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Postal Service Provides Guide to Mailing Season's Greetings *Helpful Tips from "The Official Shipper" of the Holidays*

WASHINGTON — With 16.5 billion cards, letters and packages to be delivered between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the U.S. Postal Service has shipping tips to help make sure gifts are delivered promptly and safely during the holiday season.

"The Postal Service is making it easier to ship packages to family and friends for the holidays — be it online at usps.com, or by visiting your local Post Office," says Gary Reblin, vice president, Domestic Products. "And remember, proper addressing and packaging will ensure every gift receives the service it deserves."

"Why not try the simpler way to ship this year by sending your holiday joy in one of our Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes? With Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes, you get a combination of value and convenience," says Reblin. "One low rate to any state, with no calculating of postage or weighing necessary. If it fits, it ships."

"Customers who mail online with usps.com/clicknship qualify for a discount on Priority Mail and Express Mail," adds Reblin. "The more you ship, the more you save. And when a package is ready to be shipped, log on to usps.com/pickup to schedule free package pickup right from your home or office. Skip the trip and do all of your shipping online."

For customers needing sturdy, secure boxes, bubble wrap, mailing tubes, tape, envelopes and even greeting cards, Post Offices nationwide offer ReadyPost, the Postal Service's exclusive line of pre-packaged shipping products.

Other helpful mailing tips from "The Official Shipper" of the holidays include how to get free supplies and services, reminders of shipping basics and addressing guidelines.

Free Supplies and Services

- The Postal Service offers free Priority Mail and Express Mail boxes delivered right to a customer's home or office, available by ordering at: usps.com/holiday.
- Free Variety Packs of Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes, also are available, containing 1 each of the Small Flat Rate Box, Medium Flat Rate Boxes 1 and 2, and the Large Flat Rate Box.
- Busy holiday shippers can skip a trip to the Post Office altogether, by scheduling package pickups online. The Postal Service will pick up packages at a time and place convenient for the customer, with schedule and pickup options available on usps.com

Shipping Basics

- Remove batteries from toys and other electronic devices. Wrap and place them next to the item in the mailing box. Customers should include the new batteries in the manufacturer's packaging.
- Place a card inside the package that contains both the delivery and return addresses. This ensures the safe return of an item that could not be delivered should the mailing label become

damaged or fall off.

- Include both “to” and “from” information on packages — and only on one side.
- Always use a return address, which tells the Postal Service where to return mail if it cannot be delivered.
- Select a box that is strong enough to protect the contents.
- Do not reuse mailing boxes as they can weaken in the shipping process.
- Leave space for cushioning inside.
- Stuff glass and fragile, hollow items, like vases, with newspaper or packing material to avoid damage.
- When mailing framed photographs, take the glass out of the frame and wrap it separately.
- For Parcel Post packages using a customer-supplied box, the weight cannot exceed 70 lbs. and the combined length and width measurement must be 130 inches or less. Make sure the width is measured around the largest point of the package.

Envelope and Package Addressing Guidelines

- Print the complete address clearly.
- A complete address includes:
 - The recipient’s name
 - Post Office Box or street number
 - Street name
 - Suffix (Ave., St., etc.)
 - Directional (N, S, E, W)
 - Secondary address (apartment or suite number)
 - City, state and 5-digit ZIP Code
 - Example: 123 S. Main St. Apt 4, Washington, DC 20001
- Never guess a ZIP Code. NO ZIP is better than a WRONG ZIP. Find the correct ZIP Code at usps.com “Look Up a ZIP Code” or by calling 800-ASK-USPS.

“Following these simple mailing tips helps the Postal Service meet our customer expectations and ensures a positive experience from beginning to end,” says Susan LaChance, Vice President Consumer Industry and Affairs.

The Postal Service recommends the following mail-by dates to ensure gifts arrive on time:

Dec. 3 - Military mail destined for Afghanistan
Dec. 10 - Military mail for other overseas bases
Dec. 15 - Parcel Post, the most economical shipping service
Dec. 20 - First-Class Mail
Dec. 21 - Priority Mail
Dec. 22 - Express Mail

Due to security requirements, packages bearing postage stamps and weighing more than 13 ounces must be presented to an employee at the retail counter of a Post Office and cannot be dropped in blue collection boxes.

Find more holiday tips and information at usps.com/2011holidaynews.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional on this issue, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 29th in the 2010 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency six consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.