

Classification Reform case, the Postal Service proposed adopting a bimonthly update frequency for its AIS products. It also proposed requiring that carrier route information used in qualifying for all carrier route rates be obtained through a match to a current Carrier Route Information System (CRIS) scheme or other AIS product that contains carrier route coding information no more than 90 days before the date of the mailing. This change is necessary due to the proposed increase in the issuance cycle of AIS products and the need to standardize the time frames applicable to the use of those products. A more detailed discussion of this change is set forth below in the section on the addressing proposals in the August 30 notice. The Postal Service proposes to apply these AIS changes to carrier route mailings of all classes and subclasses. Given the frequency of route adjustments that will occur over the next few years, maintaining the old matching schedule for some carrier route mail while changing it for other mail would be confusing, costly and irrational because of overlapping required updates.

Mailers at ZIP+4 and Barcoded rates will also be required to use a current database as defined under new release date schedules when matching addresses to the ZIP+4 database. Mailings prepared under subclasses not included under the current proposals for Classification Reform would need to have their addresses matched to the ZIP+4 database using CASS- or MASS-certified address matching software once a year, whereas mailings prepared under the reformed subclasses would need to have this match performed at least once every 6 months. The frequency at which address matching software must obtain CASS/MASS certification also will not change.

6. Changes Affecting All Third-Class Mail

a. Due to the proposed adoption of the name Standard Mail as part of Classification Reform for all mail currently in third- and fourth-class mail, the Postal Service proposes to change the class abbreviations from 3C to STD for sack, tray, and pallet labels for current third-class mail (which will be known as Standard Mail (A)).

b. To make it easier to apply the rate/subclass markings that are proposed under Classification Reform, this proposal would allow Standard mailers the option of placing these markings on the optional endorsement line, in front of the package label information.

7. Proposed Changes Affecting Nonprofit Third-Class Mail

As a convenience to Nonprofit Standard mailers, the Postal Service proposes to allow an optional preparation of Nonprofit Standard Mail under the rate eligibility, presort rules, PAVE-certified presort software or standardized documentation requirements, and address quality and accuracy standards for the reformed subclasses. The current third-class nonprofit rates would apply to such mailings. For example, mailers could choose to prepare a letter-size Nonprofit 3/5 and Basic mailing under the preparation rules for the Regular Standard Mail subclass. This would mean that the addresses would have to be matched to the correct 5-digit ZIP Code no more than 1 year before the date of mailing; PAVE-certified software would have to be used to presort the mailing or standardized documentation would have to be submitted with the mailing; the pieces would have to be in groups of 150 pieces to a 3-digit area trayed to 5-digit and 3-digit destinations, with the trays sleeved and strapped. The current nonprofit third-class 3/5 rates would apply to groups of 150 pieces for a 3-digit area properly presorted under the Regular Standard Mail standards. Preparation of Nonprofit Standard Mail under the rules for Regular, Automation, or Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail would also enable it to be combined (cmailed) with mailings of those subclasses.

8. Proposed Changes Affecting All Current Second-Class Mail

a. Due to the change in the name of second-class mail that is proposed with implementation of Classification Reform, the Postal Service proposes to change the class abbreviations from 2C or NEWS to PERIOD or NEWS, as applicable, for sack, tray, and pallet labels for all Periodicals, including Preferred Rate Periodicals. In addition, the mail processing category of the mail will be required to follow the class abbreviation on the second line of the sack or tray label, making those standards for Periodicals consistent with other classes of mail, and assist Postal Service mail processing personnel in directing containers of Periodicals to the proper operation.

b. The Periodicals imprints required as part of the identification statement would be changed from "Second-Class Postage Paid at * * *" and "Application to Mail at Second-Class Postage Rates is Pending at * * *" to "Periodicals Postage Paid at * * *" and

"Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Rates is Pending at * * *."

9. Proposed Changes Affecting Preferred Rate Second-Class Mail

As a convenience to Preferred Rate Periodicals mailers, the Postal Service proposes to allow the optional preparation of Preferred Rate Periodicals under the presort and eligibility rules for Regular Periodicals (including addressing and PAVE-certified or standardized documentation standards). The current second-class preferred rates would apply to such mailings. For example, if a mailer chose to prepare a letter-size Nonprofit Level G and H mailing under the preparation rules for the Regular Periodicals 3/5 and Basic rates, the pieces would have to be trayed, sleeved, and strapped, and optional city and optional SCF sortations could not be performed. The Level H rates would apply only to 5-digit and unique 3-digit packages properly sorted to 5-digit and 3-digit trays.

10. Proposed Changes Affecting All Current Fourth-Class Mail

Due to the change in the name of fourth-class mail that is proposed with implementation of Classification Reform, the Postal Service proposes to change the class abbreviations from 4C to STD 4C for sack labels for fourth-class mail (which will be known as Standard Mail (B)), and to change the rate markings "Special Fourth-Class" and "Presorted Special Fourth-Class" to "Special Standard Mail" and "Presorted Special Standard Mail" to agree with the revised names for these types of mail.

B. Summary of Comments From Second Notice

The Postal Service received 49 pieces of correspondence offering a total of 207 comments on the August 30 notice. Respondents included major mailer associations, individual publishers, printers, presort bureaus, mailers, and private citizens. As with the first notice, the comments do not lend themselves to easy categorization or direct association with specific provisions in the second notice. Rather, commenters tended to speak to general areas of concern, such as automation, or to common aspects of several proposed criteria, such as tray volumes for several different presort levels. Although the proposals were replicated in the second notice in the same format as in the first, comments tended to aggregate these into a single response.

The largest single area to which comments were directed in general was