shipping easy ®

How to Ship

An Easy Guide to Shipping Your Products

Table of Contents

Don't see your products or industry listed here?
We're always adding **more How To content on our blog!**

Introduction

Welcome to the wonderful world of shipping! Whether you're starting a small ecommerce business or a seasoned professional looking for tips to help improve your shipping process, this ebook has something for you. And, our table of contents should prove it! We've compiled all of our How To blog content to create the ultimate shipping guide, so you ship every package to its destination safely, quickly, and affordably.

We'll guide you through everything from setting up your ShippingEasy account to creating the return policy on your store's website. Are you looking to expand your business's products? We're covering all of the information you need to know on shipping products from ice cream to makeup, including carrier restrictions, carrier guidelines, and the supplies to keep on hand. If you're shipping for the first time or the hundredth, the How To Ship ebook will be your new go-to guide.

Make Shipping Easy today with a **30-day free trial!**

How to Ship a Package

The overview of shipping a package seems easy enough. You receive an order from your customer, package the item, and send your shipment off to its new destination. However, you have to decide where your products are being sold, which carrier to use, and the packaging your item is going to be shipped in.

## Here are the big questions you'll need to answer as a new shipper:

How do you find the best carrier services for your orders?

Compare carrier service options to find the best shipping rate and service option for your customers. Check which services include tracking and insurance to ensure your shipments arrive safely. We'll cover tracking and insurance more in upcoming sections as well!
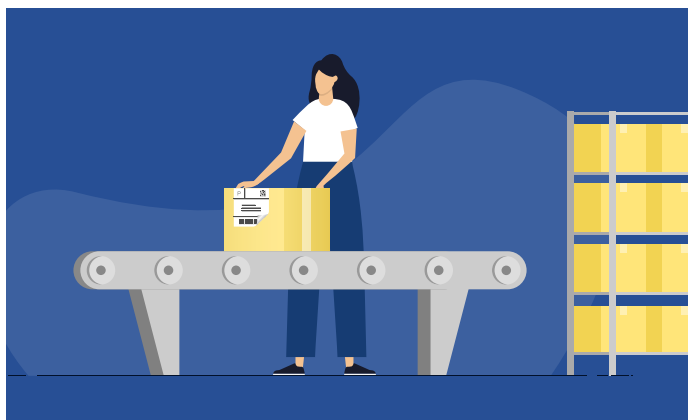
Where can you find free shipping supplies?

USPS®, UPS®, and FedEx® all offer various shipping supplies to get you started. You'll need to make UPS and FedEx accounts, and you can buy supplies from USPS through guest checkout. You can also order free USPS directly from your ShippingEasy account through Onyx® Products.
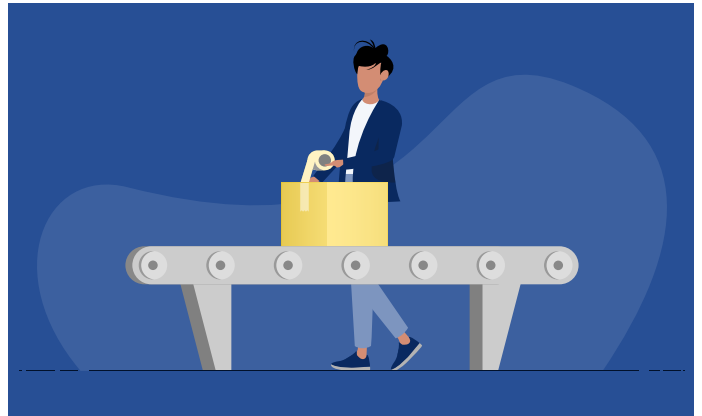
Should you sell to customers through multiple stores and marketplaces?

Multichannel selling opens your business up to more potential customers. Additionally, using multiple marketplaces such as Amazon and Etsy gives your business the opportunity to showcase different products based on the audience. ShippingEasy will even help you import and manage these orders from multiple channels.
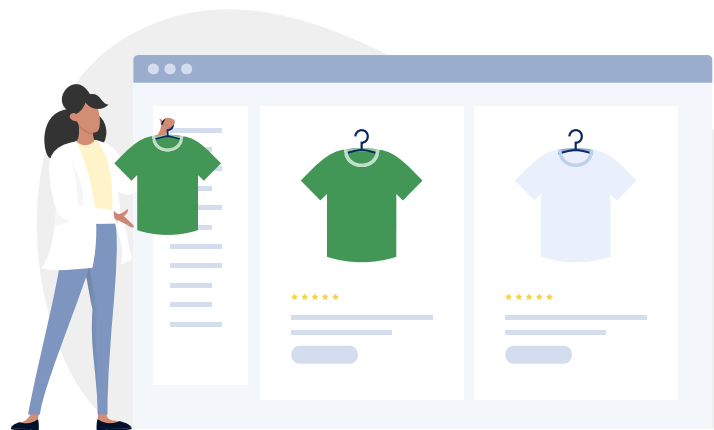
Utilizing your ShippingEasy Account

As you're discovering the best shipping process for your business, you can use features from ShippingEasy to choose the best way to ship moving forward. This ebook is all about learning which services work with which orders/ products, so it's time to learn about the customizable shipping rules available in-app. This way, you can see which carrier services are available to use with shipping automation and add shortcuts within ShippingEasy for your preferred packaging. Trust us, shipping automation is here to change your shipping process for the better!

> Take advantage of shipping automation with a **30-day free trial to ShippingEasy.**

Shipping rules: A set IF/THEN statement similar to cause and effect. For example, you could create a shipping rule to assign a specific carrier service to a specific set of orders. Some additional examples of shipping rules might include:

- IF [Order Total] is equal to [35], THEN [set shipping preset] [First Class Package Service]

- IF Store is equal to [Shopify], THEN set [packing slip template] to [Shopify packing slip template]

- IF Item Name is equal to [white shirt], THEN assign to [specific user]

Order tags: Customized phrases you can assign to your orders to make them easier to filter or use in your shipping rules. Say you wanted a way for expedited shipping orders to stand out. You could assign an order tag to orders where expedited shipping options were requested, or you could even create a shipping rule where orders with a specific tag need a signature confirmation service when delivered.
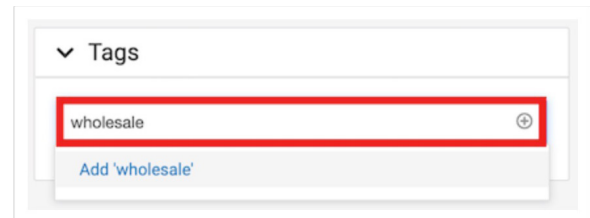
Shipping presets: Saved service and package combinations you can use within shipping rules or on the Orders page with ShippingEasy's rate quote recommendation or instant rate. Instant rate is a way to compare shipping rates between carriers in real-time, so you can find the best rate/ carrier service for your shipments.

Note: You can select up to 10 favorite presets to appear in the drop-down menu on the Ready to Ship page as well.
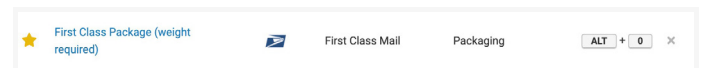
How does shipping automation help ShippingEasy merchants?

ShippingEasy customer Ashapops uses features like our rate calculator and address verification to streamline their shipping process. Comparing rates in real-time helps Jai and Asha Farswani's team find the best rate for their shipments, while address verification prevents orders from being returned.

40%
Reduction in shipment prep time

10x
Faster than their previous solution

50%
Reduction in the need for dedicated fulfillment staff

"Using ShippingEasy helped us just expedite this entire process and save on time, which definitely meant less labor. We were able to have someone [work part-time] on this versus needing somebody to do this full-time. It's a significant amount of time savings, which then translates into cost savings."

JAI FARSWANI
CEO, ASHAPOPS

Watch the User Story

WATCH VIDEO

"It was important that we had a central portal that would be able to create labels for us, not just for one carrier, but for multiple carriers, depending on what was the most cost-efficient option."

shipping easy® | PLANT-BASED SUPERFOOD SNACK
ASHAPOPS®
POPPED WATER LILY SEEDS

Measuring and weighing your shipments

With great shipping comes great responsibility. In other words, carriers have dimensional guidelines for their services, and you can be potentially charged additional shipping costs if you don't adhere to these guidelines. Before we get into these additional shipping costs, or adjustments, let's start with shipment weight.

What is Dimensional (DIM) weight?

DIM weight is weight calculated by your package's volume and not the number you see when you place your package on a scale. To find your package's DIM weight, you'll measure your package's length, width, and height to the nearest inch. Then, you'll multiply those numbers together to find the volume.

Volume = Length x Width x Height

What is billable weight?

Billable weight is the number a carrier will use to calculate your shipping cost. This might be the actual weight of your shipment or the DIM weight we mentioned earlier. Here's how to determine which weight will be used:

- If your shipment's volume (length x width x height) is under 1728, you'll be billed for your shipment's actual weight or the number you see on the scale.

- If your shipment's volume is over 1728 and you're using USPS or the UPS account included with ShippingEasy, you'll divide this number by 166 and compare it to the actual weight. Whichever one is the biggest is the one you'll be charged for!

- If you're using FedEx, you'll divide your shipment's volume by 139 and compare this number to your shipment's actual weight to see which one is larger to find which weight will be used to calculate your shipping rate.

Length x Width x Height = Total
Total/166

How to calculate DIM weight for USPS and UPS

What is girth?

The girth of your package is (2 x the width of your package) + (2 x the height of your package). You might need this number when deciding if a large package is mailable.

Girth = (2 x width) + (2 x height)
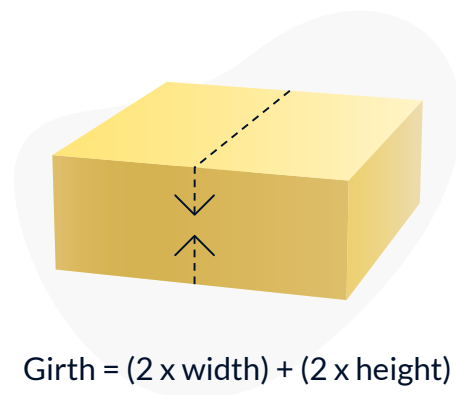
Scale up your shipping with a **30-day free trial to ShippingEasy!**

Additional USPS and UPS Handling fees

As we mentioned earlier, adjustments are additional shipping costs you can be charged if your shipment doesn't follow the measurement guidelines and restrictions given by your carrier of choice. One of these adjustments includes the USPS nonmachinable surcharge.

USPS nonmachinable surcharge

This one might sound a bit scary, but it's not as scary as you think! USPS mainly sorts mail and packages through machines, so when a package or piece of mail has to be sorted manually, it can be subject to a non-machineable surcharge. Reasons for this surcharge include:

- A piece of mail isn't a traditional size or shape
- The address on the package or piece of mail is hard to read
- The package or mail is hard for a machine to automatically sort

UPS additional handling fees

UPS also has additional handling fees to keep in mind. These extra fees are applied to your shipping costs for packages that need special/different handling than other shipments. Some of these additional handling fees include:

- Packages with the longest side over 48 inches or the second-longest side over 30 inches
- Domestic shipments over 50 pounds and international shipments over 70 pounds
- Packages with a combined length and girth [(2 x width) + (2 x height)] of 105 inches

When it comes to the weight and dimensional Additional Handling charges, as long as you've correctly entered your shipment's information, ShippingEasy will add the Additional Handling charge for you. For packing-related Additional Handling charges, we recommend confirming all of your packaging is correct before shipping.

USPS and UPS adjustments

USPS and UPS adjustments can be given to shipments with a weight and/or with dimensions over the limitations given to each service. We've broken some of these restrictions and potential fees associated with these restrictions below.

USPS dimensional guidelines

Commonly used USPS dimension limits to remember:

- Priority Mail Flat Rate® Boxes (Small, Medium, and Large) have a **maximum weight** of 70 pounds
- Parcel Select Ground shipments can be up to 70 pounds as well, but the length + girth need to be less than 130 inches (This is the reason we mentioned girth earlier!)

UPS dimensional guidelines

Three avoidable UPS adjustments are Over Maximum Size surcharges, Large Package surcharges, and Shipping Charge Corrections. Over Maximum Size surcharges are extra fees applied to your shipments:

- Exceeding UPS **maximum sizes** of 150 pounds
- Are over 108 inches long
- Have a combined length and girth of 165 inches
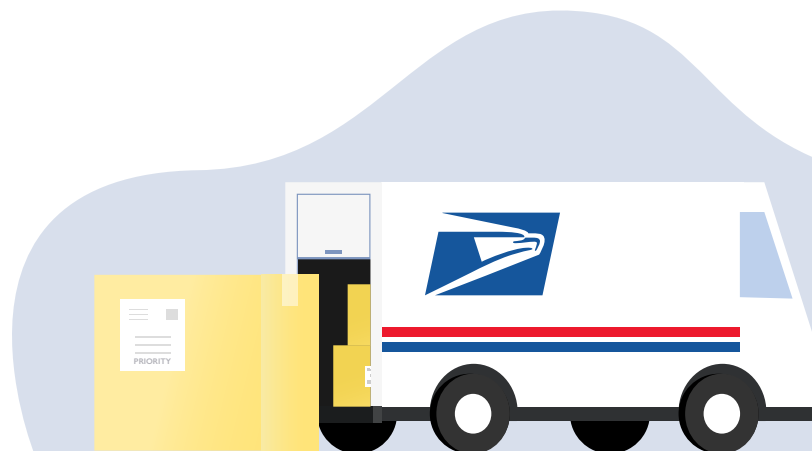
Shipping Charge Corrections are extra fees applied to each shipment with incorrect dimensions and/or weight. These charges are:

- $1 per shipment
- Also include the additional shipping cost needed for the corrected dimensions and/or weight
- Still subject to other surcharges like Additional Handling charges

Large Package surcharges are extra fees applied to your shipments when:

- A domestic package's length + girth are over 130 inches or its length is over 96 inches
- An international package's length + girth are over 130 inches
- Packages with a minimum billable weight of 90 pounds (except for UPS® Ground)

Do you have more questions about package sizes and dimensions? Learn more about shipment dimensions in **Shipping Unboxed: FAQs about Shipping Dimensions!**

Tracking your shipments and helping your customers track shipments

Congrats! You've packaged your orders and shipped them to your customers. How do you notify your customers their orders have shipped, and how can your customers track their shipments?

How to track USPS shipments

Priority Mail®, Priority Mail Express®, First-Class Package Service, and Media Mail (packages only) all offer tracking for your shipments. To track these services, you can either type in your tracking number on USPS's tracking website, or if you received a shipment confirmation email, you should be able to click the tracking number itself to follow your shipment's progress.

One quick note:
ShippingEasy will automatically send this information back to your integrated store or marketplace, so you don't have to copy and paste the tracking information for each and every order.

SERVICE	SAMPLE NUMBER	SERVICE	SAMPLE NUMBER
USPS Tracking®	9400 1000 0000 0000 0000 00	Priority Mail Express International®	EC 000 000 000 US
Priority Mail®	9205 5000 0000 0000 0000 00	Priority Mail Express®	9270 1000 0000 0000 0000 00
Certified Mail®	9407 3000 0000 0000 0000 00		EA 000 000 000 US
Collect On Delivery Hold For Pickup	9303 3000 0000 0000 0000 00	Priority Mail International®	CP 000 000 000 US
Global Express Guaranteed®	82 000 000 00	Registered Mail™	9208 8000 0000 0000 0000 00
		Signature Confirmation™	9202 1000 0000 0000 0000 00

Image source: USPS

How to track UPS shipments

Similarly to USPS, you can enter your tracking number on the UPS® website or click the link in your shipment confirmation email to follow your package's journey.
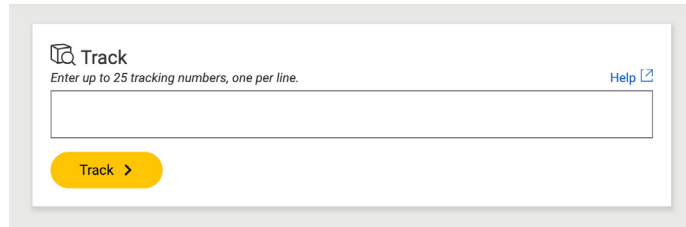

Image source: UPS

How to track FedEx shipments

Sorry for the deja vu, but the same thing for USPS and UPS goes for FedEx! You can either enter your number on FedEx's website or click the link in your shipment confirmation email.
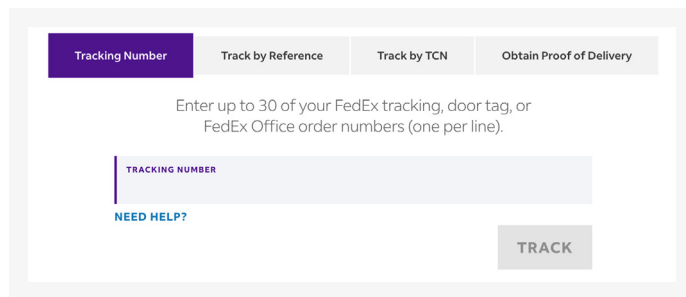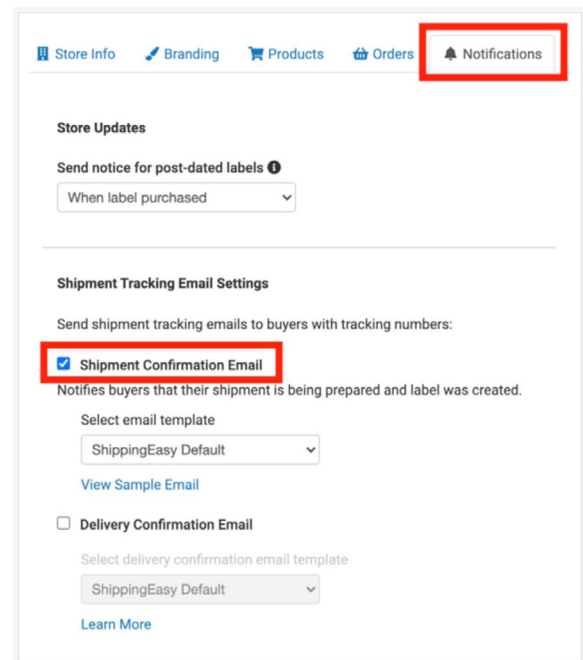

*Image source: FedEx*

Confirmation emails

Confirmation emails are emails sent to your customer when their order is shipped and when their order has been delivered. You can customize confirmation email templates in ShippingEasy or use the default templates we've created for our merchants. Your customers will automatically receive these emails if:

- Your store supports these emails*
- Your store settings have confirmation emails enabled
- Your customer gave their email address with their order
- Your order isn't a drop ship order – In this case, we'll send an email when the order is downloaded, but we won't send one when the order is shipped or delivered.

*Note:

Amazon, Jane, Reverb, Wish, and Paypal aren't eligible for confirmation emails.
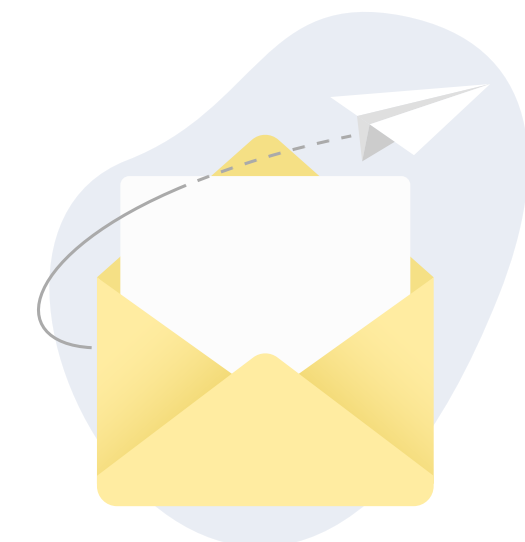
Branded Tracking

Branded tracking, or branded notifications, are confirmation emails where you can include your brand's logo, color scheme, and voice. These emails can be sent for domestic and international USPS, UPS, and FedEx shipments, with the exception of USPS First-Class Large Flat/Envelopes. These emails really make your brand stand out from other small businesses. If you're a ShippingEasy merchant and need help enabling your Branded Tracking, reach out to our award-winning Support team.

Two things to note:

- Like confirmation emails, these emails can't be used with Amazon, Jane, Reverb, Wish, or PayPal.

- Also, if you use our customer marketing feature, these emails will override any existing order campaigns.

Start using branded tracking today with **ShippingEasy!**

This is an example of a branded tracking email from ShippingEasy.

Creating an effective return policy

Another big part of ecommerce involves returns — sometimes clothing doesn't fit or items just aren't what your customer expected. Your store should have an easy-to-follow return policy, so your customers understand the available returns window, how the holidays impact your return policy, and know how to start the returns process. Good things to include in your return policy are:

- **Your returns window** - Be specific on the timeline and include if this window starts at the time of purchase or at the date of delivery
- **Whether or not your customer will need to pay for return shipping** - We recommend offering free returns whenever possible
- **Contact information for your business** - Periodically check your customer support channels to confirm they're working, too
- **Holiday return information** - Update return policy for the holidays in the fall/at the very beginning of the holiday season so customers aren't caught off-guard
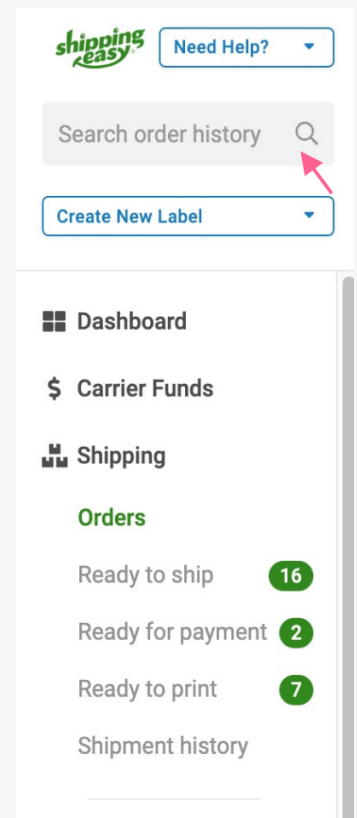
Don't be afraid to regularly check your returns policy, especially the closer it gets to the holiday season. Remember that the person returning the shipment might not be the same one who purchased it, so you have the opportunity to gain a new customer by giving them a stress-free returns process.

Keep the returns process stress–free with **ShippingEasy!**

Pictured: Global Search Bar in ShippingEasy

What are prepaid return labels?

Our study with Retail Economics found 18.3% of customers believe convenient returns are the most important factor when deciding whether or not to purchase from a business. That's where prepaid return labels come in.

A prepaid return label* is a label you pay for from the funds in your account like a regular label. The difference between this label and a regular shipping label is a prepaid return label has your address as the recipient, and your customer's address as the sender, so your customer can return their shipment. For ShippingEasy merchants, prepaid return labels can be created from your Shipment History or by searching for the order in your Global Search Bar. These labels will be emailed directly to your customers if they entered an email address with their order, or you can download the PDF to email your customers.

*Note: You can't generate a return label in ShippingEasy for:

- International shipments
- UPS shipments with a declared value of more than $100
- Amazon shipments because Amazon requires return labels to be uploaded to your Seller Account

How to cancel labels

Say your customer reaches out immediately after placing their order and needs to cancel their shipment. You've created the label, but you haven't shipped the package. What should you do? Here's how label cancellation works by carrier:

- **USPS** – Can be canceled within 28 days of purchase and hasn't moved passed "Accepted" on a SCAN form. The refund will show on your account around 21 days after the refund has been requested. (A SCAN form is a form that combines the information from all of your shipments into one barcode, so your mail carrier can scan one barcode instead of scanning all of your shipments individually).
- **UPS labels**: within 30 days of purchase*
- **FedEx** – Must be canceled on or before the ship date. If you need to cancel one shipment in a multi-box shipment, the entire group of labels will need to be canceled.

*__Note:__ Labels purchased through a personal UPS account integrated with ShippingEasy will be invoiced separately, and return labels won't be charged unless used.

On the flip side, say your customer decides they actually want to keep an item you've created a prepaid return label for. You can cancel USPS and UPS prepaid return labels if:
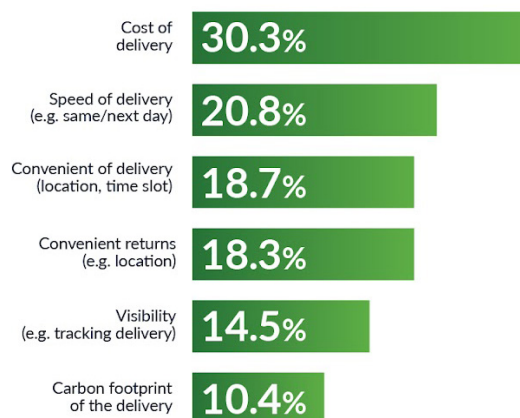
- They haven't been used on a USPS SCAN form
- Your USPS label is canceled within 28 days of purchase
- Your UPS label is canceled within 30 days of purchase*

*__Note:__ Return labels purchased through a personal UPS account integrated with ShippingEasy won't be charged unless the label is used.

Ways to offer free shipping

Along with convenient returns, our study with Retail Economics found that 30.3% of customers say the cost of delivery is the number one factor in determining whether or not they'll buy from a business. Offering free shipping can not only help with cart abandonment rates but keep customers coming back to your store.

What's important to consumers.

|	
Cost of delivery	**30.3%**
Speed of delivery (e.g. same/next day)	**20.8%**
Convenient of delivery (location, time slot)	**18.7%**
Convenient returns (e.g. location)	**18.3%**
Visibility (e.g. tracking delivery)	**14.5%**
Carbon footprint of the delivery	**10.4%**

Findings from ShippingEasy and Retail Economics study

If your business isn't able to offer free shipping outright, consider offering free shipping over a certain threshold. This gives your customers an incentive for making a larger purchase, especially if they're only a few dollars away from the free shipping threshold. Also, reward repeat customers with promo and discount codes for free shipping and/or exclusive sales. Thanking loyal customers is just as important as landing new customers.

Use ShippingEasy's rate calculator to help offer your customers free shipping with **your 30-day free trial.**
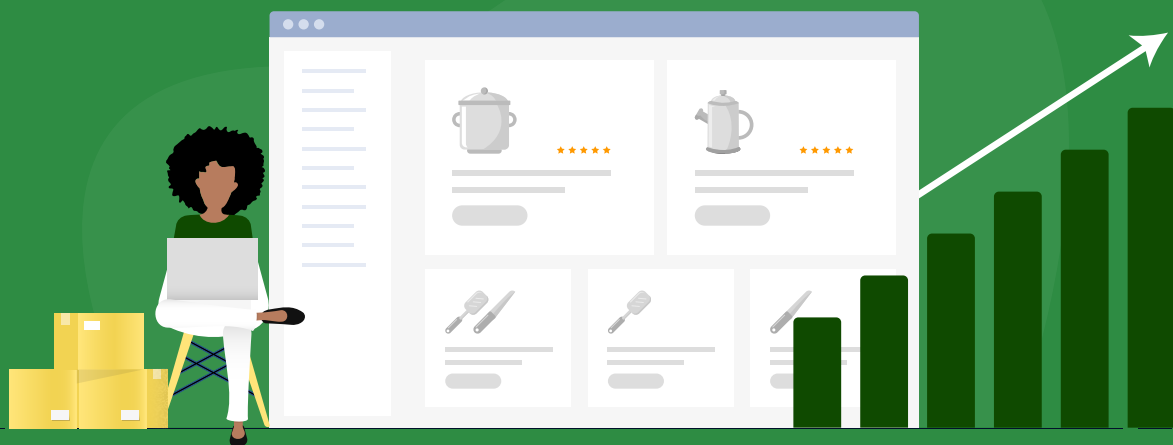
Additional Resources

How to cancel a USPS shipping label

How to offer free shipping

How to earn repeat business

Shipping 101

Shipping 201

Shipping 301

Shipping rules

Order tags

Shipping presets

ShippingEasy customer Ashapops case study

FAQs on tracking shipments

Priority Mail® full breakdown

Shipping confirmation emails

What is Media Mail?

USPS tracking

UPS tracking

FedEx tracking

ShippingEasy store settings

Drop-shipping in ShippingEasy

FAQs about returns

Essential consumer shipping expectations

How to ship jewelry

Amazon Prime Day prep

How to Ship Specialty Products

Let's take everything you've learned so far about shipping and apply it to specialty products. The specialty products we'll be discussing are shipments that will need additional packaging, labels, and/or paperwork. Items like perishable food and baked goods may follow a different process than items like jewelry and toiletries, but they're all still items that require additional steps. Without further ado, we present all of the items in our How To series (so far).

Quick Links:

Food

Jewelry

Toiletries
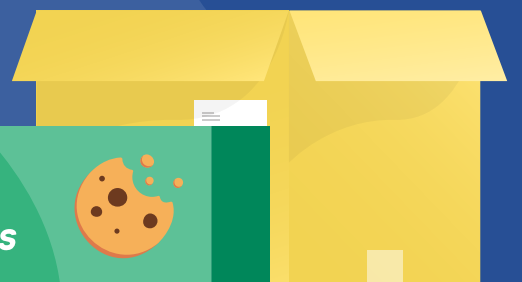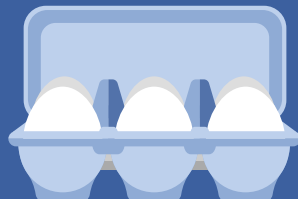
Plants

Clothes

Musical Equipment

Fragile Items

International Packages

How to Ship Food

Before we continue the journey into the world of shipping food, let's define what kind of perishable mail we're going to talk about in this section. USPS considers perishable mail to be "anything that can deteriorate in the mail and thereby lose value...under ordinary mailing conditions." USPS also considers perishable mail to be sent at the shipper's own risk. That's why knowing the guidelines for this specific class of mail is crucial.

When shipping food with USPS, anything that can deteriorate quickly isn't able to be mailed, including fresh fruits and veggies. However, dried fruits and veggies are in! Items such as eggs and meat can only be mailed domestically, and there are specialized requirements for sending both.

Eggs

Each egg needs to have its own secure cushioning, and the entire shipment needs to be packaged in a way that will enable the eggs to hold up to any shifting or movement during transit. It's also super important that the eggs be packaged in a way that keeps them from being affected by any temperature changes. Anything perishable needs to be marked as perishable as well.

Meat

Sending meat can be a little tricky, but as long as you follow the guidelines from USPS you should be all set. Only meats in accordance with USDA regulations can be sent domestically through USPS. If the meat is being sent with dry ice, there are dry ice specifications to keep in mind. Here's a little more information about dry ice packaging from USPS:

"Dry ice is permitted to be mailed when it is used as a refrigerant to cool the content of a mailable hazardous or nonhazardous material. Packages containing dry ice must be packed in containers that permit the release of carbon dioxide gas and conform to 49 CFR 173.217 and 175.10(a)(10). Mailpieces containing dry ice are subject to the following conditions, as applicable:

1. **International Mail**. Dry ice is prohibited.
2. **Domestic Mail via Air Transportation**. Dry ice is permitted in quantities of up to 5 pounds per mailpiece. Mailpieces containing dry ice are subject to the conditions for Packaging Instruction 9A in Appendix C, as applicable.
3. **Domestic Mail via Surface Transportation**. A mailpiece sent via surface transportation may contain more than 5 pounds of dry ice. Mailpiece preparation is subject to the conditions for Packaging Instruction 9A in Appendix C.

Note: A mailpiece that is prepared for surface transportation must not, under any circumstances, be routed via air transportation."

As with eggs, meats need to be marked as perishable on the package so that they are handled properly by USPS. For more information on sending perishable items and other unique products, check the guide on mailability from USPS.

Are you hungry for a more streamlined shipping process? Start your 30-day free trial of ShippingEasy **today!**

Additional Resources

5 Perishable Matter | Postal Explorer

54 Eggs | Postal Explorer

Mail Order Food Safety

349 Miscellaneous Hazardous Materials (Hazard Class 9) | Postal Explorer

Appendix C | Postal Explorer

How to Ship Baked Goods

In this section, we're going to cover baked goods like pies, cookies, brownies, and other non-refrigerated baked goods. Sweets like ice cream and perishable goodies need additional specialty packaging and have additional carrier guidelines.

Follow us on **LinkedIn** and stay tuned for more shipping tips!

Your flaky and crumbly pastries are meant to be enjoyed as a whole treat, not in flakes and crumbles! Secure baked goods by using the correct size packaging — don't place your treats in oversized boxes. And, consider double-packaging your baked goods to create more layers of cushioning.

Lastly, despite how strange it sounds, include a piece of white bread in the container with your cookies and similar treats. The bread will provide moisture for your cookies and keep them tasty. But, like Rob Zaleski, Brand Manager for ShippingEasy mentioned, it might be worth adding a note to your packing slip, so your customers aren't confused.

"If you're shipping anything that will crumble in your hand, it'll crumble in the box too."

JOSH WILLIAMS
SENIOR MANAGER SALES – GROWTH ACCOUNTS

Additional Resources

10 Things to Know About Shipping Food and Fragile Items - Postal Posts

How to ship baked goods

Customize packing slips

How to Ship Coffee

While coffee has a longer shelf life than most perishable foods, you still want products to arrive fresh for your customers. So, it might be better to ship your coffee products using a carrier service with a shorter estimated delivery window and available tracking. USPS®, UPS®, and FedEx® all offer affordable services that include tracking options, so you can give your customers more transparency and security in the shipping process.

Cubic

Cubic rates are worth noting because they are majorly discounted when compared to Priority Mail shipments and don't increase in cost based on the destination. Cubic is great for small, heavy packages:

- Between 2-20 pounds
- Shipped using one of the USPS Priority Mail® services
- With maximum shipment dimensions of 12x12x12
- Where tracking is needed
- When your customer is okay with a 1-3 day delivery window

UPS® Ground

UPS® Ground gives your business:

- Day-definite delivery in 1-5 days
- Free tracking information for your shipment, 24/7
- Savings up to 78% when using UPS® through ShippingEasy

UPS® Ground packages can weigh up to 150 pounds and be up to 108 inches long, so you have plenty of packaging space for your products.

Plus, UPS® Ground is available to all 50 states and Puerto Rico, so you can share your products with customers across the country.

FedEx Home Delivery®

FedEx Home Delivery provides:

- Tracking for your shipments
- A services for packages up to 150 lbs
- A 1-5 delivery window*
- Weekday and weekend delivery

One of the only big things to note is, currently, FedEx Home Delivery can't deliver to PO boxes. But, you can submit a request to FedEx directly to have a package delivered to a FedEx location instead.

The delivery window for Alaskan and Hawaiian shipments is 3-7 days.

How does ShippingEasy help me ship coffee?

ShippingEasy merchant RhoadsRoast Coffees® ships domestically as well as internationally to several different countries. Using services like Cubic helps RhoadRoast Coffees® to save on their shipping costs while still being able to ship to customers across the US. Plus, additional features like customer marketing through ShippingEasy enable RhoadsRoast Coffees® to promote new blends and create campaigns geared towards new and returning customers.

"We were so focused on customer service, having the best Turkish roasters, producing top notch products, and marketing the business, we had no idea how the right shipping platform could really improve business."

ANDREA RHOADS
OWNER OF RHOADSROAST COFFEES®

Tips for shipping coffee

- **Wrapping your coffee**: If the bag does happen to get ripped in transit adding extra layers of bubble wrap can help contain everything inside and seal in the flavor until it arrives to your customer. Also, if your business offers pre-ground blends, an extra layer of protection can prevent spillage.

- **Filling any spaces**: When getting your items ready for shipping, the box used should be larger than the bag itself to avoid it being accidentally ripped during shipping. However, any gaps between your items and the box should be filled with crumbled paper, bubble wrap, and other items.

- **Using bags with degassing valves when possible**: Your customer's order will more than likely travel for several days until it reaches your customers. Using bags with degassing valves allows the coffee to continue to release any gasses. This way, the chance of any air bubbles disrupting the flavor of your customers' coffee is decreased while it's brewing.

Start your morning off with a cup of affordable shipping options and a **30-day free trial.**

Additional Resources

How to ship food with USPS

FAQs about USPS

FAQs about UPS and your UPS Account

Communicate with Holiday Customers

Shipping to PO Boxes

RhoadsRoast Brews Up Shipping Success

Coffee Degassing; What Does It Mean For Brewers & Roasters? - Perfect Daily Grind.

Domestic Shipping | UPS - United States

FedEx Home Delivery

RhodesRoast Coffees reaches global and retail expansion with ShippingEasy.

How to Ship Ice Cream

Note: Package acceptance is at each carrier's discretion, so we recommend reaching out to your carrier directly before shipping.

Shipping with dry ice

Dry ice is carbon dioxide in a solid form. Its form makes it great for shipping frozen foods because instead of melting into water, it turns into a gas. Using dry ice is beneficial for shipping ice cream, but there are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- Use gloves when handling dry ice – its extremely cold temperature can burn your skin.
- Don't tightly seal your shipment – the gas released as dry ice evaporates can lead your package to burst and cause damages to your product and carrier equipment.

Where to find dry ice

Dry ice is commonly found in grocery stores, chain stores, and sometimes even gas stations. Companies like Airgas provide delivery options for dry ice to qualifying areas and have brick-and-mortar locations as well. For more information regarding those services, reach out to their customer support team.

Shipping with dry ice through USPS, UPS, and FedEx

USPS

- Any shipments containing dry ice are required to have a Class 9 Dot label (example at the end of this section).
- Dry ice can only be shipped domestically.
- The weight of the dry ice used in your shipments needs to be noted separately. The services available to you are dependent on the amount of dry ice in your shipment.

- Packages containing dry ice can't be tightly sealed – As we mentioned earlier, dry ice turns to carbon dioxide, and gases expand, so without ventilation, packages can explode and cause damage.
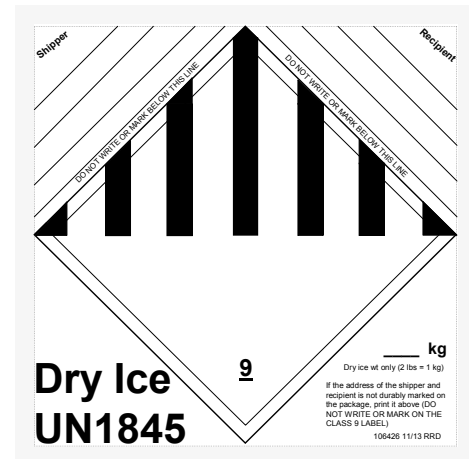- For more information and guidance, contact USPS Customer Support.


Image source: FedEx
Example of a Class 9 Dot label for dry ice shipments

UPS

Because dry ice shipments are not regulated for ground transport, simply process these shipments to/from the U.S. 48 contiguous states as you would any of your UPS® Ground shipments. Use the following information for U.S. Domestic Air Shipments:

For all diagnostic or medical treatment purposes packages shipped with dry ice (prepared under 49 CFR):

- No Hazardous Material Agreement is required.
- No Hazardous Material Shipping Papers are required.
- No acceptance audit is performed and no Hazardous Material accessorial charges will be applied.
- Process through the most current version of WorldShip or compatible software.
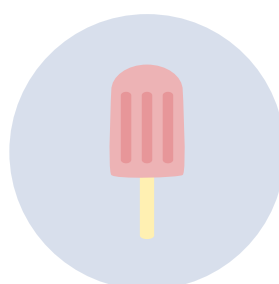
- Mark the outer carton with:
  - The words "Dry Ice for Medical Purposes" or "Dry ice for Diagnostic Purposes."
  - The amount of dry ice contained in the package.
  - No other paperwork is required.
- Shippers may obtain "Dry Ice for Diagnostic or Medical Purposes" stickers (Item #011127) online or by calling 1-800-554-9964.

For non-medical, non-hazardous U.S. domestic air packages with 2.5 kg (5.5 pounds) or less of dry ice (prepared under 49 CFR):

- No Hazardous Material Agreement is required.
- No Hazardous Material Shipping Papers required.
- No acceptance audit is performed, and no hazardous material accessorial charges will be applied.
- Process through the most current version of WorldShip or compliant software.
- Mark the outer carton with:
  - The words "Dry Ice" or "Carbon Dioxide, Solid."
  - A description of the non-hazardous contents (e.g. food, meat).
  - The amount of the dry ice contained in the package (or a statement that there is 2.5 kg [5.5 pounds] or less in the package).
  - No other paperwork is required for these packages.

For non-medical U.S. domestic packages with greater than 2.5 kg (5.5 pounds) of dry ice IATA or 49CFR regulations:

- Process through the most current version of WorldShip, CampusShip or compliant software (see UPS Rate and Service Guide for dry ice accessorial fee).
- An acceptance audit is performed.
- Mark the outer carton with:
  - The words "Dry Ice" or "Carbon Dioxide, Solid" and "UN1845."
  - The amount of dry ice contained in the package in KG.
- Apply the Class 9 diamond hazard label (optional for 49CFR).

Note:

When the contents inside a package with dry ice are hazardous materials, please follow normal UPS Hazardous Materials procedures for that commodity in preparing your shipment. For assistance, please call the UPS Hazardous Materials Support Center at 1-800-554-9964, or visit our online Hazardous Materials Guide.
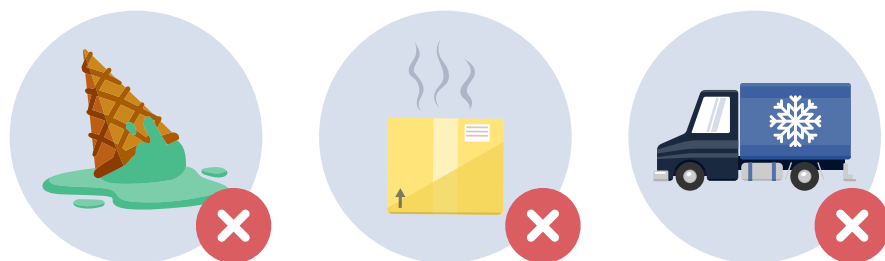
FedEx

- Not all FedEx locations can accept dry ice shipments. If your location doesn't allow for dry ice shipments, your package will have to be given to FedEx directly via scheduled pickup.

- Similar to USPS, all dry ice shipments must have Class 9 Dot labels.

- Dry ice shipments can be shipped internationally but require additional labeling and information found on their website.

- FedEx offers cooling supplies for dry ice shipments

- According to their website, FedEx provides specific support for these types of packages:

- For more information and comprehensive guidelines, contact the FedEx Dangerous Goods/Hazardous Materials Hotline at 1.800.GoFedEx **1.800.463.3339**; press "**81**" or say "dangerous goods," then press "**4**" for the next available dangerous goods agent.

In addition to dry ice shipping requirements, USPS, UPS, and FedEx have other regulations for shipping ice cream.

Shipping ice cream with USPS

Much like with food and other perishable items, your shipment needs to be clearly marked as perishable on the package itself. Shipping with dry ice and ice cream also requires special documentation. For your shipment to be shipped through USPS, three copies of the Declaration for Dangerous Goods must be included, with one copy being attached to the front of your shipment in a plastic pouch.

One of the biggest things to remember when shipping ice cream with USPS is they offer no refrigeration services with their shipping, so shipping frozen items comes at your own risk. Plan ahead when preparing your shipment to include any USPS holidays and Sundays because your shipment won't be delivered during those time frames. **Lastly, packages with leaks or odors aren't able to be shipped with USPS and won't be accepted.**

This is an example of a Declaration of Dangerous Goods. Image Source: USPS

Shipping ice cream with UPS

UPS requires all perishable items to be marked as perishable on the shipment itself. UPS also recommends the following:

- Prepare your shipment for 30 hours of transit in case of delays.

- Plan to ship your package earlier in the week because UPS has holidays and non-delivery times.

- Use a guaranteed service such as UPS Next Day Air®. This service is an overnight service, so your shipment will arrive on the next business day.

Shipping ice cream with FedEx

FedEx also suggests preparing your shipment for 30-40 hours of transit and shipping your packages early in the week because of FedEx holidays and other non-delivery days. FedEx also recommends the following:

- Packaging shipments in a way where they will be secure if the shipment moves in transit

- Having a foam container on the inside of your package that is at least 1.5 inches thick to avoid any leaks

- Using a FedEx overnight service such as FedEx First Overnight®, FedEx Priority Overnight®, or FedEx Standard Overnight® to cut down on your shipment's travel time

Similiar to other carriers, FedEx vehicles don't have refrigeration so your shipment will need to be packaged for different temperatures. Additionally, polystyrene foam can't be used on the outside of your shipment unless your business has been given permission by FedEx. For more information on FedEx limitations, reach out to FedEx directly.

Additional Resources

Customer Care - Airgas National Carbonation

Dry Ice Home Delivery | Airgas

349 Miscellaneous Hazardous Materials (Hazard Class 9) | Postal Explorer

How Do I Keep My Mailed Item Cold or Refrigerated?

FedEx Locations

How to Ship Perishables | FedEx

Refrigerated and Cold Shipping | FedEx

Shipping Restrictions - What Can You Send in the Mail? | USPS

Shipping Ice Cream

326 Shipping Papers | Postal Explorer

5 Perishable Matter | Postal Explorer

Holidays and Events - Newsroom

Overnight Shipping for Next Day Delivery | FedEx.

SHIPPING DRY ICE - Fedex.com

2023 FedEx holiday service schedule

Note: Alcohol can't be shipped through USPS or the UPS account included with ShippingEasy, so we won't be covering how to ship alcohol in this ebook.

How to Ship Jewelry

One of the biggest considerations when shipping jewelry is the type of insurance and/or liability coverage included with your shipment. Carriers like USPS provide insurance while UPS and FedEx have liability insurance with declared value options. We'll cover your options, so you can keep your jewelry safe and sound!

Shipping jewelry with USPS

USPS doesn't explicitly state limitations on shipping jewelry, so we recommend reaching out to them directly for more information. However, some USPS services do automatically include certain amounts of insurance, usually up to $100-$200.
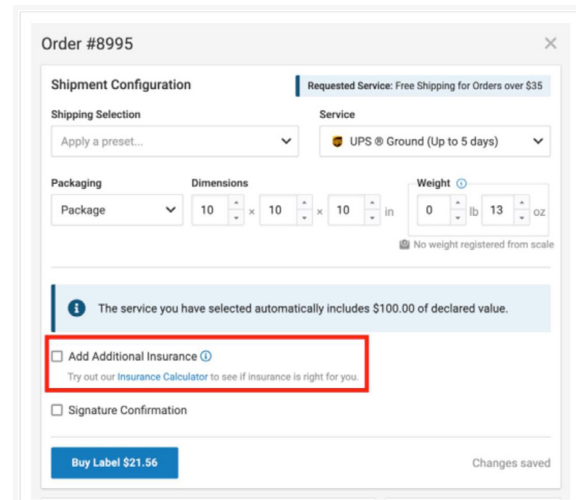
Only specific USPS services have built-in insurance options, including Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express. ShippingEasy users have access to Commercial rates, so Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express shipments are eligible for up to $100 in USPS insurance. This amount varies with international shipments and whether valuable jewelry or documents are being shipped.

Shipping jewelry with UPS

UPS has restrictions on which types of jewelry they'll accept. Gold jewelry and precious gemstones/metals can't be shipped through their services without a contract with UPS. For more information on these restrictions, we recommend reaching out to UPS directly.

UPS Declared Value

UPS Declared Value is a liability coverage service for products where UPS will potentially pay the cost of a lost or damaged item. UPS includes up to $100 in declared value for all shipments, but we have good news! ShippingEasy gives users the ability to add more than $100 of declared value on the Ready to Ship page or Orders page, so you can increase the amount of liability coverage on your shipment as needed.

This is an example of adding UPS Declared Value on the Orders page.

With the UPS account included with your ShippingEasy account, you can only include up to $100 of declared value on their shipments and must use additional insurance options. ShippingEasy does have a UPS integration available for users, so your personal UPS account can be connected for additional declared value amounts*.

*UPS surcharges may apply to declared value amounts over $100

Shipping jewelry with FedEx

If your business plans to ship jewelry regularly, FedEx does offer a Jewelry Shipping Program for some account holders. FedEx doesn't offer much information on their jewelry shipping limitations, so we recommend reaching out to them directly for more information on restrictions and their Jewelry Shipping Program.

FedEx offers a declared value service for shipments up to $100. ShippingEasy users do have the option to add more declared value to their shipments for an additional FedEx surcharge.

> Choosing carrier services in real-time has a nice ring to it! Signup for a **30-day free trial today.**

Shipping insurance

Not having protection like shipping insurance can make a bad situation even worse. If your heart is racing and your palms are sweaty, it's okay! We're going to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about insurance.

Q: How does shipping insurance help with damaged packages?

A: Shipping insurance helps cover broken/damaged items, so you aren't left paying for a replacement out of your own pocket. If an item arrives damaged, you can file a claim with your carrier of choice and potentially recoup the cost of replacing the items for a customer.

Q: Why are packages lost?

A: A package can be lost as the result of several things, including:

- An invalid tracking number
- Packages being stored incorrectly at the shipping warehouse
- Items falling out of a truck
- Delivery people taking packages to the wrong address
- Thieves targeting packages left out on doorsteps

Q: How does insurance work with international shipments?

A: Some carriers also apply limits to what insurance claims can be filed if you find yourself with lost packages. For more information on international shipping insurance, we recommend reaching out to your carrier directly.

Q: How does ShippingEasy help me avoid lost shipments?

A: ShippingEasy uses the USPS address verification and the Melissa Data Global Address Check tools to help validate your domestic and international shipments, respectively. If your address can't be verified, you have the option to update the address using one of our suggestions.

How to file a claim

Package theft and damages unfortunately come with the shipping territory, so it's better to familiarize yourself and your customers with the claims process sooner rather than later. Each carrier has a different process for filing claims, so we're going to break down USPS, UPS, and FedEx's processes below!

Filing a claim with USPS

To file your claim with USPS, you'll first need:

- The tracking number for your package
- The PDF of your shipments label – You can find this PDF in ShippingEasy by going to your **Shipment History** > **Finding your shipment** > **Actions** > **Reprint** > **Label** (with the paper icon)
- Proof of purchase from your Stamps.com account

Once you have all of this information, check to see if your claim falls within these designated timeframes:

Domestic Services

- Insured Mail (includes Priority Mail) – 15 to 60 days
- Priority Mail Express – 7 to 60 days
- APO/FPO/DPO Priority Mail Express – 21 to 180 days
- APO/FPO/DPO Priority Mail Express – 21 to 180 days

International Services

- Priority Mail Express International® – 3 to 90 days
- Priority Mail Express International with Guarantee – 3 to 30 days
- Priority Mail International – 7 days to 6 months
- Registered Mail Service – 7 days to 6 months

After you have all of your info printed, and check your claim is within the timeframes above, you're all set to file your domestic or international insurance claim with USPS online or in person. If you purchased additional insurance through ShippingEasy, you'll need to file a separate claim after filing one with USPS.

Note: Don't throw out your damaged package until your claim is approved because USPS might ask for more photos or information, and your claim will be denied if you trash it!
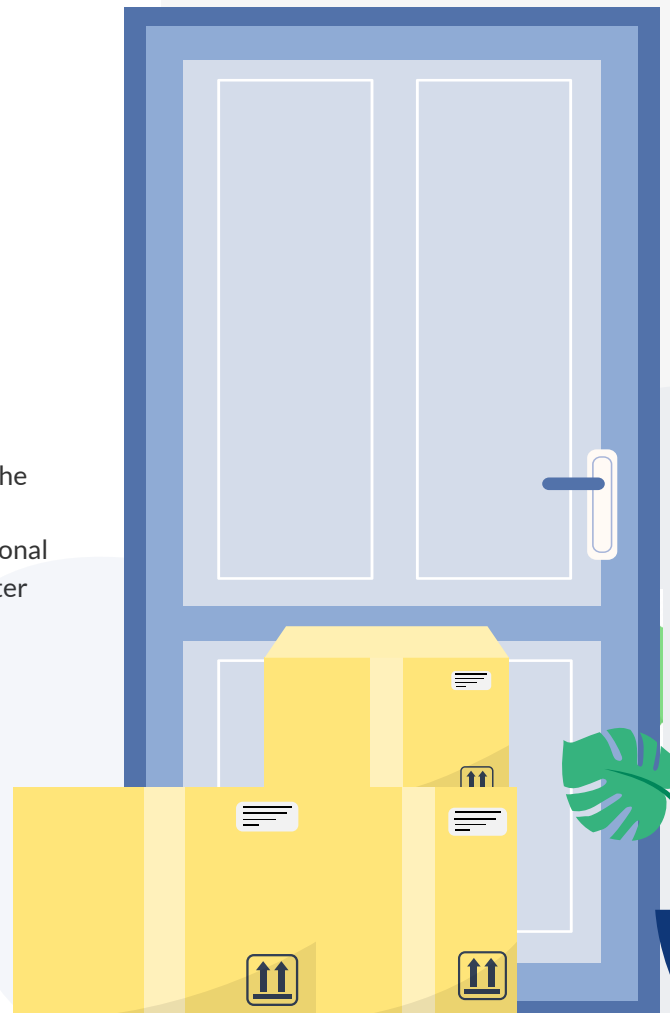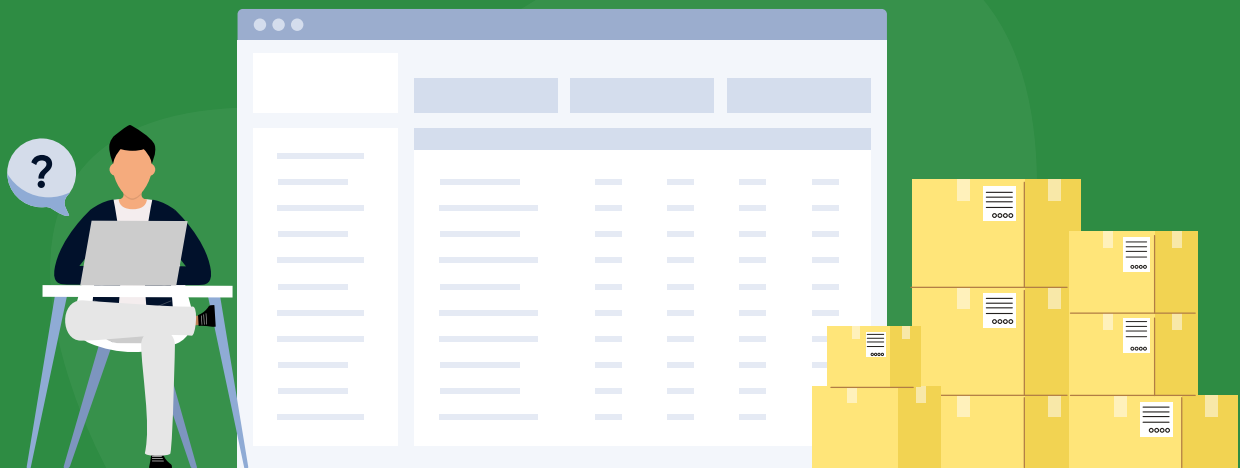
Filing a claim with UPS

If you brought an existing UPS account to ShippingEasy, insurance claims for packages sent through your personal UPS will have to be filed with UPS directly.

If you opened a UPS account on ShippingEasy, claims for shipments are submitted through our team. The easiest way to give the guidelines and restrictions for the latter type of claim is through this checklist:

☐ UPS must receive notice of claims within sixty days after delivery of the package or, in case of failure to make delivery, within sixty days after the date of scheduled delivery.

☐ Partially-completed filled claims forms can't be processed. If there is an issue with your submitted claims form, you'll get an email from our team

☐ Claims can take up to three weeks to be processed

☐ If your claim is denied, you can appeal it by submitting a new claim with new or updated information.

Filing a claim with FedEx

FedEx claims will also be filed with FedEx directly. FedEx uses declared value, which is the largest amount they'll cover for any damages or package loss. FedEx shipments have a default of $100 of coverage, and additional declared value can be purchased in ShippingEasy for a fee. We'll talk more about insurance in our next section, but extra insurance can be purchased for these shipments through ShippingEasy as well.

Additional Resources

Shipping Jewelry

File a Claim | FedEx

File a USPS Claim: Domestic

https://www.usps.com/help/international-claims.htm

FedEx Jewelry Shipping Program

Shipping Insurance and Delivery Services | USPS

Shipping Insurance in ShippingEasy

2022 Package Theft Annual Report | Security.org

International Shipping & Mailing | USPS

How to File an Insurance Claim with USPS, UPS, and FedEx

How to Ship Toiletries

Note: We'll only be focusing on paste, cream, and liquid-based toiletries. Aerosol-based toiletries have different regulations and packaging needs, so we've included some resources below and recommend reaching out to your carrier directly with any additional questions you may have.

- Shipping aerosols with USPS
- Shipping aerosols with UPS
- Shipping aerosols with FedEx

Shipping toiletries with USPS

When shipping toiletries with USPS, creams and pastes are considered to be non-hazardous liquids, meaning many of the guidelines for these toiletries are similar to shipping liquids. Creams, pastes, and liquids with push-down tops have to be mailed using a "strong and securely sealed outer packaging," as these items can open in transit and potentially damage other shipments and USPS equipment.

If liquid toiletries weigh over four ounces and are in nonmetal containers and/or have push-down tops, your shipment must be triple-packaged. One of the layers in the packaging must include a material to potentially soak up the entire volume of liquid if it should spill. Other guidelines include:

- Items with an "obnoxious odor" can't be mailed
- Perfumes containing alcohol can be mailed domestically but not internationally or with air-based services.

For more information on shipping toiletries, contact USPS.

Shipping toiletries with UPS

UPS advises taking the temperature and the time your product will spend in transit under consideration. For example, if your product is going through hot or cold weather conditions, it might impact how your product arrives at its final destination. However, UPS currently doesn't have restrictions for shipping these paste, cream, and or liquid-based toiletries domestically.*
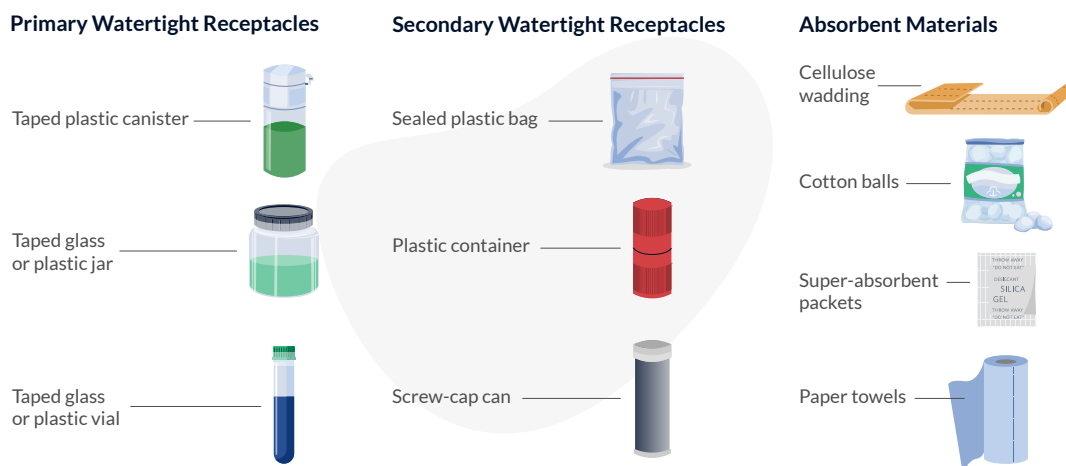
***Note:** The guidance above doesn't include toiletries with regulated substances like CBD and/or hemp.

Shipping toiletries with FedEx

FedEx doesn't provide many regulations for shipping paste and cream-based toiletries, so similar to USPS, we're including their guidelines for shipping liquid-based products. When shipping liquid-based toiletries with FedEx, all products have to use four layers of packaging:

- Primary watertight inner receptacle
- Absorbent material
- Secondary watertight inner receptacle.
- Sturdy outer packaging

FedEx recommends packing all bottles upright to keep them from moving around in transit and potentially spilling. FedEx also allows for up to eight gallons of liquids within your shipment.

Primary Watertight Receptacles

Taped plastic canister

Taped glass or plastic jar

Taped glass or plastic vial

Secondary Watertight Receptacles

Sealed plastic bag

Plastic container

Screw-cap can

Absorbent Materials

Cellulose wadding

Cotton balls

Super-absorbent packets

Paper towels

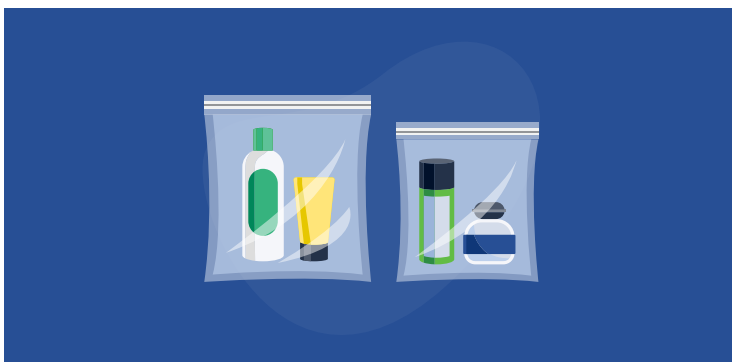# Tips for shipping toiletries

- Label the inside and outside of shipments in case of spills

- Cover both addresses in tape to keep them legible

- Plastic baggies and other plastic, sealable inserts are recommended and extremely helpful in the case of leaks

Additional Resources

How to Ship Toiletries

How to Ship Liquids

Shipping Restrictions - What Can You Send in the Mail? | USPS

Shipping Hazardous Materials (Dangerous Goods)

How to Ship Hazardous Materials | FedEx

45 Other Restricted Materials | Postal Explorer

USPS Proposes Changes to Liquid Shipping Guidelines - Stamps.com Blog

123 Mailability Premise | Postal Explorer

Ebay Sellers - Tips to Ship Fragrances through USPS - Stamps.com Blog

How To Pack - Fedex.com

How to Ship Plants

When it comes to shipping plants, it can be hard to stay rooted. Understanding the shipping materials needed, confirming your plants are shippable, and learning about the requirements and restrictions from USPS, UPS, and FedEx is crucial in getting your plants to their new homes without damage. Let's dig in!

Materials Needed

- Packing tape
- Corrugated boxes
- Corrugated trays
- Corrugated dividers
- Scissors
- Kraft Paper
- Plastic bags
- Divider inserts for pots

What are corrugated boxes?

Corrugated boxes are made up of multiple layers, which provide them with more support than regular cardboard boxes. This extra support makes it an ideal pick for shipping more fragile items like food and plants. Corrugated boxes are also sustainable. In fact, 96% are made from organizations such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®, which is committed to sustainable forestry practices.

Contents
Plant plugs
Plastic tray

Packaging
Corrugated tray
Top pad

Outer corrugated box
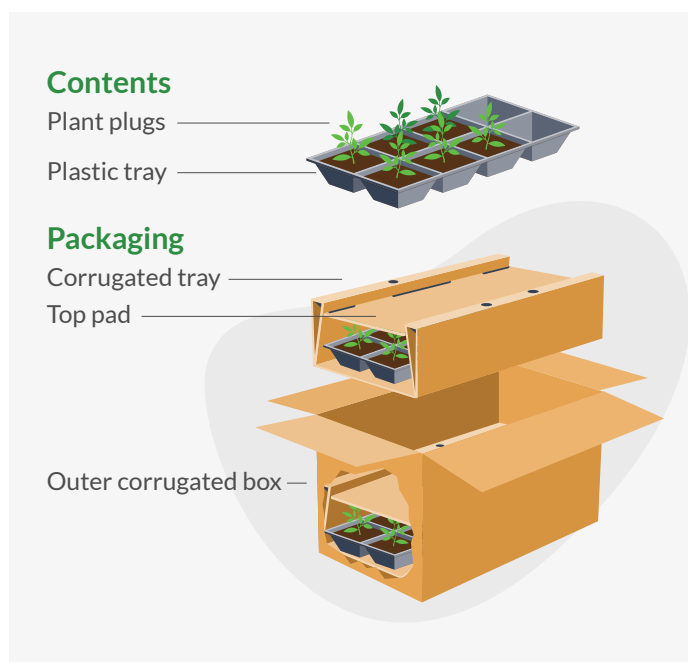
Is your plant shippable?

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to shipping plants is locating state-specific restrictions. These regulations do differ from state to state, so it's extremely important to follow these guidelines. The National Plant Board or NPB has a section of its website that's dedicated to each state's restrictions from The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine Program, or USDA APHIS PPQ. The NPB also recommends reaching out to your State Plant Regulatory Official for more information regarding plant shipping restrictions to avoid delays, confiscations, and/or potential fines.

Shipping plants with USPS

Similar to shipping food, USPS has recommendations and guidelines for shipping plants. For example, plants must have specific external labeling; incorrectly labeling your shipment can also leave you subject to fines. According to USPS's website, plants must be labeled as follows:

The exact nature of the contents, along with the names and addresses of the mailer and the addressee, must be marked on or affixed to the outside of any package, using a material or method that is not water-soluble and that cannot be easily rubbed off or smeared.

It's important to remember that your plants may not travel by air, depending on the service selected and where your package is headed compared to where it's being shipped from, or the zone. If they travel by ground, there's a chance your plants could shift around in transit. As with shipping other specialty items, we recommend reaching out to USPS directly with any additional questions to avoid any penalties.

Shipping plants with UPS

One of UPS's restrictions states that shipping endangered plant life is barred. In addition to the prohibited live animals list provided, any live animal or plant that is an endangered species is prohibited by UPS and won't be accepted for transportation. You'll need to refer to the most current publicized list posted on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website before shipping.
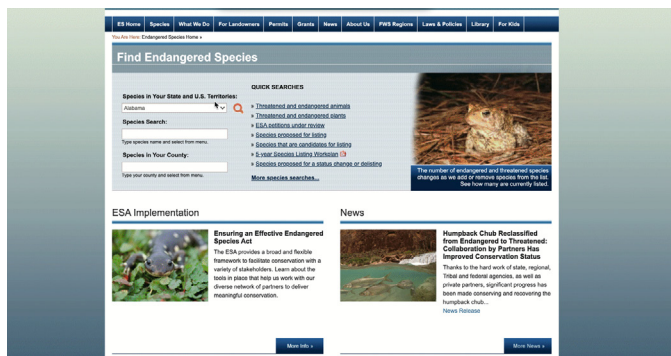
When shipping plants with UPS, it's important to consider the transit time of your service. UPS services such as UPS Next Day Air® and UPS Next Day Air Saver® restored their Service Guarantees, meaning your shipments will be delivered within the timeframes of the service. With live plants, this can be highly beneficial, as you have a better idea of how long they'll be in transit. This way, you will be able to let your customer know which steps should be taken upon their plant's arrival, and you'll be able to have a better understanding of how your plant should be packed. If your shipments aren't delivered within the provided timeframe, you may also be eligible for a refund.

Shipping plants with FedEx

FedEx provides extensive information when it comes to shipping plants and even shows different varieties of plants in their How to Ship Flowers and Plants guide. With the help of FedEx's guide, we've included more directions below to illustrate how to ship plants:

Corrugated divider

Plastic bag secured around stem

Pot
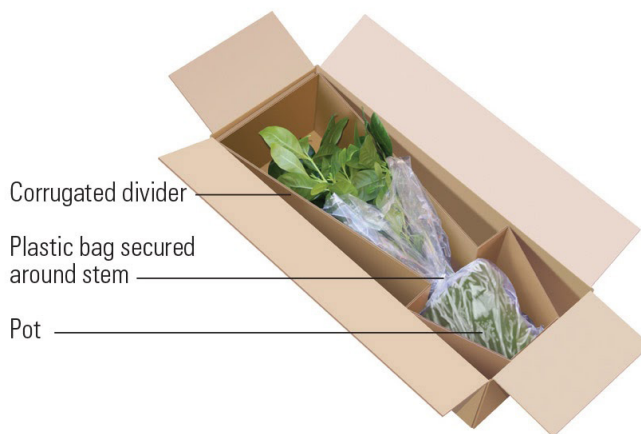
Image Source: Fedex

Since plants are fragile cargo, it's important to make sure they don't shift in transit. This is why corrugated boxes and dividers are essential. If you aren't using a corrugated divider, we recommend filling any empty spaces with paper or other packing materials to avoid your plant moving around in its package.
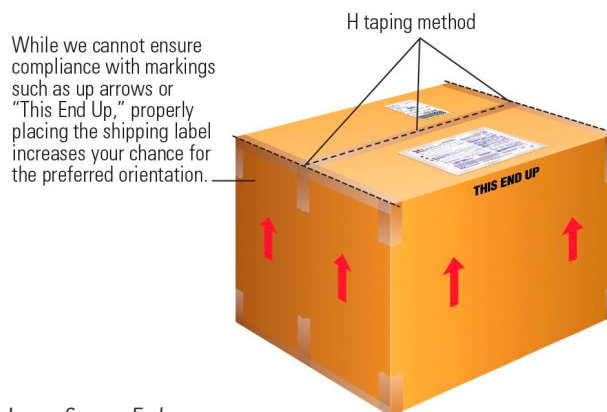

While we cannot ensure compliance with markings such as up arrows or "This End Up," properly placing the shipping label increases your chance for the preferred orientation.

H taping method

THIS END UP

Image Source: Fedex

As you can see in the diagram above, the H tape method helps to completely seal your shipment and avoid the risk of damages. It's important to double-check that all openings have been taped shut as well. Service-wise, FedEx recommends using one of their overnight services to ensure your plants safely arrive at their destination.

How can ShippingEasy help me ship plants?

ShippingEasy merchant, Grounded, uses ShippingEasy's direct store integration with Shopify to automatically sync their orders as well as order tags to help filter orders.

"We love how easy ShippingEasy makes it easy for us to filter orders by delivered, in transit, etc. This allows our communication with customers to be even more seamless in the event of a delay or error."

MIGNON HINSLEY
CO-FOUNDER OF GROUNDED PLANTS

Grow your business with affordable shipping options and a **30-day free trial.**

Additional Resources

How to Ship Plants

Overnight Shipping for Next Day Delivery | FedEx

How to ship flowers and plants | FedEx

National Plant Board

State Law & Regulation Summaries - National Plant Board

Corrugated Packaging - because boxes are so much more than ordinary.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Prohibitions and Restrictions on Mailing Plants, Animals, and Related Matter

ShippingEasy Merchant Grounded Case Study

Grounded has doubled their output volume since integrating with ShippingEasy
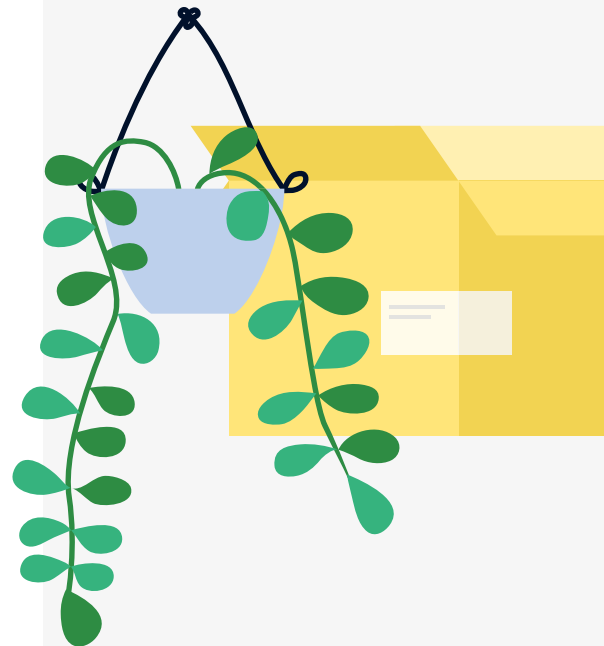
Cheapest Way to Ship Clothing
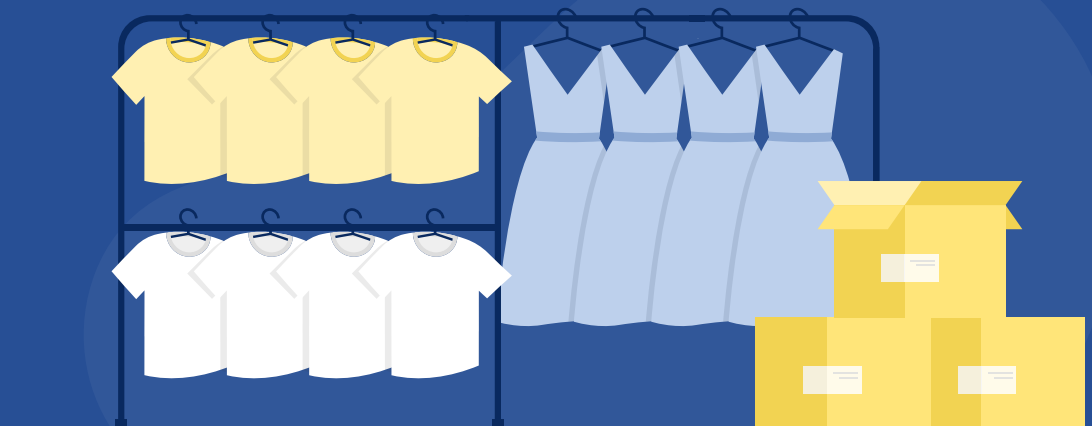
As a small business owner, you're more than likely looking for ways to help save on your shipping costs. This includes saving on shipping costs when shipping clothing. According to Statista, U.S. retail e-commerce revenue from the sale of fashion **apparel is projected to reach almost $608 million dollars by the end of 2023**. You definitely want your store to be included in those profits, so let's compare the cheapest ways to ship clothing under a pound and under a pound.

Retail E-commerce Revenue From The Sale Of Fashion Apparel

$508.69 million — 2021
$499 million — 2022
$608 million — 2023
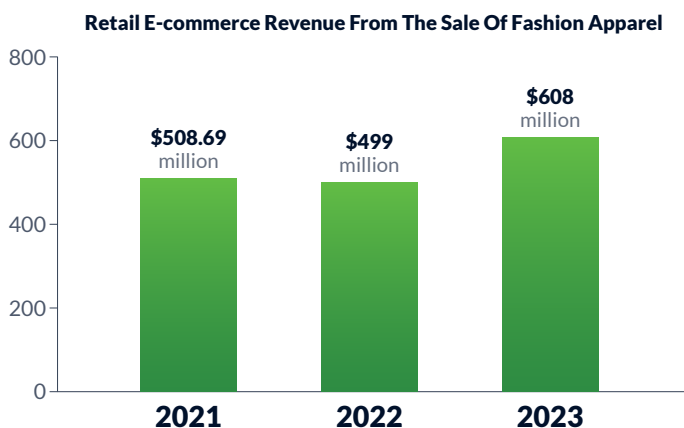
The best way to ship clothing under one pound

USPS's First-Class Package Service is basically unbeatable as the cheapest way to ship clothing under one pound. The First-Class Package Service provides tracking and has an estimated delivery of 1-5 days. ShippingEasy customers also have a few extra ounces (up to 15.999 oz) with Commercial Rates, so this option is pretty ideal for sending single clothing items.

The best way to ship clothing over one pound

A pair of men's jeans weighs about 1 lb. 6 oz. and is rounded up to 2 lbs in accordance with USPS's guidelines. This package is going to be shipped about 1400-1800 miles, or as it would be classified by USPS, in Zone 7*. Using a Priority Mail Flat Rate Package or Padded Envelope with the Commercial Rates all ShippingEasy merchants receive, you can save up to $3.

*In case you need a quick refresher, here are the USPS Zones:

Zone 1	Destinations within the same PO - 50 miles (outside of the PO)
Zone 2	Destinations within 51-150 mile radius
Zone 3	Destinations within 151-300 mile radius
Zone 4	Destinations within 301-600 mile radius
Zone 5	Destinations within 601-1000 mile radius
Zone 6	Destinations within 1001-1400 mile radius
Zone 7	Destinations within 1401-1800 mile radius
Zone 8	Destinations within 1801 mile radius or farther
Zone 9	Destinations within freely associated states

A streamlined shipping process never goes out of style. **Try ShippingEasy on for size!**

Additional Resources

Cheapest and Best Way to Ship Clothing

2023 USPS Shipping Rates

What are USPS Zones?

Postage Verification | USPS

Apparel - Worldwide | Statista Market Forecast

How to Ship Musical Equipment

If you sell musical supplies and/or instruments on a marketplace like Reverb, Amazon, or eBay, one of your biggest challenges is figuring out the best way to ship them. We currently integrate with Reverb, so let's talk about how to ship musical instruments that are commonly sold on Reverb and other marketplaces!

Supplies needed

Whether it's a brass, woodwind, percussion, or string instrument, an electric guitar, or a keyboard, there are some basic packaging materials to have on hand for shipping instruments both large and small:

- Plenty of newspaper or brown Kraft paper to crumple

- Sturdy packing tape

- Appropriately-sized boxes*

- Consider double-boxing, if possible

- Bubble wrap

- Rubber bands

*Guitars pose a particular challenge due to their size and shape. Reverb carries 3-packs of guitar-sized boxes, as do many other marketplaces.

We recommend avoiding packing peanuts as they can shift and potentially not offer the level of security needed to keep your instruments safe. If you do wish to use packing peanuts in your shipping, store them in a plastic bag and use this to cushion your instruments.

How to ship a guitar

- **In the box**, create a bottom layer of crumpled newspaper or Kraft paper for the guitar/guitar case to sit on. Loosen the strings slightly to release tension (not necessary to completely detune the guitar, just release the pressure). If shipping in a hard case, use newspaper or microfiber towels to fill in loose space around the base of the guitar case to keep it from sliding around.

- **When it comes to securing the guitar head**, some professionals, like Reverb, suggest elevating the neck of the guitar with crumpled paper and placing paper between the strings and the frets. Others suggest padding (not packing) paper just below the meeting point of the neck and the head to avoid shock. Still others suggest neither, so we will leave that up to you.

- **After adding the paper**, close the case and slightly shake it to see if you hear movement. If so, add more paper to stabilize the guitar. Once the guitar is firmly packed into the case and you've created a bottom layer of crumpled paper in the box, you're ready to pack the case in the box.

- **Pack paper around any open spaces** as tightly as possible. If all of the open spaces are filled, you should have a difficult time moving the case with your hand. After the empty spaces in the box have been filled, create a top layer of crumpled paper as you did at the bottom. Tape all edges firmly. You may consider adding **DO NOT LAY FLAT** stickers to each side of the box to avoid heavier boxes ending up on top of the guitar box which could potentially cause damage.

How to ship a drum kit

Much like a guitar, it's important when shipping a drum kit to fill all empty space and create buffer space to avoid damage from drops or collisions in transit. Many of the tips discussed for shipping guitars should be applied when you ship drum kits as well as musical instruments of all other shapes and sizes:

- Fill all empty spaces with newspaper or Kraft paper

- Secure and separately wrap pieces that could break off during transit

- Perform a "shake test" to make sure your instrument is securely packaged before taping the box closed and weighing it for shipping

Hit all the right notes in your shipping process **with the help of ShippingEasy!**

Additional Resources

7 Common Shipping and Packing Faux Pas

eBay – ShippingEasy

Amazon – ShippingEasy

How to Ship a Guitar | Reverb

How to Ship a Guitar | FedEx

Reverb - How to Ship a Drum Kit

Drum kit shipping tips from the experts at Reverb:

1 Use a sturdy box that is 4 to 6 inches larger

2 Nesting: pack toms inside kick drum to save space.

3 You want 3 inches of packing material on all sides including bottom

Watch the video for full instructions on how to ship a drum kit
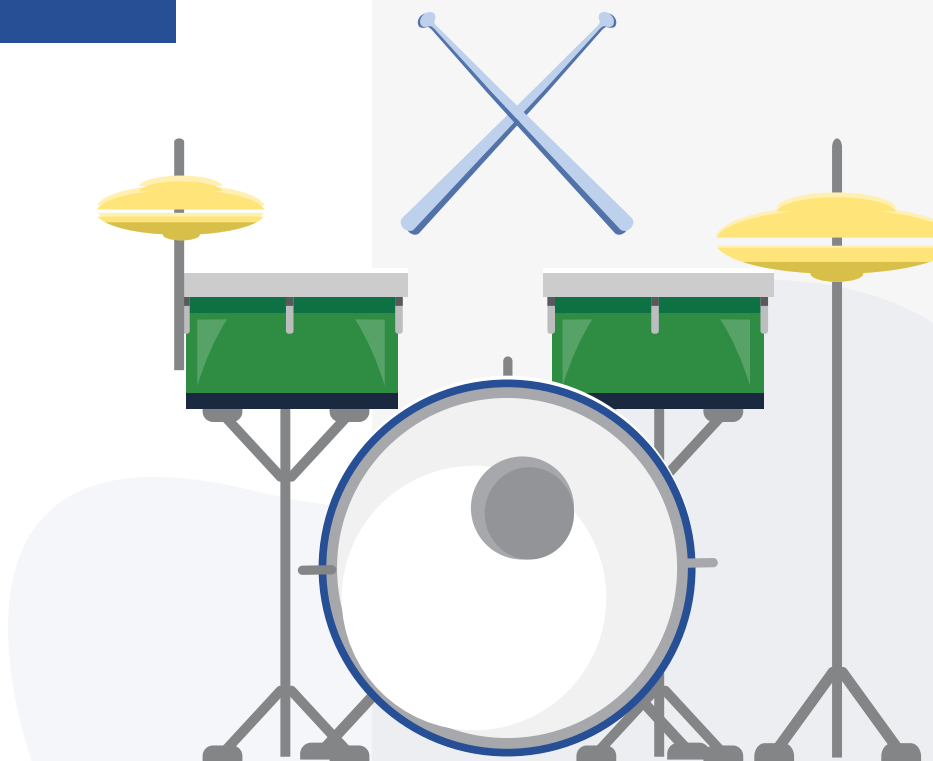
Tips for Shipping Fragile Items

We're classifying fragile items as breakable items and/or items that need special packaging for shipping. These items need multiple layers of packaging, have specific carrier specifications to follow, and honestly, they just require a little extra love to survive their journey in transit.

How to ship bendable items

Items like calendars and stationery are easily bent, so we recommend adding stickers or stamps with messages like "Do Not Bend" added to the inner and outer packaging. However, your packaging can only have a certain amount of stiffness for it to be considered mail and not a parcel, so you may be asked to show your packaging isn't completely solid by your local post office worker when you're shipping these items out.

Where to purchase fragile shipping labels

Did you know you can order some shipping supplies from your ShippingEasy dashboard? Well, you can! Onyx Products® even offers supplies for your fragile items like special handling labels, tape, and bubble bags. You buy these supplies straight from your account so that you don't have to visit other sites to try to find what you need. And, you can even do it while you're waiting for your labels to finish printing.

Recommended packaging for fragile items

When it comes to shipping your fragile objects:

- Don't use oversized boxes or soft envelopes
- Wrap items in bubble wrap and paper
- Fill any empty spaces with paper
- Include fragile item stickers and markings to show how the package should be stored
- Test your packaging before sending items to see if any items shift in transit and adjust accordingly

Fragile-specific shipping boxes

Choosing the right type of box for your fragile items can literally make or break them. Marketplaces like Amazon and Walmart are good places to start searching for more durable boxes like corrugated boxes and boxes with thicker walls. Some of these boxes are even made of recycled materials, so you can help the environment while keeping all of your fragile items in tip-top shape.

Return policies for damaged items

We discussed return policies in a previous section, but if your business sells fragile items:

- Confirm all of the information about returns for broken and/or damaged items is correct
- Provide discounts/special promos to customers who reuse packaging

Additional Resources

What is ConnectEasy for Printing Labels?

Bubble Bags – ONYX Products®

Packing and Shipping Tape – ONYX Products®

Special Handling Labels – ONYX Products®

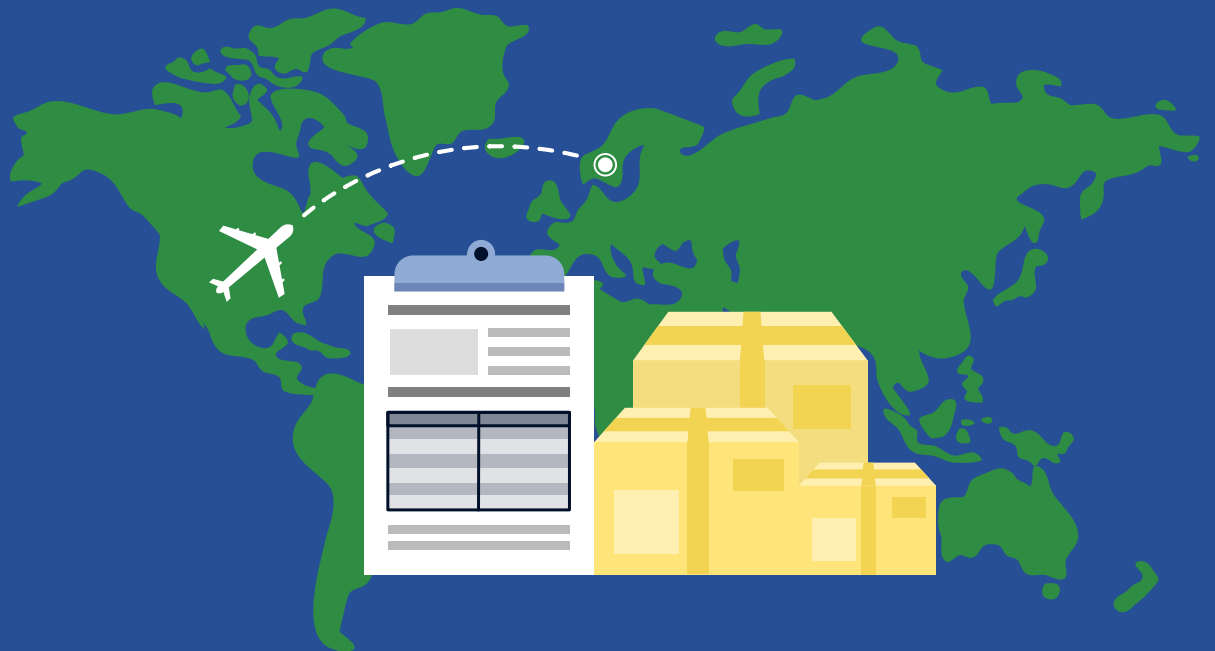DMM Revision: Clarification of Shape-based Standards

Sustainability for Small Businesses

How to Ship International Packages

Bonjour! If we're being honest, international shipping is a business move that takes a lot of planning, extra work and requires additional forms and shipping guidelines. However, if you aren't offering international shipping, you're missing out on an entirely new group of customers. And that's a big deal. All it takes to offer international shipping is an understanding of the necessary paperwork, restrictions, and available international services.

VAT

VAT, or Value Added Tax, is a tax based on the cost of your product, including all of the materials used in the assembly process. However, if a part of your product has already had this tax applied, you shouldn't be taxed twice for it. Any products shipped to the UK and the EU are subject to VAT, so keep VAT in mind when you're shipping to customers in these regions.

US merchants are required to register with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to get a VAT number as well as to collect these VAT taxes from your customers when they purchase something from your store. If your store doesn't already sell to the UK/the EU, it's a good idea to start researching everything your store will need now.

IOSS

IOSS, or Import One-Stop-Shop, gives your business the opportunity to pay and report VAT taxes instead of your customers in the EU for up to €150 ($180.81). This number is generated by whichever stores and/or marketplaces your business sells through, so you can reach out to those channels directly for your IOSS number. If you don't use a large marketplace or can't get your IOSS number, you'll need to register for one through the proper channels.

Customs Forms

Customs forms are pieces of physical or electronic documentation submitted to the proper customs authorities. These forms include information we'll cover later on like VAT and IOSS numbers, HS codes, and taxes and duties. The amount of information needed and whether the forms will be physically or electronically submitted will depend on the carrier.

Note: Shipments to military addresses and Puerto Rico are technically considered domestic shipments but still follow several of the requirements and processes for international shipments, including attached customs forms.

If you aren't offering international shipping, you're missing out on an entirely new group of customers.

HS Codes

On March 1, 2023, the EU required all incoming shipments to add Harmonized Style tariff codes (HS codes) on customs forms. This includes shipments passing through the EU during transit. HS codes are numerical codes that categorize a product going through customs. HS codes help custom offices to quickly identify the contents of your shipments and avoid language barriers. Each set of 2-3 numbers in an HS code represents the type of product you're shipping and the product's attributes. [1]

If you're using our partner GlobalPost as your international carrier, HS codes will be added through their free HS Code Fulfillment Service! Once your package arrives at a GlobalPost facility, the correct HS code will be assigned to your customs forms. Additionally, printed customs forms aren't required for GlobalPost shipments.*

*Note: Shipments to Puerto Rican aren't eligible for GlobalPost.

If you're using our partner GlobalPost as your international carrier, HS codes will be added through their free HS Code Fulfillment Service!

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1 Note: The exchange rate mentioned was compared on February 9, 2023 and is subject to change.

International shipping with USPS

Some of the most commonly used USPS international shipping options are Priority Mail International® and First-Class Package International Service®. That's why we definitely recommend checking out the [USPS International Services portal](#).

	Fastest Delivery Speed Fast delivery for your most important mail and packages.		Affordable Options Value-priced shipping with options for Flat Rate pricing or pricing by weight.		Best for Documents or Printed Materials Only Large envelopes (flats) of only documents or a large sack (up to 66 lbs) of books or other printed material.	
Service	Global Express Guaranteed® (GXG®) You're sending urgent items that must arrive in a few days. You need date-certain delivery with a money-back guarantee.[1]	Priority Mail Express International® You're sending important items that need to arrive in under a week. You can get money-back guaranteed date-certain delivery for some locations.[4]	Priority Mail International® You have a package that weighs over 4 lbs.	First-Class Package International Service® You have a package (or large envelope over 1 lb) that contains items worth less than $400 and that weighs less than 4 lbs.	First-Class Mail International® You have an envelope of documents that weighs under 1 lb. (15.994 oz).	Airmail M-Bags® You're an international student in the U.S. and need to send lots of books home.
Price	From $71.10	From $54.75	From $30.35	From $15.75	From $2.90	From $55.00
Delivery Speed	1-3 business days[2] (1 business day to many destinations in Canada)	3-5 business days[5]	6–10 business days[5]	Varies by destination	Varies by destination	Varies by destination

Image source: [USPS](#)

International shipping with UPS

UPS gives you:

- The only ground service option available for small packages from the US to Mexico from a major US-integrated carrier.

- Excellent transit time for air services to destinations across the globe.*

- Up to 82% off UPS's international services for eligible shipments.**

*Orders shipped outside of the United States may be subject to import taxes, customs duties and fees levied by the destination country. The recipient of an international shipment may be subject to such import taxes, customs duties and fees, which are levied once a shipment reaches the recipient's country. Additional charges for customs clearance is the responsibility of the recipient.

**Discounts off UPS daily rates. Rates are limited to shipping from the U.S. only. Rates and any applicable discounts are subject to change at any time without notice.

International shipping with FedEx

FedEx offers several international shipping options

- **FedEx International Economy®**: Delivery window of 2–5 days

- **FedEx International Priority®**: Delivery window of 1–3 business days

- **FedEx International First®**: Delivery window between 1-3 business days and differs by the destination. For example, deliveries can be expedited by 10:00 AM on the next business day to Canada and by 11:00 AM on the next business day to Mexico.

International shipping with GlobalPost

If your business is looking to expand to international markets, GlobalPost is designed to make your international shipping efficient. GlobalPost partners with major carriers to get your shipments to their international destinations as quickly as possible. GlobalPost features include:

- No customs forms to print

- Free parcel coverage up to $200

- Free phone and email support

- Free HS tariff code fulfillment service

GlobalPost International Economy and GlobalPost International Standard

GlobalPost services include both GlobalPost Economy International and GlobalPost Standard International. Each service can be used to ship to over 220 countries and uses GlobalPost's network of carriers during the last mile of transit. Other benefits of each service can be found in the table below.

Specifications	GlobalPost International Economy	GlobalPost International Standard
Weight Limit Per Package	4.4 lbs.	Up to 70 lbs.
Package Types	Flats up to 16oz., Packages up to 4.4 lbs.	Packages up to 70 lbs.
Transit	10-14 days	8-12 days
Tracking	Door-to-country	Door-to-door
Max Values of Goods	$400	Varies by country
Free Coverage	Not included	Up to $100 in loss or damages, plus shipping cost
Duties & Taxes	Paid by buyer	Paid by buyer

GlobalPost's SmartSaver Program

If your business already ships over five international packages daily, you might be eligible for GlobalPost's SmartSaver program. SmartSaver customers can **save up to 30%** by consolidating shipments. To consolidate packages, take your individual shipments and place them in one large box. Then, send these consolidated shipments to the GlobalPost facility closest to you, and we'll do the rest.

You'll just consolidate, ship, and save. For more information on SmartSaver, you can contact GlobalPost directly at **info@goglobalpost.com**.

Additional Resources

International 1, 2 or 3 Business Day Delivery | FedEx

VAT and OISS Overview

Conclusion

If you've recently started an ecommerce business, shipping can be daunting. Even if you've had an ecommerce business for years, shipping can sometimes still feel daunting. There are so many decisions to be made, from picking the right carrier service to deciding which marketplaces and stores to sell through.

Additionally, some products need specialty packaging and paperwork attached to keep moving in transit. With so many guidelines and restrictions, we understand how difficult it can be to do all of the needed research. That's exactly why we created this ebook. And hopefully, it'll live in your bookmarks from now on as a quick reference whenever you need it.