

S62

International mail processing centres: assignment and use of operator codes

Data definition and encoding standards

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Foreword

Postal services form part of the daily life of people all over the world. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that regulates the universal postal service. The postal services of its 192 member countries form the largest physical distribution network in the world. More than 5 million postal employees working in over 660,000 post offices all over the world handle an annual total of 434 billion letter-post items in the domestic service and 5.5 billion in the international service. More than 6 billion parcels are sent by post annually. Keeping pace with the changing communications market, postal operators are increasingly using new communication and information technologies to move beyond what is traditionally regarded as their core postal business. They are meeting higher customer expectations with an expanded range of products and value-added services.

Standards are important prerequisites for effective postal operations and for interconnecting the global network. The UPU's Standards Board develops and maintains a growing number of standards to improve the exchange of postal-related information between postal operators, and promotes the compatibility of UPU and international postal initiatives. It works closely with postal handling organisations, customers, suppliers and other partners, including various international organisations. The Standards Board ensures that coherent standards are developed in areas such as electronic data interchange (EDI), mail encoding, postal forms and meters.

UPU standards are drafted in accordance with the rules set out in Part V of the "General information on UPU standards", and are published by the UPU International Bureau in accordance with Part VII of that publication.

This is the first version of the specification.

Introduction

The codification of international mail processing centre (IMPC) operators is an important issue as regards interconnectivity between postal operators, and between operators and carriers, such as airlines. It is also important as a means of facilitating the clear and systematic identification of senders and recipients of mail. The operational use (on UPU forms, in EDI messages, etc.) of the origin and destination operator code and IMPC code [2] will enable more precision in identifying the sender and recipient. IMPC operators can thus be identified by their IMPC operator code, supplemented by their 12-/35-character name.

There are two other UPU standards relating to the identification of organisations:

- S31, *UPU issuing agency – assignment of issuer codes*, defines a mechanism for the allocation of issuer codes to organisations that are licensed by the UPU to issue licence plates and similar identifiers under the UPU's issuing agency code. The main purpose of S31 codes is, in the context of identifiers that comply with ISO/IEC 15459, to identify the organisation that issued a particular item, location, party or container identifier.
- S35, *UPU issuing agency – assignment and use of party identifiers*, specifies a system of globally unique identifiers for the identification of entities involved in using postal services and/or in providing equipment and services to support postal processing.

Data and Code Definition standards – International mail processing centre operator codes

1 Scope

This standard defines a mechanism for the allocation of operator codes to organisations authorized by UPU members to operate international mail processing centres (IMPCs), i.e. mail processing facilities involved in the creation, transit routing and/or receipt of mail despatches, in accordance with UPU standards and/or documentation.

It should be noted that IMPCs also include extraterritorial offices of exchange (ETOE), defined as offices or facilities operated by or in connection with a postal operator outside its national territory, on the territory of another country. In the case of ETOEs, the operator is a designated operator, but not a designated operator of the country in which the ETOE is located. Thus, as the designated operator has only one IMPC operator code assigned to it (see 5.1), it will use this code to identify itself as the operator of the ETOE.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, or references to a version number, only the edition cited applies. For undated references and where there is no reference to a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 3166-1:2013, *Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country codes*

S31, *UPU issuing agency – assignment of issuer codes*

S35, *UPU issuing agency – assignment and use of party identifiers*

3 Terms and definitions

The terms used in this standard are defined in the UPU standards glossary, in documents referred to in normative references and in the bibliography.

4 Symbols and abbreviations

The symbols and abbreviations used in this document are defined in the UPU standards glossary.

5 IMPC centre operator code structure

An IMPC operator code is a three-character code used to uniquely identify the operator of an international mail processing centre.

NOTE The coding structure is such that a distinction is made between designated operators (and those with special status in the UPU) and non-designated operators.

IMPC operator codes shall be consistent and shall not conflict with S31 issuer codes and S35 party identifiers.

5.1 IMPC operator code for designated operators – code structure

The IMPC operator code for a designated operator, defined in the UPU Convention as any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory, is a three-character alphabetic code (format: AAA) consisting of the ISO 3166-1 country code of the member country or its territory, if served by a territorial operator followed by an alphabetic character. Each designated operator shall have one and only one IMPC operator code assigned to it.

EXAMPLE 1 Australia Post, AUA

If a UPU member has designated more than one operator with an IMPC, then sequential alphabetic letters in the range A–M shall be used. On an exceptional basis, a preferential third alphabetic character, depending on availability, may be used.

EXAMPLE 2 Gibraltar Post, GIB

NOTE For designated operators with three-character alphabetic S31 codes, this results in the IMPC operator code being the same as those three-character S31 codes that commence with the country code. Almost all the codes comprising the ISO 3166 country code followed by the letter A have already been allocated under S31.

5.2 IMPC operator code for non-designated operators – code structure

The IMPC operator code for a non-designated is a three-character alphanumeric code (format: ANN), sequentially assigned and consisting of an alphabetic character followed by a two-digit value in the range 36–99, with Z36–Z99 being allocated before Y36–Y99, before X36–X99, etc. Each non-designated operator shall have one and only one IMPC operator code assigned to it.

5.3 Use of IMPC operator code

The IMPC operator code shall be used to identify an organisation that operates one or more international mail processing centres registered in accordance with UPU standard S34. The use of the IMPC operator code is required where context dictates that the party identified is the operator of an IMPC.¹

EXAMPLE 1 The use of the IMPC operator code is required on S47 [3] postal receptacle labels.

EXAMPLE 2 M40 [4] recommends that, wherever possible, three-character operator codes be used to represent the party that injected the item into the postal network (item-origin operator).

5.4 Change in designation of an IMPC operator

The IMPC operator code shall be modified to reflect a change in designation, from non-designated operator to designated operator code or from designated operator to non-designated operator code, of the IMPC operator. Except as otherwise determined by the International Bureau, entries shall remain in the register for five years following their modification.

5.5 IMPC operator code applications

Applications for the registration of an IMPC operator code shall be made not more than six months, and preferably not less than two months, prior to the planned date of first operation of an IMPC. Applications shall be made to:

Universal Postal Union
Standards Programme
P.O. Box 312
3000 BERNE 15
SWITZERLAND

Fax: + 41 31 350 3110

¹ Also includes the operator of an ETOE.

Applications shall include the following information:

- 12-character operator name;
- 35-character operator name;
- full organisation name, address and contact details of the person responsible for use of the code;
- status (designated operator, non-designator operator, or special status);
- ISO 3166-1 country code or territory code;
- "valid from" date: planned date (day, month and year) of commencement of operation of the IMPC;
- "valid to" date: planned date (day, month and year) of cessation of operation of the IMPC (optional).

IMPC operators shall be responsible for communicating to the International Bureau any changes to the IMPC operator code registration details.

5.6 Deregistration by the UPU of an IMPC operator code

The IB shall be entitled to mark as closed and/or deregister any IMPC operator code for which it is established that:

- the IMPC operation has not commenced within a reasonable period after the date, specified in the registration application, for commencement of operations; or
- the operation has practically ceased for a period in excess of six months; or
- the right of the operator to operate an IMPC has been withdrawn or declared invalid by the authorizing member country.

Except as otherwise determined by the International Bureau, entries, marked by means of a "valid to" date, shall remain in the register for five years following their deregistration.

5.7 Publication of IMPC operator codes

The following extracts from the registration database shall be published, as UPU code list 206:

- 3-character IMPC operator code;
- 12-character operator name;
- 35-character operator name;
- status (designated operator, non-designated operator, or special status);
- ISO 3166-1 country code or territory code;
- UPU member country code, where it differs from that of the IMPC operator;
- "valid from" date;
- "valid to" date.

Bibliography

This bibliography provides full reference and sourcing information for all standards and other reference sources quoted in the above text. For references that mention specific version numbers or dates, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications may not be relevant. However, users of this document are encouraged to investigate the existence and applicability of more recent editions. For references without a date or version number, the latest edition of the document referred to applies. It is stressed that only referenced documents are listed here.

UPU standards

NOTE The UPU standards listed below are available by subscription from the UPU International Bureau:

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- [1] General information on UPU standards, freely accessible at www.upu.int
- [2] S34, Registration of international mail processing centres
- [3] S47, Postal receptacle labels
- [4] M40, EMSEVT V3 messaging specification