

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN (QASP)

1 INTRODUCTION

This quality assurance surveillance plan (QASP) is pursuant to the requirements listed in the performance work statement (PWS) entitled Presort Mail Services, IMpb Marking, and IMb marking. This plan sets forth the procedures and guidelines the VA will use in ensuring the required performance standards or services levels are achieved by the contractor.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The purpose of the QASP is to describe the systematic methods used to monitor performance and to identify the required documentation and the resources to be employed. The QASP provides a means for evaluating whether the contractor is meeting the performance standards/quality levels identified in the PWS and the contractor's quality control plan (QCP), and to ensure that the government pays only for the level of services received.

1.1.2 This QASP defines the roles and responsibilities of all members of the integrated project team (IPT), identifies the performance objectives, defines the methodologies used to monitor and evaluate the contractor's performance, describes quality assurance documentation requirements, and describes the analysis of quality assurance monitoring results.

1.2 Performance Management Approach

1.2.1 The PWS structures the acquisition around "what" service or quality level is required, as opposed to "how" the contractor should perform the work (i.e., results, not compliance). This QASP will define the performance management approach taken by the VA to monitor and manage the contractor's performance to ensure the expected outcomes or performance objectives communicated in the PWS are achieved. Performance management rests on developing a capability to review and analyze information generated through performance assessment. The ability to make decisions based on the analysis of performance data is the cornerstone of performance management; this analysis yields information that indicates whether expected outcomes for the project are being achieved by the contractor.

1.2.2 Performance management represents a significant shift from the more traditional quality assurance (QA) concepts in several ways. Performance management focuses on assessing whether outcomes are being achieved and to what extent. This approach migrates away from scrutiny of compliance with the processes and practices used to achieve the outcome. A performance-based approach enables the contractor to play a large role in how the work is performed, as long as the proposed processes are within the stated constraints. The only exceptions to process reviews are those required by law (federal, state, and local) and compelling business situations, such as safety and health. A "results" focus provides the contractor flexibility to continuously improve and innovate over the course of the contract as long as the critical outcomes expected are being achieved and/or the desired performance levels are being met.

1.3 Performance Management Strategy

1.3.1 The contractor is responsible for the quality of all work performed. The contractor measures that quality through the contractor's own quality control (QC) program. QC is work output, not workers, and therefore includes all work performed under this contract regardless of whether the work is performed by contractor employees or by subcontractors. The contractor's QCP will set forth the staffing and procedures for self-inspecting the quality, timeliness, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and other performance requirements in the PWS. The contractor will develop and implement a performance management system with processes to assess and report its performance to the designated government representative. The contractor's QCP will set forth the staffing and procedures for self-inspecting the quality, timeliness, responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and other performance requirements in the PWS. This QASP enables the government to take advantage of the contractor's QC program.

1.3.2 The government representative(s) will monitor performance and review performance reports furnished by the contractor to determine how the contractor is performing against communicated performance objectives. The government will make determination regarding incentives based on performance measurement metric data and notify the contractor of those decisions. The contractor will be responsible for making required changes in processes and practices to ensure performance is managed effectively.

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Contracting Officer

The contracting officer (CO) is responsible for monitoring contract compliance, contract administration, and cost control and for resolving any differences between the observations documented by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and the contractor. The CO will designate one full-time COR as the government authority for performance management. The number of additional representatives serving as technical inspectors depends on the complexity of the services measured, as well as the contractor's performance, and must be identified and designated by the CO.

2.2 The Contracting Officer's Representative

The contracting officer's technical representative (COR) is designated in writing by the CO to act as his or her authorized representative to assist in administering a contract. COR limitations are contained in the written appointment letter. The COR is responsible for technical administration of the project and ensures proper government surveillance of the contractor's performance. The COR is not empowered to make any contractual commitments or to authorize any contractual changes on the government's behalf. Any changes that the contractor deems may affect contract price, terms, or conditions shall be referred to the CO for action. The COR will have the responsibility for completing QA monitoring forms used to document the inspection and evaluation of the contractor's work performance. Government surveillance may occur under the inspection of services clause for any service relating to the contract.

3 IDENTIFICATION OF REQUIRED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/QUALITY LEVELS

The required performance standards and/or quality levels are included in the PWS and in Attachment 1, "Performance Requirements Summary." Failure to meet the required service or performance level will result in a deduction from the monthly amount.

4 METHODOLOGIES TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE

4.1 Surveillance Techniques

In an effort to minimize the performance management burden, simplified surveillance methods shall be used by the government to evaluate contractor performance when appropriate. The primary methods of surveillance are:

- Random monitoring, which shall be performed by the COR designated inspector.
- 100% Inspection – Each month, the COR, shall review the generated documentation and enter summary results into the Surveillance Activity Checklist.
- Periodic Inspection – COR typically performs the periodic inspection on a monthly basis.

4.2 Customer Feedback

The contractor is expected to establish and maintain professional communication between its employees and customers. The primary objective of this communication is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is the most significant external indicator of the success and effectiveness of all services provided and can be measured through customer complaints.

Performance management drives the contractor to be customer focused through initially and internally addressing customer complaints and investigating the issues and/or problems but the customer always has the option to communicate complaints to the COR, as opposed to the contractor.

Customer complaints, to be considered valid, must set forth clearly and in writing the detailed nature of the complaint, must be signed, and must be forwarded to the COR. The COR will accept those customer complaints and investigate using the Quality Assurance Monitoring Form – Customer Complaint Investigation, identified in Attachment 3.

Customer feedback may also be obtained either from the results of formal customer satisfaction surveys or from random customer complaints.

4.3 Acceptable Quality Levels

The acceptable quality levels (AQLs) included in Attachment 1, Performance Requirements Summary Table, for contractor performance are structured to allow the contractor to manage how the work is performed while providing negative incentives for performance shortfalls. For certain critical activities such as those involving daily pickup of mail, the desired performance level is established at 100 percent. Other levels of performance are keyed to the relative importance of the task to the overall mission performance at the VA.

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENTATION

5.1 The Performance Management Feedback Loop

The performance management feedback loop begins with the communication of expected outcomes. Performance standards are expressed in the PWS and are assessed using the performance monitoring techniques shown in Attachment 1.

5.2 Monitoring Forms

The government's QA surveillance, accomplished by the COR, will be reported using the monitoring forms in Attachments 2 and 3. The forms, when completed, will document the government's assessment of the contractor's performance under the contract to ensure that the required results are being achieved.

5.2.1 The COR will retain a copy of all completed QA surveillance forms.

6 ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

6.1 Determining Performance

6.1.1 Government shall use the monitoring methods cited to determine whether the performance standards/service levels/AQLs have been met. If the contractor has not met the minimum requirements, it may be asked to develop a corrective action plan to show how and by what date it intends to bring performance up to the required levels.

6.2 Reporting

6.2.1 At the end of each month, the COR will prepare a written report for the VA summarizing the overall results of the quality assurance surveillance of the contractor's performance. This written report, which includes the contractor's submitted monthly report and the completed quality assurance monitoring forms (Attachment 2), will become part of the QA documentation. It will enable the government to demonstrate whether the contractor is meeting the stated objectives and/or performance standards, including cost/technical/scheduling objectives.

6.3 Reviews and Resolution

6.3.1 The COR may require the contractor's project manager, or a designated alternate, to meet with the COR and other government IPT personnel as deemed necessary to discuss performance evaluation. The COR will define a frequency of in-depth reviews with the contractor, including appropriate self-assessments by the contractor; however, if the need arises, the contractor will meet with the COR as often as required or per the contractor's request. The agenda of the reviews may include:

- Monthly performance assessment data and trend analysis

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- Issues and concerns of both parties
- Projected outlook for upcoming months and progress against expected trends, including a corrective action plan analysis
- Recommendations for improved efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Issues arising from the performance monitoring processes

6.3.2 The QAR must coordinate and communicate with the contractor to resolve issues and concerns regarding marginal or unacceptable performance.

6.3.3 The COR and contractor should jointly formulate tactical and long-term courses of action. Decisions regarding changes to metrics, thresholds, or service levels should be clearly documented. Changes to service levels, procedures, and metrics will be incorporated as a contract modification at the convenience of the PCO/ACO.

QASP ATTACHMENT 1: PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Required Services (Tasks)	Performance Standards	Acceptable Quality Levels (AQL)	Methods of Surveillance	Incentive (Positive and/or Negative) (Impact on Contractor Payments)
a. Presort Services	90% of all 1-2 ounce letter mail is address corrected, bar-code marked, and entered into the mail stream at presort rates.	90%	Record of mail items delivered to contractor, USPS Form 3600-R, and invoices from contractor.	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.
b. IMpb / IMb Marking	100% of parcels and flats have a USPS-compliant IMpb / IMb applied, respectively.	99%	Periodic inspections, test parcels, test flats, random observations, and customer complaints	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.
c. Daily Mail Pickup	100% pickup during any normal VA business day.	99%	Record of contractor pickup kept in Mail Room and provided monthly to COR.	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.
d. Weekly Service Report.	Weekly service report/invoice provided to COR within 5 business days of previous week's services.	99%	Weekly report provided to COR.	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.
e. Administer quality control program in accordance with QCP	100% of reports accurately depict current status.	99%	Monthly report provided to COR.	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.
f. Daily mail collected is inserted into USPS mail stream next day.	No less than 80% of each prior day's mail being inserted into the USPS.	90%	Weekly report provided to COR	Failure or success in satisfying the contract and each AQL may result in CPARS documentation.

QASP ATTACHMENT 2: QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FORM

SERVICE or STANDARD: _____

SURVEY PERIOD: _____

SURVEILLANCE METHOD (Check):

☐ Random Sampling ☐ 100% Inspection ☐ Periodic Inspection ☐ Customer Complaint

LEVEL OF SURVEILLANCE (Check):

☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ As needed

PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS SAMPLED DURING SURVEY PERIOD: _____ %

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

Observed Service Provider Performance Measurement Rate: _____%

Service Provider's Performance (Check):

☐ Meets Standards

☐ Does Not Meet Standards

Narrative of Performance During Survey Period: _____

PREPARED BY: _____ **DATE:** _____