

Penny increase in price of Forever stamps first since May 2009.

Beginning Jan. 22, 2012, it will cost just a penny more to mail letters to any location in the United States. It will be the first price change for First-Class Mail stamps (Forever stamps) in more than two and a half years. However, customers can continue to mail letters at today's prices by purchasing their forever stamps before Jan. 22.

"That's why Forever stamps were created, to help consumers ease the transition during price changes," said U.S. Postal Service Spokesman Brian Sperry.

The new single-piece First-Class Mail pricing, effective Jan. 22, 2012, include:

- Letters (1 oz.) – 1-cent increase to 45 cents
- Letters additional ounces – unchanged at 20 cents
- Postcards – 3-cent increase to 32 cents
- Letters to Canada or Mexico (1 oz.) – 5-cent increase to 85 cents.
- Letters to other international destinations – 7-cent increase to \$1.05

Prices also will change for other mailing services, including standard mail, periodicals, package services and extra services. While actual percentage price increases for various products and services varies, the overall average price increase across all mailing services is capped by law at 2.1 percent, the rate of inflation calculated based on the Consumer Price Index.

New for all customers is a three-month pricing option to rent PO Boxes, perfect for people on the move and others who need a PO Box for a short time period.

"The overall price increase is small and is needed to help address our current financial crisis," said Sperry.

The price of shipping services will also change on Jan. 22. The overall price change for all shipping services is 4.6 percent, with priority mail prices increasing an average of 3.1 percent and express mail prices increasing an average of 3.4 percent.

The new mailing and shipping services prices are available at www.usps.com/new-prices.htm.

On Jan. 22, The Postal Service will also introduce a new express mail flat rate box. Customers can ship the box for overnight delivery anywhere in the country for one price regardless of weight (up to 70 lbs). The new flat-rate box is priced at \$39.95. Other express mail changes include lower retail prices for half- and one-pound packages and commercial packages to local and close-in areas.

Priority mail pricing will offer an average 6.8 percent discount off retail prices for customers using online and other authorized postage payment methods. For commercial and online customers, a new, larger regional rate box C (12" x 12" x 15") will be added to the existing two sizes.

Also new for 2012 is Package Intercept for commercial mailers, available through a customer interface on Business Customer Gateway. For \$10.95 plus Priority Mail postage, customers can request mail be intercepted before final delivery is attempted to the initial delivery address. The shipment can be returned to sender, held for pick up at a Post Office, or redirected to an alternate address. Intercepted packages are shipped using Priority Mail.

Prices will also be adjusted for other shipping services products and services, including parcel select, parcel return service, international mail, premium forwarding service and post office box service.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

