

223 Prices and Eligibility

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1.0 Prices and Fees

1.1 Price Application

[6-2-14] The following price applications apply:

- a. Except Commercial Plus items weighing up to 0.5 pound (see [1.1c](#)) and Commercial Plus cubic items (see [223.1.1d.](#)), Priority Mail mailpieces are charged per pound; any fraction of a pound is rounded up to the next whole pound. For example, if a piece weighs .08 pound, the weight (postage) increment is 1 pound.
- b. Flat Rate prices are not based on weight and zone but are charged a flat rate regardless of actual weight (up to 70 pounds) of the mailpiece and domestic destination.
- c. The minimum postage amount per addressed piece is the 1-pound price except Commercial Plus items weighing up to 0.5 pound. Charge the 0.5-pound price for Commercial Plus items up to 0.5 pound. Items over 0.5 pound are rounded up to the next whole pound. For example, if a Commercial Plus piece weighs 0.10 pound, the weight (postage) increment is 0.5 pound; if a piece weighs 0.75 pound, the weight (postage) increment is 1 pound.
- d. Commercial Plus cubic prices are not based on weight, but are charged by zone and cubic measurement of the mailpiece with any fraction of a measurement rounded down to the nearest 1/4 inch. For example, if a dimension of a Commercial Plus cubic piece measures 12-3/8 inches, it is rounded down to 12-1/4 inches.
- e. Regional Rate Box prices are not based on weight but are priced based on box size and the zone to which it is sent.
- f. Priority Mail Open and Distribute tray boxes mailed at Commercial Plus prices are not based on weight but are charged based on the tray box and zone to which it is sent.
- g. Priority Mail items mailed under a specific customer agreement are charged according to the individual agreement.

1.2 Commercial Base Prices

[6-2-14] For prices, see [Notice 123—Price List](#). The Commercial Base prices are available for:

- a. Click-N-Ship customers.



- b. Registered end-users of USPS-approved PC Postage products when using a qualifying shipping label managed by the PC Postage system used.
- c. Customers using permit imprint.
- d. Priority Mail Open and Distribute customers using permit imprint when a Service barcode containing a unique service type code 55 is on the address label under [705.18.5.7](#). Priority Mail Open and Distribute is not available for customers using Regional Rate Boxes.
- e. Permit holders using Merchandise Return Service (MRS) for mailpieces returned at Priority Mail prices when all MRS requirements are met ([505.3.0](#)).
- f. Customers using USPS-approved IBI postage meters that print the IBI with the appropriate price marking (see [202.3.3](#)) and electronically transmit transactional data to the USPS.

1.3 Commercial Plus Prices

1.3.1 Basic Eligibility

[6-2-14] [1-26-14] For prices, see [Notice 123—Price List](#). Commercial Plus prices are available to Priority Mail (including Critical Mail) customers who qualify for Commercial Base prices and whose cumulative account volume exceeds a combined total of 5,000 letter-size and flat-size pieces (including Flat Rate Envelopes, but not the Padded Flat Rate Envelope) or 50,000 total pieces in the previous calendar year (except Priority Mail Open and Distribute) and who have a customer commitment agreement with USPS (New Priority Mail customers see [1.3.2](#)), and are:

- a. Registered end-users of USPS-approved PC Postage products.
- b. Permit imprint customers.
- c. Priority Mail Open and Distribute (PMOD) customers whose account volume exceeds 600 PMOD containers (see [705.18.5.1](#)).
- d. Permit holders using MRS for mailpieces returned at Priority Mail prices when all MRS requirements are met ([505.3.0](#)).
- e. Customers using USPS-approved IBI postage meters that print the IBI with the appropriate price marking for commercial price items ([202.3.3](#)) and electronically transmit transactional data daily to USPS for all mailpieces and mail categories.

1.3.2 New Priority Mail Customers

Commercial Plus prices are available for new Priority Mail customers who have a customer commitment agreement with the USPS. Shippers must contact their account manager or the manager, Shipping Support, Shipping Services (see [608.8.0](#) for address) for additional information.

1.4 Critical Mail Prices

1.4.1 Prices

[6-2-14] Critical Mail has two price options, Critical Mail and Critical Mail with signature. For prices, see [Notice 123—Price List](#).

1.4.2 Basic Eligibility

[6-2-14] Critical Mail pieces are charged a flat rate regardless of zone or weight for barcoded, automation-compatible letters up to 3 ounces or automation flats up to 13 ounces. Critical Mail letter-size pieces that exceed 3 ounces in weight, exceed 1/4 inch thickness, or are not barcoded according to 3.2, will be charged the Priority Mail Commercial Plus Flat Rate Envelope price (volume thresholds apply). Critical Mail flat-size pieces that exceed 13 ounces in weight or exceed 3/4 inch thickness, or are not barcoded according to 3.2, will be charged the Priority Mail Commercial Plus Flat Rate Envelope price (volume thresholds apply). Critical Mail letter and flat prices are Commercial Plus prices available to Critical Mail customers whose Priority Mail and Critical Mail volume exceeds a combined total of 5,000 letter-size and flat-size pieces (including Flat Rate Envelopes, but not the Padded Flat Rate Envelope), in the previous calendar year or who have a customer commitment agreement (see 1.3.2) with USPS, and that are:

- a. Registered end-users of USPS-approved PC Postage products when using a qualifying shipping label managed by the PC Postage system used.
- b. Permit imprint customers.

1.4.3 New Critical Mail Customers

[6-2-14] The following requirements must be met for new Critical Mail customers:

- a. All customers using Critical Mail service must have a customer commitment agreement with USPS. Customers must contact their account manager or the Manager, Shipping Support, Shipping Services (see 608.8.0 for address) for agreement requirements.
- b. USPS-produced Critical Mail envelopes must be used and mailpieces must be authorized by the Manager, Integrated Business Solutions, Shipping Services (see 608.8.1 for address). Prior to the first mailing of Critical Mail items, the mailer must provide 10 preproduction mailpiece samples to the Manager, Integrated Business Solutions or designee for review and approval. Sample pieces must be packaged in USPS-produced Critical Mail envelopes; mailpieces must include the full range of the proposed contents that will be shipped; and mailpieces must bear applicable labels and barcodes (i.e. Intelligent Mail barcodes and USPS Tracking labels or Signature Confirmation labels).

1.5 Commercial Plus Cubic

1.5.1 Commercial Plus Cubic Eligibility

[6-2-14] Commercial Plus cubic prices are generally available to Priority Mail customers whose account volumes exceeded 50,000 pieces in the previous calendar year and have a customer commitment agreement with the USPS. New Priority Mail customers see 1.5.5. Each mailpiece must measure .50 cubic foot or less, weigh 20 pounds or less, and the longest dimension may not exceed 18 inches. Cubic-priced mailpieces may not be rolls or tubes. The Commercial Plus cubic prices are available for:

- a. Registered end-users of USPS-approved PC Postage products.



- b. Permit imprint customers. Customers are required to use the Electronic Verification System (eVS) program or submit an electronic postage statement with a computerized manifest under [705.2.0](#). Mailings must contain at least 200 pieces or 50 pounds of mail. Mailpieces are not required to be identical in weight.
- c. Permit holders using Merchandise Return Service for parcels returned at Priority Mail prices.

1.5.2 Commercial Plus Cubic Tiers

[6-2-14] Cubic prices consist of the following five tiers:

- a. Tier 1 - mailpieces measuring up to .10 cubic foot
- b. Tier 2 - mailpieces measuring more than .10 up to .20 cubic foot
- c. Tier 3 - mailpieces measuring more than .20 up to .30 cubic foot
- d. Tier 4 - mailpieces measuring more than .30 up to .40 cubic foot
- e. Tier 5 - mailpieces measuring more than .40 up to .50 cubic foot

1.5.3 Determining Cubic Tier Measurements for Rectangular and Nonrectangular Parcels

[6-2-14] Follow these steps to determine the cubic tier measurement for rectangular and nonrectangular parcels:

- a. Measure the length, width, and height in inches. Round down (see [604.7.0](#)) each measurement to the nearest 1/4 inch. For example, 6-1/8" x 5-7/8" x 6-3/8" is rounded down to 6" x 5-3/4" x 6-1/4".
- b. Multiply the length by the width by the height and divide by 1728. For example: 6" x 5-3/4" x 6-1/4" = 215.6 divided by 1728 = 0.125 (This piece exceeds 0.10 - Tier 1 threshold). It is calculated at Tier 2 - 0.101 to 0.20.

1.5.4 Determining Cubic Tier Measurement for Soft Pack and Padded Envelopes

[6-2-14] Cubic tier measurements for soft pack and padded envelopes are based on the outside dimensions of length plus width, in inches, of the original packaging material. Mailpieces that are pleated (e.g., expandable) must follow the measurement guidelines in [1.5.3](#) to be eligible for cubic pricing. Determine cubic tier measurements as follows:

- a. Measure the length and width separately in inches.
- b. Round down (see [604.7.0](#)) each measurement to the nearest 1/4 inch. For example, 10-1/8 inches is rounded down to 10 inches.
- c. Add the two measurements together. The maximum total of length plus width cannot exceed 36 inches. See [Exhibit 1.5.4](#) for corresponding price tiers.

**Exhibit 1.5.4 Commercial Plus Pricing Tiers for Soft Pack & Padded envelopes**

CUBIC PRICE TIERS		LENGTH PLUS WIDTH
0.10	Mailpieces measuring from	0" up to 21"
0.20	Mailpieces measuring more than	21" up to 27"
0.30	Mailpieces measuring more than	27" up to 31"
0.40	Mailpieces measuring more than	31" up to 34"
0.50	Mailpieces measuring more than	34" up to 36"

1.5.5 New Priority Mail Customers

[6-2-14] Commercial Plus cubic prices are available for new Priority Mail customers who have a customer commitment agreement with the USPS. Shippers must contact their account manager or the manager, Sales and Communication, Expedited Shipping (see 608.8.0 for address) for additional information.

1.6 Balloon Price

[6-2-14] Parcels addressed for delivery to Zones 1-4 (including Local) that weigh less than 20 pounds but measure more than 84 inches (but not more than 108 inches) in combined length and girth are charged the applicable zone price for a 20-pound parcel (balloon price).

1.7 Dimensional Weight Price for Low-Density Parcels to Zones 5-9

[6-2-14] Postage for parcels addressed for delivery to Zones 5-9 and exceeding 1 cubic foot (1,728 cubic inches) is based on the actual weight or the dimensional weight (as calculated in 1.7.1 or 1.7.2), whichever is greater.

1.7.1 Determining Dimensional Weight for Rectangular Parcels

[6-2-14] Follow these steps to determine the dimensional weight for a rectangular parcel:

- Measure the length, width, and height in inches. Round off (see 604.7.0) each measurement to the nearest whole inch.
- Multiply the length by the width by the height.
- If the result exceeds 1,728 cubic inches, divide the result by 194 and round up (see 604.7.0) to the next whole number to determine the dimensional weight in pounds.

1.7.2 Determining Dimensional Weight for Nonrectangular Parcels

[6-2-14] Follow these steps to determine the dimensional weight for a nonrectangular parcel:

- Measure the length, width, and height in inches at their extreme dimensions. Round off (see 604.7.0) each measurement to the nearest whole inch.
- Multiply the length by the width by the height.
- Multiply the result by an adjustment factor of 0.785.
- If the final result exceeds 1,728 cubic inches, divide the result by 194 and round up (see 604.7.0) to the next whole number to determine the dimensional weight in pounds.



- e. If the dimensional weight exceeds 70 pounds, the customer pays the 70-pound price.

1.8 Flat Rate Packaging

[6-2-14] Any amount of material (up to 70 pounds) may be mailed in a USPS-produced Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope or Flat Rate Box. USPS-produced packaging, including Flat Rate containers, is not eligible for shipping live animals. See the [Notice 123—Price List](#) for applicable prices.

1.8.1 Flat Rate Envelopes-Price and Eligibility

[6-2-14] There are two types of USPS-produced Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelopes: A paper envelope and a padded envelope (for Commercial Plus only). All USPS-produced Priority Mail envelopes smaller than the EP14F envelope (9.5 inches by 12.5 inches) are eligible for the Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope price whether or not they are marked “Flat Rate Envelope.” Each type of USPS-produced Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope is priced at a flat rate regardless of the actual weight (up to 70 pounds) of the mailpiece or domestic destination.

1.8.2 Flat Rate Boxes—Price and Eligibility

[6-2-14] Only USPS-produced Flat Rate Boxes are eligible for the Flat Rate Box prices. Each USPS-produced Priority Mail Flat Rate Box is charged a flat rate regardless of the actual weight (up to 70 pounds) of the mailpiece or domestic destination. See [Notice 123—Price List](#) for applicable prices. Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes are as follows:

- a. Small Flat Rate Box to domestic, APO/FPO, and DPO destinations.
- b. Medium Flat Rate Boxes (FRB-1) or (FRB-2) to domestic, APO/FPO, and DPO destinations.
- c. Board Game Large Flat Rate Box or Large Flat Rate Box to domestic destinations.
- d. Board Game Large Flat Rate Box or Large Flat Rate Box and “special version of this box” identified with the additional logo: “Americasupportsyou.mil.” to APO/FPO and DPO destinations is priced less than the conventional domestic Large Flat Rate Boxes. If the special version of the APO/FPO Flat Rate Box is used for non-APO/FPO and DPO destination addresses, the domestic or international Large Flat Rate Box prices will apply.

1.9 Regional Rate Box Prices

[6-2-14] Regional Rate Box prices are available to Priority Mail Commercial Base and Commercial Plus customers who use one of the USPS-produced Priority Mail Regional Rate Boxes and meet the requirements in [1.3.1](#). Prices are based on box size and zone. When sealing a Regional Rate Box, the container flaps must be able to close within the normal folds. Regional Rate Boxes that exceed the maximum weight limit as specified in [1.7.2](#), or the container flaps do not close within the normal folds will be assessed the applicable Priority Mail single-piece prices. Regional Rate Box options are:

- a. Box A: (Side loading or top loading box) has a maximum weight limit of 15 pounds.

- b. Box B: (Side loading or top loading box) has a maximum weight limit of 20 pounds.
- c. Box C: (Top loading box only) has a maximum weight limit of 25 pounds.

1.10 Hold For Pickup

Under Hold For Pickup service, Priority Mail items are held at a designated Post Office location for pick up by a specified addressee or designee. Hold For Pickup service is not available for Critical Mail.

1.11 Pickup on Demand Fee

The Pickup on Demand fee is charged per occurrence. This service may be combined with Priority Mail Express, Package Services, and international mail pickups (see [507.7.0](#)). See [Notice 123—Price List](#).

1.12 Determining Single-Piece Weight

To determine single-piece weight in any mailing of nonidentical-weight pieces, weigh each piece individually. To determine single-piece weight in a mailing of identical-weight pieces, weigh a sample group of at least 10 randomly selected pieces and divide the total sample weight by the number of pieces in the sample. Except for Critical Mail and mailers using eVS, express all single-piece weights in decimal pounds rounded off to two decimal places. For Critical Mail, express single-piece weights in decimal pounds rounded off to four decimal places. Mailers using eVS may round off to four decimals, and eVS will automatically round to the appropriate decimal place. If a customer is using a manifest mailing system, the manifest weight field must be properly completed by adhering to the rules relative to the specific manifest.

1.13 Computing Postage

Determine weight increment for each piece and pay postage under [224.1.0](#). For permit imprint mailings, multiply the number of addressed pieces at each weight increment by the corresponding postage price.

2.0 Content Standards for Priority Mail**2.1 General**

All mailable matter may be sent as Priority Mail, except matter prohibited by standards (e.g., certain hazardous materials).

2.2 Matter Required to be Mailed as First-Class Mail

Unless Priority Mail Express is used, Priority Mail prices are required for a mailpiece that weighs more than 13 ounces when the mailpiece contains matter that must be mailed as First-Class Mail (see [233.3.0](#)).



3.0 Basic Standards for Priority Mail

3.1 Definition

[6-2-14] Priority Mail is an expedited service and may contain any mailable matter weighing no more than 70 pounds. Lower weight limits apply to Commercial Plus cubic (see 1.5); Regional Rate Boxes (see 1.9); Critical Mail letters and flats under 1.4; APO/FPO mail subject to 703.2.0 and 703.4.0 and Department of State mail subject to 703.3.0.

3.2 Additional Standards for Critical Mail

[6-2-14] Critical Mail, a category of Priority Mail, is available for barcoded, automation-compatible letters and barcoded, automation flats. With the exception of restricted mail as described in 601.8.0, any mailable matter may be mailed via Critical Mail. USPS-produced Critical Mail envelopes must be used for all Critical Mail. Letters may not exceed 3 ounces in weight or 1/4 inch thickness and flats may not exceed 13 ounces in weight or 3/4 inch in thickness. Critical Mail also must:

- a. Bear an Intelligent Mail Package Barcode under 708.5.0. Critical Mail may bear an Intelligent Mail barcode under 708.4.0 if prepared without an extra service.
- b. Bear a delivery address that includes the correct ZIP Code, ZIP+4 code, or numeric equivalent to the delivery point routing code and that meets address quality standards in 233.5.5 and 708.3.0.

3.3 IMpb Standards

[6-2-14] [1-26-14] Unless authorized to use a unique IMb on Priority Mail letters and flats prepared in high-speed environments or Critical Mail prepared under 3.2a, all Priority Mail pieces must bear an Intelligent Mail package barcode prepared under 708.5.0. To obtain information on how to acquire an authorization to use an IMb on Priority Mail letters and flats, mailers can contact USPS Shipping Information Systems at IMPB@usps.gov. Mailpieces not meeting the requirements for use of unique Intelligent Mail package barcodes or extra services barcodes as outlined in Publication 199 will be assessed an IMpb noncompliance fee. For details see the RIBBS website at <https://ribbs.usps.gov>.

3.4 Service Objectives

All Priority Mail receives expeditious handling and transportation, but the USPS does not guarantee delivery within a specified time.

3.5 Matter Closed Against Postal Inspection

[6-2-14] Priority Mail (including Critical Mail) matter is closed against postal inspection.