

ABC BUSINESS  
 123 West Main Street  
 Anytown, Nebraska 00000-0000  
 FIRST CLASS  
 MAIN ST  
 HERE, MAINE 00000-0000  
 ANYW

Address Service Requested



**IMPORTANT DOCUMENT INSIDE**

NIXIE 122 OC 1 00 10/22/11  
 RETURN TO SENDER  
 NO SUCH NUMBER  
 UNABLE TO FORWARD  
 ac: 12212536068 \*2737-04902-09-01  
 [Postnet barcode]

Deloitte Solutions  
 89101 East Green Street  
 Anytown, New York 00000-0000

**FORM 3547 fee due 50 ¢**

Address Service Requested



**IMPORTANT DOCUMENT INSIDE**

First class mail  
 Postage and Fees Paid  
 USPS  
 Permit No. G10

ABC BUSINESS  
 PO Box 1234  
 Anytown CO 00000-0000

TO THE POSTMASTER OF  
 89101 EAST GREEN ST  
 ANYTOWN NY 00000-0000

ABC BUSINESS  
 PO Box 1234  
 Anytown CO 0000-0000  
 21 S 1st Ave STE B  
 Anytown NY 00000-0000



# ACS™

## PRODUCT INFORMATION GUIDE

Publication 8



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# ACS™: An Intelligent Solution

## ***Meeting Mailers' Needs***

Right now, mailers may be finishing those last-minute details to get billings, parcels, or magazines to clients or subscribers. Or perhaps they are working against a deadline to get a direct mail campaign off and running. Mailers need an address change system that is fast, secure, reliable, and economical. In response to those needs, the Postal Service offers ACS.

ACS is an on-piece address correction service that helps to identify if the addressee has moved. It is used in conjunction with ancillary service endorsements so mail can reach the proper destination. ACS is ideal for those who maintain addressee records on computers. ACS mailers configure mailing address labels, envelopes, and address blocks to comply with ACS participation requirements, and may develop their own matching software to update their mailing list. There is no formal contract or service charge associated with using ACS. Fees are based on the number of change of address (COA) and nixie (mail that is undeliverable for reasons other than a move) notices provided to the ACS customer.

## ***Introduction***

Delivery information is only as good as the quality of the address data. Our goal is to help customers send their mail to the correct address every time. To help meet this objective, ACS is designed to substantially reduce the number of manual address correction notifications sent to mailers and replace them with electronic notices.

ACS has three distinct implementation methods: Traditional ACS, using a USPS® assigned Participant Code and optional keyline, and OneCode ACS® or Full Service ACS using the Intelligent Mail® barcode. Each method offers several different options. There is also a special subset of ACS called Shipper Paid Forwarding, which may be used for heavy catalogs and parcels. Technical information on Traditional and OneCode ACS options can be found at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech\\_guides](https://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides) Technical information on how to qualify for Full Service ACS can be found at [https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail\\_guides/documents/tech\\_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf](https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/GuidetoIntelligentMailLettersandFlats.pdf)

To participate in ACS, mailers must modify their mailing label and or mailpiece. The type of modification needed depends on the type of ACS implementation method chosen. Clarification regarding the required modifications can be found under the sections entitled “*Traditional ACS*,” “*OneCode ACS*,” and “*Full Service ACS*”.

Once an ACS-modified mailpiece is identified as undeliverable as addressed (UAA) and processed in the USPS® nationwide network of Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) and Computerized Forwarding System (CFS) sites, an electronic COA or Nixie notice is generated. Mailers are advised that ACS is an enhancement to the original manual (hard copy) notices provided by Post Offices. It does not completely replace or eliminate hard copy address change notifications.

## ***Benefits of ACS***

Electronic and/or automated address correction has many benefits over manual address correction. A mailer who uses ACS can:

- Reduce the volume of Undeliverable-as-Addressed (UAA) mail
- Reduce manual address correction costs
- Reduce labor-intensive address change functions by minimizing returned mail
- Select electronic or automated address change information for specific mailings
- Choose when to retrieve fulfillment of time-sensitive information
- Retrieve address change information electronically via a secure Internet site

ACS is designed to substantially reduce the number of address correction notices provided manually to mailers and replace them with electronic notifications. However, ACS does not currently — and will not for the foreseeable future — entirely eliminate manual address correction notices. Therefore, ACS is not a guaranteed service; the U.S. Postal Service® makes no assurance that any minimum percentage of a mailer's address correction notifications will be provided electronically rather than manually.

Note: If any discrepancy exists between this document (ACS-Publication 8) and the *DMM® Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, the *DMM* always takes precedence. For the most current *DMM*, go to the Postal Explorer Web site (<http://pe.usps.gov>) and click on *Domestic Mail Manual*. Any regulation in this publication can be amended or rescinded by notices in the *Postal Bulletin*, *Federal Register*, or the *DMM*. If you need further information, refer to the *DMM*, email the ACS Department at [acs@usps.gov](mailto:acs@usps.gov), or call the National Customer Support Center, ACS Department, at (800) 331-5746.

### ***Ancillary Service Endorsements***

ACS is an enhancement to the existing manual address correction process provided with the use of Ancillary Service endorsements on all mail classes except Periodicals. The following ancillary services are available for use with ACS on First-Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, Package Services, and Parcel Select:

- *Address Service Requested* – provides forwarding and address correction services when possible. If the mail is undeliverable and not forwardable, it is returned to the sender with the reason identified on the mailpiece.
- *Change Service Requested* – provides address correction services without forwarding or return. If undeliverable, either the new address or the reason it is undeliverable is provided to the sender.

The printed endorsement “Electronic Service Requested” is available for use ONLY if the mailer is requesting electronic ACS notices. The request for Address Service Requested or Change Service Requested is contained in the Intelligent Mail barcode or in the ACS profile retained and managed by the ACS Department at the National Customer Support Center in Memphis TN. “Electronic Service Requested” must not be printed on mail that requests manual or no address corrections.

For more information regarding the use of these ancillary service endorsements and the requirements for printing, refer to the *DMM®*.

ACS mailers have the advantage of additional options for each of these endorsements. Periodicals do not require a printed endorsement to receive electronic address corrections. ACS Publication mailers have multiple options for when they may be notified that an addressee has moved. For details about these additional options, refer to the *DMM* or to the technical documentation available for your preferred ACS implementation method.

## OneCode ACS®

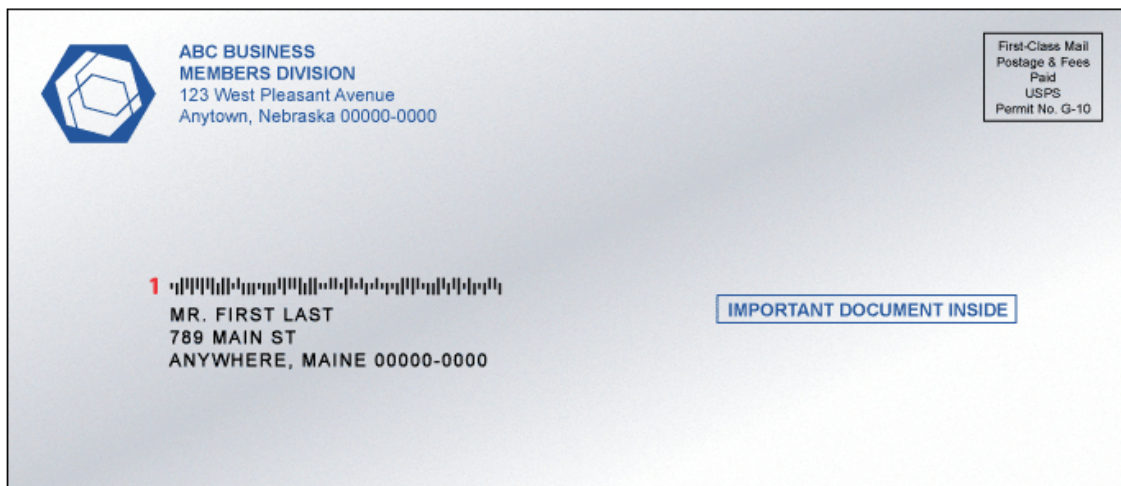
OneCode ACS allows customers mailing First-Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, or Periodicals (flats or letters) to receive electronic or automated address corrections through the use of the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb). Technical information required to produce the Intelligent Mail barcode can be found at

<https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmailmailpieces>.

Information embedded in the IMb includes the Mailer ID, which is used to identify the mail owner or mail service provider. The Sequence Number can be used to trace back to the customer, or it can be used to identify the mailpiece itself. The Service Type Identifier in the IMb represents the ancillary service requested, and on First Class Mail it can replace the printed endorsement (Standard Mail still requires a printed endorsement).

Use of the IMb allows for a less 'cluttered' address block (as illustrated below in Exhibit 1) on your mailpiece, and when used on letters may provide automated notices and lower address correction fees.

### Exhibit 1: OneCode ACS Mailpiece



1. The Intelligent Mail barcode applied to the mail contains the following information:
  - a. Presort information (flats only)
  - b. Service Type Identifier that requests specific services like ACS™ and/or Confirm®
  - c. Mailer ID that identifies the mail owner or mail service provider
  - d. Serial or sequence number that uniquely identifies the mailpiece or the addressee
  - e. Routing information that provides the ZIP Code™ and delivery point validation that allows the mail to be sorted directly to the address

Note: The optional printed Ancillary Service Endorsement (not shown) provides the Postal Service™ with the sender's instructions on how to handle the mail if it is UAA. When using the IMb on First Class Mail, the printed endorsement is optional. On Standard Mail, the printed endorsement is still required.

**Full Service ACS™**

Customers may use the Intelligent Mail® barcode to qualify for automation discounts. The OneCode ACS® infrastructure and processing methods for undeliverable-as-addressed mail are used as the basis for fulfilling address corrections provided as part of Full Service mailing benefits.

For address corrections to work properly in qualified Full Service mailings, the Service Type Identifier used in the Intelligent Mail barcode must reflect the Full Service options requesting ACS. Those Full Service mailpieces that are identified and processed as UAA generate an ACS notice that is fulfilled through the USPS® Business Customer Gateway.

Technical information and documentation that explains how to qualify for Full Service discounts and the resulting Full Service ACS benefits can be found in [The Guide to Intelligent Mail for Letters and Flats](#) found at <https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmailguides>.

Technical information and instructions on how to access the Business Customer Gateway and the Full Service benefits, including Full Service ACS reports, can be found in the [User Access to Electronic Information and Reports Guides Volumes I and II](#).

## **Traditional ACS**

Traditional ACS allows customers mailing letters, flats, or parcels to receive address corrections in an electronic format. It is available for all mail classes, including First Class Mail®, Standard Mail®, Periodicals, Package Services, and Parcel Select. Mailing customers identify their mailpieces with a postal-supplied seven character alpha identifier known as the ACS participant code. The pound sign (#) delimiter must precede the ACS participant code. In addition, mailer ancillary service endorsements must be printed on all mail other than periodicals. All ACS mail must include a valid domestic return address.

## **Keyline**

A keyline is a unique addressee code that allows mailers to either incorporate existing customer identifiers or create a new system that assists in locating the addressee in their database. Most Traditional ACS participants choose to use the keyline option, which provides an effective means of matching ACS notifications with the appropriate records in their address files.

Although not required to receive COA notices, the Keyline is required if the mailer wants to receive electronic ACS nixie notices. Nixie notices provide reasons for non-delivery of mail not related to a move (e.g. Vacant, Refused, No Such Number, No Mail Receptacle, etc.). Unlike COA notices, which include all applicable customer information, nixie notices do not contain customer name, old address, or new address information. Therefore, the use of a keyline is needed to identify the customer record.

The keyline may consist of 4 to 16 characters including a check digit. Although the content of individual keylines must be unique to ensure identification of a particular customer within a mailer's address file, all keylines for a given ACS participant code *must be consistent* in terms of keyline characteristics: length (4 to 16 characters) and attribute (numeric, alpha, or alphanumeric). The same keyline may be used on each piece mailed to the same addressee in multiple mailings.

## Exhibit 2: Traditional ACS Mailpiece



1. The *Ancillary Service Endorsement* provides the Postal Service™ with the sender's instructions on how to handle the mail if it is UAA.
2. The traditional ACS *Participant ID/Code* identifies the sender to the Postal Service.
3. The traditional ACS *Keyline* is delimited by pound signs and identifies the recipient in the sender's mailing list.
4. The Intelligent Mail® barcode applied to the mail may contain presort information (flats only), a Service Type Identifier that requests specific services like ACS and/or Confirm, a Mailer ID\* that identifies the mail owner or mail service provider, a serial or sequence number that uniquely identifies the mail piece, and routing information that provides the ZIP Code and delivery point validation that allows the mail to be sorted directly to the address.

\* The Mailer ID used in the Intelligent Mail barcode must be set up specifically for use with Traditional ACS. For more detailed information and instructions, see the Traditional ACS Technical Guide.



## Shipper Paid Forwarding Packages/Parcels

Shipper Paid Forwarding (SPF) is an ACS™ fulfillment vehicle that allows parcel shippers to pay forwarding postage and fees instead of the customer who moved.

SPF helps Package Services and Parcel Select shippers keep up with their customers and provide a more customer friendly option for forwarded parcels since forwarding postage is charged to the shipper rather than to the addressee/end consumer.

Standard Mail parcels used in conjunction with SPF allows the shipper to pay single-piece postage price for returned undeliverable parcels (Refused, Attempted Not Known, etc).

SPF used in conjunction with Bulk Parcel Return Service provides even more savings for the Standard Mail parcel shipper.

**SPF is presently available only with Traditional ACS. The address block must include a USPS-assigned traditional ACS participant code and a required 'keyline'.**



1. Intelligent Mail Package barcode used to provide tracking information services
2. Ancillary Service Endorsement which identifies which SPF service is requested
3. Traditional ACS Participant Code assigned specifically for Shipper Paid Forwarding services
4. Shipper Paid Forwarding keyline that contains the weight of the piece and a mail class identifier.

## **Data Integrity**

While the USPS® strives to provide ACS™ data in the manner described in this document, there may be occasions when the data field may not contain the expected data. When customers submit a COA, it is possible that some of the data provided may not be accurate or may be incomplete. In rare instances when our systems are unable to make corrections to the COA data submitted by the customer, the USPS has no choice but to include the data exactly as it was provided by the customer. Additionally, in other rare instances it is possible that other data fields, not directly related to the data fields provided by the customer, may be missing. We strongly suggest that all automated systems utilizing ACS data perform validity checks on all fields.

## **Fulfillment Files**

Traditional ACS notices are provided to participating mailers daily, semiweekly, weekly, semimonthly, or monthly, depending on the fulfillment option and their needs.

OneCode ACS® and Full Service ACS Notices are provided to participating mailers daily.

OneCode and Traditional ACS Notices are posted to our secure Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF) website. ACS fulfillment files are provided in a "zip" file format and are password protected. The files are compressed to save space and download time. The customer will need to obtain the appropriate software package to decompress the data back into a normal text file. The customer is responsible for the retrieval of their ACS fulfillment files from their EPF account. The fulfillment files are deleted from the EPF account after 95 days. Specific information regarding file downloading and access can be found at [http://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech\\_guides/](http://ribbs.usps.gov/acs/documents/tech_guides/).

Full Service ACS Notices are fulfilled through the Business Customer Gateway, the Web interface to all United States Postal Service® online services and full-service tools. Postal business customers log on through a single sign-on using their username and password. Mailers who qualify for the Full Service option can either download their Address Correction notices or subscribe to a Push or Pull option method.

Specific information and instructions regarding Business Customer Gateway access and options for retrieval of Full Service ACS notices can be found at: [http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail\\_guides/documents/tech\\_guides/user\\_access/user\\_access.htm](http://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_guides/documents/tech_guides/user_access/user_access.htm)

## **Billing**

For OneCode ACS and Traditional ACS, the San Mateo Accounting Service Center sends each ACS participant an invoice and statement monthly *only* if the balance is more than \$50. ACS customers whose balance remains less than \$50 receive annual statements on September 24 of each year.

Payment must be submitted with a copy of the invoice within 30 days of the invoice date. Unpaid balances more than 30 days old are charged an annual interest rate of 10 percent. Failure to pay ACS fees may result in additional charges and the inability to receive electronic address corrections.

Full Service ACS charges are mailed by the NCSC monthly following the same procedures as outlined above. Full Service ACS invoices are mailed to the name and address identified for the Customer Registration ID (CRID) that holds the MID used on the mail, unless a different billing profile is identified in the Business Customer Gateway. Information and instructions on how to set up an ACS Billing Profile can be found in the Mailer ID System section of the [User Access to Electronic Mailing Information & Reports Guide, Volume I](#).