



POSTAL NEWS

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CUSTOMERS OFFERED CHOICES ON BUSIEST MAILING DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – “While the nation’s 38,000 Post Offices stand ready to serve our customers’ mailing needs,” explained Chief Operating Officer Pat Donahoe, “we’re also making it easy for customers to mail packages at the Post Office that never closes – usps.com.”

More than 850 million cards, letters and packages will enter the nation’s mail stream on December 15, making it the busiest mailing day of the year. Two days later will be the busiest delivery day. To place this in perspective, placed end-to-end, the Postal Service’s average daily mail volume of 670 million pieces would circle the globe three times. Monday’s volume adds an extra lap. Put another way, the Postal Service delivers more in one day than both UPS and FedEx combined delivers in a month.

Buying Postage Online

In addition to buying stamps online, customers now have the option of buying postage for mailing packages at home. From usps.com, click “Send mail and packages,” and then “Print labels and postage now,” to reach Click-N-Ship™.

Click on the “Register Now” button to complete a short registration process. Enter the delivery address and weight. Choose a service shipping option and method of payment. Customers can then print out postage-paid shipping labels.

“The last step is even easier,” Donahoe added. “Just hand packages to our letter carriers.”

As an added convenience, Donahoe said Delivery Confirmation service is also free using Priority Mail service. Click-N-Ship allows customers to store up to 500 addresses in their own domestic and international address book and send an email

notifying a recipient to expect a package. It provides them with an on-line label database history, and an email can be sent to recipients when mailing a package.

Busiest Post Office with the Shortest Lines

The Postal Service's presence on the internet has skyrocketed since it first opened in 1997 when about 6,000 customers were visiting the site daily as compared to nearly a half million today.

Click-N-Ship has become a driving force in online customer convenience since its spring 2002 introduction. The volume of labels printed with and without postage in the past month more than doubled from the previous year, with the 10 millionth label printed this November.

Holiday Readiness

Donahoe said many Post Offices will stay open late and be open for business on Sundays. To learn which offices are extending hours and will be open late, check www.usps.com; or call 1-800-ASK-USPS.

Not counting the 70 million American households with access to the web, more than 82,000 "brick and mortar" 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.

Just this week, the National and Area Operations Center network began operating around the clock. The network shares information on operations and mail flow between mail processing and distribution centers and with major mailing customers.

The Postal Service also expanded its air cargo network capacity by nearly 40 percent. It has also contracted hundreds of additional trucks to create direct routes between metropolitan areas.

Recommended Mailing Dates

While there are no mailing deadlines, customers mailing to troops deployed overseas should use Express Mail Military Service until December 19, to select APO/FPOs. Check with your local Post Office details.

Customers mailing packages within the U.S. should use Priority Mail before switching to 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 R until December 22. Offers guaranteed day-certain delivery -- generally within two to three days -- and tracking.
- Global Express Mail TM 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.

Addressing Tips

- Write, type, or print the complete address neatly.
- Always use a complete return address.
- Make sure you're using the ZIP Code TM. 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.