

Customs Forms - The Basics

Receiving items from overseas that have gone through customs, preparing customs forms for mail pieces going overseas, and sending military mail

Customs Forms are important documents used by foreign customs authorities to clear mail for entry into their country and, when appropriate, to assess duty and taxes. When you mail a package to another country, the contents and value of an item must be declared on the customs form. The mailer is responsible for completing the appropriate customs form. If the form is not completed correctly, mail may be delayed, or duty and taxes could be incorrect.

Military Mail and some U.S. Possessions, Territories, and Freely Associated States (PTFAS) shipments also require customs documentation. This is the case even though these shipments are domestic mail or treated as domestic mail.

USPS® does not own the customs process. Imports is a function of the Customs and Border Protection, a subsidiary of the Department of Homeland Security. Questions about exports compliance should be directed to the Department of Commerce at <https://www.trade.gov>. USPS complies with the rules and regulations from these organizations and other regulatory bodies.

Customs form exceptions	Sending overseas items	Depositing military mail
---	--	--

All items addressed to or from overseas MPO, APO, FPO, or DPO (Military Post Office, Army Post Office, Fleet Post Office, and Diplomatic Post Office) destinations require a customs declaration either:

- **When you send the mailpiece using Priority Mail Express® service**
- **For all other mailpieces that either:**
 - **Weights 16 oz or more, or**
 - **Contains goods**

And if you are not sure a customs form is required, check your mail piece's destination APO/FPO/DPO ZIP Codes™ in either the [Postage Price Calculator](#) or the "Overseas Military/Diplomatic Mail" section of the latest [Postal Bulletin](#). Exceptions do exist for the customs forms requirement.

Note: Military mail is considered Domestic for most USPS processing and receives a Domestic Rate and domestic tracking number, but flies on International Passenger Airplanes and must follow the same rules as any International item for contents (no aerosols, limited lithium-ion batteries, and other such restrictions). International transit hubs, International Airlines, Foreign Posts, and U.S. Trade laws, departments and rules all have requirements which are met with use of the U.S. Customs Declaration Form.

You can use your mobile device or desktop computer and [Customs Forms Online](#) to enter Customs information (no weight or dimensions), print a receipt, and take the online customs form to the Army Post Office.

- See “[How do I complete customs forms?](#)” for additional information on creating online customs declaration with or without postage.

If you cannot print the online customs form receipt, you can enter data on the online customs form from your smartphone, then present the customs form receipt barcode generated on your smartphone. The clerk will then weigh and measure the item, select the desired service type, collect payment and print the customs form.

In addition, although USPS considers mailings to and from APO, FPO, and DPO Codes domestic mail, please be mindful that APO, FPO, and DPO Codes outside of the main customs territory of the United States (i.e., the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territory of Puerto Rico) are subject to international mailing standards governing the transportation of dangerous and prohibited items through the mail.

Customers can create the electronic customs forms by visiting <https://cfo.usps.com/> when purchasing postage directly from the USPS or when using a third-party vendor such as [Pirate Ship](#) or [Stamps.com](#) (no government endorsement implied).

New Customs Requirements for Packages to European Union (EU) Countries

As of March 1, 2023:

- New customs rules apply to all outbound international packages going to [European countries that follow EU customs regulations](#). This includes small personal gifts, ecommerce orders, and military and diplomatic mail (APO/DPO/FPO).
- Every item in your package must be listed on the customs declaration form.
- For each item's description: You can't just name a general category; your description must be specific. For example, you can't just say "electronics"; you have to be specific about the type of electronics, like "computer," "mobile phone," or "television."
- If you use USPS® tools (like the [International Retail Postage Price Calculator](#) or Global Shipping Software) and provide acceptable descriptions (that are specific and accurate), USPS will provide an "HS (Harmonized System) Tariff Code" (or just "HS Code"). This USPS-generated code will be included on your customs declaration form.

Guidance for Acceptable Descriptions

Unacceptable	Acceptable
Clothes	Men's shirts, girls' vest, boys' jackets
Appliances	Refrigerator, stove, microwave oven
Artwork	Oil painting, pencil sketch, bronze statue
Battery	Lithium batteries
Gifts	Scented candle, remote-controlled car, cashmere scarf
Medicine	Painkillers, antiviral spray
Health & Beauty Products	Detergent, toothbrush, towels
Vegetables	Eggplant, onions, broccoli

Countries That Follow European Union (EU) Customs Rules

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus, Republic of
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland

