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# POSTAGE RATES

An unofficial site by Jerry Nelson.

First Class letter 55 cents 27Jan2019, 29Apr2019 smaller type pdf

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**FOREVER STAMPS** can be used for anything, but what are they currently worth?

- 55¢ - classic forever stamp; good investment, always goes up.
- 15¢ - "Additional Ounce" **went down from 21¢ on 27Jan2019**
- 70¢ - "Two Ounce" (the wedding invitation stamp, heart symbol)
- 70¢ - the "butterfly" stamps for bad envelopes (square, stiff, metal clasp).  
Although the stamp says "Non-Machinable Surcharge",  
it is **not the surcharge, it is the entire cost.**
- 35¢ - postcard - no change in January 2018, 2019
- \$1.15 foreign letter - no change in January 2018, 2019

Note: mail that can't get through a sorting machine costs more.

A flat, flexible regular or business-sized envelope is cheaper than a flat, flexible manila envelope that needs bigger sorting machines and *they* are cheaper than thick, inflexible envelopes of the same size and weight that are unmachinable and have to go as small parcels.

## Letters 1st Class 55¢+15¢/oz (27Jan2019)

Not over:

1 oz	\$0.55	+15¢/oz. Bad envelope penalty is also 15¢
2 ounces	\$0.70	
3 ounces	\$0.85	
3.5 oz	\$1.00	Heavier? Go to FLATS (next).

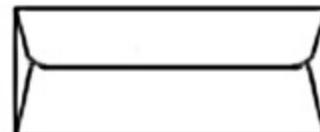
Rigid object inside? Metal clasp? Button & closure string?  
Add non-machinable surcharge ("bad envelope penalty").  
Square? Goes through their machines but they can't tell which way? Add \$0.15  
Almost square (less than 30% height-width difference)? Add \$0.15.  
Too skinny? (long length more than 2.5x short)? Add \$0.15  
Really cute little one for that note, under 3 1/2" or 4 1/4"?  
Hide it! You're illegal. Go home and start over.  
Length over 11 1/2"? Height over 6 1/8"? Go to "Flats" (next)  
Max size in the standard envelope series is #14 (5"x11.5").  
Size 10 is normal (4.125" x 9.5").  
If you want to send someone a stamped, self-addressed envelope ("SSAE")  
for them to send you back something, it's nice to get a few Size 11 envelopes to put the #10 into,  
or to send a bounced envelope back when you get your friend's new address.  
Thicker than 1/4"? Go to "Flats".  
You're a corporation using metered mail? Congratulations!  
Take off 1¢. Wait! Take off 3¢, we love corporations.  
Not a corporation, tired? Sorry. Too bad. Congress gave away its power of oversight and let the Postal Service change rates by itself.



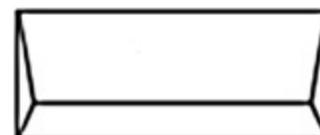
**Commercial Flap**



**Side Seam**



**Square Flap**



**Wallet Flap**

## “Flats” (Large 1st Class Envelopes)

1 oz	\$1.00	
2 ounces	\$1.15	Incrementing 15 cents each additional ounce
3 ounces	\$1.30	(3oz? Fold it & go in a business envelope for 85 cents)
4 ounces	\$1.45	
5 ounces	\$1.60	
6 ounces	\$1.75	
7 ounces	\$1.90	
8 ounces	\$2.05	
9 ounces	\$2.20	
10 ounces	\$2.35	
11 ounces	\$2.50	
12 ounces	\$2.65	
13 ounces	\$2.80	down from \$3.52 last year, yay!

### FLATS:

Over 13 oz? Consider Priority Mail flat-rate envelope.

Your envelope is inflexible, lumpy, not rectangular? Go to “Packages”.

(No rigid, corrugated cardboard in flats for preventing creased photos, sorry.)

If you want to send the photo anyway,

pad the envelope with stiff paper to protect it, & do [the flex test](#):

hang half of the short side over the edge of the table and check that it flexes 1" and back if you press down with your finger.

If the short side is 10 inches long or more, you'd better be able to bend 2".

Length over 15"? Height over 12"? Go to “Packages”.

Thicker than 3/4"? Go to “Packages”

Under 3/4" but lumpy? Klutz! Go to "Packages", pay more.

Still confused? Make sure your letters are white, your flats are manila envelopes, and [share user stories](#) like these :-)

Exception: when mailing to your friend in prison, white envelopes are preferred because somehow you can hide particles of dope in manila.

## Small Packages / Parcels / Lumpy envelopes 1st class

### 27Jan2019 NOW YOU HAVE TO USE ZONES

:-)

These are padded envelopes over 3/4" thick, rigid photo mailers, medical samples, small boxes under 1 cubic foot. If it's not cubic but very rectangular, then girth + length have to be under 108".

This single price chart 1st Class Pkg service was divided into a **zoned service** on 27Jan2019. Harder to use, lower volume of users, less revenue. You think, "Number of stamps x number of letters = Revenue." You are stupid, you never took Econ 101 in college. Elastic demand curve, customers go away, revenue goes away.

To get the zone, get your two zip codes, go here <https://postcalc.usps.com/DomesticZoneChart>, and either select "GET ZONE FOR my ZIP CODE PAIR", or print a chart that shows how all the zones look from

where you live (you also [need a chart like that below for parcel post](#)).

Crossing the country coast to coast is Zone 8. From the MidAtlantic to Indiana is Zone 4; to Indiana from the West Coast is Zone 7.

Wichita, KS is zone 6 or 7 from either coast -- 6 in the middle (San Francisco), 7 up in the corners.

### FIRST CLASS SMALL PACKAGES became zoned in 2019 :-)

Weight Not Over (oz.)	Zone							
	1 & 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	\$3.66	\$3.70	\$3.74	\$3.78	\$3.82	\$3.94	\$4.06	\$4.06
2	3.66	3.70	3.74	3.78	3.82	3.94	4.06	4.06
3	3.66	3.70	3.74	3.78	3.82	3.94	4.06	4.06
4	3.66	3.70	3.74	3.78	3.82	3.94	4.06	4.06
5	4.39	4.44	4.49	4.53	4.57	4.69	4.81	4.81
6	4.39	4.44	4.49	4.53	4.57	4.69	4.81	4.81
7	4.39	4.44	4.49	4.53	4.57	4.69	4.81	4.81
8	4.39	4.44	4.49	4.53	4.57	4.69	4.81	4.81
9	5.19	5.24	5.30	5.35	5.40	5.53	5.66	5.66
10	5.19	5.24	5.30	5.35	5.40	5.53	5.66	5.66
11	5.19	5.24	5.30	5.35	5.40	5.53	5.66	5.66
12	5.19	5.24	5.30	5.35	5.40	5.53	5.66	5.66
13	5.71	5.78	5.85	5.93	5.99	6.13	6.27	6.27

14,15, and 16 ounces were announced as acceptable on 7Jan2016, but this remains a COMMERCIAL First-Class Package Service only, not a retail service for normal people

THE CARTON SYMBOL: To get rates even if you can't purchase the postage on-line, enter the USPS site, click on the cartons symbol, and look for "First Class & Other Options" at the bottom, or perhaps a line labeled "Other Services". This is the "Parcel" (small pkg) rate. <https://postcalc.usps.com/>



Package

#### WHAT NAME IS THIS SERVICE?

Full service name was "1st Class Airmail Small Pkg", then "First Class Package Service, Retail."

Avoid "parcel", you'll just confuse everybody. "Parcel Post" is abolished.

We send parcels by post, but not by Parcel Post. Doesn't exist.

Parcel Post was abolished on 27 January 2013 and became "Standard Post".

Standard Post was abolished on 17 January 2016 and became "Retail Ground".

Ground shipments **1st Class** go by Air, of course.

((Write "1st Class PKG" on it, and be thankful you didn't have to go to the post office Name Deciding Meetings that worked all this out.))

#### BIGGER THAN A "SMALL PKG"?

If **over 13 oz domestic**, try [Priority Mail flat rate boxes](#) (any weight if you can fit it in). Once you're over about 15 lbs, Retail Ground (formerly Parcel Post) will never be cheaper than a Priority Flat Rate box.

If you're not heavy enough (>15lbs) to make flat rate Priority a no-brainer, then try "Parcel Post Select" down below (online only, see top of the [Parcel Post section](#)).

When Parcel Post Select is purchased online, it includes free tracking.

Length plus girth for Parcel Post *Select* is 84 inches max.

Length plus girth over 108"? Go to the Retail Ground (Parcel Post) [calculator](#). No even Priority will accept your package.

Length plus girth over 130" Go to UPS like I told you -- even the Post Office won't take it.

Call the brown trucks from UPS; [ups.com](https://www.ups.com). You [have to register](#).

If over 13 oz and **going overseas**, you want "First-Class Package International Service" good up to 4 lbs. (Other names: "1st Class International Parcel", "[1st Class Mail International Packages](#)".) After that, try Priority Mail International's flat rate boxes (limited to 20 lbs to most countries; see International section next).

**Posters rolled up?** Maximum post office lengths: Global Express Guaranteed is only 46", Express Mail Intl. is 60", domestic Priority Mail is maybe 60", and sometimes there is a formula of length plus how tight you rolled it up, so you don't really get the maximum length. (Take 2 inches off the max length for every inch looser than a 3 inch diameter roll-up.)

## International Airmail Letters \$1.15, unchanged 2019

### 1 ounce any country \$1.15

Thank you, dear P.O., for making the first ounce the same anywhere, and for giving us Global Forever stamps in 2013 :-)

[Try this search](#) to buy Global Forever stamps at [store.usps.com](http://store.usps.com) The "wrong" forever stamps can be combined to get up to the foreign ltr amount.

**One ounce** is a business envelope with 5 sheets of typical Xerox paper, or 1 sheet and six 4x6" photos. Leave out 1 sheet or 1 photo to be safe.

"3.5" oz means you can't weigh more, but you pay for 4 oz.

Limits, all countries: value under \$400, size under 6 1/8" x 11 1/2" x 1/4" thick (same envelope limit as domestic).

CANADA	1 oz	\$1.15	
	2 oz	\$1.15	which is 0¢ more
	3 oz	\$1.61	which is 46¢ more
	3 1/2	\$2.08	which is 47¢ more, because there was nothing to do one day, so we had a committee meeting to discuss it, and they had to decide <i>something</i> , so we made each additional ounce different.

MEXICO	1 oz	\$1.15	+57¢/oz
	2 oz	\$1.72	
	3 oz	\$2.29	We have to bribe them to take the letters, so they cost more.
	3 1/2	\$2.86	

Rest of World	1 oz	\$1.15	
	2		
	3		Check your <b>country group</b> below.
	3 1/2		

### COUNTRY GROUPS

**Group 1 Countries** is CANADA (see above).

**Group 2 Countries** is MEXICO (see above).

**Cheaper Countries, Groups 6-9.** Central and South America, Middle East, Africa, central Asia, New Zealand, Philippines, Taiwan

1 oz	\$1.15
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2 oz	\$1.98	+83¢/oz
3 oz	\$2.81	
3 1/2	\$3.64	

**Costly Countries, Groups 3-5.** European Union (France, Italy, places with chateaus & good food) , Russia, eastern Europe, Turkey; China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, & Australia ([kangaroos](#), [spy satellite stations](#)).

1 oz	\$1.15	
2 oz	\$2.13	that was 98¢ more
3 oz	\$3.12	now it's 99¢ more. Why?
3 1/2	\$4.11	

check other countries: <https://postcalc.usps.com/>

**BIGGER THAN A LETTER? MORE THAN 3.5 OZ? =**

## **Int'l Flats - "1st Class Mail International" unchanged 2018, 2019**

Envelopes up to 15" x 12", weights up to 4 lb, not lumpy, not totally inflexible. Weight increments are 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 oz then 12 oz, 16 oz, +4oz. So, if you cross 8 oz (or 12), print some photos on your camera -- 5 sheets/ounce of good paper, 6 sheets/ounce of ordinary copy paper (minus a sheet for safety).

### **TABLE BELOW**

<b>Canada, roughly</b>	<b>\$6</b>	<b>first lb, half as much gets you a quarter pound</b>
<b>Mexico roughly</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>first lb, ditto</b>
<b>ROW roughly</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>/ first lb, ditto</b>

ONLINE you can get prices but not buy the postage: select the large plain envelope icon at <https://postcalc.usps.com/> . On next page, click to unhide "First-Class Int'l Options". Y

**FLEXIBLE:** International Flat envelope cannot be rigid. And thickness? We are going up to 4 pounds here, folks, so the infamous thickness limits do not apply. Instead, the warning is, **don't have more than 1/4" VARIATIONS in thickness.**

If you fail the thickness test, you are a [First Class International Package](#) box -- prices are 40, 50% higher, even double for the low weights.

OVER ABOUT 2 1/2 POUNDS a Priority Flat Rate Envelope will be cheaper. Get the legal size 9-1/2" x 15" -- same price as stnd size for international.

USE BIG ENVELOPES FOR "FLATS": Don't try to mail a small envelope that's over 3.5 oz. even if you pay for it -- it confuses some postal clerks. The small envelope will look like a letter, and "LETTER" service up to 64 oz was dropped on 12May2008, so now there's only big "FLATS". Fill the airplanes with big envelopes, that's what they want.

# INTERNATIONAL FLATS

Weight Not Over (ounces)					
	1 Canada	2 Mexico	3-5	6-9	
1	\$2.29	\$2.29	\$2.29	\$2.29	
2	2.60	2.97	3.23	3.18	
3	2.71	3.64	4.16	4.06	
4	2.91	4.32	5.10	4.94	
5	3.12	5.00	6.04	5.83	
6	3.33	5.67	6.97	6.71	
7	3.54	6.35	7.91	7.60	
8	3.75	7.03	8.85	8.48	
<b>1 lb.</b>	12	4.79	8.48	10.72	10.31
	16	5.83	9.94	12.60	12.13
	20	6.87	11.40	14.47	13.95
	24	7.91	12.86	16.34	15.77
<b>2 lbs</b>	28	8.95	14.31	18.22	17.59
	32	9.99	15.77	20.09	19.41
	36	11.03	17.23	21.97	21.24
	40	12.08	18.69	23.84	23.06
<b>3 lbs</b>	44	13.12	20.14	25.71	24.88
	48	14.16	21.60	27.59	26.70
	52	15.20	23.06	29.46	28.52
	56	16.24	24.52	31.33	30.35
<b>4 lbs</b>	60	17.28	25.97	33.21	32.17
	64	18.32	27.43	35.08	33.99

Intl flats 2016Apr10

3-5: European Union (France, Italy, places with chateaus & good food) , Russia & Turkey, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, & Australia

6-9 Group: Central and South America, Middle East, Africa, central Asia, New Zealand, Philippines, Taiwan

## HEAVIER THAN 4 LBS?

Priority international boxes take up to 20 lbs, cost a fortune, and require the #2976 Customs Form. Sketched in Priority section below.

**1st Class Mail Int'l PACKAGES - 4 lbs max - most but not all destinations increased in 2019**

Flat rate Priority Int'l is reasonable, but, if you can't fit their flat rate boxes, then you need 1st Class Mail Int'l PACKAGES.

**First-Class Mail Int'l PACKAGES** is also called **First-Class Pkg INTERNATIONAL SERVICE**.

This is the "Letter Post" group which embraces everything that is not "shipping"; namely, LCs (Letters and Cards) joined with AO ("Air Mail -- Other").

Available online at discounts up to 10%. To get the appropriate [USPS calculator](#), pick the small tan carton symbol, enter a weight under 4 lbs, and a country overseas. Skip all the Priority choices and click on a closed menu item labeled "First-Class Int'l Options" (or "Other Services") to open it. Hiding the choices most people need is not what a democratic government should do to its own people.

Size limit is 1 cubic foot maximum, and no one dimension over 24 inches.

Rolled up poster maximum: width: 36" x 3"diameter. If you roll it up 1" wider diameter, take 2 inches off your max length.

Customs Form 2976 (the green one) must be filled out, max value is \$400. This is sooo tedious.

**YELLOW IS YOUR COST TO SEND ONE eBay ITEM BACK TO CHINA**

**First-Class Package International Service**

Weight Not Over (oz.)	Price Groups								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-8	\$10.50	\$12.25	\$14.25	\$14.25	\$14.25	\$14.50	\$13.75	\$13.50	\$14.50
9-32	17.25	21.50	23.50	24.00	24.00	24.50	23.25	22.75	24.50
33-48	26.25	33.00	35.00	36.75	37.50	38.75	37.00	34.75	38.50
49-64	39.00	47.50	52.75	59.50	61.00	63.00	59.50	55.25	62.50
			CHINA						

**ONLINE, we've GOT A LIST-OF-COUNTRIES for USING THE CHART ABOVE**

For the chart above, use the first-class zones on the right of the list (any version).

Zones 1 and 2 are always Canada and Mexico.

Zone 3 is Australia, China & Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea -- in Asia, our three big trading partners and closest surveillance ally.

Zone 4 is Turkey, Russia, and Eastern Europe.

Zone 5 is Europe, east including Kosovo and Serbia.

Zone 6 is what most people think of as Asia, including India and Pakistan, but not China, Japan, Korea.

Zone 7 is Africa and some island nations (Seychelles east off Africa, Indian Ocean)

Zone 8 is the Middle East, Arab sheikdoms, Algeria.

Zone 9 is remote island nations and our neighbors in this hemisphere, in both nearby Central America and throughout South America.



**THE COST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE ZONES ARE IRRATIONAL**

**AND TOO SMALL  
TO JUSTIFY THE ZONES EXISTENCE  
IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

**HEAVIER THAN 4 LBS?**

Priority international flat-rate boxes take up to 20 lbs, cost a fortune, and require the #2976 Customs Form . . . as sketched in Priority section below.

**Postcard 35¢ International \$1.15 world, unchanged 2019**

3 1/2 min - 4 1/4 max by 5" min - 6" max, 7 - 16 mills thick. (0.016" is "16 mills". A typical business card is 12 mills)

Within the USA, the smallest permitted letters and postcards are the same: 3 1/2" x 5".

Minimum thickness 7 mills; cheap glossy ink jet photo paper is 10 mills, so mail it.

Max thickness 0.016" -- easier to say "16 mills", sound like a machinist who can actually make things.

A typical business card is 12 mills.

Too big? Too bad. Use rates for domestic first class letter.

International postcards same, but must be

**5 1/2" - 6" wide vs 5"-6" domestic.**

Thickness 7-16 mills (0.007" = 0.016")

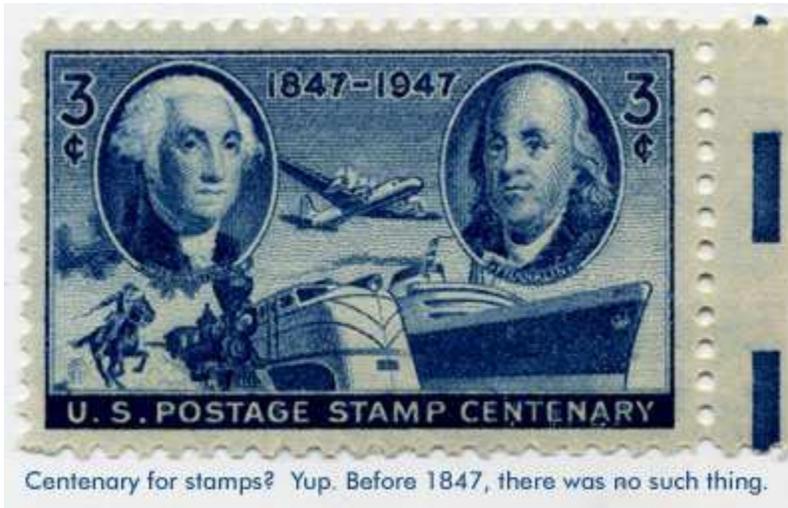
Domestic postcards can be square-ish, up to 4 1/4" high by only **5" wide.**

For all other mail, "rectangular" means

"Let's have a 30% high-vs-wide difference."

That's a simple rule, so let's apply it inconsistently for postcards. There, done! Feel better?





16 mills

#### THICKNESS LIST

3 mills (0.003 inch) - El Cheapo copier paper

4 mills - brightest white copier paper

**7 mills + is legal for postcards**

9 mills - sheet of ordinary ("110 lb") card stock (good enough for post cards)

11 mills - glossy 4x6 photos (Postcards to anywhere can be 3.5 - 4.25 x 5.5 to 6 inches -- just mail your photo.)

#### BUSINESS CARDS

feels cheap: 8 mills

feels normal: 12 mills

feels impressive: 16 mills (=max mills for postcards)

**Aerograms / Air Letter Sheets** are discontinued by the postal service of the United States. . Aerograms were \$0.75 to any country, postage printed on the paper, no stamps. Write whatever you want, mail it to any address you want -- done. Simplicity -- the good old days.

## **Domestic PRIORITY Envelope & BOXES, up in**

### **2017,2018,2019**

For local shipments, use straight Priority and drop the flat rate boxes. Otherwise, let's concentrate on flat rate.

**\$7.35 flat rate envelope** domestic, any zone, any weight, 2019 as long as you can seal the envelope without extra tape,

Add 30¢ for legal length; 65¢ for padded envelope.  
10April2016: no more online discounts for citizens, only corporate customers.

**\$7.90 small flat rate box**  
domestic, any zone, any weight,  
as long as you can close the flaps on the seams.  
10April2016: no more online discounts for citizens.

8-5/8" x 5-3/8" x 1-5/8" inside

**\$14.35 regular/medium flat rate box** any zone, 70 lb max, up 70¢ in 2019  
10April2016: no more online discounts for citizens.

Two medium-size boxes are available:

11" x 8.5" x 5.5" and  
13.625" x 11.875" x 3.375"

**\$18.90 large-size box** to any zone, 70 lb max, up \$1.05 in 2019  
**\$18.45 for APO/FPO/Diplomatic** up \$1.05 in 2019  
10April2016: no more online discounts for citizens.

Two large-size boxes are available:  
12" x 12" x 5.5"  
23 11/16" x 11 3/4" x 3"

The flat-rate-size Priority boxes may be used internationally (20 lb maximum; 4 lbs for the small one).

See Priority Mail International below.

#### **Insurance:**

Pre-May 12, 2008: insurance up to \$500 was available on-line; up to \$5,000 if you presented the package to a Post Office clerk. \$5,000 is still the limit, 2016. \$50 worth of insurance is free. Declare even a dollar more, and you pay a \$3..35 insurance fee. For some easy-to-steal-and-sell items, you may be forced to get insurance when you fill out the customs form.

#### **Priority "Dimensional Pricing" -- beyond flat rate:**

Packages larger than 1 cubic foot traveling far (Zones 5 through 8) are priced by size because such trips use air transportation. Or rather, you use the same old tables that price everything by weight, but you must use an imaginary weight calculated from your package size as **8.9 lbs per cubic foot**. These "balloon rate" mythical weights work out to be LxWxH in inches divided by 194 (No idea. I just work here).



### **THE MAIL ALWAYS GETS THROUGH**

Just kidding. No mail.  
The only thing on the executive jet was investment bankers.

# INTERNATIONAL Priority Mail

When it's bigger than a flat (they call manila envelopes "flats"), try these flat rate boxes (20 lbs max) or "1st-Class Package International Service" (4 lbs max). Flat rate box sizes same as all other Priority boxes.

**1. CANADA - FLAT RATE ENVELOPE (std or legal) & SMALL BOX (4lbs max -- could be \$50 w/o flat rate)**

envelope \$25.85  
small box \$26.85

**2. CANADA - MEDIUM FLAT RATE BOX (20 lbs max -- could be \$101 if you didn't have flat rate)**

\$49.60

**3. CANADA - LARGE FLAT RATE BOX (20 lbs max -- could be \$101 if you didn't have flat rate)**

\$64.50

27 January 2019

The non-flat rate price table for Canada 2019 is here:

[https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/Notice123.htm#\\_c330](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/Notice123.htm#_c330)

Normally, in the 1,2,3,4, etc., country list, "1" is Canada and "2" is Mexico, but we can't have "1" because Canada herself gets a whole set of rate zones.

The rates depend on where **YOU** live, not on where your pkg is going. West Coast USA costs more. The flat rates above are easier.

## Rest of World (not Canada) Priority Mail International FLAT RATE, 2019

Price Groups	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Flat Rate Envelopes (Max. Wt. 4 lbs.)	\$32.20	\$33.60	\$35.65	\$34.65	\$36.70	\$34.65	\$35.65
Small Flat Rate Priced Boxes (Max. Wt. 4 lbs.)	33.60	34.65	36.70	35.65	37.70	35.65	36.70
Medium Flat Rate Boxes (Max. Wt. 20 lbs.)	72.30	73.70	71.75	75.75	82.20	74.75	77.80
Large Flat Rate Boxes (Max. Wt. 20 lbs.)	94.25	96.30	94.25	98.35	103.85	97.35	101.80

**We have links below to country lists for these stupid zone numbers. Get the zone number from the "Zone B" column in those country lists -- the countries don't stay put, they move somehow to a different zone if you try to go there on a different service that uses a different column.**

**TO USE THE TABLE ABOVE, GO FOR ZONE "B" in the COUNTRIES LISTS**

We have an [alphabetized list of the most common countries](#) with their zones.

On the country list, the so-called **zone "B"** column gives you the correct 2,3,4,5,6,7, or 8 column to use in the table above.

The [full list](#) follows the "most commons". Also, you can use "CONTROL-F for find" to search the list in most browsers. Finally, I [sorted the list by first class zone](#).

The missing column 1 is Canada.

Column 2 is Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico. But some countries are in the "doghouse" column (8): Costa Rica, El Salvador.

Column 3: China, Indonesia, Japan, S. Korea

Column 4: EU countries (European Union), but not Hungary (8, doghouse)

Column 5: India, Norway . . . naturally, look what they have in common.

Column 6: New Zealand, Pakistan

Column 7: Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria

Column 8, doghouse: Hungary, Greece, Algeria, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Cost Rica, El Salvador.

### **Domestic Express Mail -- Does everybody agree I can drop this page because the prices are ridiculous?**

2019: Domestic express is only a "commercial" service -- probably not sold online at all. Let me know.

\$22.80 for a flat rate envelope, flat rate boxes dropped, nobody used them; **\$372** to impress someone with a 70 lb carton shipped across the country.

To find the the free stuff page, search on **site:store.usps.com \$0.00 express mail box** like this: [sample search.](#)

## **Media Mail Rates -- BOOKS**

Flat rate, no zones so it does not get cheaper locally, but even locally it is still cheapest per pound if you qualify.

OK for: books, sheet music, movies and music on CDs, DVDs, educational maps & charts if there's not a lot of text.

Because **advertising is forbidden, you must take all magazines out of your box.** The books themselves may add only incidental announcements of other books -- as old-fashioned publishers so often did on the otherwise blank end-pages.

No video games (they're media, yes; but educational, no). No hard drives, no tapes if they're blank.

At the Post Office, be prepared to open and reseal the box. So, if you want to support book bindings, wrap the books tight in "stretch (plastic) wrap" not brown paper, because you can see through it, and you can even unwind it and kind of wind it back on. Liquor store cartons are stronger than supermarket cartons, but you have to obliterate anything that makes it look like you're shipping alcohol. (Use up your old aerosol spray cans, or buy a new one in Pro Shipper tan.)

Yes, it goes to 70 lbs, see <https://postcalc.usps.com> If you don't qualify, regular "Retail Ground" (formerly Parcel Post) is double to triple the cost, depending on zone.

**After 21Jan2018: Domestic Rates      27Jan2019: 1st lb increases \$2.66 to \$2.75, increment rises from 51 to 52¢ /lb, 70 lbs is \$38.63**

1 pound: \$2.75    One CD/DVD in a padded env is \$3.66 to \$4.06 (4oz; it became zoned in 2019) as a small parcel (1st class service, 13 oz max) .

Two CDs in an env is a \$4.39-\$4.81 parcel (7oz; it became zoned in 2019), so media mail is cheaper both times.

Add 52¢/lb until the end at 70 lb for \$38.63

Up to 5 pounds: \$ 4.70 in 2018 -> \$4.83 in 2019  
Up to 20 pounds: \$12.35 -> \$12.63  
Up to 40 lbs \$22.55 -> \$23.03  
70 lbs max \$37.85 -> \$38.63

## **BEGIN PARCEL POST (this is horrible)**

For DIYers (Do It Yourselfers), here are the [parcel post rate charts](#) with zones. So now you need a zone number. A chart to give you the zone # from your own ZipCode [can be printed here](#) -- as illustrated below. To look up Retail Ground costs online, the calculator page is <https://postcalc.usps.com> But you can only buy Priority shipping labels online -- we're talking Parcel Post service here (cheaper). If the USPS doesn't sell Parcel Post shipping labels online, where can you turn?

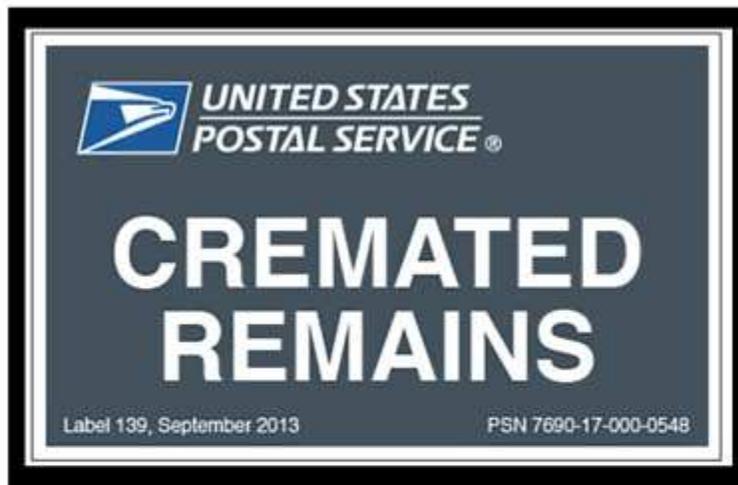
## **PARCEL POST ("Retail Ground") - SHIPPING RESTRICTIONS**

ANY 1-PAGE LOOK AT GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS THAT RESTRICT MAIL SERVICE [IS](#)

[GOING TO BE INCOMPLETE](#) <-

complete restricted materials sec'n

- never: alcoholic beverages (the Internal Revenue Service wants to catch all the taxes)
- never: ammunition
- never: explosives, even fireworks
- never: any invitation/advertising to use money to participate in a lottery or raffle
  - Clubs/non-profits doing a charity raffle can say something like this: check box: " Please enter my name in the drawing. I do not wish to make a donation at this time." If you're running the raffle, you can even enclose the little raffle ticket to keep in case they win.
- lots of rules for **firearms** (the ATF -- the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in the Dept. of Justice -- wants to control this)
- never for most of us: **switchblade knife** -- Armed Forces, National Guard, state and municipal procurement officers, they all can get their switchblades in the mail; the rest of



**USPS Label 139 for cremated remains -- dogs, people, don't ask. Remember the label, and only ship them Priority, not Retail Ground (once called Parcel Post). There is no way you or I will ever remember everything we could do wrong when we ship something.**

us will just have to meet our buddies in a bar or have a barbecue and trade our best ones.

- lots of rules for **aerosols, flammables, liquids of any kind**, even a urine specimen. My quart bottles of epoxy always come with extra tape to hold the cap on tight.
- **powerful magnets** able to deviate a compass needle at 7 feet because their magnetic flux was not short-circuited away by putting iron "keepers" on them (the Department of Transportation looks bad when planes fall out of the sky--it's their rule).
- **Lithium batteries**. You can avoid special labeling with 7 or fewer non-rechargeable "lithium metal" cells of under 20Wh each (roughly C-cell or smaller) or a single rechargeable "lithium ion" (aka lithium polymer) battery (e.g, notebook battery) under 100Wh. Otherwise, here's [what I've learned about batteries so far](#), glad to get better information from you.

- **Replicas**: Post Office and [law enforcement take weapons replicas very seriously](#).

A fake replica of a hand grenade has to be registered mail, so it can't be Parcel Post (aka "Retail Ground"). You have to write "Replica Explosive" in letters at least 1/4" high on the box. Yes, it's legal, but get it boxed and **keep it in the box**. If you want to shut down your own post office and the rest of your day, just walk in with a hand grenade and tell everyone it's just a replica.



- **Contraceptives**. If she asked for help getting her birth control pills, get a letter proving "solicitation" before you get a criminal record. "Unsolicited samples of an article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception is permitted in the mail only when sent to a manufacturer or a dealer of such an article or things, to a licensed physician or surgeon, or to a nurse, pharmacist, druggist, hospital, or clinic (39 USC 3001; 18 USC 1461)." -> 18USC1461? The post office regulations are citing the wrong law of the land. This citation by the US Postal Service of United States Code 1461 in [their own postal regulations](#) (it's at the bottom when talking about "preventing conception") suggests some people at the USPS don't see any difference between contraception and abortion. 1461 is about **abortion**, not **contraception**. I can't believe lawyers inscribing the law of the land into the federal statute books use language like this:

## 18 U.S. Code § 1461 - Mailing obscene or crime-inciting matter

US Code

Notes

Every obscene, lewd, lascivious, indecent, filthy or vile article, matter, thing, device, or substance; and—

Every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use; and

BOTTOM LINE ABOUT ANYTHING: If in doubt, go to the Post Office. I would just see if they'll take whatever it is and not ask questions because they're not supposed to answer: "Postmasters are not authorized to give opinions on the legality of any shipment of firearms." I'm quoting official regulations here: [433 Legal Opinions on Mailing Firearms](#)

### PARCEL POST OVERVIEW

RETAIL GROUND (PARCEL POST) is the cheapest postal service, and the one that takes very large, very heavy boxes. Write "USPS Retail Ground" on the box if using stamps instead of a mailing label. Parcel Post will not take local traffic to Zones 1 to 4. (A ZipCode-to-Zone chart is below, and you can easily make one centered on the place where you live.) Try regular (not flat rate) Priority for just local or lightweight stuff.

PRIORITY, PARCEL POST, or BROWN TRUCKS? I use flat rate Priority if it fits the box, parcel post (Retail Ground) for small stuff that doesn't fit, and the brown UPS trucks for heavy boxes (over 5 lbs or so). [http://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en\\_US&WT.svl=PriNav](http://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en_US&WT.svl=PriNav)

Don't buy insurance if you don't have the receipt. [More precautions here.](#)

Please pack nicely. DON'T JUST DROP YOUR ITEM INTO THE CARTON & THEN FILL IT. **Place padding into the bottom of the box first**, THEN add the shipment. You want the item **floating away from the walls**, not crashing into them when you shake the box.

## THE BIG BOX PENALTIES in PARCEL POST ("Retail Ground") SERVICE

### AVOIDING THE TWO PITFALLS OF RETAIL GROUND (Parcel Post)

Retail Ground (Parcel Post) can be cheaper than UPS if you avoid two pitfalls.

#### 1. AVOIDING THE RETAIL GROUND BALLOON RATE PITFALL AT 84 INCHES

When you are under 20 lbs (as most gifts and eBay shipments are), then keep the box length plus girth under 84" or you will pay for 20 lbs (up to \$62.25 across the country, 2019) regardless of actual weight. Think of a balloon rate box as a flat rate box at the 20 lb rate. If you're stuck with the size, enjoy the weight -- put something else in. (Ordinary, non-flat-rate Priority Mail has the same 20lb/84 inches penalty in the more local zones 1-4.)

#### 2. AVOIDING THE PARCEL POST OVERSIZE PITFALL AT 108 - 130 INCHES

If your length + girth goes over 108 inches, you pay an oversize penalty. Going across country

with 70 lbs., your oversize cost is **\$196.61** (2019; \$183.75 in 2018; \$132.20 in 2014), when a smaller box would have been "only" **\$136.17** (in 2019; \$130.51.\$105.83 in 2014).

Once you're penalized with this "dimensional weight" charge, you can pack your shipment up in as large a carton as you want (up to the maximax of length+girth of 130 inches) and throw in some extra items . . . the price isn't going to change with either your weight (up to 70 lbs) or your size (up to 130 inches length + girth).

Over 130", you are expelled from the Postal System. Go directly to UPS or FedEx Freight, do not pass Go, do not pay any more penalties.  
130" and 70 lbs are the limits no USPS service can exceed.

To get parcel post in the USPS rate calculator, choose "package" or "large package".

<https://postcalc.usps.com>

Measure and weigh the carton first, get your two Zip codes.

[some price history](#)

## **GETTING YOUR OWN 1.ZONE AND 2.RATE TABLES for PARCEL POST**

Still trying to run a small business? Need to get six boxes out this morning without going online or to the post office?

You need two charts, your own stamps, and you'll have to present your packages in person at the Post Office counter,

unless you use the corporate privileges that eBay and PayPal have gotten for their customers, the ones [I told you about above](#) ("unpublicized").

If your business grows, you will yearn for these lower prices on the business calculator page:

<https://dbcalc.usps.com/>

but you have to bring everything to a BMEU, Business Mail Entry Unit.

See if there's a BMEU near you: <https://ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm>

If you figure out how to qualify, write me [jerry\\_postage@nelsonic.org](mailto:jerry_postage@nelsonic.org) so I can share it.

Meanwhile, for the retail-level DIY route:

1. You need to go from destination Zip code to a postal zone, and then
2. You need a chart of rates per pound (for all those postal zones).

## **PARCEL POST ("Retail Ground") -- Do It Yourself w/ZONES FROM ZIP CODES A personalized chart from my town McLean to ZIP XXXxx**

It's easy to get your own chart at <https://postcalc.usps.gov/Zonecharts/> .or same thing 2019:

<https://postcalc.usps.com/DomesticZoneChart>

These charts work for Priority boxes that are not flat rate, and for Parcel Post. Both have big-box penalties.

Parcel Post and non-flatrate-Priority have the same 20lb/84inch **balloon box problem**, but only for local-ish Priority boxes (Zones 1-4).

Parcel Post big boxes have the oversize **dimensional weight penalty at 108"**. Priority starts its oversize **dimensional weight penalty at 60"**, but only for distant Priority boxes (Zones 5-8).

Go to the zone chart, then the rate table, and you're done? Not so fast.

#### **THE SPECIAL CASE OF PARCEL POST ZONES 1 THROUGH 4**

**Parcel post zones 1-4 do not exist.** You have to use Priority. (Try the non-flat-rate kind of Priority; it is probably cheaper for local, zone 1-4 shipments).

**So why do we have 1-4 zones if we can't use them?** Wrong!! They are used, just not by you. Ground shipment is required for all stuff that knocks airplanes out of the sky, so we keep zones 1 thru 4 alive for people forced into ground transportation. If it weren't for dangerous materials shippers, we'd never send our trucks out on such short routes. .

**If we don't use zones 1-4, why not abolish them?** Clarity of vision is a key part of the leadership we do not have. Just mail your silly box.

## ZIPcode -> ZONE# for RETAIL GROUND (Parcel Post) and non-flat, zoned PRIORITY

\* Indicates ZIP Code range within the same NDC as the origin ZIP Code

+ Indicates ZIP Code range has 5-Digit Exceptions

ZIP Code	Zone						
005	3	245	2	510---513	6	730---731	6
006---009	7	246---253	3	514	5	733---741	6
010---012	3	254	1*	515---516	6	743---754	6
013---059	4	255---266	3	520---528	5	755---756	5
060---076	3	267---268	1*	530---532	5	757---770	6
077	2	270---286	3	534---535	5	772---784	6
078---079	3	287---296	4	537---551	5	785	7
080---087	2	297	3	553---564	5	786---796	6
088---098	3	298---312	4	565---567	6	797---816	7
100---119	3	313---317	5	570---577	6	820---828	7
120---123	4	318---319	4	580---588	6	829---838	8
124---127	3	320---342	5	590---597	7	840---844	8
128---129	4	344	5	598---599	8	845---847	7
130---154	3	346---347	5	600---611	4	850---853	8
155	2	349---352	5	612---616	5	855---857	8
156	3	354---369	5	617---619	4	859---860	8
157---159	2	370---374	4	620	5	863---864	8
160---165	3	375	5	622---623	5	865	7
166	2	376---379	4	624	4	870---871	7
167	3	380---383	5	625---631	5	873---880	7
168---179	2	384---385	4	633---641	5	881---882	6
180---188	3	386---398	5	644---658	5	883---885	7
189---199	2	399---410	4	660---662	5	889---891	8
200---212	1*	411---412	3	664---668	5	893---895	8
214---223	1*	413---414	4	669---681	6	897---898	8
224---225	2*	415---416	3	683---693	6	900---908	8
226---227	1*	417---418	4	700---701	5	910---928	8
228---239	2*	420---427	4	703---704	5	930---968	8
240---241	2	430---438	4	705---706	6	969	9+
242	4	439---449	3	707---708	5	970---986	8
243	2	450---497	4	710---714	5	988---999	8
244	2*	498---509	5	716---729	5		

[+] 5-Digit Exceptions Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Isl, Guam, Marianas.

ZIP Code	Zone
96900---96938	8
96945---96959	8
96961---96969	8
96971---96999	8

NDC: mechanized Network Distribution Center for commercial mail drop-off.

**These are distances from my ZIPcode;  
you can easily make your own chart at**

[www.usps.com/Zonecharts](http://www.usps.com/Zonecharts)

Above: a chart from <https://postcalc.usps.com/Zonecharts/>

## **PARCEL POST ("Retail Ground") - Do It Yourself w/THE PRICE CHART (RATE TABLE)**

[THE PARCEL POST RATE TABLE](#) - 2019 PRICES BY ZONES is available on line.

### **Money Orders up 5 cents (domestic) in 2019**

Domestic:

\$1.25 up to \$500

\$1.70 up to \$1000

International Money Order

\$12.20 in 2018 -> \$13.95 in 2019 for sending up to \$750

\$18.45 in 2018 -> \$19.95 in 2019 for sending up to \$1,500

Your overseas maximum is \$1,500 (up from \$750 on 16April2016). The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. had a higher maximum. They transferred billions of drug dollars into the banking system. There is something charming about this [tale of money laundering](#) in today's corporate world.

## **END OF POSTAGE CHARTS**