CERTIFICATION FOR MANDATED MAIL REQUIREMENTS

SEPTEMBER 2022

validity

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Introducing Certification for Mandated Mail

Certification for Mandated Mail helps businesses send (potentially) time-sensitive and high-risk messages that are intended to inform their customers of critical, non-promotional information related to a triggering event that necessitates a material response. These essential messages inform recipients of critical events and should only be used for one-time notifications that are an exception to normal sending practices and cadences.

Upon completion of send, participants will receive third-party proof via certificate validating they used best efforts to fulfill their duty of care responsibilities. This Certification of Coverage is provided to the sender to share with third parties for audit review purposes.

Becoming Certified

Here are the key steps to becoming Certified:

1. Once you have identified a triggering event and submitted the form, Validity will review your case, and confirm that it and your campaign meet our eligibility criteria for Certification for Mandated Mail. This initial response time should be within 48 hours of normal business days.

2. During this initial review, your email campaign creative will need to be approved and vetted by our team. We will also conduct baseline infrastructure and message content checks. If any parts of your email program do not meet our requirements, we'll provide you with additional information on the changes and how to complete them.

3. Once we've confirmed you are compliant with our program requirements and your creative is approved. Validity will notify Mailbox Providers at least 48 hours prior to the event start date/time, however, 1 week is preferred by our partners.

Certification for Mandated Mail Requirements Overview

You will need to meet the following requirements to become eligible for the Certification for Mandated Mail program. These requirements are based on best practice guidance established in partnership with our mailbox provider partners.

Breaking Down the Requirements

- **Business Entity:** be transparent about who you are and what you do.
- **Message Content:** clearly and concisely communicate your cause by including only critical, necessary information.
- **Infrastructure:** properly send, authenticate, and manage email.
- **Legality:** adhere to any applicable spam and data privacy laws that impact you and your recipients.
- **Security and Compliance:** show how you take care of your systems and email recipients' data and follow our issue-resolution process in times of non-compliance.

Part 1: Business Entity

A verified business entity provides assurances you are a legitimate business. Here are the business entity requirements you must meet to become eligible for Certifcation for Mandated Mail:

1. **Business Registration**
    - Your business is verifiable by a public third-party source through a legitimate online website, such as a country registry, or an application such as Dun & Bradstreet.
    - Your business registration includes your business's current physical address.
    - Your business has been operational and legally registered for at least one year.
    - Your business does not use a registered agent to obscure any of your business's information.
2. **Business Contact Information**
    - You provide a direct email at your company's domain for Validity communication.
    - You respond to our communications to prove contact information is valid at our request.

IMPORTANT: Validity will not Certify any businesses engaging in illegal activities.

Part 2: Message Content

Your email message content must clearly communicate your cause by only including critical information. Our team will review your campaign creative to ensure it meets the following requirements for the Certification for Mandated Mail program:

1. **Mail type & content**
    - During the event's duration, we recommend that IPs only send mail that is fully related to your cause and is limited to critical, necessary information.
        - Promotional content of any kind, even if related to your cause, is not permitted.
        - Corporate mail or free-form content, even if related to your cause, is not permitted.
    - You must provide email content template(s) prior to campaign deployment for Validity approval.
2. **Qualifying Categories**
    - Legal / Privacy / TOS Notices
    - Safety / Duty of Care
    - System / User Access / Data Breach
    - Emergency / Health / Natural Disaster
3. **Message headers**
    - Message headers are not falsified, obscured, deceptive, or misleading in any way.
    - The subject line or friendly-from alias must include a reference to the type of message you are sending. (e.g., recall_notifications@validity.com, etc.).

Part 3: Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the hardware and process used to deploy email. It's crucial that you send email from well-maintained infrastructure systems that use best practices. Keep in mind that you may need to work with your Email Service Provider (ESP) or internal IT team to comply with the infrastructure requirements. Here are the infrastructure requirements you must meet to become eligible for Certification for Mandated Mail:

1. **IP addresses**
    - Dedicated IPs or shared IPs
2. **Open relays**
    - Your infrastructure does not have any open relay servers.

3. **FCrDNS**
    - Your IP address reverse DNS (rDNS) entry matches the forward DNS entries, otherwise known as Forward-Confirmed reverse DNS (FCrDNS).
4. **Blocklists**
    - Your IP addresses or domains are not on a Validity-monitored blocklist.
5. **Authentication (SPF and DKIM)**
    - You must authenticate your mandated email campaigns with both SPF and DKIM.
        - **SPF**
            - All of your Return-Path domains have published Sender Policy Framework (SPF) records. Learn how to set up SPF here.
            - All Return-Path domains do not use a +all or ?all directive.
            - All Return-Path domains do not include a pointer (PTR) record.
        - **DKIM**
            - All email sent over eligible IPs have DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) authentication configured. Learn how to set up DKIM here.
6. **Domain Ownership**
    - Your business must have full access and control over all sending domains, Return-Path domains, and website domains, associated with the email sent from your IP addresses. To prove domain ownership and control over your domains, you may be required to update your DNS with a TXT record containing a unique character code provided by Validity.
    - This TXT record may be required to remain within your DNS record for the duration of your Certification for Mandated Mail event.
7. **Mailing List**
    - You plan your mail deployment strategy to prioritize your email recipient groups.
    - Your business uses email address list maintenance systems to reliably receive and process delivery errors, bounce messages, and other replies from receiving networks.
    - Known inactive addresses should not be mailed to as they will never be received by the intended recipient.

Part 4: Legality

Each country and territory has legislation related to email and data practices. You must fully comply and follow the laws and regulations applicable to wherever you operate. Examples include but are not limited to:

- United States of America:
    - Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003 (CAN-SPAM)
    - California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)
- Canada: Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)
- European Union: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Australia: Spam Act of 2003

Part 5: Security and Compliance

It's important your business operates in a responsible manner by taking adequate, industry-standard steps to keep your database and systems secure so you can protect your infrastructure and your email recipients.

Should any compliance-related issue arise, including compromised IPs or domains, you will notify Validity within two business days of discovery.

Need Help?

For additional insight into Certification for Mandated Mail, or to learn how to troubleshoot deliverability and reputation issues, visit our Help Center.

Businesses run better and grow faster with trustworthy data. Tens of thousands of organizations rely on Validity solutions – including Everest, DemandTools, BriteVerify, GridBuddy Connect and MailCharts – to target, contact, engage, and retain customers effectively. Marketing, sales, and customer success teams worldwide trust Validity solutions to help them create smarter campaigns, generate leads, drive response, and increase revenue.

For more information visit **validity.com** and connect with us on **LinkedIn** and **Twitter**.

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