UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE®

United States Postal Service® Web Tool Kit User's Guide

Fly Like an Eagle.™

Software Distributors Policy Guide

Version 1.1 (8/17/01)

To Our Customers

If you require technical support, contact the USPS Internet Customer Care Center (ICCC). This office is manned from 7:00AM to 11:00PM EST.

> E-mail: icustomercare@usps.com

> Telephone: 1-800-344-7779 (7:00AM to 11:00PM EST)

USPS Customer Commitment

The United States Postal Service fully understands the importance of providing information and service anytime day or night to your Internet and e-commerce customers. For that reason, the USPS is committed to providing 7 x 24 service from our API servers, 365 days a year.

Thank you for helping the U.S. Postal Service provide new Internet services to our shipping customers.

> Internet Shipping Solutions Team
> U.S. Postal Service
> 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
> Washington, DC 20260-2464

Trademarks

Registered trademarks of the U.S. Postal Service	Trademarks of the U.S. Postal Service
Express Mail First-Class Mail Global Priority Mail Parcel Post Priority Mail ZIP + 4	Delivery Confirmation Global Express Guaranteed Global Express Mail GXG International Parcel Post Priority Mail Global Guaranteed Signature Confirmation ZIP Code

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Introduction

The USPS Web Tool Kit Application Program Interfaces (APIs) allow developers of web-based and shrink-wrapped applications access to the on-line services of the United States Postal Service (USPS). The APIs provide easy access to shipping information and services for e-tailers, who can provide their customers with the functions provided by the USPS from their own web site.

With the proliferation of web sites using the USPS APIs, and with the evolution of web site developers servicing the ever-growing Internet community, the distribution of software with USPS APIs embedded has become a cottage industry. As such, policies are now necessary for software distributors.

Violation of these policies can lead to termination of access to the USPS API servers for both you and your customers.

Although all current uses have been considered in developing these policies, every possible scenario and use of the APIs cannot be determined. For questions that are not answered by this document, contact the USPS Internet Customer Care Center (ICCC) by e-mail at icustomercare@usps.com or by phone at 1-800-344-7779 (7:00AM to 11:00PM EST).

A separate user's guide for each API is available for downloading through the USPS Web Tool Kit web site (www.uspswebtools.com). Although not labeled as such, these guides contain policies and procedures specific to "custom" developers. ("Custom" software is produced by or for a single customer.) Also available at the web tools site is some administrative and technical information of particular importance to *all* web site developers. This document should be considered as a supplement to those guides:

- *Administrative Guide for APIs*

- *A Technical Guide to HTTP Connection DLL API Interface*

- *Release Notes*

The USPS Web Tool Kit web site (www.uspswebtools.com) also contains a FAQ section for registered users. This section will be updated as necessary and provides answers to both technical and administrative questions.

Note: Future releases are planned that will impact these policies for software distributors. Specifically, a new Registration API is under development that will generate specific passwords and user IDs for developers and provide a registration wizard for customers installing your software.

Policies for Software Distributors

Although all current uses have been considered in developing these policies, every possible scenario and use of the APIs cannot be determined. After reviewing these policies, refer to the *Frequently Asked Questions* section for applicability to specific scenarios. For questions that are not answered by this document, contact the USPS Internet Customer Care Center (ICCC) by e-mail at icustomercare@usps.com or by phone at 1-800-344-7779 (7:00AM to 11:00PM EST).

Violation of these policies and procedures can lead to termination of access to the USPS API servers for both you and your customers.

User ID and Password Restrictions

In general, **any of your customers** who use your software on a workstation or server that communicates with USPS.com must have their own user ID and password. However, the following **exceptions** apply to the distribution of passwords and IDs for USPS Web Tools:

- Corporate entities may use the identical user ID and password at all workstations or servers owned and operated by its employees.

- Software companies distributing a "shrink-wrapped" product may distribute the same user ID and password in each package/product shipped. If there are multiple product titles that communicate with the USPS servers, the user ID and password must tie directly to the product title. However, customers purchasing software from your company need not individually register with the USPS since your application will be the registered entity. (This method of software distribution will be in effect until a Registration API is created for the automatic registration of end-users, at which time all software may be required to upgrade. In the case of required changes, details will be provided with adequate time for development and distribution of upgrades on the part of the distributing company.)

- Software companies that have been distributing a "shrink-wrapped" product before the creation of these regulations, and who allow/require their customers to call the ICCC for registration and authorization, may allow customers to use the same user ID and password. These customers should be given a user ID and password by the distributing software company's Customer Service department, or, by special arrangement, may be allowed to receive this information from the ICCC. For such arrangements, contact webtools@email.usps.gov.

- Consultants and developers who are integrating the Web Tools APIs for another company may use their own ID and password for testing purposes while in development. When this company's site/application is brought onto the production server however, they must be registered with the USPS under their own unique ID and password. All corporate entities must have a unique ID and password. All unique software packages or branded web sites owned by a company that do not share common back-end architecture must also have a unique ID and password when they are making calls to the USPS Web Tools API production server.

It is important to note that you will be held responsible for your customer's adherence to the user ID and password policy contained in each API user's guide:

"The user ID and password that you have received is for you or your company to use in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Use to which you agreed during the registration process. *This user ID and password is not to be shared with others outside your organization, nor is it to be packaged, distributed, or sold to any other person or entity, unless you meet one of the exceptions listed above.*"

It is **your responsibility** to ensure that your customers do not use your password and user ID in any way which may be unintended by the USPS, as set forth in this or any referenced Web Tools documentation. Should your customer not fall under the above mentioned "exceptions… to the distribution of passwords and ID's for USPS Web Tools," then you must direct them to www.uspswebtools.com so that they can register, agree to the Terms and Conditions of Use agreement, and receive their own unique password and user ID.

Distribution/Reuse of Documentation and Sample Code

The documentation and sample code contained in the *Web Tool Kit User Guide* series may be reused and/or distributed to your customers or affiliates to generate awareness, encourage web tool use, or provide ease-of-use.

Help Desk Support

Software distributors are responsible for providing support to their customers.

Address Informational APIs

These APIs may only be embedded with software that includes the USPS Domestic Rates API. They can only be used in conjunction with USPS shipping applications. Otherwise, only individual users can register and install this software.

HTTP Connection DLL Software

To make the Internet connection from an NT system, it is recommended that your customers use software from the USPS called the HTTP Connection DLL. This software, created specifically for the USPS API implementation, provides developers with a thread-safe sockets interface to submit XML requests and receive XML responses from the API server. This software may be embedded in a shrink-wrap application along with the USPS APIs for sale to your customers.

To obtain this code you must submit a Licensing Agreement to the USPS Internet Customer Care Center. For further information see the *Administrative Guide for APIs* and *A Technical Guide to HTTP Connection DLL API Interface,* both of which can downloaded from www.uspswebtools.com.

Merchandise Return Permit

A Merchandise Return permit is required for the Electronic Merchandise Return Service API. Merchandise return service may be established at any post office in the United States and its territories and possessions, or at any U.S. military post office overseas (APO/FPO). It is not available for any foreign country.

You are not required to have a permit. If Electronic Merchandise Return Service API is part of your software product, *any customer* who uses the API *must* have a permit.

For further information see the *Administrative Guide for APIs,* which can downloaded from www.uspswebtools.com.

Delivery Confirmation Barcode Certification

As the software distributor, you must secure shipping label certification for any Delivery Confirmation barcode API software that you distribute. Your customers are *not* required to secure label certification.

You must have samples of the labels produced *on your printer* certified before being able to use the APIs in full production mode. This is to demonstrate that your system is capable of receiving and/or generating readable barcodes, and that your printer is capable of printing legible barcodes that are readable by USPS scanning equipment. This is a three-part procedure:

1. Send the "*Sample*" request provided in the *Web Tool Kit User's Guide* to the Shipping API production server. The output returned to you will be a sample label for certification purposes.

2. After printing the "*Sample*" labels returned to you, send them with the API Printer Certification Submission form to the USPS National Customer Support Center (NCSC).

3. If the labels pass, you will be notified by the ICCC and you will be able to send XML transactions using your "live" data and receive "live" responses.

For further information see the *Administrative Guide for APIs,* which can be downloaded from www.uspswebtools.com.

Pay At Delivery Service

The USPS offers a service that uses Delivery Confirmation and an escrow payment mechanism to effect a "Pay@Delivery Service." Pay@Delivery processing allows for the seller of an item and the buyer of that item to agree that a third-party will hold the buyer's funds until the USPS or the buyer has confirmed delivery of the package from the seller. When the USPS confirms delivery of the package via the USPS Delivery Confirmation process, the money previously debited from the buyer's account will be credited to the seller's account. Those interested in licensing or utilizing this service should send an e-mail to webtools@email.usps.com describing their request. No USPS Web Tools APIs may be used, without prior approval, in a fashion mimicking the function of the USPS Pay@Delivery Service.

> *Warning* - If users of USPS Web Tools APIs are shown to be violating the foregoing restriction on mimicking the function of the USPS Pay@Delivery Service, they will be subject to immediate loss of access to the USPS Web Tool server and termination of the licenses granted under the Terms and Conditions of Use.

Maintain 95% Printer Quality or Lose Access

Barcodes that cannot be scanned have to be entered manually by the USPS delivery personnel. *Your customers* that use the Delivery Confirmation™ API *are responsible* for maintaining a quality level of 95% for scannable barcodes. However, your customers *do not* need to certify their printer. It is the *software distributor's responsibility* to make certain that they print legible barcodes and maintain 95% readability.

In the event that barcode print quality falls below the 95% quality threshold, the USPS will contact you and an effort will be made to resolve the problem. You will be given 30 days to correct the problem, after which access to the Shipping API server will be suspended pending resolution. Developers that provide labels to end-users will need to maintain files (records) of the PICs generated and sent to each end-user so that they can identify end-users who do not comply with the 95% quality control requirements.

USPS Corporate Branding Guidelines

The U.S. Postal Service requests that it is referenced and acknowledged as the source of information for all U.S. Postal Service data that has been acquired through the Internet and/or from other sources. However, this is not mandatory. The following guidelines should be followed for those that want to authenticate and/or validate the data displayed from the U.S. Postal Service.

Preferred Reference

Use one of the following when the USPS is the only referenced source:

- "Information provided by www.usps.com"

  or

- use the official USPS corporate logo or USPS product-specific logos.

Digital copies of USPS corporate trademarks/logos are available through the U.S. Postal Service, Public Policy and Communications Department, Washington, D.C. You can request the USPS corporate logo and/or product-specific logos by e-mailing ilogo@email.usps.gov. Requests will be responded to by e-mail within 10 days. We will review your web site, and if appropriate, provide the logo for usage in accordance with these guidelines and the license grant contained in the Terms and Conditions of Use for Internet Shipping Application Program Interfaces (APIs). If your web page is not available over the Internet, please provide a screen shot of the page where the logo will reside.

When requesting logo(s) you must provide the following information:

- company name

- URL and page where logo will reside

- type of business

- how and where the logo will be used

- contact name

- telephone number

- e-mail address

- desired graphic format, e.g., GIF, TIF, JPEG, etc.

- logo desired:

    ____USPS Corporate Eagle Logo

    ____Priority Mail®

    ____Express Mail®

    ____other (describe)

Alternative Reference

Use one of the following in text when the USPS is listed with other shipping carriers or web sites:

- United States Postal Service

- U.S. Postal Service

- U.S.P.S. (use period after each initial)

The above alternatives are listed in the order of U.S. Postal Service preference.

Examples:

"U.S. Postal Service delivery standard is two days."

"U.S.P.S. Priority Mail® rate is $3.95."

Registered Trademarks

The USPS trademarks listed on page i, as well as any logos requested from USPS Public Policy and Communications Department, should not be altered or abbreviated. You can request product-specific logos by e-mailing ilogo@email.usps.com.

Trademark Ownership and Use

USPS trademarks are trademarks owned solely and exclusively by USPS and may be used only in the form, manner and with appropriate legends prescribed by USPS. All advertising and other uses of USPS trademarks must include a legend indicating that USPS trademarks are the property of USPS and that they are being used under license from USPS, together with any other

legends or marking that may be required by law. Nothing contained in this document shall be deemed to convey any title or ownership interest to any user except for the nonexclusive rights granted under the Terms and Conditions of Use for Internet Shipping Application Program Interfaces and this document. All use of USPS Trademarks shall inure to the benefit of USPS.

Policies Summary Matrix

Policy	Description	Applies to:	
		SW Distributor	**Customer**
User ID and Password Restrictions	In general, **any of your customers** who use your software on a workstation or server that communicates with USPS.com must have their own user ID and password. Refer to the *User ID and Password Restrictions* section above for exceptions.	•	•
Distribution/Reuse of Documentation and Sample Code	Documentation and sample code may be reused and/or distributed.	•	•
Help Desk Support	SW distributor must provide support.	•	
Address Informational APIs	These APIs may only be embedded with software that includes the USPS Domestic Rates API. They can only be used in conjunction with USPS shipping applications. Otherwise, only individual users can register and install this software.	•	•
HTTP Connection DLL	This code can be embedded in shrink-wrapped SW.	•	
Merchandise Return Permit	Your customer must obtain a permit.		•
Delivery Confirmation Barcode Certification	The SW distributor must obtain NCSC label certification.	•	
Pay at Delivery Service	Allows for the seller of an item and the buyer of that item to agree that a third-party will hold the buyer's funds until the USPS or the buyer has confirmed delivery of the package from the seller.	•	
Maintain 95% Printer Quality or Lose Access	The SW distributor must ensure that their customers maintain this quality standard.	•	•
USPS Corporate Branding Guidelines	Use the guidelines provided in this document to authenticate and/or validate the data displayed from the U.S. Postal Service on web sites.	•	•

Frequently Asked Questions

Although all current uses have been considered in developing these policies, every possible scenario and use of the APIs cannot be determined. After reviewing these policies, refer to the *Frequently Asked Questions* section for applicability to specific scenarios. For questions that are not answered by this document, contact the USPS ICCC by e-mail at icustomercare@usps.com or by phone at 1-800-344-7779 (7:00AM to 11:00PM EST).

Violation of these policies and procedures can lead to termination of access to the USPS API servers for both you and your customers.

Q1. *My company has several web sites, servers, and hosted sites. Do I need to register each?*

> Yes and no. For every corporate entity there must be a unique password and ID. Further, for every unique product, service, or brand within a company that uses a separate architecture to make API calls to the USPS Web Tools API production servers, there must be a unique password and ID associated with that back-end architecture.

> However, if your company provides or repackages API integration as a service to other companies as part your business, you are not required to have your subsequent customers register for unique passwords and IDs. You will be responsible for how these companies use their access to the USPS Web Tools APIs, i.e., ensuring that they do not violate the spirit or letter of the Terms and Conditions of Use of Web Tools to which your company has agreed.

Q2. *My company has several web sites hosted on web-hosting companies' servers. Do I need to register each?*

> No. For every web site that is owned and operated by (or for) your company, you should use your company's username and password.

Q3. *My company is developing the APIs for a customer that hired us. Do I need to register separately?*

> You may find it easier to register under your company's name during development (as the registration information must reflect the name of someone knowledgeable about the USPS APIs, should there arise a problem or issue). However, when the company using the API moves into production, it will be necessary that the information held at the ICCC be updated to reflect the true name of the company responsible for use of the APIs. For this reason we recommend the use of your customer's information with proper contact persons listed for technical questions and contact from the USPS. Further clarification on this issue may be found in the *User ID and Password Restrictions* section, on page 2.

Q4. *I am developing shrink-wrapped software. How should I handle the user ID and password requirements?*

> For now, your customers must individually register for the use of USPS Web Tools with the ICCC at 1-800-344-7779. Refer to the *User ID and Password Restrictions* section for exceptions to the policy. In the near future, the USPS will release a Registration API for your software that will enable your customers to register automatically.

Q5. *I am in the process of setting up several web sites on my own server for various entities and would like to include the functionality of the USPS APIs over all of the websites. I will be making extensive use of host headers for those web sites, but for now will only be using one static IP address. The conditions and the administration guide say that only one site can use the same ID/password combination. What defines a site? The IP address or the name? I may use MY site to ensure functionality across all of my customers' sites, but I'd like to make it as simple as defining a virtual directory to all sites on the server.*

> Some APIs are not available in this manner, i.e., Electronic Merchandise Return (EMR) requires a permit held by the merchant receiving the returned merchandise (all companies using EMR must register themselves directly), and Address Informational APIs require a separate agreement and registration. However, your company may provide the remaining Web Tools as a part of your services. You will be responsible for all terms of the API agreements, and will be held accountable for maintaining 95% scanability for all barcodes that are printed for Delivery Confirmation labels.

Q6. *I'm a web developer who develops many different web sites for e-commerce. I was reading the terms of use for the API and it says that if I use the same ID and password multiple times, I will get booted. So does this mean that every new site that I develop, I'm going to have to register that site for a different ID and password?*

> You are required to register the ultimate user of your product or service -- the individual company or site responsible for calls to our API servers. You may wish to use your registration information for initial set-up and testing. However, before your customer uses the USPS Web Tool APIs in a production environment, they must be registered with the ICCC at 1-800-344-7779 and have their own unique ID and password that is used for each API call. Your customers may not use your password and ID for their API transactions, and their account information must reflect accurate contact names and numbers for problems, changes, web tools updates, or other issues that may arise.

Q7. *I am part of a development team and work on the USPS module on my machine. We also have a development server, model office server, and production server. This means a possibility of four different web sites accessing the USPS APIs. How do I need to handle this?*

> Production machines will access our production address for replies to API calls, while non-production test calls will use the testing address. This arrangement does not require separate registration for each machine. It does require using a different address for the production calls.

Q8. *How should I address the use of USPS in my software documentation?*

> All references to the U.S. Postal Service should follow the guidelines contained in the *USPS Corporate Branding Guidelines* section, above.

Q9. *I would like direction on how I should word the documentation that I will provide my customers. Exactly how should USPS be referenced in regard to my providing a USPS service and not being an affiliation or partner?*

> Software developers should not indicate that they have a partnership, alliance, or affiliate relationship with the USPS. You can state, however, that you have met the software developer requirements for the USPS web site.

Q10. *I want to incorporate the "HTTP Connection DLL" as part of my shrink-wrapped software package. Are there any unique licensing issues I should be aware of? Can I include the DLLs as part of my installation process without having the customer register for them separately?*

> No, there are no unique licensing issues. You can include the software as part of your installation process.

Q.11. *I provide web-hosting services for a number of clients, many of whom would also like to utilize your services. Since they are all hosted on the same machine, and will be utilizing the same DLL, is it necessary for me to register each one with you? (They all have separate domain names.)*

> Yes, as separate businesses each company must register as unique users of Web Tools.
>
> *Exemption*: If the separate business' site is in no way responsible for the direct call to USPS API servers, they do not have to register. That is, if your company provides a common, shared shopping cart or back-end transaction processor through which each of these companies make the call and transact business. In that case, your company could accept responsibility for the use of these APIs and make all calls under your ID and password. See Question 1, above.

Q12. *Since we will not be developing our own applications, but rather will be utilizing a shopping cart-type application for this process, is there some way we can skip these tests, and go "live"?*

> Yes, as mentioned in the *User ID and Password Restrictions section,* above*,* you may avoid registration as the end-user of a registered application. Please contact the developer of your particular application for more information.