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Keep the Path Clear for Holiday Cheer! *Avoid Common Hazards to Keep Your Holidays Joyful*



WASHINGTON, DC — It's important to practice good safety protocols all day, every day. But it's especially important during the holiday season. There's so much to do to get ready — with all the decorating, shopping and cooking — sometimes people lose sight of common hazards that could ruin the holidays.

For the U.S. Postal Service, the safety of our employees and the communities we serve is always a top priority. We have some tips that will not only help keep our carriers safe as they deliver your holiday gifts, but you and your family as well.

Keeping Postal Service Employees Safe

In addition to making sure your carrier has a clear path to your door, there are other ways to keep both your carrier and other Postal Service employees safe during the holidays and year-round.

- Don't overpack boxes. Not only could the box burst open, but overweight/overstuffed boxes can cause injuries. Items should easily fit within the box you've selected without bulging out the sides or ripping the seams of the box. If you can't fit everything in one box, consider getting a bigger size or send in multiple shipments. Customers can get free Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express boxes, in a wide variety of sizes, at their local Post Office.
- Don't send materials that are prohibited such as fireworks or ammunition. Hazardous materials such as perfumes, aerosols or lithium batteries are mailable with restrictions. For additional information or any questions please visit our [website](#)
- Items powered by dry-cell batteries sometimes may turn on during handling and emit light, buzz, beep or tick. Please ensure the device is powered off or package batteries separately (preferably in the original manufacturer's packaging). Note: specific packaging requirements apply to lithium batteries. [See Publication 52](#) - Hazardous, Restricted and Perishable Mail.

"Safety is important no matter the time of year. But even the most safety-conscious person could forget simple, quick safety checks during the hustle and bustle that is the holiday season," said USPS Occupational Safety and Health Senior Director Linda DeCarlo. "Try to set aside a few minutes each day to look for, and correct, potential hazards in and around your home. Those few minutes could be the difference between a happy holiday or an unhappy one."

In and Around the House

There are many things you can do to help prevent or reduce injuries throughout the holidays. While cooking, always turn pot handles toward the back of the stove to prevent accidentally bumping them and causing spills, keep kids at least 3 feet away from the stove and supervised at all times, and make sure anything that can catch on fire is kept away from a hot stove.

If you're outside, take care to clear any snow or ice on steps, sidewalks and driveways, and around your mailbox. Also make sure to salt the cleared areas to prevent refreezing.

Snow and ice may not be an issue for you, but that doesn't mean you don't have to watch for outside hazards. Yard equipment, toys and yard trimmings on the lawn, walkways or steps can cause a tripping hazard or serious injury. It may be easy for homeowners to notice and avoid such hazards, but your letter carrier may not. Many times, carriers may have their hands full of packages and could miss seeing obstacles in their path. It only takes a few moments to make sure your yard and sidewalks are clear of hazards to keep everyone safe.

Furry Family

We love our furry family members. They provide a lifetime of joy. But even the best-behaved dogs, and even cats, can pose an unfortunate hazard to people they don't know.

More than 5,800 postal employees and a staggering 4.5 million Americans were attacked by dogs last year. Many attacks could be avoided if dog owners would take a few extra moments of precaution. The Postal Service participates in [National Dog Bite Awareness Week](#) every year and here are a few tips to keep you, your carrier and your dog safe during the holidays and year-round.

- If a carrier delivers mail or packages to your front door, place your dog in a separate room and close that door before opening the front door. Some dogs burst through screen doors or plate-glass windows to attack visitors. Dog owners should keep the family pet secured.
- Parents should remind their children and other family members not to take mail directly from carriers in the presence of the family pet, as the dog may view the person handing mail to a family member as a threatening gesture.
- The Postal Service places the safety of its employees as a top priority. If a carrier feels threatened by a dog, or if a dog is loose or unleashed, the owner may be asked to pick up mail at a Post Office until the carrier is assured the pet has been restrained. If a dog is roaming the neighborhood, the pet owner's neighbors also may be asked to pick up their mail at the area's Post Office location.

Additional holiday news and information, including all domestic, international and military mailing and shipping deadlines, can be found at the Postal Service Holiday Newsroom: usps.com/holidaynews.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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More USPS holiday news, including shipping deadlines and the North Pole postmark, can be found at usps.com/holidaynews. For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, please go to about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf.