

News from the USPS



The United States Postal Service (USPS) is implementing Move Update price and classification changes, effective in March 2018. The Move Update postage assessment for non-compliance will increase from \$0.07 to \$0.08 per piece, but the Move Update verification method will also be changing. What exactly does this

Details of the Change

The existing Move Update compliance rules require mailers of commercial First-Class Mail and USPS Marketing Mail letters and flats to update addresses to reflect Change of Address (COA) orders as a basic eligibility requirement for automation and presort rates. Mailers may use any USPS-approved method to meet this requirement, and the addresses must be updated within 95 days preceding the mailing date.

PREPARING FOR MOVE UPDATE CHANGES

BY JEFF PEOPLES

Currently, the USPS uses Mail Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument (MERLIN) equipment to verify the Move Update compliance. This verification occurs prior to mail acceptance on a sample-based process. If the mailing selected for verification contains COA errors above the error threshold of 30%, then the Move Update charge of \$0.07 is applied to the percentage of pieces in the entire mailing above 30%.

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The new Move Update verification method will change the MERLIN verification method to the new Address Quality Census Assessment and Measurement Process. This process will utilize the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) technology to verify the address quality of mail submitted by electronic documentation (eDoc) after it has entered the mailstream. This process utilizes existing technology and allows for ALL eligible pieces to be verified, not just a sampling as with the current MERLIN process.

Using the new method, address quality will be evaluated on a calendar month basis by calculating the ratio of mail pieces submitted in the calendar month with COA errors, to all qualifying mail pieces submitted by a mailer in that calendar month. If this ratio is greater than the new error threshold of 0.5% of all eligible pieces, the new Move Update charge of \$0.08 will be applied to the number of mail pieces with COA errors that exceed the threshold.

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The biggest impact of this upcoming change is that now **all** addresses in your mailings will be subject to Move Update verification, not just the few random samplings which may have occurred in the past using the MERLIN method. While this affects both letter and flat-size mailings, flat-size mailers may see more of an impact,

Bottom line: Mail list owners and their mail service providers (MSPs) should be working to ensure that address hygiene processes are being diligently applied so mailings are submitted with up-to-date addresses. This proactive approach will help reduce the potential for Move Update validation assessments.