



POSTAL NEWS

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MONDAY IS BIGGEST, BUSIEST MAILING DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Postal Service projects Monday Dec. 20 will be the busiest mailing day of the year, with Wednesday, Dec. 22 the heaviest mail delivery day of 2004.

And Monday Dec.20 is the recommended deadline for mailing Dec. 25 items internationally using Global Guaranteed Express® for all countries except Canada (Dec. 21). Deadlines for timely mail delivery to military APO and FPO addresses have passed.

Customers using Priority Mail® service for domestic addresses have an extra day or two.

For mailing out of state, send mail by Tuesday, December 21. Mailing in-state, send mail by Wednesday, December 22. After those dates, you can use Express Mail® service to have your packages delivered by December 25.

For mailing items internationally, the deadline for Global Guaranteed Express® is also Dec.20 for all countries except Canada (Dec. 21). Recommended deadlines for timely Dec. 25 delivery to military APO and FPO addresses has passed.

Nationwide, USPS® forecasts it will handle 280 million postmarked cards and letters on Monday. Local Post Offices can expect 2-3 times the mail volume of a regular day. The blizzard of mail is a tradition that usually occurs the Monday before December 25. It is a time of year when a massive front of warm wishes converges upon cool opportunities to exchange cards and gifts with loved ones far and near. Like the magical reindeer, nearly 700,000 Postal employees are ready to transport this huge volume of good cheer across town or across the globe.

Throughout the year, the daily average volume of all types of mail is 670 million pieces. Of that 670 million, about 100 million are cards and letters. On the busiest day, card and letter volume triples to about 280 million -- to push the total to 850 million. On a normal day, if placed end-to-end, this mail would circle Earth three times. The busiest day's volume of 850 million pieces adds a fourth lap around the globe!

The Postal Service will deliver Express Mail® on Dec. 25 (Christmas Day and the first day of Kwanzaa). For holiday cards, letter and packages traveling First-Class Mail or Priority

Mail®, however, the deadline to mail for timely delivery is arriving soon. Like the magical reindeer, nearly 700,000 Postal employees are nearing completion of their Herculean mission.

(Busiest mailing day tips follow...)

Questions?

Call **800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777)** for local Post Office service hours, rates, ZIP Codes™ and general holiday mail information. Access the USPS web site at **www.usps.com**.

Printing shipping labels — paying for postage via credit card — is easy from home or office. Click-N-Ship™ brings the Post Office to you. Simply log on to usps.com and print online shipping labels with or without postage.

Labels can be printed for the following domestic and international expedited services: Priority Mail, Express Mail, Global Express Guaranteed, and Global Express Mail.

You can also get free Delivery Confirmation™ service with every Priority Mail label you print, making Priority Mail service an even greater value. Signature Confirmation service is available at the reduced fee of \$1.30 and online labels qualify for electronic rate Confirmation Services.

Online insurance is also available. You can now buy insurance items for up to \$200 online.

There's still time for personalized high-quality holiday greeting cards – they're just a click away at the Postal Service's NetPost CardStore™. With easy access on usps.com, NetPost CardStore lets customers personalize holiday greetings by designing cards online and sending them, one card at a time or all at once.

A hybrid service (starting out electronically and becoming hard-copy mail), NetPost CardStore has an extensive library of images and photos that you can select when creating cards. Personal photos and images can be uploaded easily as well.

Customers can even enclose a gift card from a variety of popular retailers in their personalized card. While gift cards have become popular in recent years, and online greetings have been available for sometime, this innovation pairs the two, bringing the power of the internet to the tradition and impact of sending gifts cards and keepsakes through the mail. Creativity is virtually unlimited when designing a card for First-Class delivery with a print from a digital image and a gift card from the recipient's favorite retailer. Gift cards are now available from Barnes & Noble, Bed Bath & Beyond, Big Bowl Asian Kitchen, Carrs, Chili's, Circuit City,

Corner Bakery, Dominick's, Genuardi's, Little Italy, Lowe's, Macaroni Grill, Maggiano's, On the Border, Pak 'n \$ave Foods, Pavilions, Randalls, Safeway, Starbucks, Tom Thumb's, and Vons.

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Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 142 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

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