

SHAPES THAT FIT

Balloon rates and dimensional weighting requirements increase the cost of oversized Priority Mail® parcels.

PRIORITY, EXPRESS & PACKAGE SERVICES STRATEGIES

A Practical Guide

The Opportunity

The guidelines established in 2007 remain in effect, adding an extra cost to lightweight packages that take up a lot of space.

For Zones 1-4. Oversized packages less than 20 lbs. will be charged the 20-lb. rate. This “balloon” rating only impacts parcels where the length plus girth (the circumference) exceeds 84 inches.

For Zones 5-8. As packages traveling further involve air-transportation, these parcels are subject to dimensional-weight pricing. Dimensional weight (also referred to as “dim” weight) is a transportation industry standard, and is calculated based on the size of the package. This type of pricing will impact Priority Mail® packages larger than one cubic foot – or, in other words, if the length times width times height exceeds 1,728 inches.

Smart Mailstream Practices

This size-based pricing could increase shipping costs dramatically, so it pays to review your current packaging to determine if balloon or dim-weight charges would apply.

- **Reformat packages.** You may be able to revise packaging to avoid these extra charges. In some cases, it may be more economical to split a shipment into two separate packages (to keep the size smaller). In other cases, it may be more economical to combine two oversized items into a single package (to avoid paying the higher charges twice).
- **Consider USPS branded Priority Mail® containers.** These packages all conform to the guidelines, ensuring your mail will not be subject to dim-weight or balloon rating. They are also provided free of charge by the USPS.

Making it Happen

Your shipping department, as well as your package design groups, should all be made aware of the Priority Mail® guidelines. In addition to a good tape measure, shipping tools that can help include:

High-capacity Scale. Electronic scales can calculate precise postage for accurate processing of mail and parcels. Many can provide rates and fees for USPS and UPS, as well as FedEx and DHL. A Differential Weighing Option enables you to stack mail pieces or parcels of differing weights on the scale. As pieces are removed, the proper postage is calculated and postage tape is printed.

Intelligent Mail Finishing. The right mailing system makes it easy to apply the correct postage without having to go to the post office. Systems equipped with IntelliLink® technology also give you the ability to process and track Priority Mail® – right up until delivery confirmation.

Balloon Rate Example

Zones 1-4

When length + girth > 84 inches



Actual weight = 5 lb.

Length (45") plus Girth (15" + 10" + 15" + 10") = 95 inches (which is greater than 84)

Balloon rate = 20 lb.

Dim-Weight Example

Zones 5-8

When volume exceeds 1 cubic foot

To calculate the dim-weight in terms of pounds, multiply the length by the width by the height, then divide the total by 194. Round that up to the nearest whole number.



Actual weight = 10 lb.

Dim-weight = $(30 \times 15 \times 15) \div 194 = 35$ lb.

Pitney Bowes provides a broad range of shipping solutions, such as:

- Mailing And Shipping Scales
- SendSuite™ Shipping Solutions
- Digital Mailing Systems

For more information,
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