



IMb Tracing® User Guide

June 17, 2014



IMb Tracing® User Guide

The U.S. Postal Service® is committed to providing the mailing industry with Intelligent Mail® products and services. One of the key strategies of the Postal Service™ Transformation Plan is to achieve growth by adding value for its customers. IMb Tracing® is one way to add value by providing “visibility” in the mailstream.

You are an important component of this commitment. As you develop and expand your business strategies, you probably ask, “How can we maintain a competitive edge and offer competitive service?” The Postal Service has harnessed current technology to give you options that can improve your bottom line.

IMb Tracing can provide you with data that can be used to track mail electronically. IMb Tracing is geared towards giving you information in advance about the processing and delivery of:

- Outbound mail going to your customers.
- Incoming reply mail.

To learn more about how this product can benefit you and how to get started, refer to this guide. If you have any questions — or you just want to talk about new ways to make your mailing smarter — please contact your account manager or the National Customer Support Center as follows:

Mail	Contact Information: USPS NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER ATTN: IMb Tracing 225 N. Humphreys Blvd, Ste 501 MEMPHIS TN 38188-1001
Telephone	800-238-3150
E-mail	IMbTracing@usps.gov

General information about IMb Tracing is available at the Mail Tracking and Reporting website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>.

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1 IMb Tracing®: A Summary

1-1 Background

IMb Tracing® is the successor to the legacy Confirm Service. It is a free service that is available to all mailers who utilize the Intelligent Mail barcode, and provides piece-level tracking data for letters and flats.

1-2 Description

IMb Tracing allows mailers to uniquely identify and receive mail processing data for outgoing mail and incoming reply mailpieces. It provides mailers with information about automation-compatible letters and flats for First-Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, and Periodicals mail. Data includes the date, time, location and sort operation of a mailpiece processed at a Postal Service facility.

IMb Tracing requires that mailers utilize Intelligent Mail™ barcodes (IMb) on the front of mailpieces. A mailer's proper application of these barcodes allows the Postal Service to generate IMb Tracing scan data and distribute this data to the mailer.

IMb Tracing provides two types of service: Destination IMb Tracing and Origin IMb Tracing.

1-2.1 **Destination IMb Tracing**

Destination IMb Tracing can provide mailers with mailpiece processing data that helps them determine delivery.

1-2.2 **Origin IMb Tracing**

Origin IMb Tracing enables the IMb Tracing mailer to determine when and where their customers mailed incoming reply mailpieces. Remittance mail processors and mail order companies use Origin IMb Tracing to receive advance notice of incoming payments and orders.

1-3 How IMb Tracing Works: Process Overview

IMb Tracing uses barcodes scanned by mail processing equipment to collect data from mailpieces as they are sorted and approach delivery.

Prior to using IMb Tracing, the mailer must become an IMb Tracing subscriber. Refer to chapter 2 for steps required to subscribe to the service. Upon establishing an IMb Tracing account, mailers follow the IMb Tracing process as noted below:

- a. Mail planning and preparation.
- b. Mail processing at a Postal Service facility.
- c. Data access and interpretation.

1-3.1 **Mail Planning and Preparation**

- a. The mailer decides whether to use Destination IMb Tracing, Origin IMb Tracing, or both.
- b. The mailer determines the information to be include within the IMb™. This includes using a Service Type ID which requests IMb Tracing on the mailpieces for which the mailer wishes to receive tracking data.
- c. The mailer ensures that mailpieces are designed and prepared in accordance with IMb™ requirements and basic specifications for automation-compatible mail.
- d. The mailer prepares mail to be inducted at a Postal Service facility.

Refer to chapter 3 for detailed information.

1-3.2 **Mail Processing at a Postal Service Facility**

- a. The Postal Service processes the mailpieces on mail processing equipment (MPE). IMb Tracing data is generated each time that a “machine-readable” IMb mailpiece is sorted using automated MPE. Mailpieces that are not processed on MPE do not generate IMb Tracing scan data.
- b. Mailpiece scan data contains processing location, sort operation, date/time, and barcode digits.

Refer to chapter 4 for detailed information.

1-3.3 **Data Access and Interpretation**

- a. The mailer receives mailpiece scan data from the Postal Service. Options are either to receive data electronically via scheduled file transfer, or to download the data from the Mail Tracking and Reporting website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>.
- b. The mailer integrates and utilizes IMb Tracing data to suit their business needs. The mailer references support resources (e.g., Operation Code listing) to help interpret the data and turn it into useful information. In most cases, data can indicate mail delivery dates with a high level of certainty.

Refer to Chapter 5 for detailed information.

1-4 Applications and Potential Benefits

Destination IMb Tracing is used by mailers to anticipate when their message will reach their customers. Origin IMb Tracing is used to gain insight into when a customer's response is on the way to the mailer. Mailers can use IMb Tracing to align their business processes and resources with the actual processing and delivery status of their mail. Integrating IMb Tracing data into current business practices puts valuable information into the hands of corporate decision makers, which could help to reduce costs, enhance marketing efforts and improve relationships with customers.

1-4.1 **Organizations**

Organizations that may benefit from IMb Tracing include the following:

- Advertising agencies
- Audio and book clubs
- Banks
- Catalog and mail order companies
- Collection agencies
- Direct mail advertisers
- Financial organizations
- Government agencies
- Insurance companies
- Mail service providers
- Non-profit organizations/charities
- Political organizations
- Printing and publishing companies
- Restaurant and hospitality companies
- Retailers
- Telecommunications companies
- Utility companies

1-4.2 **Potential Benefits**

Potential benefits from IMb Tracing may include the following:

- Collections and dunning optimization
- Estimated cash flows for improved cash management
- Improved customer service and retention
- Improved remittance center processing performance
- Improved integration of marketing efforts to increase response rates and reduce costs
- Increased return on investment (ROI) on marketing and advertising expenditures
- Reduced unnecessary outbound customer contact calls
- Optimized work force staffing

1-4.2.1 **Improving Messaging**

- a. *Heighten awareness.* Identify mail delivery trends that will help set mailing schedules using in-home delivery dates from Destination IMb Tracing on outgoing mailings.
- b. *Integrate direct marketing programs.* Boost response rates by timing follow-up e-mail or telemarketing calls to coincide with in-home direct mail delivery

by taking advantage of the delivery predictability that comes with using IMb Tracing to track outgoing mailings.

- c. *Sharpen follow-up communications.* Use the mail intelligence gathered from IMb Tracing to track incoming and outgoing mailings to improve the effectiveness of telemarketing follow-up.
- d. *Ensure timely delivery of marketing messages.* Ensure that marketing messages reach target audiences in time to support promotions and boost traffic by using IMb Tracing data for near real-time tracking of outgoing solicitations.
- e. *Test different offers.* Test different creative images and offers against others to evaluate the success of ad campaigns and determine which bring higher response rates by using IMb Tracing on both incoming and outgoing mailpieces. IMb Tracing results are faster than conventional seeding methods for which results may take weeks or months to compile.
- f. *Evaluate mail effectiveness.* Plan future campaigns by using IMb Tracing on incoming reply mail to measure how effective direct mail is at generating responses or sales and identify the day of the week customers are putting reply mail into the mailstream. IMb Tracing data can be used to identify and analyze response rate curves.

1-4.2.2 **Improving Operations and Reducing Costs**

- a. *Improve and determine cash flow.* Track accounts receivable incoming mailpieces to estimate daily cash flow by knowing in advance who is returning payments.
- b. *Improve lockbox operations.* Ensure the optimal resources for processing checks based on the incoming check volume identified by Origin IMb Tracing on incoming mailpieces.
- c. *Encourage timely responses.* Monitor delivery patterns from outgoing IMb Tracing mailings to ensure that time-sensitive offers are delivered to customers before respond-by dates. Know when customers are about to receive bills, credit cards, insurance cancellations, notices, direct mail solicitations, and other important mail.
- d. *Reduce collection cost and customer frustration associated with dunning notices.* Save money and reduce customer frustration by using IMb Tracing on incoming payments to determine the appropriate follow-up. Know that the check really is in the mail!
- e. *Grant or deny customer reprieves.* Use IMb Tracing scan data on outgoing and incoming mailpieces to know whether customers are receiving their bills in time to submit payments by designated due dates. This is valuable information to have when considering the issuance of reprieves on late payments.
- f. *Mail intelligently.* Determine mailing priority on outgoing mailpieces by using IMb Tracing data to identify customer payment and response patterns.
- g. *Improve management of call centers.* Use IMb Tracing on outgoing mailpieces to anticipate call volumes.
- h. *Improve management of inventory.* Stock inventory based on IMb Tracing scan data reported on outgoing mail and/or incoming reply mail.

- i. *Reduce credit card and check fraud.* Track where new credit cards and checks are in the mailstream and predict delivery using IMb Tracing on outgoing mailings.
- j. *Process orders efficiently.* Respond to orders immediately by using IMb Tracing on incoming mailpieces that indicate an order by mail. Also use IMb Tracing on outgoing mailpieces to know when customers receive fulfillments of mail orders.
- k. *Document mailings.* Have documentation that mail was sent and that the Postal Service has begun processing mailpieces with Destination IMb Tracing on outgoing mailings and/or Origin IMb Tracing on incoming mailings. Using IMb Tracing to track mailpieces improves customer relationship management:
- l. *Promote customer satisfaction.* Enable call centers to better manage customer relationships by using IMb Tracing data on incoming and outgoing mail to lead appropriate communication.
- m. *Identify target customers.* Cross reference response rate patterns and demographic data to target potential customers and develop customer acquisition strategies using Origin IMb Tracing on incoming mailings.
- n. *Customer acquisition.* Improve response rates of new customers by using IMb Tracing on outgoing solicitations and messages to synchronize timely message delivery to marketing e-mails and/or telemarketing messages.
- o. *Strengthen customer loyalty.* Use IM™ barcodes on your outgoing mailpieces to bring delivery predictability that customers can trust. Customers grow loyal to companies that are dependable.

2 Subscribing to IMb Tracing®

IMb Tracing® is a free subscription-based service. Before being able to receive IMb Tracing scan data, the mailer must become an IMb Tracing subscriber. To become a subscriber, the mailer must submit a completed application form, and verification of the mailer and/or printing vendor's ability to generate accurate and scan-ready barcodes prior to mailing.

2-1 Applying for IMb Tracing

From the time the Postal Service receives a completed application from the mailer, it can take as few as 2 weeks to process the application and activate an IMb Tracing subscription. Contact the IMb Tracing Customer Support for assistance.

To apply for IMb Tracing, follow these steps:

1. Apply for Mailer ID(s) using the MID system, accessible from the Business Customer Gateway.
2. Obtain the IMb Tracing application form by visiting the Postal Service's Mail Tracking and Reporting (MT&R) website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; click on *IMb Tracing* and then on *IMb Tracing Resources*. Or email IMb Tracing Customer Support at IMbTracing@usps.gov.
3. Complete and submit the IMb Tracing Service application form per instructions.
4. Receive verification from IMb Tracing Customer Support that your IMb Tracing application was received and completed properly. Then go to the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com> to complete the Postal Service Customer Registration process by clicking on the "Sign Up" button for "New Users." Registration at this site provides you with access to the IMb Tracing resource links. Customer Support will review the information and notify you of your MT&R website logon.
5. Submit 20 sample mailpieces barcoded with proper IM™ barcodes to the local MDA for testing. If the local MDA is not known, please contact the helpdesk for assistance. If already approved the customer should provide one of the following:
 - a. A copy of the MERLIN report from the local MDA
 - b. Approval documentation from another mailing vendor/service provider.
 - c. Documentation from OneCode ACS or other USPS services

Refer to chapters 3 and 5 for guidelines on preparing IMb Tracing mail.

6. Receive verification from the Postal Service as to whether or not your sample mailpieces are compliant with Postal Service specifications. If necessary, modify your sample mailpieces based on the guidance provided by the Postal Service.
7. Receive username/password and confirmation of IMb Tracing subscription activation.

Email IMb Tracing Customer Support at IMbTracing@usps.gov with questions or concerns regarding the application process or preparing IMb Tracing mailings.

3 IMb Tracing® Mail Planning and Preparation

To use IMb Tracing® effectively, mailers must prepare mail to meet basic IMb™ requirements, including the following:

- a. Mailers must use IMb Tracing Service Type IDs for First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, or Periodicals on letter-size or flat-size automation-compatible mailpieces.
- b. Mailers must apply an IMb™ on the front of the mailpiece.

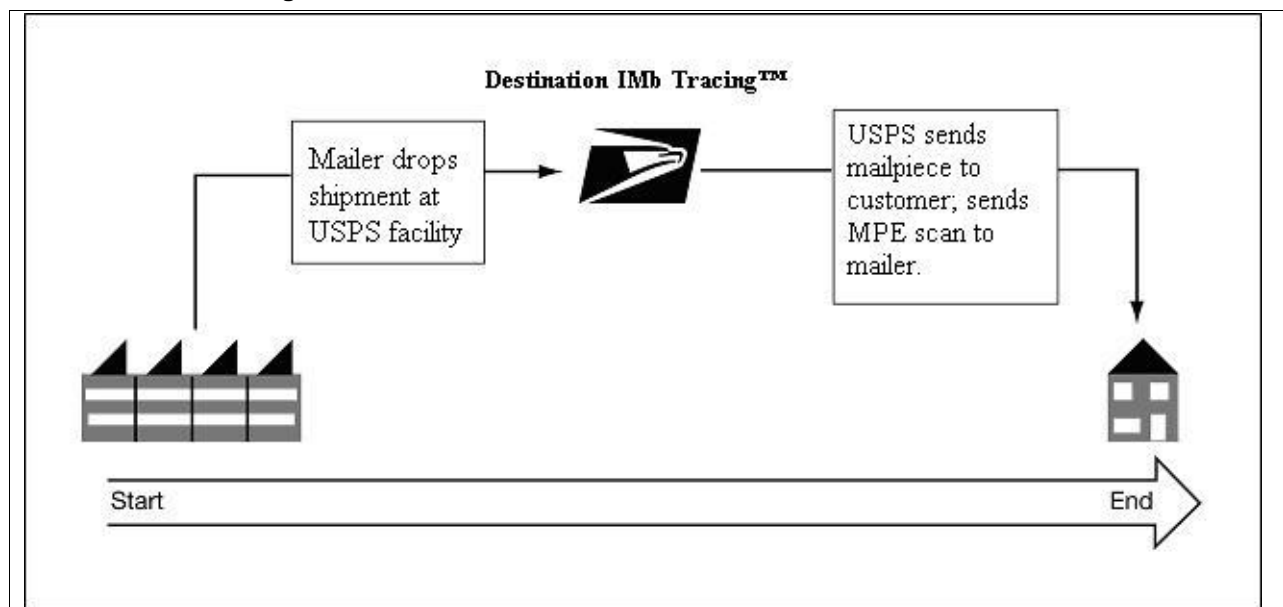
3-1 Choosing the Service Type

The mailer decides whether to use Destination IMb Tracing, Origin IMb Tracing, or both. In each case, an individual mailpiece can typically generate one or several scans as it travels through the postal system.

3-1.1 **Destination IMb Tracing**

Destination IMb Tracing generates mail processing data for outgoing mailpieces such as solicitations, credit cards, statements, and other important communications sent to customers. Mailers receive scan information that can indicate mail processing status, including delivery.

Exhibit 3-1.1
Destination IMb Tracing

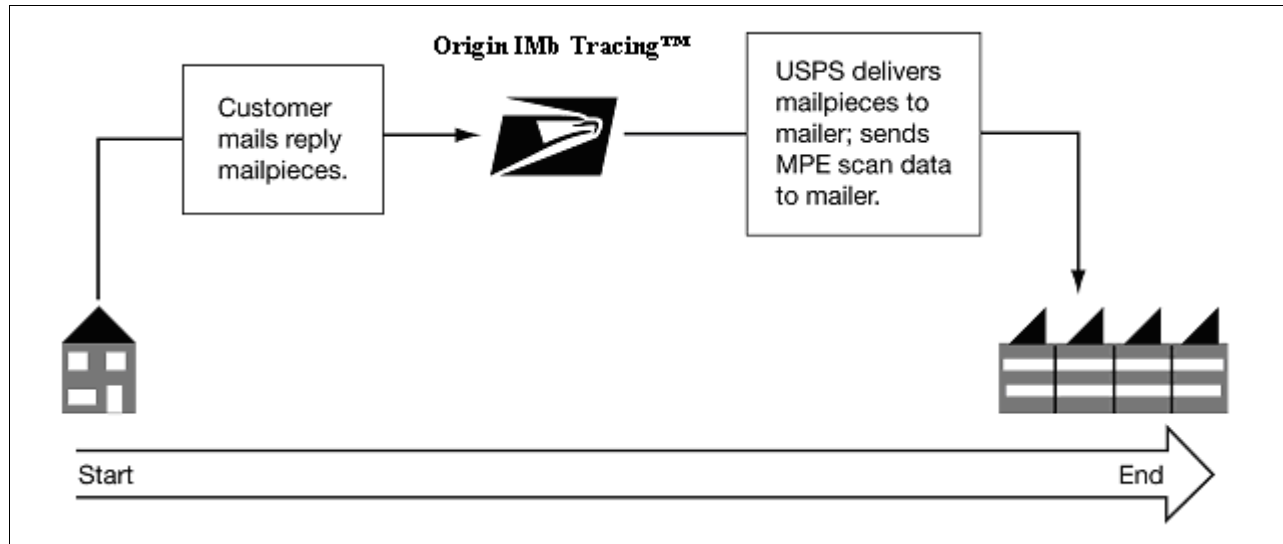


3-1.2 Origin IMb Tracing

Origin IMb Tracing generates tracking data for incoming reply mailpieces such as payments, orders, and other responses from customers. Mailers receive notification that reply pieces from customers are in the mailstream and are being processed for delivery.

Exhibit 3-1.2

Origin IMb Tracing service



An IMb Tracing subscription allows a mailer to use Destination IMb Tracing, Origin IMb Tracing, or both. Depending on the service used, the mailer must use the appropriate barcoding format referenced later in this chapter.

3-2 Using Intelligent Mail Barcodes for IMb Tracing

3-2.1 IMb™ Specification

The Intelligent Mail™ barcode specification is available on RIBBS at: https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_mailpieces/documents/tech_guides/SPUSP_SG.pdf

3-2.2 Destination IMb Tracing IMb™ Format Requirements

The Intelligent Mail barcode structure for Destination IMb Tracing consists of data elements represented in Exhibits 3-3.2a and 3-3.2b.

Exhibit 3-3.2a

Destination IMb Tracing Intelligent Mail Barcode Format Structure Digits



Destination IMb Tracing Intelligent Mail Barcode Format Structure Digits																														
2		3			6						9										11									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID		Service Type ID			Mailer ID						Serial Number										Routing ZIP Code (0, 5, 9 or 11 Digits)									

Destination IMb Tracing Intelligent Mail Barcode Format Structure Digits																														
2		3			9									6						11										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID		Service Type ID			Mailer ID									Serial Number						Routing ZIP Code (0, 5, 9 or 11 Digits)										

Exhibit 3-3.2b

Field Definitions of the Intelligent Mail Barcode for Destination IMb Tracing

Element	Digits	Definition
Barcode ID	2	<p>The Intelligent Mail barcode begins with a 2-digit identifier for internal Postal Service use only. The field is reserved for indicating Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) sort level and Exception Handling.</p> <p>For a comprehensive list of available Barcode Identifiers, please refer to the following documentation: https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_mailpieces/documents/tech_guides/BarcodeIdentifier.pdf</p> <p>Note: IMb Tracing subscribers typically populate this field with two zeros, unless instructed to do otherwise by other Postal Service programs utilizing the Intelligent Mail Barcode.</p>
Service Type ID	3	<p>The Service Type ID identifies the mail class and specific service used for the mailpiece (i.e., Destination IMb Tracing).</p> <p>The following three values are common examples of Service Type IDs used with Destination IMb Tracing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 040 –First Class Mail, Basic option with Destination IMb Tracing 042 –Standard Mail, Basic option with Destination IMb Tracing 044 –Periodicals, Basic option with Destination IMb Tracing <p>For a comprehensive list of available Service Type ID's, please refer to the following documentation: https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_mailpieces/documents/tech_guides/stid.pdf</p> <p>Note: The Intelligent Mail barcode does not accommodate separate Service Type IDs that differentiate mail shape (i.e., letter vs. flat).</p>

Element	Digits	Definition
Mailer ID	6 or 9	A 6- or 9-digit Mailer ID is assigned by the Postal Service to identify a mailer.
Serial Number	9 or 6	This field is available to the mailer to use for their own identification purposes (e.g., used to represent mailpiece, mailing, client, etc.).
Routing Code	0, 5, 9, or 11	This field accommodates 0, 5, 9, or 11 digits of ZIP Code information and must contain only the Delivery Point ZIP Code for the addressee. Mailers should not fill this field with preceding or trailing zeroes.

3-2.3 Origin IMb Tracing IMb™ Format Requirements

The Intelligent Mail barcode structure for Origin IMb Tracing consists of data elements represented in Exhibits 3-3.3a and 3-3.3b.

Exhibit 3-3.3a

Origin IMb Tracing Intelligent Mail Barcode Format Structure Digits



Origin IMb Tracing Intelligent Mail Barcode Format Structure Digits																															
2		3			15															11											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Barcode ID		Service Type ID			Origin IMb Tracing Customer Number ("Open" Digits)															Routing ZIP Code (Serves as "Subscriber ID" for Origin IMb Tracing)											

Exhibit 3-3.3b

Field Definitions of the Intelligent Mail Barcode for Origin IMb Tracing

Element	Digits	Definition
Barcode ID	2	The Intelligent Mail barcode begins with a 2-digit identifier for internal Postal Service use only. The field is reserved for indicating Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) sort level and Exception Handling. Note: IMb Tracing subscribers should populate this field with two zeros, unless instructed to do otherwise by other Postal Service programs utilizing the Intelligent Mail Barcode.
Service Type ID	3	The Service Type ID identifies the specific service used for the mailpiece (i.e., Origin IMb Tracing and mail class). The following two values are common examples of a Service Type ID used with Origin IMb Tracing: 050 – Courtesy Reply Mail, Basic option with Origin IMb Tracing 052 – Business Reply Mail, Basic option with Origin IMb Tracing For a comprehensive list of available Service Type ID's, please refer to the following documentation: https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_mailpieces/documents/tech_guides/std.pdf Note: The Intelligent Mail barcode does not accommodate separate Service Type IDs that differentiate mail type (i.e., letter vs. flat).

Element	Digits	Definition
Customer Number ("Open" digits)	15	This field is available to the mailer to use for their own identification purposes (e.g., used to represent customer, mailpiece, account number, etc.).
Routing Code	0, 5, 9, or 11	This field accommodates 0, 5, 9, or 11 digits of ZIP Code information and must contain only the Delivery Point ZIP Code for the addressee. Subscribers should not fill this field with preceding or trailing zeroes. Note 1: IMb Tracing requires 9- or 11-digit Routing ZIP to serve as "Subscriber ID" for Origin IMb Tracing users. Digits must be registered within subscriber's IMb Tracing account and match exactly with data contained within the barcode.

3-3 Rules for Reusing the Intelligent Mail Barcode

IMb™ mailers should adhere to the uniqueness requirements as outlined in the Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats. This guide is available on RIBBS at:

https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf.

3-4 Intelligent Mail Barcode Resources and Software from the Postal Service

To aid in implementing IM™ barcodes, a number of tools and resources are available via the Postal Service *Rapid Information Bulletin Board System* (RIBBS) website, including the detailed specifications for the Intelligent Mail barcode, an online encoder/decoder tool, encoder software for a range of platforms, and Intelligent Mail Barcode fonts.

The Postal Service RIBBS website has a dedicated section for Intelligent Mail barcode resources available at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/OneCodeSolution>.

3-4.1 **Online Encoder/Decoder Tool**

To convert the Intelligent Mail barcode into meaningful information, the RIBBS website offers to the general public an online decoder tool that allows users to enter the barcode sequence and receive the numeric representation of that barcode. A similar online encoder tool is available for encoding a user's own tracking and delivery point ZIP Code information into a graphic representation of the Intelligent Mail barcode. To locate the tool, navigate to the following location: <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=encoder>.

3-4.2 **Downloadable Encoders and Fonts**

To encode the Intelligent Mail barcode in a production environment, RIBBS offers an extended library of encoder source and binary code that can be downloaded and installed on a range of platforms. The Postal Service provides support for a total of 45 combinations of operating systems and language and application environments, as noted in Exhibit 3-3.5.

Exhibit 3-3.5

Operating Systems and Language and Application Environments Supported by the Postal Service

“Y” = “Yes, supported”

“N” = “No, not supported”

Operating System	Language and Applications Supported					
	C	Java 2	COBOL	PL/I	MS Access	MS Excel
MVS, z/OS, and OS/390	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
VSE/ESA	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
OS/400	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
AIX on POWER	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Linux for pSeries	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Linux for zSeries 64bit	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Linux for Intel ²	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Programmer Version for Windows	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Programmer Version for Win64	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
MS Office Version for Windows	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
MS Office Version for Win64	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Programmer Version for Mac OS X	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
MS Office Version for Mac OS X	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
HP-UX on Itanium	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
HP-UX on PA-RISC	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Solaris on Intel	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Solaris on SPARC	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Solaris on SPARC 64bit	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

For each operating system, the encoding software package is distributed as a standard ZIP file. Each package includes a user guide to provide detailed operating system-specific and language-specific instructions on how to install and use the files in the package.

For printing the Intelligent Mail barcode in a production environment, a variety of Intelligent Mail Barcode fonts are available for each of the five major production printing environments: AFP (MVS, AS/400, VM, and VSE), HP PCL, PostScript, Xerox Metacode, and TrueType. User guides for using these fonts are also available.

The library of encoder source and binary code and fonts is available only to registered RIBBS users. To register, please contact the Intelligent Mail Barcode helpdesk at 877-640-0724 or visit the website at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/OneCodeSolution>. A customer service representative will take your information (name, company, address, phone, and e-mail) and issue you a username and password. You will then be able to download all resources.

3-5 Intelligent Mail Barcode Location Requirements

3-5.1 **Letters**

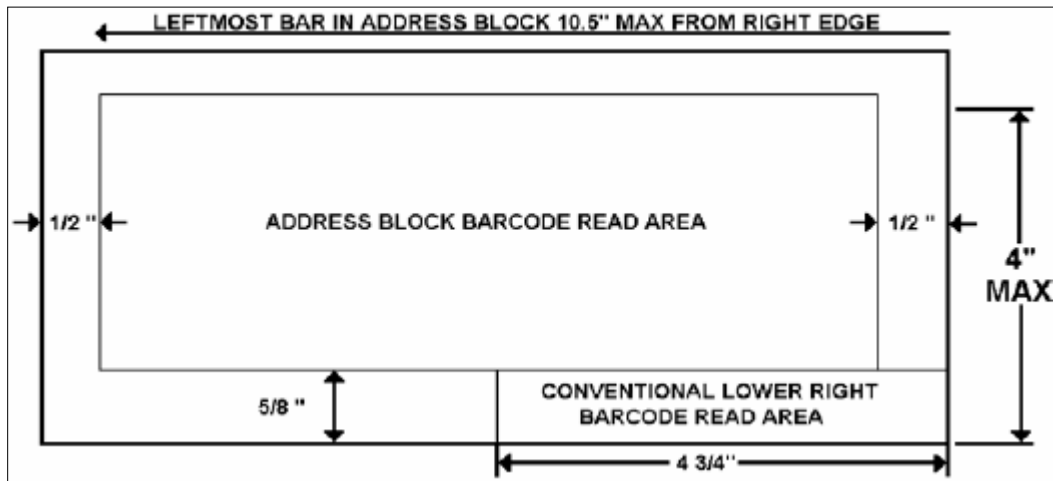
3-5.1.1 **Intelligent Mail Barcode**

For all letters with the exception of Business Reply Mail (BRM) pieces, the Intelligent Mail barcode can be affixed anywhere in the address block barcode

read area. Refer to the DMM for lower-right corner barcode read area requirements. See Exhibit 3-5.1.1.

Exhibit 3-5.1.1

Barcode Placement Locations for Letters



For detailed information on the placement of the Intelligent Mail barcode on letters, refer to section 202.5 of the DMM (<http://pe/text/dmm300/202.htm#1047220>).

3-5.2 Flats

For detailed information on the placement of the Intelligent Mail barcode on flats, refer to section 302.5 of the DMM (<http://pe/text/dmm300/302.htm#1014078>).

3-6 Intelligent Mail Barcode Print Requirements

Barcodes should be printed in accordance with DMM 708.4 (<http://pe/text/dmm300/708.htm#1352817>).

Please refer to the Intelligent Mail Barcode specification document (https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_mailpieces/documents/tech_guides/SPUSP_SG.pdf) for more detailed information on the following tracking code print requirements:

- a. Address block.
- b. Barcode pitch.
- c. Bar dimensions.
- d. Barcode tilt.
- e. Baseline shift.
- f. Reflectance.
- g. Ink Issues (overinking and voids).

Complying with the Intelligent Mail barcode specifications increases the likelihood that mail processing equipment will accurately read the information present on barcoded mailpieces. Non-compliance with these specifications will have an adverse impact on the number of scans the mailer receives from IMb Tracing mail.

4 IMb Tracing® Mail Processing Data

4-1 Scanning IMb™ Mailpieces

IMb Tracing® provides scan data that reflects automated processing of subscribers' mail containing Intelligent Mail barcodes. When the Postal Service processes IMb™ barcoded mail on high-speed mail sorting equipment, comma-delimited raw scan data records are created. The mailpiece scan record represents where, when, and at which operation level an individual mailpiece is processed.

A mailpiece is likely to generate multiple mailpiece scan records as it is processed on automated equipment prior to delivery. However, the Postal Service cannot guarantee that every IMb Tracing mailpiece with an IM™ barcode will receive a scan or multiple scans.

4-2 IMb Tracing Mailpiece Scan Data Record Format

The following table outlines the current layout of the IMb Tracing scan data record. The file will always be in fixed width and comma delimited format.

Exhibit 4-2a

IMb Tracing Data Record (columns separated by commas)

Position	Name	Description
1–5	Facility ID (ZIP)	The 5-digit ZIP Code of the facility where mail was processed.
7–9	Operation Code	The code that indicates the level of sort operation at which the mail was processed.
11–29	Scan Date and Time	The date (mm/dd/yyyy) and time (hh:mm:ss) the mail was processed.
31–41	Routing Code	The Destination ZIP Code used to process the mailpiece (5, 9, or 11 digits).
43–62	IMb Tracking Code	The 20 digit Tracking Code portion of the Intelligent Mail barcode.

Exhibit 4-2b shows an example of an IMb Tracing raw data file. All columns are separated by commas. The Routing Code field is padded to the right with spaces as needed, to fill positions 31-41:

Exhibit 4-2b

Example of an IMb Tracing Raw Data File (columns separated by commas)

22081,896,12/29/2004 11:20:50,57401317223,00040012345990019102
22081,896,12/29/2004 11:20:51,57401246401,00040012345990019101
22081,896,12/29/2004 11:20:53,57446009797,00040012345990019104
22081,896,12/29/2004 11:20:54,57454 ,00040012345990019103
22081,896,12/29/2004 11:20:56,574623010 ,00040012345990019106

Note: A list of facility IDs is available from IMb Tracing Customer Assistance via email at IMbTracing@usps.gov. A list of 3-digit operation codes is available via the Mail Tracking and Reporting (MT&R) website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

The scan records that are produced during sort operations allow customers to interpret the data and estimate when mailpieces are near delivery.

5 Data Access and Interpretation

5-1 Data Access

IMb Tracing® scan data is created each time IMb mailpieces with an IMb Tracing Service Type ID are sorted on mail processing equipment. Refer to chapter 4 for details on the scan data record format.

Mailers can receive mailpiece scan data in two ways:

- a. File transfer protocol (FTP)
- b. Download from the IMb Tracing website

5-1.1 **FTP (File Transfer Protocol)**

Customers can have their scan data sent to them on a push schedule. Customers provide their Internet protocol (IP) address and host information to be entered into their account by the IMb Tracing Customer Support staff. This allows scan data to be sent to the customer on a set download schedule of their preference. Customers receive scans accumulated since the last scheduled upload — up to 24 times a day for mailpiece scan data files. All data will be included in a package file with a “pkg” file extension.

Each push subscription can be sent to up to three separate FTP servers. That means that multiple recipients can receive the same scan data. If you would like to provision your data to multiple parties, work with IMb Tracing Customer Support to modify your schedule(s) accordingly.

5-1.2 **Mail Tracking and Reporting website**

Subscribers can download their raw scan data from the IMb Tracing section of the Mail Tracking and Reporting website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>.

5-2 Managing Scan Data Notification Schedules and Contact Information

To receive mailpiece scan data, subscribers must provide the helpdesk with the contact information and the desired notification schedule(s)

Subscribers can enter and maintain the information necessary to manage scan notifications at the Mail Tracking and Reporting (MT&R) website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>.

- a. In the Contact Setup section, subscribers can enter and maintain contact information for e-mail and file transfer notification.
- b. In the Host Setup section, subscribers can enter and maintain host information for FTP notification.

- c. In the Mailpiece Scan Schedule section, subscribers can select how and when to receive IMb Tracing notifications and view notification history.

For assistance, contact IMb Tracing Customer Support via email at IMbTracing@usps.gov.

5-3 Scan Data Interpretation

When interpreting scan data, it is important to remember that an IMb Tracing mailpiece will most likely receive more than one scan. Multiple scans of a mailpiece make it possible to determine processing time and location of each mailpiece. By evaluating mailpiece processing scans, mailers get an indication of when their mailpieces are near delivery.

Mailpiece Scans. The four subsequent scans shown in Exhibit 5-5 represent mailpiece scans. Mailpieces can be uniquely identified by using the Intelligent Mail barcode. A mailpiece scan history can be used to interpret mail processing and evaluate delivery.

Exhibit 5-5
Scan History

Mailpiece Scan

```
22081,895,12/01/2011 09:46:06,57401317223,00040012345990019102
22081,896,12/02/2011 04:52:56,57401317223,00040012345990019102
22081,918,12/02/2011 04:55:44,57401317223,00040012345990019102
22081,919,12/02/2011 05:09:36,57401317223,00040012345990019102
```

Note: A list of facility IDs is available from IMb Tracing Customer Assistance at IMbTracing@usps.gov. A list of 3-digit operation codes is available via the Mail Tracking and Reporting (MT&R) website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

5-3.1 **Postal Service Sort Operation Codes**

Each IMb Tracing scan data record includes a 3-digit sort operation code. Mailers use operation codes to determine the processing status of mailpieces. Understanding these Postal Service operation numbers is critical to the interpretation of IMb Tracing scan data.

Each IMb Tracing mailpiece will likely generate multiple mailpiece scan records, each of which will contain a different sort operation code representing a type of sort operation. The number and type of sort operations that take place will depend on numerous factors, including mail class, shape, presort level, and originating and destinating locations.

Each sort operation code provided by IMb Tracing scan data represents a type of sortation and the type of equipment on which the mail was processed. Each type of sortation process may be represented by multiple sort operation codes, depending on the type of system on which processing took place.

To obtain the most current list, go to the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

Below are definitions of some of the major process types.

- a. *Outgoing (O/G) Primary*: Originating mail separated by automated area distribution center (AADC), 3-digit ZIP Code separations, and 5-digit ZIP Code separations for overnight, 2-day, and 3-day delivery. Additional processing is required on automated equipment. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “1.”
- b. *Outgoing (O/G) Secondary*: Originating mail not finalized on outgoing primary separated by AADC, 3-digit ZIP Code separations, and 5-digit ZIP Code separations for overnight, 2-day, and 3-day delivery. Additional processing is required on automated equipment. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “2.”
- c. *Managed Mail*: 3- and 5-digit outgoing primary mail normally sorted from an AADC level down to 3-digit ZIP Code level, with high-volume 5-digit zones and firms also held out. Additional processing is required on automated equipment for the 3-digit sorted volume and the 5-digit sorted volume for which the plant has incoming secondary, delivery point sequence (DPS), sector/segment, or box section sorting responsibility. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “3.”
- d. *Incoming (I/C) SCF (sectional center facility)*: Local destinating mail normally separated by the host SCF by 5-digit ZIP Code. Additional processing on automated equipment is required for the 5-digit ZIP Codes for which the plant has incoming secondary, DPS, sector/segment, or box section sorting responsibility. The automated zone indicator (AZI) table (see 7-5.3.2.) provides more detailed information about processing for each ZIP Code. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “4.”
- e. *Incoming (I/C) Primary*: Local mail normally separated by the host SCF by 5-digit ZIP Code for which it has delivery responsibility. Additional processing on automated equipment is normally required for mail for which the plant has incoming secondary, DPS, sector/segment, or box section sorting responsibility. The AZI table provides more detailed information about processing for each ZIP Code. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “5.”
- f. *Incoming (I/C) Secondary*: Local mail normally separated by carrier route. This mail might be finalized, or additional processing might be required for letter mail on automated equipment (e.g., carrier sequence barcode sorters). This is the final processing for flats. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “6.”
- g. *Box Section*: Local mail normally separated by Post Office box section. In most instances, this is the final automated processing for this mail (manual sorting is required to separate mail by individual Post Office box). In some instances, mail is separated into individual Post Office boxes by repeating this operation on automated equipment. This is the reason why mailers may receive multiple scans with the same operation code for a given piece. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “7.”
- h. *Sector/Segment (SEC/SEG or S/S)*: Mail that typically requires two passes to complete:
 - (1) *1st Pass*. Mail normally separated by ZIP + 4@ sectors. This mail requires additional processing on automated equipment. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “8.”
 - (2) *2nd Pass*. Mail normally separated by ZIP + 4 segments. This is the final processing of mail. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “9.”

- i. *Delivery point sequence (DPS)*: Mail that is sorted into carrier walk sequence. These sorts often require two passes to complete:
 - (1) *1st Pass*. In most cases, this mail requires additional processing on automated equipment. This is the last processing for some mailpieces (e.g., firm holdouts, box sections, and Postal Service facilities). The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “8.”
 - (2) *2nd Pass*. Final processing of mail. The last digit of this 3-digit operation code generally ends with “9.”

5-3.2 Evaluating Delivery

5-3.2.1 Overview

There are several factors to consider when evaluating the delivery date and performance of IMb Tracing mailpieces. Mailers can evaluate delivery by the following factors:

- a. Identifying stop-the-clock operation codes that are often the final mailpiece scans on individual mailpieces.
- b. Becoming familiar with and utilizing the days-in-system calculation.

5-3.2.2 Stop-the-Clock Operation Codes

Sort operation codes can be useful in determining delivery dates of mailpieces. The Postal Service has identified certain sort operation codes that qualify as stop-the-clock operations. These codes represent operations recognized by the Postal Service to help indicate same-day delivery with a high level of certainty. As a guideline, when mailpieces generate IMb Tracing scan records containing one of these codes prior to the corresponding cut-off time and this is the last scan that occurs on the mailpiece, there is a very strong likelihood that the mailpiece will be delivered that same day. Not all mailpieces receive stop-the-clock scans as the final scan.

For a current listing of Stop-the-Clock Operation Codes and their associated ‘cut-off’ times, refer to the Operation Codes list. To obtain the most current list, go to the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

5-3.2.3 Days-in-System Calculation

The Postal Service commonly uses the days-in-system calculation to determine the number of days it takes the Postal Service to deliver the mail from induction to delivery. In order to obtain the first scan date, mailers must submit electronic documentation which will also enable free start-the-clock tracking data through *PostalOne!*. This calculation considers that no deliveries are made on Sundays or holidays. Exhibit 5-5.2.3 shows the days-in-system calculation.

Exhibit 5-5.2.3

Days-in-System Calculation

$\text{Days in System} = (\text{Last Scan Date} - \text{First Scan Date}) - (\text{Adjustment for Sunday/Holiday})$

The adjustment for Sunday/Holiday is determined using the following logic:

- a. If the last scan date falls on a day immediately following a Sunday or holiday, then subtract 1 from the days-in-system value.

- b. If the last scan date falls on a day immediately following a Sunday, and that Sunday is immediately preceded by a holiday, then subtract 2 from the days-in-system value.
- c. If the last scan date falls on a day immediately following a holiday, and that holiday is immediately preceded by a Sunday, then subtract 2 from the days-in-system value.
- d. If the last scan date falls on a day immediately following a Sunday, and that Sunday is immediately preceded by two consecutive holidays, then subtract 3 from the days-in-system value.
- e. If the last scan date falls on a day immediately following a holiday, and that holiday is immediately preceded by two consecutive holidays (or a holiday and a Sunday), then subtract 3 from the days-in-system value.

5-3.3 Scan Expectations and Related Resources

IMb Tracing scan data reflects the automated processing of mailpieces; however, due to the nature of mail processing there is no guarantee that a mailpiece will receive a scan. When a mailpiece does receive a scan, there are several factors such as shape, presort level, and destinating zone that impact overall scan performance. These factors should be considered when interpreting scan data.

5-3.3.1 Letter Mail Processing

Letter mail barcoded with tracking codes is more likely than flat mail to generate IMb Tracing scan data. To be eligible for scanning, letter mail must first adhere to basic mailpiece design specifications for automation-compatible mail. Proper barcodes must be present on the front of the mailpieces.

5-3.3.1.1 Automated Zone Indicator (AZI) Table

The automated zone indicator (AZI) table (see Exhibit 7-5.3.2) lists all 5-digit ZIP Codes and is an indicator of the type of processing that typically takes place on IMb Tracing letter mail destined for those ZIP Codes. The AZI is formatted in an Excel spreadsheet and contains all Postal Service 5-digit ZIP Codes, each of which is assigned one numeric zone indicator. The five numeric indicators are as follows:

1. *Two Pass Zones*: Automated two-step sector/segment at mail processing facilities.
2. *876 Carrier Route Sort Zones*: Automated incoming secondary carrier route sorting at plants.
3. *Carrier Route Barcode Sorter (CSBCS) Zones*: Automated walk sequence sorting on CSBCS machines at delivery units.
4. *Delivery Barcode Sorter (DBCS) Zones*: Automated walk sequence sorting on DBCS machines at plants (i.e., SCFs) or at delivery units.
5. *Manual/Mechanized Zones*: No automated sorting. No tracking code scans should be generated from facilities matched to these ZIP Codes.

Exhibit 5-5.3.2

Sample Automated Zone Indicator (AZI) Table Layout

ZIP Code	Zone Indicator
00501	1
00544	1
00601	2
00602	2

00603	2
00604	3
00605	3
00606	2
00610	2

Note: The AZI table is maintained and updated by the Postal Service's Address Management Services. The Postal Service posts an updated version of this table on the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an "Existing User"; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

A subscriber's scan expectancy on letter mail depends on the type of zone for which the mailpiece is destined, along with the presort level in which the mail was prepared. For example, letter mail presorted to a 3-digit level is more likely to receive mailpiece scans than mail presorted to a finer sort level (e.g., 5-digit presort) because the 3-digit sort mail requires more automated sorting to prepare it for delivery.

Some general guidelines regarding scan expectancy using AZI are the following:

- a. Letter mailpieces presorted at 5-digit level and destined to AZI 5 zones should not receive mailpiece scans.
- b. Letter mailpieces destined to AZI zones 1 and 5 should not receive stop-the-clock scans. There is also a low likelihood that letter mailpieces destined to AZI zone 2 will receive stop-the-clock scans.
- c. Letter mailpieces destined to AZI zone 3 may receive a stop-the-clock scan if they are processed on delivery point sequence (Operation Number 905) at the Postal Service delivery unit.
- d. Letter mailpieces destined to AZI zone 4 are most likely to receive mailpiece scans. These pieces should receive a stop-the-clock scan.

5-3.3.2 Flat Mail Processing

Customers report that they typically receive lower IMb™ scan rates on flats than on letter mail. This is largely attributed to the following reasons:

- a. A notable amount of flat mail bypasses processing equipment and does not get scanned. The Postal Service does not process flat size mail on automated equipment for 5-digit ZIP Codes that have fewer than ten carrier routes, that do not have sufficient densities to meet automation processing thresholds, or that cannot be processed on automation processing equipment to meet delivery schedule windows. In these situations, the standard operating procedure in the field is to send 5-digit bundles directly to delivery units.

Note: All carrier route bundles always bypass automation and therefore do not receive scans.

- b. A number of smaller plants do not have automated flats equipment, so 3-digit and 5-digit presorted mail for their service areas are not scanned. Most basic presorted mail for these areas receive a scan "upstream."

IMb Tracing is relevant only for automation-rate mailings.

For individual mailings, however, the expected scan rate depends on the destination area and on the portion of the mailing that is 5-digit presorted. For some mailings, the expected scan rate could be 80 percent or more, while for

others it could be substantially below 60 percent. To enable mailers to predict and evaluate scan rates for their individual mailings (or for ZIP Code areas), the Postal Service provides IMb Tracing subscribers with location-specific information tables. To ensure accuracy of these tables, please report any anomalies noted in the lists to IMb Tracing Customer Support via email at IMbTracing@usps.gov.

With information from the tables, both mailers and the Postal Service will be better able to evaluate whether the scan rate for a particular mailing or area is about what would be expected, or is sufficiently below expectations and indicates a need for further investigation.

5-3.3.2.1 **Nonautomated SCF Table**

The nonautomated SCF table is available to help IMb Tracing customers determine where to expect mailpiece scans on flat mail. Flat mailpieces with IMb Tracing barcodes, presorted at the 3-digit or 5-digit level, destined for the 3-digit ZIP Code zones in this table are likely not to receive scans.

The nonautomated SCF table lists all 3-digit ZIP Code zones where flat mail is not processed on automated barcode sorting equipment. The nonautomated SCF table is formatted in an Excel spreadsheet and contains four data fields:

- a. SCF: The Postal Service 3-digit ZIP Code representing an SCF.
- b. Site: The SCF name (usually associated with a city).
- c. State: The state in which the SCF is located.
- d. Associated 3-digit ZIPs: The Postal Service 3-digit ZIP Codes associated with the SCF.

Exhibit 5-5.3.3.1 shows a sample nonautomated SCF table.

Exhibit 5-5.3.3.1

Sample Nonautomated SCF Table

SCF	Site	State	Associated 3-Digit ZIPs
054	SCF BURLINGTON	VT	054
054	SCF BURLINGTON	VT	056
128	GLENS FALLS	NY	128
129	PLATTSBURGH	NY	129
136	WATERTOWN	NY	136
147	JAMESTOWN	NY	147
156	GREENSBURG	PA	156
158	DU BOIS	PA	158
163	OIL CITY	PA	163

Note: The nonautomated SCF table is maintained and updated by the Postal Service’s Processing Operations Headquarters with support from the IMb Tracing Program Office and Address Management Services. The Postal Service posts an updated version of this table on the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

5-3.3.2.2 **Nonautomated 5-Digit ZIP Code Table**

The nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table is available to help IMb Tracing customers determine where to expect mailpiece scans on flat mail. Flat mailpieces with IMb Tracing barcodes — presorted at the 5-digit level — destined

for the 5-digit ZIP Code zones in this table are likely not to receive scans. Flat mail presorted to the 3-digit level may receive scans “upstream” if mail is destined to an automated SCF.

The nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table lists all 5-digit ZIP Code zones where flat mail is not processed on automated barcode sorting equipment. The nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table is formatted in an Excel spreadsheet and contains three data fields:

- a. ZIP: The Postal Service 5-digit ZIP Code.
- b. City: The city associated with the ZIP Code.
- c. State: The state in which the ZIP Code and city are located.

Exhibit 5-5.3.3.2 shows a sample nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table.

Exhibit 5-5.3.3.2

Sample Nonautomated 5-Digit ZIP Code Table

ZIP Code	City	State
00501	HOLTSVILLE	NY
00544	HOLTSVILLE	NY
00601	ADJUNTAS	PR
00602	AGUADA	PR
00603	AGUADILLA	PR
00604	AGUADILLA	PR
00605	AGUADILLA	PR
00606	MARICAO	PR

Note: The nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table is maintained and updated by the Postal Service’s Processing Operations Headquarters with support from the IMb Tracing Program Office and Address Management Services. The Postal Service posts an updated version of this table on the MT&R website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>; logon to the website as an “Existing User”; click on *IMb Tracing*; then click on *IMb Tracing Resources*; and then click on *IMb Tracing Reference Data Tables*.

5-3.4 **Scan Performance Guidelines**

The following rules should be considered when determining scan performance for IMb Tracing letters and flats.

5-3.4.1 **Letters**

5-3.4.1.1 **First-Class Mail**

- a. *Automation Mixed AADC and Automation AADC.* Typically, letter mail in these categories will be processed on automation equipment.
- b. *Automation 3-Digit.* Typically, letter mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of a limited number of nonautomated SCFs, especially if the mail is dropped and destined at the nonautomated SCF.
- c. *Automation 5-Digit.* Typically, letter mail in this category destined to AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones) will not be processed on automation equipment; however, letter mail destined to all other zones will be processed on automation equipment. In some instances, letter mail destined to AZI 2 zones (i.e., 876 carrier route sort zones) may be processed on multiline optical character reader (MLOCR) equipment (which does not include IMb Tracing

barcode read capability) and therefore will not be scanned. Use the AZI table to help determine scan expectations.

- d. *Automation Carrier Route*. This category of mail is available only for AZI 3 zones (i.e., CSBCS zones) and AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones). Typically, mail that is processed in AZI 3 zones will be processed on CSBCS processing equipment. Mail that is destined for AZI 5 zones typically will not be processed on automation equipment.
- e. *Nonautomation Single-Piece*. Typically, letter mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment. These pieces are first processed through an automated facer-canceler and are then routed to a barcode sorter.
- f. *Nonautomation Presorted*. Nonmachinable letters (including “Manual Only”) in this category will not receive a scan. Use the information above to determine the likelihood of scans for machinable letters within this category at the various presort levels.

Note: Automation Mixed AADC and nonautomation single-piece are only originating operations.

5-3.4.1.2 **Standard Mail**

- a. *Automation Mixed AADC and Automation AADC*. Typically, letter mail in these categories will be processed on automation equipment.
- b. *Automation 3-Digit*. Typically, letter mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of a limited number of manual SCFs, especially if the mail is dropped and destined at the nonautomated SCF.
- c. *Automation 5-Digit*. Typically, letter mail in this category destined to AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones) will not be processed on automation equipment; however, letter mail destined to all other zones will be processed on automation equipment. In some instances, letter mail destined to AZI 2 zones (i.e., 876 carrier route sort zones) may be processed on MLOCR equipment (which does not include IMb Tracing barcode read capability) and therefore will not be scanned. Use the AZI table to help determine scan expectations.
- d. *Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) High Density and ECR Saturation*. Typically, letter mail prepared for these categories will not be processed on automation equipment. However, in some instances, mail destined for AZI 3 zones (i.e., CSBCS zones) and AZI 4 zones (i.e., DBCS zones) may be processed on automation equipment.
- e. *ECR Automation Basic*. This category of mail is available only for AZI 3 zones (i.e., CSBCS zones) and AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones). Typically, mail that is processed in AZI 3 zones will be processed on CSBCS processing equipment. Mail that is destined for all AZI 5 zones typically will not be processed on automation equipment.
- f. *ECR Basic*. Typically, letter mail prepared for these categories will not be processed on automation equipment due to the physical characteristics of these mailpieces. The rate for this category is higher than the rate for 5-digit automation letters; therefore a majority of the pieces in this category do not meet the specifications for automation.
- g. *Presorted Basic*. Typically, letter mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment. (This is mixed AADC and AADC, so it should be scanned.)

- h. *Presorted 3/5*. Typically, letter mail in this category destined to AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones) will not be processed on automation equipment; however, letter mail destined to all other zones will be processed on automation equipment. In some instances, letter mail destined to AZI 2 zones (i.e., 876 carrier route sort zones) may be processed on MLOCR equipment (which does not include IMb Tracing barcode read capability) and therefore will not be scanned. The 3-digit sorted pieces will typically be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of a limited number of manual SCFs, especially if the mail is dropped and destined at the nonautomated SCF. Use the AZI table to help determine scan expectations for the 5-digit sorted pieces.

Note: Automation Mixed AADC is only an originating operation.

5-3.4.1.3 **Periodicals**

- a. *Nonautomation/Automation Basic*. Typically, machinable letter mail in these categories will be processed on automation equipment.
- b. *Nonautomation/Automation 3-Digit*. Typically, letter mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of a limited number of nonautomated SCFs, especially if the mail is dropped and destined at the nonautomated SCF.
- c. *Nonautomation/Automation 5-Digit*. Typically, letter mail in this category destined to AZI 5 zones (i.e., manual zones) will not be processed on automation equipment; however, letter mail destined to all other zones will be processed on automation equipment. In some instances, letter mail destined to AZI 2 zones (i.e., 876 carrier route sort zones) may be processed on MLOCR equipment (which does not include IMb Tracing barcode read capability) and therefore will not be scanned. Typically letter mail prepared to Nonautomation Carrier Route categories (Basic, High Density, and Saturation) will not be processed on automation equipment. However, in some instances, machinable letters destined for AZI 3 zones (i.e., CSBCS zones) and AZI 4 zones (i.e., DBCS zones) may be processed on automation equipment. Use the AZI table to determine scan expectations.

5-3.4.2 **Flats — All Classes**

The following rules are most applicable to mail that meets the characteristics for processing on the automated flat sorting machine 100 (AFSM 100). Mail that exceeds AFSM 100 processing characteristics may be processed on a flat sorting machine 1000 (FSM 1000) in manual mode. The probability of receiving scans is higher in the area distribution center (ADC) and Mixed ADC categories and diminishes at the 3-digit presort level, and 5-digit mail that exceeds AFSM 100 characteristics is very unlikely to be processed on automation equipment.

- a. *Automation Mixed ADC and Automation ADC*. Typically, flat mail in these categories will be processed on automation equipment.
- b. *Automation 3-Digit*. Typically, flat mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of mail that is drop-shipped by a mailer or directly routed from origin to an SCF that does not have flat sorters.
- c. *Nonautomation Single-Piece*. Typically, flat mail in these categories will be processed on automation equipment, with the exception of mail that originates and destines in SCFs that do not have flat sorters.
- d. *Automation 5-Digit*. Flat mail in this category may be processed on automation equipment. Use the nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table to apply exceptions.

- e. *Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) categories (Basic, High Density, and Saturation)*. Mail in these categories will not be processed on automation equipment.
- f. *Presorted Basic*. Typically, flat mail in this category will be processed on automation equipment. (This rate category is comprised of Mixed ADC and ADC, so it should be scanned.)
- g. *Presorted 3/5*. Flat mail in this category may be processed on automation equipment. Use the nonautomated SCF table and nonautomated 5-digit ZIP Code table to apply exceptions.

Note: Mixed ADC and nonautomation single-piece are only originating operations.

Note: Origin entry or destination entry at the destination national distribution center (DNDC), destination area distribution center (DADC), or destination sectional center facility (DSCF) level should not impact scan expectations since the flat or letter will be processed based solely on the presort level, independent of entry. The only potential exception would be the destination delivery unit (DDU) entry of machinable enhanced carrier route letters, which may reduce the scan expectation when compared to “upstream” entry since the pieces must be backhauled to the plant for processing if a scan is to be recorded, and the delivery unit has the option to case these letters or take the letters straight to the street on mounted routes. The Postal Service’s policy is to backhaul these pieces to the processing facility in order to reduce costs, as long as this does not sacrifice service.

6 Customer Support

Contact the IMb Tracing Customer Support at the Postal Service National Customer Support Center (NCSC) for any of the following issues:

- a. Information on IMb Tracing® service.
- b. IMb Tracing subscriber account management and support.
- c. Barcode testing and certification.
- d. Troubleshooting and technical support.

Mail	USPS NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER ATTN: IMb Tracing 225 N. Humphreys Blvd, Ste 501 MEMPHIS TN 38188-1001
Telephone	800-238-3150
E-mail	IMbTracing@usps.gov

The IMb Tracing Customer Support group:

- Provides full support for initial onboarding.
- Provides full support for all IMb Tracing needs.
 - Answer questions.
 - Account administration.
 - Research visibility issues.
- Is able to address most issues on initial call.
- Will escalate to necessary functional organizations to address any systemic issues.
- Escalates issues to Management.

General information about IMb Tracing service is available at the Mail Tracking and Reporting website at <http://mailtracking.usps.com>.