 10 or more routes.

Census	A method of sampling in which the data collector records every mailpiece in the MEP.
Certificates of Mailing	A supplemental mail service that provides a receipt prepared by the mailer as proof of mailing.
Certified Mail	A special service that provides the sender with a receipt at the time of mailing; a record of delivery is kept at the post office of address. This type of mail must be sent at the regular First-Class Mail or Priority Mail rate. If sent as First-Class Mail, it is dispatched and handled in transit as ordinary mail. There are additional fees for return receipt.
Change-of-address (COA)	A customer move from one mailing address to another.
Change-of-address order	A customer's notification to the post office of a permanent or temporary change of address (COA) by using PS Form 3575, *Change of Address Order*, or other written or personal notice.
City Delivery Route	A route which delivers mail to business, residential, local, and federal government postal customers within a local city post office area.
Classification	The grouping of mailable matter into mail classes and subclasses by rate categories, according to content, weight, size, and preparation standards.
CODES Computer Support Center (CCSC)	The main help desk support unit for CODES users. The CCSC specializes in assisting CODES users with solving hardware and software problems.
Collect On Delivery (COD)	Any mailer may use COD service to mail an article for which the mailer has not been paid and have its price and cost of the postage collected from the recipient. If the recipient remits the amount due by check payable to the mailer, the Postal Service forwards the check to the mailer. If the recipient pays in cash, the Postal Service sends a postal money order to the mailer. The amount collected from the recipient may not exceed $1,000.00. COD service provides the mailer with a mailing receipt, and a delivery record is kept at the post office of address.
Commingled Mail	Test day incoming mail that has been sent to a wrong facility is not easy to identify or isolate, and so is included in the mailpiece skip count.
Computerized On-site Data Entry System (CODES)	A computerized data entry system that uses portable computers to record data for ODIS-RPW, and other statistical systems. It also provides administrative processing and telecommunications.
Consolidated Originating Unit (COU)	A physical location where clusters of mail can be subsampled as they enter the Postal Service. Mail must be Insured, Registered, C.O.D., or Certificates of Mailings.
Container Skip Subsampling	Counted subsampling by containers. Mailpiece skip subsampling is then performed within selected containers.

Container Types Any equipment used to hold more than one mailpiece. The term includes a sack, pouch, hamper, nutting truck, basket, letter tray, or flat tray and a variety of boxes and carts. Mail transport equipment is used to move mail in plant or between authorized Postal Service facilities. These include the Amtrak container, bulk mail center over-the-road (BMC-OTR) container, BMC in-house container, CON-CON container, multipurpose containers (eastern region mail container and general purpose mail container), and wire container.

Contract Postal Unit A postal unit that is a subordinate unit within the service area of a main post office. It is usually located in a store or place of business and is operated by a contractor who accepts mail from the public, sells postage and supplies, and provides selected special services (for example, postal money order or Registered Mail).

Cost Ascertainment Group (CAG) A method of classifying post offices according to volume of revenue generated. Each year, the *Postal Bulletin* publishes the number of revenue units for each classification. CAGs range from A to L.

Counted Subsampling Either mailpiece skip subsampling, or mail container skip subsampling. It is the process of selecting mailpieces/containers by starting with a randomly selected mailpiece/container, and selecting every mailpiece/container thereafter that falls on a skip number (for instance, selecting every fifth mailpiece/container when the mailpiece/container skip interval is 5).

Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) A pre-addressed return envelope or postcard that business mailers provide to a customer for returning remittance, order or response. The customer pays the postage. In many cases, the envelope is also prebarcoded. (See also *Business Reply Mail*.)

Coverage Maintaining a collection of MEPs that allows every mailpiece *one and only one* chance of being included in a test.

Coverage Error A bias in ODIS-RPW estimates that may occur whenever a mailpiece has *more than one chance* or *no chance* of being selected for recording.

Cursor A flashing, movable image on the laptop display screen that indicates where the test data are entered and displayed.

Curtailed Mail Standard Mail that the letter carrier cannot case before schedule delivery-route leave time and is authorized to leave for casing the next day. Standard Mail must be sampled on the day it is distributed to the delivery unit and excluded from sampling on subsequent days. Also, the nondelivery of mail to a customer in cases where the premises are hazardous (for example, when a customer does not restrain a dog).

If a MEP is defined before distribution, the data collector will not encounter curtailed mail. By definition, curtailed mail has already been marked for distribution. However, if a MEP is defined after distribution, such as at a delivery point, curtailed mail must be isolated. The ODIS-RPW test does not record curtailed mail intended for delivery on the previous day. Please refer to Appendix E for more information.

Cutoff Times	Every MEP has two cutoff times: the beginning cutoff time and the ending cutoff time. The cutoff times determine when the ODIS-RPW test begins and when it ends. Cutoff times also define which mailpieces must be included in the ODIS-RPW test and which mailpieces must be excluded. Cutoff times are normally determined by carrier times and dispatch times. Cutoff times for specific MEPs are included in the MEP description.
Data Collection Technician (DCT)	An employee whose position is with finance and is dedicated to statistical programs work involving data collection.
Data Entry Program	Software designed by (or for) the United States Postal Service allowing automated data collection for statistical analysis. The software consists of series of menus and prompts that require user input.
Data Field	A specific type of information required by the data entry program to complete the test.
Data Record	A set of data, stored on disk, which is a snapshot of the data captured.
Death of MEP	The termination of a MEP.
Delayed mail	First-Class Mail that is available for delivery but is delayed or is late arriving because of workload requirements that day.
Delivery BCR/BCS	A computer-controlled, high-speed machine that sorts letters by reading an imprinted barcode. This is a smaller version of the barcode sorter (BCS). In addition, it sorts carrier mail to delivery sequence at stations, branches, and associate offices. The delivery BCR/BCS has either three or four tiers of bins.
Delivery Point Barcode (DPBC)	A POSTNET barcode that contains a ZIP+4 barcode plus two additional digits (10 additional bars) that designate a specific delivery point. It consists of 62 bars with beginning and ending frame bars and 5 bars each for the 9 digits of the ZIP+4, the last two digits of the primary street address (or post office box, etc.), and a correction digit. This type of barcode allows automated sortation of mail at the carrier route level in walk sequence.
Delivery Point Sequence (DPS)	Machinable letters sorted according to the delivery sequence by the carrier. An 11-digit barcode enables a barcode sorter (BCS) to sequence mail in the exact order of delivery. This process eliminates the need for carriers to manually sort these letters prior to delivery.
Destination Bulk Mail Center (DBMC) rate	A discount/rate available for Package Services and bulk Standard Mail transported by the mailer (at the mailer's own expense) to the bulk mail center serving that delivery area.
Destination Delivery Unit (DDU) rate	A discount/rate available for Periodicals, Standard Mail carrier route, and Package Services parcel post mail that is properly prepared and entered by the mailer at the delivery unit that serves the delivery address on the mail.
Destination Sectional Center Facility (DSCF) rate	A discount/rate available for Periodicals, Standard Mail, and Package Services Parcel Post mail that is properly prepared and entered by the mailer at the sectional center facility that serves the delivery address on the mail.

Detached Mailing Cards	These are cards that are associated with parent mailpieces (often called Marriage Mail) in the destinating offices. Detached mailing cards can sometimes be returned to the plant for reprocessing with automation mail. When encountered in DPS automation mail, they must not be included in the count when applying the mailpiece skip count (treat as if they are not in the tray). This is the only case where samplers are instructed to ignore mailpieces when conducting the mailpiece skip count, and is the only exception to the rule that all mailpieces are counted through in the application of skip interval process.
Diskette	A 3.5 inch 1.44 MB, hard plastic-covered device, coated with magnetic material used for storing information or software. The user should scan all diskettes to be used in the laptop for viruses PRIOR to using them.
Dispatch	Mail readied and loaded for transportation. To ready the mail for loading.
Distribution	The sorting of mail into pigeonhole cases, trays, sacks, machine bins, or pouches in order to group pieces with a common destination for transportation to the post office of address. Distribution may be accomplished by manual, mechanized or automated means. The term is also applied to the distributed mail itself.
***Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM)**	A directive that contains the basic Postal Service standards for domestic mail services; a description of and requirements for each mail class special service and ancillary service and conditions governing their uses; and standards for rate eligibility and mail preparation. DMM is one of six Postal Service policy manuals.
Double-counting	Double-counting threatens the integrity of the ODIS-RPW test. It occurs whenever a mailpiece under test has the potential to be selected more than once during the 24-hour testing period.
Drop Shipment	A mailing transported by the mailer or a private (nonpostal) carrier, from the point of production to a postal facility located closer to the destination. Express Mail and Priority Mail drop shipment, however, are transported by the Postal Service instead of a private carrier.
D/S MEP (Drop Shipment MEP)	A requirement MEP if a PM MEP exists for a facility and the amount of drop shipment parcels is consistently 100 or mailpieces per day. The MEPs for the facility would include a PM MEP and a D/S MEP. The MEP description must include the words D/S MEP.
Endorsement	An authorized marking on a mailpiece that shows handling instructions, a special service, or a request for an ancillary service.
Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR)	Two subclasses of Standard Mail for mailpieces weighing less than 16 ounces and prepared in carrier route sequence. One subclass is available only to authorized mailers of Nonprofit Standard Mail. Mailers who sort bulk Standard Mail by individual carrier routes earn a discount from the bulk rate.
Estimate	A numerical value obtained from a statistical sample and assigned to a population parameter. Population parameters estimated from a sample of the MEP frame include total volume, average daily volume, revenue, and weight for a particular class or subclass of mail.

Exit Point	A place or point in any post office in the country by which a piece of mail can get to an addressee.
Express Mail	A mail class that provides expedited Postal Service overnight delivery service for mailable matter (up to 70 pounds), subject to certain standards.
External First-Class (EXFC)	A slot-to-slot performance measurement system that measures First-Class Mail performance from the time mail enters the mailstream until it is delivered to a household, small business, or post office box. EXFC measures service performance from a customer perspective and produces accurate, independent, externally generated results.
Facility	Any building used by the Postal Service to accept mail, process and distribute mail, and/or deliver mail. Examples of facilities are: airport mail center, bulk mail center, processing & distribution center, associate post office station or branch.
Facing Identification Mark (FIM)	A series of vertical bars used by automated postal equipment that identifies, orients, and separates business reply mail, courtesy reply mail, and official mail. These bars are positioned in the upper right corner of the mailpiece to the left of the indicia (area reserved for postage). FIMs serve as an orientation mark for automated facing and canceling equipment.
Facing Slip	A paper label attached to the top of a mail package that shows the postal unit where the mail is due to be distributed, the class and type of mail, and the country or military post office.
FASTforward	A Postal Service-licensed automated system that updates addresses by identifying names and addresses for which current change-of-address orders are on file.
Finance Number	An assigned six-digit number that identifies an installation for processing financial data. The first two digits are a state code; and the last four are uniquely assigned from 0001 through 9999 to each installation in alphabetical order.
Finance Unit	A nondelivery post office branch or post office station that accepts mail from customers, provides services to customers and handles their mail.
Firm	A business, school, church, library, apartment building, or government agency.
Firm Holdout	A service for customers who receive 50 or more pieces on the first delivery trip on a carrier route. These customers may pick up their mail at the post office once a day.
Firm ZIP	The system designed to make optimal use of automated equipment. The system is primarily for high-volume mailers that use courtesy or business reply mail and share a common ZIP Code. The primary emphasis is on unique 5-digit ZIP Codes assigned to firms receiving a high volume of mail and on unique ZIP+4 codes assigned to firms receiving 10 or more pieces of mail on a daily average. The mail must be readable by an optical character reader (OCR) and bear a ZIP+4 code.
First-Class Mail	First-Class Mail weighs 13 ounces or less. It includes letters, cards, flats, small parcels, and rolls.
Flagging	Identification of mail that must be included or excluded for the MEP unit during an ODIS-RPW test.

Flat	Mail shape category for the ODIS-RPW test that includes any mailpiece not categorized as a card or letter. See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Flat Sorting Machine (FSM)	A machine that mechanically sorts flats by ZIP Code. Using four operators, a FSM distributes between 10,000 and 13,500 pieces per hour into one of one hundred bins or stackers. Also known as multiposition flat sorting machine (MPFSM).
Fleet Post Office (FPO)	A branch of a designated Postal Service civilian post office which falls under the jurisdiction of the postmaster of either New York or San Francisco. An FPO is operated by the Department of Defense to serve military personnel overseas or aboard ships where the Postal Service does not operate and a military situation requires service. FPO serves the operating forces of the Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps.
Frame	A list of sampling units.
Franked Mail	Official mail sent without postage prepayment by members and members-elect of Congress, the vice president, and other specifically authorized individuals. Mail must relate to the official business, activities, and duties of the U.S. Congress. The mailpiece bears a written signature, printed facsimile signature, or other required marking instead of a postage stamp.
Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped	Material sent to or by the blind and other disabled persons and bearing postage and fees paid indicia. It must be marked "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped."
Function Keys	Keys that are pre-programmed to perform certain functions upon execution. Function keys are usually F1 through F12.
General Mail Facility (GMF)	A facility that processes and distributes mail for a specific service area.
Girth	The measurement around the thickest part of a mailpiece.
Golden Rules	The set of rules which must be met in order to create a MEP. The four rules are as follows: (1) mail must be associated with one and only one MEP; (2) the mail for each MEP should be able to be isolated for testing; (3) MEPs should be relatively stable through time; and, (4) the cost effectiveness of testing should be maximized for each MEP.
Handbook	A Postal Service directive that documents the procedures needed to implement Postal Service policy stated in manuals.
Hazardous Materials	Any item that is mailable only under specific Postal Service restrictions and that requires specific endorsements because of potential harm to the mail or persons or property involved in moving the mail. This category includes chemicals, toy propellants and some safety fuses, explosives, compressed gases, radioactive materials, biological materials, magnetized materials and dry ice.
Headquarters	The national Postal Service unit that directs administration, policy, and operations. It is located at 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Washington DC 20260-0001.
Help	Information displayed at the user's request that explains how to use a specific software option, thus aiding a DCT in providing correct information.

Highway Contract Route A route served by a Postal Service contractor to carry mail by highway between destination points. Some of these routes include mail delivery to boxes along the line of travel.

Holdout Mail held for handling and dispatch and for businesses that receive a large volume of mail.

Identical Mailing A mailing in which the mailpieces have the same origin, mail class, subclass, markings, shape, size, weight, and postage, but have different destinations.

Incoming Mail Mail received by a Postal Service facility, most commonly for distribution and delivery within the delivery area of the receiving facility.

Incoming Primary Distribution An operation in which most of the mail is distributed to city zones and local destinations (including AOs). Note that most incoming primary distributions have other holdouts included in the sort that are not incoming primary.

Incoming Secondary Distribution An operation in which the mail is being sorted to mail carriers or to final delivery units.

Indicia An imprinted designation on a mailpiece that denotes postage payment (for example, a permit imprint in place of a postage stamp or a meter stamp).

Information Based Indicia (IBI) A type of *postage security device (PSD) meter*, categorized under the *Generation 2* evidencing systems. IBI can be applied as an indicia to any class of mail except Periodicals. IBIs are digital indicia that include human-readable information and a Postal Service approved two-dimensional barcode or other Postal Service approved symbology, with a digital signature and other required data fields (revenue, postmark date, origin city and state, and origin ZIP Code). Human-readable information pertaining to revenue is optional. IBI as a type of metered mail is entitled to all privileges and is subject to all conditions applying to the various classes of mail.

Insured Mail A special service to customers who pay a fee in advance to obtain payment in the event that the mail is lost, rifled, or damaged.

***International Mail Manual* (IMM)** The directive that contains postage rates and classification and other regulations for mailings bound for other countries. IMM is one of six Postal Service policy manuals.

Irregular Parcel and Pieces (IPP) ODIS-RPW mail shape category that includes any mailpiece not categorized as a card, letter, flat or parcel.

Keyline Optional mailer information printed at least two lines above the delivery address or in the lower left corner of the mailpiece. Under some postage payment systems, a required data line that contains specific information regarding the mailpiece.

Keys and Identification Devices Keys and identification devices (identification cards or uncovered identification tags) bearing, containing, or having securely attached the name and complete address of a person, organization, or concern, with instructions to return the piece to that address and a statement guaranteeing payment of postage due on delivery.

Laptop Personal Computer (PC)	A compact PC used by data collection personnel for source data entry, online editing, automated test control and electronic transmission of statistical data to the CODES Web Base Unit for final processing.
Letter	Mail shape category for both ODIS-RPW that includes any mailpiece not categorized as a card. See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Letters and Cards (LC)	A category of international mail that consists of ordinary letters containing personal correspondence; letter packages containing correspondence and/or other mailable items; postcards and postal cards, and aerogrammes. The *LC* designation is derived from the French terms *lettres and cartes.*
Library Mail	A Package Services subclass for items on loan from or exchanged between academic institutions, public libraries, museums, and other authorized organizations. Books, sound recordings, academic theses, and certain other items may be mailed at the Library Mail rate if marked on the outside of the mailpieces as "Library Mail" or "Library Rate." See RM 3–12 for dimensions and weight.
Mail Class	The classification of domestic mail according to service standards and content (for example, personal correspondence versus printed advertising). Domestic mail classes are codified in the Domestic Mail Classification Schedule.
Mail Exit Point (MEP)	A physical place in the mail processing stream between and including the destination mail processing plant and the final delivery unit. At a MEP, mailpieces can be isolated and counted so that information about the mailpieces can be recorded.
Mail Exit Point System (MEPS)	This is the data entry system for recording and maintaining MEPs. This includes the MEP History Report which maintains historical records of test and external data for selected MEPs.
Mail Exit Point - Day (MEP-Day)	For the ODIS-RPW test, a sampling unit is *always* a MEP-day. Because a MEP is a physical place, by itself, a MEP does not allow us to define precisely what volume of mail we should capture and record. Because mail processing is an around-the-clock operation, we need to associate every MEP with a specified time frame (normally one day, but sometimes a specific part of a day). You might see a MEP-day at a facility described as follows: *All letter size mail for ZIP Codes 55551, 55552, and 55553 on January 14th*. By associating every MEP with a specified time frame, we can divide the universe of domestic mail into *sampling units*. By testing sampling units, we can statistically estimate the characteristics of all the mail. Sampling units of MEP-days allow us to cover every domestic mailpiece required for the ODIS-RPW test.
Mail Exit Point History Report	This is the data entry report for maintaining a historical record of test and external data for selected MEPs.
Mail Processing Stream	The total live mail at any time in a Postal Service mail processing function. Also a mailing industry term that describes the assembly line production of mailpieces in a highly automated plant.

Mail Shape/Type	This term refers to the predominant-shape of the mail in the mail processing stream (such as letter, flat, parcel, or IPP). The stream may also include pieces of mail that are not of the predominant-shape. For example, in the mail processing stream for flats, there may be some flat-shaped parcels (mailpieces too large to be classified a flat, but similar in appearance to a flat) commingled.
Mailpiece	A single addressed article of mail, usually a letter, flat, postal card, or parcel.
Mailstream	The total live mail at any time in a Postal Service mail processing function.
Main Office	The primary Postal Service facility in a city where the post office uses subordinate post office stations or post office branches. It provides complete postal services to a specified geographic area. (Formerly called *general post office - GPO*.)
Manager, Statistical Programs (MSP)	The manager of Statistical Programs (MSP) is responsible for the collection of statistical data associated with Statistical Programs. The primary responsibilities include implementing, operating, and ensuring data integrity of statistical programs within the district.
Manifest Mailing System (MMS)	A postage payment system that enables the Postal Service to accept and verify permit imprint mailings that contain nonidentical-weight and/or nonidentical-rate pieces of the same mail class (except Periodicals) and same mail processing category. These pieces are prepared by the mailer according to certain standards.
Marriage Mail	These are the parent mailpieces for the mail with detached mailing cards. Marriage mail is sampled on the first day that both the parent and detached mailing cards are at the facility. For recording mail characteristics all information comes from the detached card, except for shape. Shape is determined from the parent piece.
Media Mail	A subclass of Package Services that consists of books, sheet music, printed educational material, film, videocassettes, and computer prerecorded media such as CD-ROMs. Advertising restrictions apply.
Menu	A listing of selections used to navigate through the software programs. The users select the appropriate option depending on their needs.
Merchandise Return Service	A special service whereby an authorized company provides a customer with a special mailing tag or label to return a shipment without postage prepayment. The company pays the return postage.
Meter Stamp	A postage imprint (either on meter tape or as a direct impression) applied in the upper right corner of the envelope, address label, or tag.
Meter Utilization Tracking System (MUTS)	A restricted access system available only to Inspection Service and Revenue Assurance.
Metered Mail	Any mail class (except Periodicals) with postage printed by a Postal Service-approved postage meter. This mail is entitled to all privileges and subject to all conditions that apply to the various mail classes.
Military (APO/FPO) Mail	Domestic mail that bears a U.S. military delivery address or return address and that, in some stage of its transmission, is in the possession of the Department of Defense.

Missent Mail-Commingled

Commingled missent mail is test day incoming mail that has been sent to the wrong facility and *commingled* with other mail. Commingled missent mail is not easy to identify or isolate, and so is included in the mailpiece skip count, and recorded in the software on the *Mail Class* screen.

Missent Mail-Containers

Containers of missent mail is test day incoming mail in containers that has been sent to the wrong facility. These containers hold exclusively missent mail. Easily identifiable containers of missent mail must be pulled aside and released to mail processing by dispatch before sampling begins. Containers of missent mail which cannot be isolated beforehand, and once the skip selection process begins for that dispatch, must be included in the skip-interval selection process.

Misthrown Mail

Mail that has been erroneously distributed within the same Postal Service facility but has not yet been returned to the correct delivery unit. With MEPs, testing is normally performed as mail arrives at the office. Technically, such mail cannot be considered misthrown mail at this point. However, when a MEP is defined further downstream at the delivery point, a data collector may encounter misthrown mail. If the data collector encounters misthrown mail at such a delivery point MEP, the data collector should count this mail as part of the MEP. The data collector should make no special adjustments.

Monday and Day After Holiday Test

If the day scheduled for conducting an ODIS-RPW test is Monday, the count must include all mail received since the last cutoff time Saturday. Accordingly, Sunday's mail must be included in the count. The same requirement applies to a count that is scheduled for the next working day after a holiday. For example, if a holiday falls on a Saturday, Monday's count must include all mail received since the last cutoff time Friday.

Multiline Optical Character Reader (MLOCR)

An optical character reader that reads and interprets multiple lines of the delivery address on a mailpiece.

Multiple Identical Mailpieces (MIP)

Mail that belongs to the same mail class, mail preparation and sortation marking, mail type, type of mailer, indicia, meter information, weight, postmark date, origin ZIP Code, barcode size, barcode source, total mailpiece revenue, and any other characteristics that are class specific.

Multi-tour MEP

Some MEPs correspond to facility tours and are therefore defined for a period of less than 24 hours. For example, a facility might process the mail for a very large firm that has a unique ZIP Code. This ZIP Code's mail over a 24-hour period might be defined by 3 MEPs, with each MEP based on one of the 3 facility tours. A MEP based on the second tour at the facility might be entered in the MEPS in the following manner: *letter mail processing stream (all shapes) and flat mail processing stream mailpieces (all shapes) from 0800 to 1600.* If you were to test such a MEP, you would perform the test on the day when the test mail is available for delivery on the test date. In the above example, for instance, if the 0800–1600 mail were available for delivery on the test date (as listed on the sample selection file), you would perform the test on the listed test date and at the time listed in the MEPS.

Nonlocal Outgoing mail destined for a Postal Service area outside the post office where the piece is mailed.

Nonmachinable Parcel A parcel or mailpiece that must be processed manually because of size, weight, or another characteristic that prevents safe sorting by mechanized or automated mail processing equipment. The piece (such as a truck tire) cannot be placed inside a container that can be mailed.

Irregular Parcels Parcel not meeting the machinable parcel dimensional criteria. Includes parcels that cannot be sorted by BMC parcel sorters, including rolls and tubes up to 26 inches long; merchandise samples not individually addressed and not letter-size or flat-size; unwrapped, paper-wrapped, or sleeve-wrapped articles that are not letter-size or flat-size; and articles enclosed in envelopes that are not letter-size, flat-size, or machinable parcels.

Outside Parcels A parcel exceeding the dimensions for machinable parcels. For more information see RM 3–12.

Nonprofit Rate A preferred rate for a Periodicals publisher or Standard mailer authorized as a nonprofit organization.

Nonprofit Standard Mail A subclass of Standard Mail that is available only to qualified organizations specified by U.S. statute.

Nonstandard Size Mail First-Class Mail weighing 1 ounce or less and exceeding *any* of these size limits:

- More than 11-1/2 inches long, or
- More than 6-1/8 inches high, or
- More than 1/4 inch thick, or
- With a length less than 1.3 times the height, or more than 2.5 times the height.

This type of mail incurs a surcharge.

Optical Character Reader/Channel Sorter (OCR/CS) An automated mail sorting machine that locates the delivery address on the face of a mailpiece; reads and interprets the city, state, and ZIP Code; prints a barcode; and sorts the mailpiece into either 44 or 60 stackers. OCR/CS consists of a mail feed and transport unit; stacker modules; and a computer with system control, video monitor, and printer.

Originating Mail Outgoing mail and local mail that enter the mailstream (that is, the point of origin) for mail processing and delivery.

Special service mailpieces sent out by a facility. For the COU test, originating mail includes the following: Insured Mail, Registered Mail, Collect on Delivery (COD), and Certificates of Mailing.

Origin-Destination Information Network (ODIN) Domestic ODIN is a web-based system that permits the user to generate both standard and customized reports using ODIS-style data from the ODIS-RPW system. ODIN also allows managers to pinpoint problems at the five-digit ZIP Code level by day-of-week, shape, level of barcoding, ZIP Codes of origin, etc.

Origin-Destination Information System (ODIS)	ODIS is an information system in which volume, service performance, and other mail data are collected, developed, and reported.
Outgoing Mail	Mail sorted within a mail processing facility that is dispatched to another facility for additional processing or delivery.
Outgoing Primary Distribution	The first sortation of mail to states, large cities, or foreign countries. In most situations, outgoing primary operations have mail separations for the local area sorted to zones, and possibly to the mail carrier level.
Outgoing Secondary Distribution	The sortation of originating mail or mail received from other offices before the mail is sorted to city zones. Examples of this type of distribution include mixed states secondary, state distribution, and the managed mail program.
Package Services	Usually matter that weighs 16 ounces or more. It comprises four subclasses: Bound Printed Matter, Library Mail, Parcel Post, and Special Standard Mail.
Parcel	Mail shape/type category that includes any mailpiece not categorized as a card, letter, or flat. See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Parcel Post	Parcel Post (including Parcel Select) is Package Services mail that is not mailed as Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, or Library Mail. Any Package Services matter may be mailed at Parcel Post rates, subject to the basic standards for Package Services. There are five Parcel Post (including Parcel Select) rate categories: Intra-BMC, Inter-BMC, destination bulk mail center (DBMC), destination sectional center facility (DSCF), and destination delivery unit (DDU). Destination entry rates are named Parcel Select. Intra-BMC and Inter-BMC Parcel Post rates and DBMC Parcel Select rates are calculated based on the zone to which the parcel is addressed and the weight of the parcel. DSCF and DDU Parcel Select rates are calculated based on the weight of the parcel.
Partitioning	In set theory, to partition a set is to divide the elements of that set into two or more subsets such that every element of the set belongs to one and only one subset. If we consider the set of all mailpieces delivered by the Postal Service during a quarter, then the delivery unit/days constitute one partitioning of that set. The creation of MEPs defines a different partitioning of the same mailpiece set, or population.
Pass	Sorting mail on one automated operation.
Penalty Mail	Official mail sent without postage prepayment by officers of the executive and judicial branches of the U.S. government, and by specifically authorized individuals. The term comes from the endorsement "Penalty for Private Use" printed on the mail.
Periodicals, Periodicals Class	A mail class consisting of magazines, newspapers, or other publications formed of printed sheets that are issued at least four times a year at regular, specified intervals (frequency) from a known office of publication. Periodicals usually must have a list of subscribers and/or requesters, as appropriate.
Permit Imprint	Printed indicia, instead of an adhesive postage stamp or meter stamp, that shows postage prepayment by an authorized mailer.

PLANET Code PLANET Code is a barcode used to track mail electronically. It provides mailers electronic tracking information about a mailer's outgoing or incoming First-Class Mail and Standard Mail mailpieces. The PLANET Code is a 12-digit barcode using long and short bars. The PLANET Code is the inverse of the POSTNET barcode, reversing long bars for short and short for long.

PM Mail Some facilities receive afternoon or PM dispatches for mail that may or may not be available for delivery the next day. This mail is generally cased in the evening and usually consists of Standard Mail and Periodicals. A PM MEP isolates this mail processing stream for testing. A PM MEP entry in the MEP System might be similar to the following: *Exclusively PM flat shape and letter shape mail only* from 1000 until 2400. If you were to test such a MEP, you would perform the test on the date prior to the actual test date listed on the sample selection file during the time frame listed in the MEP System.

Population A collection of all of the items of interest for a particular survey or study. For most of our surveys, the population of interest is a portion of, or all of, the mail being collected, processed, or delivered by the Postal Service.

Postage Payment for delivery service that is affixed or imprinted on a mailpiece usually in the form of a postage stamp, permit imprint, or meter impression.

Postage Due Mail Mail marked postage due or mail bearing a special service marking, such as business reply, merchandise return, or address correction, indicating additional postage and fees are required.

Postage Validation Imprint (PVI) A postage label similar to a meter stamp strip. This label may contain a barcoded destination ZIP Code that is compatible with automated mail processing equipment.

Postal Card A blank mailing card sold by the Postal Service (as distinguished from a commercial postcard) with a printed or impressed postage stamp.

Postal Numeric Encoding Technique (POSTNET) The barcode system used by the Postal Service for translating ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, and delivery point code information into a machine-readable format that consists of a series of vertical full and half bars. These POSTNET barcodes can be found in the address block (either above or below the address), at the bottom of the mailpiece, in the address area, or even in the indicia of a PVI meter. (See also Delivery Point Barcode.)

Postcard A privately printed mailing card.

Postmark A postal cancellation imprint on letters, flats, and parcels. The imprint shows date and the name, state, and ZIP Code of the post office or sectional center facility that accepted custody of the mailpiece.

Precision The degree to which a set of measurements agree with their mean. A measurement tool used to prevent the least variation from the set standards.

Presorted First-Class Mail Rate A nonautomation rate category for a mailing that consists of at least 500 addressed mailpieces and is sorted and prepared according to Postal Service standards. Normally, this mail does not bear a barcode.

Primary Containers	Containers that directly hold the mailpieces being tested by ODIS-RPW. Sometimes primary containers themselves are contained by larger containers. For instance, an APC is a primary container when it is full of parcels. A letter tray full of letters is also a primary container. However, an APC that holds letter trays full of letters is not a primary container. In this case, the APC is a large container because it does not directly hold the letters being tested.
Priority End-to-End (PETE)	An end-to-end performance measurement system that measures identified Priority Mail performance from the time mail enters the mailstream until it is delivered to a household, small business or post office box. PETE measures service performance from a customer perspective and produces accurate, independent, externally generated results. The National result is the combined originating/destinating score, with overnight and two-day service standards, delivered within two days for the Surface Network.
Priority Mail	A subclass of First-Class Mail that weighs more than 13 ounces and usually consists of flats and parcels. At the mailer's option, mail weighing 13 ounces or less may be sent at the Priority Mail rates. Any mailable matter may be sent as Priority Mail. Priority Mail is a Postal Service trademark.
Private/Penalty Card	A private post card for the transmission of messages with postage or a permit imprint affixed or an official mail card used by federal agencies and specifically authorized individuals. Penalty cards bear the following imprint: *Penalty for Private Use.* Must be a rectangular mailpiece of uniform thickness and made of card stock (single and double cards). See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Probability	The relative possibility that an event will occur. Probability sampling techniques are used to measure the characteristics of the total mail volume by examining a small fraction of that volume.
Processing & Distribution Center (P&DC)	A central mail facility that processes and dispatches part or all of both incoming and outgoing mail for a designated service area. P&DC also provides instructions on the preparation of collection mail, dispatch schedules, and sorting plan requirements to mailers.
Processing & Distribution Facility (P&DF)	A processing and distribution facility is usually a sectional center facility or a general mail facility, but can also be a dedicated mail processing facility without a post office station or post office branch.
Prompt	A screen indication to the DCT to take an action or provide needed information.
Random Access Memory (RAM)	A storage location within the computer where data is entered, stored, and retrieved. RAM is also known as internal memory. Any information stored in RAM is lost when the computer is turned off or loses power.
Random Sampling	A type of sampling in which every item in the population of interest has a known chance of being included in the sample.

Registered Mail	A special service by which, through a system of receipts, the Postal Service monitors the movement of the mailpiece from the point of acceptance by the Postal Service to delivery. The sender receives a receipt at the time of mailing, and a delivery record is kept at the post office of address. This service also provides optional indemnity in case of loss or damage. Registered mail is the most secure service offered by the Postal Service.
Registered or Certified Sections	A unit found in all Postal Service facilities having incoming registered or certified delivery functions.
Reprocessed Mail	Reprocessed mail is mail that will be sent back to the plant for sortation on that day. It is then returned to the site the same day or the next day. Because testing reprocessed mail leads to double-counting, do not test mail that is to be reprocessed.
Residual Containers	Containers remaining after container subsampling has been completed. For example, if 5 containers remain from a session using a container subsampling skip of 10, these 5 remaining containers are called *residual containers*.
Restricted Delivery	A supplemental mail service that generally limits who may receive an item. This service is available for a fee when used with certified mail, collect on delivery (COD), insured mail, and registered mail.
Return Address	A mailpiece element that is usually placed in the upper left corner of the mailpiece to indicate the address of the sender. This address indicates where the sender wants the mail returned if it is undeliverable and whether the sender will pay any fee due for that mail.
Return Receipt	A supplemental mail servicemail, collect on delivery (COD), mail insured for more than $50, registered mail, or return receipt for merchandise. The mailing card for this service (PS Form 3811, *Domestic Return Receipt*, for domestic and PS Form 2865, *Return Receipt for International Mail*, for international) is signed by the addressee of the article and mailed back to the sender as evidence of delivery.
Revenue, Pieces, and Weight (RPW)	This system estimates revenue, pieces, and weight by class and subclass of mail, as well as by type of special service for domestic mail. Estimates are developed from a probability sample of MEPs.
Rural Route	A route primarily for the delivery and collection of mail from boxes owned and maintained by persons residing in communities served by rural carriers.
Sample	A subset of the population for which measurements are taken.
Sample Allocation	The number of tests to be conducted in each stratum. The term is also used to refer to the process of determining the number of tests to be conducted in each stratum.
Sample Selection File or Printout	A list of MEP sampling units selected for ODIS-RPW for each postal quarter. This list indicates the day of a test, the facility, and the MEP. The file is located on CODES equipment. A printout can be obtained from the CODES Web Base Unit.
Sampling Efficiency	The degree to which a sample design is able to produce estimates with the required precision for a pre-set cost. Two frequently used ways of improving sampling efficiency are to improve the stratification and to optimize the sample allocation.

Sampling Frame	A list of the population of interest, divided into units which will be sampled in part or in whole.
Sample Unit	For destinating tests, it is a randomly selected MEP on a randomly selected day, or MEP-day. For an originating test, it is a COU-day.
Scale	Electronic scale used in CODES to record weight measurements of sample mailpieces.
Service Enhancement Support System (SESS)	Developed to give first-line field managers direct access to user-friendly programs in order to improve service. The focus of SESS is to identify problem areas in service and operations.
Service Performance Estimates	A statistical estimate of the portion of mail volume delivered within service commitments and between organizational units in the Postal Service.
Service Time Calculations (Mondays and Holidays)	For an ODIS-RPW test taken on Monday (or a day after a federal holiday) an adjustment is made to service time calculation by subtracting one (1) from the number of days that elapsed between date of cancellation and the date the test is conducted. For example, if a federal holiday falls on a Monday, then 2 would be subtracted from service time calculations for a Tuesday test.
Shortpaid Mail	Mail that needs additional postage for delivery but is not postage due mail. Therefore, shortpaid mail is either (a) not marked "Postage Due" or (b) not identified with a marking that implies the mailpiece should be routed to a postage due unit (PDU) for the collection of postage and fees (for example, business reply mail, Merchandise Return Service mail, address correction, keys and identification devices, etc.).
Single Piece Rate	A postage rate available for individual pieces of Express Mail, First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services. It is not available for Periodicals except under the rate category of basic. This type of rate contrasts with rates available for bulk mail and presorted mail.
Skip Interval Number	The skip number is an assigned number used by the data collector during ODIS-RPW tests to systematically select mailpieces for recording. Skip numbers are used whenever a data collector employs a subsampling method. For example, a skip number of 10 would require the data collector to select the first mailpiece using the start number and then to select every tenth mailpiece for recording.
Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS)	A modular machine that sorts small parcels and packages or bundles of letters and flats to 100 specific bins for either delivery or processing.
Software	A set of coded instructions which directs a computer to perform tasks in a specified sequence under specific conditions.
Sortation	The distribution or separation of mail to route it to its final delivery point.
Stamped Card (Postal)	A blank card sold by the Postal Service with a preprinted, precanceled postage stamp. The card must be a rectangular mailpiece of uniform thickness and made of card stock (single and double cards). See RM 3–12 for dimensions.
Standard Mail	Standard Mail matter that weighs less than 16 ounces and is mailed in bulk.

Start Number The number used to select the first mailpiece or container beginning an ODIS-RPW test. When a data collector has determined a mailpiece and/or container skip interval, he or she receives a *start number*. This number is randomly selected by the CODES Laptop. The start number must be used as the first, and only the first, skip interval.

For instance, a start number of *5* would require the data collector to begin the test by selecting the fifth mailpiece as the first mailpiece for recording. Thereafter, the data collector would use the assigned skip number. The start number is usually a randomly-assigned number displayed on the CODES Laptop along with the subsample skip number.

Station (classified) A unit of a post office that is staffed by career Postal Service employees and located within the corporate limits of a city or town.

Statistical Programs Service Center (SPSC) Headquarters field unit that provides technical and field support to the district statistical programs units.

Statistical Programs Specialist (SPS) The statistical programs specialist is responsible for assisting the MSP (as necessary) in fulfilling their organizational responsibilities such as, training, process review, and any other requirements.

Strata Two or more sets of sampling units that were grouped on the basis of one or more known characteristics. The plural form of stratum. (See also *Stratification*.)

Stratification The process of subdividing the population into two or more mutually exclusive sets of sampling units called strata. The singular form of strata is stratum. If we can subdivide the population in such a way that the units within a stratum are more similar to each other, (with regard to the item we are trying to estimate), than they are to units in other strata, then stratified sampling will be more efficient than a simple random sample.

Stratum A set or collection of sampling units that are similar on the basis of one or more known characteristics. They are used in the selection of MEPs to be sampled by ODIS-RPW system test. The singular form of strata.

Subclass A subdivision of a mail class, usually based on the consideration of a physical characteristic rather than content.

Subsampling The systematic process for selecting mail within a sampling unit (MEP-day). Use counted subsampling techniques only.

Surcharge An additional fee for nonstandard size mail or certain nonmachinable parcels.

Surface Mail In international mail, mail that is transported by any mode other than air (that is, sea, rail, or highway).

Throwback Mail

Throwback mail is mail that has been misthrown within a post office or finance unit and has been returned to the correct delivery unit. Like misthrown mail, throwback mail is not found at most MEPs. With most MEPs defined along a mail processing stream, throwback mail is not a concern for the data collector. However, when a MEP is defined further downstream at the delivery point, a data collector may encounter throwback mail.

Because throwback mail may have already been counted in an ODIS-RPW test of another MEP as misthrown mail, the ODIS-RPW test does not record or include throwback mail.

The ODIS-RPW test does not include throwback mail if this mail is in a clearly marked *throwback case*. Mail that is not in a clearly marked throwback case is included in an ODIS test even if it has a "T" affixed or is in a bundle marked "Throwback."

Tour

One of three scheduled Postal Service shifts: Tour I (usually from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) is the night shift, Tour II (usually from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.) is the daytime shift, and Tour III is the evening shift (usually from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.).

Transit Time

The time between when a mailpiece comes into the possession of the Postal Service until the time that mailpiece is delivered to the addressee.

Transit Time Calculations

The number of days that elapse between the date of cancellation for stamped mail (or meter date for metered mail) and the date the mailpiece arrives at the final delivery unit (i.e., the date of the ODIS-RPW test). Allowances are made for Sundays and holidays.

Undeliverable as Addressed

Mail that the Postal Service cannot deliver as addressed and must forward to the addressee, return to the sender, or send to a mail recovery center (depending on the treatment authorized for that mail class).

Vertical Improved Mail (VIM)

A mail service within high-rise buildings. The carrier delivers and collects mail for the entire building by operating a small elevator in a mailroom or by using a call window or lockbox delivery system, or some combination of these.

Video Ink Jet Cancellation (VIJC)

Cancellation that is applied via video ink jet technology. It is often used by mailers to correct a stale meter date. There are two kinds of VIJCs, Postal Service-applied and mailer-applied.

ZIP Code

The five-digit numeric code of which the first three digits identify the delivery area of a sectional center facility or a major-city post office serving the delivery address area. The next two (the fourth and fifth) digits identify the delivery area of an associate post office, post office branch, or post office station. All post offices are assigned at least one unique 5-digit code. ZIP Code is a Postal Service trademark.

ZIP+4

The 9-digit numeric code, established in 1981, composed of two parts: (a) The initial code: the first five digits that identify the sectional center and delivery area associated with the address, followed by a hyphen; and (b) the four-digit expanded code: the first two additional digits designate the sector and the last two designate the segment. ZIP+4 is a Postal Service trademark.

ZIP+4 Barcode

A 9-digit POSTNET barcode consisting of 52 vertical bars. (See also *POSTNET.*)

Zone A number that expresses the distance that a zone rate mailpiece must travel from point of entry to point of delivery. It is based on the air mileage along a great circle line between three-digit ZIP Code prefix areas of dispatch and receipt. This mileage range is converted to a zone number. The Postal Service uses 8 numbered postal zones and one local zone for computing postage on mail.

Zone Rate A rate structure for certain Package Services and all Periodicals and Priority Mail, based on weight and distance traveled (or zones crossed).

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Log of Revisions

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

SP Letter	SP Letter Number and Subject	Description

DCT Notes

Text Messages

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Date	Subject	Comments

Container Subsampling Table for All Mail Shapes

Container Range	Skip Intervals	Average Mailpieces Per Container								
		5–10	11–25	26–50	51–100	101–150	151–300	301–500	501–800	801+
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
3–5	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	4	6	10
	Container	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	3	3
6–10	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	3	2	4	7	11
	Container	N/R	N/R	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
11–15	Mailpiece	N/R	N/R	2	3	3	4	6	9	14
	Container	N/R	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	8
16–25	Mailpiece	N/R	1	2	2	3	4	7	12	10
	Container	N/R	2	3	4	5	7	7	7	10
26–35	Mailpiece	N/R	2	2	3	4	4	7	12	12
	Container	3	3	4	6	8	10	10	10	10
36–75	Mailpiece	1	2	3	4	4	6	11	18	27
	Container	5	5	6	7	10	12	12	12	12
76–125	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	6	8	14	25	40
	Container	8	8	10	12	12	16	18	22	25
126–200	Mailpiece	1	2	3	5	8	11	16	21	30
	Container	10	12	15	20	25	30	30	30	30
201–500	Mailpiece	2	3	5	8	10	15	25	40	60
	Container	12	12	20	25	30	40	45	50	50
501+	Mailpiece	3	5	8	12	15	20	32	45	75

N/R means that mailpiece and/or container subsampling is **Not Recommended**. There is insufficient volume to warrant container subsampling.

PHS MEP Only: All areas on the chart are applicable.

All other MEPs: Only nonshaded areas are applicable.

October 2003

Forwarded and Returned Mail Guidelines Table

Characteristics	First-Class Mail	Standard Mail	Periodicals	Priority Mail	Package Services	Free Mail for the Blind	International Mail
Revenue	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece	Not recorded	Postage due amount indicated on piece
Postmark Date	From CFS label, else CBR	Not recorded	Not recorded	From CFS label, else CBR	From CFS label, else CBR	Not recorded	From CFS label, else CBR
Postmark Origin	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	From CFS label, else original destinating 5-digit ZIP Code, else CBR	Not recorded	Not applicable
All Other Characteristics	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece	From original mailpiece
Additional							If forwarded, at *Foreign Country* screen, select Code 900 for United States. If returned, select the foreign country of origin in the original destinating address.

Mailpieces with the following special services are not to be recorded as Forwarded or Returned:

- Business Reply Mail (BRM) for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail
- Merchandise Return Service (MRS) for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Package Services
- PS Form 3547/3579 Revenue for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail

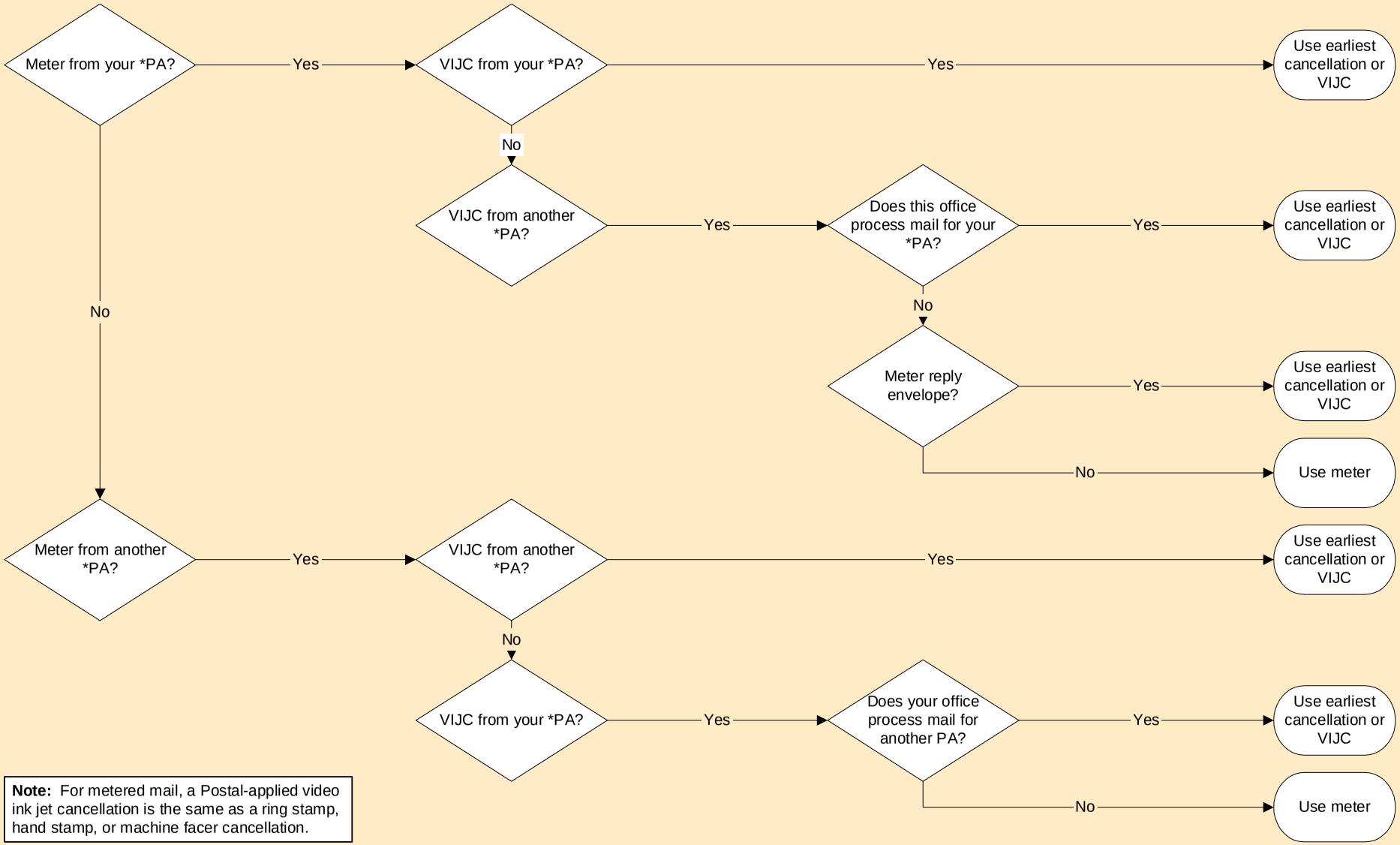
For Standard Mail revenue, if the postage due is the weighted fee, then the fee is the appropriate single piece rate for First-Class Mail or Priority Mail service rate multiplied by 2.472 and rounded up to the next whole cent.

October 2003

Decision Flow Diagram for Postal-applied Video Ink Jet Cancellations

To be used for Meter Mail only

*PA = Processing Area



Note: For metered mail, a Postal-applied video ink jet cancellation is the same as a ring stamp, hand stamp, or machine facer cancellation.

October 2003

Video Ink Jet Cancellations *Quick* Reference Guide

Postal-applied VIJC

For metered mail that has been overcanceled, ring stamped, or has a valid VIJC, the DCT MUST record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin data from the earliest cancellation mark or ring stamp subject to the following conditions:

- If the meter and the cancellation (including a valid VIJC) are both from within your mail processing area, you must take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest overcancellation or the valid VIJC.
- If the meter and the cancellation (including VIJC) are both from outside your mail processing area, you MUST take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the earliest overcancellation or VIJC.
- If the meter is from another processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from within your mail processing area, take the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the METER, not from the overcancellation or the VIJC.
- There are instances when mail will be metered locally (inside) but will be processed in another processing area (outside). This can happen when processing operations are consolidated during weekends and holidays. This should be a consideration when applying the inside/outside rule. If the meter is from within your processing area and the cancellation (including VIJC) is from outside your processing area you must take the postmark date and ZIP Code from the earliest overcancellation or VIJC.
- If the VIJC contains a range of 3-digit ZIP Codes, ignore the VIJC and take all data from the meter.

See F-75 Appendix H for additional examples, applications and information.

Mailer-applied VIJC

The Postal Service allows mailers to use video ink jet technology to correct stale meter dates. According to the DMM P030.4.12, they must have the following characteristics:

- The text of the cancellation is preceded by two asterisks. In addition, there may be two asterisks at the end of the text.
- The VIJC shows the actual date of deposit.
- The VIJC shows the city, state and 3-digit ZIP Code of the mailing office.
- The VIJC is located above the address block and below the meter impression, or just above the barcode clear zone.
- For metered mail with a valid mailer-applied VIJC, the data collector MUST record the postmark date and ZIP Code of origin from the mailer-applied VIJC.

Mailer-applied Drop Shipment VIJC

When recording data for video ink jet canceled drop shipment metered mail (mailer-applied with one of the endorsements shown in the list below), the data collector MUST take the date and ZIP Code of origin from the VIJC:

- D/Snn Mailed At zzz – mm/dd/yy
- Mailed at zzz D/Snn – mm/dd/yy
- D/Snn Mailed At zzz
- Mailed At zzz D/Snn

nn = unique authorized number
zzz = 3-digit ZIP Code prefix or entry office
mm/dd/yy = correct date of mailing, if used