

**EFAST**  
**Draft Electronic Filing Specification**  
**DEL 1022**

**Publication EFAST-C**  
**EFAST PARTICIPANT ACCEPTANCE**  
**TESTING PROCEDURES**

**ERISA FILING ACCEPTANCE SYSTEM**  
**(EFAST)**



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# 1. Overview

This Instruction Guide for Testing is written for participants accepted into the ERISA Filing Acceptance System (EFAST) program as Software Developers. In order to participate in EFAST as a Software Developer, the official application, EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers* must first be completed and be accepted by the Department of Labor (DOL). To download a copy of EFAST-1, visit the EFAST Web site at [www.EFAST.dol.gov](http://www.EFAST.dol.gov). To receive a paper copy in the mail, call the EFAST Consolidated Contact Center at 866-463-3278 (866-GO EFAST).

Once EFAST-1 is accepted, the Software Developer is assigned an EFIN, Password, Test Encryption Key, Test PIN, Software Developer ID, and *Participant Acceptance Procedures*. Using this information, the Software Developer must submit a batch containing a total of 10 Test filings to the EFAST electronic filing system for approval.

During this testing period, your batch of Test filings is checked for proper encryption (if applicable), EFIN, PIN, Software Developer ID, formatting, byte count, data, and attachments. Once approved for Live filing, your Software Developer ID becomes valid for sending Live filings to the EFAST electronic filing system. Prior to approval, any Live filings that are received by the EFAST electronic filing system will be rejected for Invalid Software Developer ID Code.

Test filings can be sent using File Transfer Protocol (FTP) via modem-to-modem electronic transfer. Unencrypted Test filings can be sent by mail through any accepted external media format (CD ROM, diskette, or magnetic tape).

Live filings are those 5500 series filings created and submitted as to report benefits paid. Live filings and Test filings are differentiated by an indicator in the header record of the file. For greater detail of Live and Test filing record layout, see EFAST Publication-B, *File Specifications, Validation Criteria, and Record Layouts*.

## 1.1 Purpose of Testing

The purpose of requiring Software Developers to send Test filings is to assure that proper formatting is confirmed in a software application prior to the software application being used to create and send Live filings to the EFAST system.

## 2. Revision History

The following is a list of changes of this document:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
9/01/2005	throughout	Changed all references to plan year 2004 to plan year 2005.
3/21/2006	Cover	Changed DRAFT to FINAL.
8/7/2006	Cover	Changed FINAL to DRAFT.
	throughout	Changed all references to plan year 2005 to plan year 2006.
3/13/2007	Cover	Changed DRAFT to FINAL.
9/13/2007	Cover	Changed FINAL to DRAFT.
3/20/2008	Cover	Changed DRAFT to FINAL.
8/21/08	Cover	Changed FINAL to DRAFT.
8/21/08	7.1	Changed reference to Schedule B to Schedules MB and SB.

### 3. Referenced Documents

The following documents are referenced in Publication EFAST-C:

<b>Publication EFAST-1</b>	Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers
<b>Publication EFAST-A</b>	User's Guide for Electronic/Magnetic Media Filings of Forms 5500 and 5500-EZ
<b>Publication EFAST-B</b>	Electronic/Magnetic Media File Specifications and Validation Criteria for Forms 5500 and 5500-EZ Parts One and Two

## **4. Software Developers' Responsibilities**

As Software Developers, you are responsible for creating or modifying a software application designed to create and/or transmit 5500 series filings to the Department of Labor while complying with the guidelines provided in EFAST Publication -B - *Electronic/Magnetic Media File Specification Validation Criteria, and Record Layouts*. Before Live filings can be received from any software, each Developer must participate in and be approved through testing procedures.

### **4.1 Assigned Materials**

Software Developers are required to first complete Form EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers*. Software Developers whose applications are accepted are provided an EFIN, Password, Test Encryption Key, Test PIN, and Software Developer ID.

#### **4.1.1 EFIN**

The Electronic Filer Identification Number (EFIN) is a unique six-digit (6) number assigned to all Transmitters and Software Developers. The EFIN identifies the Transmitter or Software Developer and is used to log into the communications system.

Sample EFIN: 170001

The EFAST electronic filing system will generate and assign an EFIN and distribute the EFIN and Password together in a letter to Software Developers and Transmitters upon acceptance of Form EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers*. EFINs do not expire.

#### **4.1.2 Password**

The Password is a string of twelve (12) alphanumeric characters assigned to all parties who will transmit filings directly to the DOL. The Password also serves as an identifier when the Transmitter or Software Developer submits filings and receives acknowledgements.

Sample PASSWORD: UR466Y3F1M77

The EFAST Electronic Filing System will generate and assign a Password and distribute the EFIN and Password together in a letter to Software Developers and Transmitters upon acceptance of Form EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers*. The letter containing the Password should be stored in a secure location to which only authorized people have access. Passwords do not expire.

#### **4.1.3 Test Encryption Key**

An Encryption Key is a string of forty-eight (48) alphanumeric characters that gives the sender and receiver of an electronic file the ability to securely transfer a modem filing.

Beginning with filings received after July 1, 2000, the DOL requires that all filings submitted by modem be encrypted to protect the privacy of the filings. (External/magnetic media filings should **not** be encrypted.) DOL will use private key cryptographic methods, which require the sender and receiver to know and use the same private key.

Sample Encryption Key:

AB31 7AB9 4C34 808C 1CEA 2583 586E A8D9 2A76 8F08 D0DC 861C

The EFAST Electronic Filing System will generate and assign an Encryption Key upon the acceptance of Form EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers*. The Encryption Key will be distributed in a letter and will include written documentation containing suggested guidelines and standards for handling, using, and protecting them. The letter containing the Encryption Key should be stored in a secure location to which only authorized people have access. Encryption Keys are valid until they are inactive for two consecutive years. After two consecutive years of inactivity, the Encryption Keys are deactivated. The transmitter may request to be reactivated by calling the EFAST Consolidated Contact Center at 866-463-3278. The caller will be required to provide the EFIN and Password of the Transmitter. A new Key will then be issued to the Transmitter.

The EFAST Electronic Filing System will also generate and assign **Test** keys to Software Developers to be used when submitting Test filings for PATS. An overview of testing and certification procedures is discussed further in Section 5. Detailed instructions for testing are provided to Software Developers upon acceptance of the EFAST-1 application.

Transmitters will enter the Encryption Key in the software used to create the electronic file. The Encryption Key is displayed on the acceptance letter with two (2) spaces every four (4) digits to improve readability, however, the spaces are not valid characters of the Encryption Key. The spaces must be removed from the Encryption Key before placing it in the .DOL. The software encrypts the filing before sending it to DOL. The DOL determines the validity of the Encryption Key, EFIN, and checks an indicator in the file identifying whether the key is the Live or Test Key. DOL also ensures that the security data matches only one participant. Once the Key is validated, the DOL system decrypts the encrypted filing data.

#### **4.1.4 Test PIN**

A Personal Identification Number (PIN) is a unique sixteen (16) alphanumeric character identifier that acts as the Signer's "signature" on the electronic filing. The party whose PIN is used for electronic/magnetic media filing becomes the party responsible for the filing. A Test PIN is assigned to Software Developers and is used to "sign" Test filings. The Test PIN will not be used in sending Live filings.

Beginning with filings received on and after July 1, 2000, the DOL requires a PIN to be included with each filing as an alternative to using a paper Form 8453-E as a signature document for electronic and magnetic media filings.

Form 5500 filings may be submitted with the "signatures" of two different individual signers, one as Plan Administrator and the other as the Employer/Plan Sponsor/DFE. Form 5500-EZ filings may be submitted with only one "signature", that of the "Plan Employer or Plan Administrator".

Sample PIN: F9A2 608D 6D55 C3B1

The Lawrence Computing Center (LCC) will assign and generate the Test PIN upon acceptance of Form EFAST-1. The PINs will be distributed in a separate letter with written documentation containing suggested guidelines and standards for handling, using, and protecting them. The letter containing the Test PIN should be stored in a secure location to which only authorized people have access. The Test PIN does not expire.

The PIN should be entered in the data-entry software used to create the electronic file. The PIN is displayed on the acceptance letter with two (2) spaces every four (4) digits to improve readability, however, the spaces are not valid characters of the PIN. The spaces must be removed from the PIN before placing it in the .DOL. When a filing is received by DOL, the PIN is cross-checked against the DOL databases to verify that it is valid. Once the PIN is validated, processing can begin.

#### **4.1.5 Software Developer ID**

The Software Developer ID is a unique, three-digit alphanumeric identifier for Software Developers. It is used to determine whether Software Developers have successfully passed the testing process.

Sample Software Developer ID: 1A4

The Software Developer ID is present in the Header Record of the filing batch.

## **4.2 Process Overview**

Following are the events that are to be taken by a person or company applying to be a Software Developer:

- Complete and submit Form EFAST-1, *Application for EFAST Electronic Signature and Codes for EFAST Transmitters and Software Developers*.
- Receive letter of acceptance.
- Receive EFIN and Password.
- Receive Test Encryption Key.
- Receive Test PIN.
- Receive Software Developer ID.
- Receive EFAST-A, *Electronic Filing User's Guide*
- Receive Publication EFAST-B - *Electronic/Magnetic Media File Specification Validation Criteria, and Record Layouts*
- Receive this testing instruction document and Test filings.
- Submit 10 of the 12 included Test filings via electronic transmission (using Encryption Key) or external media (**NOT** encrypted) following the format provided in EFAST-B.



- Receive approval that Test filings were formatted correctly. The assigned Software Developer ID is now valid for submitting Live filings.

This document is intended for Software Developers. For definitions and procedures for Signers and Transmitters, please see Electronic Filing Publications A and B.

## **5. Process of Testing**

### **5.1 Time to test**

While testing can be a quick process lasting only a couple of days, it is recommended that you allow ample time prior to sending Live filings using your software. There is no scheduled testing time. Testing can occur during any point throughout the filing year provided that the filings include 'TEST' as the Record Type Indicator in the TRANS record. (See Publication EFAST-B - *Electronic/Magnetic Media File Specification Validation Criteria, and Record Layouts* for the format of the filings records.)

The EFAST Consolidated Contact Center will answer calls during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. CST regarding electronic filing.

EFAST CONSOLIDATE CONTACT CENTER TELEPHONE: 866-463-3278 (866-GO EFAST)

### **5.2 Testing data**

You will receive twelve (12) Test filings. These test cases must be successfully processed to pass the testing process. Ten (10) of the twelve (12) filings are to be entered in the software application to be tested. The data must be included in a single filing batch and submitted to the LCC. Once these filings are deemed by the LCC to be in the proper format, the Software Developer ID is approved for processing Live filings.

Additional, voluntary Test data can be sent to test other filing types, filing methods, or specific data once the provided Test data is accepted and the Software Developer ID is approved. Acknowledgements for this testing will be identical to those provided when sending the Test data provided by the Department of Labor. Results from this additional testing does not affect the status of an approved Software Developer ID.

The format for all Test filing data must conform to the specifications as defined in EFAST Publication-B.

### **5.3 Method of testing**

Test filings can be sent using File Transfer Protocol (FTP) via modem-to-modem transmission or to an EFAST established IP address. Unencrypted filings can be mailed on any of the acceptable external media sources (CD ROM, high density diskette, or magnetic tape). For greater detail on the specifications and layouts of these filing types, refer to Appendix A of this document and EFAST Publication-B - *Electronic/Magnetic Media File Specification Validation Criteria, and Record Layouts*.

Once Test data is received at the LCC, it is verified and acknowledgements are created. Electronic acknowledgements and paper letters are created for filings sent both via modem-to-modem transmission as well as those on external media. Modem-to-modem connection Test filings will be acknowledged no later than three (3) days after receipt. External media no later than five (5) days. Both electronic and paper letter acknowledgements are created upon processing of the data. Letters are created and mailed immediately upon process completion. Electronic acknowledgements are placed in the user directory at the same time. For more information on receiving acknowledgements, see EFAST Publications A and B

## 6. Web Support/Updates

The EFAST Consolidated Contact Center would be happy to assist you with questions or problems you may have during the testing period.

- Telephone: 866-463-3278 (866-GO EFAST)
- Email: [ron.zook@vangent.com](mailto:ron.zook@vangent.com)
- Web site: [www.EFAST.dol.gov](http://www.EFAST.dol.gov)

**Note:** The Web site is intended to provide information helpful in answering questions. There is not, however, an option to submit questions via the Web site.

## 7. Appendix A – Test Filing Data

There are a total of ten (10) Test filings that are required to be filed with the software application designed to file 5500 filings via electronic transmission or external media medium. You will receive these filings from the Department of Labor. This data must be entered exactly as it appears into your software, which should create and format the .DOL file in the format specified in EFAST Publication-B.

Modem-to-modem transmissions are to follow File Transfer Protocol (FTP). The number for transmitting data via modem-to-modem transmission is (888) 273-9539.

The freely available encryption .DLL will automatically encrypt all necessary portions of the .DOL file as well as all the Unstructured Attachment files for modem-to-modem filings. For more information about encryption and the encryption .DLL, see Appendix C of EFAST Publication-B, *File Specifications, Validation Criteria and Record Layouts for Electronic/Magnetic Media Filing of Forms 5500 and 5500-EZ for Plan Year 2008*.

Test filings sent by external media should not be encrypted. The method of delivery for a package is optional. Envelopes, packages or cartons containing magnetic tape(s) should be sent to:

Regular Mail:

Lawrence Computing Center - EFAST  
P.O. Box 7041  
Lawrence, KS 66044-7041

Overnight Delivery:

Lawrence Computing Center - EFAST  
Attn: Production Control  
3833 Greenway Drive  
Lawrence, KS 66046

All ten (10) filings must be submitted in a single filing batch. Additional Test filings can be submitted once the Software Developer ID is approved for Live filing. That is, if a Software Developer wishes to create their own filings to further test their software, these can be sent upon successful completion of the provided Test filings. Any further, voluntary testing does not affect the status of an Approved Software Developer ID.

### 7.1 Unstructured Attachments

Including unstructured attachments are a required portion of the testing process. The following formats are accepted:

Format	Minimum Version
ASCII character (text) format	--
Microsoft Word document format	6.0

<b>Format</b>	<b>Minimum Version</b>
Corel WordPerfect document format	6.0
Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF)	3.0
Hypertext-Markup Language (HTML) format	--
Microsoft Excel format	5.0
Lotus 1-2-3 format	3.0

The following text must be included in one of the above formats and included with the Test filing batch as an unstructured attachment for any of the Test filings, e.g. it does not need to be on a particular Test filing:

Any information that cannot be contained on the 5500 series Forms and Schedules may be submitted as an unstructured attachment. Examples of unstructured attachments include Schedules **MB and SB** Actuarial attachments and Schedule H Accountant's Opinion attachments. There are two types of unstructured attachments: 1) Unstructured attachments submitted as separate files to the DOL file and 2) unstructured attachments submitted within the DOL file.

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