



iAddress™ Updater

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Canadian NCOA Changes Coming in 2016

On January 2, 2016, Canada Post will be introducing a new licensing structure for their National Change of Address (NCOA) data. Flagship Software Ltd. will be working to minimize any impact this has on our customers. Those that will be affected are being contacted directly by Kristi Kanitz, General Manager.

The most noticeable change for all customers will be the introduction of a web-based portal in 2016 for signing "Terms of Use". Any mailers wanting to access NCOA processing services will be required to create an account and agree to the Terms of Use for the service. This will replace the current paper-based system that uses the NCOA Acknowledgement Form.

The current system works like this:

1. The NCOA Acknowledgement form is signed by the mail owner. If the mail owner processes directly, the form is returned to Flagship. The form is kept on file and updated annually.
2. If the mail owner processes through a mail service provider, the form is returned to that provider. The provider is required to keep the form on file and have it updated annually.
3. The mail service provider must sign their own form and return this to Flagship. The form is kept on file and updated annually.

Under the current terms of the NCOA license agreement, Canada Post requires Flagship to provide monthly reports that list the client using the NCOA service and the number of transactions processed. If a mail service provider is processing on behalf of their customer, the mail service provider's name is listed on the report as Flagship does not have access to the mail owner's information. Canada Post has decided that this does not provide a sufficient level of transparency and is moving to a system that will require all mail owners using the service to be directly identified to Canada Post.

The web portal is still being developed by Canada Post but this is the information they have provided to date. A mail owner will be required to register and agree to the NCOA Terms of Use

through the portal. Once this is done, an NCOA identification number will be issued. This number will be valid for one year and can only be used by that mail owner. Mail service providers will also be required to register for their own NCOA identification number. Canada Post will notify registrants by e-mail prior to their expiry date to return to the portal and update their terms of use.

Flagship will be required to modify the iAddress™ software to require the input of a valid NCOA identification number as well as a valid mail service provider number, where applicable. All valid numbers will be available from Canada Post to Flagship on a daily basis. If an identification number has expired, validation will fail and the job will not process through NCOA. It will be the responsibility of the mail owner to update their Terms of Use agreement as Flagship will not be able to override the Canada Post authorization system.

For customers currently accessing our NCOA services, this should be a relatively simple adjustment in process. Instead of signing and returning the existing pdf form to Flagship, you will register and agree online to the same terms and conditions. You will enter your identification number into iAddress™ (or your customers' identification numbers). We will be modifying the software to make the selection of the correct identification number simple and as seamless as possible.

We will continue to update you with changes to the NCOA program. Ensuring your addresses are current as well as correct and complete is a best practice in address management. It will reduce returns and make sure your mail piece arrives to the intended recipient in the shortest amount of time. For questions, please e-mail Kristi@flagshipsoftware.com.

US NCOALink

We have noticed a significant slow-down in the approval of US NCOALink forms for Canadian mailers in the past few months. As well as this unexplained delay, we have also had Processing Acknowledgement Forms (PAFs) and Letters of Intent (Lols) refused for both new and seemingly minor issues which also add time to the approvals process. While we work to determine why these issues are happening, here are some of the most common and some recent reasons the forms have been rejected. We do review every PAF and Lol so we may ask you to add or modify information before we submit it for approval.

1. The company signing the PAF and Lol is not the mail owner or does not appear to be the mail owner. Licensing at the USPS googles every Canadian company submitting paperwork for NCOALink processing. They check the website's contact page and, if it is a publication, they check the masthead of the magazine. They appear to be looking

for any reason to dispute that the mailer is not in fact the mail owner. Please make sure the information on the website matches the information on the PAF and Lol.

2. No e-mail address provided for the mail owner contact. This is a new requirement. USPS now requires both the phone number and e-mail address of the main contact in the event that they need to audit the NCOALink processing for that mailer.
3. No title (or no specific title) for the mail owner contact or the Broker/Agent contact. Please make sure the title is identical between the PAF and the Lol. They will not accept a department name or division as a title (e.g. "Mailing Department" is not acceptable.)
4. The address on the Lol does not match the address on the PAF. This can happen where the mail owner has a head office (usually reflected on the PAF) but the letterhead shows a branch office. Please make sure the addresses are consistent.

Direct Mail or E-mail?

When was the last time someone told you "mail is dead"? Was it yesterday? Or even today? In spite of the rumours, mail still is and continues to be an important tool in a marketer's belt. With the perception that e-mail is "free" and mail is most definitely not, why would a marketer choose direct mail over an e-mail campaign?

One of the most important benefits of direct mail over e-mail is sheer volume. Inboxes are overloaded but mailboxes are not. Many e-mail messages are automatically removed by either spam filters or the filters the recipient has set up to move advertising e-mails. The filter on a mailbox is the consumer themselves, who will be physically handling and reviewing the direct mail piece for interest and relevance. "Select All" and "Delete" are an e-mail marketer's worst nightmare.

The lower number of pieces results in less competition in the mailbox which means your message is more likely to be noticed. This makes it far more personal, allowing the mail piece to pitch your product or service directly to the recipient in the comfort of their own home or office. The USPS shows 98% of people check their mail daily and more than 75% sort their mail as soon as it is received. This means for most recipients, direct mail doesn't build up into an unmanageable pile that gets swept into a recycling box without review, unlike unread e-mail that is deleted in bulk.

Your options to grab the recipient's attention are limited to a subject line with e-mail. That has to be a very compelling subject line! With direct mail, you can use colour, shape, content, texture, samples, and more to engage your audience and keep their interest. You can link the mail piece to websites, social media accounts, and augmented reality, just to touch on a few options.

Mail is seen as more trustworthy than e-mail marketing. Phishing and spoofing are commonplace and increasingly sophisticated in the online world. It can be difficult for a consumer to know if an e-mail is really from a trusted source or simply a good con. It makes many consumers wary of even the most attractive e-mail offers. Mail doesn't have the same stigma.

Direct mail is generally not considered a stand-alone marketing tool any more but rather an integral part of a multi-media campaign. It has been enhanced by digital technology; it can push consumers to websites, personalized or general, designed to lead to a sale. So next time someone tells you that mail is dead, remind them of all the benefits they will be missing out on if they don't consider direct mail as part of their marketing campaign!

iAddress™ Web Training

Flagship Software continues to offer **Web Training!**

If you are a new customer, would like a refresher course on **iAddress™** or if you have new hires, please contact Carolyn at 1-866-672-0007 ext. 3 or carolyn@flagshipsoftware.com to schedule a web session.

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