UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

Transportation Cost Systems

Handbook F-65

October 2012
Transmittal Letter

A. **Introduction.** This handbook revises Handbook F-65, *Data Collection User's Guide for Cost Systems,* September 2001, to incorporate material from chapters 5 and 8 related to Transportation Cost Systems. All previous editions of Handbook F-65 are obsolete.

B. **Explanation.** To gather information about mail characteristics and the costs of processing, transporting, and delivering the mail, the Postal Service conducts tests that provide data for the following Transportation Cost Systems (TRACS):

1. Surface transportation (TRACS Surface).

2. Air transportation (TRACS Air).

This handbook is a policy guide for employees who conduct TRACS tests.

C. **Distribution.** Handbook F-65 is available on the Postal Service Intranet.

1. Go to *http://blue.usps.gov*.

2. Under "Essential Links" in the left-hand column, click *PolicyNet.*

3. Click *HBKs.*

D. **Comments.** Address comments and questions about this document to:

STATISTICAL PROGRAMS
FINANCE
US POSTAL SERVICE
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E. **Effective Date.** This handbook is effective immediately.

James Corbett
Chief Financial Officer and
Executive Vice President

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Exhibits

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1 Introduction

11 Developing Cost Information

In order to set appropriate rates, the United States Postal Service develops cost information for each class of mail, price category, and type of service. The Postal Service uses cost information to develop proposals for new postal rates, assist in the preparation of budgets, and conduct management studies. The portion of the total cost attributed to each class and subclass of mail and extra service is determined using these data.

The Postal Service must report annual cost, revenue, volume, and quality of service to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), which sets the appropriate rates. The Postal Service must also ensure that market-dominant products do not subsidize competitive products and that each competitive product covers its attributable costs. Prices for competitive products must be high enough to ensure that revenue exceeds cost. To assist in meeting this requirement, the Postal Service continually collects revenue, volume, weight, and cost information.

To gather information about mail characteristics and the costs of processing, transporting, and delivering the mail, the Postal Service conducts tests that provide data for the following cost systems:

a. City Carrier Cost System (CCCS).

b. Rural Carrier Cost System (RCCS).

c. In-Office Cost System (IOCS).

d. Transportation Cost System (TRACS).

This chapter introduces the TRACS tests. The remaining chapters describe policy and procedures for performing the tests.

For information on the CCCS and RCCS tests, see Handbook F-55, *Carrier Cost Systems.* For the IOCS test, see Handbook F-45, *Data Collection User's Guide for In-Office Cost System.*

12 Understanding the Cost Measurement Systems

The primary sampling systems for estimating the cost of processing, delivering, and transporting the mail are CCCS, RCCS, IOCS, and TRACS. The data collected from the systems enable the Postal Service to allocate costs to each mail category, which aids in determining postal rates. That is why consistent, accurate data collection is essential.

The cost-measurement process consists of the four phases shown in Exhibit 12:

Exhibit 12
The Cost Systems Measurement Process
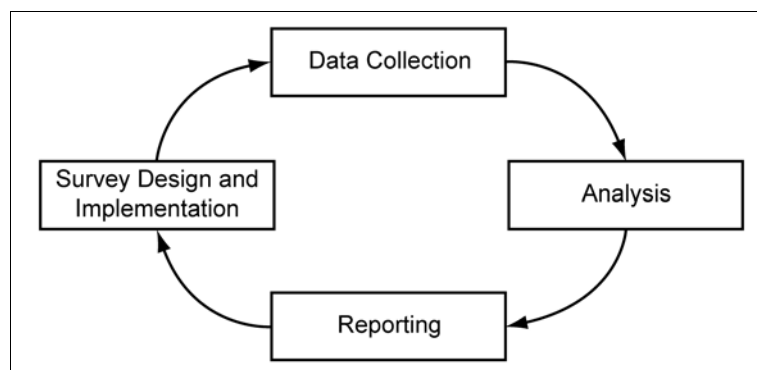
The following sections explain the phases of the cost systems measurement process.

121 Survey Design and Implementation

In the survey design and implementation phase, Headquarters Statistical Programs (SP) personnel develop and revise data-collection methods for the cost systems. They decide how frequently certain tests are performed, the number of sites tested, the type of information gathered, the procedures for conducting the tests, and when and how data are collected. In addition, SP staff provide training for data collectors.

When designing a test, SP staff use established statistical methods to ensure the data's reliability. Principles behind these methods include:

a. Collecting data in either a census or a sample. (A *census* selects every item, while a *sample* selects a smaller group to study.)

b. Using the same procedure to gather data, no matter who is conducting the test. Questions are asked that will not be interpreted differently by data collectors. This method ensures that different data collectors performing the same test under the same circumstances will get the same data.

c. Conducting *pilot tests* to try out the questions and procedures before using them to gather data. These tests find and correct problems in the procedures that would lead to inaccurate or unreliable data.

122 Data Collection

In the data-collection phase, trained collectors record data for the cost systems tests on laptops. The data collectors count and record mail by product, shape, and other characteristics. The data are attributed to various categories of mail and extra services and are sent to the Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit for analysis.

Data must be collected consistently regardless of who performs the tests. For this reason, test questions and procedures are written in a manner that helps to ensure that data will be gathered in a way that will not introduce error or bias. Thus, to ensure the data's reliability, data collectors must follow the procedures exactly and review them periodically to refresh their memory of the details.

Data collectors address issues that need to be clarified to SP managers, who report these issues to SP specialists so they can work to develop solutions. The SP managers then share any revisions with the data collectors.

123 Analysis

In the analysis phase, the data are analyzed for accuracy on two levels:

a. **First level.** The field manager, specialist, or designee reviews and approves the tests.

b. **Second level**. Once the data are accepted by the CODES Web Base Unit, they are grouped with test data from many other locations. Headquarters personnel check the data again.

124 Reporting

In the reporting phase, the analyzed data are compiled to create reports that are used by the Postal Service and the PRC. The data are made available electronically and are used to develop estimates for costs of processing, delivering, and transporting the mail by product, shape, and other characteristics.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 established rate-setting policies and procedures for both noncompetitive (market dominant) and competitive postal products. The Postal Service submits price-change requests to the Postal Service Board of Governors. These requests include an explanation of and justification for the price change, the effective date, and a schedule of the changed rates.

The Board of Governors reviews and helps justify the rate changes before sending the request to the PRC. The commission considers the request, reviews supporting materials, seeks comments from the public, and makes a decision. The PRC may approve, deny, or alter the rate request. The Postal Service is bound by the decision and must put into effect any rate change approved by the PRC.

13   Understanding the Transportation Cost Systems

The TRACS test is used to estimate transportation costs and attribute those costs to different mail categories. Costs are developed as follows:

a.   **Surface transportation** — based on cubic feet and distance traveled.

b.   **Air transportation** — based up cubic feet or pounds flown.

131   Surface Transportation

TRACS Surface Tests are conducted by sampling mail unloaded from a truck at a specific facility for a specific trip on a specific day. Data collectors record the use of test vehicles and container characteristics. For each sampled item, data collectors record weight and volume (count) by mail category. Chapter 2 provides detailed information about TRACS Surface Tests.

132   Air Transportation

TRACS Air Tests are conducted by sampling mail processed for a specific air transportation mode, mail class, facility, date, and time. For each sampled item, data collectors record routing information, weight, and volume (count) by mail category. Chapter 3 provides detailed information about TRACS Air Tests.

2 Transportation Cost System — Surface Test

21 Overview

The TRACS Surface Test provides the information needed to estimate the proportions of cubic foot miles used by specific mail products transported by highway. The Postal Service uses TRACS Surface Test data to distribute transportation costs to different categories of mail, set prices, create new products and services, and provide operations information to management.

Mail selected for a TRACS Surface Test is identified by the type of transportation and by the test vehicle's characteristics. Data collectors sample arriving mail at:

a. Network Distribution Centers (NDCs).

b. Surface Transfer Centers (STCs).

c. Sectional Center Facilities (SCFs).

d. Air Mail Facilities (AMFs).

e. Air Mail Centers (AMCs).

f. Processing and Distribution Centers (P&DCs).

g. Smaller facilities.

The mail to be sampled arrives in tractor trailers, trucks, vans, and automobiles. A vehicle is selected, and mail unloaded from the that vehicle is tested.

This chapter sets forth policy and procedures for conducting TRACS Surface Tests. For instructions on data entry and related information, see *Reference Guide — Transportation Cost System Surface*.

211 Essential Personnel

The data collector conducts a TRACS Surface Test with the help of the following personnel:

a. Facilities Manager.

b. Distribution Operations Manager.

c. Transportation specialist.

d. Dock supervisor or dock mail handlers.

211.1   **Data Collector**

The data collector must contact the supervisor at least two days before a test to obtain the information needed to conduct the test. On the day of the test, the data collector must:

a.   Arrive at the dock area at least 45 minutes before the scheduled test time to collect information about vehicle utilization before the test vehicle is unloaded.

b.   Explain the test and the data collector's role.

c.   Determine the time of arrival and location of the test vehicle.

d.   Locate safe areas to stage the test mail and conduct the test.

e.   Locate the test vehicle.

f.   Determine all stops the vehicle made before arriving at the test facility.

g.   Locate and test a replacement vehicle if necessary.

h.   Record a Zero Volume test if necessary.

i.   Collect barcode and utilization information for the test vehicle.

j.   Verify the Header screen information in the Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES).

k.   Set aside mail to be tested.

l.   Conduct the test.

m.   Transmit test data.

211.2   **Facility Personnel**

Facility personnel must provide safe areas for staging and sampling set-aside mail and help the data collector to:

a.   Identify the test vehicle, including its arrival time and docking location.

b.   Identify a replacement vehicle if necessary.

c.   Identify the mail to be sampled.

212   **Required Materials**

The data collector must take the following materials to the test site:

a.   CODES laptop computer with a fully charged battery pack.

b.   AC power pack with a power cord.

c.   Extension cord with three-prong safety.

d.   Electronic scale with cables for power source and computer connection.

   Note: The scale must be accurate to one-tenth of an ounce. To ensure accuracy, check the balance and level the scale before each test.

e.   Barcode scanner.

f.   *Reference Guide –Transportation Cost System Surface* (RG-TRACS Surface).

g.   Handbook F-65, Chapter 2, Transportation Cost System — Surface Test.

h.   Statistical Programs policy letters.

i.   Paper and pen or pencil.

    j.   Tape measure (at least 60 inches for measuring pallets and heights of noncontainerized items.

    k.   Data storage device (i.e., USB portable drive).

    l.   Marking slips to tag set-aside containers and items scheduled for testing.

These items are optional:

    a.   Hamper or cart.

    b.   Sorting case.

213 Procedures

The data collector performs the following tasks when conducting a TRACS Surface Test. The subchapters that follow describe the tasks in detail.

    a.   Preparing for the test.

    b.   Collecting information about the test vehicle.

    c.   Recording vehicle utilization information.

    d.   Identifying and selecting mail to be sampled.

    e.   Recording information about selected mail.

    f.   Replacing a test, rescheduling a test, or recording a Zero Volume test.

    g.   Finalizing the test.

22 Preparing for the Test

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure that the data collector conducts the test efficiently and that the results are accurate.

221 Preparing Before the Day of the Test

Before the day of the test, the data collector must:

    a.   Download test schedules and other information from the CODES Web Base Unit, if necessary.

    b.   Review current TRACS procedures, including this chapter, RG-TRACS Surface, and Statistical Programs policy letters.

    c.   Call the facility at least two days before the test to:

        (1)   Inform the supervisor that the facility is scheduled for a TRACS Surface Test.

        (2)   Explain test procedures, if necessary. (See 222.)

        (3)   Verify that the test vehicle stops at the facility on the assigned test day. Select a replacement vehicle if necessary.

        (4)   Confirm the time of arrival and dock location of the test vehicle.

        (5)   Ask whom to contact when arriving at the facility.

        (6)   Explain to the supervisor what types of mail are sampled. (See 251.)

    d.   Ensure that all required materials are available. (See 212 for the list of materials.)

222 **Preparing on the Day of the Test**

To successfully complete the test, the data collector must arrive at the assigned facility dock at least 45 minutes before the test time; and:

a.   Explain the reason for and purpose of the test.

b.   Provide the contract route and trip number.

c.   Ask where the vehicle docks to unload the mail.

d.   Request safe work areas to stage and sample the mail.

e.   Be present at the dock before the contents of the vehicle are unloaded.

f.   Ask the driver to identify all stops made before arriving at the test facility.

23 Collecting Information About the Test Vehicle

A test vehicle is defined by contract route, trip number, date of the test, and unloading facility. The data collector will perform the following procedures to collect information about the test vehicle:

a.   Verify vehicle information as specified on the General Information Table on the Header screen.

   (1)   Contract route.

   (2)   Trip number.

   (3)   Frequency code.

b.   Determine all stops the vehicle made before it arrived at the test facility. Mail may originate from any stop along the route. Adding additional stops on the Header screen allows the data collector to select each of these stops as an Origin Facility.

c.   When performing a replacement test, ask dock personnel and the driver to help obtain the following information (see 27):

   (1)   Contract type.

   (2)   Route number.

   (3)   Trip number.

   (4)   Frequency code.

   (5)   Origin Facility code.

   (6)   All stops the vehicle made before arriving at the test facility.

d.   When the test vehicle has more than one trailer that unloads mail at the test facility, enter the number of trailers on the Header screen in CODES; the software will randomly select a trailer to test.

e.   When conducting a test on a car, pickup, or van, highlight the Car/Pickup Truck/Minivan/Other Small Vehicle check box on the Header screen.

f.   Record the test vehicle's *Actual Arrival* time, which is defined as the time the driver started to unload mail from the vehicle. Enter the Actual Arrival time in military hours and regular minutes. If the facility was skipped because there was no mail, leave the Actual Arrival field on the Header screen blank.

See 27 and RG-TRACS Surface for additional information on replacing or rescheduling a test and recording a Zero Volume test.

24   Recording Vehicle Utilization Information

241   Overview

The Postal Service gathers information to calculate the cubic feet used in transporting mail to a facility. *Utilization information* describes how a vehicle's floor space is occupied. To record utilization estimates correctly, the data collector must remain with the vehicle while it is being unloaded, observe its entire contents, and estimate the percentage of each of the vehicle's utilization components.

The data collector will collect vehicle utilization information at the:

a.   Facility, if the vehicle stopped there.

b.   Next stop, if the vehicle did not stop at the facility. (When appropriate, information may be collected by phone.)

c.   Prior facility, if the data collector knows that there is no mail for the test facility. (When appropriate, information may be collected by phone.)

Note: If the test facility is skipped because there was no mail, and the facility is the last stop on the trip, the data collector must end the test and save in CODES.

242   Components of Vehicle Utilization

242.1   Three Components

The three components of vehicle utilization are: (a) Percent Empty; (b) Percent Unloaded (Mail); and (c) Percent Remaining in the Vehicle (Mail). When added together, these components total 100 percent of a vehicle's floor space. Before the vehicle is unloaded, the data collector estimates the following:

242.2   Percent Empty

Percent Empty refers to the total amount of floor space that was not occupied by mail when the vehicle arrived.

a.   *Percent Empty Equipment* is the floor space not occupied by empty equipment.

   Example: For a vehicle with 40 feet of floor space and 4 feet of containers with empty equipment, empty equipment is 10 percent (4 feet divided by 40 feet = 0.10).

b.   *Percent Empty Floor Space* is the total floor space not occupied by mail or empty equipment.

   Example: If 4 feet of the 40-foot truck are completely empty, empty floor space is 10 percent (4 feet divided by 40 feet = 0.10).

c.   *Percent Empty* equals *Percent Empty Equipment* plus *Percent Empty Floor Space.*

   Example: In a 40-foot truck:

   (1)   Percent Empty Equipment is 10 percent (4/40 = 0.10).

   (2)   Percent Empty Floor Space is 10 percent (4/40 = 0.10).

   (3)   Percent Empty is 20 percent (8/40 = 0.20)

Note: Consider Postal Freight to be empty equipment. *Postal Freight* is non-mail matter transported by the Postal Service and identified by yellow tape and a placard with the words Postal Freight.

242.3   **Percent Unloaded (Mail)**

Percent Unloaded (Mail) is the percentage of the vehicle's floor space occupied by the mail that will be unloaded at the test facility. The data collector can verify the Percent Unloaded (Mail) by adding up the percentages in the Detail of Unloaded section on the Utilization screen in CODES.

242.31   **Detail of Unloaded**

Detail of Unloaded is a further breakdown of Percent of Unloaded (Mail). Determine as follows:

a.   Estimate the percentage of floor space taken by each of the five sampling groups. The sum of the five percentages must equal the Percent of Unloaded (Mail) as explained in 242.3.

b.   Count the number of wheeled containers and pallets unloaded from the vehicle. Do not count empty wheeled containers, those containing only empty equipment, or Postal Freight.

c.   Estimate average height in inches for noncontainerized sacks, Express Mail, and other items stacked in the vehicle before the vehicle is unloaded. Items thrown on top of pallets are considered loose items and should be included in the appropriate noncontainerized group when estimating height.

242.32   **Five Sampling Groups**

All mail unloaded from the vehicle is separated into these sampling groups:

a.   *Wheeled Containers* is a category that includes items such as general purpose mail containers (GPMCs), eastern region mail containers (ERMCs), bulk mail center over-the-road containers (BMC-OTRs), hampers, wiretainers, and Postal Paks.

   Note: Do not count empty wheeled containers, those containing only empty equipment, or Postal Freight.

b.   *Pallets (skids)* describes reusable platforms (approximately 3 by 4 feet) on which mail is stacked and then moved as a single unit. *Pallets* are made of high quality, rigid material and are designed for forklift entry. They are also known as *skids.*

   (1)   Palletized sacks or trays (i.e., sacks or trays shrink wrapped or otherwise secured to the pallet) are considered pallets, not loose items.

   (2)   Sacks or trays thrown on top of pallets **are** considered loose items.

   (3)   Do not count empty pallets.

c.   *Noncontainerized Sacks* refers to non-Express Mail sacks or pouches found loose on the test vehicle.

d.   *Noncontainerized Express Mail Items* consists of individual pieces, sacks, or other items of noncontainerized Express Mail found loose on the test vehicle.

e.   *Noncontainerized Other Items* refers to all other non-Express Mail items (not including sacks or pouches) found loose on the test vehicle.

242.4   **Percent Remaining in Vehicle (Mail)**

Percent Remaining in Vehicle (Mail) is the percentage of floor space occupied by mail that is not unloaded at the test facility. This does **not** include mail originating at the test facility that will be loaded onto the vehicle.

To determine Percent Remaining in Vehicle (Mail):

a.   If possible, enter the vehicle and use a tape measure to estimate linear feet for each utilization requirement listed in 242.1.

b.   Use markings inside the vehicle, such as lines on the walls and holes placed at regular intervals on the floor, as references.

c.   Round off estimates to the nearest percentage.

Note: Record a Zero Volume test when no mail is unloaded from the test vehicle. Enter the vehicle utilization information in CODES and end the test. See 274 and RG-TRACS Surface for more details.

25   Identifying and Selecting Mail to Be Sampled

251   Grouping Set-Aside Mail

Mail unloaded from the test vehicle is eligible for sampling by the data collector. Unloaded mail is separated into five groups for sampling (set-aside types). Each of these is described in detail in 242.32.

a.   Wheeled Containers.

b.   Pallets.

c.   Noncontainerized Sacks.

d.   Noncontainerized Express Mail Items.

e.   Noncontainerized Other Items (parcels, trays, etc.).

252   Procedures for Identifying and Sampling Mail

The following procedures are used to identify and sample mail.

a.   As dock personnel unload the vehicle, the data collector will:

(1)   Select and remove mail following the set-aside procedures for each sampling group.

(2)   Enter utilization information in CODES. The software will display the number of targeted items for each sampling group.

(3)   Use the number or range indicated in the Targeted column on the Utilization screen as a guide when selecting the sample.

b. Because the unloading process is fast-paced and unloaded mail is removed from the dock quickly, the data collector must:

    (1) Coordinate with the mail handler unloading the test vehicle.

    (2) Explain how the mail handler can assist in selecting the containers and mail to set aside.

c. The data collector will:

    (1) Select set-aside items and stage them in an area where mail handlers will not remove them. (The staging area is usually located near the vehicle so the data collector can control the set-aside items.)

    (2) If possible, move set-aside items to a more convenient testing area after they have been secured.

253 Items Set Aside

253.1 Wheeled Containers

The data collector will perform the following tasks:

a. Set aside up to five wheeled containers and mark them 1 through 5. CODES will display the random start number on the Header screen.

b. If CODES displays a random start number of *1* on the right side of the screen, use this number and select the first wheeled container to sample.

c. After selecting the first wheeled container based on the random start number, select every third wheeled container according to these rules:

    (1) Select up to five wheeled containers.

    (2) If the skip rule results in selecting fewer than two wheeled containers, ignore the skip rule and select two wheeled containers.

    (3) If only one wheeled container is unloaded, sample it.

    Example: Fifteen wheeled containers are unloaded based on the random start number of *1*. The data collector will: (a) select the first wheeled container as the first container for sampling; (b) select every third wheeled container thereafter (in other words, select the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth, and thirteenth wheeled containers). In this example, five wheeled containers were selected.

d. Enter the percentage of empty container space for each container on the Container screen. This number can be used to double check the percentage remaining on the Items screen. When you have entered all item types for a container, the percentage of empty container space should equal the percentage remaining.

253.2 Pallets

The data collector will randomly choose two pallets (with mail) and set them aside. (The test cannot be completed if two or more pallets are unloaded, but only one pallet is sampled.) The date collector will then:

a. If only one pallet with mail is unloaded, sample it.

b. Record all mail on selected pallets.

Note: Postal Paks are not considered pallets.

253.3 Noncontainerized Express Mail Items

The data collector will set aside all noncontainerized (bedloaded) Express Mail items, including individual pieces, sacks, and other items.

253.4 Noncontainerized Sacks and Noncontainerized Other Items

The data collector will:

a.   Combine Noncontainerized Sacks and Noncontainerized Other Items (non-Express Mail) when selecting the Targeted range of items to sample.

b.   Select up to eight items to sample.

c.   Observe the following guidelines when selecting noncontainerized items.

   (1)   If there are eight or fewer set-aside items, select all.

   (2)   If there are more than eight set-aside items, select items in proportion to the percentage of Detail of Unloaded for the two set-aside groups.

   (3)   The ratio of selected sacks to selected other items is approximately equal the ratio of percent Noncontainerized Sacks to percent of Noncontainerized Other items.

d.   Count all mail in selected items.

   Example: If the space occupied by noncontainerized sacks is 30 percent, and the space occupied by loose parcels is 10 percent, select six sacks and two parcels (6/2 = 30/10). If some sacks are large and some are small, select some of each size. If most parcels are large, select mostly large parcels.

254 Item Types in TRACS

The following items are generally contained within a set-aside container, but TRACS considers them separate item types:

a.   Bundle.

b.   Convoy and conveyance (CON-CON).

c.   Envelope tray.

d.   Flat tray or box.

e.   Half-size envelope tray.

f.   Loose parcel or piece.

g.   Sack or pouch (non-Express Mail).

h.   Express Mail item.

i.   Small parcel tray.

j.   Other.

254.1 **Items in Wheeled Containers**

The data collector will record the following information for each set-aside wheeled container:

a. Item type.

b. Weight.

c. Percent of container occupied by the item type.

d. Origin Facility.

The *Origin Facility* for an item is the location where the item was loaded onto the test vehicle, not necessarily the facility where the item entered the mailstream.

254.11 **Identifying Items**

The data collector will:

a. Record the total weight of a set-aside wheeled container by leaving mail inside the container and weighing the container with all of its contents.

b. Select items from each of the set-aside wheeled containers, and:

    (1) Identify all item types present in the container.

    (2) Estimate the percentage of total container space occupied by each item type. (Estimate *absolute* percentage, i.e., percentage of the entire container).

    Example: If a container is 80 percent full, with half of the used portion occupied by sacks and the other half occupied by loose parcels and pieces, record 40 percent for sacks and 40 percent for loose parcels and pieces. Do not record 50/50, which is a *relative* percentage. If you record a relative percentage, Statistical Policy will not know that the container was only partially empty.

c. Select individual items in a container:

    (1) The following instructions apply to items selected non-randomly:

        (a) If there is only one of any item type, select it.

        (b) If there are four or fewer Loose Parcel or Piece(s), sample all items.

        (c) For items other than Loose Parcel or Piece(s), select only 1.

        Example: A set-aside wheeled container has 15 Envelope Trays; because this is an item type other than a Loose Parcel or Piece(s), select only one Envelope Tray randomly.

        (d) Do not make an entry in the Item(s) to Select/Number of Items fields.

    (2) Items are randomly selected when:

        (a) There are four or more Loose Parcel or Piece(s).

        (b) There are two or more of any of the other item type.

254.12 **Counting**

The data collector will:

a. **Count each item type.**

(1) When possible, count the number of each item type.

(2) When actual counting is not feasible, estimate the number of items.

(3) When sampling the actual count is not feasible, enter the maximum possible number of items you can process in the # of Items field on the Item screen.

Example 1: A tall Postal Pak completely full of loose parcels is selected for sampling.

■   Assume that it is impractical to count all of the loose pieces.

■   It appears to have 500 loose parcels.

■   Assume that it is not practical to consider all 500 of the loose parcels for sampling; however, it is possible to skip through 150 parcels.

■   On the Item screen select 6, Loose Parcel or Piece(s), as the item type, and enter 150 in the # of Items field.

Example 2: A hamper that contains 11 letter trays and 5 flat tubs is selected for sampling. On the Item screen:

■   Select 3, Envelope Tray, as the item type for the letter trays, and enter 11 in the # of Items field.

■   Select 4, Flat Tray or Box, as the item type for the flat tubs, and enter 5 in the # of Items field on the Item screen.

Example 3: A wiretainer full of loose parcels is selected for sampling. It is not feasible to count each item. Estimate that there are 175 loose parcels.

■   On the Item screen, select 6, Loose Parcel or Piece(s), as the item type, and enter 175 in the # of Items field.

b. **Identify and select the actual items to sample.**

(1) Enter the items to count in the # of Items field.

(2) The software provides an item number for each item to sample in the Item(s) to Select field.

(3) Count items of the same type from **front to back**, **left to right**, **top to bottom** until you reach the number shown in the Item(s) to Select field.

Example 1: A set-aside container has 9 flat trays. The numbering should begin with the tray closest to the front, on the top-left side. The box below shows the proper counting order for the flat trays.

3	6	9
2	5	8
1	4	7

Example 2: If a set-aside container has 18 flat trays neatly stacked together, count the top layer as shown Example 1. For the second layer, continue to count as shown in the box below.

12	15	18
11	14	17
10	15	16

On the Item screen:

■ Select 4, Flat Tray or Box, as the item type, and enter 18 in the # of Items field.

■ The software randomly selects a number from 1 to 18. For this example, the software selects 17. Continue counting until you reach Flat Tray 17. Select the tray for sampling.

Example 3: A set-aside container has 225 loose parcels and pieces. On the Item screen:

■ Select 6, Loose Parcel or Piece(s), as the item type, and enter 225 in the # of Items field. The software randomly selects four numbers from 1 to 225.

■ For this example, the numbers are 11, 72, 114, and 220.

■ Loose parcels and pieces will not be neatly stacked and arranged. Follow the systematic numbering process **front to back**, **left to right**, **top to bottom**; count and hold out pieces 11, 72, 114, and 220 for sampling.

■ If an overestimation of the number of pieces in the container causes the software to select a number that exceeds the actual count, select the last piece in the container as the final piece.

■ For example, if there are only 210 pieces, sample piece 210 in place of piece 220.

(4)   More than one parcel entered for a wheeled container

(a)   Enter the pieces one at a time.

(b)   Enter dimension data for each piece.

(c)   For the first loose piece, make an entry into the Item(s) to Select/# of Items fields.

   Note: The Item(s) to Select field displays pieces to select for sampling. The randomly selected pieces may or may not be displayed in sequence.

(d)   When entering information for the first loose piece, enter the Percent of Container Taken Up by This Item Type (include all loose pieces in the container in this percentage.)

(e)   After recording the first loose piece, leave the Select # of Items field blank. Enter 0 for the Percent of Container Taken Up by This Item Type for all remaining pieces.

c. **Mark all selected items to indicate the corresponding container.**

In TRACS, Postal Paks are defined as wheeled containers. Tall Postal Paks can present challenges when selecting the items inside the container for sampling.

Select one of each item type in the Postal Pak. Use the following guidelines:

(1) *NDC Facilities.* Determine which of these container dumpers are in place.

    (a) *Culling platforms (belts).* Ask the operator to stop the conveyer belt on the culling platform to allow you to safely retrieve the sample.

    (b) *Dumper stations.* Safely retrieve the sample or ask the operator to retrieve it.

(2) *Non-NDC Facilities.* Most non-NDCs do not have container dumpers suitable for Postal Paks.

    (a) If a safe container dumper is available, ask the operator for assistance to retrieve the sample mail safely.

    (b) If a dumper is not available, ask mail processing personnel how they process the mail. If they are going to cut open the Postal Pak, take the sample from the opened Postal Pak.

Note: If you cannot reach the items, record them as uncountable and provide the reason in the Notes section. Access the Notes section at any time during data entry by pressing <F5>.

254.2 Items on Pallets

Palletized sacks or trays (i.e., sacks or trays shrink wrapped or otherwise secured to the pallet) are considered pallets, not loose items. However, sacks or trays thrown on top of pallets are considered loose items.

a. Palletized sacks, trays, and other handling units will only have item information recorded for pallets if the mail category is not recordable.

b. When the mail category cannot be determined, uncheck the Mail Category Recordable box. Enter weight, dimensions in inches, barcodes, and Origin Facility. (See 263). When measuring pallet dimensions, include the pallet and its load.

c. Enter information for the items on the pallet by performing the following steps:

(1) Identify all item types present on the pallet.

(2) Estimate the percentage of pallet space occupied by each item type. Estimate the percentage of the entire pallet by item type (i.e., the *absolute percentage,* where all of the items combined equal 100 percent).

254.3 **Noncontainerized Express Mail Items**

The CODES software will automatically enter Express Item in the Item Type field. Count and record all mail for all of the Noncontainerized Express Mail Items.

254.4 **Noncontainerized Sacks and Noncontainerized Other Items**

For Noncontainerized Sacks, the CODES software will automatically enter Sack or Pouch (Non-Express) in the Item Type field. For Noncontainerized Other Items, enter the specific item type in the Item Type field as follows:

a. Open the selected items or containers.

b. Count and record all mail.

c. If the item cannot be opened, weigh the entire item and treat it as uncountable.

26   Recording Mail Category Information

261 **Categories of Mail**

Recording mail category information differs slightly for each set-aside group listed in 251.

a. For some mail categories, the software displays warning screens asking the data collector to verify the entries. Enter comments to verify or explain unusual mailpiece characteristics.

b. When entering mailpiece weight using the electronic scales, the laptop weight and scale weight may differ by 0.1 ounce.

For more detailed information about recording categories of mail see RG-TRACS Surface.

262 **Wheeled Containers and Noncontainerized Set-Asides**

To record mail category characteristics for wheeled containers and noncontainerized set-asides:

a. Number each set-aside container and its selected items for sampling to identify the corresponding container.

b. Remove the mail from each container (do not mix mail from different containers).

c. Separate and select mail by category, subclass, and shape.

d. Count and enter the total number of mailpieces for the selected mail category. For some mail categories, mailpieces must be recorded individually. See 263 and RG-TRACS Surface for more detail.

e. Enter the total weight of the mailpieces for the selected mail category.

f. Return the mail to the original item and container.

g. Repeat steps *b* through *f* for each item.

263 **Pallets**

263.1 **Procedures**

a.   For each set-aside pallet:

   (1)   Record the weight from the printed label on its exterior. If weight cannot be determined, leave the field blank.

   (2)   When measuring the pallet, include the pallet and its load.

   (3)   Enter the dimensions and the Origin Facility.

b.   If mail categories can be determined, record the percentage of the pallet occupied by each mail category. For each mail category selected, enter the mailpiece shape, percent, count, and barcode information on the Mail Information screen.

c.   If the mail category is recordable, the barcode scanning window in the Mail Information screen appears. If possible, get a barcode scan on one mailpiece from each pallet mail category. For example, if a pallet has 200 First-Class Mail parcels, try scan the barcode of one mailpiece, as follows:

   (1)   Select only one of each a mail category in a pallet.

   (2)   Enter the percentage of space occupied by each mail category.

   (3)   Enter the piece count number printed on the exterior of the pallet. If there is no number, leave the count field blank.

   (4)   Repeat steps 1 through 3 for all mail categories.

   (5)   The sum of the percentages must equal 100 percent.

263.2 **Category Not Recordable**

A pallet usually contains a single subclass of mail and has a label attached. However, a pallet may be shrink-wrapped with sacks, trays, or other items, either without a label or with a label that does not provide adequate information to identify each subclass of mail.

a.   If you cannot determine the mail category on a pallet, ask operations to unwrap the pallet so you can collect the mail mix information. If necessary, rewrap the items on the pallet.

b.   If you cannot determine the mail category for over 95 percent of the mail on a pallet, enter the pallet as Mail Category Not Recordable.

   Example: A pallet's mail categories are 90 percent Periodicals and 10 percent unknown. Record the pallet as Mail Category Not Recordable.

c.   Treat a pallet as uncountable only as a last resort. If a pallet is unrecorded, uncheck the Mail Category Recordable box and record Items information. (See 254.2.)

264   Sequenced Mail

TRACS uses a special procedure to sample sequenced mail. A sequenced tray may contain Delivery Point Sequence (DPS), Return to Sender (RTS), or Flats Sequencing System (FSS) mail.

To maintain the mail sequence:

a.   Count the total number of mailpieces for each category and subclass in the sequenced tray. Be sure to maintain the sequence of the sample mail when counting. Finger through the mail and keep a tally of each category and subclass on paper.

b.   Select three mailpieces for each category and subclass present in the sequenced tray.

c.   When selecting mailpieces, mark their places by turning the next mailpiece on end.

d.   After recording mail category information, return the mailpieces to their original place in the tray and return the marker mailpieces to their original position.

e.   Do not alter the mail sequence unless you receive permission in advance from appropriate facility personnel.

See the Special Sampling Rules in RG-TRACS Surface for more information on sequenced mail.

265   Registered Mail That Cannot Be Opened

In some cases the contents of a CON-CON or Registered Mail container may not be recordable. If an item is a blue or red CON-CON or a locked register pouch or sack, take the item to the registry cage for detailed sampling. If the item cannot be opened, weigh the entire item and treat it as uncountable.

266   Workload Constraints

If workload constraints are an issue, and there is a prompt to collect density data, take the following actions.

a.   Record dimensions for one parcel-shaped mailpiece within each mail category and item type.

b.   To collect dimension data, choose the top parcel-shaped piece from each mail category.

After meeting this requirement, bypass the Mailpiece Dimension screen by selecting the Skip button.

Note: Workload constraints do not apply to loose parcels or pieces when a wheeled containers is the primary container: When counting loose parcels or pieces, record parcel dimensions for every loose parcel or piece selected for sampling.

267 **Mail Retrieved by Operations Before a Test Is Finished**

Sample as much of the mail as possible.

a. If operations retrieves the mail for processing before you are finished with the test, include the mail in the Percent and Quantity of the Details of Unloaded.

b. Do not include it in the sample unless it is the only mail for a sampling group.

c. If it is the only mail for a sampling group, contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

d. Describe the situation in the Notes section by pressing <F-5>.

268 **Dock Transfers**

A *dock transfer* occurs when mail is immediately transferred from one vehicle to another. Follow the guidelines in 267.

27 Replacement, Rescheduled, and Zero Volume Tests

271 **Overview**

If a transportation contract has been changed or terminated or the test vehicle does not arrive as scheduled, perform one of the following actions in order of priority:

a. Conduct a replacement test on another vehicle on the same test day.

b. Reschedule the test for another day in the quarter (rescheduling is done by a manager or designee).

c. Record the test as a Zero Volume test.

To decide which action to take, the data collector may need to find out why the mail did not arrive and under what circumstances it will arrive. The facility or origin office may be able to answer these questions, and the RG-TRACS Surface decision trees may provide helpful information.

272 **Replacement Test**

272.1 **When to Conduct**

A *replacement* test is conducted under the following conditions:

a. A test vehicle does not arrive on the day of the TRACS Surface Test;

b. Another vehicle of the same contract type is available for testing; and

c. The test can be conducted on the same day, using the same type of vehicle as the one originally scheduled.

272.2 **Procedures**

To conduct a replacement test, the data collector will:

a. Enter the vehicle information, Origin Facility code, and all previous stops on the replacement route. (Dock personnel and the driver should be able to provide this information.)

b. When entering the replacement information in the Header screen, complete each field. At least one of the vehicle fields must be different from the original test information, or CODES will not accept the entry.

273 **Rescheduled Test**

273.1 **When to Reschedule**

A test must be *rescheduled* when any of the following occurs:

a. The data collector does not arrive in time to observe the mail being unloaded.

b. The mail does not arrive due to a permanent change in route, and a replacement vehicle is not available.

c. A temporary change in route causes the mail to be delivered by a vehicle other than the scheduled test vehicle, and either of the following conditions exist:

(1) The vehicle does not have the same contract type as the test vehicle. (See 273.3.)

(2) The vehicle has the same contract type as the test vehicle, but was not originally scheduled to stop on the test day.

d. Because of a permanent route change, it is not possible to replace the test vehicle on the day of the test, but it is possible to replace it on the same day of the following week.

273.2 **Authority to Reschedule**

The data collector is responsible for making the decision not to conduct a test, but does not have the authority to reschedule a test. Only a manager has the authority to reschedule.

273.3 **Selecting a Replacement Vehicle**

When a test is rescheduled, the replacement vehicle must be under the same type of contract as the originally scheduled vehicle. These four contract types are tested in the TRACS Surface Test:

a. **Inter-NDC** —contract to carry mail between NDCs; however, Inter-NDC trips often stop at SCFs and may not necessarily connect two NDCs.

b. **Intra-NDC** —contract to carry mail within an NDC service area; the route may be from an NDC to an AO or SCF (outbound) or to an NDC from an AO or SCF (inbound).

c. **Inter-SCF** —contract to carry mail between SCFs (some trips stop at AOs); contracts classified as Inter-P&DC, Inter-Cluster, or Inter-Area are treated as Inter-SCF by TRACS.

    d.   **Intra-SCF** —contracts carry mail between an SCF and the AOs within its service area.

Plant load transportation (to and from mailers' plants), Postal Service vehicles, and Contract Delivery (box) Routes are not eligible for selection.

274   Zero Volume Test

A *Zero Volume* test occurs when no mail is unloaded at the test facility. The data collector will record Zero Volume when the test vehicle:

    a.   Stopped, but did not have mail for the test facility.

    b.   Did not stop at the test facility because there was no mail (temporary routing change).

When a test is Zero Volume and the test facility is not the last stop on the route, the data collector will record vehicle utilization information.

28   Finalizing the Test

281   Determining the Time Required to Complete the Test

After reviewing the data and correcting any errors, the data collector will record the amount of time taken to complete the test, including time spent on the following tasks:

    a.   Communicating with essential personnel on the day of the test.

    b.   Setting up the computer and work area.

    c.   Selecting the sample and gathering items.

    d.   Entering data into the computer.

    e.   Reviewing data and ending the test.

    f.   Traveling to and from the test site.

Note: Do not include time the data collector spent off the clock, working on another test, or reading.

Example: On the day before the test, it takes 5 hours to get to the test site from the office and to check into a hotel. On the test day, it takes 15 minutes to get to the test site from the hotel. It takes 1 hour and 10 minutes to prepare for and conduct the test and another 5 hours and 5 minutes to get back to the office. The total time is 11 hours and 30 minutes.

282   Reviewing the Data and Administrative Information

When finalizing the test, the data collector will:

    a.   Review the following data for accuracy.

        (1)   Header information.

        (2)   Replacement vehicle information.

        (3)   Origin Facility codes.

        (4)   Data summaries.

        (5)   Item weights and counts.

        (6)   Pallet weights, dimensions, and counts.

        (7)   Items found on pallets.

        (8)   Mail categories.

b.   Answer the final administrative questions, review, and save.

After entering all test data, select Review/Delete Test to open the test and review the data. An Error Warning Log may appear. CODES does not allow test completion until all errors are resolved. If errors are found, return to data entry and correct all mistakes.

If all errors have not been corrected, do not complete the test. Suspend the test and contact your manager or designee. If all errors have been corrected or no Error Warning Log has appeared, and the test data has been appropriately reviewed, then answer the final administrative questions, save, and transmit the test.

283   Transmitting the Test Data

Test data must be transmitted to the CODES Web Base Unit as soon as possible after completion. If it is not possible to transmit the test electronically, copy the test to an external storage device (i.e., USB portable drive). Notify the manager or designee and contact CODES Support for additional help, if needed. See RG-TRACS Surface for detailed instructions.

3 Transportation Cost System — Air Test

31 Overview

The TRACS Air Test provides the information needed to estimate the percentage of pounds or cubic feet for specific categories of mail transported by FedEx and UPS (called *Network Air Carriers*) or commercial air carriers that carry passengers and freight. The Postal Service uses TRACS Air Test data to distribute air transportation costs to different categories of mail, set prices, develop the costs of products and services, and provide operations information to management.

This chapter sets forth policy and procedures for conducting TRACS Air Tests. For instructions on data entry and related information, see *Reference Guide — Transportation Cost Systems Air* (RG-TRACS Air)*.

311 Essential Personnel

A data collector conducts a TRACS Air Test with the help of the following personnel:

a. Distribution Operations Manager.

b. Operations Supervisor.

c. Tour Supervisor.

d. Air Transportation Specialist.

e. Air Contract Data Collection System (ACDCS) Operator or Air Records Processor.

f. Express Mail Clerk or Ramp Clerk.

311.1 Data Collector

The data collector must contact the supervisor at least two days before a test to obtain the information needed to conduct the test. On the day of the test, the data collector must:

a. Arrive at the test facility at least one hour before the scheduled test time.

b. Explain the test and the data collector's role.

c. Explain the criteria for the test mail, as follows:

    (1) Air mode (FedEx Day, FedEx Night, UPS, or commercial air).

    (2) Time and date of the test.

    (3) Air Contract Transportation (ACT) Tag type.

d. Locate all possible scanning locations and staging areas.

e.   Verify the Header screen information in the Computerized On-Site Data Entry System (CODES) Web Base Unit.

f.   Locate areas to hold mail and conduct the test.

g.   Estimate the percentage of items to sample. (See Sample Selection in RG-TRACS Air).

h.   Set aside mail to be tested.

i.   Conduct the test.

j.   Transmit test data.

311.2   **Facility Personnel**

Facility personnel must provide a safe area to hold the test mail and conduct the test and help the data collector to:

a.   Identify the mail to be sampled.

b.   Develop an estimate for the number of different handling unit types (i.e., sacks, outsides, etc.) when applicable.

c.   Develop an estimate for the average item weight for each type of handling unit.

312   **Required Materials**

The data collector must take the following materials to the test site:

a.   CODES laptop computer with fully charged battery pack.

b.   AC power pack with power cord.

c.   Extension cord with three-prong safety.

d.   Electronic scale with cables for power source and computer connection.

   Note: The scale must be accurate to one-tenth of an ounce. Verify accuracy and level the scale before each test.

e.   Barcode scanner.

f.   RG-TRACS Air.

g.   Handbook F-65, Chapter 3, Transportation Cost System — Air Test.

h.   Statistical Programs policy letters.

i.   Paper and pen or pencil.

j.   Tape measure.

k.   Data storage device (i.e., USB portable drive).

l.   Marking slips to tag set-aside containers and items for testing.

These items are optional:

a.   Hamper or cart.

b.   Sorting case.

313 **Procedures**

The data collector performs the following tasks when conducting a TRACS Air Test. The subchapters that follow describe the tasks in detail.

a.   Preparing for the test.

b.   Identifying and selecting mail to be sampled.

c.   Recording information about selected mail.

d.   Rescheduling or canceling a test.

e.   Finalizing the test.

32   Preparing for the Test

Careful preparation is necessary to ensure that the data collector conducts the test efficiently and that the results are accurate.

321 **Preparing Before the Day of the Test**

Before the day of the test the data collector must:

a.   Download test schedules and other information from the CODES Web Base Unit, if necessary.

b.   Review current TRACS procedures, including this chapter, RG-TRACS Air, and Statistical Programs policy letters.

c.   Call the facility at least two days before the test to:

    (1)   Inform the supervisor that a TRACS Air test is scheduled.

    (2)   Explain test procedures, if necessary. (See 322.)

    (3)   Ask whom to contact when arriving at the facility.

    (4)   Explain the five test criteria described in 332.

    (5)   Determine scanning locations. (If a scanning location is not accessible, ask how to identify the sample items, and where the sample items will be staged.)

d.   Ensure that all needed materials are available. (See 312 for the list of materials.)

322   **Preparing on the Day of the Test**

To successfully complete the test, the data collector must arrive at the assigned facility dock at least one hour before the scheduled test time; and

a.   Explain the reason for and purpose of the test.

b.   Explain the five test criteria:

    (1)   Test Facility.

    (2)   Test Day.

    (3)   Time Segment.

    (4)   Air Mode.

    (5)   Air Contract Transportation (ACT) Tag type.

c.   Ask facility personnel to help the data collector:

    (1)   Locate the scanning and staging areas for the mail.

    (2)   Determine where the Dispatch and Routing (D&R) Tags are applied.

    (3)   Locate a safe place to work.

    (4)   Develop an estimate for the total number of different handling unit types (i.e., sacks, outsides, etc.) when applicable.

    (5)   Develop an estimate of the average item weight for each handling unit type.

33   Identifying and Selecting Mail to Be Sampled

331   Overview

A TRACS Air Test is conducted on outgoing mail assigned to one of the following Air Modes: FedEx Day, FedEx Night, UPS, and Commercial air.

Mail processing generates a D&R Tag that is attached to all mail items or containers transported by air. The tag contains these codes: Airline, ACT Tag, and Leave Time (LV). To be eligible for sampling, the air item's D&R Tag must be applied at the test facility during the time segment specified for the test date. (See exceptions for private mailers in 333.3.)

332   Procedures for Identifying and Selecting Mail

Test criteria are shown in the test schedule information and explained in the test criteria section of RG-TRACS. The TRACS Air Test is designed to sample outgoing mail after it has been scanned, but before it is loaded on an airplane.

Mail to be tested can be found in the following locations:

a.   **Scanner.** The ACDCS scanner operator applies D&R Tags to the mail and may be able to identify or hold out items for the test flight that have just been scanned.

b.   **Airline Runout.** In facilities with several scanners, the mail is not always staged near the scanner, is sent to an airline runout (staging area) immediately after it is scanned. When this occurs, the data collector will: (1) obtain the mail from the runout of the designated airline; and (2) ensure that procedures are in place to identify mail scanned within the appropriate time segment.

c.   **Auxiliary Scanner.** Facilities with auxiliary scanning and runout locations often use special scanners for: (1) Express Mail, (2) Registered Mail, (3) large (outsized parcels); and (4) seasonal mail.

333 **Mail Included in the Test**

Include mail that meets the five test criteria described in this section.

333.1 **Test Facility**

The *Test Facility* is the facility selected for the test. The data collector:

a.   Will include items processed at the specified test facility.

b.   Will not include items scanned at other facilities, then transported to the test facility for consolidation.

333.2 **Test Day**

The *Test Day* is the 24-hour calendar day specified in the test ID and the date D&R Tags are printed and applied to the test items. The test date does not necessarily match the flight date displayed on the D&R Tag because the mail could be tagged for a later flight date.

333.3 **Time Segment**

The *Time Segment* is assigned based on the specific periods of time in which mail was scanned at the test facility during the previous quarter.

Note: Mail is sampled more often when volume is heavy.

The data collector must:

a.   Sample items with D&R Tags that were scanned and applied during the specified time segment.

b.   Observe the scanning and D&R Tag application.

c.   Be aware that military time is used for the time segment.

    Examples of military time:

    ■   Midnight to 01:59 A.M. = 00:00 to 01:59

    ■   Noon to 01:59 P.M. = 12:00 to 13:59

Exception: Ignore the time segment when denied access to a test scheduled at a private mailer's plant. Arrange to have the mailer isolate and placard the test mail. Conduct the test when the mail arrives at the Postal Service facility. (See Special Situations in RG-TRACS Air.)

333.4 **Air Mode**

The *Air Mode* identifies the type of air carrier. D&R Tags identify Air Modes as follows:

a.   **Commercial Air Carriers** are identified by a two-character code, such as *AA* for American Airlines. The CODES software lists codes for the airlines to be sampled.

b.   **Network Air Carriers** are identified by the following codes on the D&R Tag:

Carrier	Code
UPS	5X
FedEx	FX

c. **Leave time** (LV) is a code that shows the close-out time (i.e., time when the item must be dispatched) for FedEx Day and FedEx Night.

Test	Leave Time (LV)
FedEx Day (FX1)	Between midnight and noon.
FedEx Night (FX2)	After noon and before midnight.

Note: LV on a D&R Tag is not used to determine the time segment for testing.

333.5 **Air Contract Transportation Tag**

The *ACT Tag Code* is a bold letter superimposed on the barcode of the D&R Tag that is used to identify the predominant mail class for the item. For example, *P* designates a Priority Mail item. (For further information see the Test Criteria and D&R Tag sections of RG-TRACS Air.)

The table below shows the assigned ACT Tag Type for the sample and the actual ACT Tag Codes to be sampled.

Mail Class	If the ACT Tag Type on the sample selection is…	Then sample ACT Tag Code…
Express Mail	E	E, N, S
First-Class Mail	F	F, D, K, M, T, X
Priority Mail	P	P, Y
International Mail	I	I
Other	O	G, H, L, R

ACT Tag Type *O* is a placeholder that shows in the sample selection, but represents these ACT Tag Codes: G – Perishable, H – Hazardous, L – Lives, R – Registered.

334 **Mail Excluded From the Test**

Do not include:

a. Mail with a D&R Tag applied in another Postal Service facility and consolidated at the test facility.

b. Mail with a D&R Tag applied on a different calendar day from the test date.

c. Mail with a D&R Tag applied outside the specified time segment.

d. Mail for any other air or transportation mode. For example, exclude FedEx items from a UPS test.

e. Mail for which the Sample ACT Tag Code does not match the Sample ACT Tag Type (See the table in 333.5).

34   Recording Selected Items

An *Item* may be a single mailpiece or a container holding multiple mailpieces. The data collector will record items as follows:

a.   Record the selected items on the Item Information screen.

b.   Scan the D&R Tag barcode into the laptop.

c.   Record shape, markings, count, and weight for each mailpiece or pieces in the selected container on the Mail Information screen. (See RG-TRACS Air for more detailed information.)

d.   Scan all barcodes on the item and mailpieces for information gathering and validation purposes during processing. (See Barcode Scanning Order in RG-TRACS Air.)

Note: The mailpieces within an item are usually countable, but on rare occasions this may not be possible (due to dispatch considerations or the inability to open an item). In these cases, deselect the Countable check box, record basic item information, weigh the item, and complete the test without recording information about the contents of the item.

35   Rescheduling or Canceling a Test

The TRACS Air Test must be rescheduled when:

a.   The data collector does not arrive in time for sampling.

b.   It appears that no mail was scanned during the assigned time segment, and a subsequent Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) search shows that items were scanned meeting the test criteria.

A manager or designee will request permission from a Statistical Programs specialist to cancel a test when no items meeting the test criteria are scanned during the assigned time segment. The manager will verify this in EDW.

36   Finalizing the Test

361   **Determining the Time Required to Complete the Test**

After reviewing the data and correcting any errors, the data collector will record the amount of time taken to complete the test, including time spent on the following tasks:

a.   Communicating with essential personnel on the day of the test.

b.   Setting up the computer and work area.

c.   Selecting the sample and gathering items.

d.   Entering data into the computer.

e.   Reviewing data and ending the test.

f.   Traveling to and from the test site.

Note: Do not include time the data collector spent off the clock, working on another test, or reading.

Example: On the day before the test, it takes 5 hours to get to the test site from the office and check into a hotel. On the test day, it takes 15 minutes to get to the test site from the hotel. It takes 3 hours and 10 minutes to prepare for and conduct the test and another 5 hours and 5 minutes to get back to the office. The total time is 13 hours and 30 minutes.

362 Reviewing the Data and Administrative Information

After entering all test data, select Review/Delete Test to open the test and review the data. An Error Warning Log may appear. CODES does not allow test completion until all errors are resolved. If errors are found, return to data entry and correct all mistakes.

If all errors have not been corrected, do not complete the test. Suspend the test and contact your manager or designee. If all errors have been corrected or no Error Warning Log has appeared, and the test data has been appropriately reviewed, then answer the final administrative questions, save, and transmit the test.

363 Transmitting the Test Data

Tests must be transmitted to the CODES Web Base Unit as soon as possible after they are completed. If it is not possible to transmit the test electronically, copy the test to an external storage device (i.e., USB portable drive). Notify the manager or designee and contact CODES Support for additional help, if needed. (See RG-TRACS Air for detailed instructions.)

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