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U.S. Postal Service Delivers Hassle Free Holiday Shipping *Consumer Advocate Provides Customers Tips for Discounted Shipping Costs*



WASHINGTON — Just in time for the peak holiday season, the U.S. Postal Service is offering helpful pointers for customers to relieve holiday shipping hassles and get those gifts under the tree in time for St. Nick's arrival.

"The holidays are less than three weeks away and understandably customers are beginning to feel the pinch," said Krista Finazzo, consumer advocate for the Postal Service. "Whether sending a large toy or mailing a greeting card to loved ones overseas, customers can feel at ease with the Postal Service knowing there are dozens of affordable products and services designed to help make holiday mailing and shipping simpler than ever before."

Given the busy season ahead, Finazzo shares six simple tips to help customers avoid those holiday hassles:

- **Receive discounted shipping costs.** Skip the trip to the Post Office by using Click-N-Ship on usps.com/holiday and receive up to a 16 percent discount off your shipping costs. Customers can print their own mailing labels with postage from the convenience of home or office. And by requesting Free Package Pickup online, customers can have the Postal Service pick up packages from homes and offices across the country. The service is free regardless of the number of packages being requested at usps.com/pickup/.
- **Confirm addresses.** Print addresses clearly in all CAPITAL LETTERS and be sure to include all address elements — apartment numbers, suite numbers and directional information for streets. For example: 123 S MAIN ST. or 12456 ELM ST. N. Include both "to" and "from" information on packages — and only on one side. Never guess a ZIP Code. Visit usps.com to find all ZIP Codes.
- **Use a sturdy box.** Select a box that is strong enough to protect the contents. Leave space for cushioning inside. Do not reuse mailing boxes — they weaken in the shipping process. Customers can purchase ReadyPost boxes at a local Post Office or at the Postal Store on usps.com. Express Mail and Priority Mail boxes and envelopes are free. And if you're not sure — customers can use our convenient Flat Rate Boxes that come in a variety of sizes and once again are always free. Remember—"If it fits, it ships®," for a low flat rate.
- **Pack delicately.** Cushion contents with shredded or rolled newspaper, bubble wrap or foam peanuts. Plain air-popped popcorn is also good for cushioning — it's inexpensive and environmentally friendly. Pack contents tightly to avoid shifting during transit. Always use tape designed for shipping, such as

pressure-sensitive tape, nylon-reinforced craft paper tape or glass-reinforced pressure-sensitive tape. Do not use wrapping paper, string, masking tape, duct tape or cellophane tape.

- **Remove batteries and fragile items.** Be sure to remove batteries from toys. Wrap and place them next to the toys in the mailing box. Customers should include the new batteries in the manufacturer's packaging. And 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.
- **Mark your calendars.** And last up, but certainly not least are the all-important mailing and shipping deadlines. Be sure to take note of the following mail-by dates to have your package arrive in time for the holidays.

- Dec. 10** Priority Mail Military
- Dec. 11** Express Mail International
- Dec. 14** Parcel Post
- Dec. 17** Global Express Guaranteed
- Dec. 20** First-Class Mail
- Dec. 21** Priority Mail
- Dec. 22** Express Mail

Customers can visit the [Postal Service Holiday Blog](#) for additional holiday mailing and shipping tips, and get the best advice from resident holiday experts for sending holiday cards, letters and packages this holiday season. New insights are regularly posted to help customers sail through this busy and joyous season.



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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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation — 151 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 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *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 for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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