

## **FAST: Recurring Appointment Clean Up**

### **Background**

#### **1. What is FAST?**

The Facility Access & Shipment Tracking (FAST) System was designed for business mailers to schedule appointments for entry of mail into Postal facilities. FAST accommodates both drop-shipped and Origin Entry mailings.

#### **2. What are the benefits of FAST?**

FAST provides Mail Owners, Mail Preparers, and Schedulers enhanced visibility of their mailings at each facility. It provides a single integrated customer service and product visibility solution for all mail classes. It reduces the overall appointment wait times, improves dock efficiency, and simplifies the scheduling process.

#### **3. What does it mean to schedule an appointment in FAST?**

In FAST, an appointment is comprised of logistics and content information. Logistics information includes facility information and appointment date/time. Content information includes mail class and mail shape.

The FAST system collects:

- 1) Scheduled Appointment dates/times (facility information from FDB, AMS, FAST Facility Constraints databases)
- 2) Customer information (source: CustReg)
  - o Scheduler of the Appointment
  - o Mail Preparer/Mail Owner
- 3) Content Information
  - o Mail Class (Standard, Periodicals, etc.)
  - o Mail Shape/Processing Category (Letters, Flats, etc.)
  - o Presort Information (e.g. Mixed ADC)
  - o Container Information (IMCB)

#### **4. What are the methods of scheduling an appointment in FAST?**

FAST encourages mailers to provide further information via electronic submission (online or Web Services) for drop shipments and Origin-Entered mailings. FAST Users are able to schedule appointments via three methods:

- 1) Online – Access to FAST online is provided via the Business Customer Gateway
- 2) Web Services – Provides ability to submit electronic appointment management requests from mailer's systems with FAST using the Mail.XML Specification developed by IDEAliance or Mail.dat
- 3) Phone Assistance – By calling the facility directly (not encouraged)

#### **5. How can I change appointments I have scheduled?**

A FAST User can edit, update or cancel appointments up to 1 hour prior to the appointment date and time. A FAST User can "Late Reschedule" an appointment once. The Late Reschedule must be made 1 hour prior to and up to 24 hours after the scheduled appointment date and time. Appointments that are not rescheduled, not cancelled nor shown up for after 24 hours past the original appointment date and time are marked as No Shows.

#### **6. How frequent can mailers make appointments?**

Mailers can create One-Time and Recurring Appointments.

#### **7. What is a One-Time Appointment?**

A One-Time Appointment is an appointment that occurs on a one-time basis or when necessary.

#### **8. What is a Recurring Appointment?**

A Recurring Appointment is a drop shipment that arrives consistently on the same day or days of the week, during the same time period, with approximately the same mail contents on the same type of transportation. Recurring Appointments generate One-Time appointment instances.

#### **9. How long are Recurring Appointments Valid for?**

A Recurring Appointment remains valid until the mailer's appointment profile changes and no longer meets the schedule originally agreed upon.

### **Problem**

#### **10. What is the issue?**

USPS MEPT and Operations departments found that there is a 28% Appointment No Show rate across facilities and mailers. A No Show appointment is an appointment that a mailer does not show up for (24 hours after the original appointment time). No Shows greatly impact USPS and mailers. For USPS, No Shows result in lost appointment slots, distorted expected mailer volume, inaccurate staffing models and poor data. For mailers, No Shows impact mailer ratings and result in lost appointment slots for other mailers who would have used the appointments.

**11. Why is USPS cleaning up Recurring Appointments to address the No Show issue?**

In performing a root cause analysis, USPS found that unused Recurring Appointments are automatically generating appointments that are never being used (No Shows). Over a 90 day period, approximately 216 mailers have at least 1 Recurring Appointment ID associated with 100% No Shows. Eliminating unused and unneeded Recurring Appointments is a quick and effective way to drastically reduce No Show appointments and to open up appointments for other mailers.

**12. What does it mean when a Recurring Appointment is cancelled?**

Canceling a recurring appointment also cancels all contents that are associated to the appointment. However, canceling a recurring appointment does not cancel any appointment instances that occur within the next 14 days. A user needs to cancel each appointment instance individually to cancel those instances.

**13. What is USPS doing to address unused Recurring Appointments going forward?**

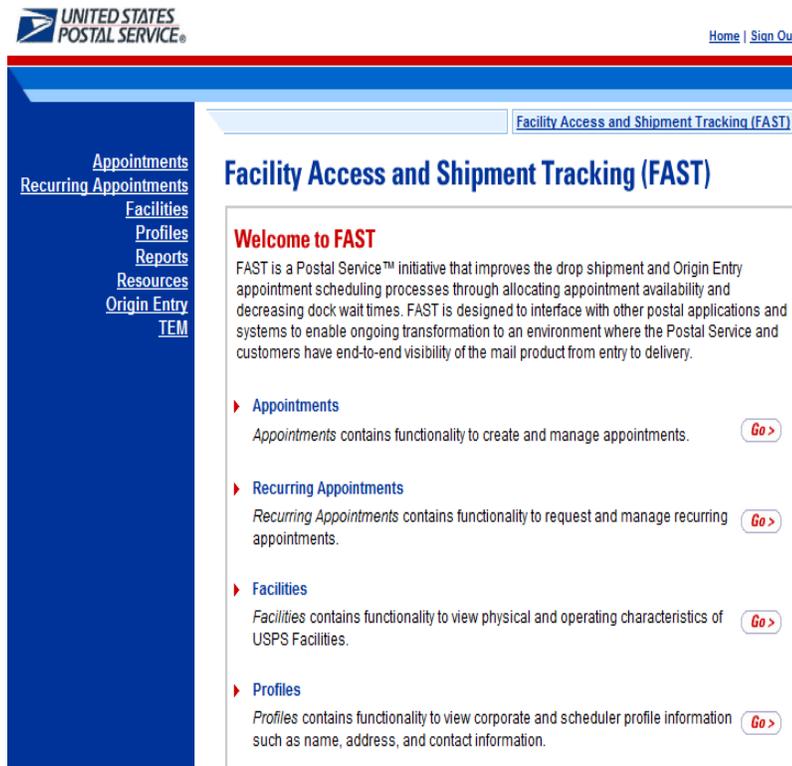
FAST IT created and tested a onetime script that will remove Drop Ship Recurring Appointment IDs with no appointment activity (no cancellations, closed appointments, rescheduled appointments etc.) over a 60 day period. The script will look back 60 days from the script date/time. In addition, FAST IT is creating a batch script that will automatically remove Recurring Appointment IDs. The automatic script will run monthly, and look back 60 days for Recurring Appointment IDs with no activity.

**14. Can USPS revoke Recurring Appointment ID's?**

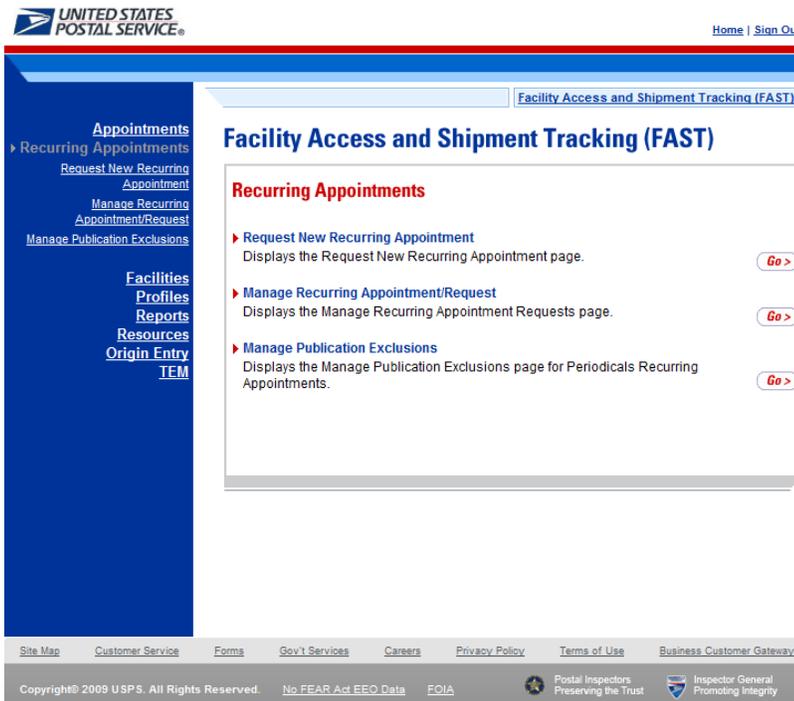
Yes. As per the Pub 804 (Section 3-7), "failure to adhere to scheduled appointments or other abuse of the procedures will result in revocation of recurring appointment privileges."

**15. How can I cancel my Recurring Appointments?**

Schedulers can access FAST through the Business Customer Gateway. After entering the Web Portal, Users should CLICK on the Recurring Appointments link on the left side of the webpage and CLICK "GO>".



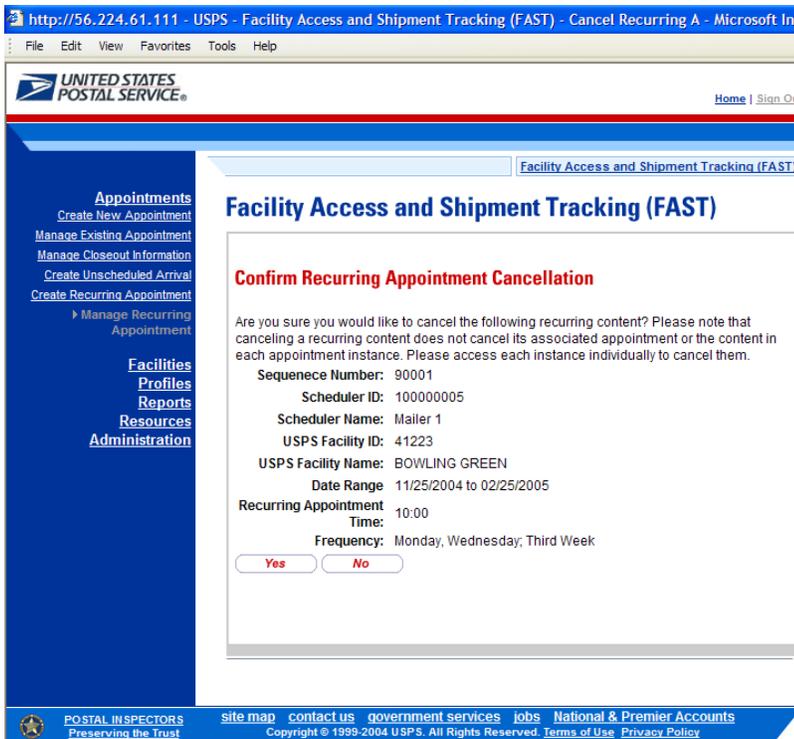
Users should then CLICK on the Manage Recurring Appointment/Request to manage recurring appointments (Screenshot below). A User can search for their recurring appointment by either the sequence ID or the scheduler ID



There are several possible actions a user may perform to manage recurring appointment information such as canceling recurring appointments.

A user begins to cancel an appointment from the Edit Recurring Appointment Request page by CLICKING the Cancel Recurring Appointment Request button. The Recurring Appointment Request Cancellation Confirmation page displays confirming that the appointment was cancelled.

The Confirm Recurring Appointment Cancellation page is displayed below.



The appointment is not officially cancelled until the user confirms the cancellation from the above page.

To cancel the appointment and its associated contents, CLICK the Yes button. The Cancel Recurring Appointment Confirmation page displays, showing some of the key appointment information.

The Cancel Recurring Appointment Confirmation page is displayed below.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://56.224.61.111> and the page title "USPS - Facility Access and Shipment Tracking (FAST) - Cancel Recurring A - Microsoft Int". The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The page header features the United States Postal Service logo and a "Home | Sign Out" link. A navigation menu on the left lists various options under "Appointments" (Create New Appointment, Manage Existing Appointment, Manage Closeout Information, Create Unscheduled Arrival, Create Recurring Appointment, Manage Recurring Appointment) and "Facilities" (Profiles, Reports, Resources, Administration). The main content area is titled "Facility Access and Shipment Tracking (FAST)" and displays a confirmation message: "Confirm Recurring Appointment Cancellation". The message states: "The following recurring appointment has been cancelled along with any associated contents. However, any instances of that appointment created in the next fourteen days has not been cancelled." Below this message, the following details are listed:

- Sequence Number: 90001
- Scheduler ID: 100000005
- Scheduler Name: Mailer 1
- USPS Facility ID: 41223
- USPS Facility Name: BOWLING GREEN
- Date Range: 11/25/2004 to 02/25/2005
- Recurring Appointment Time: 10:00
- Frequency: Monday, Wednesday, Third Week

The footer of the page includes the USPS logo, the text "POSTAL INSPECTORS Preserving the Trust", and a list of links: [site map](#), [contact us](#), [government services](#), [jobs](#), and [National & Premier Accounts](#). It also contains the copyright notice "Copyright © 1999-2004 USPS. All Rights Reserved." and links to [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

## 16. How can I edit my Recurring Appointments?

After a user searches for a recurring appointment by the sequence ID, area, district, or the facility, they are taken to the Edit Recurring Appointment Request page when the selected recurring appointment hyperlink is clicked. From the Edit Recurring Appointment Request page, a user has the ability to:

- Edit appointment level information
- View Appointment Audit Information
- Go to the Add/Edit Content Information page
- Add additional contents
- Cancel the recurring appointment
- Create a copy of the recurring appointment
- View/Access instances of the recurring appointment
- View a summary of the recurring appointment contents

Editing appointment and content level information through the Recurring Appointment Management area in FAST sets the Recurring Appointment Request status to Pending. A USPS user must approve the changes before they will take effect. If an already scheduled appointment instance needs to be updated and is within the allowable time frame to be modified, the user can update it by clicking the instances in the Recurring Appointment Instances section. The user may also edit the appointment or content information through the one time appointment management process via the recurring instance appointment ID.

A user may edit the following appointment level information on the *Edit Recurring Appointment Request* page:

- Mail Class
- Date Range of Recurring Appointment
- Appointment Time
- Appointment Type
- Number of Pallet Positions
- Scheduling Frequency
- Comments regarding the appointment

To edit any of the above fields, a user CLICKS in the desired textbox and updates the entry with the new information. CLICKING the **Submit** button on the *Edit Recurring Appointment Request* page updates the recurring appointment

## 17. Who can I contact to learn more about FAST and the Recurring Appointment Cleanup initiative?

Please reach out to [FAST@usps.gov](mailto:FAST@usps.gov) for general information relating to FAST. Specific questions concerning the Recurring Appointment Cleanup should be directed to Lane Bell, Program Manager, Business Mailer Support ([lance.a.bell@usps.gov](mailto:lance.a.bell@usps.gov)).