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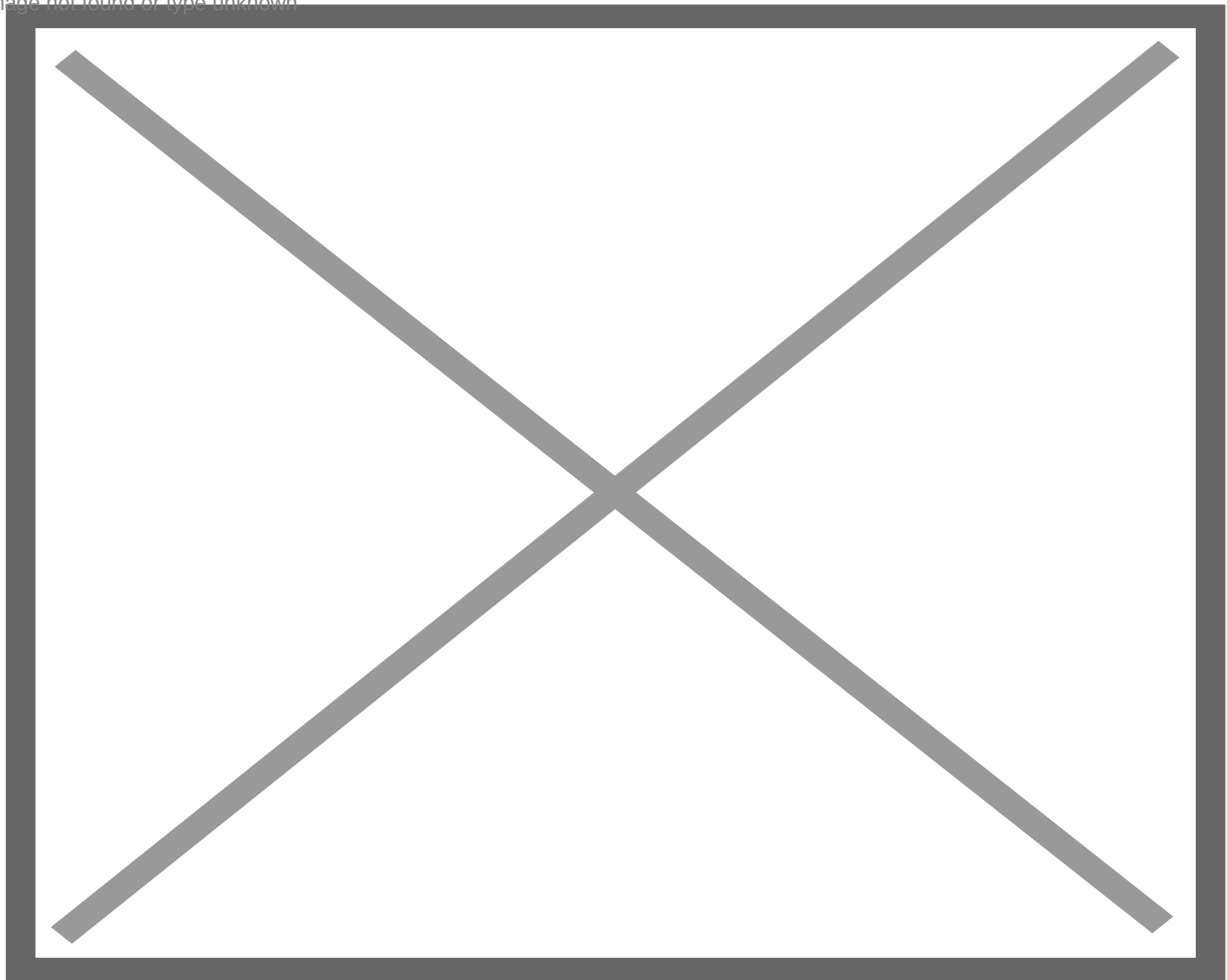
USPS Holiday Package Rates to Rise 6% on Average, With Some Shipments Costing Up to \$20.80 More

USPS is preparing a temporary holiday increase averaging 6 percent for Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, Ground Advantage and Parcel Select. The higher rates would run Oct. 4 through Jan. 17 and apply to all domestic shipments, including the USVI.

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Virgin Islands residents and businesses using the U.S. Postal Service to send packages are poised to pay more during the upcoming holiday season, with USPS moving forward with a temporary price increase averaging 6 percent across several of its major domestic package services.

A Federal Register notice published Friday sets an October 4 effective date for the temporary rates, which would remain in place through January 17, 2027. The affected services are Priority

Mail Express, Priority Mail, USPS Ground Advantage and Parcel Select. USPS has filed the changes with the Postal Regulatory Commission and said implementation remains subject to favorable regulatory review.

The changes apply in the Virgin Islands because USPS classifies St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John as domestic mail destinations. The amount a customer pays will depend on the service selected, package weight and shipping zone, which is generally determined by the distance between the origin and destination.

For retail customers using Priority Mail or Ground Advantage within Zones 1 through 4, the temporary increase ranges from 50 cents for packages weighing up to three pounds to \$3.90 for packages weighing 26 to 70 pounds or qualifying as oversized. For longer-distance Zones 5 through 9, Priority Mail increases range from \$1 to \$9.10 depending on weight, while Ground Advantage increases range from 75 cents to \$7.50.

The largest listed retail increase applies to Priority Mail Express packages weighing between 26 and 70 pounds traveling in Zones 5 through 9, which would cost \$20.80 more during the holiday period. The same category under commercial pricing would rise by \$18.20. Large Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes would increase by \$2.10 at retail, other Priority Mail Flat Rate products by \$1, and Priority Mail Express Flat Rate Envelopes by \$2.35.

The Postal Service's governors said the overall increase for Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, Ground Advantage and Parcel Select averages 6 percent. No price changes are being made to Special Services or international competitive products under the new action.

The holiday adjustment comes during another temporary USPS price increase already affecting the same four domestic package services. An 8 percent transportation-related increase took effect April 26 and is also scheduled to remain in place until January 17, 2027. USPS said that earlier change was intended to better align transportation costs with market conditions.

USPS said the latest holiday adjustment is intended to offset additional handling costs during its busiest shipping period and bring its seasonal pricing practices closer to those of competitors. No other USPS products or services are included in the holiday filing.