

SAFETY NEWS

Be Aware: Mercury Is Prohibited In The Mail

Commonly Encountered Mercury

| Visual | Description of Item | Mailability of Item |
|--|--|---|
|  | Liquid mercury — Often encountered in a wide range of volumes. Reasons for sending include uses for gold reclamation/refinement, preparation of dental amalgams, and element collections. | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e |
|  | Mercury barometer — These devices often contain significant amounts of mercury that are not well contained. They have been responsible for several leaks. (Note: Fully digital versions are mailable without restrictions.) | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e |
|  | Mercury thermometer — These items may contain significant amounts of mercury in breakable containment (glass). (Modern versions (i.e. digital and those using red liquid, which is alcohol to which red coloring has been added) are mailable without restrictions.) | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e |
|  | Mercury sphygmomanometer (blood pressure gauge) — These devices may contain significant amounts of mercury in breakable containment (glass). (Note: Fully digital versions are mailable without restrictions.) | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e |
|  | Mercury switch - May exist in a small enough size to get below the 100 mg. limit; however, this would be the exception rather than the rule. If you can see the mercury, it is not mailable. | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e, may encounter some that adhere to Section 348.22g |
|  | Mercury relay — May exist in a small enough size to get below the 100 mg. limit; however, this would be the exception rather than the rule. If you can see the mercury, it is not mailable. | Domestic Ground — Prohibited Domestic Air — Prohibited International — Prohibited Prohibited as per Section 348.21e, may encounter some that adhere to Section 348.22g. |
|  | Compact fluorescent lamps — These items contain small amounts of mercury vapor. If broken, there will be no visible mercury and the vapors will readily disperse. | Domestic Ground — Mailable Domestic Air — Mailable International — Prohibited Mailable as per Section 348.22g. [Ⓣ] See also Packaging Instruction 8C. |

(NAPS)—Many people may be surprised to learn they've been sending dangerous, prohibited items through the mail. That's why the Postal Service is reminding customers that metallic mercury and devices containing metallic mercury are always prohibited in the mail stream.

What To Avoid

Forbidden items include: antiques such as thermometers, barometers, blood pressure monitors, switches and relays. However, compact fluorescent lamps, which contain small amounts of mercury in vapor form, are mailable domestically but not internationally (including APO/FPO/DPO destinations).

What Can Happen

If a person knowingly mails items or materials that are dangerous or injurious to life, health, or property, they may face a civil penalty of at least \$250, but not more than \$100,000 per violation; the costs of any cleanup associated with each violation; and damages. They may also face criminal penalties.

The Postal Service is committed to the safety and security of its employees,

its customers, and its transportation networks and will remain vigilant in safeguarding the mail stream against any article that might pose a hazard to health, safety, property, or the environment.

What You May Not Know About The Postal Service

The United States Postal Service is an independent federal establishment overseen by a bipartisan Board of Governors and mandated to be self-financing and to serve every American community through the affordable, reliable and secure delivery of mail and packages to 167 million addresses six and often seven days a week. It generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

Learn More

The Postal Service offers FAQs on prohibited items containing mercury and the Postal Inspection Service has released a public service announcement on mercury in the mail. Additionally, you can visit usps.com and facts.usps.com.