

Postage Meter

Using a **postage meter** is a convenient way to pay for postage. Meters are leased from authorized meter manufacturers.

The meter company you choose will install your meter and, after you request it, the post office will issue you a meter license and set your meter for the amount of postage you wish to purchase. Only the Postal Service can refill (reset) your meter when you are ready to purchase additional postage.

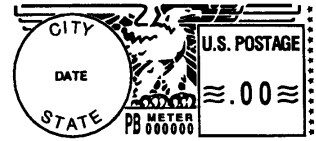
Postage meters cannot be sold or given to one mailer by another mailer. Lost, stolen, or found meters must be reported to the Postal Service immediately, as must anyone who offers to sell you a meter.

Only companies licensed by the Postal Service are authorized to lease meters. You can find the telephone number for meter vendors in your telephone directory under “Business Machines.”

Authorizations and Fees

To use a postage meter for Standard Mail, you need:

- A postage meter and a meter license (see page 18).
- Authorization to mail with a postage meter (mailing permit). To apply, fill out Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile* (see page 13). Check the box next to “Notification to Present Metered Mail in Bulk” and check “Standard Mail.” If you have already applied for a different permit and have a Form 3615 on file at the local post office, the Postal Service will amend that form to show the metered mail authorization. There is no fee for this authorization. When your application is approved, you will receive a permit number. You **DO NOT** print this number on your mailpieces; simply keep this on file for your records.
- To pay the annual mailing fee (see page 12). Paying the annual mailing fee gives you authorization to mail at presorted Standard Mail rates for 12 months.



postage meter: An electronic postage imprinter used to print postage on gummed tape or directly onto envelopes or cards.

Applying for a License

Complete a meter license application—Form 3601-A, *Application or Update for a License to Lease and Use Postage Meters* (May 1996 or later edition only)—at the post office where you will have your meter refilled. Your meter vendor will complete this form, and submit it to the Postal Service on your behalf.

How to Use a Postage Meter

Your authorizing post office will explain any local rules, but these standards generally apply:

- Insert a “Presorted Standard” or “Nonprofit Organization” slug into your meter according to your authorization. Your meter vendor will supply these.
- Print on each piece either the exact amount of postage due. Some mailers meter each piece at the lowest claimer postage rate and then “pay up” the difference when they bring the mail to the post office. Ask your local postal employees about this option.
- If you print a date in the meter impression, you must use the date you actually deposit the mail at the post office. Meter impressions on Standard Mail mailings do not have to show a date. Meter tapes need only show the month and year (not the day) of the mailing.
- Make sure the meter stamps are legible and don’t overlap, or they will not be accepted when postal employees examine the mail for postage.
- Use fluorescent ink for postage imprints on letter-size metered mail, or your license may be revoked. Ask your meter manufacturer for ink recommendations.
- Always deposit the mail at locations designated by the postmaster of the licensing post office shown in the meter stamp unless you’re authorized by the Postal Service to deposit it at a different location.

slug: An attachment to the meter machine that can be obtained from your meter supplier. Used to print postal endorsements or advertising on a mailpiece when the postage is printed.

Warning! When using a postage meter to print postage on your mail pieces, check, double check and triple check that the postage amount is actually what you want (\$.15 not \$1.50 or \$.15 not \$.015).

If you overpay and request a refund, you must turn in the envelopes and will only receive 90% reimbursement of the postage affixed.

Sample Meter Designs

