

Monster machines that sort U.S. mail

The removal of more than 670 high-speed letter-sorting machines at the U.S. Postal Service raises questions about whether the USPS will be able to handle a huge increase in mail-in ballots in November's election

2018 election: More than 31 million voters (26%) cast ballots by mail – number is expected to surge amid coronavirus pandemic

Delivery Bar Code Sorter (DBCS):

Two mail processing clerks can sort up to 38,500 letters per hour



1. Front-end feeder: One worker feeds unsorted mail into 24-metre-long sorter



2. Belt carries mail in single file. Checks and cancels postage



4. Stacker modules: Mail sorted into hundreds of pockets for different mail delivery carriers



5. Second worker packs sorted mail into trays

Letters in each tray are stacked in exact order so each mail carrier can select them while walking route

3. OCR: Optical character reader determines destination pocket in stacker

4. Stacker modules: Mail sorted into hundreds of pockets for different mail delivery carriers