



Carrier Cost Systems

Handbook F-55
Updated through SP Letter #1, FY20

February 2020
Transmittal Letter

- A. Explanation.** This handbook serves as both a training aid and reference guide for Statistical Programs personnel at Postal Service Headquarters and at area and districts offices, and for local Postal Service employees who conduct and support Carrier Cost Systems (CCS) tests. The procedures contained in this handbook are part of the Postal Service's continuing effort to improve data quality and productivity through benchmarking and standardizing of best practices.

This edition of Handbook F-55 contains revisions that Statistical Programs has made since the handbook's previous publication in September 2018, including revisions to management policies and procedures, and revisions issued in the following Statistical Programs (SP) letters:

- SP Letter #1, FY 2019 (dated August 30, 2018).
- SP Letter #2, FY 2019 (dated November 28, 2018).
- SP Letter #4, FY 2019 (dated June 1, 2019).
- SP Letter #1, FY 2020 (dated September 4, 2019).

- B. Availability.** Copies are available for Postal Service employees on the Postal Service PolicyNet Web site at <http://blue.usps.gov>: In the left-hand column under "Essential Links," click on *PolicyNet*, and then in the tabs across the top, click on *HBKs*.

- C. Comments on Content.** Address comments or questions regarding the content of this handbook to the following address:

MANAGER OF STATISTICAL PROGRAMS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLZ SW RM 4912
WASHINGTON DC 20260-2808

- D. Comments on Format.** Address comments or questions regarding the language or organization of this handbook to the following address:

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- E. Effective Date.** This publication is effective February 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon D. Owens".

Sharon D. Owens
Vice President, Pricing and Costing
Finance

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1 Introduction

1-1 Overview

In order to set appropriate rates, the United States Postal Service develops cost information for each class of mail, price category, and type of service. The Postal Service uses cost information to develop proposals for new postal rates, to assist in the preparation of budgets, and to conduct management studies. Using these data, Statistical Programs at Postal Service Headquarters (HQ SP) determines the portion of the total cost attributed to each class and subclass of mail, as well as extra services.

The Postal Service must report annual cost, revenue, volume, and quality of service to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), which sets the appropriate rates. The Postal Service must also ensure that market-dominant products do not subsidize competitive products and that each competitive product covers its attributable costs. Prices for competitive products must be high enough to ensure that revenue exceeds costs. To assist in meeting this requirement, the Postal Service continually collects information regarding revenue, volume, weight, and cost.

To gather information about mail characteristics and the costs of processing, transporting, and delivering the mail, the Postal Service conducts tests that provide data for the following cost systems:

- a. City Carrier Cost System (CCCS).
- b. Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS).
- c. In-Office Cost System (IOCS).
- d. Transportation Cost System (TRACS).

This handbook discusses the carrier cost system tests and describes the policies for performing the tests.

Note: This handbook uses the pronoun “you” to refer to the data collection technician.

You are to use this handbook as a learning tool during your training period and also later as a reference source. Others who also use this handbook as a reference source are the Manager Financial Programs Compliance (MFPC) and the Supervisor Statistical Programs (SSP).

Note: Whenever this book refers to the MFPC, the reader must understand that it also refers to the SSP or, at the MFPC’s direction, a trained designee (just to simplify wording and to avoid redundancy).

1-2 Understanding Cost Measurement Systems

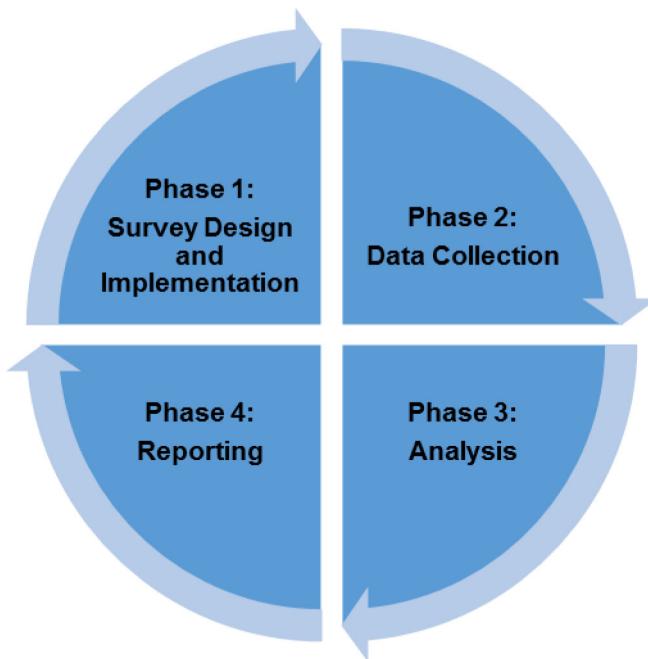
1-2.1 Overview

The primary sampling systems for estimating the cost of processing, delivering, and transporting the mail are CCCS, RCCS, IOCS, and TRACS. The data collected from the systems enable the Postal Service to allocate costs to each mail category, which aids in determining postal rates. That is why consistent, accurate data collection is essential.

The cost measurement process consists of the four phases shown in [Exhibit 1-2.1](#).

Exhibit 1-2.1

Cost Systems Measurement Process



The following sections explain the phases of the cost systems measurement process.

1-2.2 Survey Design and Implementation

In the survey design and implementation phase, HQ SP personnel develop and revise the data collection methods for the cost systems. They decide the frequency of certain tests, the number of sites tested, the type of information gathered, the procedures for conducting the tests, and the time, manner, and method of data collection. In addition, HQ SP personnel provide training for data collectors.

When designing a test, HQ SP uses established statistical methods to ensure the data's reliability. Principles behind these methods include the following:

- a. Collecting data in either a census or a sample. (A census selects every item, whereas a sample selects a smaller group for study.)

- b. Using the same procedure to gather data, no matter who is conducting the test. This method ensures that you do not interpret test questions differently, and that different data collectors performing the same test under the same circumstances get the same data.
- c. Conducting pilot tests to try out the questions and procedures before using them to gather data. These tests find and correct problems in the procedures that would lead to inaccurate or unreliable data.

1-2.3 **Data Collection**

In the data collection phase, trained data collectors record data for the cost systems tests on laptops. Data collectors count and record mail by product, shape, and other characteristics and then transmit the data to the Computerized On-Site Date Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit (WBU) for analysis.

HQ SP writes test questions and procedures in a manner to gather all data in a way that do not introduce error or bias. Thus, to ensure the data's reliability, you must follow the procedures exactly so that the collected data is consistent regardless of who performs the tests. You must also periodically review the policies and procedures to maintain knowledge of current details and to address any issues requiring clarification to the MFPC. The MFPC reports these issues to HQ SP personnel, who work to develop solutions, and then the MFPC shares these solutions with you.

1-2.4 **Analysis**

In the analysis phase, HQ SP personnel analyze the data for accuracy on two levels. On the first level, the MFPC reviews and approves the tests on the CODES WBU. On the second level, HQ SP personnel check the data again.

1-2.5 **Reporting**

In the reporting phase, HQ SP compiles the analyzed data to create reports used by the Postal Service and the PRC to develop estimates for costs of processing, delivering, and transporting the mail by product, shape, and other characteristics.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 established rate-setting policies and procedures for both noncompetitive (market-dominant) and competitive postal products. The Postal Service submits price change requests to the Postal Service Board of Governors. These requests include an explanation of, and justification for, the price change, an effective date, and a schedule of the changed rates.

The Board of Governors reviews and helps to justify the rate changes before sending requests to the PRC. The PRC considers the request, reviews supporting materials, seeks comments from the public, and in turn makes a decision to approve, deny, or alter the rate request. The Postal Service is bound by the PRC's decision and must put into effect the rate change the PRC approves.

1-3 Understanding the Carrier Cost System

Each Carrier Cost System (CCS) test counts the mail by product, shape, and other characteristics on randomly selected carrier routes. Data from the tests provide volume estimates on carrier routes for various categories of mail. The Postal Service uses the data to determine the portion of total delivery costs attributable to each mail category and each extra service.

Note: The Postal Service does not use CCS tests to set work standards or to measure mail carrier performance.

CCS includes the following tests:

- a. City Carrier Cost System (CCCS): Used to record mail characteristics for city carrier letter routes. The CCCS Special Purpose Route (SPR) test records mail characteristics for city SPRs. For more information on conducting the CCCS or CCCS-SPR tests, see chapter [2](#).
- b. Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS): Used to record mail characteristics for rural carrier routes. For more information on conducting the RCCS test, see chapter [3](#).

2 City Carrier Cost System

2-1 Overview

During a CCCS test, you must count and record mail by class, subclass, and shape for a randomly selected city route. The Postal Service uses the data to attribute city carrier costs to various categories of mail and extra services.

Note: The Postal Service does not use the information from the CCCS test to set work standards or measure carrier performance.

2-2 Definitions

2-2.1 Definitions

The following are terms related to the CCCS test and their definitions:

- a. Direct bundle: All the mail in a bundle or container that is for one addressee, and that was prepared by mail processing or the mailer rather than the test carrier. A direct bundle may be a tray or tub of loose nonidentical or identical mailpieces to one addressee. Count each direct bundle as one mailpiece.
- b. Identical pieces: Mailpieces (often a large number) with the same characteristics.
- c. Pivoted route: A route in which the mail is split up (i.e., pivoted) and assigned to multiple carriers. An entirely pivoted route is one in which the route is split up and assigned to two or more carriers who are also delivering other routes. A partially pivoted route is one in which the primary carrier is delivering a portion of the route and parts of the route are split up to one or more carriers.
- d. Deviation parcel: A parcel-shaped mailpiece that cannot fit in the customer's receptacle (along with flats and letters). For special situations and examples, see the section titled "Determining Shape" in *City Carrier Cost System Reference Guide (CCCS-RG)*, which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/_pdf/statistical-programs/cccs_rg-09162019.pdf.

2-2.2 **Essential Personnel**

2-2.2.1 **Overview**

You are to conduct the test with the help of the delivery supervisor, carrier, and postmaster.

2-2.2.2 **Data Collector**

You must contact the delivery supervisor at least 1 day before the test to obtain the information needed to complete the test. A sample letter to inform the postmaster of a CCCS test appears in [Exhibit 2-2.2.2](#). You must complete the following tasks to gather the required information to complete the test:

- a. Explain the test to essential personnel.
- b. Upon receiving the sample selection file, verify the administrative information for the selected route and make adjustments for any changes.
- c. Locate the mail to sample.
- d. Determine the random start number and skip interval.
- e. Select mailpieces, and record counts under the proper class, subclass, and shape.
- f. Complete Section 1 of PS Form 2846, *City Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*. See [2-7](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2846 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2846.pdf>.
- g. Review the instructions with the postmaster or designee:
 - (1) Explain how to count and record mail on this form, and indicate the sections that the postmaster must complete.
 - (2) Tell the postmaster to submit the form by using the address or fax number specified in Section 1.
- h. After receiving the submitted PS Form 2846 from the postmaster, review the form for completeness and accuracy.

Exhibit 2-2.2.2

Sample Letter to Inform Postmaster of a CCCS Test

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
315 DISTRICT RD
ANY DISTRICT, ST 99999-9998

DATE: February 21, YYYY

TO: POSTMASTER JONES
US POSTAL SERVICE
119 W 4TH ST
APPLETON CITY MO 64724-9998

SUBJECT: City Carrier Cost System (CCCS), Quarter (1, 2, 3, 4 as appropriate)

Attached is the schedule of City Carrier route tests to be taken at your office during Quarter ____.

A data collector from the Statistical Programs Unit will contact you, one or two days before each scheduled test, to determine the time the city carrier for the route to test arrives in the office. On the test date, the data collector will arrive approximately one hour before the city carrier.

The test should not delay the city carrier. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Union is aware of these tests, and the assistance required of the city carrier in completing the test. The CCCS test is used only to classify mail delivered by city carriers.

This is not a test of the city carrier; the test is designed to aid in the distribution of costs.

Please inform the city carrier of the route selected for testing.

Your cooperation and assistance are appreciated.

John Doe
Manager, Finance

Attachment

2-2.2.3 **Postmaster**

The postmaster must do the following:

- a. Ensure that Sections 2 and 3 of PS Form 2846 are complete. Count (or designate someone to count) the collected mail from the carrier, and record the amounts in Section 3.
- b. Mail or fax the form to the address or fax number specified in Section 1.

2-2.2.4 **City Carrier**

The city carrier must do the following:

- a. Help identify mail to be sampled.
- b. Isolate collected mail to be counted by the postmaster or designee.

2-2.2.5 **Supervisor**

The supervisor must do the following:

- a. Determine whether the carrier is to receive overtime pay or auxiliary help because of the test.
- b. Help identify mail to be sampled.
- c. Confirm the finance number, Cost Ascertainment Group (CAG), and route number.
- d. Confirm administrative information for the route being tested.
- e. Complete the postmaster's sections of PS Form 2846 if the postmaster is not available.

2-2.3 **Required Materials**

You must take the following materials to the test site:

- a. A CODES laptop computer with a fully charged battery pack.
- b. An AC power pack with a power cord.
- c. An extension cord with a three-prong safety.
- d. An electronic scale with a cable for a power source and a cable for computer connections.
- e. A barcode scanner.
- f. A copy of *City Carrier Cost System Reference Guide* (CCCS-RG), which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/pdf/statistical-programs/cccs_rg-09162019.pdf.
- g. A copy of Handbook F-55's Chapter 2, "City Carrier Cost System."
- h. Statistical Programs policy letters.
- i. A current sample file.
- j. Paper and a pen or pencil.
- k. Marking slips to identify test mail.
- l. A tape measure.
- m. PS Form 2846.

2-2.4 Procedures

You must perform the following tasks when conducting a CCCS test (for detailed information, see the sections noted):

- a. Prepare for the test (see [2-3](#)):
 - (1) Prepare before the day of the test.
 - (2) Complete and verify the Test Header.
 - (3) Communication on the day of the test.
- b. Identify and select mail to sample (see [2-4](#)):
 - (1) Mail included in the test.
 - (2) Mail excluded from the test.
 - (3) Select the skip interval.
 - (4) Select the mailpieces.
- c. Record selected mail (see [2-5](#)):
 - (1) Mail class and subclass.
 - (2) Shape.
 - (3) Count mailpieces.
- d. Finalize the test (see [2-6](#)):
 - (1) Review the data and administrative information.
 - (2) Record the time required to complete the test.
- e. Have the postmaster complete PS Form 2846 (see [2-7](#)).
- f. Perform CCCS SPR sampling procedures when applicable (see [2-8](#)).

2-3 Prepare for the Test

2-3.1 Overview

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure that you conduct the test efficiently and that the results are accurate.

2-3.2 Prepare Before the Day of the Test

2-3.2.1 Overview

Before the day of the test, you must do the following:

- a. Review current CCCS procedures, including this chapter, the CCCS-RG, and Statistical Programs policy letters.
- b. Contact the Post Office. (See [2-3.2.2](#) for detailed information.)
- c. Ensure that all needed materials are available. (See [2-2.3](#) for a list of materials.)

2-3.2.2 Contact the Post Office

The day before the test, you must contact the Post Office and complete the following tasks:

- a. Inform the postmaster or supervisor that a particular route is scheduled for a CCCS test.
- b. Discuss the test if the postmaster or supervisor is unfamiliar with a CCCS test. (See [2-3.4](#).)
- c. Ask the supervisor whether or not the carrier on the test route collates the Flats Sequencing System (FSS) mail.
- d. Inform the supervisor that you will arrive early enough to set up and begin sampling the mail before the carrier arrives. To determine the appropriate schedule, ask the supervisor for the times when the following actions occur:
 - (1) The office opens.
 - (2) The first clerk arrives.
 - (3) The first truck arrives.
 - (4) The clerks begin to distribute mail to the routes.
 - (5) The carrier is expected to arrive.
 - (6) The Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) mail arrives.
 - (7) The carrier is expected to leave.
- e. Ask if there are any changes to the route information. If the test route is pivoted, or if the test route carrier is delivering mail for a pivoted route, identify someone who can isolate all of the deviation parcels for the test route. You must reschedule the test if no one can identify all of the deviation parcels for the test route.
- f. If applicable, explain the need to obtain End of Run (EOR) data for the following columns on the EOR report (ask the supervisor to provide the data promptly):
 - (1) Firm holdout (FIRM).
 - (2) Change of Address (COA).
 - (3) Nondelivery day (NDD).
 - (4) Temporary Hold (TMP).
 - (5) Window Call (WIN).
 - (6) Delivery Point Sequence (DPS).
- g. Ask whom to contact when you arrive at the facility.

2-3.3 Complete and Verify the Test Header

Enter administrative data on the *Test Header* screen on the day of the test. (For more information, see the CCCS-RG.)

2-3.4

Communication on the Day of the Test

To avoid delaying the carrier, you must locate all mail being sampled and begin sampling before the carrier arrives. As participants arrive, explain what each must do:

- a. Upon your arrival, meet with the delivery supervisor or the person in charge, and do the following:
 - (1) Explain the reason for the visit.
 - (2) Explain the purpose of the test and address any concerns.
 - (3) Explain the supervisor's role and answer any questions.
 - (4) Ask the supervisor to do the following:
 - (a) Point out the carrier's case.
 - (b) Provide you with the DPS EOR printout, if applicable.
 - (c) Determine if the carrier cases saturation mailing.
 - (d) Fill out the postmaster's sections of PS Form 2846 if the postmaster is not available.
 - (e) Confirm whether or not the carrier of the route to be tested collates the FSS mail.
- b. When the carrier arrives, you are to do the following:
 - (1) Explain the following:
 - (a) That the test is not used to measure carrier performance or set work standards.
 - (b) That the test helps the Postal Service allocate the cost of delivering different categories of mail.
 - (c) That the carrier's departure will not be delayed, if possible.
 - (2) Ask the carrier to do the following:
 - (a) Identify where mail for the route is located.
 - (b) Verify route information.
 - (c) Identify parcels for the route and classify them as regular or deviation.
 - (d) Identify easily isolatable parcels or accountable mail that will be held and not delivered on the test day (e.g., for vacation holds or closed businesses). Exclude this mail from the test.
 - (e) Give the postmaster or designee the collection mail to count and record on PS Form 2846.
 - (3) Explain that the carrier must separate collection mail into three tubs:
 - (a) Mail collected from online requests for Package Pickup.
 - (b) Mail collected from blue collection boxes.
 - (c) Customer outgoing mail, missorted mail, and mail brought back to the office.

- c. You must meet with the postmaster to do the following:
 - (1) Explain the test and the role of each participant.
 - (2) Explain that you complete Section 1 of PS Form 2846, and that the postmaster or designee is responsible for completing (or designating someone to complete) Sections 2 and 3 after the carrier returns from delivering mail. You must also do the following:
 - (a) Highlight each section that the postmaster or designee must complete.
 - (b) Explain what mail the postmaster or designee must count.
 - (c) Explain that the postmaster or designee must return PS Form 2846 to you upon completion. See [2-7](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2846 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2846.pdf>.

2-4 Identify and Select Sample Mail

2-4.1 Overview

Sample all test route mail that goes out for delivery from 00:00:00 (midnight) to 23:59:59 on the test day.

Exception 1: If the test is scheduled for a Monday or the day after a holiday, include mail that was delivered on Sunday or on the holiday.

Example 1: A test scheduled on a Monday begins at 00:00:00 Sunday and ends at 23:59:59 Monday.

Example 2: A test scheduled on a Tuesday after a Monday holiday begins at 00:00:00 Sunday and ends at 23:59:59 Tuesday.

Exception 2: If the Select Test screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D00 or D02, exclude the DPS mail from the sample.

The test facility may distribute mail to the carrier at times other than when dispatches arrive. Because of differing arrival times, some mail in the sample may not be available when you start the test, so perform the following tasks:

- a. Sample mail as it becomes available.
- b. Work with office personnel to identify all mail in the sample.
- c. Sample the mail before it is cased, if possible.

2-4.2 Mail Included in the Test

Include all test route mail that goes out for delivery during the test window, including the following types of mail:

- a. Mail that the carrier has made previous attempts to deliver.
- b. P.M. mail that goes out for delivery on the test day (by the same carrier or another carrier).

Note: If afternoon sampling is not possible, then obtain from Operations at the station the Scanner ID that was used for mail

- delivery and the missed volume. Enter the information from the Scanner ID into the CODES software comment field and notify the MFPC, who must submit the information in the Anomaly Log.
- c. Any mail not brought to the case, including parcels and DPS, drop-shipped (which the carrier may pick up on the way to the street), accountable, postage-due, and hot case mail.
 - d. Misthrown mail for this test route that other carriers bring to the case.
 - e. Any mail for this test route that is handed off or pivoted (either partially or entirely) to other routes.
 - f. Commingled pieces of vacation hold, business closed, or missent, misthrown, or missorted letters and flats. Because you are sampling mail from both the letter-shaped and flat-shaped mailstreams before it is cased, the sample includes commingled pieces of vacation hold, business closed, or missent, misthrown, or missorted letters and flats. Although you might test this mail on more than one route, this is a case in which it is acceptable to have a potential for double counting.

Office personnel must verify that each tray, tub, and carrier route bundle is for the selected route and goes out for delivery on the test day.

2-4.3 **Mail Excluded From the Test**

Exclude the following types of mail from the test:

- a. Easily isolatable vacation hold and business closed mail that will not go out for delivery on the test day.
- b. Mail that has been distributed to the carrier route but that will not go out for delivery on the test day.
- c. Priority Mail Express items, Priority Mail items, and late-arriving parcels when the carrier delivering the mail clocks to LDC 23.
- d. Any mail handed off from other routes or pivoted to the test route.
- e. DPS mail if the Test Type in the CODES software is D00 or D02.

2-4.4 **Examples of Included and Excluded Mail**

The following examples help illustrate when to include or exclude mail from a test:

Example 1: Carrier-route bundles of USPS Marketing Mail (previously Standard Mail) are distributed to the carrier's case on Tuesday for delivery on Wednesday. Exclude this mail from the Tuesday test and include this mail in the Wednesday test because the mail will be delivered on Wednesday.

Example 2: A pallet of carrier-route presort flats arrives at the station on Wednesday afternoon, with delivery requested for Saturday. Late on Thursday afternoon, the facility personnel break down the bundles and distribute the flats to each route. The carrier does not deliver the bundles on Friday and instead delivers them on Saturday as requested. Exclude these flats from a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday test because they were delivered on Saturday. Include these flats in a Saturday test because they were delivered on Saturday.

Example 3: On Wednesday morning, DPS mail is staged on the dock or in the vestibule. Because the mail is for delivery on Wednesday, the Test Type in the CODES software is D01, and the test is on Wednesday, include this mail in the test.

Example 4: On Saturday evening, parcels arrive at the station for delivery on Sunday by carriers clocking to LDC 23. Exclude this mail from the Saturday and Monday letter route tests because the parcels are delivered on Sunday under LDC 23. Include this mail in an SPR test scheduled on Monday.

Note: Carriers often clock to LDC 24 when delivering parcels on Sunday. Exclude parcels delivered under LDC 24 from all carrier cost tests.

Example 5: A facility has three city letter routes — routes A, B, and C. The regular carrier for route A is unavailable, so the supervisor splits route A between the carriers assigned to routes B and C, making this an entirely pivoted route. Carrier B is familiar enough with route A so that carrier B is able to provide information about deviation parcels. If the CCCS test is on route A, then conduct the test on all route A mail for delivery. If the CCCS test is on route B, then conduct the test on all route B mail for delivery, and do not include any portion of route A.

2-4.5

Select the Skip Interval

Determine the skip interval by the type of mail or mailstream and the time available for sampling the mail. You may use more than one skip interval in a test. Keep mail selected using one skip interval separate from mail selected using other skip intervals.

See [Exhibit 2-4.5](#) for the six skip intervals.

Exhibit 2-4.5

Skip Interval and Mail Type Usage

Skip Interval	Mail Type Usage
1	Use for extra services, identical pieces (a large number of mailpieces with the same mail characteristics), a normal parcel workload, and when time allows for recording all mail.
3	Use for a route with a heavy parcel workload (such as during the Holiday Season) or when time allows for sampling of more mail.
5	Use for normal sampling of mail and when time allows for sampling of more mail.
10	Use for normal sampling of mail.
20	Use as needed to sample routes when high mail volumes or shortened time windows preclude normal sampling.
40	Use as needed to sample routes when high mail volumes or shortened time windows preclude normal sampling.

If you encounter a parcel or accountable mailpiece when sampling mail using a skip interval greater than 1, include it in the count; if selected, record the mailpiece appropriately. For example, suppose you are counting through a letter tray using a skip interval of 10 and you select a First-Class Mail letter that includes Certified Mail service — record this mailpiece as any other selected from the tray.

2-4.6 Select the Mailpieces

2-4.6.1 Overview

The CODES software provides the random start number for you. Then you must perform the tasks described in the following sections.

2-4.6.2 Non-DPS and Non-parcel Mailpieces

Select mailpieces as follows:

- a. Count the pieces sequentially until reaching the start number. Set that piece aside for recording. Thereafter, select every x piece (where x is the mailpiece skip interval).
- b. Keep track of the number of pieces remaining after the last selected piece from a tray, tub, or bundle of mail. Write the number on the Test Schedule or Header Sheet, which you may print from the CODES WBU.
- c. Use this number to continue counting the mailpieces in the next tray, tub, or bundle.

Example: Suppose the CODES laptop displays a start number of 6 and a skip interval of 10 — select and set aside for recording mailpieces 6, 16, 26, etc. Suppose the tray originally had 99 pieces, and as you near the end of the tray, you select mailpiece 96 and notice that there are three pieces remaining — write the number “3” on the Test Schedule or Header Sheet. In the next tray, count the first mailpiece as 4, and continue counting the subsequent pieces until you reach the skip interval of 10. In this case, the first piece you select in the second tray is mailpiece 7.

Exception: Sample all mail that was cased before your arrival. Use the skip interval as explained in [2-4.5](#). If the carrier is still casing mail, sample the mail in the case first, and then sample the uncased mail. After you sample the uncased mail, the carrier may proceed with casing the mail.

2-4.6.3 DPS Mailpieces

If the *Select Test* screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D00 or D02, exclude the DPS mail from the sample.

Otherwise, handle DPS mail as follows:

- a. Keep selected pieces of DPS mail separate from the other selected mailpieces.
- b. Unless the carrier agrees otherwise, keep DPS mail in its original order.
- c. Select the sample mailpieces according to the random start number and the skip interval. (You may want to mark the place of each selected mailpiece in the tray by turning the mailpiece that follows it on its end.)
- d. Record the selected mailpieces individually.
- e. Return each mailpiece to its place in the tray before recording the next one.

2-4.6.4 DPS Container Subsampling

Changes in mail processing and delivery operations over the past few years have limited the testing window for sampling a carrier’s mail. Consequently, HQ SP developed an option for you to sample late-arriving DPS mail by

randomly selecting only one or two trays. You must use this option only as a last resort to minimize carrier delay, and you must use the lowest possible skip interval to sample mail.

Note: This DPS Container Skip option is applicable only to DPS mail.

To use this skip interval, you must do the following:

- a. Count and order the trays destined for the sampled route. It is permissible to use the order denoted by the tray labels — i.e., A, B, C, D, etc. — without physically lining them up.
- b. Choose “DPS Subsample – Mailpiece Skip = 5” from the dropdown “Skip” list in CODES.
- c. When prompted, enter the number of DPS trays in CODES, which provides a tray number to sample. Additionally, CODES provides a second tray number in case the initial selected tray is less than half full or is a half-sized tray. If the first tray is less than half full or is half-sized, select both trays for mailpiece sampling.
- d. Pull sample mailpieces from the selected DPS tray(s) using a mailpiece skip of 5 (CODES provides a random mailpiece start number as usual).

When an unexpected, late-arriving DPS dispatch results in a carrier delay, you may use the DPS subsample skip *only* on the late-arriving trays. Do not include the previously sampled trays in this process. Report to the Service Center all cases that use a combination of mailpiece skips and DPS subsample skips on the same test.

Note: HQ SP recommends that you do *not* use a combination of the traditional mailpiece skips and this DPS subsample skip on the same test. However, if DPS mail arrives early enough for you to sample it and time permits, then you may use a traditional skip interval for all of that mail.

2-4.6.5 **Packages**

You may begin entering parcels in the CODES software before the carrier’s arrival. When sampling parcel-shaped mail, complete the following tasks:

1. If the *Select Test* screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D02, measure the dimensions of parcels selected by the CODES software, as follows:
 - a. Determine whether the selected parcel is Square/Rectangular or Other Shapes.
 - b. Record length, height, and thickness (width) to the nearest quarter inch.
2. Record the deviation status of each parcel as either parcel or deviation parcel.
3. Group the parcels by deviation status.
4. Ask the carrier to verify the deviation status of each parcel and to identify any parcel to be held due to a vacation hold or business being closed.

5. To update the deviation status of a parcel, edit the mailpiece record as follows:
 - a. For a parcel that does not have a scanned barcode, go to the *Mailpiece Info* screen and select the mailpiece record from the list of records. Select the *Edit Parcel* button, and then select the *Use Current Selection* button. Select Yes or No to the deviation parcel question.
 - b. For a parcel that does have a scanned barcode, go to the *Mailpiece Info* screen and select the *Edit Parcel* button. Scan the barcode on the parcel, and then select the *Search Parcel* button to locate the mailpiece record. Select Yes or No to the deviation parcel question.
6. To delete a mailpiece record, perform the following steps:
 - a. On the *Mailpiece Info* screen, select the mailpiece record.
 - b. Select the *Delete* button — the following pop-up message will appear: “Are you sure you want to delete the mailpiece?”
 - c. Select Yes to delete the mailpiece record.

For more information on recording parcels, see the section titled “Determining Shape” in the CCCS Reference Guide, which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/_pdf/statistical-programs/cccs_rg-09162019.pdf.

2-5 Record Selected Mail

2-5.1 Overview

For the pieces selected, determine and record class, subclass, shape, piece count, and other characteristics.

2-5.2 Mail Class and Subclass

The Postal Service determines mail class by the weight and content of the mailpiece and by the service provided. See the CCCS-RG for a detailed explanation.

Note: For direct bundles, record the class and subclass of the top piece of mail. Each direct bundle is counted as one mailpiece.

To help identify all First-Class Mail products, it is necessary to collect indicia information for all First-Class Mail shapes. Group and enter First-Class Mail letters and flats by indicia type. When selecting the indicia in the CODES software, select the first applicable option.

2-5.3 Shape

The Postal Service determines shape based on mail specifications in *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM). For more information on recording shape, see the CCCS-RG.

2-5.4 Count Mailpieces

Enter the mail count of selected mailpieces — the mail count is “1” when you record mailpieces individually, and it is greater than “1” when you group mailpieces together. You may group the following types of mailpieces:

- a. Nonaccountable letters and flats that are identical in shape, endorsements, and all other characteristics.
- b. Parcels that are identical and destined for multiple deliveries on a tested route, such as Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence Saturation (ECRWSS) parcels or Bound Printed Matter telephone books.

Note the following requirements:

- a. To group mailpieces, you must select them using the same mailpiece skip interval.
- b. If parcels are not identical, you must record them individually. When you enter a parcel count greater than “1,” the *Parcel Count* warning screen appears.

After you enter the count, the data entry software flags unusual combinations of mailpiece characteristics. Verify that you correctly entered the characteristics (including class, subclass, and shape) and the count. For unusual combinations, enter a comment that describes the unusual combination and count.

2-5.5 Scanning

When grouping flats or any other mailpieces, group only identical mailpieces, including endorsements. For these groups, follow the endorsement grouping in the software question.

When scanning one barcode, scan any one mailpiece barcode since the mailpieces are identical. You are not limited to scanning only one mailpiece; however, you are allowed to scan only one mailpiece from a grouped entry. The software asks the scan question for every mailpiece you enter in the software. Therefore, when you enter mailpieces individually, the software asks for a scan of each mailpiece barcode. The only mailpieces that you may group are letters, flats, and some parcels (e.g., saturation parcels).

2-6 Finalize the Test

2-6.1 Review the Data and Administrative Information

You must review the data and administrative information as follows:

- a. After entering all mail counts, review the data. If you find errors, return to the data entry screen and make corrections.
- b. For rare or unlikely mail categories, CODES displays warning screens about the entries. Add comments about these mailpieces to verify or explain unusual mailpiece characteristics.
- c. Before completing or suspending the test, review all administrative information in the Test Header.

2-6.2 Record the Time Taken to Complete the Test

After reviewing and correcting the data, record the total time taken to complete the test, including time spent on the following tasks:

- a. Preparing forms.
- b. Communicating with the postmaster, supervisor, and carrier on the day of the test.
- c. Setting up the computer.
- d. Selecting the sample and gathering the mailpieces.
- e. Entering mailpiece data into the computer.
- f. Reviewing data and ending the test.
- g. Traveling to and from the test site.

Note: Do not include time spent off the clock or working on another test.

Example: On the day before the test, it takes 4 hours to get to the test site from the office and to check into a hotel. On the test day, it takes 15 minutes to get to the test site from the hotel, another 1 hour and 10 minutes to prepare for and conduct the test, and another 4 hours and 5 minutes to return to the office. The total time to complete the test is 9 hours and 30 minutes.

2-7 Complete PS Form 2846

2-7.1 Overview

The Postal Services uses PS Form 2846 to report the volume of mail the carrier collects on the day of the test. You, the carrier, and the postmaster or designee share responsibility for completing this form. PS Form 2846 is a record of all mail that the carrier brings back, including returned mail and mail that was missorted to the test route.

A copy of PS Form 2846 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2846.pdf>.

2-7.2 Data Collector – Section 1

You must do the following:

- a. Highlight the administrative data to be completed by the postmaster or designee.
- b. Complete Section 1.
- c. Obtain the test ID and city route number from the *Test Schedule* or *Test Header* screen, and enter it in Section A.
- d. Give the form to the postmaster or designee, who completes Sections 2 and 3.

2-7.3 **Postmaster — Sections 2 and 3**

2-7.3.1 **Collection Volume for Pivoted Routes**

To avoid double counting collection volume for pivoted routes, adhere to the following rules for the test route:

- a. If the test route is entirely pivoted to another route, record the collection volume as Zero Volume.
- b. If the test route is partially pivoted to other routes, record the collection volume, including the collection mail from the receiving routes or from carriers that are delivering only test route mail.
- c. If the test route is receiving mail from a pivoted route, record all the collection volume, including collection mail from the received pivoted route portion.

Example 1: A facility has three city letter routes — routes A, B, and C. On the day of the test, the regular carrier for route A is unavailable, and route A is split evenly between routes B and C (i.e., the route is entirely pivoted). If the CCCS test is on route A, the collection portion (PS Form 2846) is a Zero Volume test. If the CCCS test is on route B, include all of the mail collected by the route B carrier on that day, including the collected mail from the pivoted route A portion.

Example 2: A facility has three city letter routes — routes A, B, and C. On the day of the test, the regular carrier is available, but the route is overburdened. Part of route A is pivoted to route B (i.e., the route is partially pivoted). If the CCCS test is on route A, record the mail brought back to the office by the regular route A carrier for that portion of route A. If the CCCS test is on route B, include all of the mail brought back to the office by the route B carrier on that day, including the collected mail from the pivoted route A portion.

2-7.3.2 **Section 2**

The postmaster or designee must complete Section 2 as follows:

- a. Complete Section 2 after the carrier returns from delivering and collecting the mail.
- b. Have the carrier separate the mail into three tubs:
 - (1) One for online requests for Package Pickup.
 - (2) One for blue collection box mail.
 - (3) One for customer outgoing mail, missorted mail, and mail brought back to the Post Office.
- c. After counting the mail, follow the instructions on the form to determine the class and shape categories.
- d. Use the destinatting address to determine if the mail is domestic or international.

2-7.3.3 Section 3

You must explain to the postmaster or designee how to record collected mail on PS Form 2846.

The postmaster or designee must do the following:

- a. Record franked mail and penalty mail from U.S. Government agencies based on the service provided.
- b. Record balloting materials endorsed "US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406" as First-Class Mail.
- c. Describe the items counted in "Other."
- d. Count Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Netflix mail on the row for First-Class Mail. Count BRM Mail as Priority Mail if it weighs more than 13 ounces.
- e. Count Certified Mail at the rate category under which it was sent (First-Class Mail or Priority Mail, depending on the weight of the mailpiece).
- f. Count USPS Mail and Free Matter for the Blind Mail on the "Other" row.
- g. Count any other type of mail and record and explain that type of mail in the space below the "Other" row.

2-7.4 Postmaster's Responsibility

The postmaster or designee mails or faxes the completed form to you as your name and address appear in Section 1.

2-7.5 After the Test Is Completed

The following are the tasks required after the test is completed:

- a. The MFPC must review the submitted form for completeness and accuracy and must discuss any incomplete or inconsistent items with the postmaster or designee.
- b. The MFPC must enter the data from PS Form 2846 into the CODES WBU. For a test that has zero collection volume, the MFPC must select the appropriate choice in CODES to describe the reason.
- c. After verifying all collection test data entered into CODES, click on the *Approve 2846* button in the *Sample Control Info* screen in the CODES WBU to transmit the test to the mainframe for processing. (The CODES WBU system allows the transmission of only approved collection tests.)
- d. Personnel entering data must bring cross-cell error checks to the MFPC's attention for appropriate action if editing is required.

2-8 CCCS Special Purpose Route Sampling Procedures

2-8.1 Overview

The Postal Service uses Special Purpose Routes (SPRs) for miscellaneous carrier activities. City carriers assigned to an SPR clock to the following Management Operating Data Systems (MODS) activities:

- a. Parcel Post (operation numbers 733 and 734).

- b. Relay (operation numbers 735 and 736).
- c. Combination (operation numbers 737 and 738).
- d. Carrier Drivers (operation numbers 739 and 740).
- e. Express Delivery (operation number 767).

Work hours for these carrier operations contribute to Labor Distribution Code (LDC) 23 costs, and the sampling of an SPR focuses on LDC 23 street operations.

The CCCS-SPR does not sample the “Collection Routes” SPR, which contributes to LDC 27 costs.

Note: Traditional sampling of city letter routes focuses on LDC 22 street operations.

2-8.2 Sampling Units

CCCS uses extracts from the Address Management System (AMS) as a sampling frame for letter routes. However, AMS does not identify all SPRs. City carriers indicate a route number when clocking to LDC 23 operations. HQ SP creates the sampling frame for testing SPRs using the carrier's clock rings from recent Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) records. The sampling unit for testing SPRs is the 6-digit TACS route number (for each finance number) for the day of the test. You must record administrative and mailpiece data for all city carriers (sometimes two or more) clocked to the sampled route number (LDC 23 operations only) on the test day.

Note: Although SPRs are identified in the CCCS sample file by the leading “S” in the route number (for example, “S199”), the route number in TACS does not have the “S.” Statistical Programs adds the “S” to differentiate between letter routes (beginning with a “C”) and SPRs. When looking at TACS reports, the route number that CCCS uses is the last three digits of the “Route” field. The second and third digits of the TACS route number usually correspond to the last two digits of the ZIP Code.

3 Rural Carrier Cost System

3-1 Overview

During an RCCS test, you must count and record mail by class, subclass, compensation category, and shape for a randomly selected rural route. The Postal Service uses the data to attribute rural carrier costs to various categories of mail and extra services.

Note: The Postal Service does not use the information from this test to set work standards or measure carrier performance.

3-2 Definitions, Personnel, Materials, and Procedures

3-2.1 Definitions

The following are terms related to the RCCS test and their definitions:

- a. Direct bundle: All the mail in a bundle or container that is for one addressee, and that was prepared by mail processing or the mailer rather than by the test carrier. A direct bundle may be a tray or tub of loose nonidentical or identical mailpieces to one addressee. Count each direct bundle as one mailpiece.
- b. Identical pieces: Mailpieces (often a large number) with the same characteristics.
- c. Deviation parcel: A parcel-shaped mailpiece that cannot fit in the customer's receptacle (along with flats and letters). For special situations and examples, see the section titled "Determining Shape" in *Rural Carrier Cost System Reference Guide (RCCS-RG)*, which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/_pdf/statistical-programs/rccs_rg-09162019.pdf.

3-2.2 Essential Personnel

3-2.2.1 Overview

You are to conduct the test with the help of the delivery supervisor, carrier, and postmaster.

3-2.2.2 **Data Collector**

You must contact the delivery supervisor at least 1 day before the test to obtain the information needed to complete the test. A sample letter to inform the postmaster of an RCCS test appears in [Exhibit 3-2.2.2](#). You must complete the following tasks to gather the required information to complete the test:

- a. Explain the test to essential personnel.
- b. Upon receiving the sample selection file, verify the administrative information for the selected route and make adjustments for any changes.
- c. Locate the mail to be sampled.
- d. Determine the random start number and skip interval.
- e. Select mailpieces and record counts under the proper class, subclass, compensation category, and shape.
- f. If the test delays the carrier, complete PS Form 2847, *Rural Carrier Payment Authorization*. Ask the carrier and postmaster to sign the form, and ask the postmaster to mail it. See [3-8](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2847 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2847.pdf>.
- g. Complete Section A of PS Form 2848, *Rural Carrier Route Mail Acceptance Data*. See [3-9](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2848 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2848.pdf>.
- h. Review the instructions with the postmaster or designee:
 - (1) Explain how to count and record mail on this form, and indicate the sections that the postmaster must complete.
 - (2) Tell the postmaster to submit the form by using the address or fax number specified in Section A.
- i. After receiving the submitted PS Form 2848 from the postmaster, review the form for completeness and accuracy.

Exhibit 3-2.2.2

Sample Letter to Inform Postmaster of an RCCS Test

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
315 DISTRICT RD
ANY DISTRICT, ST 99999-9998

DATE: February 21, YYYY

TO: POSTMASTER JONES
US POSTAL SERVICE
119 W 4TH ST
APPLETON CITY MO 64724-9998

SUBJECT: Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS) Quarter (1, 2, 3, 4 as appropriate)

Attached is a schedule of Rural Carrier route tests to be taken at your office during Quarter ____.

A data collector from the Statistical Programs unit will contact you one or two days before each scheduled test to explain the test, and clarify the help and information required to complete the test. At that time, the data collector will also ask to speak to the rural carrier, and the carrier's supervisor, to obtain information about the route, mail arrival times and personnel working with the mail. On the test date, the data collector will arrive approximately one hour prior to the rural carrier's arrival to begin sampling the mail. The data collector will interfere as little as possible with the work of the rural carrier.

The data collector may ask the rural carrier for some minor assistance while conducting the test — for example, identifying mail for the route. The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Union is aware of these tests.

This test could possibly delay the rural carrier. The rural carrier will be compensated for any delay at the rural carrier's average pay rate. The data collector will ask both the rural carrier and you to sign PS Form 2847 to cover any additional time required by the test.

You will be asked to participate in the rural carrier test which should require only a few minutes. When the rural carrier returns from the route, you will need to record information about the mail collected on the test route, on the test day. Please inform the rural carrier of the route selected for the test.

Your cooperation and assistance are appreciated.

John Doe
Manager, Finance

Attachment

3-2.2.3 **Postmaster**

The postmaster must do the following:

- a. Ensure that Sections B and C of PS Form 2848 are complete. Count (or designate someone to count) the collected mail from the rural carrier, and record the amounts in Section C.
- b. Mail or fax the form to the address or fax number specified in Section A.
- c. If the rural carrier was delayed by the test, sign and mail PS Form 2847.

3-2.2.4 **Rural Carrier**

The rural carrier must do the following:

- a. Help identify mail to be sampled.
- b. Isolate collected mail to be counted by the postmaster or designee.
- c. If delayed by the test, sign PS Form 2847.

3-2.2.5 **Supervisor**

The supervisor must do the following:

- a. Determine whether the carrier is to receive overtime pay or auxiliary help because of the test.
- b. Help identify mail to be sampled.
- c. Confirm the finance number, Cost Ascertainment Group (CAG), route number, and route type.
- d. Confirm administrative information for the route being tested.
- e. Complete the postmaster's sections of PS Form 2848 if the postmaster is not available.

3-2.3 **Required Materials**

You must take the following materials to the test site:

- a. A CODES laptop computer with a fully charged battery pack.
- b. An AC power pack with a power cord.
- c. An extension cord with a three-prong safety.
- d. An electronic scale with a cable for a power source and a cable for computer connections.
- e. A barcode scanner.
- f. A copy of *Rural Carrier Cost System Reference Guide (RCCS-RG)*, which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/_pdf/statistical-programs/rccs_rg-09162019.pdf.
- g. A copy of Handbook F-55's Chapter 3, "Rural Carrier Cost System."
- h. Statistical Programs policy letters.
- i. A current sample file.
- j. Paper and a pen or pencil.
- k. A blue Rural Mail Count Gauge with 5-inch and 6-1/8-inch measurements.

Note: The scale must be accurate to 0.1 ounce. To ensure accuracy, check the balance and level the scale before each test.

- i. A Statistical Programs mail gauge or tape measure.
- m. Marking slips to identify test mail.
- n. PS Form 2847.
- o. PS Form 2848.

3-2.4 **Procedures**

You must perform the following tasks when conducting an RCCS test (for detailed information, see the sections noted):

- a. Prepare for the test (see [3-3](#)):
 - (1) Prepare before the day of the test.
 - (2) Complete and verify the Test Header.
 - (3) Communication on the day of the test.
- b. Identify and select mail to be sampled (see [3-4](#)):
 - (1) Mail included in the test.
 - (2) Mail excluded from the test.
 - (3) Examples of included and excluded mail.
 - (4) Select the skip interval.
 - (5) Select the mailpieces.
- c. Record selected mail (see [3-5](#)):
 - (1) Mail class and subclass.
 - (2) Compensation category.
 - (3) Shape.
 - (4) Count the mailpieces.
- d. Finalize the test (see [3-6](#)):
 - (1) Review the data and administrative information.
 - (2) Determine the time required to complete the test.
- e. Conduct the RCCS test by telephone when appropriate (see [3-7](#)):
 - (1) Requirements.
 - (2) Procedures.
- f. Complete PS Form 2847 (see [3-8](#)).
- g. Complete PS Form 2848 (see [3-9](#)):

3-3 Prepare for the Test

3-3.1 Overview

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure that you conduct the test efficiently and that the results are accurate.

3-3.2 Prepare Before the Day of the Test

3-3.2.1 Overview

Before the day of the test, you must do the following:

- a. Determine if the test will be conducted by telephone. If so, follow the procedures in [3-7](#).
- b. Review current RCCS test procedures, including this chapter, the RCCS-RG, and Statistical Programs policy letters.
- c. Contact the Post Office. (See [3-3.2.2](#) for detailed information.)
- d. Ensure that all needed materials are available. (See [3-2.3](#) for a list of materials.)

3-3.2.2 Contact the Post Office

The day before the test, you must contact the Post Office (i.e., the “head-out office”) and complete the following tasks:

- a. Inform the postmaster or supervisor that a particular route is scheduled for an RCCS test.
- b. Discuss the test if the supervisor is unfamiliar with an RCCS test. (See [3-3.4](#).)
- c. Determine if the sampled route serves intermediate offices (separate rural Post Offices served by a rural carrier), and if so, complete the following tasks:
 - (1) Determine the number of intermediate offices on the route.
 - (2) Use the CODES software to select either the head-out office or an intermediate office for testing.
 - (3) If the test is for an intermediate office, gather information to complete the intermediate office portion of the *Test Header* screen. Obtain from the head-out office the telephone number and contact person for the intermediate office.
 - (4) Call the intermediate office to set up the test.

Note: If the intermediate office selected for sampling is under the jurisdiction of another district, notify your MFPC, who must contact the Statistical Programs Service Center to determine the best way to proceed.

- d. Ask the supervisor to have PS Form 4241-A, *Rural Route Evaluation*, available for the sampled route on the test day. PS Form 4241-A is automatically generated after Operations completes and processes PS Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*.

- e. Inform the supervisor that you will arrive early enough to set up and begin sampling the mail before the carrier arrives. To determine the appropriate schedule, ask the supervisor for the times when the following actions occur:
 - (1) The office opens.
 - (2) The first clerk arrives.
 - (3) The first truck arrives.
 - (4) The clerks begin to distribute mail to the routes.
 - (5) The carrier is expected to arrive.
 - (6) The Delivery Point Sequence (DPS) mail arrives.
 - (7) The carrier is expected to leave.
- f. Ask the supervisor if someone can identify the mail and all of the deviation parcels for the test route, and can help answer questions that might arise in determining how mail is counted in the Rural Mail Count. Reschedule the test if you cannot identify all of the deviation parcels for the test route.
- g. When applicable, explain the need to obtain End of Run (EOR) data for the following columns on the EOR report (ask the supervisor to provide the data promptly):
 - (1) Firm holdout (FIRM).
 - (2) Change of Address (COA).
 - (3) Nondelivery day (NDD).
 - (4) Temporary Hold (TMP).
 - (5) Window Call (WIN).
 - (6) Delivery Point Sequence (DPS).
- h. Explain what mail is being sampled. (See [3-4](#) for a detailed explanation of the mail to be sampled on the day of the test.)
- i. Ask whom to contact when you arrive at the facility.

3-3.3 **Complete and Verify the Test Header**

For selected rural routes that have intermediate routes, enter administrative data on the *Test Header* screen on the day before the test. (For more information, see the RCCS-RG.)

For all other tests, enter administrative data on the *Test Header* screen at the test site on the morning of the test. Review PS Form 4241-A at the Post Office to verify header information.

3-3.4 **Communication on the Day of the Test**

To avoid delaying the carrier, you must locate all mail being sampled and begin sampling before the carrier arrives. As participants arrive, explain what each must do:

- a. Upon your arrival, meet with the delivery supervisor or the person in charge and do the following:
 - (1) Explain the reason for the visit.

- (2) Explain the purpose of the test and address any concerns.
 - (3) Explain the supervisor's role and answer any questions.
 - (4) Ask the supervisor to do the following:
 - (a) Provide any additional administrative information about the route.
 - (b) Explain how mail is distributed to the route.
 - (c) Point out the carrier's case.
 - (d) Provide you with the DPS EOR printout.
- b. When the carrier arrives, you are to do the following:
- (1) Explain the following:
 - (a) That the test is not used to measure carrier performance or set work standards.
 - (b) That the test helps the Postal Service allocate the cost of delivering different categories of mail.
 - (c) That the carrier's departure will not be delayed, if possible.
 - (2) Ask the carrier to do the following:
 - (a) Provide any additional information about the route, including information from the carrier's PS Form 4241, *Rural Delivery Statistics Report*. A copy of PS Form 4241 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps4241.pdf>.
 - (b) Explain how mail is distributed to the route.
 - (c) Identify the location of the mail for the route.
 - (d) Provide the postmaster or designee the collection mail to count and record on PS Form 2848.
 - (e) Identify parcels for the route and classify them as regular parcels or deviation parcels.
 - (f) Identify the delivery location for deviation parcels.
 - (g) Identify easily isolatable parcels or accountable mail that will be held and not delivered on the test day (e.g., for vacation holds or closed businesses). Exclude this mail from the test.
 - (3) Explain that the carrier must handle collection mail as follows:
 - (a) Have one tub for mail collected from online requests for Package Pickup.
 - (b) Have another tub for all other mail.
 - (c) Do not include the following mail:
 - Mail picked up from collection boxes or cluster box unit collection compartments.
 - Mail taken out but not delivered (for example, markup mail).
 - Mail for sampled intermediate routes.

- c. You must meet with the postmaster or whoever is in charge to do the following:
 - (1) Explain the test and the role of each participant.
 - (2) Explain that, if you had to complete PS Form 2847, the carrier and postmaster must sign the form, and that the postmaster must mail it to the address on the form. See [3-8](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2847 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2847.pdf>.
 - (3) Explain that you complete Section A of PS Form 2848, and that the postmaster or designee completes Sections B and C after the carrier returns from the route. You also do the following:
 - (a) Highlight each section that the postmaster or designee must complete.
 - (b) Explain what mail the postmaster or designee must count.
 - (c) Explain that the postmaster or designee must return PS Form 2848 to you upon completion. See [3-9](#) for instructions for completing this form. A copy of PS Form 2848 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2848.pdf>.

3-4 Identify and Select Sample Mail

3-4.1 Overview

Sample all test route mail that goes out for delivery from 00:00:00 (midnight) to 23:59:59 on the test day.

Exception 1: If the test is scheduled for a Monday or the day after a holiday, include mail that was delivered on Sunday or on the holiday.

Example 1: A test scheduled on a Monday begins at 00:00:00 Sunday and ends at 23:59:59 Monday.

Example 2: A test scheduled on a Tuesday after a Monday holiday begins at 00:00:00 Sunday and ends at 23:59:59 Tuesday.

Exception 2: If the *Select Test* screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D02, exclude the DPS mail from the sample.

The test facility may distribute mail to the carrier at times other than when dispatches arrive. Because of differing arrival times, some mail in the sample may not be available when you start the test, so perform the following tasks:

- a. Sample mail as it becomes available.
- b. Work with office personnel to identify all mail in the sample.
- c. Sample the mail before it is cased, if possible.

3-4.2 Mail Included in the Test

Include all test route mail that goes out for delivery during the test window, including the following types of mail:

- a. Mail that the carrier made previous attempts to deliver.
 - b. P.M. mail that goes out for delivery on the test day (by the same carrier or another carrier).
- Note:** If afternoon sampling is not possible, then obtain from Operations at the station the Scanner ID that was used for mail delivery and the missed volume. Enter the information from the Scanner ID into the CODES software comment field and notify the MFPC, who must submit the information in the Anomaly Log.
- c. Any mail that is not brought to the case but that goes out for delivery on the test day, including parcels and DPS, drop shipped, accountable, postage-due, and hot case mail.
 - d. Misthrown mail for this test route that other carriers bring to the case.
 - e. Commingled pieces of vacation hold, business closed, or missent, misthrown, or missorted letters and flats. Because you are sampling mail from both the letter-shaped and flat-shaped mailstreams before it is cased, the sample includes commingled pieces of vacation hold, business closed, or missent, misthrown, or missorted letters and flats. Although you might test this mail on more than one route, this is a case in which it is acceptable to have a potential for double counting.

Office personnel must verify that each tray, tub, and carrier route bundle is for the selected route and goes out for delivery on the test day.

3-4.3 Mail Excluded From the Test

Exclude the following types of mail from the test:

- a. Easily isolatable vacation hold and business closed mail that will not go out for delivery on the test day.
- b. Mail that has been distributed to the carrier route but that will not go out for delivery on the test day.
- c. Priority Mail Express items, Priority Mail items, and late-arriving parcels when the carrier delivering the mail clocks to LDC 23.
- d. DPS mail if the Test Type in the CODES software is D02.

3-4.4 Examples of Included and Excluded Mail

The following examples illustrate when mail should be included in or excluded from a test.

Example 1: Carrier-route bundles of USPS Marketing Mail (previously Standard Mail) are distributed to the carrier's case on Tuesday for delivery on Wednesday. Exclude this mail from the Tuesday test and include this mail in the Wednesday test because the mail will be delivered on Wednesday.

Example 2: A pallet of carrier-route presort flats arrives at the station on Wednesday afternoon, with delivery requested for Saturday. Late on Thursday afternoon, the facility personnel break down the bundles and

distribute the flats to each route. The carrier does not deliver the bundles on Friday and instead delivers them on Saturday as requested. Exclude these flats from a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday test because they were delivered on Saturday. Include these flats in a Saturday test because they were delivered on Saturday.

Example 3: On Wednesday morning, DPS mail is staged on the dock or in the vestibule. Because the mail is for delivery on Wednesday, the Test Type in the CODES software is D01, and the test is on Wednesday, include this mail in the test.

Example 4: The carrier for the tested route picks up mail at another facility for delivery on an intermediate route with a different route number. Because the intermediate route mail is delivered in the middle of the test route, exclude this mail from the test.

3-4.5 Select the Skip Interval

Determine the skip interval by the type of mail or mailstream and the time available for sampling the mail. You may use more than one skip interval in a test. Keep mail selected using one skip interval separate from mail selected using other skip intervals.

See [Exhibit 3-4.5](#) for the six skip intervals.

Exhibit 3-4.5

Skip Interval and Mail Type Usage

Skip Interval	Mail Type Usage
1	Use for extra services, identical pieces (a large number of mailpieces with the same mail characteristics), a normal parcel workload, and when time allows for recording all mail.
3	Use for a route with a heavy parcel workload (such as during the Holiday Season) or when time allows for sampling of more mail.
5	Use for normal sampling of mail and when time allows for sampling of more mail.
10	Use for normal sampling of mail.
20	Use as needed to sample routes when high mail volumes or shortened time windows preclude normal sampling.
40	Use as needed to sample routes when high mail volumes or shortened time windows preclude normal sampling.

If you encounter a parcel or accountable mailpiece when sampling mail using a skip interval greater than 1, include it in the count; if selected, record the mailpiece appropriately. For example, suppose you are counting through a letter tray using a skip interval of 10 and you select a First-Class Mail letter that includes Certified Mail service — record this mailpiece as any other selected from the tray.

3-4.6 Select the Mailpieces

3-4.6.1 Overview

The CODES software provides the random start number for you. Then you must perform the tasks described in the following sections.

3-4.6.2 Non-DPS and Non-parcel Mailpieces

Select mailpieces as follows:

- a. Count the pieces sequentially until reaching the start number. Set that piece aside for recording. Thereafter, select every x piece (where x is the mailpiece skip interval).
- b. Keep track of the number of pieces remaining after the last selected piece from a tray, tub, or bundle of mail. Write the number on the Test Schedule or Header Sheet, which you may print from the CODES WBU.
- c. Use this number to continue counting the mailpieces in the next tray, tub, or bundle.

Example: Suppose the CODES laptop displays a start number of 6 and a skip interval of 10 — select and set aside for recording mailpieces 6, 16, 26, etc. Suppose the tray originally had 99 pieces, and as you near the end of the tray, you select mailpiece 96 and notice that there are three pieces remaining — write the number “3” on the Test Schedule or Header Sheet. In the next tray, count the first mailpiece as 4, and continue counting the subsequent pieces until you reach the skip interval of 10. In this case, the first piece you select in the second tray is mailpiece 7.

Exception: Sample all mail that was cased before your arrival. Use the skip interval as explained in [3-4.5](#). If the carrier is still casing mail, sample the mail in the case first, and then sample the uncased mail. After you sample the uncased mail, the carrier may proceed with casing the mail.

3-4.6.3 DPS Mailpieces

If the *Select Test* screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D02, exclude the DPS mail from the sample.

Otherwise, handle DPS mail as follows:

- a. Keep selected pieces of DPS mail separate from the other selected mailpieces.
- b. Unless the carrier agrees otherwise, keep DPS mail in its original order.
- c. Select the sample mailpieces according to the random start number and the skip interval. (You may want to mark the place of each selected mailpiece in the tray by turning the mailpiece that follows it on its end.)
- d. Record the selected mailpieces individually.
- e. Return each mailpiece to its place in the tray before recording the next one.

3-4.6.4 DPS Container Subsampling

Changes in mail processing and delivery operations over the past few years have limited the testing window for sampling a carrier’s mail. Consequently, HQ SP developed an option for you to sample late-arriving DPS mail by randomly selecting only one or two trays. You must use this option only as a last resort to minimize carrier delay, and you must use the lowest possible skip interval to sample mail.

Note: This DPS Container Skip option is applicable only to DPS mail.

To use this skip interval, you must do the following:

- a. Count and order the trays destined for the sampled route. It is permissible to use the order denoted by the tray labels — i.e., A, B, C, D, etc. — without physically lining them up.
- b. Choose “DPS Subsample – Mailpiece Skip = 5” from the dropdown “Skip” list in CODES.
- c. When prompted, enter the number of DPS trays in CODES, which provides a tray number to sample. Additionally, CODES provides a second tray number in case the initial selected tray is less than half full or is a half-sized tray. If the first tray is less than half full or is half-sized, select both trays for mailpiece sampling.
- d. Pull sample mailpieces from the selected DPS tray(s) using a mailpiece skip of 5 (CODES provides a random mailpiece start number as usual).

When an unexpected, late-arriving DPS dispatch results in a carrier delay, you may use the DPS subsample skip *only* on the late-arriving trays. Do not include the previously sampled trays in this process. Report to the Service Center all cases that use a combination of mailpiece skips and DPS subsample skips on the same test.

Note: HQ SP recommends that you do *not* use a combination of the traditional mailpiece skips and this DPS subsample skip on the same test. However, if DPS mail arrives early enough for you to sample it and time permits, then you may use a traditional skip interval for all of that mail.

3-4.6.5 Parcels

You may begin entering parcels in the CODES software before the carrier’s arrival. When sampling parcel-shaped mail, complete the following tasks:

1. If the *Select Test* screen in the CODES software lists the Test Type as D02, measure the dimensions of parcels selected by the CODES software, as follows:
 - a. Determine whether the selected parcel is Square/Rectangular or Other Shapes.
 - b. Record length, height, and thickness (width) to the nearest quarter inch.
2. Record the deviation status of each parcel as either parcel or deviation parcel.
3. If the parcel is a deviation parcel, record where the deviation parcel will be delivered (e.g., door, locker, or other).
4. Group the parcels by deviation status.
5. Ask the carrier to verify the deviation status and delivery status of each parcel and to identify any parcel to be held due to a vacation hold or business being closed.
6. To update the deviation status of a parcel, edit the mailpiece record as follows:
 - a. For a parcel that does not have a scanned barcode, go to the *Mailpiece Info* screen and select the mailpiece record from the list of records. Select the *Edit Parcel* button, and then select the

- Use *Current Selection* button. Select Yes or No to the deviation parcel question.
- b. For a parcel that does have a scanned barcode, go to the *Mailpiece Info* screen and select the *Edit Parcel* button. Scan the barcode on the parcel, and then select the *Search Parcel* button to locate the mailpiece record. Select Yes or No to the deviation parcel question.
 7. To delete a mailpiece record, perform the following steps:
 - a. On the *Mailpiece Info* screen, select the mailpiece record.
 - b. Select the *Delete* button — the following pop-up message will appear: “Are you sure you want to delete the mailpiece?”
 - c. Select Yes to delete the mailpiece record.

For more information on recording parcels, see the section titled “Determining Shape” in the RCCS Reference Guide, which is available on the CODES laptop or at https://blue.usps.gov/finance/pricing/_pdf/statistical-programs/rccs_rg-09162019.pdf.

3-5 Record Selected Mail

3-5.1 Overview

For the pieces selected, determine and record class, subclass, compensation category, shape, piece count, and other characteristics.

3-5.2 Mail Class and Subclass

The Postal Service determines mail class by the weight and content of the mailpiece and by the service provided. See the RCCS-RG for a detailed explanation.

Note: For direct bundles, record the class and subclass of the top piece of mail. Each direct bundle is counted as one mailpiece. The compensation category is “Direct Bundle.”

To help identify all First-Class Mail products, it is necessary to collect indicia information for all First-Class Mail shapes. Group and enter First-Class Mail letters and flats by indicia type. When selecting the indicia in the CODES software, select the first applicable option.

3-5.3 Compensation Category

Compensation categories correspond to various shapes and types of mail. These categories are similar to the mail categories in the National Count of Mail on Rural Routes.

Use the blue Rural Mail Count Gauge with 5-inch and 6-1/8-inch measurements to help determine the appropriate compensation category. If the compensation category is unknown, ask the carrier or postmaster how they count similar-shaped mailpieces in the National Count of Mail.

For more information on compensation categories, see the RCCS-RG.

3-5.4 **Shape**

Unlike compensation categories, which are determined based on categories of mail in the National Count of Mail on Rural Routes, the Postal Service determines shape based on specifications in the DMM. For more information on recording shape, see the RCCS-RG.

3-5.5 **Count Mailpieces**

Enter the mail count of selected mailpieces — the mail count is “1” when you record mailpieces individually, and it is greater than “1” when you group mailpieces together. You may group the following types of mailpieces:

- a. Nonaccountable letters and flats that are identical in shape, endorsements, and all other characteristics.
- b. Parcels that are identical and destined for multiple deliveries on a tested route, such as Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence Saturation (ECRWSS) parcels or Bound Printed Matter telephone books.

Note the following requirements:

- a. To group mailpieces, you must select them using the same mailpiece skip interval.
- b. If parcels are not identical, you must record them individually. When you enter a parcel count greater than “1,” the *Parcel Count* warning screen appears.

After you enter the count, the data entry software flags unusual combinations of mailpiece characteristics. Verify that you correctly entered the characteristics (including class, subclass, and shape) and the count. For unusual combinations, enter a comment that describes the unusual combination and count.

3-5.6 **Scanning**

When grouping flats or any other mailpieces, group only identical mailpieces, including endorsements. For these groups, follow the endorsement grouping in the software question.

When scanning one barcode, scan any one mailpiece barcode since the mailpieces are identical. You are not limited to scanning only one mailpiece; however, you are allowed to scan only one mailpiece from a grouped entry. The software asks the scan question for every mailpiece you enter in the software. Therefore, when you enter mailpieces individually, the software asks for a scan of each mailpiece barcode. The only mailpieces that you may group are letters, flats, and some parcels (e.g., saturation parcels).

3-6 Finalize the Test

3-6.1 Review the Data and Administrative Information

You must review the data and administrative information as follows:

- a. After entering all mail counts, review the data. If you find errors, return to the data entry screen and make corrections.
- b. For rare or unlikely mail categories, CODES displays warning screens about the entries. Add comments about these mailpieces to verify or explain unusual mailpiece characteristics.
- c. Before completing or suspending the test, review all administrative information in the Test Header.

3-6.2 Record the Time Taken to Complete the Test

After reviewing and correcting the data, record the total time taken to complete the test, including time spent on the following tasks:

- a. Preparing forms.
- b. Communicating with the postmaster, supervisor, and carrier on the day of the test.
- c. Setting up the computer.
- d. Selecting the sample and gathering the mailpieces.
- e. Entering mailpiece data into the computer.
- f. Reviewing data and ending the test.
- g. Traveling to and from the test site.

Note: Do not include time spent off the clock or working on another test.

Example: On the day before the test, it takes 5 hours to get to the test site from the office and to check into a hotel. On the test day, it takes 15 minutes to get to the test site from the hotel, another 1 hour and 10 minutes to prepare for and conduct the test, and another 5 hours and 5 minutes to return to the office. The total time to complete the test is 11 hours and 30 minutes.

3-6.3 Complete the Forms

If the test has detained the carrier, you must complete PS Form 2847 so that the carrier is paid for time spent on the test. Ask the carrier and postmaster to sign the form, and then ask the postmaster to mail it. (For instructions on completing the form, see [3-8](#).)

You must complete Section A of PS Form 2848 and give it to the postmaster or designee to complete and submit. Explain to the postmaster what mail to include in the count and where to enter the mail categories. (For instructions, see [3-9](#).)

3-7 Conducting the RCCS Test by Telephone

3-7.1 Overview

Conducting the rural carrier test by telephone might be an option. You can discuss this option with the MFPC.

3-7.2 Requirements

Before you may conduct a rural carrier test by telephone, the MFPC must contact the Service Center and obtain permission for such a test. The MFPC must provide a fair estimate of the amount of driving time that would be required if the you conducted the test on-site rather than over the telephone. If the Service Center grants permission, the MFPC must provide the Service Center with the volume of mail expected on the route for sampling on the test day.

You must plan for a telephone test several days in advance, and must verify that the employees who are conducting the test with you have sufficient knowledge to do so.

Note: The knowledge level of an employee includes knowledge of mail classification and definition of the mail to be sampled, and the amount of time that field employees have to correctly conduct the test.

3-7.3 Procedures

To ensure accurate data collection, it is extremely important that you conduct the telephone test properly. To conduct an RCCS test by telephone, you must do the following:

- a. Send PS Form 2848 to the office of the route being tested. Explain to the postmaster or designee what mail will be sampled and how the test counts various classes, subclasses, and categories of mail.
- b. Send PS Form 2847 only if the test delays the carrier.
- c. On the day before the test, call the office and verify who will be helping conduct the test. Review with office personnel what will be sampled and the sampling procedures.
- d. In the “Comments” section of CODES, record the name and telephone number of the person assisting with the test. For example, enter “Telephone test contact: Jane Doe, telephone (000) 123-4567.”
- e. Explain to the postmaster that you will send PS Form 2847 only if the carrier is delayed, and if necessary, explain how to complete the form. (See [3-8](#) for instructions on how to complete PS Form 2847.)
- f. Tell the person assisting with the test that the postmaster or designee must complete and submit PS Form 2848. Explain how to count and record mail on the form. (See [3-9](#) for instructions on how to complete PS Form 2848.)
- g. If there are data collection problems, reschedule the test and conduct it on-site.

3-8 Complete PS Form 2847

3-8.1 Overview

The Postal Services uses PS Form 2847 to compensate the rural carrier for time spent on the RCCS test. Complete this form for any RCCS test that delays the carrier. A copy of PS Form 2847 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2847.pdf>.

3-8.2 Record Carrier Delays

Record the time the carrier spent on the following:

- a. Listening to you explain the test.
- b. Helping you gather mail.
- c. Performing any other test-related tasks (including filling out PS Form 2847) that require extra time in the office.
- d. Waiting for you to sample and record the mail.

Note: PS Form 2847 includes the time required to complete PS Form 2848 if the postmaster designates the carrier to count and record the collection mail.

3-8.3 Guidelines for Completing PS Form 2847

Postal Service personnel must complete PS Form 2847 as follows:

- a. Complete the form at the test site, as follows:
 - (1) When you conduct a test on-site, you complete the form.
 - (2) When you conduct a telephone test, the carrier and postmaster complete the form.
- b. Verify that the carrier's Employee Identification Number (EIN) is entered correctly.
- c. Record carrier time in minutes, not hours.
- d. Ensure that both the carrier and postmaster sign the form.

The postmaster mails the completed and signed form to the Accounting Service Center address printed on the form.

Note: At intermediate offices, the intermediate office postmaster handles the tasks for the postmaster.

3-9 Complete PS Form 2848

3-9.1 Overview

The Postal Services uses PS Form 2848 to report the volume of mail the carrier collects as the carrier delivers it. The postmaster or designee completes PS Form 2848. A copy of PS Form 2848 is available at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/forms/ps2848.pdf>.

Note: If the tested site is an intermediate office, follow the instructions in [3-9.6](#).

PS Form 2848 does *not* count mail from collection boxes and cluster box collection compartments.

3-9.2 **Data Collector — Section A**

You must do the following:

- a. Highlight the administrative data to be completed by the postmaster or designee.
- b. Complete Section A.
- c. Complete Item 2 using leading zeros for the month/date and a four-digit year — for example, record February 21, YYYY, as “0221YYYY.”
- d. Obtain the test ID and rural route number from the *Test Schedule* or *Test Header* screen, and enter it in Section A.
- e. Give the form to the postmaster or designee, who completes Sections B and C.

3-9.3 **Postmaster — Sections B and C**

3-9.3.1 **Section B**

The postmaster or designee must do the following:

- a. Complete Sections B after the carrier returns from the route.
- b. Have the carrier separate the mail into three tubs:
 - (1) One for online requests for Package Pickup.
 - (2) One for mail collected from individual delivery boxes and brought back to the Post Office.
 - (3) One for all other mail.
- c. After counting the mail, follow the instructions on the form to determine the class and shape categories. Also, include or exclude mail as follows:
 - (1) Include mail that the carrier picks up from any intermediate office.
 - (2) Include mail from intermediate routes when the head-out office is the route being sampled.
 - (3) Exclude mail from collection boxes or cluster box unit collection compartments.
- d. Use the destination address to determine if the mail is domestic or international.

3-9.3.2 **Section C**

You must explain to the postmaster or designee how to record collected mail on PS Form 2848.

The postmaster or designee must do the following:

- a. Record franked mail and penalty mail from U.S. Government agencies based on the service provided.

- b. Record balloting materials endorsed "US Postage Paid 39 USC 3406" as First-Class Mail.
- c. Describe the items counted in "Other."

3-9.4 **Postmaster's Responsibility**

The postmaster or designee mails or faxes the completed form to you as your name and address appear in Section A.

3-9.5 **After the Test Is Completed**

The following are the tasks required after the test is completed:

- a. The MFPC must review submitted forms for completeness and accuracy and must discuss any incomplete or inconsistent items with the postmaster or designee.
- b. The MFPC must enter the data from PS Form 2848 into the CODES WBU. For a test that has zero collection volume, the MFPC must select the appropriate choice in CODES to describe the reason.
- c. After verifying all collection test data entered into CODES, click on the *Approve 2848* button in the *Sample Control Info* screen in the CODES WBU to transmit the test to the mainframe for processing. (The CODES WBU system allows the transmission of only approved collection tests.)
- d. Personnel entering data must bring cross-cell error checks to the MFPC's attention for appropriate action if editing is required.

3-9.6 **Guidelines for Intermediate Offices**

An intermediate office is a Post Office that is located on the official line of travel on a rural route and is included in the official route description.

If the test site is an intermediate office, you must prepare a separate PS Form 2848, writes "Intermediate Office" in item 12 on the front of the form, and completes Sections A and B.

If the test samples the head-out office, include mail picked up from boxes on intermediate routes and brought back to the Post Office.