



Changes in Service Standards – FAQs

Latest revisions to FAQs are shown in green text

Updated May 9, 2025

General Questions:

Q1) What are Service Standards?

Answer: A Service Standard indicates the expected number of days for delivery after a mail piece is accepted by USPS. These standards take into account processing times and transportation network logistics, providing both senders and recipients with a reliable timeframe for when they can expect their mail to arrive.

Q2) Why has the USPS changed Service Standards?

Answer: The changes will enhance service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for First-Class Mail and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services. The changes will maintain service at existing levels for most volume, while upgrading standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded.

A key goal of the “Delivering for America” plan is for USPS to achieve financial sustainability while maintaining its service obligations required by law. As a result of these newly refined Service Standards, the Postal Service projects at least \$36 billion in savings over 10 years from transportation, mail processing, and facility cost reductions. To date, the Postal Service has lowered annual transportation costs by \$2.2 billion through eliminating redundant networks and rationalizing the use of air and surface transportation options, and reduced 45 million workhours, equivalent to \$2.5 billion in annual cost savings, by improving plant productivity and eliminating unnecessary facilities. In addition, the Postal Service has increased revenue by \$3.5 billion annually by transitioning and enhancing its product offerings in the face of significant declines in mail volume.

For additional information about the Service Standard changes, please go to [Delivering for America: Our ten-year plan highlights - about.usps.com](https://about.usps.com/delivering-for-america/our-ten-year-plan-highlights).

Q3) What products will be affected by the change to Service Standards?

Answer: The Service Standard adjustments apply to First-Class Mail, Periodicals, Marketing Mail, Package Services (Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail), USPS Ground Advantage, Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express.



Q4) Will this slow the mail down?

Answer: The changes will maintain service at existing levels for most volume and will upgrade standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded. The changes will enhance service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for First-Class Mail and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services.

We have also changed a number of our Critical Entry Times (CETs). The CET is a reference point for measuring service performance relative to time of acceptance by the Postal Service of commercial mail and package entry. If the Postal Service accepts mail volume prior to the CET on a given day, the service performance measurement clock starts the same day, whereas acceptance after CET will start this clock the following day. While assessing the impact of CET changes to customers, the Postal Service prioritized the maintenance of customer access to USPS acceptance units, i.e., Local Processing Centers (LPCs), Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), Post Offices, and both co-located and detached Business Mail Entry Units (BMEUs). To maintain access points for mailers throughout the network, we revised the CETs for various product types to ensure that we could effectively transport commercial mail and packages through an integrated network and keep our processing schedules on time. In other words, rather than saying that certain types of mail could only be entered at certain locations closer to our RPDCs, we developed an approach that allowed customers to continue to enter at their preferred location at the same rate categories, but we also had to adjust the CETs.

Note that processing of mail and packages will continue apace whether a mail piece or package is accepted before or after the CET. USPS operating plans and operational practices will remain focused on timely processing, distribution and delivery of all mail and packages. Also, mail and package acceptance procedures are not changing, and the date of acceptance will continue to be verified as is done currently.

Also, beginning April 1, 2025, the calculation of days from acceptance to delivery will exclude Sundays and holidays. Customers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail. This does not alter the Service Standard itself.

One specific goal of the above changes is to ensure that all originating volume for an RPDC is received by 20:00 hours so that it can be processed and dispatched into the transportation network 4-6 hours earlier than is currently feasible.

Q5) By changing the Service Standards, how will the USPS *actually* be able to ensure that mail will arrive at its destination within the new Service Standard?

Answer: Moving Service Standards from a 3-Digit to 3-Digit Zip Code pairing to a 5-Digit to 5-Digit Zip Code model allows the Postal Service to continue evolving to be more precise, understandable, and accurate. The Postal Service will continue to track and report Service Standard performance and is developing changes to our measurement system so we can report service performance at the 5-Digit ZIP Code level. These updates will provide enhanced



visibility into service performance, allowing the Postal Service and customers to track service more precisely. Additional information on the Service Standard change, including tools to determine Service Standards for specific 5-digit pairs, can be found at [Service Commitments](#).

Q6) Are you moving or adjusting these Service Standards because the USPS couldn't meet the current standards?

Answer: No, the adjustments to the Service Standards are not due to the USPS's inability to meet current standards. Rather, the decline in the volume of Single Piece First-Class Mail and other mail entered at Post Offices, has necessitated operational changes to reduce costs and align Service Standards with the network that provides the most cost-effective mail services. These changes will maintain existing service levels for most mail volume while upgrading standards for a greater portion of market-dominant products than those that are downgraded.

Q7) When would the proposed change in Service Standards go into effect? What is the time line?

Answer: Implementation will be in two phases to facilitate effective operational execution: the first phase began on April 1, 2025 and the second will begin on July 1, 2025.

Changes implemented on April 1, 2025

- Added one day to Service Standard for Ground Advantage and Single Piece First-Class Mail products originating in offices more than 50 miles from the nearest Origin processing facility. No change to Service Standard for Presort First-Class Mail.
- Collection mail and packages originating in offices within 50 miles of the nearest Origin processing facility to reach said facility by 20:00 hours.
- Sundays and holidays no longer counted in service performance measurement for mail and packages accepted by USPS on day prior to Sunday or holiday.
- New CETs go into effect.

Changes to be implemented on July 1, 2025

- Service Standard bands to expand by four hours due to earlier surface transportation dispatch times from each Origin processing facility (increasing the reach of 2-, 3- and 4-day Service Standards).
- Expanded geographic scope of "turnaround" volume, i.e., mail and package volume originating and destinating within a processing facility's service area. "Turnaround" volume of Single Piece First-Class Mail will receive a 2- or 3-day Service Standard depending on the location of the office of entry and the distance to the nearest Origin processing facility.



Q8) How does this change enable greater service performance or operational efficiencies?

Answer: The changes to Service Standards enhance service performance and operational efficiencies in several key ways. Transitioning from a 3-Digit to a 5-Digit ZIP code model allows for more precise measurement and higher-quality products. The Postal Service organizes the operational path of mail and packages into three distinct legs:

Leg 1: From collection to origin processing.

Leg 2: From origin processing to destination processing.

Leg 3: From destination processing to final delivery.

By establishing service expectations for each leg and adding one additional service day for volume entered far from Origin processing facilities, the new standards provide a clearer picture of how mail travels through our network.

Furthermore, these standards enable earlier dispatch from Origin processing facilities and extend our Leg 2 reach, improving customer service for mail and shipping products. Turnaround service, which processes and delivers mail within the same region, will also be available for larger geographical areas around Origin processing facilities. These productivity gains allow us to offer Single-Piece First-Class Mail cancellation and turnaround at a wider range of Local Processing Center sites than initially planned, ultimately improving service reliability and supporting revenue growth.

Q9) What is turnaround service?

Answer: Turnaround volume is mail or package volume originating and destinating within a facility's service area. The new rules and operational structure expand the geographic scope for turnaround volume. Currently, certain Intra-SCF volume receives a two-day service standard. Under the new rules, certain Intra-LPC and all Intra-RPDC First-Class Mail volume will be subject to the new turnaround rule which provides for a 2 or 3-day standard depending on the 5-digit ZIP Code from which mail originates. Specifically, certain LPCs and all RPDCs will have a 2-day standard for turnaround Single-Piece First-Class Mail originating from 5-digit ZIP Codes 50 miles or less from the cancellation location. If the originating volume is from a 5-digit ZIP Code more than 50 miles from the cancellation location, the turnaround standard for Single-Piece First-Class mail will be 3 days. USPS Ground Advantage would also have 2–3-day intra-RPDC service. The standards for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals, and Package Services within a region will also be based on these standards.

The financial and efficiency gains from the operational changes allowed us to maintain cancellation operations for certain LPCs. This means that more locations will provide turnaround mail than originally planned. For LPCs providing turnaround service, the 50-mile rule noted above will be based on the distance from the LPC. When cancellation will take place at an RPDC, rather than an LPC, the 50-mile rule will be based on the distance from the RPDC.



Q10) Does the PRC have a role in approving this change? If so, please describe.

Answer: When the Postal Service determines that there should be a change in postal services which will affect service on a nationwide or substantially nationwide basis, 39 U.S.C. § 3661 requires that the Postal Service seek an advisory opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). Consistent with this requirement, the Postal Service requested and received an advisory opinion from the PRC.

Q11) How does this change affect the general public, for example, a person sending a birthday card or a letter to a friend?

Answer: The impact of the changes will depend on where the letter is mailed from and where it is going. Beginning March 24, 2025, customers can look up [Service Commitments](#) on usps.com for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. This tool accounts for the Sunday/Holiday change described in the following questions. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.

In addition, a new interactive map is available on usps.com which will visually display Service Standards simply by entering the ZIP Code they are mailing from and the mail class to view the expected delivery time. Since this tool simply displays the stated service standard, it does not reflect the Sunday/Holiday change. This map is available at <https://www.usps.com/service-standards/>.

Finally, customers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail.

Q12) What changed with respect to Sundays and holidays?

Answer: Beginning April 1, 2025, the calculation of days from acceptance to delivery will exclude Sundays and holidays for customers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday. These customers should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail. For example, a mail piece tendered on Friday that has a 3-Day Service Standard will not exclude Sunday from measurement and will still have an expected delivery date of Monday. Whereas, if a customer sends a letter on a Saturday that has a 3-day Service Standard, the letter should be delivered on Wednesday (not Tuesday, as was the case before excluding Sunday from the measurement change).

Customers can go to usps.com at [Service Commitments](#) to find the Expected Delivery Day for specific products depending on the ZIP Codes from and to which one is mailing.



Q13) Why did USPS make the change with respect to Sundays and holidays?

Answer: This change is better aligned with the practice of competitors and other postal operators. It was made to enable USPS to achieve greater operational efficiencies and cost savings with minimal impact to volume. For example, we are able to increase density of containers and the surface transportation fleet, increase processing throughputs, and plan staffing with greater flexibility. These improvements, in turn, will help USPS achieve financial sustainability while maintaining its service obligations required by law.

Q14) How is Priority Mail Express changing?

Answer: Priority Mail Express delivery service will have a 1-, 2- or 3-day Service Standard depending on various factors, including date of acceptance by the Postal Service and the origin and destination 5-digit ZIP Code. This revision will not affect any other current product features. Priority Mail Express will continue to be a money-back guaranteed product with delivery available 7 days a week in certain areas. Prior to this change, Priority Mail Express had a 1- or 2-day Service Standard.

Q15) How will the regional transportation changes impact postmarking?

Answer: The Postal Service is not changing our postmarking practices. Customers can request a hand cancellation at any Post Office by going to the retail counter and asking the retail associate to postmark their envelope. We will also continue to cancel stamped Single Piece mail on our automation equipment in our processing facilities. What may change is the timing of the postmark. Some mail will not reach our processing machines until the day after it is collected by a carrier or dropped off at a Post Office.

Customers that want to ensure that their mailpiece is postmarked on the day it is presented to the Postal Service can bring the mailpiece to a retail unit and ask for a manual cancellation. If customers need to retain evidence of mailing, they can purchase a Certificate of Mailing at retail, which will provide a receipt showing that they tendered the mailpiece that day.

Business Mailer Questions:

Q1) How does this change affect business mailers?

Answer: The changes will maintain service at existing levels for most volume and will upgrade standards for more market-dominant volume than is downgraded. The changes will enhance service reliability nationwide while maintaining the existing one-to-five day service range for First-Class Mail and improving service for end-to-end Marketing Mail, Periodicals and Package Services.

Business mailers should note changes to CET for Presort First-Class Mail while estimating the number of days from acceptance to expected delivery. In addition, business mailers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now



excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail. See CET-related questions in this section and prior sections for more details on CET changes.

Q2) Will business mailers have to prepare their mail any differently?

Answer: No.

Q3) Are Critical Entry Times (CETs) changing? If so, why?

Answer: We have changed a number of our Critical Entry Times (CETs) in order to maintain existing customer access to USPS mail and package acceptance units while implementing the Service Standard changes.

The CET is a reference point for measuring service performance relative to time of acceptance by the Postal Service of commercial mail and package entry. If the Postal Service accepts mail volume prior to the CET on a given day, the service performance measurement clock starts the same day, whereas acceptance after CET will start this clock the following day. While assessing the impact of CET changes to customers, the Postal Service prioritized the maintenance of customer access to USPS acceptance units, i.e., Local Processing Centers (LPCs), Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), Post Offices, and both co-located and detached Business Mail Entry Units (BMEUs).

To maintain access points for mailers throughout the network, we revised the CETs for various product types to ensure that we could effectively transport commercial mail and packages through an integrated network and keep our processing schedules on time. In other words, rather than saying that certain types of mail could only be entered at certain locations closer to our RPDCs, we developed an approach that allowed customers to continue to enter at their preferred location at the same rate categories, but we also had to adjust the CETs.

Note that processing of mail and packages will continue apace whether a mail piece or package is accepted before or after the CET. USPS operating plans and operational practices will remain focused on timely processing, distribution and delivery of all mail and packages. Also, mail acceptance procedures are not changing, and the date of acceptance will continue to be verified as is done currently.

Q4) Does the Service Standard change mean changes to business mailers projected mail in-home arrival dates?

Answer: Changes in the Service Standards will provide more reliable service for mailers to plan around in home windows. The relative impact on Service Standards, i.e., leaving more than 80 percent of Market Dominant volume unchanged, demonstrates the Postal Service's efforts to maintain high quality service and mitigate any customer impacts to the extent possible while also implementing operational changes necessary to improve postal operations and achieve the critical — and significant — cost savings that are necessary for financial sustainability as



required by law. For additional information about the Service Standard changes, please go to [Delivering for America: Our ten-year plan highlights - about.usps.com](https://about.usps.com). This information will be updated as needed to communicate any new information.

While the Sunday and holiday change does not alter Service Standards, customers who tender mail to USPS on Saturday or the day before a holiday should account for the day(s) now excluded from service measurement while estimating the expected delivery date for the tendered mail.

Q5) Will business mailers be able to claim a refund if the USPS mail fails to reach its destination in the new time periods?

Answer: No. Business mailers could not claim refunds for postage on mail that did not reach its destination at the predicted date under the old Service Standards and will not be able to claim refunds for mail that does not reach its destination on the predicted date under the new Service Standards. However, due to the implementation of operational improvements and Service Standard adjustments, the Postal Service anticipates that a greater percentage of mail will reach its destination in the predicted days under the new Service Standards.

Q6) What is the effect on community newspapers who may use the mail and who need same day or next day delivery?

Answer: As long as the community newspapers are mailed to the same area that they were sent from, this should not affect the delivery date for these newspapers. However, if for example, a subscriber to a community newspaper in Southern Florida moves to Washington state and wants to keep getting the same community newspaper delivered by mail, then the delivery date will be determined by the ZIP Codes from and to which the newspaper is being mailed. A six day max service standard would apply to newspapers (Periodicals) for mail flow within the contiguous 48 states (end to end). The expected delivery date can be determined at this link [Service Commitments](#). This tool accounts for the Sunday/Holiday change.

Q7) Does this affect customer/supplier agreements? Do they need to be revised or rewritten? If so, how is this process initiated?

Answer: For Customer Service Agreements, business customers can contact their local BSN representative who will coordinate with the appropriate departments.

Q8) What is the process by which the USPS is collecting feedback from business customers regarding this proposed change?

Answer: These changes were covered in the Postal Service's request for an advisory opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission. That process included opportunity for public input, including a pre-filing conference and participation in the proceeding before the Postal Regulatory Commission, which included a public hearing. These changes were also covered in



a notice and comment proceeding in the Federal Register. There was significant participation by members of the general public and by industry stakeholders in both proceedings. The Postal Service has solicited, and continues to solicit, feedback from webinar participants, industry and mail associations, and BSN and National Sales Managers. In addition to this, MTAC and other industry outreach forums provide regular opportunities for business mailers to provide feedback. The feedback from customers and other stakeholders has been used in developing and refining our implementation and communication efforts regarding the changes.

Q9) Some mailers may say that a change in Service Standards is a hidden price increase...these mailers propose that they are receiving less service for the same price. What is your response?

Answer: This effort is designed to improve service and cut costs to better serve our customers, and to provide more reliable and predictable delivery of USPS products. It should not be considered or understood to be a hidden price increase.

Consumer/Retail Customer Questions:

Q1) What does this mean for consumers/retail customers ?

Answer: Beginning March 24, 2025, customers can look up [Service Commitments](#) on usps.com for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. This tool accounts for the Sunday/Holiday change. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.

In addition, on March 24, 2025, a new interactive map was made available on usps.com at <https://www.usps.com/service-standards/> to visually display Service Standards. Since this tool simply displays the stated service standard, it does not reflect the Sunday/Holiday change. Customers can simply enter the ZIP Code they are mailing from and the mail class to view the expected delivery time.

Finally, the Postal Service will share information at its retail locations. There are no impacts to services at those retail locations as retail access will not change. There are also no impacts to delivery services.

Q2) What does this mean for rural customers?

Answer:

We do not anticipate that individual rural customers will experience a significant impact from these adjustments, and in fact are likely to notice positive impacts. The delivery process in rural communities is not changing. Customers, regardless of where they live, will still receive delivery 6 and sometimes 7 days per week. The collection of mail and package volume within local communities is also not changing. This includes carrier pickup from homes and blue collection boxes. Post Office hours are also not changing as part of this effort. What we are changing is



the timing of transportation from select Post Offices to the USPS processing facilities. And we are processing and transporting mail and packages faster within our network.

The service standard refinements do not depend on whether an area is urban or rural, but rather a collection point's distance from an Origin processing facility. The changes add one day to the delivery expectation for mail and packages *sent* from certain ZIP Codes, but they also include improvements to our processing and transportation of mail and packages within our network (often removing a day from previous expectations). Because individual postal customers generally receive far more mail and packages than they send, these service standard refinements either maintain or speed up the vast majority of First-Class Mail (almost 90 percent). Almost 70 percent of First-Class Mail will have a service standard of three days or less. The Postal Service also maintains the range for the First-Class mail service standard at 1-5 days.

For reference, the majority of mail and package volume, including mail and packages destined to rural communities, originates in ZIP Codes that are within 50 miles of an RPDC and/or is pre-sorted. The refined service standards do not add a day to the delivery expectation for this volume, but they do account for it moving quickly through the improved network to destination processing. Consequently, all customers, including rural customers, can expect more reliable and often speedier delivery of important and time-sensitive mailings and packages like prescription medications and veterans or Social Security benefits.

Overall, the best way to ensure rural delivery remains a mainstay of the Postal Service universal service mandate is to maintain modern service standards and a network capable of handling both package and mail volume in a financially sustainable manner with reasonable service expectations. These refined service standards meet that goal and balance our dual mandates of financial self-sufficiency and service excellence for all our customers.

To determine the total impact of these service standard refinements, customers can go to usps.com at [Service Commitments](#) to find the Expected Delivery times for their correspondence and packages based on ZIP Code.

Measurement Questions

Q1) How will USPS monitor the volume of mail that reaches its destination within the allotted Service Standard Timetable?

Answer: The Postal Service will continue to track and report Service Standard performance. We are also updating measurement systems so we can report service performance at the 5-Digit ZIP Code level. These updates will provide enhanced visibility into service performance, allowing the Postal Service and customers to track service more precisely.

Q2) How will consumers and businesses know how the refined Service Standards will apply to their mail?

Answer: To help customers determine the expected delivery time for their mailings, the Postal Service is offering the following tools and technical specifications:



- Detailed file specifications for downloadable files with the new standards can be accessed on PostalPro ([Service Standards | PostalPro](#)) starting March 24, 2025.
- The Service Standards API has been updated to include a new presort indicator for First-Class Mail standards. API specs are available now on the USPS Developer Portal (<https://developers.usps.com/>).
- Effective March 24, 2025, customers are also able to look up Service Standards on usps.com for mailings from one ZIP Code to another on a particular mailing date. The search results will display the expected delivery dates for each available mail class.
- Also, on March 24, 2025, a new interactive map was made available on usps.com to visually display Service Standards simply by entering the ZIP Code they are mailing from and mail class to view the expect delivery time.