

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE:

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT USPS®
INTELLIGENT MAIL INDICIA (IMI) COMPLIANCE

Postage stamps allow us to send communications through the mail and the price to mail the item varies depending on the size, weight, and destination. For individuals mailing standard sized cards and communications, or businesses that send a handful of letters a month, a stamp suffices. Other businesses send mail that ranges in terms of dimensions and weight, as well as service class and quantity, situations in which a standard stamp will not suffice.

Businesses of all sizes have long relied on postage meters to assist in mailing their communications. Postage meters imprint indicia, markings that carry the necessary postage information, directly onto envelopes, or onto labels that affix to envelopes or packages. Postage meters save money, since the postage meter indicia costs less than a stamp, and time, as it eliminates trips to the post office. According to the Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service (USPS®), Domestic Mail Manual, postage meters and online postage products are collectively identified as a mailing system¹.

The Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP) was the first digital postage management system designed to manage the mailing system Performance Criteria (PC). As technology evolved, the design and function of the IBIP no longer met the needs of the USPS. For instance, IBIP based mailing system offers limited postage and transaction data, uses out of date technology/security standards, prevents the USPS from automating costly operations (such as refunds and proper postage payment validation), and does not fully meet product reporting/pricing requirements.



















To that, they introduced a new style of indicia, the Intelligent Mail Indicia (IMI). It has been used concurrently with IBIP since its introduction in 2013. The goal of the USPS is to replace all existing IBIP-based indicia with the up-to-date technology of IMI, as it provides more transparent and detailed transaction data, enables automation of costly back-office operations, and employs better security standards. This information helps the USPS deliver faster and offer a more predictable mailing service.



NEW IMI STANDARDS OFFER FULL COMPLIANCE

According to the Federal Register, IMI-PC enables the USPS® to provide more detailed corporate reporting, more accurately price shipping/ mailing products, attain operational efficiency by automating many functions (including postage refunds), improve the USPS Federal Regulatory compliance, and better secure Postal Service and customer data².

The USPS now requires that all new mailing systems meet the IMI standards as the mailing systems go to market.

Why IMI-PC is Important for the Postal Service ³	IMI-PC Fully Compliant	IBIP Not Fully Compliant
Provides transaction level data for each mail piece daily		
Supports automated refunds, refund authorization, and fraud detection (data on IMpB, PIC)		
Restricts Keyed-In-Postage (KIP), which supports proper mail rating/classification for USPS		
Provides end mailer information for Federal Government compliance		
Supports the tracking and management of reprinted indicia		
Provides improved indicia constructs that support Fraud Detection, Readability, and Indicia Management		
Supports the USPS to accurately calculate short paid and over paid postage (data on TW, Price, Notice123, Extra Services)		
FIPS 140-2 Security Level 3+ (EFP/EFT) (security strength to deter current threats)		
Improved security for Rate Table, Log Files and Data Exchange Interface		

 - Compliant

 - Partially Compliant

 - Noncompliant

BENEFITS OF THE NEW IMI STANDARDS

The new IMI standard was designed to safeguard the USPS® and everyone who uses a mailing system, from home offices and small businesses to larger enterprises.

Additional benefits of IMI include:



Accurate postage

Even the most careful manual data entry may produce errors. With an IMI, the postage is automatically calculated after you input the required Service Class. Using IMI saves money and mail is not returned for lack of postage.



Stronger security

Federal Information Processing (FIP) is the organization that creates standards for data encryption. IMI adheres to their standards to ensure that information transmits securely, whether it is going to or from the postage meter.



Automatic updates

The USPS requires systems with IMI to connect to the manufacturer's servers every 72 hours. With frequent use information, the USPS is better able to manage mail flow. Updates arrive to the meter in a timely fashion, including rate changes and other modifications, avoiding over or short payment.



Greater connectivity

There is no need for a dedicated phone line. Instead, dedicated LAN connections are required to ensure a constant connection, which enables faster updates and postage refills.

You do have a choice when it comes to which postage meter you purchase, but it must comply with USPS® standards. The new IMI captures more data, provides the USPS with more real-time data, and ensures that you always use the correct amount of postage.

The iX-Series by Quadient meet the latest IMI and Dimensional Weighing (DIM) USPS requirements. Built to excel in small offices to the most demanding mail centers, the iX-series mailing systems deliver effortless

mailing and shipping operations. Gain a complete suite of tools that offer a one-stop approach to processing, tracking, reporting and reconciling postage expenses for mail and parcels. Additional features of the iX-Series by Quadient include a color screen, easy-to-use control panel, as well as different processing speeds and a variety of weighing and stacking options.

To learn more about Quadient's IMI compliant iX-Series postage meters, visit quadient.com.



Approved IMI Postage Solution



¹ Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual, January 24, 2021
² Authorization To Manufacture and Distribute Postage Evidencing Systems, A Rule by the Postal Service on 12/04/2020
³ Importance of IMI-PC for USPS



About Quadient®

Quadient is the driving force behind the world's most meaningful customer experiences. By focusing on Intelligent Communication Automation, Parcel Locker Solutions and Mail-related Solutions, Quadient helps hundreds of thousands of customers worldwide simplify the connection between people and what matters.

For more information about Quadient, visit www.quadient.com.