



**UPDATED  
WITH 2017  
USPS PRICING**

# HOW TO SEND CERTIFIED MAIL

A Complete Guide to USPS Certified Mail



## What is Certified Mail?

Certified Mail is a special USPS service that provides the person sending the mailpiece with an official receipt showing proof the item was mailed. When the mailpiece is delivered, the mail carrier requires a signature from the recipient. That signature is stored in the USPS database for a period of 2 years. Customers can also add a Return Receipt service (electronic or physical) to their Certified Mail mailpiece that will deliver a copy of the recipient's signature to the sender. The Electronic Return Receipt option shows the recipient's signature via email. The physical Return Receipt option is a postcard mailed to the sender that contains the actual recipient's signature providing proof the mailing was delivered or that a delivery attempt was made.

## How Much Does Certified Mail Cost?

Certified Mail costs \$3.35. That fee is in addition to the First Class Mail or Priority Mail delivery fee to send the mailpiece. Additional services for Certified Mail include Return Receipt. The cost of Return Receipt is \$2.75 for a mailed receipt or \$1.45 for an Electronic Receipt that is emailed to you.

Service	Cost
Certified Mail	\$3.35
Return Receipt (mail)	\$2.75
Return Receipt (electronic)	\$1.45

## How Long Does It Take To Deliver Certified Mail?

Delivery time depends on the mail class chosen to add the Certified Mail service to. If you are sending a First-Class Mail letter, delivery usually takes 2 to 5 business days. For Priority Mail, delivery is usually within 2-3 business days.

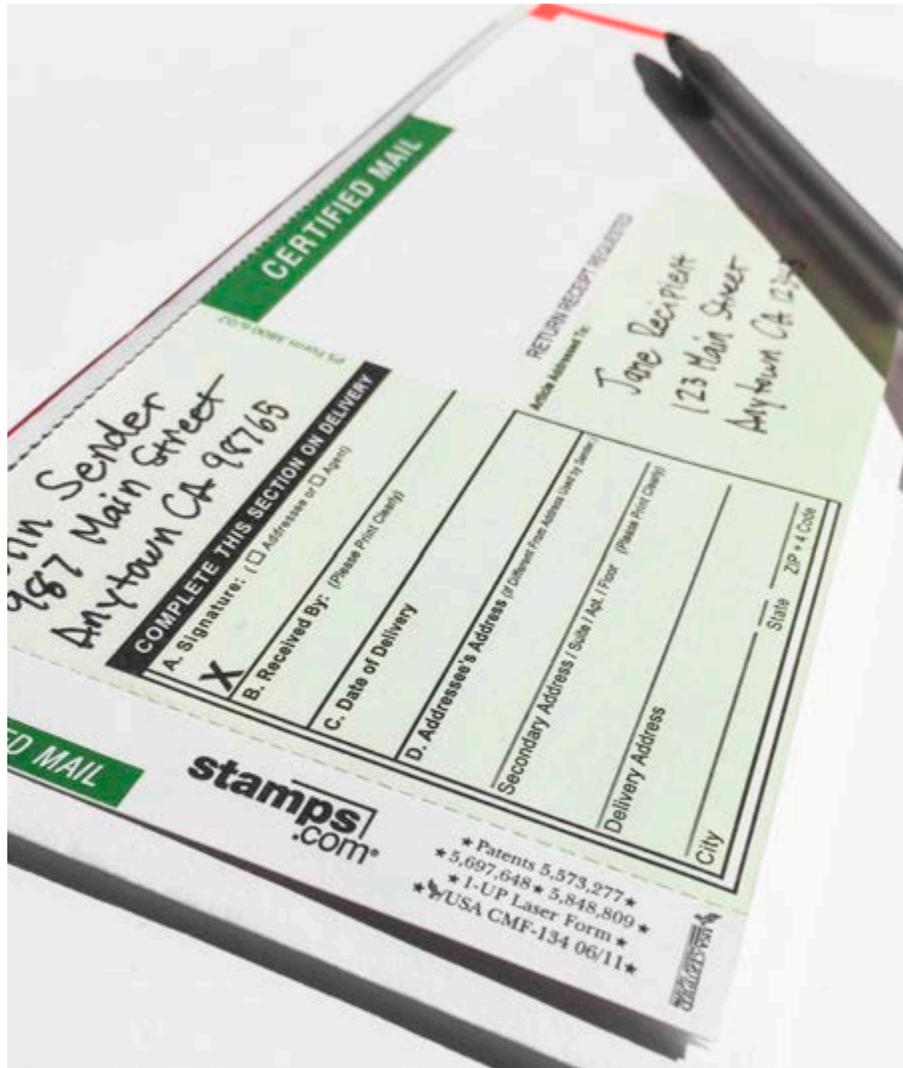


## Common Uses of Certified Mail:

- Time Sensitive Communications With Debtors or Creditors
- Bank Documents
- Tax Returns
- Health Care Records
- Personal Identity Records
- Important Compliance Documents

## What is a Return Receipt?

Return Receipt is a service from the USPS that provides evidence of delivery in the form of a postcard signed by the recipient or an e-mail with an electronic copy of the recipient's signature.



## Certified Mail With Return Receipt

Customers are given the option to purchase a physical Return Receipt or an electronic Return Receipt at the time of mailing. Once purchased, the USPS will return either a physical Return Receipt or an electronic Return Receipt showing the recipient's signature once the mailpiece has been delivered.

In the event that you need to prove that a particular mailpiece has been delivered, you can use the receipt to help prove what date your mailpiece reached its destination. The USPS will save the recipient's signature in its database for a period of 2 years.

To use Return Receipt, the USPS requires a special form which can be obtained at the Post Office™ or from the Stamps.com store. These forms can be filled out by hand; alternatively, Stamps.com also offers special Certified Mail labels that can be automatically filled out by Stamps.com's software.

## ? How Do You Track Delivery of Certified Mail?

Track your Certified Mail letters on the USPS website [here](#). Make sure you have your tracking number handy!



## How To Use Certified Mail With Stamps.com

1. **Connect to Stamps.com to print Certified Mail** – Our software (download [here](#)) connects you to your Stamps.com account where you can print Certified Mail.
2. **Click on “Envelopes”** from the left navigation bar.
3. **Select “Letters”** as your Mailpiece type.
4. **Enter the weight** of your mailpiece.
5. **Select your mail class** – Keep in mind that only First-Class Mail and Priority Mail are options when you use a Certified Mail Form or Envelope.
6. **Choose additional services** – At this point, you may select options such as Return Receipt and Restricted Delivery. Remember, depending on your chosen services, unused portions of the form may contain the word VOID when printed.
7. **Specify the required address information** for your mailpiece.
8. **Select your printable choice** – From the “Printing On” list, select Stamps.com’s pre-formatted Certified Mail Envelope or Form.
9. **Print** – Load the form into your printer, then click “Print Postage.” We recommend you print a sample on a blank sheet of paper so you know the correct loading direction for the form. And remember, the method of affixing the Certified Mail Form to your mailpiece will depend on any additional services you selected in Step 8. Pay close attention to the directions printed on the form to ensure you affix it properly to your mailpiece.

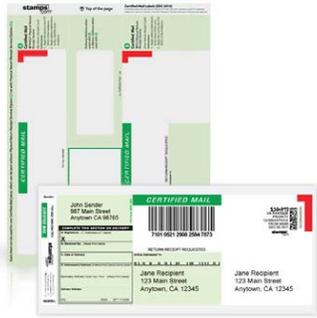


### Using Certified Mail To Send Your Tax Returns

- Make sure your return is signed, otherwise the IRS will return it and penalize you for filing late tax returns!
- Make sure to deposit your returns in a collection box whose pickup time has not passed.
- If your return feels heavier than one ounce, weigh it and apply proper postage. The IRS will not accept a return with postage due!

## Options For Forms Using Stamps.com

With Stamps.com you can buy postage for Certified Mail and Return Receipt using forms from the Post Office. Or, if you want to save even more time we have built-in Certified Mail Forms\* – no handwriting required!



**SDC-3910**

### Certified Mail Label with Postage, Mailing Receipt and Return Receipt Postcard

A flexible label that lets you print postage, addresses and Certified Mail Forms in one step, confirm delivery online and order copies of signatures.



**SDC-3610**

### Three-Part Certified Multi-Purpose Labels

A cost-effective option that allows you to print up to four label sets on one sheet and automatically records the Certified Mail article numbers in your Stamps.com print history.



**SDC-3710**

### Certified Mail with Receipt

Similar to the Three-Part form above, this option automatically records the Certified Mail article number in your print history, plus prints up to three label sets on one sheet.



**SDC-3810**

### Certified Mail #11 Envelope with Postage, Mailing Receipt and Return Receipt Postcard

A quick and easy option, this envelope is ideal for mailing items that fit into #11 or smaller envelopes. Just print postage, Proof of Mailing, Return Receipt or Restricted delivery in one step, fold and seal, and mail.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

You must be on the Stamps.com Premier plan in order to use Certified Mail Forms and Envelopes. If you are not a Premier member, fill out and attach USPS Form 3800 and be sure you have Certified Mail Forms and Envelopes on hand – they're easy to order from the Stamps.com Store! \* *upgrade to [Stamps.com Premier](#) required*

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Do I have to be present at a Post Office to send Certified Mail?

No, as long as you affix the proper Certified Mail Forms and correct amount of postage, you can have a USPS mail carrier pick up your Certified Mail mailpiece or drop it in a mail box.

### How long will it take for USPS to deliver my Certified Mail letter?

Plan on First-Class Mail delivery standards of 2 to 5 business days and Priority Mail delivery within 2-3 days. However, USPS does not guarantee an exact delivery time for either First-Class Mail or Priority Mail.

### How can I track my Certified Mail letter?

You can track Certified Mail from the U.S. Postal Service by using tracking tools on the USPS website, [https://tools.usps.com/go/TrackConfirmAction\\_input](https://tools.usps.com/go/TrackConfirmAction_input). You need the tracking number for the mailpiece in order to use this service.



### Can I send a Certified Mail letter in a blue mail box at the corner of the street instead of the Post Office?

Yes, you can drop off your Certified Mail item in one of the big USPS boxes you would see on the street.

### If the Certified Mail is returned to sender as not deliverable, should the sender sign the green card?

No, the sender should not sign it. The fact that it was returned as undeliverable with the unsigned green card intact is proof that you tried to send it.

### Which name goes on the receipt, mine or the person I am mailing it to?

On the green and white "Certified Mail Receipt", write the name of the person you are mailing the mailpiece to. Their address should be entered at the bottom.

### Can anyone at the mailing address sign for Certified Mail?

Yes, as it is only required that the person whose name is on the package sign for it if the letter was sent by restricted Certified Mail.

### Can someone hand write "Certified Mail" on an unsealed envelope and stick in your door?

No, Certified Mail must be processed and tracked through the U.S. Postal Service.

### Can someone refuse to accept a letter and not sign for Certified Mail?

Yes, there is no legal requirement to accept Certified Mail.

### Can Certified Mail go to a P.O. Box?

When Certified Mail arrives at the delivery Post Office, the letter carrier will place a delivery notification inside the P.O. Box that instructs the person to present the delivery slip to the window clerk.

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## About Stamps.com

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No more trips to the Post Office™. Stamps.com lets you prepare and print USPS postage and shipping labels quickly and easily from your own computer. Sign up and experience an online suite of mailing, shipping and international services guaranteed to save you time and money. Take a look at all that Stamps.com has to offer.

### Choose from all USPS services

- All mail classes including Priority Mail, First-Class Mail and Media Mail
- Schedule free USPS pick-ups
- Certified Mail and free USPS Tracking

### Print postage stamps

- Print any denomination
- Use for letters or large envelopes
- Never run out of stamps again

### E-commerce Integrations

- Retrieve order data directly from eBay®, Amazon.com® and more
- Shopping Cart Support including Magento® and Bigcommerce
- Multi-Carrier Shipping Software including Kewill Flagship and ShipWorks

### Warehouse Shipping

- Gain access to substantial USPS discounted rates
- Scalable with existing equipment – printers, scales and barcode readers
- Multiple shipping stations or locations

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