

An Overview of USPS Shipping at Carnegie Mellon University

All Shipments

- All shipments require both the recipient's name/address and the sender's name/address.
 - Postcards only require the recipient's name/address
- All shipments must follow USPS guidelines regarding the shipping of Hazardous Materials.
 - For additional information, please review <https://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/Pub52/pub52.pdf>

Domestic Mail

First Class Letters

- First Class letters can be up to 3.5 ounces in weight before they are considered flats (large envelopes).
- The price of First Class letter postage increases for each additional ounce above 1 ounce.
- The maximum length and height a first class letter can be is 11 ½" x 6 1/8" with a maximum thickness of ¼". Anything larger than one or more of these dimensions will be considered a flat (large envelope) or a package.
- Any rigid or oddly shaped envelopes will be considered nonmachinable and will require a surcharge. (Ex: specialty birthday cards, gift cards, etc.).

- Any items placed in an envelope automatically upgrade it to a package (Ex: keys, socks, etc.).
- First Class letters take roughly 3 days to reach their domestic destination. This is sometimes less if the destination is local.
- Does NOT include a tracking number.
 - First class letter envelopes can be **“Certified”** which provides a tracking number. The Certified letter will require a signature whenever it reaches its destination. This service does not change the shipping speed of the letter. In addition to the Certified service, a **“Return Receipt”** is available as well. The return receipt provides either a digital or physical proof of receipt from the recipient.

First Class Flats (Large Envelopes)

- First Class flats can be up to 13 ounces before they are considered a package.
- The maximum size dimensions for flats are 15” x 12” with a maximum thickness of ¾”. Anything larger will be considered a package.
- Shipping prices for flats are determined by the weight.
- First Class flats take roughly 3 days to reach their domestic destination. This is sometimes less if the destination is local.
- Any rigid, odd shaped, or non-document items in the flat will require the flat to be sent as a package.
- Does NOT include a tracking number.
 - First class flats can be **“Certified”** which provides a tracking number. The Certified flat will require a signature whenever it reaches its destination. This service does not change the shipping speed of the flat. In addition to the

Certified service, a **“Return Receipt”** is available as well. The return receipt provides either a digital or physical proof of receipt from the recipient.

First Class Postcards

- Domestic postcards must be less than 6” long, 4 ¼” high, and .016” thick in order to qualify for the First Class postcard rate. Larger postcards are sent at the First Class letter rate.
- Postcards take roughly 3 days to reach their domestic destination. This is sometimes less if the destination is local.
- Postcards do not require a return name/address. If the postcard cannot be delivered to its destination, it will not be returned without a return name/address.

Domestic Packages

First Class

- A package must be equal to or under 13 ounces in weight to qualify for First Class shipping.
- A First Class package should arrive at the destination in an estimated 1-4 days, based upon the distance travelled.
- All domestic First Class packages come with a tracking number.
- In order to ship First Class, the package must be in First Class or unmarked packaging (Priority, Priority Express, or other company [UPS, DHL, FedEx] labeling is not permitted).
- First Class packages do not have insurance included in their shipping, it must be added for an additional cost.
- First Class package postage is calculated by weight, package dimensions, and distance shipped.

Priority

- Priority packages cannot exceed a weight of 70 pounds.
- Priority packages have a maximum allowable shipping size of 108 inches, which is measured by the combined length and girth of the parcel.
- A Priority package should arrive at the destination in an estimated 1-3 days, based upon the distance travelled.
- All domestic Priority packages come with a tracking number.
- In order to ship Priority, the package must be in Priority or unmarked packaging (First Class, Priority Express, or other company [UPS, DHL, FedEx] labeling is not permitted).
 - Priority flat rate boxes and envelopes are a great alternative when appropriate.
- Priority packages have \$50 of insurance included in the shipping, with the option to add extra as an additional charge.
- Priority package postage is calculated by weight, package dimensions, and distance shipped.

Priority Flat Rate Box/Envelope Dimensions

- Small FR Box: 5" x 8" x 1"
- Medium FR Box
 - Long: 11" x 3" x 13"
 - Square: 11" x 8" x 5"
- Large FR Box
 - Long (Board Game Box): 11" x 3" x 24"
 - Square: 12" x 12" x 6"
- Small/Windowed Flat Rate Envelope: 10" x 6" / 10" x 5"
- Flat Rate Envelope: 12" x 9"
- Legal FR Envelope: 15" x 9"

- Bubble FR Envelope: 9" x 12"
- Tyvek Envelope: 11" x 15"

Priority Express

- Priority Express packages cannot exceed 70 pounds.
- Priority Express packages have a maximum allowable shipping size of 108 inches, which is measured by the combined length and girth of the parcel.
- In most cases a Priority Express package will arrive on the next delivery day. It normally arrives at 12:00 pm or 3:00 pm. 10:30 am is occasionally available. Some packages have 2 day shipping due to distance, location, or if the destination is a PO-Box.
- All Priority Express packages come with a tracking number.
- Priority Express comes with a money back guarantee, stating that if the package arrives after the guaranteed time, the customer gets a refund for the entire cost of the shipment (from a government USPS location).
- Priority Express can only use unmarked packaging or Priority Express packaging, any other marked packaging is prohibited.
- Priority Express has \$100 of insurance built in to the shipping, with the option to add extra as an additional charge.

Retail Ground

- Retail Ground is normally only available to oversized packages, packages containing non-prohibited hazardous material, or packages that are traveling very long distances within the United States. This method is marginally less expensive than Priority Mail. It takes roughly 5-7 days to arrive at the destination.

- The maximum size for parcels that are being shipped Retail Ground are 130 inches in combined length and girth.
- There are no flat rate options for Retail Ground. It is calculated by weight, package dimensions, and distance.
- Only unmarked packaging can be used with Retail Ground.
- There is no insurance included with Retail Ground but can be added as an additional charge.
- A Retail Ground package may not exceed the weight limit of 70 pounds.
- All Retail Ground packages come with a tracking number.

Media Mail

- Media Mail is a cost-effective way to send books and educational materials. Media Mail is subject to inspection. Any disqualifying items will cause the package to be returned to the sender.
- Media Mail packages should arrive at the destination in 2-8 business days for most locations.
- All Media Mail packages come with tracking.
- In order to ship a package via Media Mail, it must be in an unmarked box or padded envelope and the clerk must be told before the transaction that the package qualifies for Media Mail.
- The maximum weight for Media Mail is 70 pounds.
- There is no flat rate option for Media Mail. The cost is determined by weight, package dimensions, and distance.

According to the USPS Media Mail guidelines, the following qualify for Media Mail:

- Books (bound, and at least 8 pages long)

- Printed music and test material
- Video and sound recordings
- Printed educational charts
- Medical loose-leaf pages and binders
- Computer-readable media

Note: Video games, computer drives, and digital drives do not qualify for Media Mail.

Registered Mail

- Registered Mail can be applied to either letters, flats, or packages. Padded envelopes and cellophane tape are prohibited.
- Registered Mail is designed for high-value or high-security items to be sent through the mail as securely as possible.
- Registered Mail can either be sent as normal (any recipient at the destination may sign for and receive the item) or as 'restricted delivery' (only the recipient listed in the address can sign for and receive the item).
- Registered Mail can have an insurance value of up to \$50,000.
- Registered Mail provides a complete chain of custody. It has to be signed for by every person as it changes hands (starting with the cashier and ending with the address recipient).

Certified Mail

- Certified Mail is designed to add tracking and a signature requirement to letters, flats, and packages.
- Certified Mail can either be sent by itself or with a Return Receipt. A physical Return Receipt is a postcard that is added to the item. The recipient will also sign the Return Receipt which

will be mailed to the sender upon delivery. An electronic Return Receipt will provide an electronic delivery record showing the recipient's signature.

International Mail

First Class International Letters

- International letters have the same general size and weight requirements as domestic letters.
- An international stamp is used for any letters up to 1 ounce (excluding Canada, which allows up to 2 ounces). The postage price will vary based upon the destination when the letter weighs more than one ounce.
- International letters take roughly 1-2 weeks to reach their destination. This varies based upon the destination.
- All international letters require that the country name be written on the last line under the address to make the country destination identifiable.
- All international letters require a return address.
- International letters do not include tracking numbers.

First Class International Flats (Large Envelopes)

- International flats have the same general size and weight requirements as domestic flats.
- The price of international flat postage varies based upon the destination country and the weight of the flat.
- International flats take roughly 1-2 weeks to reach their destination. This varies between countries.

- All international flats require that the country name be written on the last line under the address to make the country destination easily identifiable.
- All international flats require a return address.
- International flats do not include tracking numbers.
- Any rigid or any odd shaped items within the flat will cause the flat to be considered a package and will then require a customs form and additional postage for shipping.

First Class International Postcards

- International postcards must be less than 6" long and 4 ¼" high and be no more than .016" thick.
- International postcards ship with an international stamp.
- International postcards take roughly 1-2 weeks to reach their international destination. This varies based upon the destination country.
- International postcards do not require a return address. Any postcards without a return address will not be returned to the sender if delivery is not possible.
- All International postcards require that the country name be written on the last line under the address to make the country destination identifiable.

International Packages

- All international packages require a **customs form**.
- This customs form can be filled out in the following ways
 - Hand-written in person

- Completed and paid for online then printed
- Completed online then printed, paid for in-person
- Be sure to check all shipping restrictions and prohibitions for the destination country.

First Class International Packages

- A package must be under 4 pounds in weight in order to qualify for First Class International shipping.
- First Class International packages usually arrive in 10-14 business days (2-3 weeks).
- All First Class International packages receive a customs barcode. Normally this number is not trackable. Some destination countries will use this number for tracking purposes. Please refer to www.usps.com for more information.
- There is no insurance included in this service.
- First class International package shipping costs are calculated by the package's weight, dimensions, and the destination.
- First Class International packages require First Class or unmarked packaging.

Priority International Packages

- A Priority International package cannot exceed the USPS maximum of 70 pounds. Each destination country has weight limitations in addition to this. Some countries require heavy packages to be sent through other USPS services. Only Priority International packaging or unmarked packaging is allowed.
- Priority International packages usually take between 6-10 business days to arrive (1-2 weeks).

- Priority International packages come with a tracking number for most destination countries. Please refer to www.usps.com for more information.
 - Flat Rate Envelopes and the Small Flat Rate boxes do not include tracking.
- Priority International packages postage is determined by the package's weight, size, and destination.
- Flat Rate package prices are determined by the destination.
 - Flat Rate envelopes and the small Flat Rate box are limited to less than 4 pounds.
- Priority International packages come with \$200 of insurance included in the service with the option of more if necessary at an additional cost.

Priority Express International Packages

- A Priority Express International package cannot exceed the USPS maximum of 70 pounds. Some countries require a different service when sending a heavy package. Only Priority Express packaging or unmarked packaging is allowed.
- PMEI packages should arrive in 3-5 business days (1 week), sometimes with a money back guaranteed delivery date.
- PMEI packages are shipped by EMS and include a tracking number that tracks all the way to the destination.
- PMEI packages have \$200 of insurance built into the service with the ability to add more if necessary at an additional cost.
- PMEI package shipping costs are calculated by the package's weight, dimensions, and the destination country.

Global Express Guaranteed International Packages

- Global Express Guaranteed packages are transported via USPS within the United States and then delivered by FedEx through their air fleet and delivery logistics within the destination country.
- Global Express Guaranteed package weight limits must not exceed the USPS maximum of 70 pounds. Either GXG packaging or unmarked packaging is required.
- GXG packages will arrive in an estimated 1-4 business days with a money back guaranteed delivery date.
- GXG packages include a tracking number.
- GXG packages have \$100 of insurance built into the service with the ability to add more if necessary.
- GXG package shipping costs are calculated by the package's weight, dimensions, and the destination country.
- All GXG packages require a GXG airway bill. Some GXG packages will require a commercial invoice based upon the contents and value of the package.