# Secure Meter Enhancements and Migration Phases

## Introduction

The most significant trend in the mailing machine industry is the transition from non-digital postage meters to digital postage meters. This transition is being carried out under a six-phase plan implemented by the United States Postal Service (USPS) to minimize the impact on both customers and manufacturers.

## Background

In 1995, the United States Postal Service (USPS), in conjunction with all authorized postage meter manufacturers, began a phase out of all mechanical postage meters because of identified cases of tampering and misuse. Postal Service revenues were proven to be at serious risk. Since that time, digital enhancements and accuracy of postage meters have provided the users with secure meter technology that will prevent fraudulent activities.

## New Enhancements and Features

Features offered by electronic postage meters employing digital technology include:

- *Security features*, which restrict access to the machine via passwords and PIN numbers for individuals and departments. These identification features also makes it possible to track mailings by individuals or departments for accounting purposes.
- *Postage accounting*, which can track postage costs for departments or individual customers and may allow data downloading to third party spreadsheet and database programs or to mail accounting software.
- *Report printing,* which prints status or expenditures reports on labels or on to an external printer.
- *Low-postage warning,* which alerts the user when it's time to reset the meter with more postage.
- *User-definable text,* which can be used for promotional tag lines or to convey other information on the postage label or tape.
- *Automatic date advance,* which automatically sets the machine's date every day, eliminating the possibility that mail will be returned from the post office, owing to improper dating.

**Meter Migration Plan**

The meter migration plan summarized below is a phased approach to migrate users from early technology susceptible to tampering and misuse to the enhanced security of digital printing.

| PHASE | DESCRIPTION | NO NEW CONTRACT | NO RESETS AFTER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 1<br><br>Mechanical Meters | Postage was set and reset manually by physically bringing the meter head to the Post Office. Postage is printed with rotary motion, security was minimal, and no enhancements were available. | 12/31/99 | Completed |
| Phase 2<br><br>Manual Set Meters | Postage is set and reset electronically by physically bringing the meter head to the Post Office. Postage is printed with rotary motion, security was minimal and no enhancements were available. | 12/31/02 | 2/28/05 |
| Phase 3<br><br>Rotary Print Head Meters | Postage is set and reset by a code entered into the meter or by telephone from the meter supplier. Postage is printed by rotating the print head, minimal security enhancements available | 12/31/02 | 12/31/06 |
| Phase 4<br><br>Security Enhanced Rotary Print Head Meter | Postage is set through a modem only. Postage is printed by rotating the print head, but the meter has a "time-out" feature to detect when a meter is not used or is tampered with. The system will lock itself down after 110 days of inactivity. Much more secure, and the most secure type of meter without 2-D barcode encryption | 12/31/04 | 12/31/08 |
| Phase 5<br>Non-IBI Digital Print Meter | Postage is set through a modem only. Postage is printed through an Inkjet Cartridge filled with special postal ink. First generation of the "Postal Security Device" which is virtually tamper-proof. | Current | Current |

| PHASE | DESCRIPTION | NO NEW CONTRACT | NO RESETS AFTER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 6<br><br>IBI Digital Print Meter Current preferred technology | Postage is set exclusively through a modem. Postage is printed with digital Inkjet Cartridge, and also prints a unique 2-D barcode with unique information embedded in the postage Indicia imprint. **Security** fully Secure, both by the "postal Security Device" and by the resulting encrypted 2-D barcode unique Indicia | Current | Current |

**Glossary**

*De-certification*
Meter de-certification is an organized process of removing meters from the market.

*Digital printing technology*
The indicia is created electronically by inkjet or laser as opposed to a stamping or letterpress print method

*Enhanced Computerized Reset Meter (Phase 4)*
This meter has an additional feature that automatically disables the meter if it is not reset within a specified time period or when certain preprogrammed criteria are met.

*Electro-Mechanical Counter Meters (Phase 2)*
These are meters that uses industry-standards mechanical components for managing the registers and account for postal funds.  These meters have been decertified and are not authorized for use.

*Information Based Indicia (Phase 6)*
The United States Postal Service initiated Information-Based Indicia program to enhance the security of postage evidencing by supporting new methods of applying postage to mail.  The information-based indicia (IBI) is printed by the postage meter or other forms of PC postage systems on mail pieces. The IBIP program is designed to give the post office greater visibility & security of mail. In addition, the use of the 2-D barcode removes levels of sorting within the mailing process cycle, which in turn will speed the delivery of a mail piece.

*IBI Digital Print Meter (Phase 6)*
This meter prints with digital Inkjet Cartridge, and also prints a unique 2-D barcode with unique information embedded in the postage Indicia imprint

*Letterpress Postage Meter (Phase 1-4)*
This is a meter that produces an indicia utilizing a stamping or impact print method.  The registers could be electro-mechanical or electronic.

*Mechanical Meter (Phase 1)*
This is a letterpress meter that has to be taken to the post office and physically reset by a Postal official. These meters have been decertified and were taken out of circulation by the USPS in 1999.

*Manual Set Meter (Phase 1)*
A meter that was set by taking to the post office, or by setting a code onto the meter /the code was provided by the USPS or the meter vendor

*Non-IBI Digital Print Meter (Phase 5)*
A meter that prints via an Inkjet Cartridge filled with special fluorescent postal Ink

*Nonenhanced Computerized Meter Reset Letterpress Meter (Phase 3)*
This is a meter that does not have a time out feature that shuts the meter off if not reset within 90 days.

*Off Market*
This is the term used to describe the removal of decertified meters from the customer. The meter is permanently out of service.

*Rotary Print Head Meter (Phase 1-3)*
Meters that rotate the print head with push button settings.

*Security Enhanced Rotary Print Head Meter*
A meter that prints by rotating the print head but has a "time-out" feature to detect when a meter is not used or is tampered with. The meter system will lock itself down after 110 days of inactivity.

*What is a postage meter?*
A postage meter is a device that prints postage directly on the envelope (or on an adhesive tape/label) for any type of mail – First Class, Periodicals, Third, or Fourth Class; Airmail, Registered mail, Special Delivery, or other Special services.

**Authorized postage and PC Postage system meter providers:**
Hasler, Inc. 800-243-6275 www.haslerinc.com **Graham Fulgham**
Francotyp-Postalia Inc. 800-341-6052 www.fp-usa.com **Zach Moody**
Neopost 800-624-7892 www.neopostinc.com **Bob Sheehan**
Pitney Bowes Inc. 800-322-8000 www.pitneybowes.com **Ernie Rojas**
Envelope Manager 800-576-3279 www.envmgr.com **Patrick Whitehouse**
Stamps.com www.stamps.com 888 434-0055 **Mike Boswell**
**Source:
http://gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?programId=15454&channelId=-24609&ooid=10957&contentId=17276&pageTypeId=17113&contentType=GSA_BASIC&programPage=%2Fep%2Fprogram%2FgsaBasic.jsp&P=MTM**