General

1. What is Informed Visibility (IV)?

IV is a key component of the Delivering Results, Innovation, Value, and Efficiency (DRIVE) initiative Roadmap to Leverage Technology and Data to Drive Business Value. IV is an enterprise-level system that provides USPS and the mailing community "real-time," comprehensive, transparent, and cost-effective access to all mail visibility data and analytical tools to optimize operational efficiencies and generate information-rich reporting solutions that provide new opportunities to enhance, expand, and create new products and services.

2. What is Service Performance Measurement (SPM)?

SPM is measurement of the speed and reliability of mail services. USPS measures letters, flats, and parcels from collection to delivery; determines service scores; and then applies the data to provide timely, reliable, accurate, and secure mail services to customers.

3. What is Internal SPM Sampling? How does IV help with Internal SPM Sampling?

Internal SPM Sampling is an initiative to have carriers scan some mailpieces at collection and delivery points to capture service performance information. Through SPM Sampling, all mail is measured (census versus sampling), and reliance on third-party reports is reduced. IV leverages Mail Visibility to provide a single, consolidated measurement system for single-piece and presort mail. IV also provides the capability for same-day service scores and diagnostic data to help remediate delays in mail processing and transportation.

4. Why are we conducting Internal SPM Sampling?

SPM Sampling allows for the collection of data on First-Mile and Last-Mile performance in an effort to improve service for USPS customers. First-Mile data helps identify operational issues between collection and the first sorting operation, while Last-Mile data helps identify operational issues between the last sorting operation and final delivery.

5. What will carriers need to do for Internal SPM Sampling?

Carriers should carry their Mobile Delivery Devices (MDDs) on routes. Carriers will receive randomly generated sampling requests **for specific collection points and delivery points on their routes** via their MDDs**.** Carriers should then scan the indicated number of mailpieces to comply with the sampling request to ensure data is captured.

For collection, alerts are triggered by scanning the Collection Point Management System (CPMS) barcode inside a collection box. For delivery, alerts are triggered by geographic location, meaning carriers receive the alerts as they approach the delivery address.

Note: During the Pilot, some carriers will also be asked to complete a brief survey.

6. **What will supervisors need to do for Internal SPM Sampling?**

   Most importantly, supervisors need to ensure they provide SPM Sampling training to carriers. Supervisors should escalate any questions or concerns as needed. In addition, reports will be provided regarding missed sampling requests so that supervisors can help ensure compliance with the sampling requests.

   Supervisors should also ensure their site's MDDs have the necessary software update (V2.71 or later) to receive SPM sampling requests. This update is pushed to the MDDs when they are cradled each evening. Please see question 14 for instructions to check the MDD software version.

   Note: During the Pilot, supervisors are asked to provide five carriers with an *SPM Sampling Pilot Survey* at the end of the first week. Supervisors should then compile all surveys and forward them to Garth Tingey (Garth.R.Tingey@usps.gov) with a CC to Donald Vaughn (Donald.J.Vaughn@usps.gov).

7. **Will both city and rural carriers receive sampling requests?**

   At this point, only city carriers will receive Internal SPM Sampling requests. The specifics for rural carriers are still being determined, and more information will be provided as it is available.

   Note: Until further notice, if a rural carrier does receive a sampling request, the carrier should disregard the request (press **Esc** to close the Work Order) and inform his or her supervisor. The supervisor should contact rural HQ delivery (HQRuralDeliveryEmail@usps.gov) and provide the office name, ZIP code, and route number.

8. **Will Internal SPM Sampling be implemented at Post Office (PO) Boxes and Postal Lobby Chutes?**

   Currently, sampling requests are only being pushed to carriers via their MDDs. We are working on updating the Intelligent Mail Device (IMD) system to alert for sampling requests, which will allow for sampling at PO Boxes and Postal Lobby Chutes. The timeline for the update is TBD.

9. **How many sampling requests will carriers receive on a given day?**

   For delivery, carriers may receive zero, one, or more sampling requests per day, with an average of one request per route per week. For collection, 30-40 collection boxes are targeted per day per district.

10. **Should carriers scan any mail they collect at delivery points?**

    No. If carriers receive sampling requests at delivery points, the carriers should only scan mail being delivered – **not** being collected – up to the specified sampling amount.

11. **Before starting the daily route, can a carrier or supervisor find out which addresses and collection boxes will have sampling requests?**

    No. Sampling requests are generated randomly, so there is no way to know about a sampling request until after scanning the CPMS barcode (for collection) or after approaching the sampling location (for delivery).

12. How will supervisors know if carriers complied with sampling requests?

Reports will be provided to Delivery Unit (DU) supervisors regarding sampling requests.

13. Why might a carrier not receive a programmed sampling request?

The following situations could prevent a carrier from receiving sampling requests:
- **Geolocation of address:** If the latitude/longitude recorded in the system is not centered on the delivery point, the MDD may not trigger.
- **MDD route ID:** The carrier must enter the correct and current route ID into the MDD. The MDD only receives delivery sampling requests for the entered route ID.
- **MDD software version:** MDDs need a software update (V2.75 or later) to receive sampling requests. This update is pushed to the MDDs when they are cradled each evening. Please see question 14 for instructions to check the MDD software version.

14. What software version do the MDDs need in order to receive sampling requests? How can the MDD software version be verified?

To receive sampling requests, the MDD software version should be 2.75 or later.

Follow these steps to check the MDD software version:
1. Remove the MDD from the cradle.
2. At the Login screen, press and hold the **red** button and press the **H** key OR tap the question mark icon in the upper-right corner of the screen.
3. The MDD software version displays.

Note: If an MDD does not have the correct software version, please contact the MDD Help Desk at 1-800-877-7435.
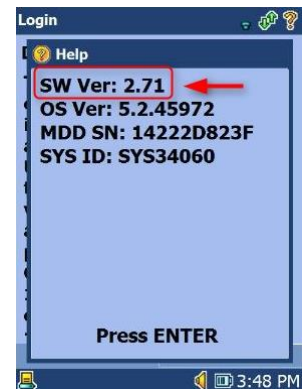
15. When will the Pilot and National Deployment happen? Which sites are included in the Pilot?

The Pilot is scheduled at 55 sites for August 10-September 12, 2015. National training will occur in early September, with national sampling beginning September 14. Click **here** for a complete list of Pilot sites.

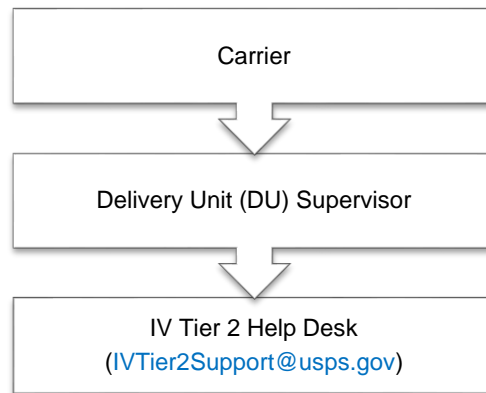**16. What training resources are available regarding SPM Sampling?**

In addition to these FAQs, the following materials are available and can be found **here**:
- *SPM Sampling Service Talk*
- *Sampling Request Process Poster*

Note: The *SPM Sampling Service Talk* includes a simulation exercise for processing SPM sampling requests for delivery and collection points. The exercise works with MDDs that have software version 2.75 or later.

17. Whom should I contact if I have questions or concerns?

Please direct questions and concerns as indicated in the escalation hierarchy below:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Carrier                │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Delivery Unit (DU) Supervisor    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         IV Tier 2 Help Desk          │
│       (IVTier2Support@usps.gov)      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Note: For questions pertaining to MDD hardware and software issues not related to SPM Sampling, please contact the MDD Help Desk at 1-800-877-7435.

Technical

18. When and how will carriers receive sampling requests?

Sampling requests appear as Work Orders on the Mobile Delivery Devices (MDDs). The MDD makes a chime sound and gives a voice alert that there is a sampling request. For collection, sampling requests trigger after scanning the Collection Point Management System (CPMS) barcode inside the collection box. For delivery, sampling requests trigger when the MDD is within a certain radius of the sampling location.

19. If a carrier has a hearing impairment, how will he or she be alerted to a sampling request?

For collection, sampling requests trigger just after scanning the CPMS barcode. The Work Order screen displays on the MDD to indicate there is a sampling request for that collection box. For delivery, the Work Order screen displays when approaching a sampling location. The carrier needs to check the MDD frequently to see if it displays this screen.
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20. Will a carrier receive sampling requests for addresses or collection boxes that are not on his or her route?

For collection, sampling requests only trigger after scanning the CPMS barcode, so a carrier will **not** receive requests for another route. For delivery, a carrier will only receive alerts for the route ID entered in the MDD.

Note: Carriers on pivoted routes should follow normal pivoting procedures set by their supervisors. Therefore, if a carrier is not supposed to change the route ID in the MDD to reflect the pivoted route, the carrier should not do so.

21. What should a carrier do if working one section of a pivoted route but he or she receives a sampling request for an address on another section of the route?

The carrier should initiate the Work Order. Then, when asked to confirm if the address is on the delivery route for today, the carrier should select **No**.

The carrier who is working the section of the pivoted route that contains the sampling address should process the Work Order normally.

22. What should a carrier do after receiving a sampling request?

The carrier should follow these general steps:
1. Initiate the Work Order to begin the sampling process.
2. For delivery, confirm if the address is on the current route.
3. Scan **up to** the number and type of mailpieces indicated in the Work Order.
4. Close the Work Order by confirming that scanning is finished or there are no additional pieces to scan.

For more details, see the *SPM Sampling Service Talk* and *Sampling Request Process Poster*.

23. What should a carrier do if the MDD alerts but he or she is not yet ready to process the sampling request?

To postpone a sampling request from the Work Order screen, press **Esc** to return to the previously displayed screen.

24. How can a carrier retrieve a sampling request after postponing it?

From the On Street menu, press the **W** key OR scroll down the menu, select **W Work Orders**, and press **Enter**.

Note: The **W Work Orders** option is only available from the On Street menu if there is an active Work Order on the MDD. If there are no other Work Orders on the MDD, this menu option is hidden.

25. Will a carrier receive multiple alerts for one sampling request? If a carrier postpones a sampling request, will he or she receive another alert?

For collection boxes, a carrier only receives an alert upon scanning the CPMS barcode.

For delivery, a carrier may receive additional alerts whenever he or she leaves and re-enters the geofence for the sampling location. For example, Barbara passes 123 Maple Street and receives a sampling request for that address. However, she parks a few houses down to begin a park and loop, so she postpones the sampling request for later. After finishing the even side of the street, Barbara crosses over to the odd side of the street and receives another alert for 123 Maple Street as she approaches the house.

Note: If a carrier postpones a sampling request but stays within the geofence for the sampling address OR leaves the geofence without re-entering, the carrier will **not** receive another sampling request for that address.

26. What types of mail should a carrier scan?

Carriers should scan letters and flats, as displayed in the Work Order. Carriers should **not** scan parcels or mail being collected at delivery points.

27. What types of barcodes can carriers scan? How many barcodes should a carrier scan per mailpiece?

Carriers can scan any of the following barcodes:

IMb™
Intelligent Mail Barcode™
for letters and flats

FICS™
Flats ID Coding System™

IBI™
Information-Based Indicia Barcode™

Carriers should only scan one barcode per mailpiece.

28. How should the carrier scan the mailpieces? Does the carrier need to open the Scan Barcode screen?

The carrier should scan while the Sampling Screen is displayed by pressing the green **Scan** button. The carrier should **not** open the Scan Barcode screen to scan mailpieces for these sampling requests.

29. How many items should a carrier scan for a sampling request?

The Work Order displays the number of letters, flats, or mailpieces to scan. In general, carriers will not be requested to scan more than seven items.

30. What should a carrier do if there are not as many mailpieces to scan as requested?

The carrier should scan as many pieces as possible, up to the number requested. Then, the carrier should press **Enter**, and indicate there are no more pieces to scan.

31. What should a carrier do if the barcode is damaged or will not scan?

The carrier should treat the mailpiece as a non-barcoded item and try to scan another mailpiece if available.

32. What happens if an SPM Sampling request and a Density Volume request are both needed for a collection box on the same day?

On an MDD, the SPM Sampling request is displayed first. The carrier should complete the request normally. After completion, the Density Volume request displays.

On an IMD (once deployed), the Density Volume request will be displayed first. After completion, the SPM Sampling request will be displayed.

33. What should the carrier do if the alert does not trigger until after the carrier delivers the mail OR the Work Order triggered, but the carrier forgot to do the sampling?

The carrier should **not** backtrack or pull the mail out of the box for sampling. This could result in scanning mail delivered on a previous day, which would provide incorrect data for the delivery measurement. Instead, the carrier should **not** process the Work Order. The following day, all unprocessed Work Orders will be cleared and the MDD reset.

34. Why does the MDD sometimes alert AFTER the carrier delivers the mail?

For delivery, sampling requests trigger when the MDD is within a certain radius of the sampling location. If the delivery location coordinates recorded in the system do not quite match the physical delivery address coordinates, the MDD may trigger at a nearby location instead of triggering at the specific delivery address.

35. Can the MDD tell the difference between a flat and letter being scanned?

There is no way for the MDD to know if a scanned barcode is associated to a letter or a flat. The measurement system can determine if a letter or flat was scanned based on information received from electronic documentation or mail processing equipment (MPE).

36. What should a carrier do with the mailpieces after scanning them? Should carriers treat scanned mailpieces in a special way?

No, carriers should deliver or collect the mailpieces as appropriate, not hold them out or treat them differently.

37. What should a carrier do if he or she receives a sampling request for an address where mail is being forwarded to another address?

Carriers should only scan barcodes for mailpieces being delivered to the address of the sampling request. If mailpieces are being forwarded to another address, carriers should **not** scan those mailpieces.

38. What should a carrier do if he or she receives a sampling request for an address where mail is on hold?

Carriers should only scan barcodes for mailpieces being delivered to the address of the sampling request. If there are no mailpieces being delivered, then the carrier should indicate there are not any mailpieces to scan for that sampling request.