Workshop Meeting Information

The staff intends to conduct a workshop to provide for an exchange of information related to the risk-informed revisions to the technical requirements of 10 CFR Part 50. Persons other than NRC staff and NRC contractors interested in making a presentation at the workshop should notify Mary Drouin, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, MS: T10–E50, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington D.C. 20555–0001, (301) 415–6675, email: mxd@nrc.gov.

Date: February 24, 2000 (with possible extension to February 25, 2000).

Agenda: To be provided.

Location: NRC Auditorium, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Registration: No registration fee for workshop; however, notification of attendance is requested so that adequate space, materials, etc., for the workshop can be arranged. Notification of attendance should be directed to Alan Kuritzky, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, MS: T10–E50, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555–0001, (301) 415–6255, email: ask1@nrc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alan Kuritzky, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, MS: T10–E50, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555–0001, (301) 415–6255, email: ask1@nrc.gov.

Dated this 23d day of December 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Mark A. Cunningham,

Probabilistic Risk Analysis Branch, Division of Risk Analysis and Applications, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.

[FR Doc. 99–34052 Filed 12–30–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

POSTAL SERVICE

Quality Control Reviews for Discounted Letters (Presorted/ Automation Rate Mail)

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Postal Service is implementing more efficient quality control procedures to check letter mail preparation for rates claimed on postage statements. An automated, in-depth review of selected letter size mailings will be conducted using the Mail Quality Analysis (MQA) program, in addition to verification procedures now in use for all mailings. MQA will use existing automated equipment and reports to compare actual presort to mailer documentation for sampled mail. MQA also will provide feedback on the readability of mailer-applied barcodes. The Postal Service seeks comments on the Mail Quality Analysis (MQA) program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Phase one of the Mail Quality Analysis Program will begin on January 3, 2000. All written comments must be received on or before February 2, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be mailed or delivered to Rates and Classification Service Center, U.S. Postal Service, 5904 Richmond Highway, Suite 500, Alexandria VA 22303–2736.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Richards, (703) 329–3684.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Improperly prepared mail results in additional USPS handling and related costs that eventually are passed on to all customers in the form of rate increases. Since 1982, the Postal Service has applied quality controls in the form of standardized mail acceptance and mail verification procedures to support the goal of keeping postage rates stable. Along with the National Bulk Mail Verification Program (NBMVP) in 1982, the Postal Service has taken many steps to control operating costs, assess postage fairly for each mailer, and charge postage commensurate with the preparation of the mail. Classification reform in 1996 and the last rate case (R97–1) gave rate incentives for properly preparing mail that is compatible with automated processing and presorted to avoid certain processing operations.

As further background, revisions to the National Bulk Mail Verification Program through two Postal Bulletin articles in 1989 reduced the acceptable tolerance level for presort errors from 10 percent to 5 percent before a postage adjustment was calculated. Mailers were later advised in a Postal Bulletin article in 1989 that tolerance levels for errors would be reduced to 2 percent at a future date. Further, in 1996, classification reform formalized the requirement that only mail meeting automation requirements is eligible for automation rates. MQA does not involve a change in the current 5 percent presort error tolerance level.

Today, both mailer production and Postal Service processing are highly automated processes. Large mailings are more easily created and produced with each advance in mail production hardware and software. It has become increasingly important for mailers to introduce quality assurance features into mail production operations in the design and set-up stages. Once production of a mailing begins, problems not identified through internal quality controls may not be easily corrected. Problems discovered by the Postal Service related to presorting and automation specifications generally surface during mail processing, which is often far from the acceptance point for the mailing. It is therefore critical for mailers to use the tools noted below and effective quality assurance procedures to produce mail that follows Domestic Mail Manual requirements for the postage rates claimed.

Using mailer's input, the Postal Service has provided a variety of tools to improve mail quality in the design and set-up stages. Included are a variety of address management programs, Presort Accuracy Validation and Evaluation (PAVE), the Mailpiece Quality Control Program (MQC), the Mail Preparation Total Quality Management Program (MPTQM), various handbooks and brochures, the Domestic Mail Manual, and Customer Support Rulings. Information on many of these tools is available on the Postal Service Internet sites. Postal business centers, business mail entry managers, mailpiece design analysts, and the National Customer Service Center are available to assist customers in design of mail. The net effect of these efforts is the expectation that today's business mailings should be of exceptionally high quality.

Current Postal Service quality controls focus on manual verification of a small number of mail pieces and were designed when mail production and mail processing environments were not highly automated. Under MQA, larger portions of selected mailings will be reviewed as they are run on Postal Service barcode sorters. MQA will use reports already available from this equipment (which has been performing this function with documented accuracy for years) to compare the mailing, or a portion of the mailing, to the postage statement and supporting mailer documentation for that specific mailing. MQA will assist the Postal Service in providing improved diagnostic feedback to mailers on the quality of sampled mail. These procedures will lead to improved mail quality, reduction in costs, and correct payment of postage.

Mail will be isolated at postal facilities and detached mail units. The business mail entry unit, revenue assurance, and mail processing will work together using automated equipment already in place to perform the analysis of MQA samples. Initial runs will focus on large volume

mailings, with subsequent mail selection determined by the results of MQA reports and feedback from mail processing, mail acceptance, and other sources.

MQA will be implemented in two phases. Phase one will implement the MQA program on a national basis in December 1999, collect data, and develop improvements to MQA procedures. During phase one, mailers will receive diagnostic reports only. The reports will allow the mailer to correct quality problems. Phase one will run through June 2, 2000. Phase two will begin on June 3, 2000, and as of this date postage adjustments will be made when presort error rates over 5 percent are found. Even during this phase, a mailer's first MQA report (for mailers who received no report during phase one) will be for diagnostic and notification purposes only, with no postage adjustment cited. Additionally, errors discovered through MQA that amount to less than $50 in additional postage will not be assessed at any point in time. Mailers will have their normal appeal rights regarding postage adjustments. Domestic Mail Manual PO 11.4–11.5. In both phase one and two, MQA will provide feedback on barcode readability. A decision will be made at a later date as to whether postage adjustments eventually will apply.

By necessity, MQA will extract data about a mailing after acceptance of the mail, as it is entered into postal processing. The numerous postage rates and discounts available, automation of mail production, and acceptance and processing procedures, combined with more mail requesting specific in-home delivery dates, mean that reworking mail after initial acceptance has become less viable. Mailers will not have the option of reworking mail to avoid a postage adjustment after June 2, 2000.

Now and in the past, Domestic Mail Manual G020.2 has described how all mailers are required to comply with applicable postal standards. DMM G020.2.2 and each postage statement also show that when proper postage is not claimed on the postage statement, the Postal Service must collect correct postage, at or after the time of acceptance. Mailers with effective quality assurance procedures resulting in accurate representation of their mail on each postage statement will not encounter postage adjustments and therefore will not be affected by MQA.

The Postal Service and mailers have worked together for many years to improve the quality of mail, which ultimately benefits all customers through lower USPS processing costs and more stable postage rates. MQA extends this effort further by incorporating an improved feedback procedure into the process. Mailers have for some time requested regular feedback concerning their mail. MQA will provide this feedback for selected mailings.

MQA procedures will be described in an upcoming issue of Mailers Companion.

Stanley F. Mires,

Chief Counsel, Legislative.

[FR Doc. 99–34051 Filed 12–30–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7710–12–P

POSTAL SERVICE

Privacy Act of 1974, System of Records

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Notice of amended system of records.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this document is to publish notice of amendments to Privacy Act system of records USPS 140.020, Postage—Postage Meter Records, renamed by this notice as USPS 140.020, Postage—Postage Evidencing System Records. The change is necessary to broaden the definition to include new postage evidencing technology that allows customers to purchase postage and print evidence of postage directly onto envelopes and labels using their personal computers, printers, and the Internet (PC Postage). In addition, changes in the system description are required to reflect collection of information related to payment of postage through both traditional paper-based licensing, as well as new postage evidencing products that allow customers to apply for licenses online.

DATES: Any interested party may submit written comments on the proposed amendments. This proposal will become effective without further notice on February 2, 2000, unless comments received on or before that date result in a contrary determination.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on this proposal should be mailed or delivered to: Administration and FOIA, United States Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, RM 8141, Washington, DC 20260–5202. Copies of all written comments will be available at the above address for public inspection and photocopying between 8 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Betty Sheriff (202) 268–2608.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Privacy Act system of records USPS 140.020, Postage—Postage Meter Records, renamed by this notice as USPS 140.020, Postage—Postage Evidencing System Records, has traditionally covered information collected from customers who apply for meter licenses and who purchase postage under those meter licenses. The system name and notice is amended to make it clear that the system also covers information collected through implementation of new technology information postage evidencing systems. This new technology has led to postage evidencing systems that generate an Information Based Indicia.

Using products developed by commercial vendors, the Postal Service offers a service that lets customers purchase postage and print evidence of postage directly onto envelopes and labels using their personal computers, printers, and the Internet. Customers must have a Postal Service-issued license before they can purchase and print postage. The license applications are processed through traditional licensing methods with the Postal Service maintaining the kind of information historically covered by system USPS 140.020. The postage is printed on the label or envelope in the form of a special digital imprint called an Information Based Indicia. Postage evidencing systems that produce an Information Based Indicia generate transaction log files for each indicia created by a customer. These transaction log files include data unique to security and revenue protection under the Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP). This notice expands the categories of records in the system to include the new information collected by the postage evidencing systems generating Information Based Indicia and improves the description of the data historically collected.

In addition, because data from the system may be used by the Postal Service to advise the user about Postal Service products and services, the purpose statement is expanded to include that secondary use. Routine use 2 is changed to reflect the change in name from postage meter to postage evidencing system.

The system changes are not expected to have an effect on individual privacy rights. Most information kept within the system pertains to businesses rather than individuals. To the extent information is kept about individuals, the changes do not in any manner alter the nature or increase the types of personal information already kept in the system. In fact, the amount of personal information kept is narrowed to the extent that the Postal Service will no