



Paper-free route implementation guidelines for Posts and carriers

This document explains the key conditions and operating procedures to be met by all stakeholders in order to discontinue the printing of paper delivery bills (CN 38, CN 41 and CN 47) for airmail carriage. Any Post or carrier wishing to render a transport route “paper-free” should consider the preconditions and requirements to be met, as described herein.

Background

The exchange of CARDIT/RESBIT messages between Posts and carriers has more than quadrupled in the past 10 years. The quality of such messages has greatly improved and an increasing number of stakeholders are upgrading their business processes in order to base these processes on electronic data interchange (EDI) messages rather than paper documents. In parallel, the exchange of PRECON/RESCON messages between Posts has also greatly increased.

The use of paper delivery bills to accompany airmail consignments has a number of limitations and constraints, as below, making this an unreliable and error-prone medium:

- Often, the printed delivery bill does not actually travel with its corresponding physical consignment and may be delivered later, lost or damaged;
- Paper delivery bills reflect the reality of the consignments at the moment of production by the origin postal operator. The receptacles listed and the transport details provided on a paper delivery bill are those known at the time of closing the consignment at origin;
- Changes to transport plans or the addition/removal of receptacles to or from the consignment cannot be reflected on a document that has already been printed.

Furthermore, paper delivery bills are currently used for additional checks and procedures for which they were not designed, which introduces additional inaccuracies and potential inconsistencies. For instance, processes and procedures relating to security checks or implemented by border agencies are sometimes completed using paper delivery bills as a primary data source. Given the issues identified above, such practices can only lead to potential problems. However, Posts and carriers are not always able to force change with regard to such procedures and are sometimes constrained to provide paper delivery bills for such purposes.

Ceasing to use paper delivery bills in operations drives the optimization of several processes that are currently based on paper document checks and would subsequently be based on EDI exchanges:

- Enhanced tracking of receptacles (with updated information retrieved from EDI messages);
- Faster resolution of operational issues obtained from greater visibility over processes;
- Optimized reporting and monitoring of operational key performance indicators;
- Under certain conditions, electronic settlement and accounting based on EDI exchanges.

In addition, paper-free transport is environmental friendly, as it avoids forms being printed and transported unnecessarily around the world.

Preconditions for paper-free transport

The Post and carrier concerned must exchange the most recent version of CARDIT/RESBIT messages (or CARDIT V2.1–RESBIT V1.1 as a minimum).

The Posts at the origin and destination of the consignment¹ must exchange PRECON/RESCON messages.

¹ The consignment includes mail sent to the destination and, if relevant, closed transit mail sent via the destination.

A tripartite agreement must be in place between the origin Post, carrier and destination Post with regard to replacing paper delivery bill by EDI messages, whereby it is agreed that for transport and accounting purposes:

- Copies of the paper delivery bill used between the origin Post and the carrier shall be replaced by the CARDIT message;
- Copies of the paper delivery bill used by the destination Post shall be replaced by the PRECON message;
- The RESCON and RESDES messages and electronic scan data from the destination Post can be used if requested in lieu of a signed paper delivery bill.

Minimum requirements

Although EDI exchange is a precondition, it is not necessary for full message exchange to be in place with all the RESDIT events required for electronic proof of acceptance (POA) and proof of delivery (POD). The origin Post must send a CARDIT message to the carrier, with confirmation to the destination Post in a PRECON message. The destination Post must scan the receptacle IDs for receipt and have in place RESCON and/or RESDES reporting to the origin Post so that these data can be used, if requested, in lieu of a signed paper delivery bill.

Scope of implementation of paper-free transport

The following elements are within the scope:

- Category A and B consignments (priority airmail, EMS items, S.A.L. and closed transit) carried under either a CN 38 or CN 41 delivery bill;
- Empty bag consignments carried under a CN 47 delivery bill;
- CARDIT/RESDIT and PRECON/RESCON EDI message exchange;
- Consignments carried on agreed routes between the specified origin and destination Posts and assigned to the specified carrier;
- Consignments for single-leg transportation, consignments with intra-carrier transshipment between flights with the same carrier, and consignments with inter-carrier transshipment between different carriers;
- Paper-free handling and transport.

The following elements are excluded from the scope:²

- Accounting processes, invoicing and settlement between Posts and carriers;
- Consignments transported by road under a CN 37 delivery bill;
- Customs clearance and pre-departure and arrival notification requirements based on government regulations;
- Paper documents that origin Posts may be required to provide to handling agents/airport agents/carriers in addition to paper delivery bills, such as a mail manifest for a flight, a Customs manifest or a security declaration.

Preparation and communication for implementation

Each participating Post and carrier must inform all stakeholders concerned that paper-free transportation is to be implemented, and provide them with the relevant information. Such stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Post and carrier head offices;
- Post and carrier accounting departments;
- Offices of exchange/airmail units and carrier mail handling facilities at origin, transshipment point and destination;

² In view of ICS2, this section will need to be revisited in early 2023.

- Post and carrier controllers, planners, ramp drivers and operational staff at origin, transshipment point and destination;
- Post and carrier IT/EDI managers;
- Ground handling agents (of both Post and carrier at origin, transshipment point and destination), where applicable;
- Cargo handling agent (of carrier at origin, transshipment point and destination), where applicable;
- Airport authority, security, Customs and other relevant government agencies at origin, transshipment point and destination.

Paper-free operational and messaging procedures

CARDIT

The Post must send a CARDIT message to the carrier that is assigned to carry a consignment at the moment of consignment closure. The Post's EDI system must be set up to ensure preparation and transmission of the CARDIT message before the physical tender of the mail to the carrier. The carrier needs to receive the CARDIT message in its EDI mailbox and process it before physical tender of the consignment.

In cases where mail is handled by the carrier's subcontractors (cargo/mail/ground handling agent) at airports, the carrier can make the CARDIT data available either by sending it to the handling agent electronically or by providing it via other channels in an agreed format. In cases where the CARDIT data cannot be transmitted to the handling agent electronically:

- The carrier makes this information available to the handling agent via other channels;
- The handling agent scans the mail delivered by the Post for carriage and cross-checks the data against the information provided;
- If no CARDIT information is available, the handling agent must consult the carrier in order to decide whether the mail can be accepted for carriage.

RESBIT

The handling agent, on behalf of the carrier, scans the mail, as per agreed local procedures, and transmits the data to the carrier's system, enabling RESBIT message generation. RESBIT 74 and RESBIT 21 (recommended minimum requirement) must be produced based on positive data capture. RESBIT 74 and RESBIT 21 can be based on Mail Registration Device (MRD) proof of custody (POC)/proof of delivery (POD) registrations where available. In general, it is recommended that all relevant RESBIT messages be sent, not only RESBIT 74 and 21.

PRECON: Post–Post EDI pre-advice of consignment at receptacle ID level

The PRECON message will be sent at consignment closure (equivalent to receptacle ID list and consignment ID in CARDIT). The PRECON message will be prepared and transmitted well before the scheduled flight arrival time of the last leg of transport and will be available to the destination Post well before physical handover of the mail.

RESCON: Post–Post EDI response by destination Post of consignment receipt at receptacle ID level

The destination Post scans all receptacle IDs, normally when unloading the carrier equipment in which the receptacles are handed over by the carrier at the office of exchange airmail unit. The destination Post must report the receptacle IDs to the origin Post by RESCON in response to PRECON. The RESCON message must be prepared and transmitted as soon as possible after a batch of incoming mail is processed. RESDES response messages may be used if RESCON data is not provided.

Exceptions to the implementation of paper-free transport

Exceptions to paper-free transport may be made in two cases, namely where paper documents are required for the purposes of either security control or border control. In such cases, if the number of copies is reduced to a minimum, the route is still considered to be paper-free.

Annex 1: Checklist for the implementation of paper-free transport

<i>ID</i>	<i>Phase/Activity</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Status</i>
0	<i>Tripartite agreement</i>			
0.1	Confirmation by origin Post, carrier and destination Post of acceptance of CARDIT in lieu of paper copies of the delivery bill			
0.2	Confirmation by origin Post, carrier and destination Post of acceptance of RESDIT in lieu of signature of paper copies of the delivery bill as proof of handover at origin, transshipment point and destination			
0.3	Confirmation by all three parties of readiness for the paper-free process as per the agreed requirements			
0.4	Notification to relevant parties of the agreement for reporting purposes			
1	<i>Origin Post</i>			
1.1	Confirmation that origin Customs, parties conducting security screening and other local authorities will accept mail for export without a paper delivery bill			
1.2	Confirmation by all relevant departments within the organization (accounting, IT, operational staff, etc.) that they will process mail without a paper delivery bill			
1.3	Sending by origin Post of CARDIT to carrier and PRECON to destination Post.			
2	<i>Destination Post</i>			
2.1	Confirmation by all relevant departments within the organization (accounting, IT, operational staff, etc.) that they will process mail without a paper delivery bill			
2.2	Sending by destination Post of RESCON to origin Post in response to PRECON			
2.3	Confirmation that a process is in place to report irregularities in receipt of mail from carrier in lieu of the paper delivery bill			
3	<i>Carrier</i>			
3.1	Confirmation that origin Customs, parties conducting security screening and other local authorities will accept mail for export without a paper delivery bill			
3.2	Confirmation that all subcontracted parties (ramp and ground handling agents) will accept mail for handling without a paper delivery bill			
3.3	Confirmation by all relevant departments within the organization (accounting, IT, operational staff, etc.) that they will process mail without a paper delivery bill			
3.4	Coordination of approval from any relevant code-share partners			
3.5	Provision of applicable RESDITs to the origin Post			

Note. – If the route is subject to interline transport, the entire route must be paper-free and the agreement needs to be a quadripartite agreement. The points in the “Carrier” section of the checklist apply to both carriers.

Annex 2: Tripartite agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to confirm the paper-free transportation of mail between Post A, Post B and the Carrier. Paper delivery bills are replaced by electronic data interchange (EDI) messages on the following routes:

Origin IMPC	
Origin airport	
Destination IMPC	
Destination airport	
Start date	

By signing this agreement, the parties attest that the checklist has been used to establish that the proposed routes are ready for the implementation of paper-free transportation of mail based on, but not limited to, the agreed principle that the paper delivery bill will be replaced by CARDIT and PRECON messages, and that RESCON and RESDIT data will be used in lieu of a signature on the paper delivery bill by the destination Post.

Annex 3: Available tools

A suite of tools has been developed to support the implementation, monitoring and optimization of paper-free transportation. These tools are not the only ones that support the implementation of paper-free transport, but are specifically designed to comply with the requirements described in this document. They are listed below and are accessible to any Post or carrier willing to implement paper-free procedures for their consignments.

UPU tools for UPU members

- Paper-free route piloting (point of entry): This part supports communication between all parties wishing to apply for paper-free piloting. There is a “Specific point of contact – SPOC” on the UPU website to contact the IB, which will check if interested parties are meeting the minimum requirements for paper-free routes (check list) before embarking on piloting. The IB will also provide a matrix of paper-free links.
- Paper-free monitoring and reporting tools: Air connectivity report and CARDIT/RESBIT and PRECON/RESCON monitoring and compliance reports.
- Paper-free transport in IPS: Simple guidelines on how to set up IPS functionalities to stop printing documents for paper-free routes.

To access the above tools, interested parties should contact: transport@upu.int.

IPC tools for IPC members

- Paper-free creation tool: This tool supports communication between parties wishing to implement paper-free transportation. It allows for any party (Post or carrier) to request paper-free route creation, confirmation by the other parties and electronic agreement signature for a route to become paper-free. The tool then feeds the data to the IPC reporting system for Posts and carriers, so they can monitor the level of expansion of their paper-free agreements.
- Paper-free monitoring and reporting tools: IPC provides access to a number of reports that help Posts and carriers monitor the paper-free expansion KPIs. By using these, expansion options for paper-free routes can be easily identified and, by using the paper-free creation tool, the different parties can further expand paper-free coverage.
- DOCPORT (DOCument PORTal): Allows for the printing of paper delivery bills (CN 38, CN 41) from a website by any involved party (handler, Post, carrier, other) with access to the Internet, anywhere in the world. The tool recreates a paper delivery bill copy in pdf format (from a receptacle ID or a consignment ID known by the user) that can then be printed in order to comply with applicable local requirements

To access the tools above, interested parties should contact: helpdesk@ipc.be.

Annex 4: Process for implementing paper-free transport

