

The Distribution Solution for Direct Marketing!

An Introduction to Confirm and Planet Codes

At their core, the USPS CONFIRM® system, and PLANET® CODES in particular, exist to accurately track mail throughout the USPS system. Lettershops, printer/mailers, marketing agencies, and end users alike can each benefit from these technologies. Direct Logistics is here to help you understand and incorporate them into your business model.

WHAT IS CONFIRM?

CONFIRM is the information system for USPS tracking and reporting. Confirm allows mailers to uniquely identify and track both outgoing and incoming mailpieces with near real-time information about the processing and delivery status of First-Class Mail, Periodicals, and Standard Mail letters and flats.

There are two types of services under the Confirm umbrella: Destination Confirm and Origin Confirm.

DESTINATION CONFIRM

For outgoing mail, Destination Confirm gives mailers the tools to verify when customers receive important mailings like bills, credit cards, and marketing messages. This helps companies plan and synchronize their efforts with mail delivery to enhance customer response rates, sales, and other business activities.

ORIGIN CONFIRM

Origin Confirm allows major processors of incoming payments, orders and other reply mail to anticipate return rates and timing to match staffing needs, reduce costs, and evaluate the success of marketing initiatives more quickly.

WHAT ARE PLANET CODES?

PLANET CODES are bar codes just above the address line that stores the following specific information directly on a mailpiece:

- A code that identifies mailpiece class and shape
- The Confirm Subscriber ID
- Additional information that the Confirm subscriber chooses, such as a mailing number, mailing campaign ID, customer ID, or other information: you can use up to 6 digits of the PLANET Code any way you want!
- A check digit that ensures barcode integrity

The encoded data is captured each time a mailpiece passes through mail scanning equipment at various USPS facilities. The information is processed and disseminated through Confirm.

HOW DOES IT ALL WORK?

Access to Confirm is acquired through the USPS at one of three subscription levels: Silver (quarterly subscription, 3-5 million mailpieces), Gold (annual subscription, 12-16 million mailpieces), and Platinum (annual subscription, unlimited mailpieces). As you can see, subscriptions to the

Confirm service require considerable volumes of mail. Fortunately, some Confirm subscribers also act as third party resellers for smaller mailings, even down to the purchase of a single Planet Code.

Once you have your required number of Planet Codes, you generate unique Shipment ID numbers for each destination entry drop. Next, you provide this information to the USPS in the form of a Pre-Shipment Notification. Finally, you prepare a shipment document (8125 or 3152-A) to accompany your shipment. You are now ready to enter the mail locally or by drop shipping to a USPS facility.

At this point, and every subsequent scan point, information about your mail is generated and provided to you via the Confirm system (or your third party provider) giving you near real time status of your mailpiece(s) through the USPS system.

WHO USES THESE SERVICES?

With billions of dollars invested in business and marketing mail every year, Confirm is being used on increasingly large scales by the financial, telecom, travel, and entertainment industries, as well as governmental agencies, for answering two critical questions:

- When did mail reach our target audience?
- What mail response is coming our way?

Fortunately, with the advent of third-party resellers, lettershops, printer/mailers, and marketing agencies of any size can now take advantage of Confirm and Planet Code technologies to help their clients in the same ways - as well as ensure their mail logistics efforts are.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Complete documentation on Confirm and Planet Coding is available at <https://mailtracking.usps.com>

For a demonstration of Planet Coding capabilities, or to discuss the merits of integrating these technologies into your business model, please contact Direct Logistics today.

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