

Secure Destruction Frequently Asked Questions

Secure Destruction Service Questions

1. What is Secure Destruction?

Secure Destruction is a new Intelligent Mail® opt-in mail service offered by the United States Postal Service®. The service was developed as a USPS BlueEarth® sustainability initiative. The Secure Destruction service provides mailers with an option to reduce the amount of return to sender (RTS) letter-sized First-Class Mail® they receive from USPS®. Undeliverable-asaddressed (UAA) letter-sized First-Class Mail® that contains personal protected information, that would otherwise be RTS, can now be identified, captured, destroyed, and recycled in a secure Destruction mailpieces are shredded by USPS® employees at USPS® facilities, and are rendered unreadable prior to recycling. Secure Destruction shreds mailpieces to a size that makes it impractical to attempt to retrieve information.

2. Why is the Postal Service[®] offering Secure Destruction as a service?

Today, USPS[®] returns over 1.2 billion pieces of undeliverable -as-addressed (UAA) First-Class Mail[®] each year. Returning this mail to the sender adds incremental costs to the USPS[®] and Mailers. Securely disposing of this UAA mail within Postal facilities creates a more sustainable and cost effective solution for the mailing industry that benefits mailers, the USPS[®], and the environment. Mailer interest in this type of mail service option has risen over the past few years, but has been contingent on providing assurances that the mail cannot be retrieved and used to obtain sensitive data. The new Secure Destruction service has been developed by the USPS[®] to address these mailer concerns.

3. When will Secure Destruction be available?

Secure Destruction will be available on November 18, 2014. The Postal Service[®] initiated nationwide pilot tests at postal facilities equipped with Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) software and Combined Input-Output Sub-System (CIOSS) equipment in the fall of 2013. As a result of the successful completion of the pilot testing and performance validation, the Postal Service[®] announced the launch of the Secure Destruction service at all CIOSS Host Plants for November 18, 2014.

4. Is there a cost or fee to participate in the Secure Destruction Service offering?

There is no additional fee for mailer participation in this service.

Operational Questions

1. How is Secure Destruction performed?

Secure Destruction of undeliverable-as-addressed (UAA) mail uses newly established Service Type IDs (STIDs) embedded in the Intelligent Mail[®] barcode (IMb[™]). A STID is a unique value placed by the mailer into the IMb[™] that identifies the mailing services desired. Use of a Secure Destruction STID on a mailpiece serves as an indication of the mailer's request to have UAA mail that would otherwise be returned to the sender (RTS), routed for Secure Destruction. When undeliverable letter-sized mail is processed on the Combined Input Output Sub-System (CIOSS), software reads the STID from the IMb[™] and diverts the UAA mailpiece to a separate bin designated for Secure Destruction.



2. Who will actually perform Secure Destruction?

The Secure Destruction service is performed by USPS[®] employees utilizing high performance shredding equipment within secure USPS[®] facilities. Secure Destruction mailpiece shredding occurs in the Postal facility where the unique Secure Destruction Service Type ID (STID) is read (i.e., CIOSS plants shown in Figure 1). Mailpieces designated for Secure Destruction are considered live mail up to the point of shredding within the Postal facility. Mail designated for Secure Destruction, like all mail, have the full protection and power of law associated with all live mail. Any employee tampering with contents or removing mail items from USPS[®] facilities are subject to legal penalties (18 USC 1708).

3. How will the Postal Service[®] assure that the Secure Destruction Service is properly performed?

The Secure Destruction process takes place within secure USPS[®] facilities by Postal employees. As part of our mission to ensure the sanctity of the mail, Postal facilities already have existing security systems such as lookout galleries and surveillance cameras. These systems are monitored by the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS). The monitoring performed by the Inspection Service occurs completely independent of Postal Service management and employees.

Eligibility Questions

1. What mail is eligible for Secure Destruction?

Only letter-sized First-Class Mail[®] with an Intelligent Mail[®] barcode (IMb[™]) that contains an approved Secure Destruction Service Type ID (STID) that would otherwise be returned to the sender (RTS), is eligible for participation in Secure Destruction. First Class Mail[®] that is undeliverable due to a customer submitted change-of-address will continue to be forwarded to the customer's new address for mailers that have requested forwarding service.

2. What are the participation requirements for Secure Destruction?

Mailers may participate in Secure Destruction handling by using Traditional ACS[™], OneCode ACS[®], or Full Service ACS[™] programs with any Basic or Full-Service mailing. These programs offer the added benefit of providing the mailer with electronic notification of undeliverable-as-addressed (UAA) mailpieces processed for Secure Destruction. Only letter-sized First-Class Mail[®] with an Intelligent Mail[®] barcode (IMb[™]) that contains an approved Secure Destruction Service Type ID (STID) is eligible for participation in Secure Destruction. The Secure Destruction service is not available to any mailpiece that does not include the appropriate Secure Destruction STID in the IMb[™].

3. Will flat-sized mailpieces be eligible for the Secure Destruction Service?

No. The Secure Destruction service will NOT be offered for flat-sized mailpieces. Flat-sized mailpieces are currently not machinable on all Combined Input-Output Sub-System (CIOSS) processing equipment, which is the engine at the center of the Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS). Secure Destruction of flat-sized mail will be considered as a service option in FY15.





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Mail Security Questions

1. Will the the Postal Service[®] maintain a National Association for Information Destruction (NAID) certification?

After careful examination of the NAID certification process, the USPS[®] determined that it is in conflict with the USPS[®] regulatory mandate to protect the sanctity of mail. Voluntary compliance with the NAID certification process on behalf of The Postal Service[®] would not meet existing USPS[®] security standards and legal penalties under 18 USC. For additional information about how the USPS[®] Secure Destruction service meets or exceeds national and international information security standards, refer to the Information Security Cross Comparison Table on the Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS[®]) website located at https://ribbs.usps.gov.

2. Is there a "guarantee" that all mailpieces will be destroyed securely?

USPS[®] processes over 100 billion mailpieces per year with a proven track record of reliable service. However, given this enormous volume, the Postal Service[®] cannot guarantee against a single sorting error for any given mailpiece processed. The Postal Service[®] has strict policies and procedures to handle mailpieces designated for Secure Destruction.

3. Will there be any documentation or certificate of destruction provided to the mailer for Secure Destruction Service?

Yes, when registered, mailers are able to access new Secure Destruction electronic notifications on the USPS[®] customer Electronic Fulfillment Website (EPF) daily. The notification includes the mailpiece IMb[™] data, date, time, and 5 digit ZIP of the Postal facility where the mailpiece was routed for Secure Destruction.

4. What happens if a mailer mistakenly prints the Secure Destruction Service Type ID (STID) on a flat-sized mailpiece?

If a mailing customer inadvertently uses a STID that requests Secure Destruction service on a flat-sized mailpiece, the Secure Destruction service request will not be recognized and the flat-sized mailpiece will be handled according to standard handling procedures. Other services (i.e., not related to Secure Destruction), as identified on the flat-sized mailpiece, will proceed normally. This is possible because the STID table used at the Computerized Forwarding Service (CFS) centers, where flats are processed, will be coded and processed as Address Service Requested (ASR) - Option 2, unless there's a conflicting printed endorsement. In that case, the printed endorsement would define the processing. Option 2 means that the mail will be forwarded if possible and returned if not. In each case, an electronic notice will be provided, which includes both NIXIE and change of address (COA) notices.

Registration Questions

1. How do I enroll to begin using Secure Destruction?

Mailers must register their Intelligent Mail[®] Mailer ID with the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) to allow the NCSC to update all necessary data systems. The registration form is available to mailers on Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS[®]) website located at https://ribbs.usps.gov. After submitting the registration form to NCSC, mailers must wait until November 18, 2014 and allow at least 7 business days until their first Secure Destruction mail deposit. Registration allows for proper participation in the program and generation of electronic notifications.

2. Is there anything I should be doing now to get ready while the Postal Service[®] finalizes the full deployment of the Secure Destruction Service?

Mailers are encouraged to consider the business impact of implementing the Secure Destruction Service within their organization. Mailers should also become familiar with the Secure Destruction Service Type IDs (STIDs) that will be applied to qualifying mailpieces. Where issues or questions are identified that you feel need to be considered in the development of the Secure Destruction service, please direct them to the National Customer Support Center (NCSC), Address Change Service (ACS) Department at acs@usps.gov for review.

Figure 1 - Secure Destruction Combined Input-Output Sub-System (CIOSS) Plant Locations





