



P.O Box 51234

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Postage Rates Are Going Down?

USPS Postage Rates to Roll Back on April 10, 2016

The United States Postal Service ("USPS") has released the postage rates for the rollback of the Exigent Rate Increase, which will take place on April 10, 2016. While the overall rate decrease is 4.3%, most commercial mailers will see rates drop between 3.8% and 6%, depending upon class of mail and level of sortation.

For First-Class Mail, the new rates for one-ounce letters are:

Type	Proposed Rates	Current Rates	Per Piece Savings	% Savings
Retail Single Piece	\$ 0.470	\$ 0.490	\$ 0.020	4.1%
Metered Single Piece	\$ 0.465	\$ 0.485	\$ 0.020	4.1%
Machinable Presort	\$ 0.452	\$ 0.471	\$ 0.019	4.0%
Mixed AADC	\$ 0.419	\$ 0.439	\$ 0.020	4.6%
3-Digit/AADC	\$ 0.399	\$ 0.416	\$ 0.017	4.1%
5-Digit	\$ 0.376	\$ 0.391	\$ 0.015	3.8%

There will be similar reductions for First-Class Flats.

Standard Mail contains many more categories, and the overall percentage reductions are also around 4.1%. The entire draft rate table is available on the USPS Postal Explorer website (<http://pe.usps.com>).

Why Are Rates Going Down?

In their December 24, 2013 ruling, the Postal Regulatory Commission ("PRC"), found that the USPS experienced financial harm as a result of the Great Recession of 2008 – 2009, and was legally entitled to implement temporary price increases in excess of the CPI cap. The losses were originally calculated to be \$2.8 billion.

The USPS appealed the PRC's decision, and last June the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ("the Court") issued their decision. The Court ruled that the PRC's standard of a "new normal" was valid, but that they could have used the "new normal" rule to better determine how long they should have counted lost mail. In response to the ruling, the PRC recalculated the number of lost pieces, and added \$1.2 billion to the amount the USPS could recover.

How quickly the USPS recovered the \$4 billion dollars depends on the volume of mail received. Past performance and current models lead to the April 10 date.

Mark Fallon, The Berkshire Company

Boston Hockey Teams Up for Mary (cont'd)



The Boston Herald and FOX 25 recently shined a light on the story of Mary and the Junior Terriers. The story became so popular that the team was invited to the Beanpot Championship by TD Bank-North Garden Management as special guests of Boston University. The team held the Beanpot trophy and watched the game from a luxury suite filled with pizza and soda. They were also given a pre-game pep talk by BU Head Coach David Quinn who was compelled to meet the team of 'inspiring young hockey players.' The team also received a letter from Boston Bruins President Cam Neely.

Neely praised the team for reminding others that

'kindness, respect and acceptance' are important values to have as a team and as individuals.

George said, "I'm surprised that this story spoke to so many people. But when you think about it, it is refreshing to hear a story about athletically gifted kids treating other 'not so typical' kids with kindness and respect. It's a tribute to the coaches as well as the parents. I know many adults who could learn a lot from these kids. We are just happy that Mary has found a group of friends who love her for the sweet girl that she is."

For more information about the Greater Boston PCC, visit us at: www.bostonpcc.org

Record Holiday Shipping Season for the USPS!

The Postal Service expected another big holiday season for 2015 with an expectation for USPS to deliver 15.5 billion mail pieces, including 600 million packages, between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. The package volume was an estimated 10.5 percent increase over 2014 volume.

Those expectations were certainly met within the Greater Boston delivery units as the 32 calendar day period after Thanksgiving (11/30/15 – 12/31/15) showed a significant increase from 2014. For the time frame aforementioned, Greater Boston realized nearly a 30% increase in parcel volume over 2014, finishing with a total of 12,735,132 parcels delivered through all mail classes.

By far the busiest day for Peak 2015 was Monday, December 21st, when over 617,000 parcels were delivered, with Parcel Select leading the way, followed by First Class and Priority Mail respectively.

Nationally, Greater Boston District ranked 8th out of 67 Districts for parcel delivery during Peak 2015, finishing well ahead of major metros such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

PCC Night at the Boston Celtics

The sold-out PCC Networking night at the Celts was a fun night! On February 3rd, the Greater Boston PCC enjoyed a full evening that featured a delicious pre game meal and networking at The Harp, a guided private tour of the New England Sports Museum and an escort to our seats to watch the Celtics earn a 102-95 victory over the Detroit Pistons. Isaiah Thomas led all scorers with 17 points. PCC Members from as far away as CT came to the event and all had a memorable evening.



Harvard University and the USPS Work Together

At the 2015 Postal Forum, Director of Harvard University Mail and Distribution Services, Betsy Shortell, attended a session led by Juliann Hess, Manager of Shipping Information Systems for the United State Postal Service focusing on the latest in tracking for Colleges & Universities. The session focused on accurately reflecting status of delivery confirmation of mail destined for "last mile" delivery. For many years this has been a pain point for Harvard University Mail and Distribution Services as their customers were demanding a "clear real scan" as opposed to having customers "ping-ponged" between Harvard Mail Services and United States Postal Service regarding package whereabouts. The delivery information on the USPS site that was available led to confusion for customers and could lead to finger pointing among Harvard and the USPS when concerned customers wanted to know the where and who was in possession of their parcel.

The new technology available allowed USPS to pass a Firm Sheet Extract file and Harvard to simply share an event file through their software vendor "Winn Solutions (WITS Tracking Systems)" to develop a customized scanning solution where they would utilize their own scanners and customers could see additional scan events, such as a "Delivered to Recipient by Agent", showing the complete life cycle of a parcel once tendered by USPS to an agent.

Since November 2015 this service has been fully operationally, allowing customers (Faculty, Staff and Students) to have complete visibility of their shipments through one USPS platform (usps.com). As a result of this functionality, which was both easy to implement and cost effective, this program has led to an improvement in customer service and satisfaction as there has been a decrease in package inquiries for both Harvard and the USPS due to more accountability and visibility allowed through his program.

Upcoming PCC Events—Join Us!

- Industry Certifications: "It's your career" - May 5, 2016 10:30 AM (EDT) • Harvard University Mail & Distribution Facility
- Boston Red Sox Networking Event —June 14, 2016 • Fenway Park, Boston MA

For more information
visit
www.bostonpcc.org

Boston Hockey Teams Up for Mary

Many of you may know George Kippenhan as a Postal Customer Council Executive Board Member. Others know him as the Manager of Consumer and Industry Contact for the United States Postal Service who is quick to respond to any of your issues or questions with a resolution in a timely manner. What you may not know is that he spends most nights and weekends with his 11 year old daughter Mary, in the most unimaginable environment for a girl who was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at the age of 2...an ice hockey rink.

Three years ago after watching a Boston Bruins game, Mary told her father that she wanted to learn how to ice skate. George and his wife Michelle heard that a "Learn to Skate" event was being held in the Kippenhan's hometown of Rockland. Mary's diagnosis and low muscle tone essentially made even learning to walk a huge challenge. So although hesitant, George and Michelle borrowed some hand-me-down skates, pads and helmets and watched Mary fall on the ice for the first ten minutes. George states, "She was wiping out, but with a big smile on her face."

Little did Mary know that her life was about to be changed. Marty Decourcey, Head Coach of a local elite hockey team called the Boston Junior Terriers, noticed the little girl struggling. He skated over and spoke with the wide eyed, smiling little girl. Decourcey stated, "You can tell who the hockey players are the first time they step on the ice. All the kids are gonna fall, it's the kids who don't crawl off the ice after 2 minutes who are determined to learn. You could tell Mary was one of those kids. She was something special." 'Coach Marty' spent the remainder of the event skating with Mary, essentially giving her the confidence to take up skating lessons.

It was several months later when Mary and Coach Marty crossed paths again at a town soccer game. The Coach asked Mary to join his Elite Boys Hockey Team, the Junior Terriers. Marty told George, "She is going to teach my boys way more than I am going to be able to teach them." Mary proudly accepted. At the first practice in September 2014, a uniform, new helmet and pads were waiting for her.

Mike Rakes, Senior Plant Manager for the Greater Boston District and Assistant Coach for the Terriers states, "She goes to every practice, sits on the bench in full uniform during the games, attends teammates' birthday parties and is genuinely supported by the whole team. She fires the boys up. They love her. She's their spark plug."

The Terriers love for Mary was evident this past February when the whole team skipped a Tuesday night practice to support Mary at her first Special Olympics basketball game of the season. Signs of support were made and the chants of "Mary, Mary" could be heard during the whole game. On a night where tears were flowing easily and often, the Kippenhan Family reflected on how proud they were of this group of young boys that also supported every other athlete participating that night, making it a truly memorable experience.

"This is something out of a Disney movie or an Afterschool Special...but it's real. You could tell this story to a stranger and they wouldn't believe you. A girl with special needs is seen randomly at a 'learn to skate' session by an elite boys hockey coach. The coach places her on the team to teach the boys how to become better people. The lines between typical and 'special' kids are blurred. The children all become friends. The girl inspires the team to perform at the highest level. It sounds so made up, but it's been going on for almost two years now."

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