



Preparing Your Mail Operation for the U.S. Postal Service 2014 Rate Increase

USPS 2014 Rate Increase

New postage rates go into effect on January 26, 2014.

The new rates are consistent with the December 24, 2013 decision of the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to conditionally approve the USPS request for an exigent rate case.

Under the decision, the USPS is raising rates by approximately 6%, and will maintain those rates until they recoup approximately the \$2.8 billion loss due to the "Great Recession of 2009".

Your mail operation needs to take action now to be properly prepared for the new rates.

Step 1: Send an Announcement

As soon as possible, send an announcement to your customers.

If you manage a corporate mail operation, your customers are the departments you service.

The notice should include an explanation of the new rates, and how the rates impact your customers' costs.

If your department or company can help mitigate the expenses through better presort or changing classes of mail, this is the time to highlight those opportunities.

Step 2: Meet with the USPS

Meet with your local USPS representatives, including the acceptance unit.

Review the changes with the new postal statements, including electronic submission.

If possible, meet with the Business Mail Acceptance unit manager or supervisor.

Ensure that everyone is on the same page with any changes.

Step 3: Meet with Your Vendors

Meet with your postage meter and software vendors.

Include your programmers in meetings and on calls, to ensure they understand when and how the updates will be delivered, how to properly install the updates, and how to test the changes.

Establish a phone tree for reporting and resolving any problems with the installation.

Step 4: Prepare Your Employees

Schedule training for your employees about the new rates.

Review the new rates and forms for every category of mail your operation produces.

Go over the update schedule for the meters and software, discussing any potential impact to production.

Lastly, cover the actions your department will take directly before and after the new rates go into effect.

Final Prep: January 24-25, 2014

Prepare to implement all changes by end-of-day on either January 24 (Monday through Friday operations) or January 25 (Monday through Saturday operations).

Download and install meter and software updates.

Replace all internal and postage statement forms.

Post reminders around your mail center about the new rates, including printed notices at the meters, the inserters, and the customer service desk.

For corporate mail operations, post reminders at internal mail stops.

Go Live: January 27, 2014

On Monday, January 27, send another notice to your internal and external customers about the rate change.

At the daily huddle with your employees, remind them about the changes and answer any last-minute questions.

Inspect every meter to ensure the settings are correct, and review the testing the programmers completed on the software updates.

Conduct additional quality control checks throughout the day.

At the end of the day, have a manager or supervisor accompany the mail to the post office to answer any questions and resolve any problems.

Your Implementation Checklist

Complete as soon as possible:

- Announcement to customers (internal/external)
 - Explanation on impact to business
 - Plan to mitigate rate increase
- Meet with local postal representatives
- Meet with meter/software vendors
 - Dates for update release
 - Testing plans
- Meet with mail center employees
 - Provide training on new rates and forms
 - Review schedule for updates and transition

Your Implementation Checklist

Complete end-of-day, January 24 or 25:

- Upload updates for meters and software
- Test all updates
- Post reminders of new rates
- Replace all printed forms

Complete on January 26:

- Announcement to customers (internal/external)
- Meet with mail center employees
- Test meters and forms
- Implement quality checks throughout day
- Have manager/supervisor accompany mail to USPS

US Postal Service Resources

In addition to the local post office, mailers should take advantage of the US Postal Service's online resources.

One of the most important sections of the USPS website is the [Postal Explorer](#) page. In addition to access to all USPS publications, Postal Explorer provides the new price list, updated postal forms, and Federal register notices.

The [National Customer Support Center](#) (aka "RIBBS") is the hub for information on service alerts, the Intelligent Mail Barcode, the Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee, and much more.

Mailers should also subscribe to the [DMM Advisory](#) and [PCC Insider](#). These emails provide information on price changes, the Domestic Mail Manual, and educational opportunities.



About The Berkshire Company

The Berkshire Company improves business processes in your print & mail operation. With our approach, The Berkshire Company helps you solve real problems, implement better processes, and improve the bottom line.

An independent management consulting firm, The Berkshire Company specializes in improving your business process, including analyzing your operation, developing and selecting solutions, and providing project management.

The Berkshire Company has helped more than 50 organizations improve their operations with:

- Process Evaluations & Improvements
- Strategy Development
- Project Management
- Outsource vs. Insource
- Mail Center Security
- New Technology

[Learn more at berkshire-company.com](http://www.berkshire-company.com)