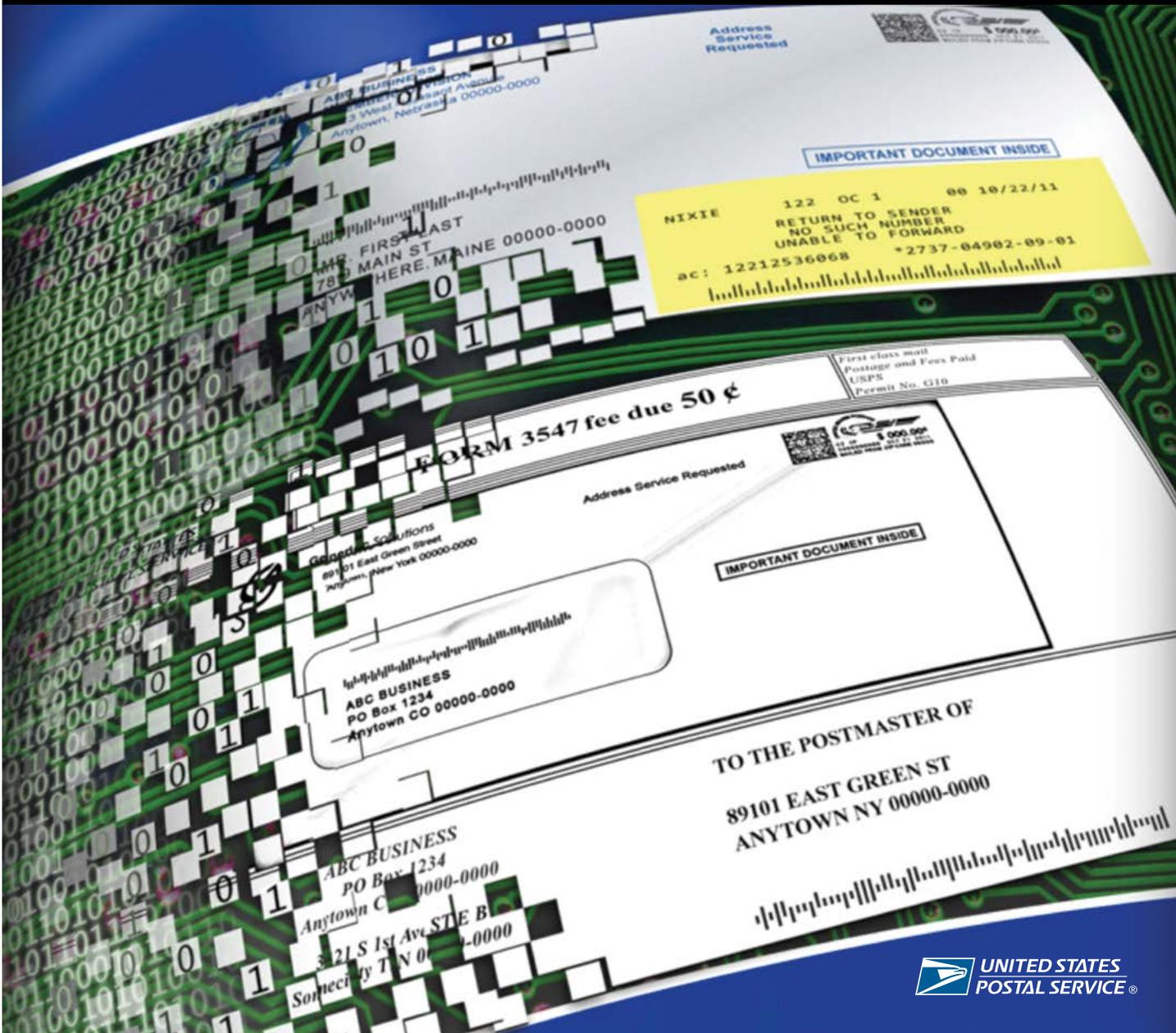


ACS™ Product Information Guide

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Change History

Version #	Date	Reference Title	Description of Change
1.2	09/18/2017	Throughout the document	Changed links from RIBBS to PostalPro.
		ACS: An Intelligent Solution	Updated the ACS telephone number to the toll-free number at 877-640-0724 (Option 1).
		Throughout the document	Updated billing information and made other small corrections.
		Throughout the document	Updated the document to reflect that, on January 22, 2017, Standard Mail underwent a name change and was rebranded as USPS Marketing Mail.
1.1	07/02/2013	Change History	Added.
		Trademark Table	Added.
		Introduction	Added IMpb.
		Introduction	Added information regarding a Fulfillment Service called SingleSource ACS, which provides all ACS transactions in the same fulfillment format and provides detailed shipping notice data files and invoice data files that will allow the customer to automate the reconciliation of fulfillment files.
		IMpb ACS	Added.
		Fulfillment Files	Added IMpb and SingleSource.
		SingleSource ACS Fulfillment	Added
		Billing Traditional and OneCode	Renamed Billing to Billing Traditional and OneCode.
Billing IMpb and SingleSource	Added		
1.0	11/18/2011	PUB 8	Original document.

ACS: An Intelligent Solution

Meeting Mailers' Needs

Right now, mailers may be finishing those last-minute details to get billings, parcels, or magazines to clients or subscribers. Or perhaps they are working against a deadline to get a direct mail campaign off and running. Mailers need an address change system that is fast, secure, reliable, and economical. In response to those needs, the Postal Service offers ACS.

ACS is an on-piece address correction service that helps to identify if the addressee has moved. It is used in conjunction with the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb) and/or ancillary service endorsements so mail can reach the proper destination. ACS is ideal for those who maintain addressee records on computers. ACS mailers configure mailing address labels, envelopes, and address blocks to comply with ACS participation requirements, and may develop their own matching software to update their mailing list. There is no formal contract or service charge associated with using ACS. Fees are based on the number of change of address (COA) and nixie (mail that is undeliverable for reasons other than a move) notices provided to the ACS customer.

Introduction

Delivery information is only as good as the quality of the address data. Our goal is to help customers send their mail to the correct address every time. To help meet this objective, ACS is designed to substantially reduce the number of manual address correction notifications sent to mailers and replace them with electronic notices.

ACS has four distinct implementation methods: Traditional ACS, using a USPS-assigned Participant Code and optional keyline; OneCode ACS or Full Service ACS, using the Intelligent Mail barcode; and IMpb ACS, using the Intelligent Mail package barcode. Each method offers several different options. There is also a special subset of ACS called Shipper Paid Forwarding/Return, which may be used for heavy catalogs and parcels. Technical information on all ACS services is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.” Technical information on how to qualify for Full Service ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/GuidetoFullService>.

To participate in ACS, mailers must modify their mailing label and/or mailpiece. The type of modification needed depends on the type of ACS implementation method chosen. Clarification regarding the required modifications is available in the Publication under the sections entitled “Traditional ACS,” “OneCode ACS,” “IMpb ACS,” and “Full Service ACS.”

Once an ACS-modified mailpiece is identified as undeliverable as addressed (UAA) and processed in the USPS nationwide network of Postal Automated Redirection System (PARS) and Computerized Forwarding System (CFS) sites, an electronic COA or nixie notice is generated. Mailers are advised that ACS is an enhancement to the original manual (hard copy) notices provided by Post Offices. It does not completely replace or eliminate hard copy address change notifications.

Benefits of ACS

Electronic and/or automated address correction has many benefits over manual address correction. A mailer who uses ACS can do the following:

- Reduce the volume of undeliverable-as-addressed (UAA) mail.
- Reduce manual address correction costs.
- Reduce labor-intensive address change functions by minimizing returned mail.
- Select electronic or automated address change information for specific mailings.
- Choose when to retrieve fulfillment of time-sensitive information.
- Retrieve address change information electronically via a secure Internet site.

ACS is designed to substantially reduce the number of address correction notices provided manually to mailers and replace them with electronic notifications. However, ACS does not currently and will not for the foreseeable future entirely eliminate manual address correction notices. Therefore, ACS is not a guaranteed service; the Postal Service makes no assurance that any minimum percentage of a mailer's address correction notifications will be provided electronically rather than manually.

Note: If any discrepancy exists between this document (Publication 8) and *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)*, the DMM always takes precedence. For the most current DMM, go to the Postal Explorer Web site (<http://pe.usps.gov>) and click on the links for Domestic Mail Manual (DMM). Any regulation in this publication can be amended or rescinded by notices in the *Postal Bulletin*, *Federal Register*, or the DMM. For further information, refer to the DMM, email the ACS Department at acs@usps.gov, or call the ACS Department at the National Customer Support Center toll free at 877-640-0724 (Option 1).

Note: The Postal Service encourages new and current ACS participants to sign up for a Fulfillment Service called SingleSource ACS. SingleSource ACS fulfillment removes the need for handling different file formats when dealing with Full Service ACS, OneCode ACS, IMpb ACS, and Traditional ACS. With SingleSource ACS, all of the ACS notices are combined into a single file format and are provided via Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF). In addition to providing all ACS transactions in the same fulfillment format, it also provides detailed shipping notice data files and invoice data files that allow the customer to automate the reconciliation of fulfillment files. Participating in SingleSource ACS is as easy as selecting SingleSource ACS on the enrollment form. Information regarding SingleSource ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Ancillary Service Endorsements

ACS is an enhancement to the existing manual address correction process provided with the use of Ancillary Service endorsements on all mail classes except Periodicals. The following ancillary services are available for use with ACS on First-Class Mail, USPS Marketing Mail, Package Services, and Parcel Select:

- **Address Service Requested** provides forwarding and address correction services when possible. If the mail is undeliverable and not forwardable, it is returned to the sender with the reason identified on the mailpiece.
- **Change Service Requested** provides address correction services without forwarding or return. If undeliverable, either the new address or the reason it is undeliverable is provided to the sender.
- **Return Service Requested** provides address correction services and always returns the piece.

The printed endorsement “Electronic Service Requested” is available for use *only* if the mailer is requesting ACS notices. The request for Address Service Requested, Change Service Requested, and Return Service Requested is contained in the Intelligent Mail barcode or in the ACS profile retained and managed by the ACS Department at the National Customer Support Center in Memphis, TN. “Electronic Service Requested” must not be printed on mail that requests manual or no address corrections.

For more information regarding the use of these ancillary service endorsements and the requirements for printing, refer to the DMM.

ACS mailers have the advantage of additional options for each of these endorsements. Periodicals do not require a printed endorsement to receive electronic address corrections. ACS publication mailers have multiple options for when they may be notified that an addressee has moved. For details about these additional options, refer to the DMM or to the technical documentation available for the preferred ACS implementation method.

OneCode ACS

OneCode ACS allows customers mailing First-Class Mail, USPS Marketing Mail, or Periodicals (flats or letters) to receive electronic or automated address corrections through the use of the IMb. Technical information regarding the Intelligent Mail barcode is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/intelligent-mail-barcode> — scroll down to the section titled “Featured Resources.”

Information embedded in the IMb includes the Mailer ID, which is used to identify the mail owner or mail service provider. The Sequence Number can be used to identify the customer, or it can be used to identify the mailpiece itself. The Service Type Identifier in the IMb represents the ancillary service requested, and on First-Class Mail it can replace the printed endorsement. USPS Marketing Mail still requires a printed endorsement.

Use of the IMb allows for a less “cluttered” address block (as illustrated below in Exhibit 1) on the mailpiece, and when used on letters may provide automated notices and lower address correction fees.

Exhibit 1: OneCode ACS Mailpiece



1. The Intelligent Mail barcode applied to the mail contains the following information:
 - a. Presort information (flats only).
 - b. Service Type Identifier that requests specific services like ACS and/or Informed Visibility (IV).
 - c. Mailer ID that identifies the mail owner or mail service provider.
 - d. Serial or sequence number that uniquely identifies the mailpiece or the addressee.
 - e. Routing information that provides the ZIP Code and delivery point validation that allows the mail to be sorted directly to the address.

Note: The optional *printed* “Ancillary Service Endorsement” (not shown) provides the Postal Service with the sender’s instructions on how to handle the mail if it is UAA. When using the IMb on First-Class Mail letters, the printed endorsement is optional. On USPS Marketing Mail, the printed endorsement is still required.

Technical information on OneCode ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Full Service ACS

Customers may use the Intelligent Mail barcode to qualify for automation discounts. The OneCode ACS infrastructure and processing methods for undeliverable-as-addressed mail are used as the basis for fulfilling address corrections provided as part of Full Service mailing benefits.

For address corrections to work properly in qualified Full Service mailings, the Service Type Identifier used in the Intelligent Mail barcode must reflect the Full Service options requesting ACS. Those Full Service mailpieces that are identified and processed as UAA generate an ACS notice that is fulfilled through the USPS Business Customer Gateway.

Technical information and documentation that explains how to qualify for Full Service discounts and the resulting Full Service ACS benefits is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/GuidetoFullService>.

Technical information and instructions on how to access the Business Customer Gateway and the Full Service benefits, including Full Service ACS reports, is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/ElectronicMailingInfoReportsGuide>.

Traditional ACS

Traditional ACS allows customers mailing letters, flats, or parcels to receive address corrections in an electronic format. It is available for all mail classes, including First-Class Mail, USPS Marketing Mail, Periodicals, Package Services, and Parcel Select. Mailing customers identify their mailpieces with a postal-supplied seven-character alpha identifier known as the ACS participant code. The pound sign (#) delimiter must precede the ACS participant code. In addition, mailer ancillary service endorsements must be printed on all mail other than periodicals. All ACS mail must include a valid domestic return address.

Keyline

A keyline is a unique code that allows mailers to either incorporate existing customer identifiers or create a new system that assists in locating the addressee in their database. Most Traditional ACS participants choose to use the keyline option, which provides an effective means of matching ACS notifications with the appropriate records in their address files.

Although not required to receive COA notices for Traditional ACS, the keyline is required if the mailer wants to receive electronic ACS nixie notices. Nixie notices provide reasons for non-delivery of mail not related to a move (e.g., Vacant, Refused, No Such Number, No Mail Receptacle). Unlike COA notices, which include all applicable customer information, nixie notices do not contain customer name, old address, or new address information. Therefore, the use of a keyline is needed to identify the customer record.

The keyline may consist of 4 to 16 characters including a check digit. Although the content of individual keylines must be unique to ensure identification of a particular customer within a mailer's address file, all keylines for a given ACS participant code *must be consistent* in terms of keyline characteristics: length (4 to 16 characters) and attribute (numeric, alpha, or alphanumeric). The same keyline may be used on each piece mailed to the same addressee in multiple mailings.

Exhibit 2: Traditional ACS Mailpiece



1. The *Ancillary Service Endorsement* provides the Postal Service with the sender's instructions on how to handle the mail if it is UAA.
2. The Traditional ACS *Participant ID/Code* identifies the sender to the Postal Service.
3. The Traditional ACS *Keyline* is delimited by pound signs and identifies the recipient in the sender's mailing list.
4. The Intelligent Mail barcode applied to the mail may contain presort information (flats only), a Service Type Identifier* that requests specific services like ACS and/or IV, a Mailer ID that identifies the mail owner or mail service provider, a serial or sequence number that uniquely identifies the mail piece, and routing information that provides the ZIP Code and delivery point validation that allows the mail to be sorted directly to the address.

* The Service Type Identifier embedded in the Intelligent Mail barcode must be one that specifically requests Traditional ACS.

Technical information on Traditional ACS services is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

ACS Shipper Paid Forwarding/Return Services

Shipper Paid Forwarding/Return (SPF/R) is an ACS fulfillment vehicle that allows parcel shippers to pay forwarding/return postage and fees instead of the customer who moved.

SPF/R helps Package Services and Parcel Select shippers keep up with their customers and provide a more customer-friendly option for forwarded/returned parcels since forwarding postage is charged to the shipper rather than to the addressee/end consumer.

USPS Marketing Mail parcels used in conjunction with SPF/R allows the shipper to pay single-piece postage price for returned undeliverable parcels (Refused, Attempted Not Known, etc.).

Exhibit 3: ACS Shipper Paid Forwarding/Return Mailpiece



1. Intelligent Mail Package barcode used to provide tracking information services.
2. Ancillary Service Endorsement, which identifies which SPF/R service is requested.
3. Traditional ACS Participant Code assigned specifically for SPF/R services.
4. SPF/R keyline, which contains the weight of the piece and a mail class identifier.

Technical information on Traditional ACS SPF/R is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

IMpb ACS

IMpb ACS allows parcel mailers that print the Intelligent Mail package barcode to receive an electronic address correction using the MID embedded in that barcode. *Service requests must be registered in the ACS mailer profile retained and managed by the ACS Department at the National Customer Support Center in Memphis, TN.* A customer might require additional MIDs if mailing multiple services and/or using multiple endorsements.

IMpb ACS is available for use on parcels:

- First-Class Mail parcels and Priority Mail parcels.
- Periodicals mailed as parcels.
- Parcel Select.
- Package Services (including *Library Mail*, *Media Mail*).
- USPS Retail Ground.
- USPS Marketing Mail and Parcel Select Lightweight parcels.
- Bound Printed Matter (including Bound Printed Matter *flats*).

Shipper Paid Forwarding/Return (SPF/R) service is available for IMpb ACS parcels.

Technical information on IMpb ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Technical information required to produce Intelligent Mail package barcodes is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/impbimplementationguide>.

IMpb ACS billing is provided via NCSC Accounting.

SingleSource ACS Fulfillment

SingleSource ACS is a fulfillment service that removes the need for handling different file formats when dealing with Full Service ACS, OneCode ACS, IMpb ACS, and Traditional ACS. With SingleSource ACS, all of the ACS notices are combined into a single file format and are provided via Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF).

SingleSource ACS does not replace the Full Service ACS fulfillment process and method. Full Service ACS notices that were created from undeliverable as addressed Full Service qualified pieces will continue to be reported in the ACS and Nixie Reports provided through *PostalOne!* via the Business Customer Gateway.

SingleSource ACS is available to *all* mailers that desire to receive all of their ACS notices in a single file format and from a single fulfillment source.

SingleSource ACS provides additional files with each fulfillment. The Shipping Notice Report File and Shipping Notice Data File contain more detailed information regarding the notices provided as well as a count of those provided for free and those that will be charged.

The SingleSource fulfillment process produces a single zipped file which may contain the following files:

File Reference Name	Type	Included when zero data record count
ACS Notification File*	Fixed format data file	Yes – contains zero count header record
Shipping Notice Report File	Formatted text file	No
Shipping Notice Data File	CSV	No
Full Service Chargeback Data File	CSV	Yes – contains zero count header record

* The Notification file contains the ACS COA and Nixie notices.

The Shipping Notice Report File and Shipping Notice Data File contain more detailed information than the other ACS systems. Additionally, a more detailed Invoice is provided in a PDF format and a CSV format, which is not provided in the other ACS systems.

SingleSource billing is provided by NCSC Accounting.

Technical information on SingleSource ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> – scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Data Integrity

While the Postal Service strives to provide ACS data in the manner described in this document, there may be occasions when the data field may not contain the expected data. When customers submit a COA, it is possible that some of the data provided may not be accurate or may be incomplete. In rare instances when our systems are unable to make corrections to the COA data submitted by the customer, the Postal Service has no choice but to include the data exactly as it was provided by the customer. Additionally, in other rare instances, it is possible that other data fields, not directly related to the data fields provided by the customer, may be missing. We strongly suggest that all automated systems utilizing ACS data perform validity checks on all fields.

Fulfillment Files

We encourage new and current ACS participants to sign up for a Fulfillment Service called SingleSource ACS. SingleSource ACS fulfillment removes the need for handling different file formats when dealing with Full Service ACS, OneCode ACS, IMpb ACS, and Traditional ACS. With SingleSource ACS, all of the ACS notices are combined into a single file format and are provided via Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF). In addition to providing all ACS transactions in the same fulfillment format, it also provides detailed shipping notice data files and invoice data files that allow the customer to automate the reconciliation of fulfillment files (this feature is not provided with just OneCode ACS). Participating in SingleSource ACS is as easy as selecting SingleSource ACS on the enrollment form. Information regarding SingleSource ACS is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Traditional ACS notices are provided to participating mailers daily, semiweekly, weekly, semimonthly, or monthly, depending on the fulfillment option and their needs.

OneCode ACS, IMpb ACS, and SingleSource ACS fulfillments are provided to participating mailers daily. If a Traditional ACS code is associated with a OneCode or SingleSource account the fulfillment will be daily.

Traditional, OneCode, IMpb ACS Notices, and SingleSource fulfillments are posted to our secure Electronic Product Fulfillment (EPF) Web site. ACS fulfillment files are provided in a “zip” file format and are password protected. The files are compressed to save space and download time. The customer will need to obtain the appropriate software package to decompress the data back into a normal text file. The customer is responsible for the retrieval of the ACS fulfillment files from the EPF account. The fulfillment files are deleted from the EPF account after 95 days. Specific information regarding file downloading and access is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality/ACS> — scroll down to the section titled “ACS Technical Guides.”

Full Service ACS notices from the Full Service qualified pieces continue to be fulfilled through the Business Customer Gateway, regardless if the customer participates in SingleSource, the Web interface to all United States Postal Service online services and full-service tools. Postal Service business customers log on through a single sign-on using their username and password. Mailers who qualify for the Full Service option can either download their Address Correction notices or subscribe to a Push or Pull option method.

Specific information and instructions regarding Business Customer Gateway access and options for retrieval of Full Service ACS notices is available at <https://postalpro.usps.com/ElectronicMailingInfoReportsGuide>.

Billing

New Accounts Through NCSC Accounting

The Postal Service sets up all new accounts for billing via NCSC Accounting. This allows the customer to get very detailed invoice information, which they can then use to reconcile their fulfillment shipping notices electronically/programmatically.

The NCSC Accounting billing cycle runs from the 25th of the month to the 24th of the next month.

The NCSC Accounting office creates a PDF and a CSV file of the ACS Invoice each month. The NCSC Accounting office posts invoices to the customer's EPF account within 6 days following the end of the ACS billing cycle, unless otherwise notified.

A customer billed via NCSC Accounting is responsible for downloading the invoice when posted to the EPF account. The Postal Service sends an email to the customer when the invoices are posted.

Payment must be received within 30 days of the invoice date, and funds must be drawn from a bank within the United States.

Delinquent accounts may cause the interruption of all ACS fulfillments and may result in manual address correction notices.

Note: The National Customer Support Center in Memphis, TN, administers NCSC Accounting as follows:

- A customer who has other ACS accounts that are not fulfilled via NCSC Accounting will receive two separate invoices.
- A customer who switches other ACS accounts to NCSC Accounting may receive two separate invoices initially and subsequent invoices from NCSC Accounting.

An NCSC Accounting customer has the option of paying an ACS account balance when it is less than \$25 or waiting until the balance is greater than \$25. An ACS customer whose balance remains less than \$25 receives an annual statement on September 24 of each year.

San Mateo Accounting

The San Mateo Accounting billing cycle runs from the 25th of the month to the 24th of the next month. The San Mateo Accounting Service Center mails each ACS participant an invoice and statement monthly *only* if the balance is more than \$25. An ACS customer whose balance remains less than \$25 receives annual statements on September 24 of each year.

Payment must be submitted with a copy of the invoice within 30 days of the invoice date. Unpaid balances more than 30 days old are charged an annual interest rate of 10 percent. Failure to pay ACS fees may result in additional charges and the inability to receive electronic address corrections.

