

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)- Managed File Transfer (MFT)

## **Is it possible to automate our EAB and EDR (DFSTATE) file transmissions to the SSA?**

*Yes, automation of the file transfers is possible! This can be accomplished with a software tool called "MFT" (previously it was called CyberFusion), your "State Transmission Component" (STC), and a simple task scheduler.*

## **What is a State Transmission Component (STC)?**

*The SSA has an agreement with one agency at each state where a VPN has been configured and a license for the software tool called "MFT" has been provided. Together, this is called the "STC" or "State Transmission Component" and is used to support all data transfer with your state. The agency in your state with the STC may not necessarily be the department of health, but you can find out by emailing the SSA directly at [eab@ssa.gov](mailto:eab@ssa.gov).*

## **What is MFT?**

*Managed File Transfer (MFT) is a file transfer software package developed and supported by TIBCO. The SSA uses MFT on the processing side and requires that all file transfers are done securely through the STC (the direct VPN connection between you and the SSA) using MFT. MFT was previously known as CyberFusion.*

## **Does MFT cost anything?**

*MFT is a licensed product sold by TIBCO, but an agreement already exists between the SSA and TIBCO to provide a single license to each jurisdiction in the US. That license is used with the STC between you and the SSA and no additional cost is associated with using MFT through your STC.*

## **Why not just use SFTP then?**

*SFTP, while an effective and industry-standard file transfer protocol, does not have the breadth of functionality that is available with MFT. The SSA uses MFT in order to not only transfer the files but also to execute processing commands and deliver responses for EAB or DFSTATE files. The SSA already has agreements in place that MFT will be used for all data transfers, and consequently SFTP is not an approved protocol.*

## **Is a VPN required?**

*Yes. In order to securely transfer files to the SSA, a site-to-site VPN will be used. This VPN is already present via the STC described above, as this provides both the secure VPN connection as well as the MFT software configuration.*

## **How are these file transfers secured?**

*The STC configuration provides consists of both a VPN connection and the MFT software. This provides four ways of securing file transfers: file transfers are encrypted, only known network IP addresses are allowed, username and password credentials are required, and public Internet traffic cannot access the tunnel.*

## **If I don't have a VPN, can I still automate the file transmissions?**

*Unfortunately, no. The STC – which provides the VPN – is the only method supported for transferring files to the SSA. The data being transferred is highly sensitive, so multiple layers of security are in place and required for file transfers.*

## **Where is my STC/VPN connection?**

*As mentioned previously, one state agency will already have the STC with the VPN connection configured. If you don't know where this is, you can email [eab@ssa.gov](mailto:eab@ssa.gov) to inquire as to which agency has established the STC. The SSA team can assist with finding, testing, and troubleshooting this connection.*

## **This could be any state agency? How do I work with that from my vital records department?**

*Essentially, your vital records system will need to store a file in a location that the MFT server can access. Once you have determined the agency that has your STC configured, you will need to work with them to decide how to get your export files to that location accessible to MFT. MFT can access both local files as well as files located on network shares.*

*For example, your registration system will generate an EAB/DFSTATE export file and then store that file where it can be access by the MFT server. As long as it is accessible by MFT, the method to get it there shouldn't make a difference. Your department and the state agency with the STC could agree on a simple file share, FTP, or even a folder synchronization tool such as OneDrive or Google Backup and Restore.*

## **So how can file transfers be automated then?**

*File transfers to the SSA are automated in the sense that jobs can be set up to scan for and run a process on pending files. Once you have established the location of your file exports, you will simply need a system task or job scheduler (such as cron on Linux platforms or Task Scheduler on Windows platforms) to perform an MFT command. Personnel supporting the STC will be the primary contact for establishing this setup. This scheduled system task would run periodically to check for pending export files and run MFT commands on those files.*

## **How difficult is it to create the task to watch for and run MFT commands?**

*This task is relatively simple and would just be a shell script or a Windows batch file, depending on your platform. Essentially, it will simply execute an MFT process command for each file in the*

folder you are dropping off your EAB or DFSTATE files. NAPHSIS can assist with providing templates for this script.

**This is a lot so far. Can you summarize what needs to be done up to this point?**

*Aside from some coordinating any administrative communication, the steps to be taken would include:*

1. *Determine which state agency maintains your STC by emailing [eab@ssa.gov](mailto:eab@ssa.gov).*
2. *Work with that agency and whatever personnel support the STC to determine an appropriate file location to save your vital records system's EAB/DFSTATE exports.*
3. *Configure your EBRs/EDRS systems to create the EAB/DFSTATE exports and drop them at the file system location determined in step 2.*
4. *Create a scheduled job/task (using cron or Task Scheduler) on the MFT server to watch for and run an MFT command on any outbound files.*

**Oh, that's not too bad. But what happens next after this MFT command has been run?**

*The MFT commands that run on each outbound file will trigger the process on the SSA side to retrieve and store the EAB/DFSTATE file. Later in the day, the SSA's automated jobs will run the appropriate processing on each received file. Once complete, the processing response file will be returned to you via MFT.*

**When does the SSA processing job run?**

*At the end of each day, the SSA's processing jobs will run to work through each EAB and DFSTATE file received. This occurs at around 7:00 pm EST. The timing of your deliveries is important, and you will need to make sure your task will deliver your files through MFT prior to the SSA cutoff each night. If the cutoff is missed, your files will simply be processed the next night. You'll need to pay attention to your own time zone relative to Eastern Time to make sure you hit the cutoff time – especially if you're in AST or ChST!*

**What about receiving the processing response files?**

*The SSA will send the processing response files, such as the Death Processing Notification (DPN), using MFT as well. You'll need to work with the STC team to establish the destination for placing these response files. Once they are received by MFT and placed in the destination, you can access them in any way that makes sense for your application. For example, you could create another file watcher task to collect and run commands on the responses, or you could configure FTP access for this location, or your EBRs/EDRS application could check the shared file system and process the files as needed.*

*The SSA will also send an automated email notification when processing occurs.*

**Can this be run in a cloud environment?**

*Yes, absolutely! The cloud environment would need to still meet the requirements above. More particularly, the STC would need to be supported by or connected to your cloud environment. Specifically, the file system on the MFT server would need to be accessible by whatever process your EBR/EDRS needs to drop files for transfer to the SSA.*

**What about testing and integration environments?**

*The SSA has two regions available – one for testing/integration and one for production. The testing (IPPF) region will be used when initially setting up the MFT software and verifying its functionality. The EAB/DFSTATE files you send to IPPF will just be test data. Once things are in place, you would switch your configuration to the production (NCC) region with just minor changes to the MFT commands.*

**This all sounds doable! Where do I start and who do I contact?**

*To get started, you can contact the SSA to let them know you're ready to go and to determine your STC. Email [eab@ssa.gov](mailto:eab@ssa.gov) and they will provide you with contact information for your STC.*

*If you need additional help connecting your jurisdiction, please reach out to NAPHSIS using [systems@naphsis.org](mailto:systems@naphsis.org).*