



International Customs Changes Release Overview

Proposed November 2026 Changes VERSION 1.0

This document describes changes being considered for the next structural implementation. The document is prepared based on the knowledge available at the time of printing and any direction found herein is subject to change prior to the release. The contents of this document are pre-decisional, and subject to change based on Board of Governors and Postal Regulatory Commission decisions.

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 International Customs Changes	4
3.0 Document History	8

1.0 Introduction

This document includes planned changes under review for International Customs. The document is prepared for the mailing software industry based on the knowledge available at the time of publication, and any direction found herein is subject to change, including additional structure changes prior to the release. The contents of this document are pre-decisional and subject to change.

2.0 International Customs Changes

The European Union (EU) requirements for Product Identifiers (PIDs) in postal and courier customs information mark a historic shift from requiring parcel-level identifiers to requiring product-level identifiers. The mandate requires that all business-to-consumer (B2C) distance sales of imported goods into the EU include specific, granular codes identifying the exact items inside a shipment.¹ Distance sales are transactions that involve the dispatch or transport of certain goods by or on behalf of a supplier from a country or territory outside the EU to certain customers in the EU.² This rule was introduced on a voluntary basis on July 1, 2026, and becomes strictly mandatory on November 1, 2026.

Beginning November 1, the EU will require coordinated updates to capture and transmit two or three, as applicable, additional product identifier fields in customs data. For USPS's purposes, as of November 1, 2026, these changes apply to shipments destined for EU countries that are part of a business-to-consumer transaction and contain merchandise or commercial sample; failure to provide complete and accurate data may result in package rejection by the EU, penalties, surcharges, and other consequences.

To address the EU requirements, USPS will use the "content description" field as an interim solution. Based on your business relationship with USPS, follow the instructions below to help ensure your shipments meet the new EU data requirements.

NOTE: Definitions and Meanings that may require disambiguation as follows:

- 1) Incoterms® are not being discussed/ indicated herein. The term "Incoterm" - in the Postal environment, the USPS rarely deals with actual Incoterms (where we do, we generally identify & flag them without using this meta-tag). The meta-tag or field name that the USPS has in its manifest systems which uses the same word – "Incoterm" (capitalized, singular, and **not** the ® Registered version of the word/term – is ONLY meant to refer to the location where certain data may be placed when communicating with the USPS.
- 2) B2C (and B2B) – these abbreviations refer to transactions involving Businesses (the "B") to Customer/Consumer (the "C"). These terms are described in some EU guidance and documents; the USPS uses them as "short-hand" form complicated topics defined in EU rules/requirements – primary terms defined below.
 - a. B2C: A package sent which is part of a "distance sale of goods imported from third territories or third countries" (cited from Council Directive 2006/112/EC)
 - b. B2B: A package sent which is part of a transaction between registered operators identified by valid EORI numbers (European designations, carrying specific meaning with which mailers must understand if choosing to identify goods using this identifier).
- 3) Special Characters allowed are not changing (below) in that the "curly" bracket is not allowable – the "{" or "}" – these are used only to illustrate that the PID elements MP may have up to 50 characters, NS may have up to 70, and the SP up to 50. The "square" brackets "[" and "]" are to be used as indicators where the PID is being passed (these are to be entered into the data as "overhead", just like the semi-colon between elements and the letters with an equal sign – "MP=").

Manifest Requirements

Business customers who generate their own manifests should append product identifiers at the end of the content-piece description field, using the format [MP=50Char;NS=70Char;SP=50Char]. Ensure this data is

¹ See https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2026/1022/oj/eng.

² See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32017L2455>.

included in the appropriate positions within Shipping Service Files and provided with the commerce type under the Incoterm field:

1. Content-piece description field: Limiting input in the “shortened” content-piece description field (the PID will take up the ending 183 of the original 256 characters – maximum allowable length) is an important change for all systems. Limiting input for the actual content-piece description to less than 74 characters is important to ensure a readable & useful (not arbitrarily truncated) description from the mailer. In any system that concatenates the elements together into a string of up to 256 characters, to include all elements, truncation is not acceptable – the full description should be limited to 73 characters and the max PID must not exceed 183 characters (including overhead and PID elements noted above).

Append product identifiers at the end of the content-piece description field:

Example: Blue Dress [MP=8675309;NS=123456789;SP=987654321]

2. The format to be used must be appended to the end of the content-piece description as follows (leading space not necessary):

[MP={50Char};NS={70Char};SP={50Char}]

3. The data needs to be presented in G1, G2 in Shipping Service Files
 - SSF v1.7 G2 Positions 173 – 428
 - SSF v2.0 G2 Position 14
4. Provide the data to be sent with the commerce type under “Incoterm” field:
 - SSF v1.7 G1 Position 2439
 - SSF v2.0 G1 Position 84
5. Provide the commerce type under Incoterm for:
 - “1” - Business to Consumer
 - “2” - Business to Business
6. The product identifiers should be submitted when the following conditions are met:
 - EU Destination Country
 - B2C Commerce Type (Incoterm)
 - Categories of “Merchandise” or “Commercial Sample” (Content Type)

Note: Shipments that do not include the required details may be returned to sender and/or subject to penalties, surcharges, or other consequences.

USPS API Requirements

Business customers who utilize USPS APIs to include customs information should provide product identifiers for each item in the new attribute fields and specify the commerce type under Incoterm:

1. Provide PIDs for each individual PID for the new attribute fields
2. Limiting input to the “newly shortened” content-piece description field (now the PID will take up the ending 183 of the original 256 characters – maximum allowable length) is an important change for all systems, though how this is done will vary. Ultimately limiting input for the actual content-piece description to less than 74 characters is important in order to ensure a readable and useful (not arbitrarily truncated) description from the mailer. In any system that concatenates the elements together into a string of up to 256 characters, to include all elements, truncation is not acceptable – the full description should be limited to 73 characters and the max PID must not exceed 183 characters (including overhead and PID elements noted above).
3. Provide the commerce type under Incoterm for:
 - “1” - Business to Consumer
 - “2” - Business to Business
4. The value should be submitted under the conditions:

- EU Destination Country
- B2C Commerce Type (Incoterm)
- Categories of “Merchandise” or “Commercial Sampling” (Content Type)

Note: API requests without required information for the required locations will return an error. Additionally, shipments that do not include the required details will be returned to sender.

USPS Online and Retail Requirements

Business customers who utilize USPS online applications or visit a local retail facility to provide customs information should enter product identifiers for each item and indicate the appropriate commerce type during the customs process:

1. In the workflow, provide PID's for each individual PID for the new attribute fields
2. In the workflow, define whether the mailer is:
 - Business to Consumer
 - Business to Business

Note: Shipments that do not include the required details will be returned to sender.

The required fields:

1. The EU Merchant Product Identifier (MP)

- **Character Maximum:** 50 characters
- **Required:** Always when conditions are met
- **Description:** Assigned by the online seller, marketplace, or platform to uniquely identify the item within that platform.

2. The EU Non-standardized Manufacturer Product Identifier (NS)

- **Character Maximum:** 70 characters
- **Required:** Always when conditions are met
- **Description:** Assigned by the manufacturer, producer, or supplier when no international standard identifier is used.

3. The EU Standardized Manufacturer Product Identifier (SP)

- **Character Maximum:** 50 characters
- **Required:** Only when a global barcode identifier exists
- **Description:** Globally recognized barcodes such as, but not limited to, Universal Product Code (UPC) or International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

Summary of Application Impacts:

- Online Reporting: No Impact
- Data Feeds: No Impact
- Postage Statement and SKU Changes: No Impact
- Mail.dat changes: No Impact
- Mail.XML changes: No Impact
- Shipping Services File (SSF) Changes: The data needs to be presented in G1, G2 in Shipping Service Files
- Indicum Creation Record (ICR) File: No Impact
- WebTools: Will facilitate changes to PID elements based on country, category (content type), and incoterm.
- USPS API: Will require relevant customs information based on country, category (content type), and Incoterm for international labels.

3.0 Document History

Date	Section	Description