

Shipping to APO, FPO, and DPO Addresses

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Shipping to APO / FPO / DPO Addresses

1. Scope and Definitions

APO / FPO / DPO

Military mail destinations. These are handled through USPS regardless of physical overseas location.

- **APO** - Army / Air Force Post Office
- **FPO** - Fleet Post Office (Navy / Marines)
- **DPO** - Diplomatic Post Office

Key Rule:

All APO/FPO/DPO shipments are treated as **USPS shipments**, not FedEx, UPS, or DHL.

2. Shipment Type Decision

Before quoting or processing, determine shipment type:

A. Small Parcel Shipment (Standard Process)

Use USPS directly when:

- Shipment consists of **individual boxes**
- Total shipment is manageable (typically < ~10-15 boxes)
- No palletization required

B. Large Shipment (Consolidation Required)

Use consolidation when:

- Shipment is **palletized** or large volume
 - Example:
 - 1,000 backers + 5,000 targets
 - 20+ boxes
 - USPS direct shipment becomes inefficient or cost-prohibitive
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3. Small Parcel Workflow (USPS Direct)

Step 1: Prepare Box Data

For each box:

- Measure **dimensions** (L × W × H)
- Determine **weight**
- Identify contents (if needed for internal reference)

Important Rules:

- Each box must be processed **individually**
 - USPS does **not support multi-box quoting in a single entry**
 - Even identical boxes must be entered separately (or calculated once and multiplied)
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Step 2: Use USPS Rate Calculator

Navigate to: **USPS.com** → **Calculate a Price**

Input:

- **Ship From ZIP Code:** (Action Target) (*confirm if needed*)
 - **Ship To:**
 - City: APO / FPO / DPO
 - State: AE / AP / AA (auto-populates)
 - ZIP: Provided by customer (e.g., 09439)
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Step 3: Enter Package Details

For each box:

- Weight
- Dimensions
- Quantity = 1

Repeat for each box OR:

- If identical boxes:
 - Calculate **one box**
 - Multiply cost by total quantity
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Step 4: Select Service Type

General guidance:

- **USPS Priority Mail** → Preferred for APO/FPO/DPO
- **USPS Retail Ground / Standard** → Rarely used for military mail

Note:

- APO/FPO/DPO is technically treated as domestic mail but behaves like international

- Priority typically offers better reliability
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Step 5: Calculate Total Shipping Cost

- Sum all individual box costs
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Step 6: Apply Markup

Apply standard margin:

- Typical: **10%-20%**
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Step 7: Provide Quote

Deliver:

- Total shipping cost (with markup)
 - Service type (Priority recommended)
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4. Large Shipment Workflow (Consolidation Required)

Step 1: Identify Consolidation Need

Trigger conditions:

- Pallet shipment
 - Excessive number of boxes
 - High USPS cost or labor burden
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Step 2: Contact Customer

Request the following:

“Please provide a **stateside consolidation point address** and all required routing information for forwarding to your unit.”

Step 3: Required Customer Information

Customer must provide:

- Consolidation point address (U.S.-based)
- Unit information (final destination)
- Required identifiers (if applicable):
 - TCN number
 - DSN number
 - Unit number
 - Contact name (e.g., John Doe)
- Any special labeling instructions

Step 4: Create Sales Order

Ship-To Address

- Enter **consolidation point address**

Order Notes

Include ALL provided routing data:

- Final APO/FPO/DPO destination
- Unit identifiers
- Contact details
- Any special instructions

Principle:

More information is always better for downstream handling.

Step 5: Create Shipment Placard (Required)

Create a document (Word or equivalent) containing:

- Final destination (APO/FPO/DPO)
 - Unit information
 - TCM / DSN / routing numbers
 - Contact name
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Step 6: Labeling and Placement

For palletized shipments:

- Print placard
 - Attach:
 - **Front of pallet**
 - **Back of pallet**
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Step 7: Shipment Execution

- Ship to **consolidation point via standard domestic carrier - may be any LTL carrier.**
 - After delivery:
 - Consolidator assumes responsibility
 - They route shipment to final APO/FPO/DPO destination
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5. How Consolidation Routing Works

The consolidator determines final routing based on:

- Information on placard
- Sales order / packing slip data

- Internal military logistics systems

Key Insight:

You do NOT control final leg routing.

Your responsibility is to provide **complete and accurate data**.

6. Edge Cases and Exceptions

A. Customer Insists on Direct USPS (Large Order)

- Possible but inefficient
 - Requires:
 - Manual calculation of every box
 - Potentially very high cost (e.g., \$8,000+)
 - Proceed only with customer approval
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B. Customer Does Not Know Consolidation Process

Guide them:

“Please check with your logistics or supply chain contact for a consolidation shipping address and required routing information.”

C. Mixed Box Types

If boxes differ:

- Each must be calculated separately
 - No batching allowed
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7. Key Rules Summary

- USPS is **mandatory** for APO/FPO/DPO
 - No FedEx, UPS, or DHL
 - Each box must be **quoted individually**
 - Large shipments require **consolidation**
 - Always **collect routing data from customer**
 - Always **include redundant labeling**
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8. Quick Decision Flow

1. Is shipment small (few boxes)?
 - YES → USPS direct
 - NO → Go to consolidation
 2. Is shipment palletized or large volume?
 - YES → Request consolidation point
 - NO → USPS direct
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9. Operational Best Practices

- Always over-communicate shipping constraints
 - Avoid underestimating labor for large USPS shipments
 - Default to consolidation for anything non-trivial
 - Include redundant routing info on:
 - Sales order
 - Packing slip
 - Physical labels
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