



Post Ops Update

News on Postal Operations Issues

Issue 03-16, June 2, 2016

USPS Updates Informed Visibility Time Line

The USPS has updated its Informed Visibility implementation time line, and has posted the [latest version](#) (as of 5/26/16) on its RIBBS web site. Comparing the latest version to the version the USPS shared with industry at the March 2016 MTAC meeting held in conjunction with the National Postal Forum (NPF), the following differences are seen.

Pilot test start dates for IMb Tracing Piece Visibility migration, container/tray visibility, bundle visibility for automation handling events, web-enabled mail tracking (Phase 1), flexible data provisioning (Phase 1), and flexible data integration (Phase 1) have all been changed from May to **June 13**, with the start dates for national deployment of all changed from June to **July 5**.

Pilot test start date for Logical Delivery events changed from June to **July 25**.

Completion dates for migration of IMb Tracing Piece Visibility, migration of container/tray visibility, and migration for bundle visibility for automation handling events now shown as **July 29** (previously shown as July with no specific date).

National deployment of logical delivery events changed from July to **Aug 15**

Pilot enhancements for Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events, and pilot start date for Assumed Handling Events changed from June to **Aug 22**

Mailer Scorecard Available for Review

The USPS earlier this month issued its long-awaited announcement that mailers should begin to use and review the data in their Mailer Scorecard. “The USPS has completed its testing of the Mailer Scorecard for Full-Service with Mailers Technical Advisory Committee members (Task Team 23),” it said. “We now encourage all mailers to begin reviewing the Full-Service Mail Quality Metrics which can be found within the Electronic Tab of the Mailer Scorecard beginning with the current month of May.”

The USPS is urging mailers to review the data for accuracy in preparation for use of the data for additional postage assessment for non-compliance with IMb Full-Service electronic verification requirements. The USPS said that its previously announced July date “to begin assessments of Full-Service is being postponed to allow the industry additional time to access, utilize and test the Full-Service Mail Quality Metrics within the Mailer Scorecard.” The USPS has not yet announced a new implementation date, though October has been mentioned in some informal meetings.

The USPS in its announcement instructed mailers to report any irregularities or questions through a new hotline, to the PostalOne! Helpdesk at 800-522-9085 or via email at postalone@usps.gov.

PostCom strongly encourages all mailers to use and review their Mailer Scorecard data, and to report any inaccuracies or issues to the USPS. Remember, this is the data that will determine whether you are assessed additional postage in the not-too-distant future!

Pilot start dates for Start-the-Clock migration, and web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) changed from July to **Sept 8**

National deployment dates for enhancements for Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events changed from July to **Sept. 12**.

National rollout dates for Start-the-Clock migration and web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) changed from Aug and July respectively to **Sept 26**.

Completion of Start-the-Clock migration changed from Aug to **Oct 14**.

New information added: Pilot start of Roles & Permissions Management set for Aug 22 and national deployment set for **Sept. 12**.

To date, there has been little information shared by the USPS as to what changes in process, systems, or data mailers/service providers should prepare for when the various Informed Visibility pieces are implemented. While the USPS on June 2, 2016, did publish on its web site an updated [Informed Visibility Mail Tracking and](#)

[Migration Communications Plan](#), it has not yet released any detailed information to help mailers or service providers prepare for the changes.

Industry representatives have expressed concerns with the lack of information available to help mailers prepare. MTAC User Group 4 has been urging the USPS to provide information to industry on the upcoming changes, and a technical guide is being developed (which the USPS' updated communications plan says will be released next week...). With the initial Informed Visibility changes now scheduled for implementation starting June/July, time is becoming critical for mailers to prepare.

USPS Requests PRC Approval for 2017 Promotions

The USPS on May 16, 2016, filed a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to request approval of six promotion/incentive programs for calendar year 2017, including a new "Direct Mail Starter" promotion.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®		IV™ Mail Tracking & Reporting Timeline					
		DRAFT as of 05-24-2016					
	Piece Visibility	Container & Tray Visibility	Bundle Visibility	Assumed Handling Events	Web-Enabled Mail Tracking and Flexible Data Provisioning	Flexible Data Delegation	Administrative Activities
Jun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/13 – Pilot start for IMb Tracing Piece Visibility migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/13 – Pilot start for Container & Tray Visibility migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/13 – Pilot start for Bundle Visibility for automation handling events migration 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/13 – Start Pilot for Web-Enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/13 – Pilot start for Flexible Data Delegation 	
Jul.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7/5 – Begin National Rollout of IMb Tracing Piece Visibility migration 7/25 – Pilot Start for Logical Delivery Events 7/29 – Migration of IMb Tracing Piece Visibility Complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7/5 – Begin National Rollout of Container & Tray Visibility migration 7/29 – Migration of Container & Tray Visibility Complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7/5 – Begin National Rollout of Bundle Visibility for automation handling events migration 7/29 – Migration of Bundle Visibility for automation handling events complete 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7/5 – National Deployment of Web-Enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7/5 – National Deployment of Flexible Data Delegation 	
Aug.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/15 – National Deployment of Logical Delivery events 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/22 – Pilot enhancements for Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/22 – Pilot start for Assumed Handling Events 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/22 – Pilot start of Roles & Permissions Management
Sept.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/8 – Pilot start for Start-the-Clock migration 9/26 – Begin National Rollout of Start-the-Clock migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/12 – National Deployment of enhancements for Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/12 – National Deployment of Assumed Handling Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/8 – Pilot Web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) 9/26 – National Deployment of Web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/12 – National Deployment of Roles & Permissions Management
Oct.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10/14 – Migration of Start-the-Clock Complete 					

"In response to mailer requests for more advance notice of its upcoming promotional offerings," the USPS said, "the Postal Service is seeking approval of the 2017 promotions earlier than it has in the past." The USPS said it "expects that obtaining approval of the 2017 promotions now, rather than in the fall, will provide mailers sufficient planning time to maximize their participation in the 2017 promotions, thus better fulfilling the promotions' goal of retaining and increasing mail volumes."

The USPS noted that five of its planned promotions are continuations of previous promotions approved by the PRC, but noted a few changes in its request for 2017:

- the Mobile Shopping Promotion will be offered for five months, instead of six;
- the Earned Value Reply Mail Promotion will be extended to six months (from three months), offer credits for Alternate Postage mailpieces (in addition to Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) pieces), and increase the per-piece credit amount to \$0.05 (from \$0.02);
- the Emerging and Advanced Technology Promotion will include two new categories of qualifying technology.

In addition, the USPS is proposing for 2017 a new "Direct Mail Starter" promotion, which it proposes running from May - July 2017. In describing the new promotion, the USPS said it is "aware that complex participation requirements can create barriers for many small business mailers that would otherwise respond to promotional incentives by maintaining or growing their direct mail volume."

"This promotion is intended to encourage small business mailers to design direct mail marketing campaigns that incorporate a qualifying technology (such as a QR code), which leads the consumer to a mobile-optimized website," the USPS said. "Regular and nonprofit Standard Mail letters and flats that meet the promotion requirements will be eligible for an upfront five-percent postage discount," the USPS outlined, noting that "[n]o more

USPS Proposes August Price Change for FCM Parcels

The USPS on May 16, 2016, filed a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to increase First-Class Mail parcel rates effective August 28, 2016.

According to the USPS' filing, the request to increase First-Class Mail (FCM) parcels prices is to "correct an anomaly." The USPS proposed "small increases for the one-, two-, and three-ounce rate cells in the 'Retail' price category." The USPS proposed increasing the price for FCM Retail parcels weighing up to 3 ounces from the current \$2.45 to \$2.62, and the price for Keys and Identification Devices weighing up to 3 ounces from the current rate of \$3.27 to \$3.44.

Information is included in the USPS' filing (http://www.prc.gov/docs/95/95896/Combined%20Notice_FINAL.pdf).

than 10,000 pieces per mailer may receive the discount during the promotion period."

Information around the other five proposed promotions is included in the USPS' filing (http://www.prc.gov/docs/95/95896/Combined%20Notice_FINAL.pdf).

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USPS Renames 2 Parcel Return Scans

The USPS earlier this month advised mailers that it has renamed two parcel scans that indicate that a merchant's reverse logistics providers have picked up return parcels at USPS facilities.

"If the scan is performed at a Retail Delivery Unit or a Return Sectional Center Facility," the USPS said, "the mailer will now see the following, 'Tendered to Return Agent.'"

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Information around the other five proposed promotions is included in the USPS' filing (http://www.prc.gov/docs/95/95896/Combined%20Notice_FINAL.pdf).

USPS' 2017 Irresistible Mail™ Award Deadline June 25th

The USPS has expanded its Irresistible Mail™ award program launched at the 2016 National Postal Forum and for the remainder of 2016 it will conduct four quarterly winner mailpieces that then will compete for a grand prize at the 2017 National Postal Forum for the 2017 Irresistible Mail™ Award.

"The Mail Owner, Agency, and Printer of each quarterly winner will be recognized," the USPS said, noting that the award "recognizes innovative and effective mail piece designs." "These designs may include (but are not limited to) the use of shapes, sizes, textures, colors, personally targeted content, specialized inks, conversions to digital, or uncommon enclosures," the USPS said.

The USPS has posted the entry form and complete rules (entry is free) at [http://www.usps.com/irresistiblemail](#). "Mail pieces must have been mailed at least once since July 1, 2015 to be eligible," it said, noting that "[s]ubmissions for Quarter One must be postmarked by **June 25, 2016**, and received by June 30, 2016."

USPS Adds MID-Based Barcode Option for BRM

The USPS has published in the May 26, 2016 *Postal Bulletin*, revisions to its mailing standards (DMM 505.1.5) to "add a barcode option allowing Business Reply Mail® (BRM) customers sharing a BRM 9-digit ZIP Code™ the ability to trace the mail separately using a Mailer ID (MID) based Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb)."

The USPS noted that five of its planned promotions are continuations of previous promotions approved by the PRC, but noted a few changes in its request for 2017:

- the Mobile Shopping Promotion will be offered for five months, instead of six;
- the Earned Value Reply Mail Promotion will be extended to six months (from three months), offer credits for Alternate Postage mailpieces (in addition to Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) pieces), and increase the per-piece credit amount to \$0.05 (from \$0.02);
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“Currently,” the USPS said, “when customers enroll in the BRM program they are assigned a unique BRM 9-digit ZIP Code based on the delivery address as a condition for mailing.” “Each BRM 9-digit ZIP Code is unique to a single permit holder, address, and a single BRM mail type, which can present a challenge if there are two or more organizations/groups/departments using the same address,” it explained. “The MID based IMb option is being added for BRM customers to provide the increased flexibility requested by the mailing industry,” the USPS said.

The USPS said that upon enrollment in the BRM program, customers will be able to use the MID-based IMb combined with specific BRM Service Type ID codes (STIDs), “which will allow multiple entities with the same BRM 9-digit ZIP Code the ability to trace the mail separately.” “The MID based IMb will require a Barcode ID, STID, MID, and serial number in the tracking code field and a ZIP+4® routing code,” it noted.

The USPS has added two new STIDs to the BRM assignment matrix for this new option:

- Business Reply Mail nonautomation without IMb Tracing — 072.
- Business Reply Mail nonautomation with IMb Tracing — 032.

Additional information on the new BRM Reply Mail MID based IMb option, and STIDs can be found at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/> or by contacting [Himesh Patel](mailto:Himesh.Patel@usps.gov). [http://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2016/pb22442/html/updt_004.htm]

No Extra Services Refund for Undeliverable with Proper USPS Event Scan

The USPS is revising its mailings standards effective June 6, 2016 (DMM 604.9.2.4g) “to clarify that extra service fees will not be refunded for undeliverable Certified Mail®, Return Receipt for Merchandise (RRM), and Signature Confirmation™ mailpieces when they have received the proper event scan (e.g., UAA, Refused, etc.).”

Remaining 2016 MTAC Meeting Dates

The following MTAC meeting dates remain in 2016:

- July 12 - 14, 2016
- November 1 - 3, 2016

“Prior to the availability of electronic scanning data, signatures were routinely captured for mailpieces that were undeliverable,” the USPS said. “On June 26, 2013, (78 FR 38204) the Postal Service provided clarification that signatures of the sender were not required and a refund for service not rendered would not be provided if the piece was properly returned to sender with the reason for non-delivery,” it noted. “This DMM revision clarifies that a refund for service not rendered will not be provided for the extra service fees mentioned above when an undeliverable mailpiece receives an event scan that indicates an attempted delivery,” the USPS said. [http://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2016/pb22442/html/updt_002.htm]

Parcel Select Lightweight Volume Clarification

Effective June 6, 2016, the USPS is revising mailing standards (DMM 705.21.1.1) to clarify that the minimum volume requirement for Parcel Select Lightweight parcels in a combined parcel mailing under 705.21 is 200 pieces or 50 pounds.

USPS Political Mail PCC Workshop

The USPS has posted on its website a presentation and notes for Postal Customer Councils (PCCs) to promote the use of direct mail for political messaging [https://ribbs.usps.gov/pccworkshopbox/documents/tech_guides/PoliticalMailInsightsandOpportunities.pdf] and [https://ribbs.usps.gov/pccworkshopbox/documents/tech_guides/PoliticalMailInsightsandOpportunitiesNotes.pdf].

In its presentation notes, the USPS says it “will be

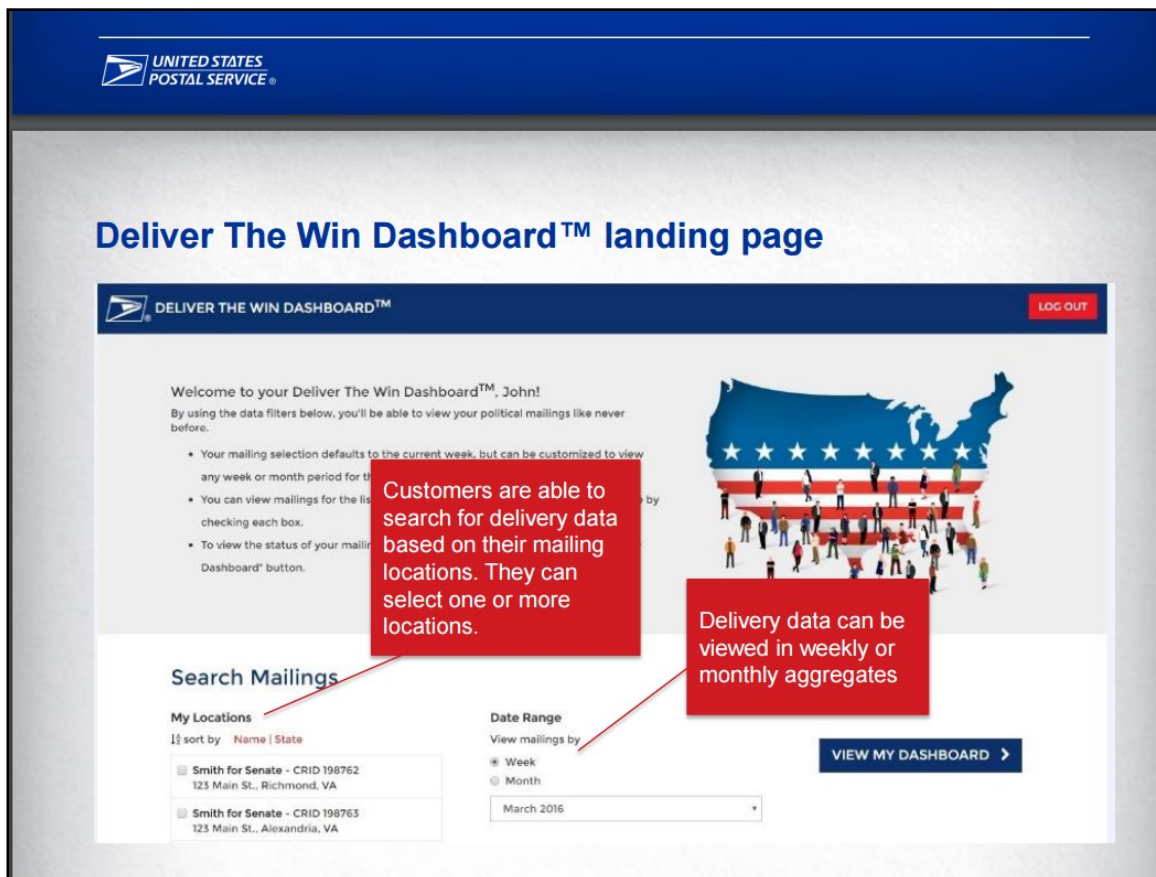
USPS Launches Online “Missing Mail” Customer Application

The USPS in mid-May 2016 introduced a new online application for registered USPS.com customers to “inquire about missing items.” The new USPS’ “Missing Mail” application will allow customers to complete a search request. Access to the application is available on USPS.com under Help>Find Missing Mail.

unveiling a ‘Deliver the Win’ Dashboard this summer.” “This new USPS system will provide customers with delivery visibility into their political mailings,” it said, noting that “[m]ailers will be able to; Track the delivery status of every Full-Service campaign mailing; Know which Zip Codes have received the mail; Analyze mail delivery by key geographic variables; Display delivery data in graphical map view or columnar data view; Export delivery information as a map or in raw form.”

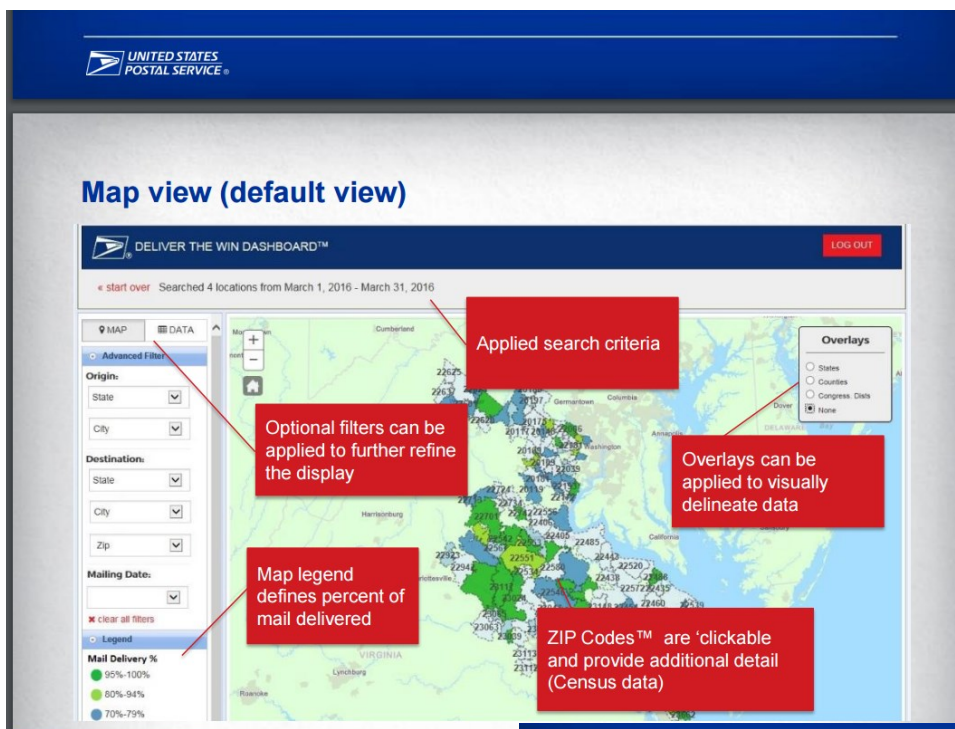
The USPS in its presentation includes the below slides showing the “Deliver the Win” dashboard landing page and functionality.

Industry representatives at the last MTAC meeting



had raised concerns around the “tools” the USPS says it will be providing for political mailings – which are not provided to other users of Standard Mail, despite the fact that political mailings pay no different postage.

The USPS had scheduled a webinar at industry’s request subsequent to the MTAC meeting, but then canceled the webinar and has not yet announced a re-schedule date.



Mail Service Provider	Destination	# pieces	% delivered
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. McLean, VA 22102	250	85%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Arlington, VA 22207	250	90%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Arlington, VA 22208	150	75%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Fairfax, VA 22031	1200	100%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Fairfax, VA 22032	800	100%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Falls Church, VA 22042	250	88%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Falls Church, VA 22041	50	0%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Alexandria, VA 22311	950	60%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Arlington, VA 22206	650	10%
Smith for Senate - CRID 198762 123 Main St., Richmond, VA	Mr. ZIP Mailings, Inc. Arlington, VA 22202	500	64%



PostCom's 2016-2017 Operations Planner

(updated as of 6/1/16)

Date	Category	Proposed/New Requirements
TBD	IMb Full-Service Mail	USPS to publish proposed rules in <i>Federal Register</i> around moving to a census-based Move Update verification process. [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 03-15]
TBD	IMb Full-Service Mail	USPS to publish proposed rules in <i>Federal Register</i> outlining legal restraint exceptions to Move Update verification process. [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 03-15]
TBD 2016	All Mail	USPS to resume implementation of Phase 2 Network Rationalization facility consolidations. [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 02-15]
November 1, 2015 - ?	All Mail	USPS pilot test in NYC area for Informed Delivery (formerly known as "Real Mail Notification" program) [For more information, see <i>PostCom Post Ops Updates</i> 01-16 and 03-15]
Jan 15 - Aug 31, 2016	First-Class and Standard Mail	Registration period for USPS' proposed Emerging and Advanced Technology/Video in Print 2016 promotion
Jan 15 - Aug 31, 2016	Standard Mail	Registration period for USPS' proposed Tactile, Sensory & Interactive Mailpiece Engagement 2016 promotion
March 1 - Aug 31, 2016	First-Class and Standard Mail	Promotion period for USPS' proposed Emerging and Advanced Technology/Video in Print 2016 promotion
March 1 - Aug 31, 2016	Standard Mail	Promotion period for USPS' proposed Tactile, Sensory & Interactive Mailpiece Engagement 2016 promotion.
April - Sept	Flats	USPS to activate FPARS at 17 sites [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 02-16, 01-16 and 04-15.]
April 1 - June 30, 2016	First-Class Mail Reply Mail	Promotion period for USPS' proposed Earned Value Reply Mail 2016 promotion.
May 15 - Dec 31, 2016	Standard Mail	Registration period for USPS' proposed Mobile Shopping 2016 promotion.
May 15 - Dec 31, 2016	First-Class Mail	Registration period for USPS' proposed Personalized Color Transpromo 2016 promotion.
June 2016?	All Mail	USPS to release updated draft of its <i>Streamlined Mail Entry for Letters and Flats</i> , and provide mailers at least one month to review and provide feedback [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 02-16, 01-16 and 04-15.]
July 5, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	National deployment for IMb Tracing Piece Visibility migration, container/tray visibility, bundle visibility for automation handling events, web-enabled mail tracking (Phase 1), flexible data provisioning (Phase 1), and flexible data integration (Phase 1) [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
June 25, 2016	All Mail	Deadline for USPS' <i>Irresistible Mail</i> quarterly award [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 03-16]
July 2016	PO Box Holders/Caller Service	USPS to implement new Enterprise Payment System for PO Box/Caller Service customers [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 01-15]

Date	Category	Proposed/New Requirements
July 2016 /2	IMb Full-Svc	USPS to begin assessing additional postage for electronic verification errors (valid MID, valid STID, by/for, barcode uniqueness, entry facility, unlinked copalletization) in excess of established thresholds for IMb Full-Service mail – based on June mailing data [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 02-16, 01-16, 04-15, 03-15, 07-14 and 06-14]
July 1 - Dec 31, 2016	First-Class Mail	Promotion period for USPS' proposed Personalized Color Transpromo 2016 promotion.
July 1 - Dec 31, 2016	Standard Mail	Promotion period for USPS' proposed Mobile Shopping 2016 promotion.
July 25, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	Pilot test start date for USPS' Informed Visibility Logical Delivery events [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
July 29, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	Completion dates for USPS' Informed Visibility migration of IMb Tracing Piece Visibility, migration of container/tray visibility, and migration for bundle visibility for automation handling events [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
August 15, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	National deployment of USPS' Informed Visibility logical delivery events [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
August 22, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	Pilot enhancements for USPS' Informed Visibility Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events, and pilot start date for Assumed Handling Events. Pilot start of Roles & Permissions Management [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
Sept. 8, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	Pilot start dates for USPS' Informed Visibility Start-the-Clock migration, and web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
Sept. 12, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	National deployment dates for enhancements for USPS' Informed Visibility Bundle Visibility for handheld & logical handling events. National deployment of Roles & Permissions Management [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
Sept. 26, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	National rollout dates for USPS' Informed Visibility Start-the-Clock migration and web-enabled Mail Tracking & Flexible Data Provisioning (Phase 2) [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
Oct. 14, 2016	All Market Dominant Mail	Completion of USPS' Informed Visibility Start-the-Clock migration [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 03-16 and 02-16]
January 2017	All Market Dominant Mail	USPS to implement pricing/product changes [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Updates</i> 02-16, 01-16 and 04-15]
Early 2017	All mail	USPS planning nationwide rollout of its Informed Delivery service in "early 2017" [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 02-16]
July 1, 2017	All Mail	All postal address management products and systems must be converted from SHA- to SHA-2 format. [More information in PostCom's <i>Post Ops Update</i> 03-15]