



STATE CONTROLLER'S BULLETIN

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State Controller

Rebecca M. Wyke, Commissioner
Administrative & Financial Services

Bulletin #05-08

SUBJECT: Electronic Interface Systems

DATE: January 12, 2005
TO: All Departments and Agencies
FROM: Edward A. Karass, State Controller
Richard Thompson, Chief Information Officer

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) support, but do not encourage the use of electronic interfaces from external applications with MFASIS. There are several types of interfaces supported by OSC. They are:

- **Operational interfaces from Statewide systems, such as, the Human Resource/Payroll Management System and The State Treasurer's Cash Management System (TAMI)**
- **Service delivery interfaces from institutions that provide value-added business services such as Bank Lock Box operations such as Bank of America - Paymode**
- **Departmental systems that present transactional information**

Transactional and table interfaces with MFASIS will be bi-directional. For example, inbound departmental interfaces will result in an outbound transactional status return interface to the presenting system that communicates the current status of the transactions received by MFASIS.

This policy statement will describe the conditions under which a request to establish an interface with MFASIS will be considered, the process for requesting an interface and the requirements for maintaining that interface.

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Considerations

Authorization

Interface requests will be given consideration if they meet specific requirements. These requirements include:

- **There will be a demonstrated benefit to the State of Maine through either resource (financial and or human) savings or increased timeliness and accuracy of the information recorded in MFASIS.**
- **Demonstrated technical capacity to develop, implement and operate the interface**
- **Financial resource and management commitment to develop and maintain the interface in an on-going business relationship**

MFASIS is a dynamic system that periodically makes changes that could affect interface designs to meet the needs of sound fiscal management, comply with statutory directives and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) financial reporting requirements. Interface requestors must demonstrate a willingness, commitment and capability to modify their operational interfaces in a time frame coincidental with the MFASIS changes.

OSC will provide administrative and technical guidance concerning MFASIS changes.

Departments and Agencies operating interfaces will be required to re-certify their applications. Departments who cannot meet the time frames associated with changes to MFASIS may have their interface authorization suspended in MFASIS until re-certification has been completed. OSC will provide departments with as much lead time as possible to make these changes, however there may be times when modifications to either MFASIS documents or tables are needed on an emergency basis. In such cases, the OSC and technical staff will work with departments to make the needed changes or develop a satisfactory alternative solution.

Policy

Establishing Interface Processing

A Department, who desires to establish or change an interface from their internal systems and MFASIS, will be required to make a formal request that the interface be approved prior to

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development. The department will be asked to provide information regarding the following characteristics of the proposed interface:

- **Transaction and or Table content,**
- **Business context of the departmental application presenting the interface data**
- **Technology foundation of their application,**
- **Estimated volumes**
- **Frequency of interface activity**
- **Description of internal application management and resources**

In addition to the above, the department heads will include a certification that they are prepared to:

- **Authorize the expenditure of both human and fiscal resources to develop and maintain on an on-going basis an effective interface relationship with MFASIS. This authorization would include the commitment to acquire, develop and or implement software and other technology to meet the requirements of MFASIS interfaces.**
- **Incorporate appropriate interface management and administrative internal controls for the maintenance and operation of the interface**

Following the receipt of the request to implement or modify an interface, OSC will assign business and technical staff to review the request for compliance with stated requirements, conduct review sessions with departmental staff to discuss intended interface content and make a recommendation to OSC management regarding the acceptability of the interface request. The department must also provide appropriate documentation of the system and demonstrate adequate testing.

Once an interface request has been approved, OSC, OIT and departmental representatives will form a workgroup to design, develop, prepare infrastructure technology and certify interface activities. After the interface has been certified, OSC business and technical staff will coordinate MFASIS and OIT security activities to implement interface processing.

Departments and Agencies operating existing interfaces will be required to re-certify their applications by September 1, 2005 to meet the standards identified in this bulletin and the

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operational requirements below. This work is necessary to align existing interfaces for transition to any replacement for or update to MFASIS component systems.

Operational Requirements

- **All departmental interface data must be presented in a format consistent with that of the MFASIS System.**
- **Interfacing systems are responsible for initiating the transfer of data between their application and MFASIS. Departments must develop and maintain the ability to retain back up copies of their interface files. In the event of a transfer failure departments may be asked to resubmit their interface files.**
- **MFASIS operates on a standard production schedule that includes a nightly processing cycle. Interface operations are conducted from Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Department interfaces received by the MFASIS Load service after 3:00 pm and before 8:00 am will be accepted for processing in the next business day.**
- **Transactional and table status return and payment number return interfaces are created as part of the MFASIS nightly processing cycle. These return files may be transmitted to departments before 6:00 am. Departments are encouraged to make provisions to accept these return file interfaces without placing their internal processing schedules in jeopardy.**
- **Departments will be expected to use either the MFASIS on-line features or the State of Maine Information Warehouse for information related to the results of transactional and table interface beyond the status information contained in the Status Return interface.**

Internal Controls

The processing of all transactions or table updates in MFASIS requires certification by a department that the entries comply with state administrative, accounting, legal requirements, and that the proper security has been granted to perform the transaction. The Interface Control features of MFASIS will prevent certain Interface files from being accepted for processing in MFASIS. Interfaces files received that are structurally incorrect, inconsistent with stated expected totals (number of records and/or amount), and /or not authorized by OSC will be discarded without further action in MFASIS. OSC will monitor these incidents and provide advice



and counsel to the presenting departments regarding file format, financial controls and or the process of obtaining authorization for an interface.

Since there is no on-line agency user interaction during interface presentation, all departmental interfaces will require agency approval prior to the processing of the interface files in MFASIS. The MFASIS Interface service will only accept interface files from authorized departments. Once an incoming interface has met the file validation process described above, the Interface Control features of MFASIS will require that a user with appropriate security privileges provide an approval through email or fax to all incoming interface files prior to these interface files being loaded or processed in MFASIS. Failure to approve interface activities within 2 business days of receipt of the Interface file may result in the file being discarded. Departments would then be required to resubmit these interface files for processing.

OSC will monitor all interface activity daily. In the event that a department experiences a repeatedly high percentage of either interface control failures or document validation errors once they are loaded to the MFASIS document catalogue, OSC will require the department to initiate remedial action to improve performance. If after unsuccessful attempts to correct business or technical problems underlying the high error percentage, OSC reserves the right to suspend interface processing until the department has demonstrated an improvement in successful processing.