

Automated Package Verification (APV) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



The Automated Package Verification (APV) System was launched in August of 2017. APV was built to help automate, streamline, and create a better customer experience by capturing certain postage discrepancies with domestic PC Postage /Click-N-Ship Indicia labels only. The primary purpose of the APV System is to support recovery of postage discrepancies in an automated fashion. After detecting discrepancies and calculating the postage adjustment, the system submits a file to vendors with data to support the postage adjustment. Vendors pay or collect the adjustment amount and enable customers to dispute postage adjustments. APV maintains records of all items related to postage adjustments and disputes.

APV and manual verification may result in separate postage adjustments, but mailers are still required per the Domestic Mail Manual 604.4.2.4 below to weigh, measure, and label packages properly to qualify for accurate handling, delivery and postage assessments. For mailpieces with shortpaid or unpaid postage found in the mailstream, both manual and automated processes are used to detect and verify the discrepancy.

APV is not a repricing engine nor should it be relied on as a quality control for mailers.

- USPS does not individually rate and invoice every package tendered. APV works in combination with our manual verification processes to protect revenue.
- All customers, including meter/ PC Postage customers are REQUIRED by the DMM to accurately rate and apply correct postage to each package.

PES Postage Evidencing Systems (Meters/PC Postage)

DMM 604.4.2.4 Denial of Use

The customer authorized to use a postage evidencing system may be denied use when the customer:

- a. Fails to comply with mailing standards.
- b. Submits false or incomplete information.
- c. Enters mailpieces for which there is a postage discrepancy into the mailstream.

USPS will continue to expand APV capabilities with the launch of Package Platform beginning later this year.

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What is APV?

Automated Package Verification or **APV** is a program designed to capture some short paid domestic parcels with postage prepared using Click-N-Ship or one of the following providers:

- EasyPost - PayPal
 - eBay - Pitney Bowes
 - Endicia - Stamps.com
- APV uses mail processing equipment that has been outfitted with upgraded scales to capture the weight of a package, and equipment to measure the dimensions of a package to detect certain postage overpayments or underpayments where equipment is located and if the parcel can be processed on the equipment.
 - An invoice is sent to the customers via Click-N-Ship or the PC Postage provider.
 - USPS will then receive payment from Click-N-Ship or the PC Postage provider on behalf of the customer.
 - The APV system reduces the need for packages paid via Click-N-Ship or PC Postage to have additional postage collected manually through the postage due process on the pieces detected automatically. Pieces that escape detection by this system are still subject to manual Postage Due processes.

Note: Some vendors/customers may refer to this as Automated Postage Due.

Customer Questions

How did USPS streamline the automated package verification process?

- We've invested in new technologies that automatically detect and correct certain package postage overpayments or underpayments.

How does APV improve upon the manual postage due process?

- USPS relies heavily on a manual postage due process. Mail with postage discrepancies is either returned to the senders/shipper to be corrected or delivered to its destination for the recipient/customer to pay the postage due. This process may delay shipments and/or your customer/recipient may have to pay extra, unexpected postage, which erodes the quality of the customer experience. Mail that is not paid properly and is not detected by APV may get manually processed as postage due.

Who is impacted by this process?

- USPS has implemented this process across Click-N-Ship® and PC Postage® entities: Endicia, Stamps.com, Pitney Bowes, eBay, PayPal, EasyPost.

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When does a postage difference occur?

- Generally, a postage difference occurs when the package characteristics (e.g., weight, dimensions, zone, etc.) entered when the label is created do not match the measurements of the actual package mailed as captured by USPS processing equipment.
- The most common reasons for postage discrepancies include:
 - Incorrect weight on label resulting in a price difference due to different rating or exceeding limitations for the class chosen.
 - Incorrect dimensions versus those of the actual package shipped
 - Incorrect service or packaging entered for label creation versus actual service/packaging material used (e.g., First-Class™ labels cannot be used on Priority Mail® or Priority Mail Express® packaging).
 - Package claimed at First Class 13 oz., but actually weighs 1.5 lbs. should be mailed as Priority as First Class Mail has a 15.999 oz. limit.
 - Additional information on pricing of mail classes can be found at USPS DMM notice 123 - <https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/notice123.htm>

How will I be notified of an under or over payment?

- USPS® notifies the vendor, either Click-N-Ship® or the PC Postage entity, when differences in package characteristics are detected.
- Payment adjustments are facilitated through Click-N-Ship® and PC Postage® platforms.

How is my payment processed?

- All credits/debits are processed by your PC Postage entity on behalf of USPS.
- Contact your PC Postage provider directly for questions regarding your account or billing.

Will I receive a refund for overpayments?

- Yes. USPS has invested in new technologies that automatically detect and correct both package postage overpayments and underpayments at the same magnitude.

How accurate is the automated postage due process?

- The state-of-the-art mail processing network has been tested extensively.
- The equipment is checked daily for calibration of scales to ensure we get the most accurate information that will help us to best streamline your shipping experience.

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Which account will be charged/refunded? USPS or PC Postage entity (Endicia, Stamp.com, etc.)

- The account the customer used to pay postage for the specific package will be adjusted.
 - For example, if the customer used their Endicia account to ship the package then the postage adjustment would come from the Endicia account;
 - If they used USPS Click-N-Ship, then the postage adjustment would come from the USPS Click-N-Ship account.

Disputes/Appeals

What do I do if I disagree with the assessment by USPS?

- If you disagree with the assessment, follow the instructions on the notice to submit a dispute.
 - You can open a dispute by contacting USPS by emailing verifypostagehelp@usps.gov or directly at 844-819-5187 between 7AM-5PM CT, M-F.
 - Please prepare to share the following, which can be seen on the notice of shortpaid charges:
 - Intelligent Mail package Barcode (Tracking) Number – last 4 digits
 - Revenue Assurance ID
 - Reason For Dispute
 - Contact information (name, email, and phone number)
- USPS may review all scan data relating to your piece in question, including image analysis, and, if an error in billing has occurred, USPS will work through the PC Postage entity to return the amount in question.

How long do I have to submit a dispute?

- You have 60 days from the date of the notification of the adjustment to file a dispute for a given transaction.

How long will it take USPS to review my dispute/how can I check the status of my dispute?

- Most responses can be expected in 2-5 business days, and at most 15 business days.
- The status of your dispute claim is available from your PC Postage entity and may be updated daily.

When will I receive my refund if I dispute my shortpaid invoice?

- If your view of this dispute is adopted or partially upheld you may be due a refund.
- All payments are processed by your PC Postage entity on behalf of USPS. You will need to contact your PC Postage entity directly for questions regarding billing or your account.

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How to Pay Postage Correctly

Why does Weight matter?

- Pricing for packages is based on weight increments.
 - USPS® rounds up to either the next pound (lb.) or ounce (oz.).
 - For example, if your package weighs 3 lbs. 5 oz., it would be charged at the 4 lb. rate.
 - If you have a First-Class Package® that weighs 7.3 oz., it must be charged at the 8 oz.-rate. This applies to all mail classes—domestic and international.

Why does mail class matter?

- The class of mail determines the service level the package receives and the pricing for the package.
- In addition, certain mail classes have weight restrictions
 - For example, First-Class Package Service® delivery can only be used for packages under 15.999 oz.; anything over this weight limit must be shipped in Priority Mail® service.
 - Domestic Regional Rate Boxes have weight limits of 15 lbs. for A and 20 lbs. for B. Pieces that exceed these weights must be sent Priority Mail zone and weight.
 - Priority Mail Cubic have a 20 lbs. limit and those that exceed this are assessed at the Priority Mail zone and weight rate.
 - USPS does not ship anything over 70 lbs. or with Length + Girth measurements exceeding 108” inches for Priority and 130” inches for Parcel Select.

Does Zone make a difference?

- Yes, Zone does matter.
- If you are using PC Postage® software, verify that the origin (or “sent from”) address is up to date before printing the label.
 - This will ensure you have the correct destination Zone for your package
- Please note USPS assigns and bills for zones determined by the distance between the origination and destination ZIP Codes, to get a zone chart for your ZIP Code™ use the Postal Calculator. <https://postcalc.usps.com/>

Do I have to Measure my package?

- To ensure you are paying the correct postage, you should measure the length, width, and height of the package, and enter them when prompted by the PC Postage label program you are using.
- Dimensional weight may also apply to your packaging if the volume is greater than 1 cubic foot.

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How do I properly Label my package?

- After measuring and weighing your package, follow the instruction from your PC postage entity for printing a prepared label
 - Ensure you place the label on the long side of the package.
 - Labels should not wrap over the ends or edges, and all barcodes should face up in the same direction.