Electronic Data Exchange in Postal Transactions

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Old Process

Manual Completion and Hard Copy Submission of Mailing Information

Most mailers provide paper postage statements and supporting documentation to the Postal Service.

Mailers who use software to prepare mail typically generate postage statements and documentation right from the software.

Some mailers handwrite postage statements and provide typed or handwritten supporting documents with their mailings.
Old Process

Manual Completion and Hard Copy Submission of Mailing Information

When you present your mailing and documents to mail acceptance personnel, they manually key your postage statement information into the PostalOne! system and provide you with a hard copy receipt.

This process of using hard copy and manual entry of information is costly (in both time and supplies) and prone to errors.

We have introduced a new way of working with the Postal Service – electronic submission of postage statements and supporting documentation.
New Process

Electronic Submission of Mailing Information

Using the PostalOne! system over the Internet eliminates the need to print and provide a hard copy postage statement with your mailing. You simply send your mailing information electronically to the acceptance unit where it is available when you bring in your mailing.

Once you arrive, acceptance personnel verify and accept your mail and you’re done. You can view your mailing transaction online any time.

Having online access to your mailing account also enables you to check your available funds to ensure you have enough for your mailing. You can also view past transactions to track your mailing and cost trends.
New Process

What You Get With *PostalOne!* Online Access

- Snapshot of latest account activity
- Access to all of your permits
- Summary of mailing activity
- Fee expiration
- Reference library
- Link to provide feedback
Methods of Electronic Submission

There are three methods that allow you to submit postage statements electronically:

- **Postage Statement Wizard®**
- **Mail.dat®**
- **Web Services**

The following slides provide a description of each approach and identifies criteria for selecting a particular format. You will also understand what postage documents can be submitted using each method.
Postage Statement Wizard® Process

1. Log on to *PostalOne!*
2. Select a Form
3. Enter
   - Permit
   - User Information
   - Mailing Characteristics
4. Go to the Appropriate Section
5. Complete Sections & Review
6. Submit Online
7. Mailer Presents Mail to USPS
8. USPS Accesses Information in *PostalOne!*
9. USPS Accepts and Verifies
10. USPS Deducts Postage

Log on to *PostalOne!*
The typical user of the Postage Statement Wizard falls into one or more of the following categories:

- Mailer who typically writes or types postage statements
- Mailer who does not use software to generate mailing information
- Mailer who typically mails less than $7000 annually on business mailings
All **domestic postage statements** can be typed into the PSW tool and electronically submitted.

- **First-Class Mail**® & **Priority Mail**® – PS Form 3600
- Periodicals - PS Form 3541
- **Standard Mail**® - PS Form 3602
- **Package Services** - PS Form 3605

No **supporting documentation** can be typed into PSW. You still need to provide hardcopy supporting documentation when presenting your mail.
Mail.dat® - Process

Customer

Mailer Presents Mail to USPS

Data Available to Mailer for Online Viewing

PostalOne!®

Data Available to Mailer for Online Viewing

USPS Deducts Postage

USPS Accepts and Verifies

USPS Accepts and Verifies

USPS Accesses Information in PostalOne!

USPS Accesses Information in PostalOne!

Send Mail.dat® file
Typical user of Mail.dat® falls into one or more of the following categories:

- Performs transportation planning & drop-shipping
- Mails large volumes and complex presorts
- Use software programs to prepare and produce mailings

Anyone that uses presort software that produces a Mail.dat® output can use this method. You will need to register with IDEAlliance and pay a user license fee to use this file specification.
Postage statements that can be submitted using Mail.dat®:

- First-Class & Priority Mail - PS Form 3600
- Periodicals - PS Form 3541
- Standard Mail - PS Form 3602
- Package Services - PS Form 3605

Supporting documentation that will be generated:

- Qualification Report
- Customer Mail Report
- Summary ZIP Destination Report
- Postage Summary Report
Mail.dat® - Transfer Methods

The PostalOne! system provides you with a choice of transfer methods for your mailing data files (Mail.dat files).

• **Manual mode.** Online tool which enables you to upload your Mail.dat to the Postal Service. In Manual mode, you log on the USPS PostalOne! system, select the files you want to send, and then transfer them.

• **Batch mode.** Batch mode allows you to schedule file transfers to take place automatically, for example at 2 a.m. Once Batch mode is set up, no one needs to be present when the file transfer takes place. This capability requires additional infrastructure and configuration work. If you use the Batch mode file transfer process, your company must have a SSL certificate installed and set up. The Batch Processor software required http/https protocol to communicate through port 444. If firewall settings prevent http/https communication through port 444, reconfigure your firewall to allow this traffic.
Mail.dat® eDocumentation

Mail.dat Information From Your Presort Process

- You create presort plan for mail preparation including transportation plan
- You create Mail.dat file from your presort plan
- Your file contains mailpiece destination, package and container information
- You upload this information to PostalOne! system via internet
Mail.dat® eDocumentation

Qualification Report

USPS Business Mail Entry

• *PostalOne!* creates qualification report (s) from the mailpiece information submitted via Mail.dat.

• The USPS clerk uses the electronic qualification report to verify that presort documentation matches the physical make-up of the mailing you are presenting for acceptance and induction into the mail stream.

• Presentation of hardcopy presort documentation is no longer required.
• The USPS clerk uses the electronic postage statement to verify rates and the weight of the actual pieces is accurately claimed. The electronic postage statement information is compared to qualification report and the register of mailing. Upon completion of the verification process, the payment transaction is electronically deducted from your permit account.

• Presentation of hardcopy postage statement is no longer required.
Mail.dat® - Prerequisites

- **Mail.dat prerequisites.** The PostalOne! system complies with the Mail.dat File Specification. As a result, your mailing files must comply with this specification. We recommend that you obtain and read the specification located at: http://www.idealliance.org/

- **User License Code (ULC) prerequisites.** To be an authorized user of the Mail.dat specification, our company must have a ULC, also called a Provider Code. This the ULC code can be obtained by accessing the Idealliance Web site.

- **Hardware prerequisites.** The workstation requirements to send data files are a PC with a Pentium II 266 MHz processor, Microsoft® Windows® 95/98 operating system, and 64 MB RAM. Depending on the size of the Mail.dat job, RAM requirements vary.

- **Software prerequisites.** The base software requirements are Microsoft Internet Explorer® 5.0 or later with the Java™ Virtual Machine (JVM) plug-in or Netscape® Communicator 6.0 or later with JVM plug-in. The JVM should be version 1.4.2.
Web Services

Web Services provides you another secure way to electronically transmit postage statements and supporting documentation.

This option enables you or your software vendor to convert mailing information into an XML¹ format that can be transmitted directly to the PostalOne! system.

Web Services files are generated from your computer.

Data exchange testing with PostalOne! Customer Support is necessary prior to activation.

¹ - eXtensible Markup Language (XML) – language
Web Services - Process

- Customer
- Send Web Services File
- PostalOne!
  - Data Available to Mailer for Online Viewing
  - USPS Accepts and Verifies
    - USPS Deducts Postage
  - USPS Accepts Information in PostalOne!
  - Mailer Presents Mail to USPS
    - USPS Accesses Information in PostalOne!
    - Send Web Services File
      - Customer
Web Services – User Profile

Typical mailer:

- Uses presort software programs
- Mails medium to large volumes
- Mails frequently (daily/weekly)

However, you must have presort software that has PostalOne! Web Services capabilities or has technology to produce XML outputs.

To obtain more information about Web Services you should speak to your mailing software vendor or may contact PostalOne! Customer Support at 1-800-522-9085 to obtain information on how you develop your own Web Services capabilities.
Web Services

Postage statements that can be submitted using Web Services:

- First-Class Mail & Priority Mail - PS Form 3600
- Periodicals - PS Form 3541
- Standard Mail - PS Form 3602
- Package Services - PS Form 3605

Supporting documentation that will be generated:

- Qualification Report
Benefits of Electronic Data Exchange

• Eliminates hard copy postage statements and supporting documents
• Saves preparation time
• 24/7 online access to financial information & reports
• Reduces wait times at acceptance units since Postal Service employees do not have to manually type in postage statements
• Enables mailer to develop own browser “look & feel”
• Enables software vendors to provide additional value-added customer software offerings
Implementation

Internal Process Analysis
- Determine what is right for you!
- Your process will change

Invest
- Register with PostalOne!
- Register with IDEAAlliance if necessary
- Create/purchase software
- TRAINING

Save
- Cost Savings
Electronic Payment

Centralized Electronic Payment (Centralized Account Payment System)

- Credit Cards (Limited to certain fees & services)
- Checks
- ACH Credit/Fed wire
- ACH Debit

Enhancements to Centralized Electronic Payment (Future)

- Online flexible payment accounts
- Pay for additional USPS products & services
- Self-managed and 24/7 access to information and account management
- Universal to all customers
Let’s Review
Obtaining Access to PostalOne!

• Contact your local Business Mail Entry Office or contact the PostalOne! Help Desk at 800.522.9085

• Reference Documents can be obtained at the following sites:
  • For an overview and understanding of electronic postage documentation, refer to “The 1-2-3 of Electronic Postage Documentation” which will be available on April 6, 2007 at: http://www.usps.com/postalone/guides.htm
  • Additional information on Mail.dat is available at: http://www.usps.com/postalone/guides.htm
  • Additional information on Web Services is available April 6, 2007 at: http://www.usps.com/postalone/guides.htm
  • Additional information on the Postage Statement Wizard will be available on April 6, 2007 at: http://www.usps.com/postalone/guides.htm
  • Additional information on IDEAlliance is available at: http://www.idealliance.org
Seamless Acceptance & Intelligent Mail

Total Visibility
An Integrated Approach

- Centralized Electronic Payment
- Prepare Mail With Unique Barcodes
- Electronic Mailing Information
- Electronic In-Process Mail Verification
- Mailer Assigned Transportation
- Electronic Advance Notification
Questions

What option(s) is available to submit electronic mailing information
• A. Mail.dat
• B. Postage Statement Wizard
• C. Web Services
• D. All of the above
Answer:

The Postage Statement Wizard allows you to
• A. View your balance online
• B. Type in a mailing statement online
• C. Submit a mailing statement electronically
• D. All of the above
Answer:

Large volume complex mailers should use the Postage Statement Wizard to submit their mailing information electronically
• True or False?
Answer:
What option(s) is available to submit electronic mailing information
• A. Mail.dat
• B. Postage Statement Wizard
• C. Web Services
• D. All of the above
Answer: D

The Postage Statement Wizard allows you to
• A. View your balance online
• B. Type in a mailing statement online
• C. Submit a mailing statement electronically
• D. All of the above
Answer: D

Large volume complex mailers should use the Postage Statement Wizard to submit their mailing information electronically
• True or False?
Answer: False