



What is MAC™?

The United States Postal Service® (USPS®), in cooperation with the mailing industry, has developed a certification program to evaluate manifesting software known as MAC™ (Manifest Analysis Certification). MAC is a software certification program that serves as a standard of excellence for manifest software products. The certification process provides a common platform to measure the quality of manifest products and determine their accuracy in accordance with requirements set forth in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) and Publication 401, *Guide to Manifest Mailing*. Software products that successfully complete the MAC testing process are granted MAC certification.

What is MAC Gold?

MAC Gold is a certification program that serves as a standard of excellence for Manifest Mailing Systems (MMS). The certification process provides a common platform to measure the quality of the manifest system including hardware, software, scales, and printers. MAC Gold determines the systems accuracy in accordance with requirements set forth in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) and Publication 401, *Guide to Manifest Mailing*. Manifest systems that successfully complete the MAC Gold testing process are granted MAC Gold certification.

What is the difference between MAC and MAC Gold?

Under the MAC program, the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) tests only the developer's MMS software. The software processes a series of electronic test files which the NCSC in turn analyzes for accuracy and compliance. This process has greatly improved the consistency and the accuracy of manifest software, but to begin manifesting mail each MMS installation must be authorized by the USPS through a multi-level process.

Under the MAC Gold program, a developer's entire system, software, and hardware (scales & printers), are certified as compliant. The developer participates in traditional software testing and then provides the software to the NCSC along with hardware specifications and instructions for use. The scope of MAC Gold is focused on the manifest system's ability to correctly process First-Class Mail®, Priority Mail, Parcel Post (all single-piece rate), and Insurance with the integrated barcode and Confirmation Services. The NCSC puts the developer's system through several tests to determine if it will function accurately on the specified hardware under many conditions. This extra scrutiny allows the MAC Gold user to begin manifesting mail immediately, provided the system is installed and operated according to the developer's and manufacturer's instructions. MAC Gold allows the traditional manifest authorization to take place concurrently with the shipment of mail.

Who is eligible for MAC/MAC Gold certification?

MAC™ and MAC Gold are both developer-level certification programs. Testing is available to all companies that produce manifesting software regardless of whether the product is available for sale to the general public or is intended for in-house use. Users are not required to certify individually. If you develop your own manifesting software and are interested in MAC and/or MAC Gold certification, contact the NCSC at 800-238-3150 x4473 to request a copy of the MAC/MAC Gold Manifest Certification Technical Guide.

What if I do not develop manifesting software?

Manifest software is available for purchase from many software developers in the mailing industry. The NCSC has a list of manifesting software products that are MAC and MAC Gold-certified: the MAC/MAC Gold Manifest Certified Software Products List. The list is broken down by type of certification and then organized alphabetically by company name. Each product's listing includes sales contact information and indicates the certified manifest categories and options supported. Hardware, software platforms, and price range are indicated when appropriate. This list is available upon request or can be obtained online at http://ribbs.usps.gov/files/MAC/CSP/MAC_PRODUCTS.PDF.

Do I have to use MAC/MAC Gold-Certified software?

According to the regulations set forth in the DMM and Publication 401, to manifest mail you must have a current authorization for a Manifest Mailing System (MMS), a minimum volume of 200 pieces or 50lbs. of mail, appropriate standardized manifest documentation, and accurate postage statement facsimiles. Currently, you have the option of using MAC/MAC Gold-certified software to produce the required documentation or generating the required documentation with another automated manifest system. Using MAC/MAC Gold-certified software, while not required, provides a higher level of quality assurance and expedites the authorization process.

Is the software expensive?

The MAC/MAC Gold Manifest Certified Software Products List includes a variety of products available in a wide spectrum of price ranges and platforms. You may contact the developers directly to learn more details about any listed products in which you are interested.

What if I don't manifest a large volume of mail?

The USPS® (United States Postal Service®) recognizes that some new businesses often need a "ramp-up" period to build their mail volumes to the required minimums. As a result of this need, the Minimum Volume Reduction Provision (MVRP) option was implemented to make manifest mailing available to customers who previously were not able to participate. If you are submitting mail under the terms of the MVRP, MAC/MAC Gold-certified software is required.

What is the MVRP?

This provision allows manifest mailers, when authorized, to mail less than the minimum volume for a specified period of time. The provision also allows mailers the flexibility of meeting the minimum volumes either by aggregating volumes from various mailing sites or by averaging the number of pieces from a single site mailed during a specified period of time. Taking advantage of the MVRP provision requires the use of MAC™/MAC Gold-certified software.

Why should I use MAC/MAC Gold-certified software?

MAC/MAC Gold does not guarantee acceptance of mail prepared using certified software or system (if applicable). It does, however, provide a higher level of quality assurance and expedites the MMS authorization process. MAC/MAC Gold certification also provides national approval of computer-generated facsimiles of USPS® postage statements, standardized manifest documentation, labels, and summaries. In addition, the MAC Gold certified system, once installed, needs no further approval at the local level to begin shipping packages.

What is Standardized Manifest Documentation?

DMM P910 contains the specific guidelines for standardized manifest documentation, also known as the manifest or manifest listing. Publication 401 contains a multitude of format samples. This report provides the mail acceptance clerk a complete breakdown of your mailing which includes a manifest listing, summary (when required), and postage statements.

Do I have to present a MAC/MAC Gold certificate with my mailing?

No, you should present only the standardized manifest documentation and your postage statement(s) with your mailing.

How long is MAC/MAC Gold certification valid?

Each year the USPS conducts a testing cycle for MAC/MAC Gold certification. Each certification is valid only for the current cycle for which it is granted. The traditional cycle is based on the calendar year, with certifications expiring on December 31; however, occasional changes in mailing requirements, such as the implementation of a Rate Case will result in changes in the cycle calendar.

If a product is MAC/MAC Gold certified is it certified for every class of mail?

No, all manifesting products differ in some way. During each testing cycle, the USPS examines a number of different manifesting scenarios, and it is up to each developer to choose the tests in which they will participate. Within the MAC/MAC Gold Manifest Certified Software Products List, each specific manifest category that the product has successfully completed is listed. For instance, if you mail First-Class, you should check the list to ensure that the product about which you are inquiring is certified for First-Class Mail®. Check with your developer, and ask to see the official MAC certificate awarded to the product, which lists each specific manifest category for which the product is certified.

What if a manifest software product is not listed on the official list?

The USPS® is continually receiving requests from developers to test their manifest products; therefore the MAC™/MAC Gold Manifest Certified Software Products List is updated frequently. Visit http://ribbs.usps.gov/files/MAC/CSP/MAC_PRODUCTS.PDF for the most current list, or ask your developer for a copy of the MAC/MAC Gold certificate awarded their product.

Who should I contact if I have more questions?

If you have additional questions concerning standardized manifest documentation, or the manifesting of your mail, you may contact your local post office. You may also call the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) MAC certification department at the address and/or phone number listed below. A staff member can provide you the phone number of a manifest specialist from the “Quick Response Team” (QRT) in your area. You will need to provide the ZIP Code® of the Post Office where you will deposit your manifest mailings.

MAC CERTIFICATION DEPARTMENT
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