M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, Chapter 1, Section A - Centralized Mail (CM) Intake

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Topics
M21-1 Adjudication Procedures Manual >
Part 02 (Part II). Intake, Claims Establishment, Jurisdiction, and File Maintenance >
Subpart i. Receiving and Screening Mail >
Chapter 01. Receiving Mail via Centralized Mail (CM)

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Overview

In This Section This section contains the following topics:

Topic	Topic Name
1	Overview of the CM Process
2	Receipt, Separation, and Routing of Physical Mail in a Regional Office (RO) Mailroom
3	Submitting Documents via Direct Upload

1. Overview of CM Process

Introduction This topic provides an overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) CM processing, including

- intent of CM
- roles and responsibilities in the CM process, and
- definitions of CM terms.

Change Date December 7, 2016

II.i.1.A.1.a. Intent of CM Centralizing conversion of incoming paper to an electronic medium in the Centralized Mail (CM) process is intended to

- eliminate paper handling by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) personnel at regional offices (ROs)
- reduce the number of times mail is handled in any medium
- expedite uploading of claims, evidence, and other mail to electronic claims folders (eFolders)
- improve customer service and claims processing timeliness through improved mail control processes, and
- implement first in, first out (FIFO) workflow for all mail received.

Reference: For more information on CM, see the CM webpage.

II.i.1.A.1.b. Roles and Responsibilities in the CM Process The intake processing center (IPC) is responsible for initial screening, control, and uploading to the appropriate eFolder of mail received in the CM portal.

Reference: For more information on IPC roles and responsibilities, see M21-1, Part I, Subpart ii, 1.A.1.b.

II.i.1.A.1.c. Definitions of CM Terms For definitions of terms related to CM processing, see the table below.

Term	Definition
received date	The date the mail is received at the

<table>
<tr><td>received date</td><td>The date the mail is received at the scanning vendor is displayed in the CM portal as the received date.
The table below outlines what date is displayed in the CM portal.<table><tr><th>If mail is received ...</th><th>Then the receipt/received date is the date ...</th></tr><tr><td>by the RO and sent to the vendor</td><td>stamped by the RO.</td></tr><tr><td>directly at the vendor</td><td>applied to the resulting scanned/converted image by the vendor.</td></tr></table>Note: If an earlier date of receipt is discovered, the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) allows the user to edit this data field.
Reference: For more information on editing document properties in VBMS, see the VBMS Core User Guide.</td></tr>
<tr><td>FIFO</td><td>FIFO refers to the practice of processing documents according to oldest date received rather than by type of document.
Note: The oldest date received is based on the CM portal entry date.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• packet, or
• package</td><td>A packet or package pertains to a mail bundle for a single claimant and may contain one or more documents.</td></tr>
<tr><td>document</td><td>Documents are single files of one or more pages/images and are part of a packet or package.</td></tr>
<tr><td>image</td><td>The optical reproduction of the document/page contained in a packet or package.</td></tr>
<tr><td>United States Postal Service (USPS) Priority Mailbox</td><td>A standard box normally used for shipping mail to the scanning vendor in the CM process.</td></tr>
<tr><td>bankers box</td><td>A standard, white box normally used to ship paper claims folders and service treatment records (STRs).</td></tr>
</table>

Reference: For more information on earliest date of receipt, see **M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.B**.

2. Receipt, Separation, and Routing of Physical Mail in an RO Mailroom

Introduction This topic provides an overview of processing physical mail received in an RO mailroom, including

- **sources of physical mail received at the RO**
- **separating and routing physical mail**
- **shipping mail to scanning vendors**, and
- **proper identification of undeliverable mail containing Federal tax information (FTI)**.

Change Date May 4, 2022

II.i.1.A.2.a. Sources of Physical Mail Received at the RO The USPS automatically sends mail to the scanning vendor when the claimant uses the centralized mail address provided in all development letters.
Physical mail received by the ROs may come from various sources, including, but not limited to

- Veterans service organizations (VSOs)
- walk-in via Public Contact Team (PCT)
- an appellant attending a hearing
- other courier services, including
- United Parcel Service (UPS)
- FedEx
- DHL, and
- other private messenger services
- VA satellite offices, including
- out-based offices
- Benefits Delivery at Discharge, and
- Integrated Disability Evaluation System intake centers
- USPS mail addressed to the previously published RO address, prior to the establishment of CM, and
- USPS undeliverable mail.

II.i.1.A.2.b. Separating and Routing Physical Mail

When physical mail is received by the RO, the mail clerk opens, date stamps, and separates the mail by VA business lines and/or addresses including

- Veterans Service Centers (VSCs)
- pension management centers (PMCs)
- decision review operations centers (DROCs)
- Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA)
- fiduciary hub (hub)
- Education Service
- Insurance Service
- Loan Guaranty Service
- Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
- Veteran Readiness and Employment Service
- National Cemetery Administration
- Human Resources Management
- Director's office, and
- co-located VSOs.

Once separated, use the table below to route the physical mail.

If mail ...	Then ...
requires routing to • a VSC • a PMC • a hub • a DROC, or • BVA	follow the procedures in M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.A.2.c to ship to the appropriate scanning vendor. ***Note***: Ship Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) requests to the scanning vendor for processing in the CM portal. ***References***: For more information on • processing mail in the CM portal, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.A, and • RO processing of FOIA/PA requests in the CM portal, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.D.
is related to all other business lines	mail or forward (if interoffice) the documents to the appropriate business line.
is undeliverable mail containing Federal tax information (FTI)	• scan the document(s) to the restricted FTI repository following the safeguarding procedures for FTI, and • follow the guidance pertaining to undeliverable essential mail. ***Note***: Do not ship undeliverable mail containing FTI to the scanning vendor. ***References***: For more information on • handling undeliverable essential mail, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart

	i, 2.C • FTI, see M21-1, Part XIV, 4.A • safeguarding FTI, see M21-1, Part XIV, 4.B.1, and • the proper identification of undeliverable mail containing FTI, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.A.2.d.

Note: Printing a document or otherwise creating a physical copy of an electronic document to facilitate scanning or upload into an electronic records repository is not permitted.
Exception: If FTI is scanned into the portal in error, print the document(s) from the portal and scan into the restricted eFolder. Print the document and click the DOWNLOAD COMPLETE button to remove the document from the portal. Upon printing and scanning, follow the

- procedures for storing and destroying FTI in M21-1, Part XIV, 4.B.2, and
- general safeguarding procedures in M21-1, Part X, 4.B.1.

Reference: For more information on date-stamping mail, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.B.

II.i.1.A.2.c. Shipping Mail to Scanning Vendors

Once the mail is separated, follow the steps in the table below to ship the mail to the scanning vendor.

Step	Action
1	Return the mail in the original envelope or staple the envelope to the front of the mail.
2	Securely bundle mail prior to placing it in the shipping box. ***Note***: Only use rubber bands for packages too large for clips or staples.
3	To indicate for the vendor separation of packets for multiple claimants use a • sheet of paper between packets, or • place each packet in a manila folder.
4	Place bundled mail into a medium-sized, flat-rate USPS Priority Mailbox (11'' x 8 ½" x 5 ½" inside). ***Important***: • If the volume of mail is larger or smaller than the recommended box, a different-sized container may be used as long as it is an official USPS container (box, envelope, and so on). • Use a standard, white bankers box when the volume of mail exceeds the capacity of multiple medium-sized, flat-rate boxes. • Do not ship claims folders and/or STRs via USPS or in USPS boxes. Follow the instructions in M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.B for shipping claim folders and STRs in approved bankers boxes.
5	Fill the container to approximately 90-percent capacity and add filler material. Ensure there is enough cushioning so items will not shift.
6	Insert *VA Directive 6609* into the shipping container. ***Note***: The directive cites the penalties for violation of Privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Acts.
7	Use clear, plastic shipping tape that bears the words *United States Postal Service Mailing* to • seal the box top and bottom seam, and • reinforce the edges. Do *not* use • cord • string • twine • masking tape, or

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>• cellophane tape.</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Label the top of the box CM (for "centralized mail").</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td>Use the table below to determine the appropriate address to ship the mail to for scanning.
<table>
<tr><th>If the mail will be processed by …</th><th>Then ship the mail to …</th></tr>
<tr><td>a VSC or DROC</td><td>Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 5235
Janesville, WI
53547-5235</td></tr>
<tr><td>a PMC</td><td>Department of Veterans Affairs
Pension Intake Center
PO Box 5365
Janesville, WI
53547-5365</td></tr>
<tr><td>a hub</td><td>Department of Veterans Affairs
Fiduciary Intake
PO Box 5211
Janesville, WI
53547-5211</td></tr>
<tr><td>BVA</td><td>Board of Veterans Appeals
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 5229
Janesville, WI
53547-5229</td></tr>
</table>
Note: Place the address label inside a sealable, clear jacket, which USPS provides.</td></tr>
</table>

Notes:

- Use the tracking service USPS offers when shipping CM for scanning.
- Each mailroom must maintain a log of tracking numbers for future reference.
- There is ***no*** requirement to prepare the *Document Control Sheet* referenced in M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.B, when shipping CM for scanning.

II.i.1.A. 2.d. Proper Identification of Undeliverable Mail Containing FTI

Letters containing FTI are mailed in blue envelopes or manila envelopes. All letters mailed in blue envelopes always contain FTI. Letters mailed in manila envelopes may not always contain FTI. Therefore, a review of the envelope or letter may be required to determine whether undeliverable mail contains FTI.

The table below provides examples of text that might appear in undeliverable mail containing FTI.

Note: The examples below are not an all-encompassing list.

Examples		
1	In reply, refer to: 335/21P CONTAINS FTI File Number:	In Reply Refer to: XXX/IVM/XXX
2		

	What Have We Done? We reviewed your application and determined that you are eligible for VA pension benefits. However, we received information from the IRS that conflicted with the amount of income that you have reported on your application for benefits. Please refer to the chart below: **Income Type** | **What You Reported** | **What the IRS Reported** | **Account Number** We have used the IRS information in calculating your income and your VA pension If you believe the IRS or SSA information is incorrect, or if you no longer receive this income, please provide us a written statement regarding the payments made by your financial institution(s) and provide other acceptable information that supports your statement. Other acceptable information would include a statement from the person or entity that paid you showing the amount, type, frequency, and date last paid for the payments	
3	Dear Pensioner, VA has reviewed 2007 income you reported to VA. The review discovered income for 2007 which did not agree with the income report you furnished VA. This review was to verify your entitlement to VA pension. A list of payers and the amount they reported they paid to you is on the reverse of this letter.	
4	**What We Have Been Told** We received a report of 2010 income. Our report shows you received unearned income of [redacted] from the [redacted] in 2010. We propose to count this income for 12 months starting February 1, 2010.	
5	Dear Sir/Madam: [redacted] is a beneficiary receiving VA pension benefits. These benefits are contingent upon the proper reporting of all countable family income from all sources. Under an income verification match program, we have been informed that the claimant had unearned income received in 2007 from your agency totaling [redacted]	
6	**Evidence Used to Decide Your Claim** In making our decision, in addition to the evidence in the attached rating, we used the following evidence: • Social Security Administration (SSA) data match • Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data match • Review of your VA file	
7	To help us decide your claim, please provide information explaining the difference between the amount of income you reported on your application and the amount the IRS reported to VA for 2013. If you believe the payment information reported by IRS is incorrect, please tell us in a written statement and provide any information you have to support the statement. Acceptable information to support a statement would include a statement from the person or entity that paid you showing the amount, type, frequency and date last paid. If you no longer receive the income reported by the IRS, please provide a statement from the person or entity that paid you showing the date this income stopped.	

3. Submitting Documents Via Direct Upload

Introduction This topic provides information about submitting documents via Direct Upload for inclusion in the claims folder, including

- availability and proper use of Direct Upload, and
- confirming successful submission.

Change Date December 30, 2020

II.i.1.A.3.a. Availability and Proper Use Direct Upload is available for submitting documents for inclusion in the claims

of Direct Upload

folder. **Direct Upload** may be used by
- PCT personnel
- VSOs
- VHA personnel, and
- claimants.

Important:
- Once a submission is uploaded, do ***not*** mail the original, as this will create duplicates in the claims folder.
- Send only one claimant's information per submission. Sending more than one claimant's information in a single submission risks the
- misplacement of one claimant's information into another claimant's eFolder, and
- unintentional release of personally identifiable information.

Note: In addition to **Direct Upload**, claimants and VSOs may utilize other VA claims submission service websites for submission of claims and evidence.

Reference: For more information on using **Direct Upload**, see the ***Department of Veterans Affairs Digitized Mail Handling Services Centralized Mail Portal User Manual***.

II.i.1.A.3.b. Confirming Successful Submission

After submitting documents to the scanning vendor, senders must
- verify in **Direct Upload** that all steps of submission have been successful, and
- review the claims folder to ensure the submission was completely uploaded to the claims folder.

From <https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000174855/M21-1-Part-II-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Section-A-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake>

M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, Chapter 1, Section B - Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) Shipping

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Updated Mar 19, 2025
Topics
M21-1 Adjudication Procedures Manual >
Part 02 (Part II). Intake, Claims Establishment, Jurisdiction, and File Maintenance >
Subpart i. Receiving and Screening Mail >
Chapter 01. Receiving Mail via Centralized Mail (CM)

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Overview

In This Section

This section contains the following topics:

Topic	Topic Name

1	Overview of VCIP Shipping Procedures for Claims Folders, Service Treatment Records (STRs), and Personnel Records
2	Record Management Number (RMN)/Document Control Sheet (DCS) Shipping Process
3	Resolving Common Shipping Exceptions
4	Requesting a Folder Rescan and Other Scanning Inquiries
5	Overview of the Source Material Tracking System (SMTS) Portal

1. Overview of VCIP Shipping Procedures for Claims Folders, STRs, and Personnel Records

Introduction This topic provides an overview of the VCIP processing, including
- purpose of VCIP, and
- shipping requirements.

Change Date October 7, 2019

II.i.1.B.1.a. Purpose of VCIP

The Veterans Claims Intake Program's (VCIP's) mission is to
- provide direct support to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims process by providing procedures for intake of
- source material
- documentation
- electronic records, and
- data
- work collaboratively with all stakeholders to manage VBA's digital operating environment, and
- provide procedures relating to intake capabilities and the execution/management of document conversion services contracts.

References: For more information on
- VCIP, see the ***Business Transformation Services (BTS) Dashboard***, and
- other material related to Centralized Mail (CM), see the Office of Business Integration (OBI) CM resource page.

II.i.1.B.1.b. Shipping Requirements

Using the record management number (RMN)/document control sheet (DCS) shipping process, a regional office's (RO's) intake processing center or mailroom personnel ship source materials for document conversion.

Important: ROs must verify the authenticity of any *DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,* contained in the claims folder in accordance with procedures outlined in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 1.B.3.a and M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.D.5.b prior to shipping the folder to the vendor for scanning.

Notes:
- When an RO ships loose mail to the scanning vendors using the RMN/DCS shipping process, electronic copies of the mail are directly uploaded into the appropriate electronic claims folder (eFolder), bypassing any further intake functions. (Use this approach only for non-actionable drop-file mail that requires no system updates.)
- ROs may ship loose mail to scanning vendors ***without*** following the RMN/DCS shipping process. Doing so results in the creation of a pending mail packet within the CM portal. (This approach is recommended for actionable mail that requires system updates only).

References: For more information on
- shipping loose mail received in the mailroom, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.A.2, and
- the RMN/DCS shipping process, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.B.2.

2. RMN/DCS Shipping Process

Introduction

This topic provides an overview of the RMN/DCS shipping process, including

- required shipping resources
- gaining access to the tracking portal
- creating and printing a DCS in the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)
- submitting compact discs (CDs), digital video discs (DVDs), or other portable electronic media
- preparing
- source materials for shipping, and
- a shipping label and a DCS identification (ID)
- creating a manifest and packaging boxes for shipping
- scanning vendor shipping addresses, and
- shipping container validation checklist.

Change Date March 20, 2024

II.i.1.B.2.a. Required Shipping Resources

At a minimum, the following resources are required for shipping source materials:

- workstation with computer and document printer
- United Parcel Service (UPS) shipping label printer
- UPS scale
- permanent, black-ink markers
- barcode scanner wand or gun
- manila folders, and
- approved shipping containers.

Note: If the RO does not have a UPS scale on-site, one may be obtained from UPS typically free of charge, based upon shipping volume. For those ROs with small shipping volumes, the scales are available for purchase from UPS.

II.i.1.B.2.b. Gaining Access to the Tracking Portal

To obtain new-user access to the tracking portal, contact GDIT support at fcs-support@gdit.com. The vendor will coordinate with OBI to establish access and apply the correct permissions.

Notes:

- Vendors provide login instructions within 48 hours of submission of the form if access is granted.
- Because portal access is limited, notify the VCIP mailbox if a user no longer requires access.

II.i.1.B.2.c. Creating and Printing a DCS in VBMS

Follow the instructions in the *Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) Core User Guide* to create and print a DCS in VBMS.

Notes:

- Provide a complete return address on a box of pre-discharge claims if shipping from an intake site to the scanning vendor.
- Use white paper only when printing manifests and DCSs.
- Verify that barcodes are not blurry (if, for example, the printer is low on toner).
- Do not enlarge or otherwise distort images.
- Use scan guns/wands for all data-entry shipping tasks to avoid manual keying errors.
- Ship all pre-discharge claims and pending post-discharge claims in separate shipping containers.
- Write *pre-discharge* on the outside of boxes containing pre-discharge claims.
- Do not place other annotations or labels on boxes, except as specifically directed in this section.

II.i.1.B.2.d. Submitting CDs, DVDs, or Other Portable Electronic Media

File compact discs (CDs), digital video discs (DVDs), or other portable electronic media in the claimant's claims folder or manila folder. Take the following actions when submitting media:

- remove/separate the password from the media
- write the password on a sticky note or piece of paper
- insert the sticky note or piece of paper with the password into an envelope
- seal the envelope, and
- write *Simon* on the envelope (do ***not*** write *password*, as doing so will violate Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) privacy directives).

Notes:

- Do not print the files or upload them to the eFolder.
- The scanning vendors will
- process any type of source material, including DVDs, CDs, microfiche, microfilm, and microdot, and
- extract data from the media and upload it into the eFolder.
- The Social Security Administration (SSA) started encrypting CDs issued to VA claimants, appointed representatives, and VA. SSA places a cover letter with the decryption instructions on every CD they mail. Ensure the decryption instructions and all documentation associated with the CD are included when shipping the CD to the scanning vendor.

II.i.1.B.2.e. Preparing Source Materials for Shipping

Follow the steps in the table below to prepare materials for shipping.

Step	Action
1	Acquire VBMS-eligible claims folders and secure all loose materials within them. Ensure all service treatment records (STRs) are inside the STR jacket(s). ***Note***: Do not place non-STR materials in STR jackets for shipment, as this will result in all material therein being scanned and indexed together as STRs.
2	Assess amount of source material (claims folders and manila folders with loose mail) to fit and be shipped in a single container with the following: • box weight (not to exceed 50 pounds (approximately 30 pounds of paper will fit in a standard-sized shipping container); the "hand rule" referenced in Step 5 applies) • count (number of claims) • height (number of inches), and • availability (such as *Only five pre-discharge claims received today*).
3	Scan claims folders to the *FCS/CS* internal location for the scanning vendor's facilities in Mt. Vernon, KY, and Boyers, PA. ***Note***: Discontinue the use of locations that began with *DCS* or *ICMHS*.
4	Place source material in an approved shipping container. The image below represents the approved shipping container. It is made of corrugated fiberboard, measures 12" X 14-3/4" x 9-1/2", and has lapped joints secured by wire stitching, as well as locked bottoms with hand holes. ***Notes***: • When packing containers, leave enough room in each to easily insert a hand into the front of the box and touch the bottom of the box ("hand rule"). • If a box is not completely full, insert packing material in the box to prevent the source material from

	shifting and becoming damaged during shipment.

II.i.1.B.2.f. Preparing a Shipping Label and a DCS ID

Follow the steps in the below table to prepare a shipping label for each box and a DCS identification (ID) for each claims folder.

Step	Action
1	On ***the day the box is to be shipped***, generate a UPS shipping label and tracking number for each shipping container. Use one UPS tracking number per box. ***Note***: The last four digits of the UPS tracking number must be used when creating a DCS ID, as described in the next step.
2	Create a DCS ID for each claim folder number being shipped in VBMS. Use the following format for creating the DCS ID: • RO or station code (three digits) • alpha character (*A* through *K*) of the intake site • final destination (same as the RO/station code), and • last four digits of UPS tracking number. ***Important***: • VBMS automatically generates the DCS ID referenced in this step; instructions for creating the DCS ID are provided here for user awareness only. • Pre-discharge intake sites must use the associated RO code when creating DCS IDs in VBMS.
3	Secure the DCS to the top of each claimant's claims folder (or bundle of volumes) and/or to the top of each claimant's manila folder (or bundle of manila folders) in the box using a rubber band or paper clip. ***Notes***: • If there are multiple volumes for one claimant that will not fit into a single container, ***do not*** overstuff the box to keep the claims folder together. Place the overflow portion of the record into a second box. • The second box referenced in the preceding bullet requires its own UPS tracking label and its own RMN. Overflow volumes of the claims folder require a new DCS that is linked to the second box. (Other Veterans' materials may be placed in this second box, as well, to fill it.)

II.i.1.B.2.g. Creating a Manifest and Packaging Boxes for Shipping

Follow the steps in the below table to
• create a shipping manifest in VBMS Core, and
• package boxes for shipping.

Step	Action
1	Follow the instructions in the *VBMS Core User Guide* for creating a manifest for the shipping container. ***Notes***: • VBMS generates manifests using the RMN that • was created through the DCS process discussed in previous blocks in this section, and • will be used in subsequent steps. • Users may regenerate a shipping manifest at any time after VBMS generates an RMN. • Once a user selects *Generate Manifest*, additional DCSs may be added only if created on the same day VBMS generates an RMN/manifest. • The associated RMN, UPS tracking number, and claim type *must* be entered into the tracking portal; otherwise, a shipping exception will occur and processing of the box will be delayed.
2	Check the manifest for duplicate entries or extra DCSs (also known as "ghost entries").
3	Do any duplicate/ghost entries appear on the manifest?

	• If *yes*, go to the next step. • If *no*, go to Step 5.
4	• Select *Generate Manifest* in VBMS Core. • Delete duplicate/ghost entries from the manifest. • Reselect *Generate Manifest*.
5	• Follow the instructions in the *VBMS Core User Guide* for printing the manifest. • Write *Pre-Discharge* on the manifest, if applicable. ***Notes***: • Print shipping manifests on white paper only. • If ghost entries appear on the printed manifest, return to Step 4 of this table.
6	Scan/wand each RMN and UPS tracking number into the appropriate tracking portal.
7	Write the RMN in permanent, black ink on the outside front of the shipping container.
8	• Verify and validate the contents of the box against the shipping manifest. • Initial the manifest.
9	Package the box(es) for shipping. ***Important***: • Ensure no personally identifiable information is visible through the handle openings in the box. • Ensure the tape used to seal the box does not stick to any paper behind the box handles. If the manifest or DCS is the last sheet of paper before the box handle, and it is damaged upon removal, it will be rendered unscannable and result in a shipping exception. • Place the correct UPS shipping label on the flap of the associated box. Do not place the label in the center of the box or cover the RMN. • Ensure there are no old barcode labels on the box.
10	Transfer the box(es) to the mailroom for pick up by UPS.

II.i.1.B.2.h. Scanning Vendor Shipping Addresses

The shipping address for the current scanning vendor is shown below.
Exela Services
30 Industrial Park Road
Mt. Vernon, KY 40456

II.i.1.B.2.i. Shipping Container Validation Checklist

The checklist below can be used to ensure the shipping container was properly documented and packed for shipping.

VCIP SHIPPING CONTAINER VALIDATION CHECKLIST (March 26, 2019)

DATE: _____/_____/_____ CONTRACTOR: _____ NAME & INITIALS: _____

A. All source material fits in an approved shipping container and the 'hand rule' applies	
B. Each claimant and/or Veteran has a separate manila folder(s) for loose material	
C. All cFiles or manila folder(s) with the same file number are banded together (rubber band)	
D. All DCSID(s) are firmly secured to the front of top volume of each claimant's and/or Veteran's cFile or manila folder	
E. A printed copy of the VBMS Shipping Manifest is placed in (not on the outside) the shipping container	
F. Contents of the box match the Shipping Manifest exactly	
G. A unique UPS label and/or tracking number was generated for the shipping container	
H. The correct RMN and tracking number were scanned into the contractor's tracking portal	
I. The RMN is written in permanent black ink on the side of the shipping container	

H. The correct RMN and tracking number were scanned into the contractor's tracking portal	
I. The RMN is written in permanent black ink on the side of the shipping container	
J. The correct tracking label is placed on the flap of the shipping container	
K. The RMN and tracking number on the Shipping Manifest, DCSID(s), box, and contractor's tracking portal match	
L. No personally identifiable information (PII) is visible through box handle openings	
M. The box is ready to be taken to the designated pick-up and/or shipping area for daily shipments	

3. Resolving Common Shipping Exceptions

Introduction This topic provides instructions for resolving common shipping exceptions, including

- **resolving common shipping exceptions for source materials sent to Mt. Vernon, KY (FCS/CS)**, and
- **sources of assistance in and more information about resolving shipping exceptions**.

Change Date March 20, 2024

II.i.1.B.3.a. Resolving Common Shipping Exceptions for Source Materials Sent to Mt. Vernon, KY (FCS/CS)

Use the table below to resolve shipping exceptions for source material sent to Mt. Vernon, KY (FCS/CS).

Exception: If an RO/station erred in sending documents to the scanning vendor because the documents are associated with a type of claim that is excluded from establishment in VBMS,

- disregard the instructions in the table below, and
- request return of the folder to the RO.

Exception Type	VA Action
Type 1: Missing Folder	If the DCS is listed on the shipping manifest but the scanning vendor did not receive the folder, • remove (as a "ghost" entry) the DCS from VBMS • update the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab in the vendor Source Material Tracking System (SMTS) Portal by entering *Ghost DCS* in the COMMENTS field, and • click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button. ***Reference***: For more information about ghost entries, see **M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.B.2.g**.
Type 2: Missing Shipping Information	Follow the instructions in the table below. **If …** / **Then …** the RMN, tracking number, and/or claim type was not entered in the vendor SMTS Portal → enter the missing information on the SHIPPING → MANIFEST tab. an incorrect RMN and/or tracking number was entered in the vendor SMTS Portal → • search for the incorrect RMN and/or tracking number on the SHIPPING → SEARCH tab

		• once the number is located, edit the RMN and/or tracking number • click on the UPDATE RECORD button • update the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab by entering *Shipping information added to portal* in the COMMENTS field, and • click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button.
• Type 3: Missing DCS, or • Type 6: Missing Manifest	Follow the instructions in the table below.	
	If …	**Then …**
	the missing DCS or manifest exists	• attach the DCS or manifest (in portable document format (PDF)) to the EXCEPTION LIST tab in the ICMHS portal • update the tab by entering *Missing DCS attached* or *Missing Manifest attached* in the COMMENTS field, and • click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button.
	there is no record of the missing DCS or manifest	• generate a new DCS and manifest, using the same tracking and box numbers • log the new shipment into the ICMHS portal • attach PDFs of the new DCS and manifest to the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab • update the tab by entering *Manifest and DCS attached* in the COMMENTS field, and • click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button.
Type 4: Unscannable Media	Follow the instructions in the table below.	
	If the password …	**Then ...**
	is available	• update the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab in the ICMHS portal by entering the password in the COMMENTS field, and • click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button.
	is not available	• update the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab in the ICMHS portal by entering *Long-term storage* in the COMMENTS field (in case the content will not be uploaded to VBMS), and • click on the INFORMATION

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>PROVIDED button.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type 5: Missing Manifest</td><td>Follow the instructions in the table below.
<table><tr><th>If the manifest …</th><th>Then …</th></tr><tr><td>was generated in VBMS</td><td>• regenerate the manifest
• attach a PDF of the manifest to the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab in the ICMHS portal
• update the tab by entering Manifest attached to portal in the COMMENTS field, and
• click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button.</td></tr><tr><td>was not generated in VBMS</td><td>• remove all DCSs from VBMS
• recreate the shipment (DCSs and manifest), using the same tracking and box numbers
• log the new shipment into the ICMHS portal
• attach PDFs of the new DCSs and manifest to the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab
• update the tab by entering Shipment recreated. DCSs and manifest attached to portal in the COMMENTS field
• click on the INFORMATION PROVIDED button
• return to the home page, and
• enter the tracking number, claim type, and new RMN on the SHIPPING → MANIFEST tab.</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Type 7: Miscellaneous Exception</td><td>Send an e-mail to the VCIP mailbox when the vendor describes an unusual type of shipping exception in the COMMENTS field on the EXCEPTIONS LIST tab in the ICMHS portal.</td></tr>
</table>

II.i.1.B.3.b. Sources of Assistance in and More Information About Resolving Shipping Exceptions

If questions or issues regarding shipping exceptions arise, send an e-mail to the VCIP mailbox.

Reference: For more information on using the GDIT portal, see the ***GDIT Tracking Portal User Guide***.

4. Requesting a Folder Rescan and Other Scanning Inquiries

Introduction

This topic provides an overview of the VCIP scanning inquiry process, including

- locating source materials

- rescan requests
- handling unscanned shipments that are marked as completed
- determining the content of a package that is pending scanning, and
- other scanning inquiries.

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II.i.1.B.4.a. Locating Source Materials

The source folder or shipment must be located before a rescan request can be submitted. Perform a search using the file number and select the matching shipment to identify the DCS ID number and location of the RMN shipment.

Notes:
- If the RMN shipment location cannot be identified, copy the tracking number and enter it in the UPS tracking website.
- The website provides meaningful information only if the tracking number is 120 days old or less.

References: For more information on
- shipping manifests and DCSs, see the *VBMS Core User Guide*, and
- submitting a rescan request, see M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 1.B.4.b.

II.i.1.B.4.b. Rescan Requests

A request to rescan source material must be submitted to the correct vendor. The following table provides instruction on which vendor to contact and the means for submitting the request.

Exception: Source material that has been scanned and identified as the *Best Copy* but illegible should be treated as though it has not been received by VA. Claims processors must specifically notify the claimant that the records are available for review but cannot be read due to poor quality. If the illegible records are
- Federal records, follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.A.1.g, or
- private medical records, follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.1.g.

If the source material ...	Then submit the request via the ...
is held by a contractor digitizing records previously held by the Records Management Center, National Personnel Records Center, or other Federal record holding facilities	SMTS Portal.
is currently, or was previously, maintained by • SMS, which stored source material at • Janesville, WI, and • Clinton, IA, or • CRSA, which stored source material at • Mt. Vernon, KY • Newnan, GA, and • Forest Park, GA.	BTS Issue Tracker.

Reference: For more information on submitting a request to the SMTS Portal, see the *File Conversion Services (FCS) Training Manual*.

II.i.1.B.4.c. Handling Unscanned Shipments That Are Marked as Completed

Unscanned shipments in a *Completed* status can be located and scanned using the BTS Issue Tracker. The table below provides instruction on how to request scanning of the documents.

Step	Action
1	Select the *BTS Issue Tracker Form* and complete the SUBMITTER INFORMATION fields.
2	Select the *Rescan: Missing Document* scanning vendor request type.
3	Complete the SHIPMENT DETAILS fields and provide an explanation in the ADDITIONAL INFORMATION field.

4	Click SUBMIT.

Reference: For more information on using the **BTS Issue Tracker**, see the ***FCS Training Manual***.

II.i.1.B.4.d. Determining the Content of a Package That Is Pending Scanning

The ITEM LIST located on the VBMS pending scanning banner identifies the contents of a package that is pending scanning. However, the ITEM LIST is not always populated. Search for the shipment on the INTAKE tab in VBMS and use the table below to help determine the contents of a package.

Important: Click the CLEAR button before searching for the shipment to ensure that all potential shipments are reviewed. The filter defaults to the user's station and the current date.

If the station number/intake site is …	**And the tracking number …**	**Then …**
376/A (VA Records Management Center)	begins with *1Z*	a claims folder is pending scanning.
376/D (VA Records Management Center)	does not begin with *1Z*	a claims folder or service record is pending scanning.
376/E (VA Records Management Center (VALO-OMPFs))	begins with *1Z*	service records are pending scanning.
a number other than *376*	begins with *1Z*	conduct an inquiry and review the response for • a CONFIRMED AT date that loosely corresponds to the shipment's DATE CREATED field on the VBMS INTAKE tab, and • the current location of the claims folder. A paper claims folder is pending scanning if the CONFIRMED AT and DATE CREATED fields *correspond* **and** the location is a known eFolder location. Evidence, other than a paper claims folder, is pending scanning if the CONFIRMED AT and DATE CREATED fields *do not correspond*, **or** the folder location is not a known eFolder location. ***Note***: An outstanding request for ***VA Form 28-1902b, Counseling Record – Narrative Report***, and/or ***VA Form 28-1902f, Feasibility Determination—Narrative Report***, is an indicator that a Counseling/Evaluation/Rehabilitation (CER) folder is pending scanning.
	does not begin with *1Z*	the package is part of the File Bank Extraction Program. Use the **BTS Issue Tracker** to request expedited scanning if the CER or paper claims folder is required.

References: For more information on

- searching for shipments on the INTAKE tab, see the *VBMS Core User Guide*
- the circumstances under which decision makers must review information contained in a CER folder, see **M21-1, Part VIII, Subpart iv, 3.B.4.b**, and
- using the **BTS Issue Tracker**, see the ***FCS Training Manual***.

II.i.1.B.4.e. Other Scanning Inquiries

For scanning inquiries that don't fall under the categories identified in this topic, select *Status of My Scanning Inquiry* as the issue type when submitting the inquiry through the **BTS Issue Tracker**.

5. Overview of the SMTS Portal

Introduction This topic provides an overview of the SMTS Portal, including

- **purpose of the SMTS Portal**
- **functions of the SMTS Portal**, and
- **authorization to use the SMTS Portal for claims processing**.

Change Date March 20, 2024

II.i.1.B.5.a. Purpose of the SMTS Portal

The **SMTS Portal** was created to monitor and track the status of

- a project to scan and convert Veteran's records that are currently in a paper format, and
- record requests submitted to SMTS.

II.i.1.B.5.b. Functions of the SMTS Portal

The **SMTS Portal** allows an authorized user to

- search for records that are stored with a scanning vendor and awaiting digitization
- request regular and expedited scanning of records, and
- review the status of pending requests.

II.i.1.B.5.c. Authorization to Use the SMTS Portal for Claims Processing

Claims processors who have completed **SMTS Portal** training, or have been directed by the Office of Field Operations, may use the **SMTS Portal**.

Procedures requiring the use of the **SMTS Portal** are incorporated into each section of the *M21-1, Adjudication Procedures Manual*, that discusses the respective claims development.

Reference: For more information on using the **SMTS Portal**, see the *SMTS Portal Training Manual*.

From <https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000174856/M21-1-Part-II-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Section-B-Veterans-Claims-Intake-Program-VCIP-Shipping>