



Aviva's List Optimization Service: National Change of Address (NCOA) Service

NCOA is an excellent mail list optimization tool. In most cases NCOA is by far the most cost effective way to obtain change of address information. NCOA provides the following benefits to mailers:

- Ensures prompt delivery at the most current mailing address.
- Helps reduce these mailing expenses:
 - Printing
 - Postage
 - Address Correction Charges
 - File Maintenance
 - Mail Processing

The payback from NCOA typically ranges from 200% to 300% of the cost on the first mailing. The total payback can be many times that. The payback you receive may be higher or lower depending on a number of factors including:

- Average age of the address information.
- Quality of the name and address information.
- Demographic profile.
- Cost and weight of the pieces being mailed.
- How often the list is mailed
- How the list would be maintained if NCOA processing was not done
- How the list will be used and maintained after NCOA processing is done
- If the mail is advertising for a product or service, the quality of the offer and the profitability of the sale.
- If the mail pieces are requests for donations, the generosity of the people who have moved.

How NCOA works

NCOA data comes from permanent Change of Address (COA) filings by the relocating postal customer. Approximately 40 million of these COAs are filed annually. The NCOA database is updated weekly with this information and changes are kept in the file for four years.

Data from permanent change of address cards from the entire country is transmitted to the USPS National Customer Support Center. (Temporary moves are not carried on the NCOA database.) The data is compiled, edit checks are performed, and transaction tapes are relayed weekly to licensees, which operate under a non-exclusive license of the USPS. Your list is standardized, ZIP+4 is added and then compared with the data on the NCOA file. Address change information is provided to you when your customer's name and address information matches the name and address information on the NCOA database.

Each record contains the relocating Postal customer's name along with an old and new address. The old address is compared to the NCOA customer's list for matching purposes and the new address is returned, if a match is made, to the customer. The typical profile of the new address information contained on the NCOA file is as follows:

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- 84% are forwardable moves (Contain address information)
- 13% are moved, left no forwarding address
- 3% are PO Box closed
- less than 1% are foreign moves

Change of Address information is controlled by strict name and address matching logic. To make the best use of the information returned from the NCOA process, it is best to understand the NCOA matching logic. All matches made to the NCOA file require an exact match on address. The required name matching is determined by the move type on the NCOA file. The NCOA file is composed of approximately 47% family moves, 47% individual moves, and 6% business moves.

Move Types and Name Matching Requirements are as follows:

Individual Move: A match on first name, middle name/initial, surname and title is required.

Family Move: Also referred to as a household move. This requires a match on surname only.

Business Move: This requires a match on business/firm name.

When possible, postal customers who move multiple times within the three-year period are linked, or chained, to ensure that the latest address is furnished when an NCOA match is attained. This is not always possible if subsequent COAs are not filed in exactly the same manner as COA filed previously. (e.g., if move types are different - e.g. Family and Individual - they will not be chained)

Limitations of NCOA

NCOA is a good service, but it is not a complete mail list cleanup system. You can receive address changes through NCOA that are not available in other ways, and there are changes you will not receive from NCOA. Whether or not you receive new address information from NCOA depends on several things: the relocating postal customer must have filed a change of address, the information itself that is provided by the relocating postal customer and the ability of their local post office to tap into an automated address system. Also, the demographic and geographic makeup of your list and the quality of the data in your list will affect the results of the NCOA processing. You may want to use other methods to find the address changes that NCOA doesn't provide. Here are some reasons why movers may not be found.

Zip+4 Cannot Be Matched

You may not receive a ZIP+4 Code for some addresses. Usually ZIP+4 match rates run in the 85% to 93% range. The match rate is different for each list and can run from 0% to 100%.

- The data submitted may not be precise enough to narrow the address down to a single ZIP+4 area. (e.g., "125 MAPLE" is submitted and both "125 N MAPLE ST" and "125 S MAPLE ST" are valid addresses in two different ZIP+4 areas.)

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- The data submitted is not sufficiently standard for that area. (e.g., "1010 CENTENNIAL BLDG" is submitted where the postal service recognized address is "125 E 3RD ST SUITE 1010".)
- The data submitted by the local post office is not complete.

Some Movers May Not Be on the NCOA List

You may not receive change of address information when someone has actually moved. NCOA processing will yield new addresses for many of the people and companies that have moved and filed address changes with the USPS, but some will be missed. The information you receive from NCOA will depend on the accuracy of the name and address information on your file and the information filed by the relocating postal customer.

- The name and address you submitted may be substantially different than the address change filed by the addressee. (e.g., The addressee submitted a change as "MARY G. SMITH-JONES", "125 MAPLE ST APT 125" and you submitted "M SMITH", "125 MAPLE ST". In this example, the last name, middle initial or address will cause a miss.)
- Addressee may not have filed a change of address with the USPS.
- When mail carriers submit "Move - No Forwarding Address" cards they rarely have complete information. (See above)
- The addressee may have moved too recently to appear on the NCOA file. It takes 4-6 weeks for a change to appear on the NCOA file.
- The addressee may live in an area where the postal service has not yet automated the address change process.

You May Receive New Addresses for Someone Who's Not Moved

This tends to appear in small numbers on most lists.

- Someone in a household filed a change of address incorrectly. (e.g., A child when moving out of parents' house submitted a "Change of Address" card indicating a family move.)
- Someone filed a "Change of Address" with the old and new addresses in the wrong place on the card.
- Someone filed a "Change of Address" card for an individual move and does not indicate the move type. Family Move is the default move type. If a box is not checked on the USPS Change of Address form, the move is considered a family move.

You May Receive a Mover's Incorrect New Address

This tends to appear in small numbers on most lists.

- Someone has moved multiple times during NCOA's 36 month timeframe and the moves could not be linked or chained. NCOA will link multiple moves providing back the newest address as long as each move filed contains complete address information and all move types are the same. (e.g. If an apartment number is



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included in one move and omitted in the next move or if the first move is a family move and the second move is an individual move the link cannot be made.)

- Two moves are filed from the same household under the same surname, one family move and one individual move or two family moves. The incorrect new address may be returned.

National Deliverability Index (NDI):

A National Deliverability Index (NDI) report is supplied for each list that is processed through NCOA. This report will provide a uniform methodology for evaluating deliverability of address lists.