Dispatch and Routing Policies

Handbook M-22 October 1994

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

A. Material Transmitted. This is a complete revision of Handbook M-22, *Dispatch and Routing Policies*. Handbook M-22 has been revised to highlight the current transportation policy and emphasize new programs.

B. Explanation. This handbook defines policies and procedures associated with dispatch and routing. It is intended for use by all personnel involved in the dispatch of mail. It is used by Area Distribution Networks for dispatch planning, routing development, and administration of transportation policy. This edition supersedes all previous editions of Handbook M-22, *Dispatch and Routing Policies*.

C. Comments/Changes. Since automation and new operational strategies will cause changes in policy, this handbook will be revised in the future. Comments or suggested changes regarding this handbook should be forwarded to:

MANAGER NATIONAL NETWORK OPERATIONS
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 7916
WASHINGTON DC 20260–7117

D. Effective Date. These instructions are effective immediately.

E. Distribution

1. **Initial Distribution.** This handbook is being distributed to national Headquarters, Vice Presidents, Area Operations, Managers, Distribution Networks, District Managers, and Processing and Distribution Plants, including AMCs and AMFs.
2. **Additional Copies.** To obtain additional copies of this handbook, submit Form 7380, *MDC Supply Requisition,* to the appropriate materiel distribution center.

Allen Kane
Vice President
Operations Support

Table of Contents

1 Network Plans and Routing

2 Network Planning Policies

4 National Air and Surface System (NASS)

5 International Mail Network Planning and Dispatch Guidelines

1 Network Plans and Routing

11 Where Dispatch and Routing Begins and Ends in the Mail Flow

111 Dispatch Planning Concepts

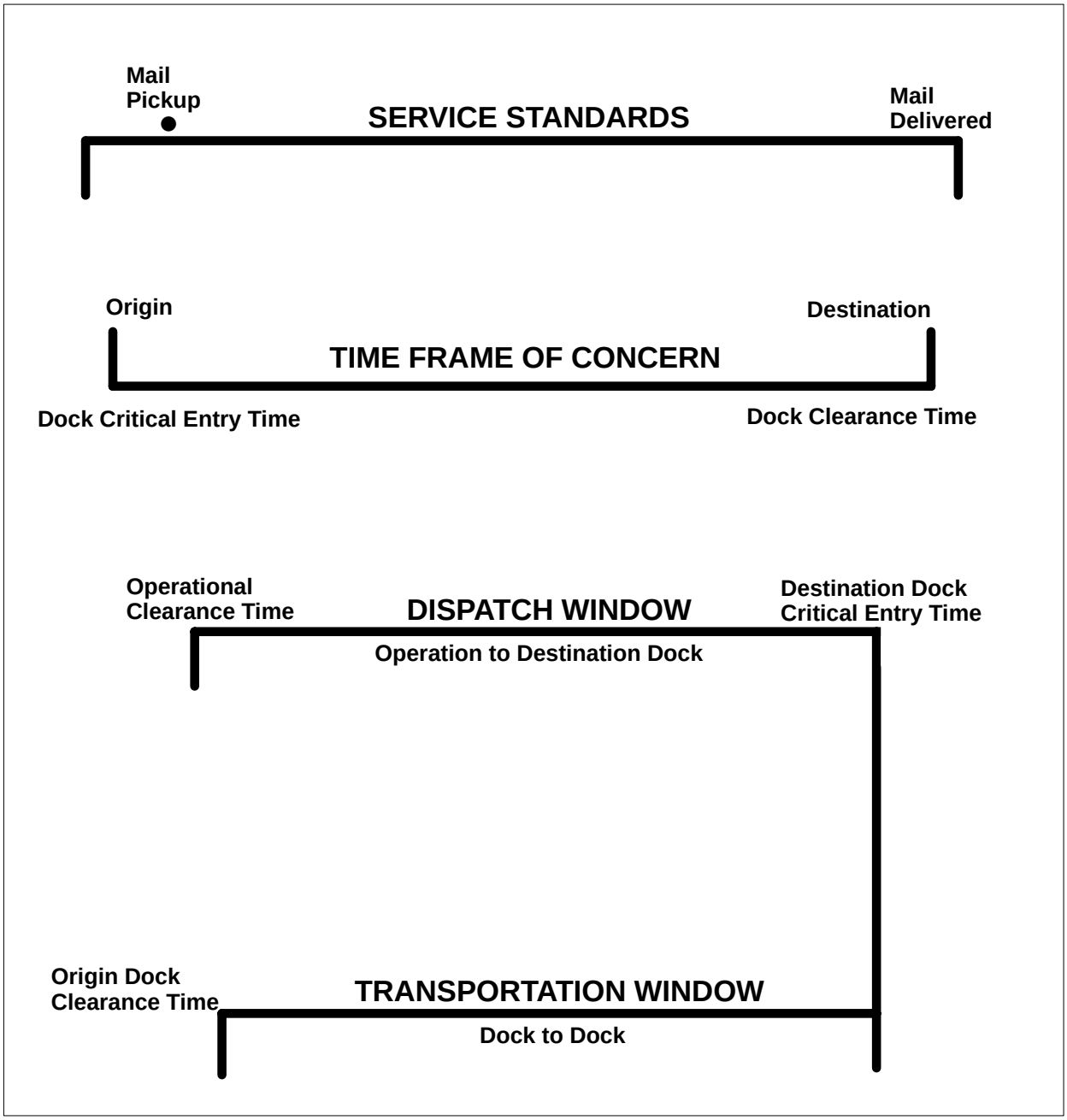
Area Distribution Networks determines the proper routing for each class of mail processed through the facilities within its service area based upon their respective operating plans. The Vice President, Area Operations, determines the type and extent of distribution, labeling, and methods used within each area and conforms to the required level of distribution and corresponding labeling instructions specified by Headquarters for inter-area dispatches.

112 Dispatch Window

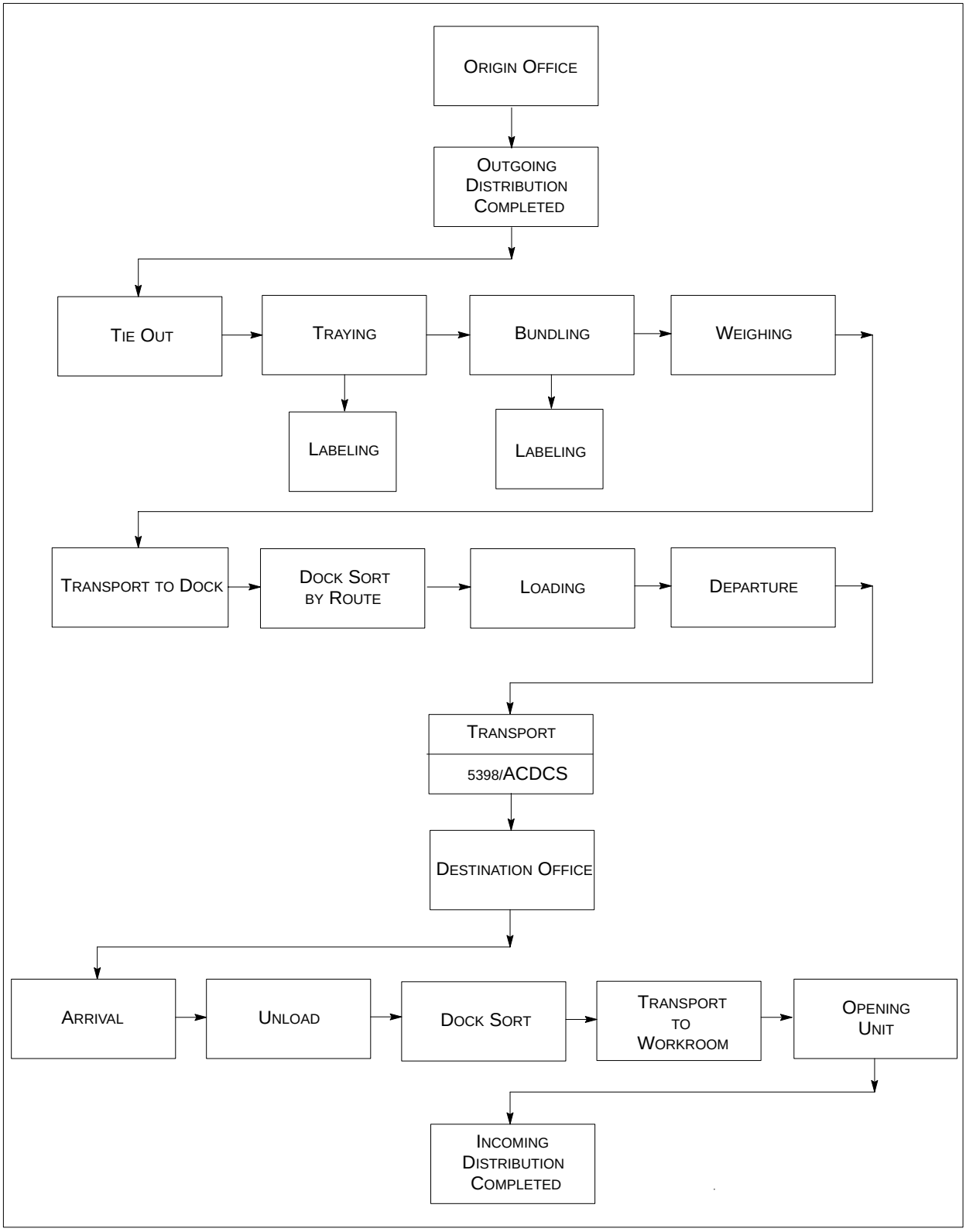
The dispatch window is the period of time that is necessary to achieve the service commitments in the total processing of mail from origin to destination. This time begins with the tie-out of mail at the back of the case/rack/machine and ends at the inbound dock of the facility specified in the labeling instructions (see Exhibit 112a). Each step in the physical distribution process has a defined period of time to be accomplished. Exhibit 112b shows where dispatch and routing begins and ends in the mail flow. These are defined, by time, to help achieve our service commitments.

113 Transportation Window

The transportation window is the time available to transport the mail from origin to destination in relation to origin dock clearance time, destination critical entry time, and service commitments for a particular mail class. Transportation service achievement is measured from the time the unit of transportation for the planned routing leaves the point of origin, and ends when the unit of transportation arrives at the point of destination. All legs of transportation for a planned dispatch are considered along with the time available between arrival and departure for any necessary transfer. Transportation service achievement must fit within the transportation window.



NASS and the Network Planning Specialist
Exhibit 112a



Dispatch and Routing in the Mail Flow
Exhibit 112b

114 Planned Dispatches

The policies listed in this handbook are the key to the U.S. Postal Service's program to manage the flow of mail through the postal system. The transportation policy of the U.S. Postal Service is to route the mail within the specified service windows for each class of mail, using the mode of transportation which provides the best combination of service and cost. Transportation selection is based on the transportation window for each category of mail. If multiple mail classes are being transported, the transportation window is the time necessary to achieve service commitments for the class of mail with the highest service commitment. When developing planned dispatches, each class of mail and its service standard must be considered.

115 Traffic Management Functions

Traffic management functions take steps to ensure all national traffic management policies are implemented and enforced. The following are all applicable to the traffic management function:

a. Ensuring the use of standard national operating procedures regarding the transportation and dispatch of mail.

b. Conducting reviews pertaining to dispatch and network utilization.

c. Coordination of transportation and distribution networks for all mail processing facilities.

d. Compliance with all national programs relative to transportation and dispatch.

e. Recommending modification to national network policies and procedures.

116 Key Elements to Effective Dispatch and Routing

The following are key elements to effective dispatch and routing:

a. Dispatch planning is based on the facilities' operating plan and provides determination based on service and cost.

b. Execution and monitoring of the facilities operating plan, or deviation from the plan for valid reasons (e.g., equipment failure, loss of scheduled transportation, etc.).

c. Dispatch discipline as a continual process that ensures the right mail gets on the right transportation, including early dispatches (i.e., prior to operating plan clearance time).

d. Evaluating transportation performance by comparing to planned schedules and irregularities.

e. Timely mail transfers by both carriers and USPS personnel.

f. Efficient execution of contractual obligations by both contractors and USPS personnel.

g. Evaluation of contractor/carrier capability to provide sufficient space to accommodate mail volume.

h. Effective communication between the processing facility and the Area Distribution Networks.

12 SERVICE COMMITMENTS

121 Definitions

Service commitments represent the time established, in whole days, for the delivery of correctly addressed mail that was accepted within the time limits established for a particular service commitment. Service standards are based on time requirements for receipt, processing, dispatch, and delivery of the specific mail class represented. Dispatch routings must be planned to meet the service commitments for the class of mail being transported.

122 Format

Service commitments are expressed as whole integers from 1 to 10 that reflect the expected day of delivery, with 1 representing overnight committed mail and 10 as the maximum for third-class mail. Day 0 is the day mail is tendered to the Postal Service by the customer.

123 Service Commitment Directories

The Service Commitment Directory is available on-line and in hard copy through the Corporate Information System. The Service Commitment Directory and certain National Air and Surface System (NASS) documents contain the service commitments between all origin and destination pairs for all classes of mail except Express Mail Service. Service commitments for Express Mail Service are established through Express Mail Directories, produced for each 3-digit ZIP Code area, and based on information found in the Facility Operating Plan Exhibit 10. The Service Commitment Directory was designed to meet the needs of both internal and external customers. At the national level, the primary customers are the Origin Destination Information System (ODIS) and the External Service Measurement Performance System (e.g., EXFC). These systems use the information compiled from the Service Commitment Directory to measure on-time service performance for various mail classes. Service commitments are also available in the Executive Information System (EIS) in graphic maps.

124 Service Performance Measurement

124.1 Internal

Performance measurement for First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and parcel post is recorded and reported by ODIS. Service performance for Express Mail Service is measured by the Electronic Marketing Reporting System (EMRS).

124.2 External

Service performance measurement for First-Class Mail (EXFC), second-class mail (EX2C), and third-class mail (EX3C) is measured externally using methods developed by several non-postal organizations under contract to the U.S. Postal Service. These external measurements allow a total examination of service beginning with mail collection and ending with final delivery. Member countries of the International Postal Congress have developed Unipost Quality of Service External Monitoring to oversee the performance of international mail.

13 Operating Plans

131 General

Facility operating plans provide the primary guidelines for establishing dispatch routings between mail processing facilities. They provide dock clearance times at the origin facility and incoming critical entry times at the destination facility. They also provide clearance time of each operation, information on mail classes, processing equipment, processing operations, a profile of anticipated volume and the operating frequencies at each processing facility.

132 Review and Approval

Facility operating plans are reviewed and approved by the plant manager at the facility level. Further review is made at the area office by both the Manager, In-plant Support (operations), and the Manager, Distribution Networks (transportation). After concurrence, final approval is then made by the responsible Vice President, Area Operations.

133 Operating Plan Changes

Changes to the operating plan must be evaluated to determine the downstream effects before approval and implementation. Critical entry time and clearance time changes, particularly for inter-area distribution, have a significant impact on other facilities' dispatch plans and must be reviewed

and approved by Headquarters. Any approved changes to facility critical entry or clearance times must be analyzed carefully from the standpoint of all affected facilities.

134 Service Reviews

The primary purpose of the facility review is to evaluate the effectiveness of the facility to meet operating plan targets. An on-site review of the processing and distribution unit can provide information on situations that are unique to that facility. These situations can have a bearing on that facility's ability to dispatch mail on the planned transportation routings provided by area distribution networks. These on-site reviews are an effective method for the Distribution Networks staff to analyze dispatches.

135 Dock Clearance Time

Dock clearance time is the latest time that committed mail is planned to complete the operation if that mail is to make proper, planned dispatch or delivery. Mail is dispatched on transportation that departs after the dock clearance time. However, advance dispatches may be based on volume or operational needs rather than normal dock clearance time. Each class of mail has a specific dock clearance time defined in the operating plan. The dock clearance time marks the beginning of the transportation window.

136 Dock Critical Entry Time

Dock critical entry time is the latest time (specified in the operating plan) that mail can be received at a destination mail processing facility and be processed for delivery in time to meet required service commitments for the particular class of mail. Dispatch routings are to be planned to arrive at the destination facility in a manageable flow prior to the dock critical entry time. Dock critical entry time marks the end of the transportation window.

137 Clearance Time Changes

Clearance time changes are evaluated with respect to the following:

a. Tie-out time requirements.

b. Present transportation schedules.

c. Impact on all transportation contracts.

d. Effect of change on contractual obligations, both service and cost.

e. Impact on service performance.

138 Critical Entry Time Changes

Critical entry time changes are evaluated with respect to the following:

a. Mail processing capabilities at the destination facility.

b. Present mail arrival profiles.

c. Service standards.

d. Effects of transportation schedule changes on:

(1) Origin departure time to ensure transportation will be compatible with clearance times at origin.

(2) Any intermediate transfers.

e. Impact on all transportation contracts.

f. Effect of changes on contractual obligations, both service and cost.

14 Distribution Networks and Labeling

141 Distribution Networks

Each class of mail falls within a prescribed distribution network that is defined by a national labeling list issued by Headquarters. Each labeling list represents minimum distribution requirements for all processing facilities, and may be modified by area distribution networks for local exceptions to achieve a finer level of sort. However, in all cases, modifications to the list must be in compliance with the national requirements. Labeling lists for all supported classes of mail are resident in the Distribution Requirements System (DRS) database. Effective routings must be provided to all destinations for all classes of mail specified in the labeling lists.

142 Labeling

142.1 Preparation

Proper preparation of dispatch instructions require correct labeling instructions in the following NASS-generated reports:

a. Dispatch Report.

b. Daily Labeling Report.

142.2 Labeling Instructions

Labeling instructions are issued by Headquarters through memorandum to Vice Presidents, Area Operations. Separate instructions are issued for each area distribution center, state distribution center, and bulk mail center and for each supported category of mail as shown below.

142.3 Labeling Lists

The following labeling lists are issued nationally. These lists are for use in Postal Service internal distribution and labeling operations. Customer labeling requirements are defined in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM).

Mail	Class Title
EM	Express Mail
EMC	Express Mail Collector Sacks
ADC	First-Class Area Distribution Centers
AADC	Automated Area Distribution Centers–First-, Second- and Third-Class
P1	Priority Mail
SP	Surface Preferential Mail
BB	Bulk Business Mail
PP	Parcel Post
IPP	Irregular Parcel Post
RG	Registered Mail

143 Labels

Label records found in the NASS database are stored on the host computer at the Information Systems Service Center (ISSC) in San Mateo, California. National labeling lists contain the following information:

a. Distribution levels (label prefix) defined as ADC, AADC, SDC, AMC, AMF, SCF, APO, FPO, BMC, or facility within a city, such as MGN to indicate Morgan Station in New York City.

b. Name of the destination facility.

c. ZIP Code (3, 5, or 9 digits) of the destination facility as well as alphanumeric such as 01Z, 20Z, etc.

d. ZIP Codes to be included in dispatches to this destination.

144 Label Ordering Requirements

144.1 Ordering

Processing facilities should order dispatch labels using Passport. This is a computerized sack and tray label acquisition system that simplifies and standardizes the label ordering process for post offices. The system is a combination of:

a. The automatic transmission of label orders to the Topeka Label Printing Center.

b. The existing On-Demand Label System (ODLS) developed by the Postal Service and in use in many larger facilities.

144.2 System Menu

The system is menu-driven and contains a database of labeling information, as well as the *Domestic Mail Manual* labeling list requirements for mailers.

Users may also obtain sequence information for collated sets from the Sort Program Subsystem of the National Directory Support System.

15 DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS SYSTEM (DRS)

151 Purpose

The purpose of the Distribution Requirements System is to replace the distribution and labeling function in NASS. The DRS resides in the General Operations and Logistics Database (GOLD) and defines distribution labeling requirements for every mail processing facility. Headquarters will continue to maintain national labeling information for all supported mail classes, with local exceptions entered by the respective Area Distribution Networks.

152 Automation of Distribution Records

The DRS automates the creation of distribution records for use in Tie-Out Times Reports and automatically populates the dispatch records with ZIP Codes. It also automatically updates the Scan Where You Band (SWYB) Distribution Tables. The system includes label requirements for manual (MA), mechanized (ME), and automated (AU) operations for letters, flats, and other categories of mail.

16 MAIL CLASS/TYPE

161 Express Mail Service

161.1 General

Express Mail Service is the Postal Service's premium product and must be given expeditious distribution, dispatch, and delivery over all other classes of mail. There are five levels of service available with Express Mail Service. While limited information is provided here, Handbook DM 201, *Express Mail Service*, provides more explicit definitions relative to this class of mail. The five subclasses are:

Custom Designed Service
Next Day Service
Same Day Airport Service
Express Mail International Service
Express Mail Military Service

161.2 Custom Designed Service

Custom Designed Service is available to and from any location in the United States. It is available only on a scheduled basis and is accepted only through a written agreement between the Postal Service and the customer.

161.3 Next Day Express Mail

161.31 *"A" Label Service - Post Office to Post Office*

A shipment must be deposited at a designated origin facility by a pre-determined acceptance time. The shipment must be available at the destination facility for customer pickup by 1000 hours the next day. (See Publication 272, *Shipment Claim Locations—Post Office to Post Office Service*, for destination facilities).

161.32 *"B" Label Service - Post Office to Addressee*

A shipment must be deposited at a designated origin facility by a pre-determined acceptance time. The shipment must be delivered to the addressee by 1500 hours the next day or, in certain circumstances, by 1200 noon the next day (see Next Day Directories).

161.33 *Two-Day Service*

Two-Day Service is available to those destinations not obtainable overnight or for Next Day Service. This may be due to late acceptance at the origin (after posted acceptance time) or destinations having inadequate transportation to meet requirements for Next Day Service (i.e., arrival after critical entry time).

161.4 Next Day Directories

Next Day Directories (Acceptance directories) generated through information input into the NASS Exhibit 10, are produced at least quarterly and will contain all market areas as specified by the Vice President, Operations Support. The NASS Exhibit 10 is based on information found in the facility operating plan Exhibit 10, that defines critical entry time (CET), clearance time (CT), and acceptance window close-out time (COT) for Express Mail Service. Next Day Directories are created for use at acceptance facilities for determining service capabilities from origin facility to destination for "A" and "B" label Next Day Express Mail. Directories will also define "B" label service for noon delivery and 3 p.m. (1500) delivery.

161.5 Same Day Airport Service

"C" Label Service is available between designated AMC/AMFs (see Handbook DM 201, *Express Mail Service*). Same Day Airport Service does not require a written agreement or scheduled frequency. Dispatch is made on a designated flight, described in the NASS Same Day Availability Report, to the desired destination. Routing priorities used for transport of this mail should be (1) non-stop flights, (2) direct flights, (3) routings with one intraline

transfer. Processing time should include time through the origin and destination AMC/AMF as well as time required for the carrier to board and unload the mail.

161.6 Express Mail International Service (EMS)

EMIS provides customers a means of expedited service (not next day) to foreign countries with whom special arrangements have been made. There are no delivery guarantees as with domestic Express Mail Service. Physical limitations of what is mailable are determined individually by each destination country. In accordance with existing guidelines, mail must be of a size and weight to be placed in a pouch and satisfy customs restrictions and documentation (see *International Mail Manual*). EMS provides two levels of service, Custom Designed and On Demand.

161.7 Express Mail Military Service (EMMS)

EMMS provides a premium expedited mail service to and from Department of Defense personnel at authorized overseas locations. EMMS is available both from the continental United States to military APO/FPO addresses (CONMIL), and from APO/FPO addresses to the continental United States (MILCON). EMMS also offers a two-tiered level of service and, as with domestic Next Day Service, offers a service guarantee for delivery within established service commitments. Established service commitments for this subclass of mail are 2-day and 3-day delivery by 3 p.m. (1500 hours).

162 First-Class Mail

162.1 General

Area Distribution Networks must provide routings for designated overnight, 2-day, and 3-day qualified mail within each window of transportation established by the origin and destination operating plans.

162.2 Overnight Delivery

Overnight delivery areas must be routed via surface transportation (some exceptions exist such as the U.S. Virgin Islands).

162.3 Two-Day Delivery

All metered and postmarked mail designated for 2-day delivery can be dispatched by either air or surface transportation, depending upon the most economical routing available that will meet the critical entry time at destination. Incoming critical entry time normally falls between 1500 and 1800 hours with some exceptions.

162.4 Three-Day Delivery

All other remaining areas within the United States must be routed by air or surface transportation to achieve 3-day delivery. Mail with 3-day service standards must utilize routings that meet the critical entry time of 8 a.m. (Day 2) at the area distribution center (ADC) or automated area distribution center (AADC). Special bracketing options as described in Chapter 2 may be used in some cases.

163 Priority Mail

All metered and stamped mail identified or intended to be treated as Priority Mail and designated for overnight delivery must be routed via surface transportation to meet the destination facility's dock critical entry time. All metered or stamped mail identified or intended to be treated as Priority Mail and designated for 2-day delivery must be planned to arrive at the destination Priority Mail area distribution center (ADC) by 5 p.m. (1700) day one.

164 Second-Class Mail

All second-class mail must be entered into and handled within the surface preferential network. Second-class mail identified as surface preferential and labeled "News" or "2C" on the label content line must be distributed concurrently with (but never to the detriment of) newspapers and First-Class Mail to meet the distribution and delivery requirements for surface preferential mail. The second-class mail transportation network currently relies on BMC transportation resources. Area Distribution Networks and processing facilities must ensure that the type transportation service, frequencies, and schedules afforded second-class mail will accommodate all preferential mail volumes and fulfill surface preferential mail service commitments.

165 Third- and Fourth-Class Mail (Bulk Business Mail and Parcel Post)

Dispatch routings are planned to all destinations, as defined in the labeling list, from each origin facility where third- and fourth-class mail is accepted. These routings are planned via the surface transportation network. Routings from the origin facility to the origin bulk mail center (BMC) or other processing facilities should be established within the window of transportation to meet the service commitments for that specific class of mail. Dispatch routings from the origin BMC must be planned to arrive at the destination BMC to meet the dock critical entry time for the class of mail being transported. Routings must utilize the most economical and service-responsive mode of surface transportation available.

166 Registered Mail

166.1 General

Security, cost, and service are the main considerations when routing registered mail. The registry section of each processing facility should maintain a library of documents governing the handling of registered mail. Such a library should consist of the following:

a. Coded Shipment Instructions (7/1/89).

b. CON-CON Instructions (7/1/89).

c. Guidelines for Operational Review of Con-Con Program (3/1/81).

d. Handbook DM- 901, *Registered Mail.*

e. Handbook T-5, *International Operations*.

f. Handbook T-7, *Handling, Dispatching, and Transporting Military Mail by Air*.

▶ **Note:** Offices should maintain a supply of all registered mail irregularity forms referenced in the various instructions.

166.2 CON-CON

Concentration and Convoy (CON-CON) is a program used to combine certain shipments of registered mail for single, daily, daylight or authorized night dispatches between designated AMC/AMFs. Additionally, the program provides for the convoy of concentrated dispatches, when necessary, between the AMC/AMF and the aircraft designated to transport the mail. There are 49 AMC/AMFs currently designated as CON-CON points (see Exhibit 166.2).

The following 49 AMC/AMFs are the only facilities that will serve as CON-CON points for registered mail dispatched by air:

ABQ (Albuquerque)	ATL (Atlanta)	BHM (Birmingham)
BNA (Nashville)	BOI (Boise)	BOS (Boston)
BUF (Buffalo)	BWI (Baltimore)	CLE (Cleveland)
CLT (Charlotte)	CMH (Columbus)	CVG (Cincinnati)
DCA (Washington Nat'l)	DEN (Denver)	DFW (Dallas/Fort Worth)
DSM (Des Moines)	DTW (Detroit)	EWR (Newark)
GEG (Spokane)	HNL (Honolulu)	IAD (Washington Dulles)
IAH (Houston)	IND (Indianapolis)	JAX (Jacksonville)
JFK (AMF Kennedy)	LAS (Las Vegas)	LAX (Los Angeles)
MCI (Kansas City)	MEM (Memphis)	MIA (Miami)
MKE (Milwaukee)	MSP (Minn./St. Paul)	MSY (New Orleans)
OKC (Oklahoma City)	OMA (Omaha)	ORD (Chicago)
PDX (Portland)	PHL (Philadelphia)	PHX (Phoenix)
PIT (Pittsburgh)	SAN (San Diego)	SDF (Louisville)
SEA (Seattle)	SFO (San Francisco)	SJU (San Juan)
SLC (Salt Lake City)	SMF (Sacramento)	STL (St. Louis)
TPA (Tampa)		

REF: CON-CON Instructions, July 1, 1989

Concentration and Convoy Points (CON-CON)
Exhibit 166.2

166.3 Transportation Selection Priority for Registered Mail

166.31 *Air*

Use the following priorities to select air transportation for registered mail:

a. Daylight flights.

b. Non-stop flights.

c. Direct flights (with stops).

▶ **Note:** Include Coded shipments, high value/vault items (value set and determined by local policy), CON-CON shipments, and minimum value/ordinary registered mail with an aggregate value of $250,000.00.

166.32 *Surface*

Use the following priority to select surface transportation for registered mail:

Direct (PVS/HCR)

▶ **Note:** Trips with intermediate stops may be included if facility served is in the seal program and the trailer is secured with twist wire and tin band seal upon departure from the facility.

Rail (Conrail/Amtrak)

▶ **Note:** Include escorted coded shipments, stamp stock shipments (draft memo 12/8/93), and ordinary registered mail that is below the high-value designation. Security liners must not be draped over general purpose mail containers.

166.4 Dispatch Generation Guidelines

In preparing for dispatch generation for registered mail, the following issues must be reviewed:

a. Facility operating plan.

b. Air transportation records within the Official Airlines Guide (OAG) files.

c. Surface transportation records within the surface master.

d. National Registered Mail Distribution, Labeling, and Massing Points lists, to determine proper destinations.

166.5 Routing Guidelines

The following routing guidelines apply to registered mail:

a. Each origin Con-Con point must support and reflect all CON-CON destinations in its NASS dispatch documents.

b. Origin dispatch reports may be generated from the AMC/AMF, GMF, or both.

c. Five (5) or more pieces for a destination must be made up as a direct pouch and dispatched to destination.

The following priorities must be used in the development of registered mail CON-CON schemes:

(1) CON-CON origins must route and bill primarily to destination CON-CON points that can be reached via direct transportation.

(2) If destination CON-CON points cannot be reached via direct transportation, dispatch should then be made to designated CON-CON massing points that can be reached via direct transportation. Designated massing points are shown in the Registered Mail Distribution Labeling List.

(3) If massing points cannot be reached via direct transportation, origins should then select, dispatch, and bill the shipment to an intermediate CON-CON point. This point must have direct transportation to the final destination. Interim point selection should be made by reviewing the Starship Route Report or OAG files.

d. The following priorities will be used in the development of Registered Mail surface routings:

(1) Direct surface transportation with no transfers should be used when possible. When surface transfer routings are used, registered mail must be billed to the transfer point and redispatched.

(2) Use of Conrail is identified in the “Stamp Stock Transportation Security Guidelines.”

(3) Amtrak may be used under the following conditions:

(a) Mail must be in security containers.

(b) Mail should be in security liners, placed within containers.

(c) Rail cars must be secured with twist wire and tin band seals.

167 Military Mail

167.1 Military Ordinary Mail (MOM)

MOM is official mail of the military that requires a more expeditious treatment than that provided by surface transportation (sea-lift), but less than premium priority service. Surface transportation is provided from the point of origin to the gateway, with space available air service to overseas points. Postage may be at second-, third-, or fourth-class rates.

167.2 Space Available Mail (SAM)

SAM is a category of personal and military parcels, periodicals, and newspapers published weekly or more frequently, handled at other than the First-Class Mail rate. SAM mailings are moved via surface transportation within the United States, and by air between gateways and overseas points on a space available basis. SAM has no priority on commercial air schedules and is moved only after all other revenue traffic has been accommodated.

▶ **Note**: Under certain conditions, the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) may upgrade SAM to a higher priority for more expeditious movement.

167.3 Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL)

PAL is a category of mail consisting of personal parcels paid at a surface postage rate plus a surcharge, which entitles the parcels to space available air transportation from the accepting post office in the United States to the domestic gateway facility for military mail. Parcels endorsed PAL are entitled to space available air transportation from the gateway office designated to process military mail to selected APOs and FPOs for delivery.

168 Hazardous Material (HAZMAT)

Hazardous material is defined as a substance or material in quantity and form that may pose an unreasonable risk to health and safety or property when transported on commercial transportation. For additional information on this subject see Handbook PO-507, *Air Contract Administration Procedures*, and Publication 52, *Acceptance of Hazardous, Restricted, or Perishable Matter.*

169 BMC Dispatch Policy and Operations Procedures and Plant Loads

169.1 General

Mail must be dispatched in accordance with the dispatch plans generated by area distribution networks. The following criteria should be used when dispatching BMC rail vans and trailers:

a. At least one dispatch to each destination will be scheduled every 24 hours.

b. Departure of last highway dispatch of value (DOV) trips to other BMCs and Auxiliary Service Facilities (ASF) will be scheduled not later than 2 hours after originating clearance time.

c. For multi-destination trips, transportation will be designed to have no more than 60 percent of the volume on the DOV.

d. BMC dispatch policy no longer allows for transshipment of mail.

e. No Mail Transport Equipment (MTE) other than Over-the-Road Containers and wire containers will be shipped to or from a BMC until after the DOV, unless mutually arranged and agreed upon.

169.2 Extra Trips

Common sense should be the main criterion for requesting extra trips. If the volume cannot be accommodated on a regular scheduled trip, but can be transported on a later trip and still meet service standards, it is not necessary to request an extra trip. If the volume cannot be accommodated on a later trip, an extra trip should be requested. All extra trips must be approved by the facility manager or designee. In the event extra trips are needed, each downline office must be advised in advance of the following:

a. Estimated time of arrival.

b. Mail class and volume.

c. Itinerary and use of return trip if not one-way.

d. Any other information that will facilitate operations and increase utilization of the service.

▶ **Note:** In instances where insufficient space becomes a continual problem, Area Distribution Networks personnel should be made aware of this and reevaluation of the route or vehicle size must be accomplished.

169.3 Plant Loads

In this operation, the USPS accepts high-volume mailings from a mailer's plant rather than at a post office, and provides transportation from the plant directly to the postal processing destinations. These operations are accomplished to bypass intermediate postal processing facilities, such as BMCs. More specific information can be found in Handbook PO-512, *Plant Loading Authorization and Procedures Guidelines,* and the *Domestic Mail Manual* D020.

2 Network Planning Policies

21 RESPONSIBILITY

211 Vice President, Operations Support

The Vice President, Operations Support, has the managerial and budgetary responsibility for the distribution, processing, and transportation of mail throughout the Postal Service. Each area's performance is monitored to ensure the achievement of transportation and processing standards, productivity goals, and budget conformance.

212 Manager, Transportation

The Manager, Transportation, is responsible for establishing and maintaining various transportation programs that will result in the best service at the most cost–effective level. Transportation policy and procedures relative to all modes of transportation, networking concepts, short- and long- term mail transport equipment (MTE) planning, and international and military mail operations are areas under the direction of the Manager, Transportation.

213 Manager, National Network Operations

The Manager, National Network Operations (NNO), is responsible for the administration and procedures relative to all national transportation networks to include air, highway, rail, and water modes of transportation for all classes of mail. The Manager, National Network Operations, coordinates with the Manager, Processing Policies and Programs, in establishing requirements and developing transportation networks to support the national distribution networks for all classes of mail. Additionally, the Manager, National Network Operations, develops national requirements for dispatch and routing, mode utilization, transportation service analysis, and mode conversion, as well as policies and program development for traffic management functions.

214 Manager, Local Network Operations

The Manager, Local Network Operations (LNO), is responsible for working with area offices to develop local networks composed of postal-owned (Postal Vehicle Service) and -contracted transportation services to ensure efficient and timely service to the processing and distribution service areas.

215 Vice President, Area Operations

The Vice President, Area Operations, through the Manager, Distribution Networks, is responsible for ensuring compliance with nationally established guidelines for distribution and transportation networks. The Manager, Distribution Networks, procures and manages transportation services for a large geographical area, develops and manages local area surface transportation networks, and creates and develops dispatch plans for each mail processing facility in a large geographical area for the integration of mail into local and national transportation networks. The Manager, Distribution Networks, is also responsible for ensuring the performance and utilization of transportation services through field visits and reviews by Distribution Networks personnel. Additional responsibilities include assisting major mailers in the development of plans for the distribution and transportation of mail between origin and destination pairs; authorizing transportation services in support of plant loads; ensuring the adherence of national drop shipment policies, forecasting mail transport equipment needs of postal customers and facilities; and reviewing operating plans.

22 Dispatch and Routing Policies

221 General

Area Distribution Networks is responsible for implementing, maintaining, and monitoring the dispatch and routing policies identified in this handbook in order to ensure effective dispatch planning. The requirements in this handbook are designed to provide defined methods and procedures to be followed by Area Distribution Networks and the processing and distribution facilities for which the resulting benefits are intended.

222 Transportation Policy

The policies described in this handbook are the key to the U.S. Postal Service's program to manage the flow of mail through the postal system. The transportation policy of the U.S. Postal Service is to route the mail within the specified service windows for each class of mail, using the mode of transportation that provides the best combination of service and cost.

223 Planned Dispatches

223.1 Responsibility

223.11 *Manager, National Network Operations (NNO)*

The Manager, National Network Operations, has the responsibility for determining the criteria and issuing directives for the preparation of dispatch and routing instructions.

223.12 *Vice President, Area Operations*

The Vice President, Area Operations, determines the type and extent of distribution, labeling, and methods used within the area, and conforms to the required level of distribution and corresponding labeling instructions specified by Headquarters for inter-area dispatches.

223.13 *Area Distribution Networks*

223.131 *General*

Area Distribution Networks determines the proper dispatch routings based on current facility operating plans for all mail processed through the facilities within its service area. Additionally, Distribution Networks has the responsibility for establishing methods and procedures for maintaining up-to-date and correct dispatch information.

223.132 *Proper Makeup of Dispatch*

Prior to developing dispatch routings, a determination must be made on the proper makeup of mail for dispatch. Separations are developed by the facilities based on service commitments, volume and/or transportation availability. Area Distribution Networks supports facilities' service goals with dispatch routings for each separation that is labeled for destination processing.

223.133 *Dispatch Routings*

For each class of mail, a distribution network is established at the national level. With qualified exceptions, Area Distribution Networks must provide dispatch routings for each minimum requirement. Minimum requirements are contained in the Distribution Requirements System (DRS). Intra-area and local exceptions may be entered into DRS, provided the exceptions describe a greater depth of sort than the minimum requirements. The contents of DRS that contain exceptions to national distribution requirements are the responsibility of each Vice President, Area Operations.

223.14 *Processing and Distribution Facilities*

Each processing facility makes distribution that may differ from the national and area minimum requirements. This difference may occur based on service commitments, volume, and transportation. The source document for

these unique separations is the facility operating plan that will contain the local and area modifications to the national distribution requirements as displayed in DRS. Case/bin/rack diagrams are prepared by the local facility, and identify the separations actually being made in each operation by mail class. Area Distribution Networks must be furnished current copies of these documents because they become the basis for dispatch planning, and are critical in the development of the NASS Tie-Out-Times Report.

224 Dispatch Routing Support

224.1 Minimum Routings

Area Distribution Networks is required to provide a minimum of two planned dispatches for each destination made-up. An exception may be considered when limited origin lift is available. Additional routings will be provided when warranted by volume, lack of available transportation space, or operational necessity. Exceptions must be justified by the processing and distribution facility with appropriate documentation. Request for exceptions should be forwarded to Area Distribution Networks serving that facility.

224.2 Advanced Dispatches

A preliminary or “advanced dispatch” is planned in order to advance mail to the destination office, preventing excessive mail volumes arriving at or near critical entry time, and to allow the destination office advanced distribution. It may also be planned to facilitate the flow of mail at the originating office, from the distribution units to the dispatch units. The advanced dispatch will depart the origin facility prior to clearance time and arrive at the destination facility prior to critical entry time.

224.3 Dispatch of Value

Depending on the distance between the origin and destination facilities and the transportation available, it is possible that more than one dispatch may be made after the origin clearance time. The dispatch of value (DOV) is the initial dispatch routing after the origin facility clearance time that will arrive at the destination facility to meet the respective critical entry time in order to meet service commitments. A last chance (LC) dispatch routing reflects the latest time mail can be dispatched from the origin facility after clearance time, and arrive at the destination facility to meet the respective critical entry time. If only a single dispatch routing exists between the origin CT and the destination CET, then the dispatch of value and the last chance dispatch will be the same.

224.4 Additional Dispatches

Additional dispatches may be provided when justified by volume or other operational considerations. The plant manager at the processing facility must coordinate the need for additional dispatches with the Manager, Distribution Networks.

224.5 Dispatches After the DOV

Dispatch routings to accommodate small volumes of mail remaining after DOV ("woodwork mail") will be included where required by the operating plan. Every effort will be made by Area Distribution Networks to provide a service effective dispatch routing.

▶ **Note:** Efforts should be made to ensure that planned dispatches are compatible with an effective mail arrival profile at the destination, which would minimize the receipt of larger volumes at or near critical entry time.

225 General Mail Facility (Plant) Versus AMC/AMF Routings

225.1 General

Dispatch routings planned from a general mail facility (GMF) origin are established as the result of the plant being the processing facility for the mail class being processed.

225.2 Routings From an Alpha Code Origin

Dispatch routings planned from an alpha code origin (e.g., AMC/AMF) can be established when:

a. The mail class for which the routing is planned is processed at the AMC/AMF and meets the requirements for proper make up of mail as determined by service commitments, volume, and available transportation.

b. Additional dispatch routings are necessary to support other programs such as equitable tender that would otherwise unnecessarily complicate a NASS report originating at a GMF.

c. Additional dispatch routings are necessary to provide backup service to the primary dispatch routings during periods of heavy volume or emergency situations.

226 Routing From Scan Where You Band Units

226.1 General

Processing facilities using Scan Where You Band (SWYB) units follow procedures for transporting mail to the AMC/AMF as defined by the local Area Distribution Networks. The exception being that mail is already scanned and may be separated by carrier, flight, destination or as locally required, and must be dispatched in a timely manner to meet the planned flight schedules.

226.2 Distribution and Routing Tag

SWYB prints a distribution and routing tag (D&R Tag) instead of utilizing an air contract transportation tag (ACT Tag). The SWYB system:

a. Reads a barcoded label.

b. Selects the mail class through use of a content identification number (CIN) printed on the slide label when label is scanned.

c. Converts the ZIP Code to the alpha code of the destination airstop, or HWY if by surface, through use of a Distribution Table.

d. Prints selected programmed routing through dispatch information stored on an in-house computer.

226.3 Distribution Tables

Distribution Tables are composed of ZIP Codes, air stop codes, and destination labels. They serve a function similar to the labeling list and outgoing sort plan. There is a single Distribution Table for each class of mail. The Distribution Tables must be updated by facility personnel whenever distribution/labeling changes occur, and updated copies forwarded to Area Distribution Networks immediately. Future plans will ensure the automatic update of the Distribution Tables through information input into the Distribution Requirements System (DRS).

226.4 Ground Transportation Delay Tables

Ground Transportation Delay Tables provide information to the SWYB unit to ensure proper mail transport from the processing unit to the AMC/AMF, or air carrier mail acceptance point. The information consists of items such as day of week, close out lead time, dock transfer time (at the AMC/AMF), actual transportation leave and arrive times. Ground Transportation Delay Tables must be maintained to allow for changes in daily operations.

▶ **Note**: Facility personnel are responsible for updating the Distribution Tables and Ground Transportation Delay Tables. However, Area Distribution Networks personnel are responsible for ensuring that the contents of these tables at all Scan Where You Band units reflect current data and mirror the NASS database.

227 Routing Criteria

227.1 Transportation Window

All planned dispatches must be developed within the transportation window. Along with service consideration, both volume/weight and cost are to be considered when developing planned dispatches. Earlier planned dispatches may be considered where volume warrants, and later planned dispatches where required by operational necessity.

227.2 Area Distribution Networks

Area Distribution Networks must maintain current and accurate information reflecting a processing facility's operation. From a mail flow standpoint, the processing facility develops processing requirements for each operation based on the following:

a. Mail availability.

b. Distribution performed.

c. Service commitments.

d. Projected mail volume.

e. Critical entry time.

f. Clearance time.

23 Information Requirements and Responsibilities for Dispatch Planning

Based on approved operating plans and the destination service criteria, Area Distribution Networks develops and makes available dispatch and routing information for each class of mail. Planned dispatches must fit within the transportation service window. Specific information and various responsibilities for supplying and monitoring data are as follows:

a. Each processing facility must provide Area Distribution Networks with currently approved case, rack, sweep side diagrams, and automation sort plans for each operation and mail class as required. The Distribution Requirements System will include distribution data records for each supported mail class, which reflect the distribution performed in each operation. Distribution Networks will continue to develop distribution data records in the NASS database reflecting the distribution performed in each operation for each mail class unsupported by the DRS (e.g., International, Custom Designed, payroll, etc).

b. Each processing facility must provide Area Distribution Networks with transfer time requirements for each class of mail based on the various types of transfers that can be performed at that particular facility for each mode of transportation (e.g., air to highway, highway to air, highway to highway, etc.). Transfer requirements may differ greatly depending on whether mail can be cross-docked in rolling stock or on pallets, or be subjected to other distribution operations. Air-to-air transfers are shown as a section of the national Air Carriers System Rate Contract (ASYS) under the heading "Ground Handling Times."

c. The critical entry time, clearance time requirements, and facility characteristics must be supplied to Area Distribution Networks through the facility operating plan.

d. Service commitments are available to Area Distribution Networks through NASS and the Corporate Information System. This system is updated quarterly to ensure accurate data is displayed and automatically updates the appropriate NASS records.

e. The average daily volume for each makeup of mail is used by Area Distribution Networks to develop viable dispatch products. The processing facility defines the average daily volume for each separation. This volume is to be determined by using density and average daily throughput information. Upon completion, the processing facility forwards information to Area Distribution Networks. This process should be completed at least yearly or following any significant operational change.

f. Information concerning incoming rack throw-off volumes and residue processing requirements must be considered by Area Distribution Networks when developing dispatch plans for a processing facility. Each facility must provide Area Distribution Networks with a list of other origins sending rack throw-off mail to that facility, the makeup ZIP Code spans of the mail from each origin, as well as the frequency. In addition, each processing facility must supply Area Distribution Networks with a list of other origins sending residue or unworked mail to that facility, the ZIP spans of mail from each origin, as well as the frequency of occurrence as described in the facility's operating plan.

g. Processing facilities should coordinate destination makeup, frequency, and volume for each major mailer with Area Distribution Networks, and may request that non ADC/SDC network destinations be added to dispatch plans when presort volumes and frequency of mailing warrant. Initially, the information provided should be for major mailers saturating a given area on a continual weekly or monthly cycle. Examples of this type mailer for First-Class Mail are utility firms, credit card firms, insurance firms, and check disbursement operations. Information should be provided for any major mailer whose mail will abnormally impact manpower and/or transportation requirements. Common sense and knowledge of postal operations should prevail when determining which major mailer's information should be provided.

h. Each Area Distribution Networks must make certain that all area mail processing requirements are accurately reflected in the NASS dispatch reports. Area Mail Processing operations must be approved by the respective Vice President, Area Operations. Area Distribution Networks should then generate appropriate dispatch plans.

i. NASS reports must include instructions for the labeling and dispatch of uncoded mail as appropriate.

24 Operational Requirements and Responsibilities

These operating procedures must be followed to effectively execute the dispatch plan:

a. Area Distribution Networks will maintain timely and accurate dispatch information within the NASS database. It is imperative that the processing and distribution facilities secure this information through the National Traffic Management System and follow the plan without deviation.

b. Information from the NASS database will be used to create routings within Automatic Dispatch Generation (ADG). This program provides more consistency in managing mail volumes and should be utilized to the greatest extent possible.

ADG routings employ the prioritized routing criteria (i.e., non-stop, direct, intra-line and inter-line), and will provide contingency routings where no non-stop or direct routings exists.

c. Staging and/or sequence loading of mail (e.g., 2- and 3-day First-Class Mail) may be necessary at certain facilities to fulfill completely these dispatch plans.

d. Automatic Dispatch Generation will plan contingency routings where no non-stop or direct exists. However, if a dispatch cannot be found having a departure within a reasonable time, the Distribution Networks personnel have the option to manually change or add routings that satisfy the service commitment of the mail involved.

e. Routings created through Automatic Dispatch Generation will alleviate the problem of overloading transportation by tender of mail from down line facilities. However, when ADG routings are changed or additional routings are planned, Distribution Networks should be aware of the potential for overload. This is particularly critical when both 2- and 3-day mail are involved.

f. Processing points are to advise Area Distribution Networks of continual cancellations or overload conditions for surface or air transportation. Distribution Networks must then review the dispatches affected and develop planned dispatches that will eliminate the problem. Conditions such as these should be documented on PS Form 2759, *Report of Irregular Handling of Mail,* for air, and PS Form 5398, *Transportation Performance Record,* for surface. Bracketing may also be an option to alleviate problems of this nature.

g. The dispatch plan prepared by Area Distribution Networks is reflected in various NASS reports. The National Traffic Management System (NTMS) provides the processing facility the capability to access and electronically format this information to meet local requirements. Information relative to data in the NTMS may be secured from Distribution Networks. Some of the most frequently used reports available through the NTMS are the Dispatch Report, the Plan Versus Actual Report, the Origin/Destination Report, the Starship Routings Reports, and Express Mail Directories. Dispatch data found in the NTMS is refreshed on a daily frequency, with other volume data being updated weekly through processing at the San Mateo Information Systems Service Center.

h. At a minimum, the Dispatch Report, the Origin/Destination Report, and the Tie-Out Times Report, where applicable, must be utilized by dispatch personnel at the processing facility. In addition to NTMS, Area Distribution Networks should provide hard copy reports to processing facilities. Dispatch documents for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail should be issued every 6 weeks or sooner if required. Express Mail documents are issued on a quarterly basis. Dispatch documents for surface preferential, bulk business mail, and parcel post should be issued at least every 6 months or more frequently if significant changes occur.

25 ROUTING REQUIREMENTS

251 General

Routing of all mail classes will be from the originating mail processing facility to the destination mail processing facility to which the mail is labeled, as provided in national or local label requirements (e.g., 3-digit to 3-digit ZIP Codes).

252 Routing Priorities

The following priority should be used when selecting routings where schedules have more than one trip that meets the service window.

a. Non-stop flights.

b. Direct flights (with stops).

c. Intra-line flights.

d. Inter-line flights.

253 Three-Day First-Class Mail

253.1 General

To the extent possible, intra-line routings departing prior to 1100 hours and later than 2359 Day 1 should not be considered for the dispatch of 3-day First-Class Mail. Due to time zone considerations, dispatch of mail originating on the west coast for east coast destinations cannot always abide by this policy. Additionally, an exception may be considered when limited origin lift is available. This exception should be approved by the Manager, National Networks Operations, at Headquarters.

253.2 Transfer Routings

Do not plan transfer routings for 3-day First-Class Mail if direct or non-stop flights operate between 1100 and 1700 hours Day 1 and meet service commitments. However, if the intermediate point(s) for the direct flight(s) experiences lift problems with Priority Mail or 2-day First-Class Mail, that direct flight should not be used for dispatch of 3-day mail. Do not plan transfer routings with more than one transfer unless absolutely necessary.

Routings should be limited to no more than three air legs or two air transfers, only one of which may be inter-line. Inter-line transfers should be avoided if at all possible, based on their expected high risk of failure. If no alternatives exist, close communication with both the air carrier and postal personnel at the transfer point is essential. Routings using less than minimum transfer times should not be used and cannot be input into NASS records.

253.3 Equitable Tender

Equitable tender is a fair and reasonable but not necessarily equal division of mail between carriers offering flights that are equivalent in terms of the Postal Service's requirements. Equitable tender will not apply when comparing non-stop and direct flights, or to connecting flights. Equitable tender will not apply when it would result in the tender to any carrier of a dispatch of less than 500 pounds of mail per flight. Deliveries that are equivalent in terms of Postal Service requirements (non-stop versus non-stop, and direct flight versus direct flight) within 60 minutes will be eligible for equitable tender. Regional carriers should not be included in equitable tender.

253.4 Routings

Routings with high circuity factors should be avoided to the extent possible. The circuity factor of an individual routing is obtained by dividing the Great Circle Miles (GCM) actually traveled, by the GCM if a direct flight had been used.

▶ **Example:** If a direct routing with a total distance of 1,000 miles has a circuity factor of 1, then a transfer routing to the same destination that travels 1,250 miles would have a circuity factor of 1.25.

26 BRACKETING

261 General

For the purpose of bracketing, only 3-day First-Class Mail that transfers at a major air hub may be selected for the bracketing program. This option should not be used if adequate direct transportation is available to the final destination airstop.

262 Final Leg of Transportation

The final leg of transportation from the bracketed AMC/AMF is generally via Highway Contract Route (HCR) or Postal Vehicle Service (PVS), which must arrive at the facility performing ADC distribution not later than 0800 hours Day 2. In extreme cases, exception to this policy may be obtained with prior approval of the Manager, National Network Operations.

263 ACT Tag

Bracketed mail must bear the ACT Tag for the bracket AMC/AMF, and the distribution label must indicate the final destination.

▶ **Note:** Approval for additions, deletions, or changes to the bracketing list must be reviewed and approved by the Manager, National Networks Operations at Headquarters. The National Transportation Contingency Operations Plan provides a list of contingency routings that must be utilized in cases of emergency operations.

27 MAIL CLASS PRIORITIES

271 General

Planned air dispatches should consider the following mail class priorities.

a. Express Mail.

b. Priority Mail.

c. First-Class (2-Day) Mail.

d. First-Class (3-Day) Mail.

272 Insufficient Available Lift

When insufficient lift is available for both Priority Mail and First-Class (2-Day) Mail, routings should be prioritized by critical entry time at destination. The national clearance time for Priority Mail is not later than 2300 hours. The national critical entry time for Priority Mail and First-Class (3-Day) Mail is:

a. CET for 2-Day Priority Mail is 1700 Day 1 at the ADC or AADC.

▶ **Exception**: A study has shown that a percentage of Priority Mail transported on commercial airlines does not meet the 1700 CET under normal operating conditions. To improve service, all ADCs are to consider Priority Mail arriving between 1700 and 2000 hours as being committed mail that must be processed and dispatched to meet service commitments. To ensure no degradation in the arrival profile at the destination ADC, Area Distribution Networks will continue to use 1700 as the CET for 2-day Priority Mail and route accordingly.

b. CET for First-Class (3-Day) Mail is 0800 Day 2 at the ADC or AADC.

c. CET for First-Class (2-Day) Mail is defined by the respective ADC operating plan and is normally established to fall within the hours between 1500 and 1800 with some exceptions.

273 Additional Routings

Additional routings should be considered to advance mail when possible and for contingency purposes. Day 0 mail should be advanced when possible, using direct and non-stop transportation where available. Contingency routings should be planned to depart after the Dispatch of Value (DOV) and as required for operational failures.

274 Selecting Routings

Listed below is the priority to be used in selecting routings when the schedules have more than one trip that meets the transportation service window. The rationale for deciding these priorities is determined by the following:

a. Direct Surface Transportation:
   (1) Highway/PVS.
   (2) Rail AMTRAK.
   (3) Transfer surface trips.

b. Air Contract Transportation:
   (1) Non-stop flight.
   (2) Direct flight (with stops).
   (3) Intra-line flight.
   (4) Inter-line flight.

275 Frequency

275.1 General

The frequency of dispatch routings will be consistent with the origin processing facilities planned days of operation. Transportation will be established and/or identified that will meet operational requirements for the class of mail to be transported. A system of alpha characters and numbers has been established to represent common frequencies used in dispatch routings (see Exhibit 275.1).

275.2 Frequency Table Characters

Each character used in the frequency table has the same meaning whether used alone or in combination with other characters. The alpha characters always appear first if used. Up to two alpha characters are allowed in a frequency. Not more than three numeric characters are allowed. Numeric characters are always shown in ascending order.

▶ **Example:**

7	Sunday only
67	Saturday and Sunday only
X67	Daily except Saturday and Sunday
X7	Daily except Sunday

1= MONDAY	2=TUESDAY	3=WEDNESDAY	4=THURSDAY
5=FRIDAY	6=SATURDAY	7=SUNDAY	

ONLY		DAILY EXCEPT
A	Days before holidays	J
B	Holidays	K
C	Days after holidays	L
D	Days before holidays and holidays	M
E	Holidays and days after holidays	N
F	Days before holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	P
G	Holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	Q
H	Days after holidays, other than Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	R
O	Days before holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	V
S	Holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	W
T	Days after holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day	Y
U	Days before holidays other than Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Washington's Birthday	Z

Absence Of A Symbol Indicates Daily

Special Note: Use of X

X Used before one to three numeric symbols indicates daily except, e.g., X6 indicates daily except Saturday.

X Used after one to three numeric symbols indicates that the trip will operate on that day(s) except when a holiday falls on that day; e.g., 6X indicates Saturday service except when a holiday falls on Saturday.

Basic Nass Frequency Symbols
Exhibit 275.1

28 PLANNED DISPATCH OF MAIL

281 Criteria

These criteria should be used for the planned dispatch of all mail. In the event of irregular operations or emergency conditions at an air dispatch point, refer to Handbook PO-507, *Air Contracting Administrative Procedures*, for proper guidance.

282 Tender of Available Mail

It is an absolute requirement that we tender all available mail to planned air and surface contracts. These routings are specified in the Dispatch Report and will fulfill the need to use the most economical transportation meeting service commitments. Due consideration is also given to impact of mail arrival at the destination facility.

3 Dispatch Operations and Dispatch Discipline

31 General

Dispatch operations and dispatch discipline are the key elements to a successful processing and distribution execution. Both depend upon a well-developed mail flow. The mail flow must address each operation: inbound docks, opening units, distribution, dispatch points, and the outbound docks for connection to, or arrival from, scheduled transportation. All these elements must be considered in the dispatch plan and monitored to ensure appropriate dispatch discipline and mail flow patterns. Transportation contracts are procured to correspond with this flow. With the contracts come obligations, both legal and financial, that must be met by both the USPS and the contractor. Effective dispatch operations are essential in fulfilling the USPS obligations. The following are the processing, dispatch, and delivery priorities:

a. Express Mail Service.

b. Priority Mail and First-Class (2-Day) Mail.

c. First-Class 3-Day Mail.

d. Newspaper treatment and second-class mail.

e. Parcel post.

f. Third-class mail.

▶ **Note:** Those Priority Mail destinations designated as 3-day commitments in the Priority Mail directory must continue to maintain the same origin processing and dispatch criteria as other Priority Mail.

32 Dispatch Discipline

321 Purpose

The purpose of dispatch discipline is to monitor adherence to the dispatch plan of the facility actually dispatching the mail. The dispatch plan provides

detailed instructions to be followed after mail has been distributed into a case, rack, machine, or container through departure of transportation from the platform. Dispatch discipline ensures that processed volumes are actually moved as planned to meet intended transportation that fits the transportation window and achieves the best possible service at the most cost-effective rate. The movement of this volume is necessary to maintain proper levels of mail service and to ensure that transportation contractual obligations, both legal and financial are met. Failure to follow dispatch discipline guidelines results in a degradation of service.

322 Facility Procedures

Dispatch discipline requires operational managers at every processing facility to do the following:

a. Review and understand the facility's operating plan.

b. Make an in-depth study of the facility's dispatching function to ensure that all requirements are satisfied.

c. Conduct detailed staffing reviews of the dispatch personnel.

d. Develop and implement a training program designed for dispatch personnel.

e. Ensure that dispatch personnel are familiar with the utilization of NASS dispatch products and that they are available through the NTMS.

f. Establish procedures to monitor the dispatch discipline program.

g. Monitor the mail flow to ensure that it is moving according to the plan, or modify the plan if a valid reason exists for it to change.

323 Dispatch Discipline Reviews

323.1 General

All processing facilities should perform dispatch discipline reviews on a semi-annual basis as a minimum. The reviews are not intended to supersede the requirements of the Area Distribution Networks facility reviews. Although the two reviews may overlap in some areas, the dispatch discipline review should be conducted by the personnel from the processing and distribution center. However, members of the Distribution Networks should be available for assistance as requested.

323.2 Review Guidelines

Prior to conducting the review, a meeting should be held with the plant manager or designee, to discuss existing dispatch performance and objectives of the current dispatch discipline review. The review team should outline items to be observed in Exhibit 323.2.

323.3 Hours of Review

The dispatch discipline reviews should be conducted on all three tours of operation, beginning with tour three and ending on tour two.

Operating Plan:

- Is the current Operating Plan available for review?
- What is the date of the plan?
- Does it reflect the facility's capabilities?
- Is it compatible with the facility's transportation?

Standard Operating Procedures:

- Is there a current SOP on hand in each operation?
- List the operations that do not have one available.
  1.
  2.
  3.

Mail Preparation:

- Does mail prep comply with facility requirements?
- Are postmarks legible? Current?
- Are facer/canceller rejects excessive? Why?
- Did operation meet its plan?

MPLSM/OCR/BCS/MPFSM/Manual Operations:

- Are trays, racks, etc. labeled in accordance with local and area labeling instructions?
- Have old labels been removed?
- Are overnight commitments held out?
- Do supervisors and dispatch personnel know the clearance time for their operation? The facility?
- Is mail being advanced?
- Are NASS Reports or information provided by National Traffic Management System being used?
- Are all mandatory separations being made?
- Is distribution completed in time to meet the intended transportation?
- Is "woodwork mail" properly identified and separated?

Pouch/Tray Rack And/Or Loose Pack:

- Are headers legible?
- Are headers labeled in accordance with local, area, or national labeling instructions?
- Are ZIP Code separations correct?
- Do labels reflect proper destination, day, numeric and/or alpha code (if applicable)?
- Are proper ACT tags or D & R tags being attached prior to dispatch?
- Are air and surface containers properly identified and separated?
- Are 2- and 3-day destinations properly identified and separated?
- Are visual aids current and legible?
- Do dispatch personnel know how to read NASS dispatch documents?

Dispatch Discipline Mini-Checklist
Exhibit 323.2 (p. 1)

Pouch/Tray Rack And/Or Loose Pack: (continued)

- Are strapping/banding operations equipped and staffed to maintain a steady flow of mail at critical dispatch times?
- Do locally prepared forms accurately reflect NASS data (if applicable)?

ACDCS/SWYB:

- If mail is being scanned at the facility, is there a backlog at the ACDCS or Scan Where You Band operation? Why?
- Are proper ACT tags or D & R tags affixed to trays and pouches?
- Are containers fully utilized?

Platform Operations:

- Are visual aids current and accurate?
- Are transfer times posted? Are they accurate?
- Are vehicles loaded properly?
- Are safety precautions observed?
- Is Express Mail tailgated?
- Are dispatch forms completed properly? (Form 5398 not prepared in advance)
- Are dispatches made in compliance with NASS dispatch documents?
- Is mail advanced whenever possible?
- Is registered mail held for Last Chance (LC) trips?
- Are trucks arriving/leaving on time?
- Are Forms 5500 issued for irregularities?
- Are trucks being held because mail is not ready?
- Is the driver issued a late slip when the Postal Service is responsible?
- Are down-line offices notified when trip will arrive late?
- Are vehicles sealed properly?

Registered Mail:

- Are all pouches from post offices/stations/branches closed with seals or rotary locks?
- Is mail made up according to requirements?
- Do the Dispatch documents and Registered Mail Labeling List reflect routing and billing points?
- Are locks and seals on pouches or containers verified and listed on the dispatch bill?
- Is the Inspection Service notified as required when losses and/or discrepancies occur?
- Is entrance door/gate to the registered mail cage secured?
- Are unauthorized personnel prohibited from entering the registered mail unit?

Dispatch Discipline Mini-Checklist
Exhibit 323.2 (p. 2)

323.4 Exit Meeting

An exit meeting should be conducted, preferably with the same person with whom the entrance meeting was held. Discussion should center around the findings of the review team and a follow-up review, scheduled for no more than 30 days after the initial review, to ensure that deficiencies have been corrected.

323.5 Written Report

A written report should be forwarded to the Vice President, Area Operations, with a copy to the Manager, Distribution Networks, and the Processing and Distribution Plant Manager (see Exhibit 323.5a). The report should include a summary of operations and procedures observed during the review (see Exhibit 323.5b).

323.6 Dispatch Conformance Committee

Although not required, it is highly recommended that each facility establish a Dispatch Conformance Committee to meet a minimum of once each quarter. All dispatch personnel, including supervisors, should attend these meetings. The committee will use this opportunity to discuss and resolve existing problems and introduce new procedures and/or techniques. The committee will serve as an ad hoc dispatch discipline team and monitor adherence to dispatch procedures. They may also provide feedback to the Vice President, Area Operations, on major issues, resolution, etc.

324 Other Areas to Be Reviewed

324.1 Transportation

Proper loading, timely transfers, and proper form preparation are required to achieve satisfactory transportation performance. Dispatches should be made in compliance with NASS dispatch instructions.

324.2 Dispatches

Mail should be advanced to accommodate destination facility arrival profile and to avoid overloading “last chance trips” whenever possible. NASS documents and NTMS data should be current and strictly adhered to so that mail moves on intended transportation. Scan Where You Band units should ensure that Distribution Tables and Ground Transportation Delay Tables are current and correct. Scanned mail must depart on intended transportation to the AMC/AMF, or may require rescanning due to missing intended flight. Dispatches should not be held at the dock due to insufficient volume.

324.3 Labels and Tags

Proper labels, ACT Tags or D & R Tags must be used in conjunction with dispatch instructions (see Exhibit 324.3). Labels should reflect proper destination, day, and numeric code.

SUBJECT: Dispatch Discipline Review

TO: Vice President, Area Operations

A dispatch discipline review was conducted at the above facility on _____by _____.

The purpose of the review was to observe operations and dispatch procedures at this facility.

A summary of the review is attached for your information.

A follow-up visit will be made on _____ (approximately 3 weeks from date of letter) to determine whether deficiencies noted have been corrected. We will advise you of our subsequent findings at that time.

(Signed)
Committee Chairperson

cc: Plant Manager (facility reviewed)
Manager, Distribution Networks

Sample Written Report of Dispatch Discipline Review
Exhibit 323.5a

March 15, 1994

Example Summary

OPERATING PLAN:

The operating plan on file at the facility was dated August 1993, and it showed the dock clearance time for outgoing 2-day FCM as 0600. The NASS database shows 0530 as the clearance time for this mail.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE:

Each operation contained a current SOP, with the exception of Operation 060. The SOP in this operation was dated July 1992.

OPENING UNIT:

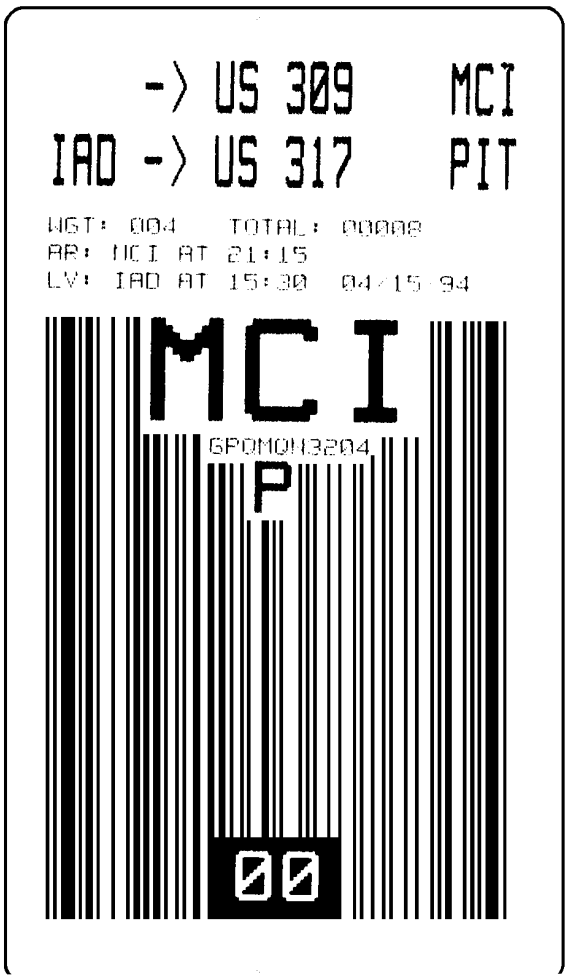
Daily collection mail was being canceled when the team reviewed this operation. All dates were current, there were minimal rejects at the canceling machine, and the operation was completed by 2000 hours, in accordance with the operating plan.

ETC:

Example Summary
Exhibit 323.5b

ACDCS ACT TAG

SWYB D & R TAG



ACDCS ACT Tag and Scan Where You Band D & R Tag
Exhibit 324.3

325 Documents Available to Management

325.1 Facility Operating Plans

The operating plan should be current as defined in Handbook PO-403, *Operating Plan Guidelines,* and be readily available to all line supervisors. The plan should reflect a realistic dock clearance time for all classes of mail and be compatible with the facility's scheduled transportation.

325.2 NASS Reports

The NASS documents described below should be utilized by all operational managers and dispatch personnel at the processing facility. They are available through the National Traffic Management System or in hard copy from the respective Distribution Networks. Specialists from the Distribution Networks are responsible for training the facility personnel in the use of these and other NASS documents.

a. The NASS Dispatch Report is the authorized document for mail dispatch.

b. The Starship Routings Report is a reference document for dispatch via air transportation.

c. The Tie-out Report is a ready reference for dispatching from operation to operation.

d. Reports must be compatible with case/rack/machine diagrams.

e. Reference should be made to the Origin and Destination Report for alternate transportation.

325.3 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

There should be an SOP on file for each operation. The SOP should be current and compatible to the operating plan and should include items such as:

a. Type of mail worked.

b. Type of operation (incoming/outgoing).

c. Planned start time.

d. Critical entry time.

e. Clearance time.

f. Average daily volume.

g. Required staffing.

h. Sources of mail (dock, 010).

i. Flow of processed mail.

j. Dispatch time.

k. Dispatch of value (DOV).

325.4 Visual Aids

Visual aids in each operation should be available to meet dispatching needs. Visual aids should be verified for accuracy and timely updates by the Manager, Transportation Networks, or other designated personnel at the processing and distribution center.

33 Area Distribution Networks Responsibilities

331 General

Area Distribution Networks is responsible for notifying the processing and distribution facilities of all transportation and/or labeling changes that impact their operations. Notification of changes are required if the processing facilities are to receive accurate data and reports that reflect correct dispatch and routing instructions.

332 Training

Area Distribution Networks are responsible for conducting training in the use of the various NASS reports and dispatch documents. Ongoing training for replacement dispatch personnel at the processing facility will be the responsibility of the Manager, Transportation Networks, at the facility.

333 Scheme Quality Assurance

Area Distribution Networks is responsible for maintaining a high-quality dispatch plan through scheme quality assurance. The intent of the program is to ensure that the best available transportation is utilized that consistently achieves service and cost, and thus, the integrity of the NASS documents. To the extent possible, Network Planning Specialists at Area Distribution Networks should be encouraged to exchange scheme products to allow other specialists to review them for accuracy and completeness. Network planning supervisors should review individual specialist work on a random basis to ensure that scheme quality measures are being observed. Some of the items that should be reviewed are as follows:

a. Ensure all destinations (ADCs, AADCs) and mail classes (P1, F2, Same Day, Network Express, etc.) are covered.

b. Ensure frequency coverage for seven (7) days.

c. Check for excessive transfer times.

d. Check routings for circuity.

e. Ensure that bracketing options are in place and being followed.

f. Ensure sufficient backup routings to transport delayed mail or carrier overloads.

334 Facility Reviews

On-site facility reviews should be jointly conducted with personnel from both Area Distribution Networks and the processing and distribution facility Transportation Networks. AMC/AMFs should also be reviewed by individuals from both these units. Joint participation ensures that a cooperative effort is put forth in identifying both the strong and weak points of a processing facilities operation. Items to be reviewed should follow the checklist established for this purpose. An exit conference should be scheduled between members of the review team and the plant manager and staff, to critique the findings of the team and suggest recommendations for improvement. Any incidents of high-quality performance found during the review should also be highlighted at this time.

335 Monitoring Planned Dispatches

335.1 General

Several documents are available to allow the Network Planning Specialist and Traffic Management Specialist at Area Distribution Networks to monitor planned routings.

335.2 Air Transportation

335.21 *Plan Versus Actual Report*

The Plan versus Actual Report compares the Distribution Network's dispatch plan for air transportation with the actual dispatches used by the AMC/AMF or facility responsible for making air dispatches.

335.22 *Starship Routing Report*

The Starship Routing Report provides planned routings for all classes of mail to be transported via air from the AMC/AMF.

335.23 *Overload Flight Summary*

The Overload Flight Summary may be used as an aid in the dispatch and routing of mail to identify potential overloading of transfer flights that may cause mail to be delayed.

335.24 *AMF Condition Report*

The AMF Condition Report is a program of information relative to conditions at AMCs/AMFs throughout the nation. The data may include weather conditions, backlog volumes, or other circumstances that may affect the dispatch and transfer of mail through airports.

▶ **Note:** Additional tools for monitoring air transportation are described in Handbook PO-507, *Air Contract Administrative Procedures*.

335.3 Highway Transportation

335.31 *Form 5398*

PS Form 5398, *Transportation Performance Record,* is used to record arrival/departure times, actual pieces, percentage of load, and driver. Where applicable, use PS Form 5398-X resident in TIMES.

335.32 *Form 5500*

PS Form 5500, *Report of Contract Route Irregularity,* is used to report irregularities in service performance of highway vehicles.

335.33 *Transportation Information Management Evaluation System (TIMES)*

TIMES is an electronic system that produces an automated PS Form 5398X to track Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) and Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) inbound and outbound transportation. It provides real time data entry of moves, utilizing hand-held computers, carried by dock clerks and expediters. Reports focus attention on volumes by class, containerization, and load/unload times.

▶ **Note:** Additional tools for monitoring highway transportation are described in Handbook PO-501, *Highway Contract Route Administration*.

336 Feedback Requirements

336.1 General

For any system to function effectively, an open exchange of information must flow between all affected parties. Each processing and distribution facility is responsible for notifying the respective Area Distribution Networks of the following situations:

a. All operational changes that affect the flow of mail into, out of, or through the facility, (e.g., such as changes in service commitments or proposed area mail processing) and particularly changes that will affect the processing facility or AMC transfer times.

b. All errors found in NASS dispatch and routing reports. Area Distribution Networks must make the corrections so that the service performance is not affected.

c. Any dispatch or routing changes that could result in service improvement or deterioration and/or cost performance (documentation required).

4 National Air and Surface System (NASS)

41 PURPOSE

All movement of mail for all mail classes to include international, domestic and military is based on information found in the National Air and Surface System (NASS) database. NASS is intended to provide:

a. Dispatch, routing, and labeling instructions for all classes of mail beginning at the outgoing distribution point, and ending at the final incoming processing destination. These instructions are provided electronically to the Air Contract Data Collection System (ACDCS) and the Scan Where You Band (SWYB) stations, and via hard copy report to Managers, Transportation Networks at the processing and distribution centers, and designated personnel at other facilities.

b. Analytical tools to confirm routings, provide arrival profiles, and ensure service performance.

c. Analytical tools for transportation planning and necessary transportation modifications to improve or continue service achievement at the most cost-effective rate.

d. The continuous integration of operating plans, transportation, and service.

42 SOURCE DATA

The following are the data sources for NASS:

a. Facility location and characteristics.

b. Facility operating plans, operating plan, database.

c. Outgoing distribution case/rack/machine diagrams.

d. National and local labeling list, distribution requirements database.

e. Transfer requirements.

f. Service commitments.

g. Transportation contracts and schedules (all modes).

h. Planned dispatches and planned transportation service achievement.

i. Actual dispatch and volume of mail between origin/destination segments.

j. Air transportation line haul and terminal handling cost.

k. Air mileage between origin/destination pairs and circuity routing factor.

l. Air contract ground handling times for systems contracts, both transfer and terminal times.

m. Air Contract Data Collection System (ACDCS) processing time and close-out time.

n. Distribution Tables and Ground Transportation Delay Tables at Scan Where You Band locations.

43 SERVICE COMMITMENTS

431 Service Achievement

Service achievement in NASS dispatch reports is based on mail available for dispatch after 1700 hours, day 0. This does not imply that mail received on day 0 is not available until 1700. Seventeen hundred hours was chosen as the starting point in time to calculate the service achievement of individual routings and is based upon mail collection at origin facility.

432 Age of Mail

The age of mail is calculated by using a start time of 1700 hours on day 0. The difference between 1700 hours and the time the first leg of transportation departs from the origin facility is the age of mail at dispatch. The age of mail at dispatch, the in-transit time of the routing (transportation), and the elapsed time from arrival at destination until the critical entry time are added together. For associate office service achievement, this final result is converted to days, and printed in the SCF column of the NASS Dispatch reports. The area distribution center/state distribution center (ADC/SDC) service achievement is computed by adding 24 hours to the final results (reflecting actual delivery capabilities), converting it to days, and printing in the ADC column of the Dispatch report.

433 Late Arriving Mail

When the mail arrives at the final destination after the critical entry time, the difference between the actual arrival time and the critical entry time (next day) is added to the service achievement. For example, if mail arrives at the final destination 1 minute after critical entry time, 23 hours and 59 minutes will be added to the calculations described above because it will be that long until the next critical entry time. This results in 1 additional day being added to the service achievement column.

44 SYSTEM USE

441 General Operations and Logistics Database (GOLD)

GOLD is a consolidation of operations and logistics databases, allowing easy access through a single menu. Access to NASS as well as other databases is available through GOLD. GOLD is available at processing and distribution centers, area offices, including Distribution Networks, and within various Headquarters functions. While system inquiry is available to all users, the ability to update records in the various databases is restricted to specific users.

442 Databases

GOLD currently includes the following databases:

a. (NASS) National Air and Surface Systems.

b. (LATO) Air Traffic Management System.

c. (LAW2) Air Contracting Support System.

d. (RMIS) Rail Management Information System.

e. (EIRS) Equipment Inventory Reporting System.

f. (LAW0) National Traffic Management System.

g. (LAX1) Air Mail Facility Condition Reporting.

h. (LDF1) Logistics and Distribution Planning.

i. (LAR4) Highway National System.

j. (LAQ0) Perishable Information/Drop Shipment.

k. (LAR1) Air Contracting Tag System.

443 Users

The NASS database is used by the following personnel:

Expediters and dispatch personnel, transportation and network specialists, label clerks, supervisors, tour superintendents, and other logistics personnel. Additionally, the system is used by both transportation networks managers and customer services managers at processing and distribution centers.

The system may be utilized by both marketing and operations at various management levels. It is available to all personnel at Area Distribution Networks and within the processing and distribution functions at the Headquarters level. Its users also include the Inspection Service at Headquarters, the area offices and the processing and distribution centers, as well as postal customers using programs such as Drop Ship, Perishable Information Program, and others.

45 National Traffic Management System

This system operates on a personal computer, interfacing with NASS for the purpose of accessing transportation and traffic management reports as well as Express Mail directories. It replaces an original program called Report Request Data Download (R2D2). The system is available to Area Distribution Networks and most processing facilities who have appropriate hardware installed. It will provide immediate access to data, with only limited requirements for hard copy reports to be downloaded and mailed from Area Distribution Networks. The system will provide data download capabilities for all current reports, with additional traffic management reports as they are developed. The users have the capability to customize the report formats to suit exclusive needs at the local level. A national library is available where locally developed queries or reports can be shared by all users.

46 Area Distribution Networks Planning Cycle

461 Advance Planning

Area Distribution Networks works in a 7-day advance planning cycle. This cycle is necessary to provide sufficient time to coordinate and review changes. The cycle also allows sufficient time for dispatch pay documents (intra-Alaska) to be received by the first line supervisors on the workroom floor.

462 Definition

The 7-day NASS cycle begins each Saturday and ends on Friday of that same week. The processing and generation of planned routes begin at the close of business on Friday. The reports produced by that processing are then effective beginning the following Saturday.

▶ **Example:** The database must be updated by COB Friday, December 10. Updates for dispatch labeling and routing activities will then be effective beginning Saturday, December 18.

463 Reports

A great number of NASS and ACDCS reports are generated every weekend at the San Mateo Information Systems Service Center (ISSC) based on the planning cycle defined above. Some of the more frequently used reports are:

a. Starship Routing Reports.

b. ACDCS Planned Routes Report.

c. Comparison Of NASS Planned Versus Actual Dispatches.

d. Invalid Dispatch Master (Area Distribution Networks only).

464 Frequency

With the National Traffic Management System in place, it is no longer necessary for Area Distribution Networks to issue reports to each facility on a scheduled frequency. Individual processing facilities with proper equipment may access information and secure reports on an as-needed basis. In facilities where required computer hardware is not available, the parent processing and distribution center or Area Distribution Networks may provide the needed documents. Data may also be reviewed via the NASS inquiry screens. Dispatch information will be refreshed on a daily frequency, with other volume data updated weekly through processing at the San Mateo ISSC.

465 Official Airlines Guide (OAG)

Air carriers who participate in the carriage of mail provide schedules to the Official Airlines Guide (OAG) Corporation, which in turn provides this schedule information to the San Mateo ISSC. This information is supplied electronically each Thursday, at least 28 days in advance of affected schedules. San Mateo processes these schedules on the weekend and makes affected changes to the NASS database, which are then reflected interactively and through selected reports the following Monday.

47 Preparation of Dispatch and Routing Reports

471 Major Categories

All reports are produced by processing data that represents major categories of operations, transportation, and dispatch information. The dispatch reports are simply an integration of operations and transportation data in a format that provides planned dispatch and distribution information that meets established service windows.

472 Operational Data Preparation

Area Distribution Networks is responsible for maintaining current operational information in the NASS database. This data is extracted from the facility operating plan. Information that cannot be obtained from the operating plan should be requested through the processing and distribution center responsible for the facility. ACDCS close-out time is an example of operational data that is not found in the facility operating plan. The NASS Users Guide contains a description of the process for entering, deleting, or editing data in NASS.

473 Transportation Data Preparation

The NASS Users Guide details the process for entering transportation data in NASS. This data pertains to the following types of service:

a. Contracted Service – Headquarters personnel are responsible for the data entry for all rail and major network air contracts. Area Distribution Networks are responsible for data entry relative to highway service and air taxi. The Contract Master File is updated at the San Mateo ISSC.

b. Contracted Air Systems – The Official Airlines Guide (OAG) Corporation supplies data regarding contracted air carrier systems other than those mentioned above. Manipulation of this data to produce valid transportation routings is performed by the Area Distribution Networks.

c. Contracted Air Taxis – The Contract Master File is updated at the San Mateo ISSC, based on information supplied by the contracting officer at the respective Area office. Personnel at the Area Distribution Networks are then responsible for updating the NASS database with schedule information that mirrors the Contract Master File.

d. Non-Contracted Air Service (Intra-Alaska) – The Official Airlines Guide (OAG) Corporation supplies the USPS with airlines scheduling-data as provided by the air carriers transporting intra-Alaska mail. The Western Area Distribution Networks, Seattle Branch performs all required data entry for this service.

e. Non-Contracted Postal Owned – Area Distribution Networks is responsible for data entry relative to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) for all inter-facility transportation.

474 Additional Transportation Data Entry Rules

Not all frequency codes are accepted in NASS. When a scheduled trip has a frequency that cannot be properly coded, the frequency that most closely approximates that undefined frequency is to be used. A special message must be prepared that reflects this information on the route and trip. Round Robin or “loop trips” are not permissible in NASS. Scheduled trips that return from a destination to the same origin without changing the route and trip number are not acceptable.

475 Planned Dispatch Data Preparation

475.1 Area Distribution Networks

Planned dispatch data preparation is the responsibility of each Area Distribution Networks in whose area the dispatching facility is located. Planned dispatches must provide cost-effective service for all classes of mail. Failure to update the database in the appropriate planning cycle will be reflected as an error in one or more NASS reports and as an omission in the Starship Routing Report and download. Request for NASS reports including Dispatch, Origin/Destination, and Tie-Out Times Reports should be submitted with an effective date that mirrors the planning cycle.

475.2 Processing and Distribution Facility

Each processing and distribution facility is responsible for advising Area Distribution Networks of operational changes or errors. Distribution Networks will update the database to reflect these changes so that updated information may be secured through the National Traffic Management System (NTMS) and other NASS products.

The following is a list of special codes for entry into NASS dispatch records and for display in NASS Dispatch Reports and Origin/Destination Reports used by dispatch personnel at the processing facility.

	Special Code Entry
Blank	Surface Dispatch / Systems Contract Non-Container / Regular O & D Routing.
&	Displayed in Dispatch and O & D Reports as a backup or contingency. Will not reflect in Starship Routings or planned routes file.
C	Indicates container dispatch.
L	Indicates Last Chance dispatch to meet transportation window.
I	(Future use) International Starship Routings.

476 Requirements for ACDCS Planned Routes File

476.1 Purpose

The Planned Routes File is an extract of all air transportation routings that have been planned for dispatch from an ACDCS site. Each routing in the Planned Routes File currently represents a contract with the air carriers. There is currently limited use of inter-modal planned routes that include surface contracts in the Planned Routes File.

476.2 Frequency of Data Download

Once a week this data is downloaded to the ACDCS sites by the San Mateo ISSC. After this download, the Planned Routes File will also accommodate any additional routings entered by the ACDCS. Hard copies of information found in the Planned Routes File is produced in the Starship Routings Report.

476.3 Access

These files may be accessed via the ACDCS terminal, for the purpose of adding, suspending, or editing routing records on the local site computer. Any new records added will be shown as “NEW” on the NASS Weekly Plan Versus Actual Report received by the Area Distribution Networks. These routings should be reviewed weekly by the Networks Planning Specialist for accuracy and to ascertain whether adjustments are required for the next Starship Routing Report.

476.4 Starship Routings Immediate Download

In addition to weekly updates, the Area Distribution Networks and AMC/AMF personnel have the capability to enter routings on-line through a program known as the Starship Routings Immediate Download. This on-line entry allows for immediate validation and download back to the AMC/AMF, directly into the ACDCS daily routings file. This ensures that all the routine NASS edit checks are performed on each routing. Once validated, the routing will be stored on the host database for future inquiry/reporting and will be placed in a queue for transmission back to the AMC/AMF. User instructions for Starship Routings Immediate Download are available from the St. Louis ISSC.

476.5 Planning Factors

Area Distribution Networks must consider many factors in establishing the Planned Routes File. This file is similar to the Starship Routing Report because it consolidates mail classes intended for dispatch. The Air Contract Data Collection System (ACDCS) currently recognizes eleven (11) codes for contract assignment. Of this number, seven (7) are valid entries into the mail class field in NASS and require an alpha numeric. The remaining, C - Container, G - Perishable, H - Hazardous, and J - PAL, are processed by the ACDCS flags in the Planned Routes File. The following is a list of the 11 codes:

EM=Express
CD=Custom Designed
P1=Priority
C=Container
F1=First Class
G=Perishable
RG=Registered
H=Hazardous
SD=Same Day
J=PAL
ND=Next Day Network

477 Computerized Exhibit 10

477.1 General

This is a computerized replica of the Exhibit 10 taken from the mail processing operating plan. It defines Critical Entry Times, Clearance Times, and acceptance window Cut-off Times for Express Mail. The Exhibit 10, as it exists in the NASS database, provides automatic generation of the Next Day Express Mail Directories based on data from the exhibit and dispatch records with valid transportation that meets the criteria of the facility's Exhibit 10.

477.2 Exhibit 10 Data Elements

477.21 *Processing Facility*

The NASS code assigned to a facility that is responsible for processing origin and/or destination Next Day Express Mail for one or more 3-digit ZIP Code area.

477.22 *Assigned ZIP*

The ZIP Code assigned to each 3-digit or 5-digit area that is served by the "processing facility" for origin and/or destination Next Day Express Mail.

477.23 *Incoming "A"*

The latest time expressed in hours and minutes (military time) that destination Next Day "A" Label (Post Office to Post Office) Express Mail Service may be received at the processing facility's inbound dock in order to effect window delivery by 1000 hours (10 a.m.).

477.24 *Incoming "B"*

The latest time expressed in hours and minutes (military time) that destination Next Day "B" Label (Post Office to Addressee) Express Mail Service may be received at the processing facility's inbound dock in order to effect delivery to the addressee by 1500 hours (3 p.m.).

477.25 *Incoming "N"*

The latest time expressed in hours and minutes (military time) that destination Next Day "B" Label (Post Office to Addressee) Express Mail Service may be received at the processing facility's inbound dock in order to effect delivery to the addressee by 1200 hours (Noon Delivery).

477.26 *Cut-off Time (COT)*

The latest time Next Day Express Mail may be accepted in order to ensure on-time delivery to any given ZIP Code shown in the acceptance facility's Next Day Express Mail Service Directory. For flexible or optional directories, this is the time that will appear in the header as the directory is printed. For a ZIP Code having multiple acceptance facilities, this should reflect the earliest cut-off time.

477.27 *Critical Entry Time (CET)*

The latest time Express Mail can arrive at the processing facility in order to complete processing and meet transportation that supports the facility's Next Day Express Mail Service Directory.

477.28 *Clearance Time (CT)*

The specified time in which Express Mail must have completed an operation and be available for planned transportation that supports the facility's Next Day Express Mail Service Directory.

477.3 Exhibit 10 Changes

As a portion of the overall mail processing operating plan, changes to the Exhibit 10 must be approved at the same level as the operating plan (Plant Manager, Manager, Distribution Networks, Manager, Inplant Support, Vice President, Area Operations). No changes are to be made to the Major Market Network ZIP Code commitments unless approved by the Headquarters Express Mail Service Change Board (see Handbook DM-201, *Express Mail Service*).

▶ **Note:** Three weeks prior to the quarterly generation of the Next Day Express Mail Service Directories, approved Exhibit 10 updates may be entered by Area Distribution Networks. Changes at any other time must be submitted for approval to the Manager, National Network Operations, at Headquarters.

5 International Mail Network Planning and Dispatch Guidelines

51 Dispatching International Mail by Air

511 Dispatch Schedules

The overall policy governing the dispatch and routing function is to provide the most cost-effective routing that meets the service standard. The National Air and Surface System (NASS) was developed to help attain this goal. Preparation and verification of these schedules are the responsibility of Area Distribution Networks. These schedules must list the flights to be used (including alternatives). The following frequency symbols are used in preparing dispatch schedules:

1 = Monday

2 = Tuesday

3 = Wednesday

4 = Thursday

5 = Friday

6 = Saturday

7 = Sunday

0000 denotes daily service.

512 Frequency of Service Goals

Dispatches must be made 5 days each week or more often, providing one of the following two criteria are met: (1) an average daily volume of 5 kilograms of LC and AO mail; or (2) three parcels or 5 kilograms of CP mail (see the *International Mail Manual* for description of international mail classes).

513 Delivery of Mail to Carriers

513.1 Priority Aircraft Loading

Air carriers must board and transport international mail in accordance with the established mail priorities on the designated flights and routings shown on the destination tags or labels. Mail boarding priorities are as follows:

a. Express Mail International Service (EMS).

b. International Civil Airmail, Military Airmail/Priority Mail.

c. Military Ordinary Mail (MOM).

d. Air freight and diplomatic pouches moved as air cargo.

e. Space Available Mail (SAM)—Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL).

▶ **Note:** International Surface Airlift (ISAL) is moved under contract and should be transported within the time frame of the contract.

513.2 Removal of Mail

When it is necessary to remove mail to reduce the weight of the aircraft due to weather conditions or other emergency situations, follow this order of removal:

a. SAM/PAL.

b. Air freight and diplomatic pouches moved as air cargo.

c. MOM.

d. International Civil Airmail, Military Airmail/Priority Mail.

e. EMS.

513.3 Code Sharing

When a flight is listed in the OAG as a code share flight, e.g., NW/KL 786, dispatching facilities should treat the flight as a U.S. air carrier and tender mail under equitable tender rules. Billing documents should be prepared to compensate the U.S. air carrier for the transportation of the mail.

513.4 Equitable Tender

When two or more carriers serve the same point with service that is equivalent in terms of the requirements of the Postal Service, the mail must be distributed equitably among the U.S. carriers. Equitable distribution requires a fair and reasonable, but not necessarily equal, division of mail between such carriers.

▶ **Note:** Foreign flag carriers are not considered for equitable tender.

52 ROUTE AND CARRIER SELECTION GUIDELINES

521 General

The following route and carrier guidelines must be followed in routing international airmail to destination. Changes in procedure are not permitted without the authorization of the Manager, International and Military Mail Operations, at Headquarters. The guidelines apply only between domestic and international points or between two international points. These guidelines do not apply between two domestic points or between a domestic point and a United States possession. International routes that require an interline transfer within the United States are not authorized. Authorized transfers are shown in the Authorized Interline Transfers And Foreign-Flag Carriers And Route/Carrier Selection Guidelines, which is distributed to Area Distribution Networks by Headquarters.

▶ **Note**: The Postal Service is a service-oriented organization. United States air carriers are given preference in every instance, but service must never be compromised strictly because of transportation cost or other non-service related reasons. The following instructions regarding the selection of air carrier services are to be used in establishing routings.

522 EMS (Express Mail International Service)

522.1 Priority

Use the following guidelines when deciding which carrier to use:

a. United States air carrier either by direct or by intraline connection when the schedule meets required service standards.

b. Foreign-flag carrier.

c. Interline service.

d. International gateway exchange office.

▶ **Note:** See priority description below for exceptions.

522.2 Priority Description

522.21 *United States Air Carriers*

Unites States air carrier service will be used for any destination served either by direct or intraline connection when the U.S. carrier's schedule meets required service standards. Use Form 2942, *Delivery Bill AV-7*, to document this mail from dispatching exchange office to destination. An analysis to determine the best routing available must be made prior to selection of a carrier. However, where a U.S. air carrier meets the requirements as well as or better than other alternatives, it should be selected. Intraline transfers are through routings on one set of AV-7s where (1) a domestic leg on an international carrier is used from an exchange office to a gateway office or

other exchange office where connection to the international flight is made, or, (2) transfers to another flight of the same carrier at a point outside the United States. Area Distribution Networks must use international Express Mail network country exchange offices for transfers. All exceptions (they should be considered) must be approved by the Manager, International and Military Mail Operations, at Headquarters.

▶ **Note**: In a competitive situation, a U.S. air carrier or foreign-flag carrier providing direct service (no change of aircraft) will be given preference over a routing that involves a change of aircraft. This includes both intraline transfers and routings using a single flight number that involve a change of aircraft at a down-line stop. These type routings are considered equal and of a lower priority than single aircraft direct service. A flight involving a change of aircraft can be identified through NASS Transportation Inquiry.

522.22 *Foreign-Flag Carrier*

Use foreign-flag air carrier service, either direct or by intraline connection, when United States air carrier service does not meet required service standards. Use AV-7s to document this mail from dispatching exchange office to destination. If service goals cannot be met using option (a) above, use foreign-flag carriers in the following order of priority: (1) carriers who offer service at Department of Transportation (DOT) rates, (2) Headquarters-authorized foreign-flag carriers that offer service at the Universal Postal Union rates. When selecting foreign-flag air carrier service under this option, the potential service advantages must be carefully weighed. Foreign-flag air carrier services should be used if it will provide advanced delivery to the addressee over holding the mail for the next scheduled U.S. air carrier. Estimated time of arrival in the foreign country should be the critical factor in making the selection and will be a matter of judgment on the part of Area Distribution Networks.

522.23 *Interline Transfer*

If there is inadequate service, i.e., no U.S. air carrier or foreign-flag air carrier from this country, use approved interline service at an intermediate country between a U.S. air carrier and a foreign-flag air carrier. In the absence of service as stated in 522.21 and 522.22, routings should be selected that include authorized interline transfers from U.S. air carriers to foreign-flag air carriers at a point outside the United States in order to accomplish the frequency of service goals. Two sets of AV-7s are required when making interline transfers.

▶ **Note:** In an interline agreement, the U.S. Postal Service selects the foreign-flag air carrier to be used and the overseas airport at which the mail is to be transferred.

522.24 *Gateway Exchange Offices*

When options in 522.21, 522.22, and 522.23 are not available, routing should be made through a gateway exchange office. When none of these three options meet service requirements, International Express Mail should be dispatched through the gateway that offers the best service connection to the

destination country. This mail is to be manifested with an Air Contract Tag (ACT) or Dispatch and Routing (D&R) tag using the “E” mail class designator to the gateway. The gateway exchange office will list the dispatch on its AV-7.

523 International Airmail (Except Canada)

523.1 Selection Priority

Use the following guidelines when deciding which carrier to use:

a. Single plane non-stop and one-stop service.

b. Single plane multiple-stop service.

c. Intraline service, including single flight designation operations where a transfer between two aircraft occurs.

d. Ramp-to-ramp service.

e. Headquarters-approved interline transfers.

f. Foreign-flag carriers, direct or on-line connecting foreign carriers that accept DOT rates.

▶ **Note**: Foreign-flag carriers which do not accept DOT rates must be authorized on an individual basis by the Manager, International and Military Mail Operations, at Headquarters.

g. U.S. carriers to an intermediate country.

523.2 Priority Description

523.21 *United States Air Carrier*

U.S. air carrier service must be used exclusively to all countries served either direct or with an on-line connection when the U.S. air carriers schedule frequency is adequate to meet service commitments. Use U.S. air carriers that provide direct service, including routings that have intermediate stops and/or intraline transfers to accomplish service goals before considering other types of service. Intraline transfers are through routings on one set of AV-7s where (1) domestic leg on an international carrier is used from an exchange office to a gateway office or another exchange office where a connection to the international flight is made or, (2) an international flight originating at a gateway or exchange office transfers to another flight of the same carrier at a point outside the United States.

▶ **Note:** In a competitive situation, a U.S. air carrier providing direct service (no change of aircraft) will be given preference over a routing that involves a change of aircraft. This includes both intraline transfers and routings, using a single flight number that involves a change in aircraft at a down-line stop. These types of routings are considered equal and of a lower priority than single plane, direct service. A flight involving a change of aircraft can be identified through NASS Transportation Inquiry.

523.22 *Ramp-to-Ramp Service*

If a U.S. air carrier advises Headquarters that arrangements have been made for ramp-to-ramp transfers with a foreign-flag air carrier to a country to which there is inadequate or no U.S. air carrier service, the arrangement will be considered as a single U.S. air dispatch and Area Distribution Networks will be advised accordingly.

▶ **Note:** Ramp-to-ramp transfers differ from interline transfers in that, during ramp-to-ramp transfers, the U.S. air carrier makes the necessary arrangements for transfer of the mail to the foreign-flag air carrier of its choice, but is ultimately held responsible for transportation of the mail to final destination. In the absence of direct U.S. air carrier service (as stated in 523.21) routings should be selected that include authorized ramp-to-ramp transfers from U.S. air carriers to foreign-flag air carriers at a point outside the United States in order to accomplish the frequency of service goals.

523.23 *Interline Transfers*

Headquarters-approved interline service at an intermediate country between a U.S. air carrier and a foreign-flag air carrier must be used after options in 523.21 and 523.22.

▶ **Note:** In an interline agreement, the U.S. Postal Service selects the foreign-flag air carrier to be used and the overseas airport at which the mail is to be transferred. In the absence of direct U.S. air carrier service or an authorized ramp-to-ramp transfer, routings must be selected that include authorized interline transfers from the U.S. air carriers to foreign-flag air carriers at a point outside the United States. in order to accomplish the frequency of service goals. Authorization should be requested for potential interline routings that Area Distribution Networks feel is necessary.

523.24 *Foreign Flag Air Carrier*

When U.S. air carrier schedules to another country are not adequate to meet service commitments, direct or on-line connecting foreign-flag air carrier service from the United States is authorized, subject to restrictions from the Manager, International and Military Mail Operations, to supplement U.S. air carrier service. If the service goals cannot be accomplished with routings following the options listed in 523.21, 523.22, and 523.23, use foreign-flag air carriers offering DOT rates that provide direct service from the United States, including routings that have intermediate stops or intraline transfers. When selecting foreign-flag air carrier service under this option, the potential service advantages must be carefully weighed. Direct foreign-flag air carrier service should be used only if it will provide advanced delivery to addressee over holding the mail for the next scheduled U.S. air carrier. Estimated time of arrival in the foreign country should be an important factor in making the selection and will be a matter of judgment on the part of Area Distribution Networks. The use of a foreign-flag air carrier not offering DOT rates must be authorized by the Manager, International and Military Mail Operations, at Headquarters.

523.25 *Intermediate Country*

When there is no alternative, U.S. air carrier service will be used to an intermediate country. The postal administration of that country will then assume responsibility for reforwarding the U.S. mail to final destination. If the service goals cannot be accomplished with routings following the options listed in 523.21, 523.22, 523.23, and 523.24, use direct U.S. air carrier service to an intermediate country at which point the mail will be turned over to the foreign postal administration for onward dispatch to final destination.

▶ **Note:** If none of the above options are available, direct seals must be forwarded to the designated gateway exchange office using an Air Contract Tag (ACT) or Dispatch and Routing (D&R) tag using the “P” mail class designator to the gateway. The gateway exchange office will list the dispatch on its AV-7.

524 Canadian Mail

524.1 Selection Priority

Use the following guidelines when deciding which carrier to use:

a. Single plane, non-stop, and one-stop service.

b. Single plane, multiple-stop service.

c. Intraline service, including single flight designation operations where a transfer between two aircraft occurs.

d. Headquarters-approved interline transfers.

e. Foreign-flag air carriers.

524.2 Critical Entry Time

The critical factor for origin U.S. airmail to Canada is the established critical entry time (CET) of the Canadian facility. The goal is to have all or as much of the total available volume as possible, to the destination office by CET on day 1, subject to the mail availability and transportation. Therefore, available and authorized service, scheduled to arrive at the Canadian destination prior to the established CET for receipt of U.S. mail, is to be used over transportation of a higher order of priority that does not meet CET.

525 International Surface Airlift (ISAL)

International Surface Airlift Mail is forwarded as First-Class Mail from the acceptance office to the designated international gateway exchange office. The gateway exchange office must dispatch ISAL on flights with carriers whom we have contracted to provide this service. Only dispatches of 750 pounds or more, recorded on an individual PS Form 2941, *Delivery Bill-Bordereau (C-18bis),* is authorized for dispatch to an air carrier. When an Airmail Center (AMC) not designated as a gateway exchange office receives large volumes of ISAL mail that meets the 750 pounds per flight minimum, it

should contact the respective Manager, Distribution Networks, to prepare a temporary air carrier contract.

53 DOCUMENTATION

531 PS Form 2942, *Delivery Bill AV-7*

The AV-7 is prescribed by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to be used for the exchange of mail by air between countries. At offices utilizing the Military and International Dispatch Accounting System (MIDAS), the AV-7 is computer generated. However, for manual preparation, see Handbook F-59, *International Exchange Office Procedures*.

532 Documentation and Processing of Airmail From Visiting Foreign Military Units

Mail from military units of foreign governments on maneuvers or visits in the United States is made up by those units for dispatch and return to their home country. This mail is made up in postal equipment of the visiting forces and delivered to the local Postal Service official, who re-encloses it in domestic orange equipment and forwards it, with a complete foreign AV-7 prepared by the visiting foreign government, to the designated exchange office. The foreign AV-7 covers the move to the destination. The visiting foreign government's flag air carrier is used where possible, and the arrangements are between the foreign government and the air carrier. If the use of the foreign-flag air carrier is impractical, a U.S. air carrier is used and the arrangements for compensation are between the foreign government and the air carrier.

54 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

541 General

Regulations for handling hazardous material and restricted articles are outlined in Publication 52, *Acceptance of Hazardous, Restricted or Perishable Matter*, *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) CO42, and *International Mail Manual* (IMM) chapter 1, section 135. Other than mail for Canada and Great Britain, hazardous material items are the only type of international airmail that may be dispatched as outside pieces.

542 Handling Procedures

The following guidelines must be used when dispatching hazardous material:

a. Prepare a separate AV-7 (PS Form 2942) for each item.

b. When hazardous material is accepted for dispatch by international airmail, remove one copy of the shipper's certificate and attach it to the air carrier's copy of the AV-7.

c. Stamp or endorse all copies of the AV-7 "Hazardous Material" in prominent bold letters.

d. Give article and AV-7 its own dispatch number, in proper sequence, by class (AO or CP).

e. The Form 8108, *Verification Note* (C-14), is prepared for each article and must read as follows: "The attached article is being forwarded to your administration as an outside piece due to the nature of its contents. We would appreciate acceptance into your service and any comments you may have."

f. Complete the proper destination tag in the usual manner and affix it to the address side of the article.

g. Enclose Form 8106, *Letter Bill Exchange of Mail* (C-12), or PS Form 8107, *Air Parcel Post Bill* (CP-20), and two copies of the *Bulletin of Verification* (C-14) in a Bulletin of Verification envelope addressed to the destination administration and securely attached to the article. Endorse the envelope to indicate what forms are enclosed.

h. Tender the hazardous material as an outside piece to the air carrier that is scheduled to serve the destination country. Refusals are handled in accordance with Publication 52, sections 621.1 and 621.3.

55 Articles Mailed Aboard Ship

Mail posted on ships must bear postage stamps of the country of registry. Upon arrival at a port, the mail is delivered to the post office for cancellation of the stamps and onward dispatch. Any mail to be forwarded by air must have a PS Form 2710, *Statement of Net Weight of the Airmail (AV-2)* advising the destinations and the weight of the mail for each destination. Post offices that are not air mail exchange offices must forward the AV-2s and the mail to one of the following international exchange offices:

a. IAMRU

JFK AIRPORT MAIL CENTER (JFK)
US POSTAL SERVICE
JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
JAMAICA NY 11430-9998

b. IAMRU

AIRPORT MAIL CENTER (MIA)
US POSTAL SERVICE
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
MIAMI FL 33159-9741

c. IAMRU

AIRPORT MAIL CENTER (SFO)
US POSTAL SERVICE
SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT BLDG 660 ROAD 6
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94128-9741

6 Transportation Changes and Other Services

61 PURPOSE

The types of transportation used to carry mail are quite diversified. Many modes of transportation are used and many management systems are used to control it. Area Distribution Networks is continually reviewing, determining requirements, procuring contracts, and administering and monitoring the performance of the various carriers to ensure the most effective service at the most reasonable cost. Some important areas not covered elsewhere in this handbook are presented in this section.

62 RESPONSIBILITY

Area Distribution Networks must respond to internal and external changes that can affect the flow of mail. Some examples are as follows:

a. Major air carrier strikes and work stoppages.

b. Service related mode changes.

c. Distribution network changes.

d. Changes in individual facility operations.

e. Customer mailing changes.

f. Seasonal transportation changes.

63 CHRISTMAS PLANNING

Each year, beginning in January, appropriate personnel representing processing and distribution from each area; major airport mail centers (AMCs) and selected airport mail facilities (AMFs); Area Distribution Networks; and Headquarters meet to discuss the outcome of the prior

Christmas season and begin planning for the current year. Based on these initial meetings, new objectives are determined and general operating policies are defined in regards to the processing, transportation, and delivery of the mail during the holiday season. Intelligent planning for Christmas is the key to a successful operation. Where volume is historically known to be more than scheduled transportation can handle, sufficient, extra service scheduled trips should be planned. Requirements for additional air transportation based on projected volumes, carrier capability, and performance in the past must be reviewed and documented. One of the tools used to plan requirements for air transportation is the Plan Versus Actual report for the same period last year (SPLY). This report provides a snapshot of volumes flown by day, week or accounting period. Additionally, the need to establish or enhance surface transportation networks must be considered with personnel and equipment resources committed.

64 Air Carrier Impact Analysis

641 Purpose

The Carrier Impact Analysis System is a computerized program that identifies the impact an air carrier will have on the mail transportation network if their services were not available due to work stoppage, contract termination, or other circumstances. Various carrier impact profiles are offered the user that supply all existing alternate routings, including average daily volumes. The system also provides new routings using direct transportation and allows the Network Planning Specialist to reassign or add routings as required to accommodate impacted volumes.

642 Aircraft Type and Lift Capacity

The lift capacity and type aircraft used by each carrier is monitored by the system. The volume of mail assigned by destination and flight at each origin and transfer point is calculated by the system, and all flights that are potentially overloaded are indicated through exception reports. The lift assigned to each flight is based on individual carrier responses and general air industry standards.

643 System Description

The system is composed of hard copy reports and interactive computer screens. Reports are automatically generated when Headquarters initiates an impact, update, or exception request. The interactive screens are used by Headquarters and Area Distribution Networks to enter required updates and as an information database to identify carrier profile numbers, routing alternatives, and aircraft capacities.

65 RESTRICTED FLIGHTS

651 Purpose

This computerized program is accessed through the Air Traffic Management System in the General Operations and Logistic Database (GOLD). It provides the ability to restrict dispatches onto a particular flight where excess amounts of mail are being routed, and volumes are consistently being left behind. Flights may also be restricted when designated aircraft are too small to accommodate anticipated volumes. This program is administered by Headquarters transportation personnel, and access is limited to selected individuals only.

652 Transfer Restrictions

Transfer restrictions are imposed where situations exist similar to those found with restricted flights as follows:

a. The aircraft size is insufficient to accommodate the mail volume, e.g., commuter service between a hub and an area distribution center (ADC).

b. A high number of origins are routing mail to a particular transfer flight, which causes continual delay and/or failure to load.

66 LIMITED DISPATCH FACILITIES (LDFS)

661 Definition

An LDF is a facility that dispatches mail directly to an air carrier but must enter the assignment data for the dispatch via equipment at an air contract data collection system (ACDCS) site. LDFs have no computerized ACDCS equipment.

662 Criteria for LDF Designation

Before a facility may be designated as an LDF, it must meet the following criteria:

a. The respective Vice President, Area Operations, must provide administrative approval.

b. The area approval, along with the name and specifications of the designated input host, must be forwarded to the Manager, National Network Operations, at Headquarters.

c. After Headquarters concurrence, a facility record is created in the National Air and Surface System (NASS) database.

d. The facility name and alpha code is added to the Destination ZIP Code File and Great Circle Mileage Files.

e. The San Mateo Information Systems Service Center (ISSC) must update the Limited Dispatch Facility Files, providing access privileges to the input host.

Additional information on dispatch procedures relative to a limited dispatch facility can be found in Handbook PO-507, *Air Contract Administrative Procedures.*

67 Mode Conversions

671 General Information

A complete cost study must be made prior to making any request for a mode change. It is no longer feasible to assume that one form of transportation is less costly than another. The number of moves in each direction, transportation windows, classes of mail, extra trip capabilities, local drayage, etc. all must be considered when determining the most efficient mode of transportation.

672 Air to Surface Diversions

672.1 Purpose

The purpose of the air to surface diversion is to improve or maintain current service while achieving cost reductions. Where it is operationally and economically feasible, we must divert mail that is ordinarily dispatched by air and transport it on the surface. A static surface transportation schedule will present the destination processing facility with a constant mail arrival profile. This, in some instances, allows staffing and scheduling changes to widen the facilities distribution window.

672.2 Program Objectives

One of the major objectives of the program, where it is operationally sound, is to eliminate transfer handlings that occur with tender to, and receipt from, airlines. Elimination of these handlings will help reduce cost and may provide a more consistent arrival at destination. Air transportation rates represent the most expensive mode of moving mail. Its main value to the Postal Service is to transport Express Mail with overnight delivery commitments and 2- and 3-day mail that is dispatched to destinations where surface transportation cannot meet service needs. Successful diversions should be possible for any volume of mail that can meet the destination critical entry time for its mail class or category, while traveling by surface transportation.

672.3 Procedures

The following steps must be taken when considering air to surface diversions:

a. Review the transportation window, which is from origin dock clearance time to destination dock critical entry time, to ascertain that surface transportation can meet service objectives. Also consider changes in the mail arrival profile at destination and any operational impact.

b. Review all established surface transportation currently operating close to, or from, the processing facilities at both origin and destination for schedules and unused space. Consider new routings if economically feasible.

c. Compute and compare the cost of surface transportation versus the cost of air transportation.

d. If the cost of air transportation is higher than that of surface transportation, the routing must be planned for surface.

672.4 Reviews

Ongoing reviews of transportation are needed to ensure service is consistent with the following:

a. A steady buildup of mail volume being dispatched by air over short haul origin/destination pairs.

b. Changes in a processing and distribution center's operating plan.

c. Changes in surface transportation schedules or routes.

▶ **Note:** Increased mail volume could reach a point where it may be advisable to establish new service or combine it with other existing service. A change in critical entry time could make space on existing transportation available for small volumes.

673 Highway to Rail, Rail to Highway

673.1 Approval/Disapproval

Approval or disapproval to convert from one mode of transportation to another is a joint effort with concurrence required from the Manager, Transportation and the Manager, National Mail Transportation Procurement at Headquarters.

673.2 Service Impact

Documented procedures for requesting mode conversion must be followed (see Exhibit 673.2). All proposals will be considered when the major areas of service standards, cost, and operational impact have been analyzed by the affected processing and distribution centers and Area Distribution Networks. The Manager, National Networks Operations, will conduct the Headquarters analysis and submit it to the Manager, National Mail Transportation Purchasing, for concurrence. Predicated on this format, the proposal will be approved or disapproved.

The following information must be provided with each proposal for mode conversion from Highway to Rail or Rail to Highway.

1. Service achievement comparison

2. HCR Statement of Service and Schedule

3. Proposed HCR Statement of Service and Schedule

4. Dispatch and Arrival Profile

5. Load Factor Analysis

6. Cost Impact

7. Fuel Impact

8. Statement of Average Volume Dispatched/Received

9. HCR Contract Route Statement, Schedule and Specifications (PS Form 5443)

10. Letter Requesting Comments From Affected Facilities

11. BMC Comments

12. Summary of Benefits, Savings, and Impacts

Information package must be submitted to the Manager, National Network Operations, for analysis. Incomplete packages will be returned to sender for additional information. After review, package will be forwarded to the Manager, National Mail Transportation Purchasing, for concurrence and final approval/disapproval. Requester will be notified of decision.

Mode Conversion Proposal
Exhibit 673.2

68 AIR CARRIER PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

681 System Concept and Operating Components

The Performance Measurement System was designed to uniquely identify and track selected pieces of mail from the time it is scanned by the Postal Service at the origin processing facility, until it is delivered to the Postal Service at the specified destination airport by the contractor. To track each piece of mail, computer hardware and software have been developed and procured by the Postal Service.

682 Hardware Requirements

The hardware required at the origin processing facility is a Scan Where You Band (SWYB) system. Scan Where You Band reads a barcoded distribution label, weighs and assigns it to transportation, and places a machine-readable (10 character bar code) dispatch and routing tag on each piece of mail (sack/outside) that will be tendered to the contractor. Scan Where You Band accounts for the time required to transport mail from the processing facility to the airport, as well as the time required for the Postal Service to prepare the mail for tender to contractors.

683 Dispatch and Routing Tags

Each dispatch and routing tag created by the Scan Where You Band system has a unique identification code. The code is composed of (1) the destination ZIP Code, (2) mail class and day of week, index number and weight. This information is then transmitted from the local computer to the national host computer for maintenance and storage.

684 Time of Delivery to USPS

At the destination airport, the time mail is delivered to the USPS is established and tested by Postal Service personnel using hand scanners developed for the Performance Measurement System. Contractors are tested on a random basis as determined by an automated sample design program. Mail is tested at the destination airport, and the actual delivery time is entered into the hand scanner.

685 Hand Scanner Records

The hand scanner records all the barcoded information including the actual delivery time of the mail, and transmits via radio waves to a base station located adjacent to the local computer. This information is then transmitted to the national host computer where it is matched with information from the origin scan to determine whether the mail was delivered to the Postal Service by the scheduled delivery time. The scheduled delivery time is

determined by adding 60 minutes' buffer time and the mail due USPS time to the *Official Airlines Guide* (OAG) scheduled flight arrival time.

▶ **Note:** Performance Measurement (PM) also has provisions to disqualify mail (by piece or by flight) that is delivered late due to circumstances beyond the contractor's control.

686 Ranking Contractors Into Performance Groups

In each market, a set of air carriers will be identified to be compared with each other. The goal of the comparison (ranking) is to divide these contractors into a group of highest performers, second highest performers, and so on. The Postal Service expects contractors to provide dependable, consistent, and 98 percent on-time delivery of mail within guidelines provided by the Airlines System-Rate Contract, ASYS 94-01. Each contractor's on-time delivery of Priority Mail at selected airports will be measured by the Performance Measurement System to determine the quality of service being provided. Performance measurement may also be used to determine the performance of other mail classes as seen fit by the Postal Service. The volume of mail assigned to competing contractors between specified origin and destination airports will be determined in part by their performance ranking under Performance Measurement. Availability of the mail at origin, flight selection criteria, and scheduled AMC/AMF delivery time will also be factors considered in the tender of mail to contractors. Additional information on the Performance Measurement System may be found in Clause 1.4 of the ASYS 94-01 contract.

Glossary of Terms

Area Distribution Networks – a function found in each area office responsible for managing transportation services for a large geographical area, developing and managing local area surface transportation network, creating and developing dispatch plans for each processing unit within its area, and ensuring the performance and utilization of transportation services through field visits and audits.

Automatic Dispatch Generation (ADG) – a process to automate the generation and maintenance of transportation dispatch routings in the National Air and Surface System (NASS). – the routing of mail through an airstop where it will connect with surface transportation for the final leg. Utilized to avoid air transfers when no direct transportation exists between origin and destination. Must be approved by Headquarters.

Bracketing – the routing of mail through an airstop where it will connect with surface transportation for the final leg. Utilized to avoid air transfers when no direct transportation exists between origin and destination. Must be approved by Headquarters.

Concentration and Convoy (CON–CON) – Registered mail dispatched by air to and/or from designated airports within the CON-CON program.

Dispatch Discipline – a plan to monitor adherence to the dispatch plan by the facility dispatching the mail. Dispatch discipline ensures that processed volumes are actually moved as planned.

Dispatch of Value – the first designated dispatch after clearance time that will make service commitments.

Dispatch Window – the period of time in hours, necessary to achieve the service objectives in the total processing of mail from origin to destination. The time begins at the back of the case/rack/machine and ends at the destination dock as defined in the labeling instructions.

Distribution Requirements System – an automated system residing in the General Operations and Logistics Database (GOLD) that will define the distribution labeling requirements for each supported mail class for every processing facility.

Exchange Office – a postal facility authorized to make up and dispatch, or receive, international and military mail, both air and surface.

Exhibit 10 – a computerized replica of the Exhibit 10 from the mail processing operating plan. It defines clearance times, critical entry times, and acceptance window cutoff times for Express Mail Service.

GOLD – General Operations and Logistics Database – a consolidation of operations and logistic databases, allowing easy access through a single menu.

Inter-line Transfer – a transfer of mail between aircraft owned and operated by different air carriers (e.g., UA to DL).

Intra-line Transfer – a transfer of mail between aircraft owned and operated by the same air carrier (e.g., UA to UA).

Mail Arrival Profile – an estimate of the percentage of mail by class/type arriving at the platform each hour of each tour.

NASS – National Air and Surface Systems – a database designed to accommodate facility information, transportation, labeling, and distribution operations records. The system will provide inquiry, hard copy reports, and on-line update capability.

National Traffic Management System – a program that interfaces with NASS for the purpose of accessing transportation and traffic management reports as well as Express Mail Service Directories, and is available to processing facilities with the required equipment.

Operating Plan Clearance Time – the latest time that committed mail must complete an operation, in accordance with the facility operating plan, if that mail is to meet the critical entry time for the next required operation or its planned dispatch of value. The facility clearance time is the time that the vehicle at the outbound dock is scheduled to leave the facility.

Operating Plan Critical Entry Time – The latest time that committed mail must be available to an operation, in accordance with the facility operating plan, if the mail is to complete the operation by its planned clearance time. In terms of transportation, critical entry time is the time the vehicle must arrive at the facility to meet the service commitment of the mail it contains.

Passport – a computerized sack and tray label acquisition system that simplifies and standardizes the label-ordering process for post offices.

Processing and Distribution Center – a large major mail processing facility with a manager who has full management (administrative) responsibility for all processing and distribution offices within specific ZIP Code areas.

Scan Where You Band – an automated dispatch system normally located at the processing facility. Users scan a barcoded label or manually input a 3-digit ZIP Code, which then produces a Dispatch and Routing tag with appropriate alpha airstop code and other required dispatch information.

Starship Routing Reports – hard copy reports showing all planned air transportation from the designated facility for a period of 1 week. Information in the reports is based upon the planned route files as updated and maintained by the Network Specialists at Area Distribution Networks.

Transportation Information Management Evaluation System (TIMES) – a computerized program that produces an automated Form 5398X to track inbound and outbound Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) and Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) transportation.

Transportation Window – the amount of time available to transport mail from origin to destination in order to achieve the service commitment for that particular class of mail.