APPS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Operations • Engineering • Human Resources • Maintenance

Operations

1. **What can the APPS do that the SPBS could not? Or, in what ways is the APPS an improvement over the SPBS?**

   The APPS processes packages and bundles upto 25 lbs. in weight. The maximum dimensions are H-15" W-22" L-18", the minimum dimensions of H-.05" W-3" L-3.5". A dual induction APPS will process at least 9500 pieces per hour. A single induction APPS will process at least 5500 pieces per hour. The APPS machine is automated which eliminates the need for SPBS keyers.

2. **What is the recommended staffing of an APPS machine?**

   Staffing requirements and craft will be determined at the First Article Test (FAT) site in the Twin Cities Metro Hub in Minneapolis MN during FAT testing.

3. **What types of mail can APPS Process?**

   The APPS machine can process packages, bundles (letters or flats), SPR's and items that meet the minimum or maximum dimensions and upto 25 lbs in weight.

4. **Will the APPS machine replace all SPBSs?**

   No. The Plant will be asked to exchange 2 SPBSs for 1 APPS.

5. **Will the Plant be able to relocate an SPBS?**

   Yes, there were funds requested in the DAR for SPBS relocation but the Area had to formally request it in the original DAR. If the Area failed to include these costs in the DAR then the Area would have to absorb these costs.

6. **How much money was made available to the Areas for this process?**

   The amount was $75,000 for each SPBS and $75,000 for each feed system.

7. **How much money is available for SPBS disposal?**

   The amount was $26,000 for each SPBS and $26,000 for each feed system.

8. **How many SPBSs are being replaced in the Field?**

   The DAR states 104 with 81 scheduled for disposal and 23 for relocation.

9. **What are the expectations for thruput for the APPS machine?**

   HQ expects to process a minimum of 3.1 million pcs per AP for a single induction and 5.3 million pcs for a dual induction.

10. **How many hours per day is APPS being projected to run?**

    The DAR states 20 hours per day.

11. **Will APPS image keying be done on site?**

    The Original DAR called for onsite keying but the requirements were modified this past year to have the capability to have RECs key these APPS images.

12. **How will the REC handle these images?**

    The REC will process images the same way they handle flat images (real time). The APPS machine will be able to process these images in real-time and sort the proper container.

13. **What happens if the REC site is backed up or not staffed and does not respond timely to images sent from the machine?**

    After the allotted time pieces not receiving a result will be sent to the reject bin.

14. **We get pieces with straps where the strap often covers the address. What will the machine do with these pieces?**

    The machine will divert these pieces to the semi-automatic induction station operator. The operator can move the strap and re-induct the piece.

15. **Where do we cull dumped mail on this machine?**

    Culling may be performed at a point downstream from the dumpers on the same side or on the opposite side.

16. **What happens to mail for a full sort bin?**

    If it is not a chained bin, it re-circulates up to 3 times (configurable) and then goes to the reject bin.

17. **How do I work mail in sacks on this machine?**

    Sacks may be dumped on the feed belts manually either adjacent the dumpers or on the opposite side of the feed belt from the dumpers. Sack dumping should be accompanied with dumping of containerized mail as it will be difficult to provide enough mail volume for efficient machine operation from dumping sacks alone.

18. **Can I sort sacks on this machine?**

No. The transport system is not designed to handle sacks. The strings and label holders will snag and create a jam.

19. **Can I work letter trays on this machine?**

    No. The scan tunnel does not have barcode readers positioned to read either the lead or trail sides (tray labels in this case) of pieces.

20. **When will I (my plant, my SDOs, my IE, etc.) be able to visit a site that has a production version of the APPS?**

    The first production machine is scheduled for Oklahoma City, OK in February 2004. As with all site visits, they must be confirmed by the Area office.

21. **I have heard that the USPS is designing a new mail transport container. Can you give me the dimensions of new container, weight limits, features etc?**

    The containers dimensional characteristics are 40 inches wide, 48 inches long and 50 inches high. Its approximate weight 292lbs. It will hold approximately 2,000lbs of product.

22. **What are the performance parameters for APPS?**

    Single induct throughput per hour is 5,500 with dual induct requirement of 9,500. Accuracy of sort is 98% with mail damage for parcels set at 0.1% and 1.0% for bundles. Recognition readability for BCR is 98% and 70% on OCR.

23. **What kind of mail will run successfully on APPS?**

    The types vary form shape and size. Finishes can be smooth to rough and bundles can be run with shrink-wrap and straps. Although APPS will process bundles with rubber bands, it is high encourage that all facilities communicate with mailer to follow the DMM regarding stings and rubber bands. Throughput will be reduced and rehandling will occur if high volumes of breakage are experienced. Stuffed envelopes and other packages will also run on APPS. Items made of cardboard, plastic and Tyvek have been successfully as well as boxes made of cardboard, plastic wood and metal.

24. **Do the APPS have scales?**

    Yes. The APPS has a Data Collection Subsystem (DCS). Data gathered from the DCS collects information regarding the package type, verifies simulation of package on belt, collects dimension information, had in motion scales and is used to determine sort location, full bin status and OCR/VCS performance.

25. **Since Remote Encoding Centers have a role in APPS, will the same REC site that processes our letter images be the same for APPS?**

    Not necessarily. Currently only four REC Sites are scheduled to process APPS images. Up to 40 APPS will be assigned to a REC. The four REC selected are Pittsburgh, Beaumont, Wichita and Salt Lake City. Due to the high volumes of images expected, the image workload will be

spread across these four RECs therefore; your APPS images may not be received by the REC that processes your other images.

26. What should we as an APPS site be preparing prior to installation?

In preparation for APPS, your facility must formulate several plans. Headquarters additionally will provide tools for your use. Begin developing the following plans to ensure your successful transition to APPS:

Transition Plan: Goal -- No degradation in service performance and no mail delays.

- Mail Volume Capacity
- Equipment/ Sort Program
- Staffing Resources
- Transportation/MTE
- Space for Empty Equipment, Dispatch Equipment and Staging
- Contingency Plans
- Reverse Transition Plan (bringing mail back to the building if it was sent out during installation)
- Dock to Dispatch- Dispatch to Dock
- SPBS Relocation/Removal
- Feeding/Sweeping Activities
- SPS
- Readiness Assessment (30-45 days prior to final acceptance)

27. What will the naming conventions be for Sort Programs?

Naming Convention:
Mail Level: A-OGP
B-OGS
C-MMP
D-SCF
E-INP
F- Carrier Route
Machine Type - APPS has been assigned the Letter "E"
Five Digits – First three digits are a supported SCF (which determine the Service Standards).

28. How will mail be sorted?

Based on the following factors

1) Mail Type: Priority, Periodicals, STD, FCM
2) Mail Shape: Packages, Bundled Letters, Bundled Flats, Mixed
3) Physical configuration file
    a. Maximum number of outputs
    b. Number of outputs that are restricted or obstructed by columns or other interferences
    c. 10 or 24 digit barcodes
    d. Open or closed loop configuration.
4) Container Type
5) Mail Size

29. **Will SPS support sort programs for APPS?**

    Yes. A new version of SPS is currently being developed that will support the creation and maintenance of APPS sort programs.

30. **What type of sort programs will SPS be able to create and maintain for the APPS machine?**

    SPS will support the following Mail types: Priority, Periodicals, FCM and STD. SPS will support the following mail levels: Outgoing Primary, Outgoing Secondary, MMP, SCF, Incoming Primary and Carrier Route.

31. **This is a new machine and there is no density information. How will I know what bins I should put what holdouts in?**

    If you have an SPBS machine, work with density information obtained from EOR to determine heavy volume bins. If you currently work the mail manually, get mail counts to determine densities. And work with Mail Processing. Mail Processing knows what needs to be run on the machine, where they will need to locate the heavy volume and special bins, and what types of containers will be utilized for each program.

32. **Will SPS training be available?**

    Yes. Training will be available at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) in Norman Oklahoma.

33. **I already do sort programs. Do I have to go to Norman for training?**

    The SPS application for APPS will look totally different from the current SPS application for other sort programs. It is strongly recommended that current users of SPS attend the APPS training class.

34. **What kind of support will there be?**

    In addition to the formal training, there will be Release Notes, full Help availability with the SPS application, an updated User's Guide (due in FY-04) and the SPS Help Desk.

35. **When should I use the above information in preparing my sort program?**

    The physical configuration file (created on the APPS machine) must be uploaded prior to sort program creation. You will not be able to create a sort plan without it.

36. **What other SPS sort issues do I need to know?**

    SPS will sort on ZIP code, barcode or OEL (Optional Endorsement Line). Sortation also can be based on size and weight and/or container type.

37. **I understand two sort plans can be run on the same machine. Is this true?**

Yes. That is true. Every dual sided, dual induct machine can run two different sort plans at the same time. There are no common bins in this mode.

38. What about labeling. How will APPS print labels?

It will follow the same convention as current labels. There is an option for either one or two inch label. Placards are dependent on container file for the sort program.

39. I have the task of developing the APPS sort plans. What should I do to prepare?

First determine your holdouts. Get densities and decide where you want the heavier volumes to fall. Secondly, look at the sort plan for the SPBS being replaced by the APPS. Check the EOR and if you are a manual site, check your counts. Thirdly, consider the configuration of you incoming APPS. What type of MTE and how many bins will you have? Lastly consider the current dispatch process.

40. I'm the Manager Inplant Support and I don't have anyone trained in SPS or sortplan development. What should I do?

Arrange to train someone to become a developer. Get support from a near by site that already has sort program developers on staff.

41. I'm the manager of a BMC or Annex. How will I develop sortplans?

Find out how you will access SPS. Will it be locally through NDSS or remotely through NRPC? If you don't have a developer then arrange for training and get support from a site that currently has a developer.

42. Will APPS Video Coding Systems be a separate system?

Yes. These systems will be deployed at the REC site.

43. What about the Hardware in the RECs?

Headquarters will coordinate all the requirements for each REC involved. Site visits have already taken place and each REC Manager is aware of requirements needed for APPS.

44. What about space requirements?

Approximately 130 APPS VDT's at each of the four RECs are planned. All servers will be housed in a single rack and depending on distance to APPS VDT's; Cisco switches may be in either the IPU room or on workroom floor.

45. With all these additional images, will the REC be working longer hours?

APPS operating plans will vary from site to site which may result in 24 hour operating windows. There may be changes to your scheduling and staffing.

46. What about the keying strategy? Has that been decided?

Yes. The following is given:

- Numeric keying will occur with no alpha keying.
- Five digits
- Optional Endorsement Line (OEL) will be used which consists of any of the following: Carrier Route, ADC, SCF, Five Digit or mixed ADC.

47. What about other REC impacts?

Edits will be automated and manual as well as the PARS keyboard will be used with the addition of new key assignments. Supervisor terminal will have a single user interface. Sort plans are incorporated into the image and remains with image in edit sets.

48. What will the image keying MODS Operation Number be?

387- APPS images only and 389-mixed image keying.

49. What about reports?

Reports available from APPS are as follows: End of Run, End of Tour, End of Day, Selected Period Summaries, Sort Plan Summaries, Density Analysis and online Machine Summaries.

50. How will NIA impact APPS deployment?

The APPS Deployment schedule will be changed to reflect NIA impacts as soon as they are agreed upon.

51. What is the component most likely to fail on APPS?

This is unknown at this time due to the APPS production model having not been deployed.

52. What are the anticipated bottlenecks with APPS?

We anticipate starvation, feeding, empty equipment and dispatch issues.

53. What are the BPI targets by target group for APPS productivity?

This information TBD.

54. What are the right performance-oriented questions a Plant Manager needs to ask their people? What methods or tools can answer them?

Productivity issues, transition activities, SPBS disposal/removal, empty equipment plan, starvation issues, dispatch concerns, sweeping concerns, staffing. These issues will be answered in the Field Orientation Presentation.

55. What are the metrics that we will use to evaluate performance? What are the specific improvement goals for these metrics?

HQ is developing a Certification Process that will address these issues.

56. **Will it be possible to develop APPS sort plans based not only on address (or OEL), but on package size - for example, all smaller pieces to one runout (e.g. a sack) and larger pieces (perhaps now handled as outsides) to another runout (e.g. a hamper)?**

Each mail piece is measured (length x width x height, and weight) before the package is inducted onto the sorter. The sort plan can separate mail pieces by weight and thickness. Thickness is defined as the smallest of the three dimensions (l x w x h).

The container list, which is used in the sort plan, will prevent mail pieces that are too large to fit into sack from discharging into a sack output.

57. **What is the fill factor for sacks / containers?**

It is a preset container weight limit that is identified in SPS during Sort Plan development.

58. **How many images will DCOs receive from each package?**

APPS sends four images to the REC for each package.

59. **Does the APPS have local OCR capacity?**

Yes

60. **When a piece times out, is the information retained or is it re-inputted?**

When the mail piece timeouts, it will be sent to the reject bin. This mail should be re-inducted when more REC Keyers are coding.

61. **How will Aviation Security Mail be handled?**

In the OG Priority Sort Plan, a bin can be identified in SPS for mail pieces exceeding the 16 ounce weight limit.

62. **How will jams be cleared and by who?**

Operators will clear jams that due not require the use of a tool. Maintenance will clear all other jams. This issue will be addressed in the Operators training.

63. **Now will National Directories be downloaded to sites without NDSS?**

APPS will be deployed with a DVD Drive. This will enable National Directories to be updated directly at the machine.

64. **Is there another alternative to develop Sort Plans without the machine configuration file?**

No. This is a requirement needed for sort plan development.

65. **When will the machine configuration file be made available to the sites?**

    We are working with Lockheed Martin to provide this file to the site 60 days prior to installation.

66. **Will APPS be able to print on-demand labels?**

    Yes

67. **How many printers will come with APPS?**

    APPS will be deployed with two printers but with the ability to expand at a later date if required.

68. **Will APPS be able to download reports to Web EOR?**

    Sites that have NDSS will be able to download reports to Web EOR. Software for sites with National Remote PC (NRPC) is still under development.

69. **Can we get a copy of the reports?**

    Yes. There will be a facsimile in the Orientation Guide.

70. **What about Certification? How was this developed?**

    Certification was based on the AFSM 100, but was reduced to 16 elements.

71. **When will the certification process take effect?**

    The Certification process will take place 6 months after acceptance but not to exceed 9 months.

72. **Are the timelines compatible with Windows 98 and 2000?**

    Yes. They were developed in EXCEL.

73. **When will they be available to the field?**

    Timelines are available on the APPS web page for download.

Engineering

1. **What are the re-circulation volume percentages for APPS?**

    First, there are two type of recirculation - around the backbone sorter and around the feed area (off the shoe-sorter). The major effect with either recirculation is mail characteristics (assuming

someone is staffing the semi-auto). If the OCR read rate for a particular mailer is poor, the VCS queue will grow dramatically and mail will stay on the backbone sorter longer (recirculating). Also, this saturation of the backbone sorter will cause the feed systems to throttle back. At the start of this feed system slow down, some mail will go off the end of the shoe-sorter to be recirculated. The dual induction system (as opposed to a single induction system) will have a higher recirculation rate, since the dual induction system run the backbone sorter at higher capacity and therefore, saturates the backbone sorter more often. If a mailer has not secured the bundle adequately, there will be significant amount of bundle breakage that will overflow the semi-auto induction station and go off the end of the shoe sorter. In talking with Lockheed, their estimate would be around 5%-20% of the mail volume can get recirculated.

2. **What is the turn around time expectations for image processing before timeouts occur?**

   Time-out for image processing, the optimum time to process the image in OCR/BCR/VCS is approximately 14 seconds. The OCR/BCR processing time takes a couple seconds. The 14 second optimum time is the time a package takes to reach the first output bin after being scanned by the camera. For the Prototype APPS in Twin Cities, Lockheed has determined the best maximum number of rotations a mail piece should do around this backbone sorter is 3. After 3 rotations the image processing will time-out and package will be rejected. The sorter rotation time will depend on the length of the sorter. The following list the lap time for each configuration.

Dash#	Configuration	Lap Time
1	2 Induct 100 Outputs Open	70sec
2	2 Induct 150 Outputs Open	82sec
3	2 Induct 200 Outputs Open	92sec
4	1 Induct 100 Outputs Open	57sec
5	1 Induct 150 Outputs Open	68sec
6	2 Induct 100 Outputs Closed	80sec
7	2 Induct 150 Outputs Closed	101sec
8	2 Induct 200 Outputs Closed	122sec
9	2 Induct 100 Outputs Closed	70sec
10	2 Induct 150 Outputs Closed	91sec

3. **How does the Data Collection Sub-system (DCS) determine package type - bundle, parcel, flat, etc?**

   The APPS software is intelligent in that it deciphers laser scans from the surfaces and edges to determine package, bundle, weight and dimensions that determine mail type.

4. **How can I tell if the semi-automatic induction operator is receiving too much mail thus indicating a problem with the machine?**

   Several factors can contribute to this, the mailer may have obscured the address with strapping or banding, the OCR may not be able to penetrate the plastic wrap, the sorter may be backed up due to full bins or the REC may not have enough keying capacity. If a large percentage of mail is going to the re-circulation, the supervisor should investigate further by checking the System Manager Screen to see if a problem exists.

5. **What happens if two or more pieces are inducted together into the scan tunnel?**

   If the pieces cannot be separated and distinguished one from the other, they will bypass the induction belts and be directed to the recycle belt for another pass through the singulator / scan tunnel.

6. **What happens to a piece that has no address label on it at all e.g. the address label has come off?**

   The piece will be diverted to the semi-automatic induction operator who will cull the piece from the mail stream for manual processing

7. **What happens to a piece when the address cannot be fully resolved and thus the destination sort bin cannot be determined?**

   The piece will be diverted to the semi-automatic induction operator who will attempt to determine the complete address. The operator can then re-induct the mail piece.

8. **What is the Tiger Teams role in APPS?**

   The Tiger Team is made up of Headquarter personnel from Engineering, Operations and Maintenance. Their primary role is to work with each APPS site through the Area APPS Coordinator and ensure the configuration requested by the site obtains two goals: 1) The configuration selected is sized and properly fits the space requested within the facility, 2) Is operational sound for the volumes projected for the machine. No changes

   There are two teams (A & B) each will performing on site conferences with every site scheduled to receive APPS. A member of the Tiger Team contacts your Area/Site Coordinator to schedule a date for their visit. Prior to the team leaving the site, an agreement must be made regarding the configuration type and loader requirements.

   Once the Tiger Team leaves the opportunity to make any major configuration changes is lost. To request changes once Lockheed Martin is on site for their final survey is extremely costly.

9. **Where can I locally find more info on APPS for my facility?**

   Your Area and facility will provide Newsbreaks, Bulletin Board postings and briefings to all levels within at the site. Additional updates on the machines progress will appear on postal link and the postal T.V media.

10. **What is the total capital investment and workhour savings for all the APPS being deployed?**

    The capital investment for the next generation bundle sorter is $381 million with an annual workhour savings of 2.8 million. A 24.4% return on investment (ROI) is projected.

11. **How many machines will be deployed postal wide?**

    74 machines are slotted for deployment beginning March 2004 with completion scheduled for June 2005. These machines will replace SPBS in these sites.

12. **How many pieces can the APPS process per hour?**

    With a single induction APPS will process 5,500 pcs/hr. The dual induct will process 9,500 pcs/hr far faster that the current SPBS models. Additionally it has a 70% read rate with BCR/OCR (Barcode Reader/ Optical Character Reader).

13. **How many sorts can this machine perform?**

    Currently APPS has 10 configurations to choose from. Based on the processing requirements of the facility, it can select 100,150 or 200 bins for sorts. APPS is capable of running two sort plans at the same time on the dual induct machines.

14. **Is the feed system the same on APPS as it is on the SPBS?**

    No. The feed subsystem is similar to the SPBS but has different features that make it unique to APPS only.

15. **I've heard APPS configuration names have changed. Why?**

    Originally the configurations were called base system and low profile. The names were changed to open loop (base) and closed loop (low) to better fit the actual look of the machine. Nothing has changed regarding the machine itself. The open loop has an "open" spine which allows you to process mail inside the loop whereas the closed loop processing is only performed on the outside of the spine on both sides of the machine. Closed cannot accommodate tall outputs.

16. **I understand a 90% turn configuration is coming. Is this true?**

    Yes the need in some facilities for a 90% angled machine was imperative. Currently this design is not among the 10 original designs. Lockheed Martin is currently designing this 11th option for sites who, in order to fit the APPS into the facility, need the angle.

17. **What about the tall outputs? What MTE can be used for processing?**

    GPMCs, ERMC, Postal Paks, and Tall Gaylords can be used with the tall outputs. Short containers and sacks cannot be used on these run outs.

18. **What's the maximum weight I can sort on the tall outputs?**

    Mail pieces should not exceed 25 pounds and shrink-wrapped or strapped bundles should be sorted to bins not containing the tall outputs.

19. **How many configurations of the load modules do we have to choose from?**

There are four options for the load modules. During the Tiger Team visit, you will have the option to choose which configuration best suits your facility.

20. Can APPS separate classes of mail (between 2nd and 3rd class)?

The APPS does not read postage (except for IBIP); therefore, APPS cannot distinguish between classes of mail. The APPS can differentiate between bundled flats, bundled letters and parcels.

21. Can APPS do an Aviation Security check for a parcel?

The APPS cannot perform this function but are investigating this possibility.

22. Can the APPS sort by OEL?

The APPS can categorize the OEL and Presort stickers into 5 per-sort groups (Carrier Route, 5-digit, 3-digit, ADC and Mixed). For bundle sortations, APPS reads the OEL in conjunction with the destination address to determine the correct output.

23. What are the factors that affect throughput of APPS?

The APPS is a complex system; therefore, many factors affect performance. The obvious factors that affect performance are keeping the system feed and outputs swept. Typically, if the outputs are being swept, the system will sort as fast as the machine can be fed. Other factors that affect throughput are mail size, readability and quality, as well as preventive maintenance. Each sub-system in the APPS has a throughput limitation. The camera tunnel can be the critical factor in performance of the system. The tunnel has a fixed minimum gapping between mail pieces. Smaller packages can go through the camera tunnel quicker then larger packages because the overall pitch between mail pieces are smaller. Also, smaller package have a higher fill factor for output containers, reducing sweeping frequency. For example, 1st Class parcels will sort faster then Priority because 1st Class parcels tend to be smaller in size then Priority Mail. When the destinating address is decoded by the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) or the Bar Code Reader (BCR) the system quickly sorts the mail piece. If the mail piece cannot be decoded by the OCR/BCR an image of the mail piece is sent to the Video Coding Station (VCS) at the Remote Encoding Center (REC). If the mail piece is not decoded by the VCS within about 10 seconds, there is a potential for the mail piece to miss its output and go around the sorter loop again. This recirculation will reduce the number of available carrier cells for subsequent mail pieces and there by reduce throughput of the system. The higher the percentage of mail piece images that go to VCS, the bigger the image queue at VCS, the longer the decoding time of the mail piece, the longer the mail piece recirculates on the sorter. Recirculation is configurable; but, (default setting) after three circulations around the sorter the mail piece will be ejected for reworked. The quality of the mail refers to how well a bundle stays together, as well as parcels breaking apart. Bundle breakage can adversely affect throughput by the bundle breaking open after the culler station and for each flat or letter to be singulated / sorted as individual mail piece. Typically, poor mail quality creates debris in the system. The more debris in the system, the greater the likelihood debris will block a photo-eye, causing the adjacent belts to shut-down requiring manual clearing.

24. Delivery Confirmation- will it scan info?

Scanning information is collected in the Data Collection Server. We are investigating on how to retrieve this information and the associated costs.

25. **Are T-1 lines still going to be used?**
    No. VBNS will be used for image transmission.

26. **What about sites that do not have NDSS?**
    BMCs will receive the NDSS system; other sites will receive the National Remote PC. (NRPC)

27. **Is money available in the Site Prep funds for NDSS?**
    No.

28. **Will a phone line be installed at the Supervisors desk?**

    Yes, it was made a requirement in the Site Prep Guide.

Human Resources

1. **What is the position title and staffing for the APPS machine at the plant?**

   It's too early in the process for us to provide definitive staffing information. Evaluation is dependent upon seeing the FAT machine in operation. Therefore, all final recommendations related to job, craft, level determination and staffing levels will not be available until after FAT.

2. **How should the plant site plan for employee impact?**

   For impact planning purposes, we have advised the field to consider that all current staffing for SPBS machines, that will be replaced, is impacted (clerk and mail handler). National Agreement, Article 12 requirements for impact notification and withholding should be addressed. We will not know what placement opportunities the APPS will provide by craft and level until the staffing recommendations are finalized. However, the SPBS impact on current positions should be addressed.

3. **Should I prepare an impact statement now?**

   The impact statement preparation starts the process for union impact notification, through the Area office, and Article 12 withholding. In light of current TE and excessing hold agreements, impact statements may not be seen as not having the same time urgency that they used to have. However, they provide the avenue for meeting our early union notification commitment and should be competed.

4. **What training will be provided on APPS?**

   HQ has provided for contractor development of Operations training for supervisors and operators assigned to APPS operation, in-plant support specialists, maintenance and Remote Encoding Center supervisors and keyers assigned to APPS image keying. These courses are

currently underdevelopment. Delivery is planned using a Train the Trainer method. Training lengths are to be determined. HQ will provide further information on the training content and dissemination at the Area Orientations.

5. **What is the staffing level of the APPS?**

   Too be determined at the FAT site.

6. **Who needs to attend the maintenance training?**

   - From the Plants: MPE's, ET's and Supervisors.
   - From the RECs: ET
   - Each level will have courses prepared specifically for you with different days or weeks of training assigned.

7. **How long is the training for SDO's, In Plant and Craft?**

   Training requirements are as follows: Train the Trainer, 24 hours
   APPS SDO, 8 hours
   Craft, 2 hours
   In Plant, 8 hours

8. **Our facility is short of Mailhandlers, can I use volunteers to staff the APPS during the transition period?**

   Yes.

9. **How many keyers at the REC will be trained for APPS keying?**

   The exact number has not been determined but there will be sufficient keyers trained to handle the workload.

10. **Are we going use the Clerk SPBS training for the semi-auto induction workstation?**

    No. We are not planning to key at the semi-auto induction station.

11. **Does APPS become a "new section" or an extension of the SPBS Section?**

    New Section

12. **What is the process to move Clerks into the Mailhandler Craft?**

    Contact your Area HR Representative for assistance.

Maintenance

1. **What about Article 32 for Maintenance?**

   APPS contract 512593-03-B-0193 Article 32 issues have been addresses at the national level. All APPS local site tasks that are not performed by the APPS contractor or his sub-contractor under the scope of the national contract are subject to Article 32 if the work is to be contracted out. Examples of such work are equipment moves/removal, facility modifications, etc.

2. **Will there be an integrated Logistics Support Plan (ISLP) for APPS?**

   Yes. The following currently make up the ILSP for APPS:
   - Maintenance Field Support (MTSC, TMDC and Lockheed Martin)
   - Preventive Maintenance Routes (PM)
   - Maintenance Handbooks (LM and MTSC)
   - Maintenance site installation requirements
   - Logistics Support for TMDC and MTSC
   - Help desk escalation process
   - Sparing Philosophy (Field replaceable unit)
   - Site Spare Part Kits (SSPK)
   - Consumable Kits

   Additionally, fourth echelon repair support is available as well as site spares replacement and spare parts kit replenishment.

3. **What do we need to know regarding site preparation?**

   Power requires: 480 volts 3o 60HZ 4 wire 250 amps is needed to run the APPS. Conduit and fiber optics run from APPS to demarcation points. Ensure the NDSS is configured to accept input from APPS and LAN is installed prior to machine arrival. Currently there is no air requirement for APPS.

4. **Who will perform the work on APPS?**

   Maintenance for APPS will be split between ET 10s, Level 9 MPE's and Level 5 General Maintenance Mechanics.

5. **What of Preventive Maintenance?**

   All preventive maintenance performed to the main machine transport will use Level 9 MPE and Level 5 General Mechanics. All preventive maintenance performed on the OCR/VCS or the system PC will be performed by the Level 10 and Level 8 MPE's. Preventative Maintenance routes will be developed by using the First Article Test machine "Draft" form until union gives final approval.

6. **What about the APPS Diagnostics?**

   All diagnostics are from the SMS computer, Except for detailed diagnostics for OCR. Electronic log book and Auto to do task manager as well as hypertext RTF help screens and visual factory will aid in speedy resolution. The Electronic Handbook resides on the SMS. For more information regarding other tools, contact your area maintenance office.

7. **How long is the maintenance window for APPS?**

   Four hours is the current window. Corrective and preventative maintenance routes average three hours and thirty minutes per daily route.

8. **What about the REC and Equipment Route?**

   Headquarters Maintenance is currently working on these numbers. It will be a separate route. Considering two hours weekly and four hours monthly.

9. **When will the APPS handbooks be ready?**

   USPS Maintenance Technical Support Center – DOC Group will develop and produce the APPS electronic handbook. A hard copy will also be developed (MS-202). Once published, it will provide ready access to information from within APPS application for operation and maintenance of the APPS.

10. **What other aid will be available?**

    MTSC currently has videos for fiber optics installation in development.

11. **How long is the maintenance training?**

    4 weeks for ETs and 3 weeks for MPMs.

12. **Where will maintenance training be held?**

    The first sessions will held at the Lockheed Martin facility in Owego, NY. Training will then move to Norman after the new building is completed.

13. **Who will coordinate maintenance windows with the REC?**

    The Plant