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Postal Rate Change Requires More Loose Change.

The Governors of the United States Postal Service recently announced that the postage required to mail a first-class letter will increase by two cents to \$.41 on May 14, 2007. After that date, first-class letters with insufficient postage will be returned to the sender for additional funds.

There are a few other additional changes to the Postal Service regulations that could affect you.

Policy Change

Along with the increased rate for first-class letters, the USPS has also announced plans to raise the postage for catalogs, magazines and priority post items.

These rate changes have been postponed to allow time for a transitional phase and to make final pricing decisions. Expect these rates to increase—dramatically in some cases—and possibly affect the future of bulk mail items.



Invest In Forever

Another new addition to the Postal Service policy is the creation of Forever Stamps, designed to ease the changeover period between future rate changes.

The stamps will provide postage for all future one-ounce first-class letters regardless of the new rate. They will never expire or decrease in value and will be sold at the new first-class postage rate.

The Forever Stamp is the Postal Service's way to deliver convenience and value for its customers.



Examples of new prices for postage effective May 14, 2007

	EXISTING RATE	NEW RATE
FIRST-CLASS MAIL	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.41
Letters, Bill Payment, Greeting Cards		
WEDDING INVITATION (2-ounce)	\$ 0.63	\$ 0.58
POSTCARD	\$ 0.24	\$ 0.26
PRIORITY MAIL		
Flat-Rate Envelope	\$ 4.05	\$ 4.60
Flat-Rate Box	\$ 8.10	\$ 9.15*
EXPRESS MAIL		
Flat-Rate Envelope	\$14.40	\$16.25
1-lb. Package	\$18.80	\$19.50

* Postal Governors are requesting reconsideration for the new price



The USPS delivers

On an average day, the amount of mail the U.S. Postal Service handles would circle the globe three times. On its very busiest days—typically around Christmas—that number increases to four circumferences. In fact, the USPS is responsible for delivering half of the world's mail each day. With all the workload, it's a good idea to follow these guidelines to ensure the safe and timely delivery of your mail.



of the World's Mail

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Dueling Addresses

If you want to mail a letter to a recipient that has both a street address and a post office box, you can include either or both, but the mail will be delivered to the address listed directly above the city and state.

The ZIP Line

A complete ZIP code is a five-digit number followed by a hyphen and four digits, also called "ZIP + 4." If you are unsure of a ZIP code, you can look up the information online at www.usps.com or call 800-ASK-USPS. Leaving the ZIP code blank is better than including an incorrect value.

If you aren't familiar with all of the services provided by the U.S. Postal Service, spend some time on its Web site, www.usps.com and what you find may amaze you! The self-supporting agency offers a variety of shipping options and price points, some nifty online services and guidelines on how best to wrap packages for mailing, address packages and cards and send military mail. Some key points are highlighted here.

PACKAGES

- With multiple items in one box, put heavier items at the bottom and place packing around each one.
- For cushioning, use crumpled newspaper, styrofoam peanuts, bubble pack, shredded paper or plain popcorn.
- For hollow items, put cushioning inside and out.
- Put an index card with delivery and return addresses and a list of contents inside the package—just in case.
- Use 2-inch-wide clear or brown packing tape, reinforced packing tape, or paper tape to seal the opening and reinforce all seams.
- Put glass in zip-top plastic bags, using sealed-in air for added cushioning, then wrap individually in bubble wrap.
- Packages are measured by adding length plus girth. Anything over 130 inches, or that exceeds 70 pounds, cannot be sent via U.S. mail.
- Packages with correct postage can be handed to your mail carrier or dropped in a blue collection box.

CARDS AND LETTERS

- Use a standard envelope size (3-1/2 to 6-1/8 inches high by 5 to 11-1/2 inches long) to avoid a surcharge.
- A square envelope smaller than 5-by-5 inches or weighing 1 ounce will get a surcharge.
- Order stamps online, by phone or with a Stamps-by-Mail order form, delivered within 7 days.
- Print or type clearly, large enough to be read at arm's length.

MILITARY MAIL

- If mailing to Iraq, remember that mail is subject to extreme heat. Do not package items that melt, such as candles or chocolates.
- Military mail postage is the same as domestic postage.