

VSN

Vamp Stamp News

Issue Tidbits



New USPS Rates for Priority/Express Mail: Jan 18
Just when we were getting used to the idea of the post office doing an annual price increase every year in May, they come along and throw us a curve! The US Post Office has new prices coming out on January 18th that includes Priority Mail and Express Mail Prices.

The link below goes to the USPS web site page that explains (well, sort of) the price changes. Note: The price of a First Class stamp is NOT going up at this time, so this won't affect most stamped card mailings. Watch for an announcement about First Class and other mail rates to come along in February and take effect in May.

<http://www.usps.com/prices/pricechanges.htm?from=prices&page=newshippingprices>

Prices for Priority and Express Mail are going to be split out into three categories and here is my understanding of them:

Retail: This is the price that you pay if you mail something via Priority or Express mail when you either put on your own postage or do it at the local post office counter. It's the highest of the three levels.

Commercial Base: This is the price that you will pay if you use the Post Office's Click-N-Ship's website to pay for and print labels, plus *“Registered end-users of USPS-approved PC Postage products when using a qualifying shipping label, Information Based Indicia (IBI) postage meters (in conjunction with an approved shipping label that includes a confirmation services barcode with a postal routing code) or Permit imprint (DMM 423.1.2).”* Note: Although this is called *“Commercial Base”*, you don't have to be a business to use Click-N-Ship. I use Click-N-Ship myself for both business and personal mailings and recommend it. (www.usps.com/clicknship/) This is the middle price level.

Commercial Plus: This is the price that you will pay if you *“meet specific volume or customer agreement requirements”*. Basically, this is the best price given to big-volume commercial shippers and isn't something the average stamper is likely to use. This is the cheapest of the three levels. (Of course.)

At VSN, I don't ship much via Express Mail, but I do routinely ship things via Priority Mail, especially Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelopes and Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes. Some stampers and a lot of stamp companies also use these Flat Rate products.

For example, the price for shipping a Priority Mail Flat Rate envelope within the US is currently \$4.80 or \$4.75 if you use Click-N-Ship. On January 18, the price will go up to \$4.95 (Retail), or \$4.80 (Commercial) or \$4.75 (Commercial Plus).

So if you use Click-N-Ship to ship your Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelopes, your price will only go up about 5 cents. If you just use stamps or pay at the counter, your price will go up 15 cents. Yes, it is sometimes easier to slap on the postage and pay the extra 10 cents, but if you ship a lot using Priority or Express Mail, it can add up, so you may find using Click-N-Ship worth while. It's also nice that you can print the labels via Click-N-Ship and not have to scrounge around and find enough postage stamps to add up to a total of \$4.80 or whatever.

International Priority and Express Mail rates are going up too, with Flat Rate Priority Envelopes going up by \$1 for shipments to Mexico and Canada and up by \$2 to all other countries. If you pay for and print postage by Click-N-Ship, you save 5%, so again, this approach can save you a little money.

One interesting development is that they are introducing a Flat Rate “*Small Box*” that will ship for the same price as the Flat Rate Envelope. I can’t find the dimensions of this box anywhere on the USPS website today, so I don’t know yet how useful this will be to stampers. When the post office discontinued their previous half-height Flat Rate envelope, a lot of rubber stamp company owners were very unhappy because that one was a perfect size for half-sheets of un-mounted rubber stamps and other small orders. These companies had to switch to the (more expensive) larger sizes if they wanted to continue using Flat Rate boxes or envelopes to ship their products. Fingers crossed that the new “*Small Box*” will turn out to be useful to us!

I hope you found this extra VSN Tidbits article interesting. Feedback is always welcome on this Tidbits article, current or past VSN issues, VSN’s web site or anything else you would like to tell me about: vampstamp@prodigy.net

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Good wishes,
Nancie, VSN

Saturday 1/3/09

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