



POSTAL NEWS

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MANY OFFICES TO OPEN SUNDAYS TO STAY AHEAD OF 20 BILLION PIECES OF HOLIDAY MAIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. – To handle the blizzard of 20 billion pieces of mail this holiday season, the Postal Service's Chief Operating Officer announced that many Post Offices will stay open late and will open Sundays. He also outlined operational initiatives and customer conveniences to make it easier than ever for customers to mail this year.

This Post Office Never Closes

"We're everywhere so you can be anywhere -- including the web," explained Pat Donahoe, referring to the Post Office that never closes: www.usps.com. Among other features, similar to a traditional Post Office, customers visiting this Post Office can buy stamps, calculate postage, look up ZIP Codes, track and confirm mail delivery, change their address and ask to have their mail held.

Customers mailing packages can avoid the trip to the Post Office by using a credit card to obtain postage-paid address labels from their computers. Click-N-Ship™ prints address labels online with or without postage. Delivery Confirmation service is included for no fee with Priority Mail. For items paid online, customers need only place packages in a mailbox or hand them to a letter carrier.

Holiday Projections

This year's busiest mailing day will be Monday, December 15 with 850 million pieces of mail entering the system. The busiest delivery day will be two days later. As Christmas falls on a Thursday this year, Monday, December 22 is also expected to be busy.

Smarter Sorting Technology

Thanks to advances in technology, the need for temporary holiday help will be minimal this year. Today's high-speed sorters can process nearly seventy percent of the handwritten addressed mail versus two percent in 1997.

"We're delivering 24 billion more pieces of mail to 17 million more addresses," Donahoe explained, "yet we're using the same number of employees today as we did in 1994."

As the commercial passenger aviation industry's largest customer, the Postal Service places mail on 23,000 commercial passenger flights daily. That's in addition to utilizing an air cargo network that moves hundreds of thousands of pounds each day. The mail also moves by rail and among more than six thousand trucking firms that operate anywhere from a handful to hundreds of vehicles each.

Gearing-Up for the Holidays

Post Offices will stay open late and be open for business on Sundays. To learn which offices are

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extending hours and will be open late, check www.usps.com; or call 1-800-ASK-USPS.

More than 82,000 locations will have 2.85 billion stamps. This includes 38,000 Post Offices; more than 21,000 supermarkets, convenience and drugstores; and 16,000 ATMs and 7,000 vending machines located in shopping malls, office parks and airports.

The National and Area Operations Center network will operate around the clock. The network shares information on operations and mail flow between mail processing and distribution centers and with major mailing customers.

Two weeks prior to Christmas, capacity of the Postal Service's air cargo network will expand by nearly 40 percent, and hundreds of additional trucks will be added to create direct routes between metropolitan areas.

Recommended Mailing Dates

While there are no mailing deadlines, customers mailing to troops deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom should use:

- **Priority Mail until December 4 to ZIP Codes beginning with APO 093.**
- **Priority Mail for other APO/FPOs until December 11**, then check with their local Post Office for Military Express Mail Service availability

Customers mailing packages within the U.S. should use:

- **Parcel Post until Monday December 15;**
- **Priority Mail until Monday December 22;** and,
- **Express Mail beginning Monday, December 22.** Express Mail delivery on Christmas Day will be available in many locations. Customers are asked to check with their local Post Offices for details.

If mailing internationally, delivery times are based on the number of business days specified for each service. Use:

- **Global Express Guaranteed until December 22.** Offers guaranteed day-certain delivery -- generally within two to three days -- and tracking.
- **Global Express until December 17.** Provides a balance between speed with price without day-certain delivery. Provides three- to five-day delivery to more than 190 countries, based on distance. Global Express Mail offers online tracking to more than 60 countries.
- **Global Airmail until December 8-15 (based on destination).** For mailing a standard letter or package, this service provides delivery to virtually every country on the world within four to seven days for letters and up to ten days for parcels. Items travel by air and are delivered as First-Class type mail. Special services that can be purchased include a return receipt for letter-post items, and insurance for Parcel Post items. Each item must be marked Airmail/Par Avion.

Addressing Tips

- Write, type, or print the complete address neatly.
- Always use a complete return address.
- Make sure you're using the ZIP Code. If you don't know it, don't guess. Go to www.usps.com to find ZIP Codes and locate post offices – and any other place that sells stamps in your area, like grocery stores or ATMs. The web site even provides a map to any of these places – now that is convenience.
- Use www.usps.com to calculate postage, buy stamps, make greeting cards and purchase gifts.
- Avoid waiting in line for stamps by using Stamps by Phone (800-STAMP-24), Stamps by Mail, postal vending machines, or go online to the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.

Packaging Tips

- Select a box that's strong enough to protect the contents. Leave space for cushioning inside the carton.
- Cushion the contents of the package.
- The only addresses on packages for mailing should be the delivery and return addresses.
- Enclose a card listing the contents along with the sender and recipient's address.
- Remove batteries from toys. Wrap and place them next to the toys in the mailing box. If you are mailing framed pictures, disassemble and wrap the frame and glass separately.
- Packages weighing at least one pound must be taken into the Post Office for mailing – or you can use Click-N-Ship to purchase postage online and hand them to your letter carrier.
- Save time by purchasing packaging materials, including boxes and padding materials at your local Post Office. Express Mail and Priority Mail boxes, envelopes, and tubes are free.
- For questions regarding Express Mail or Priority Mail, call 1-800-222-1811. For all other Post Office information, please call 1-800-(ASK-USPS) 275-8777.

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