Timing and rules for exchanging PREDES messages

Scope

According to the UPU Convention Regulations, it is mandatory to send a PREDES message compliant with UPU EDI Messaging Standard M41 for each dispatch sent. This document sets out the ideal timing and logic as to when a PREDES message should be generated and sent via the electronic data interchange (EDI) network. It does not take into consideration exceptional circumstances applicable to a receptacle or item in the postal supply chain that may result in a change to the composition of the dispatch after the initial PREDES message has been sent. M41 does not cover the possibility of sending multiple PREDES messages for a dispatch, but, in practice, some postal operators do send multiple PREDES messages for a single dispatch. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in order to reduce instances of multiple or updated PREDES messages being sent unnecessarily.

1   Timing for the generation of PREDES messages

1.1   According to M41, the timing for generating a PREDES message is "as soon as possible after dispatch finalization, that is, when the dispatch documentation (paper CN 31, CN 32, or CP 87 or electronic equivalent) has been created and at a time in the process when there should be no changes to the data in the message".

1.2   On this basis, it is recommended **not** to generate the PREDES message as soon as a dispatch is closed. Ideally, the PREDES message should be sent on the basis of a planned transport departure date/time, as long as the date/time is "logical" (see definition at the end of this section). This allows time for dispatches to be adjusted (i.e. re-opened and re-closed) before the PREDES message is sent.

1.3   A logic for triggering a PREDES message is proposed below, in order to ensure that the PREDES message is sent at the optimal time:

If the planned transport departure date/time is "logical" (as defined below),

then the PREDES is sent no earlier than one hour prior to the planned transport departure date/time and no later than the planned transport departure date/time;

Note. – Any changes to and finalization of dispatch contents normally happen up to one hour prior to the planned transport departure. By that time, the dispatch is typically in the custody of the transportation company.

Otherwise (i.e. if the planned transport departure date/time is NOT logical), the PREDES message should be sent "X hours following dispatch closing" (as defined below).

Note. – If the planned transport departure time is non-existent or not "logical" (see explanation below), then allowing a minimum of four hours to deal with issues such as accidental early closing is reasonable. However, operators should have the option of allowing a longer time, such as six hours, via a locally driven system parameter.

Explanation/Definitions

"Logical" planned transport departure date/time

A planned transport departure date/time is logical if:

a   It exists. Note that, unlike the date/time of closing, this is a conditional data element in a PREDES message and therefore may not exist; and

b   It is in the future, i.e. chronologically after the dispatch closing; and

c   It is within 72 hours (three days) of dispatch closing. This criterion is designed to address instances where the date/time are syntactically correct but possibly erroneous, e.g. the month or year of the transport date

is wrong. It is recognized that there are valid instances where a dispatch will be closed more than 72 hours prior to a planned transport, but these do not typically result in a second PREDES.

Note. – The PREDES standard allows for both YYMMDDHHMM (i.e. date and time) and YYMMDD (i.e. date but not time) formats for transport departure. The latter is intended in particular for S.A.L. and surface transport but is not specifically prohibited for priority (e.g. airmail) transport. For the purpose of triggering a PREDES message, a planned transport departure in YYMMDD (i.e. date but not time) format is to be considered as YYMMDD2359.

"X hours following dispatch closing"

This is used when the planned transport date/time is illogical and thus cannot be used to trigger the sending of a PREDES message. The default value of "X" is four hours, but this can be set to a greater value by the designated operator.

2   Rules for the generation of PREDES messages

2.1   In the event that the planned transport date/time is updated after the PREDES message for a dispatch has been sent, this must never trigger the generation of a new PREDES for this dispatch.

   Note. – The PREDES message provides planned transport information. Actual/updated transport information can be provided via the PRECON message.

   Example: A PREDES message is sent for a dispatch, and then a flight is cancelled and mail is reassigned to a later flight. No new PREDES message should be sent for the dispatch, even though the associated transport information has changed.

2.2   Once the PREDES message has been sent, no further mail can be added to the dispatch. Instead, a new dispatch with similar characteristics should be created if needed. In other words, the generation of multiple PREDES messages must be strictly limited to the removal of mail from the dispatch.

   In such cases, the PREDES message should be available to the destination postal operator before the mail dispatch arrives. To be safe, it is deemed that the message should be sent via the EDI network at least one hour before the arrival time of the last transport leg.

   Example 1: For security reasons, Customs requests the removal of a small packet from a bag after the dispatch has been closed. This may lead to another PREDES message being generated for the dispatch.

   Example 2: After a dispatch has been closed and the PREDES message has been sent, more mail arrives at the last minute via the domestic process, for the same destination as the closed dispatch. The additional mail would easily fit into the mailbags recently closed. However, the additional mail should not be incorporated into the closed dispatch. Instead, a new dispatch must be created with a new bag, and the additional mail must go into this new dispatch.

2.3   If paper dispatch documentation (CN 31/CP 87) is generated together with a PREDES message, then the content of the PREDES message and the paper document must always remain identical. In other words, it is not possible to reprint the paper document and attach it to the mail without sending an updated PREDES. If it is not possible to update both, then the sending postal operator should generate a verification note to inform the destination postal operator of the discrepancies between the pre-advised information (PREDES message and paper document) and the mail actually sent.

   Note. – Postal operators gain more flexibility through paperless exchanges, i.e. exchanges of dispatches with no paper documentation.

2.4   In rare cases where multiple PREDES messages are generated for a dispatch, each PREDES message must cover the full dispatch; therefore, each new PREDES message supersedes the previous PREDES messages sent.

2.5   Only one PREDES version can be sent for a dispatch. If both the sender and recipients have the necessary technical capacity (see information in UPU reference list 160a), PREDES V2.1 must be sent.

2.6   A PREDES message must be sent for all dispatches, i.e. for all mail classes, including mail class T (empty bags), and all mail categories (air, S.A.L., surface and surface priority).

3   Rules for handling PREDES messages received

When multiple correction PREDES messages are received for a dispatch, the message with the most recent preparation date supersedes all prior messages.