



29 May 2019

Royal Mail Wholesale

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ROYAL MAIL ADVERTISING MAIL®: MODERNISING THE SEED PROCESS

Dear customer

Royal Mail Advertising Mail® offers a postage discount off standard access, subject to the content of the Advertising Mail items meeting the requirements set out in the Access Letters Contract. To make it easier for you to ensure compliance with the requirements and to help ensure a level playing field for all in the letters postal market, we are updating the seed/sample (“seed”) process which we use to check the eligibility of items declared as Advertising Mail. The changes set out in the letter apply equally to Royal Mail Responsible Mail®.

Current process

Posting customers are required to provide us with a seed on the same date as the Advertising Mail posting is handed over to Royal Mail¹ to enable us to verify conformance with the content requirements. To ensure this:

1. Each week, you must send us a list of Advertising Mail posting customers’ names and their UCID numbers. We use the list to help us identify the seed to the relevant Advertising Mail sales order on the docket; and
2. Following our checks, each week we send you a list of UCIDs for which we have not received the seed and ask you to send us one within two weeks of the request.

Why we are updating the current process

Despite our weekly retrospective requests for seeds, average weekly compliance remains below 75% Advertising Mail postings declared. We strongly believe we can all do more to achieve 100% compliance.

Ideas to remedy the issue

Last Autumn, we asked you to put forward ideas on what we could do to help you manage the seed process better to ensure we receive a sample for every posting. We also shared a few ideas of our own and asked for your feedback on them. Customers highlighted three key areas for our attention. We listened to your feedback and are pleased to confirm that we can implement remedies which address these areas:

#	Customer feedback	Remedy
1.	Customer are currently required to send RM a weekly list of customer names per UCID to	We can use Mailmark SCID data to identify mail originators of Advertising Mail postings

¹ See paragraph 7.2.3 of Schedule 6: Royal Mail Advertising Mail® and paragraph 8.2.3 of Schedule 7: Royal Mail Responsible Mail®.

	identify the originating customer. Customers say this is time consuming, manual and a duplication of effort for Mailmark postings for which the SCID data can be used.	and, additionally, use it to create an Advertising Mail customer report that informs whether the posting includes an item with the seed address. This means customers could use Mailmark Reporting to help themselves monitor compliance to the specification at the time of each posting.
2.	Customers are required to ensure that all posting customers send a hard copy seed. Customers say it is not easy to check compliance if they work with third party supply chains or where data files cannot be amended to include a seed.	We are not changing the requirement for customers to send us a hard copy seed on the same date as the Advertising Mail posting is handed over to us. However we have developed a process for customers to optionally send us a PDF electronic seed or a hard copy seed within 2 weeks of us notifying you that we have not received one.
3.	RM create and monitor a weekly seed receipt register. This is a time consuming, manual administrative process that in this data rich and technologically advanced age can be automated to save time and make for more accurate reconciliation of seed to poster/sales order.	We have developed and tested a new "Seed not-received" report that we will send to affected customers each week (relating to postings two weeks previous) to inform them of the seeds not received (by SCID for Mailmark and by UCID for non-Mailmark) and request the missing seeds to be sent to us within two weeks. Customers will find it quicker to identify the poster from the SCID details than they currently do from only knowing the UCID number.

Changes to the process

Following our review of your feedback, and in consideration of customers that post Advertising Mail using an Exceptions SCID under our SCIDs Exceptions Policy, we are pleased to announce the following changes to the seed check process for Advertising Mail and Responsible Mail which will take effect from 29 May 2019:

Activity	Current process	Change to process
1. Weekly UCID list	Each week customer sends RM a list of Advertising Mail postings by UCID to identify the mail originator.	We are ceasing the requirement for customers to send RM a UCID list. RM will use Mailmark data to identify the mail originator ² . For Mailmark postings, we will use the Mailmark data to identify the mail originator. For non-Mailmark postings we will use Dockethub data to identify the mail originator.
2. Seed not received report	RM sends customers a weekly list of UCIDs for which they did	RM sends customers a weekly report of Mailmark postings that did not contain a seed and of non-Mailmark postings for

² We will not deem such cessation to be a breach by the customer of paragraph 9.1.3 of Schedule 6: Royal Mail Advertising Mail® or paragraph 10.1.3 of Schedule 7: Royal Mail Responsible Mail®. We undertake to use the customer's Mailmark data for the sole and exclusive purpose of auditing the relevant Mailing Items for compliance with the relevant Schedule.

	not receive a seed and requests to receive a seed within 2 weeks.	which they did not receive a seed, and requests to receive a seed within 2 weeks.
3. Physical seed	Following our request to send us a seed within 2 weeks, customers must send us a hard copy seed to enable RM to verify compliance.	Following our request to send us a seed within 2 weeks customers may send to RM a hard copy seed OR OPTIONALLY they can send a PDF copy of the posted pack to enable RM to verify compliance*.
4. Mailmark Reporting	Not available.	(Recommended**) Customers to access Mailmark Reporting to check whether a posting contains a seed with the seed address.
5. Consolidated UCID postings for customers set up with an Exceptions SCID	Customers must not send different mail originators' postings using a single UCID because we are unable to verify the volume per uniform message.	For non-Mailmark postings and postings that fall outside of the Exception SCID policy, the current process continues to apply. Where RM has set a mail producer customer up with an Exceptions SCID ³ , the customer may submit a Mailmark eManifest under that SCID that contains different mail originators' postings, provided that the customer identifies on the eManifest each discrete mail originator's posting volumes (via Campaign Name field) and has sent in a seed for each discrete posting.

**Subject to the clarity and accuracy of the electronic information provided, the customer may not need to send DSACC a physical seed. Customers must contact us if they wish to use this PDF process so that we can set them up with the electronic receipt process.*

*** Using this Mailmark report enables customers to take corrective action at the time the posting is posted to send in a seed of the posting before we issue a "seed not received" request.*

How you can help effective seed not received reporting

To help us accurately identify whether or not a seed has been sent, customers should remember to take the following steps:

1. for **Mailmark postings**:
 - a) include the seed as an item in the eManifest; and
 - b) each Advertising Mail posting should identify individual campaigns within the 'Campaign' field of the eManifest;
 - c) ensure the seed has a valid Mailmark barcode applied to it; and
 - d) send the seed to us as an individual item at the time of sending the corresponding Advertising Mail posting.

³ To see our SCID Exceptions policy visit <https://www.royalmailwholesale.com/mint-project/uploads/245000675.pdf>.

2. for **non-Mailmark postings** include the UCID reference in Dockethub.

For those customers who adhere to their contractual requirements and send seeds for 100% of their Advertising Mail postings, this is an opportunity for you to stop sending your weekly UCID list to DSACC. For those customers who are at less than 100% adherence, we hope this modernised process will support you to increase your compliance by making it simpler and easier to adhere to the Advertising Mail seed requirements.

Over the next 3 months, our Access Account teams will work with you to help you with implementing the new process, and in particular with using the new “seed not received” reports and the use of the ‘Campaign Field’ of the eManifest. We hope this time will enable you to review your processes, and as appropriate, your customers’ Advertising Mail seed processes and make any necessary changes to ensure compliance.

To ensure that all our customers enjoy a level playing field, we are keen to allow customers a 3-month window before we begin to remove discount from Advertising Mail postings where, despite all our efforts, a seed has not been provided within two weeks of our request⁴. We will begin removing the Advertising Mail discount from 26 August 2019,

We look forward to working with you and your teams to improve this necessary part of the Advertising Mail service and are grateful for your support. If you have any queries in the meantime please contact your Account Director.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Cable
Wholesale Products Director
Royal Mail Letters

⁴ See paragraph 8.1.2 of Schedule 6: Royal Mail Advertising Mail® and paragraph 9.1.2 of Schedule 7: Royal Mail Responsible Mail®.