
How To Get A Po Box

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INTRODUCTION: WHY YOU MIGHT NEED A PO BOX

In an era of digital communication, the humble post office box (or PO box) remains a surprisingly vital tool for millions of individuals and businesses. Whether you run a home-based business and want to keep your residential address private, travel frequently and need a secure place for mail, or simply want to avoid having packages left on

your doorstep, a PO box offers a reliable solution. But the process of getting one can feel a little bureaucratic if you have never done it before. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know about **how to get a PO box** — from choosing the right size to completing the application — so you can enjoy the peace of mind that comes with a dedicated mailing address.

Many people assume renting a PO box is complicated, but the truth is that it is a straightforward procedure once you understand the requirements. In the

following sections, we will cover the steps you need to take, the documents you must bring, the costs involved, and the differences between USPS PO boxes and private mailbox alternatives. By the end, you will have a clear roadmap for securing your own postal box.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF A PO BOX

A PO box is a lockable, secure mailbox located inside a post office facility. It is assigned a unique number, and your mail is delivered directly to that box rather than to your home or business address. The United States Postal Service (USPS) is the most common provider, but private companies also offer similar mailbox services. Before you begin the process of learning **how**

to get a PO box, it is helpful to know the different types available.

Types of PO Boxes

- **Traditional PO Box (USPS):**
Located inside a post office lobby. You access it with a key during the facility's operating hours. Most offices offer 24/7 lobby access for box holders.
- **Premium PO Box (USPS):**
Available at select locations that have extended lobby hours or offer street addressing. With a premium box, you can use the post office's street address as your mailing

address, which is useful for receiving packages from private carriers like UPS or FedEx.

- **Private Mailbox (CMRA):**

Offered by companies like UPS Store, Pak Mail, or independent shipping centers. These provide a street address that looks like a regular apartment or suite number. They also accept packages from all carriers and often forward mail.

The choice between USPS and a private mailbox often depends on your specific needs, such as whether you receive many packages from non-USPS carriers (private boxes are better for that) or if you simply want the lowest cost (USPS tends to be cheaper for basic boxes).

STEP-BY-STEP: HOW TO GET A PO BOX AT THE POST OFFICE

The most common method is renting a box from the USPS. Here is a detailed walkthrough.

Step 1: Find a Post Office Near You

Visit the USPS website and use the "Find a USPS Location" tool. Filter by "PO Box" to see which offices near you offer mailbox rentals. You can also check the hours of the lobby and the counter. Some smaller post offices have limited

hours, so if you need 24/7 access, confirm that the lobby is open around the clock.

Step 2: Choose Your Box Size

USPS offers five standard sizes, ranging from the smallest (able to hold a few letters) to a large box that can accommodate small packages. The sizes are labeled 1 through 5, with dimensions roughly:

- **Size 1:** 3 in. high x 5.5 in. deep – holds letters and small flats.
- **Size 2:** 4.4 in. high x 5.5 in. deep – slightly taller.
- **Size 3:** 5.5 in. high x 11 in. deep –

fits magazines and larger envelopes.

- **Size 4:** 9.25 in. high x 11 in. deep – holds small packages.
- **Size 5:** 14.5 in. high x 11 in. deep – for larger parcels.

Think about the volume and type of mail you anticipate. If you mostly get letters, a Size 1 is enough. If you subscribe to magazines or receive catalogs, go with Size 3. For packages, consider Size 4 or 5, or use a premium box that allows package acceptance at the counter.

Step 3: Gather

Required photograph and
Identification your current
USPS requires physical address
two forms of ID (not a PO box).
to verify your Acceptable
identity. The primary IDs
primary ID must include a driver's
have a license, state ID,

passport, or name. Both must be current and valid. If your secondary ID can be a utility bill, driver's license, bank statement, does not have voter registration your current card, or a credit address, bring a card with your change-of-

address online or in confirmation or a person. Online recent bill that application via matches your USPS.com is address. convenient:

Step 4: Complete search for "PO the Application Boxes" and You can apply choose "Apply

for a PO Box." upload scans of
You will select your IDs. After
your office, submitting, you
choose a box will receive a
size, and enter confirmation and
your personal a temporary box
details. You will number. Then
also need to you must visit

the post office Alternatively,
within 15 days you can go
with your directly to the
physical IDs to post office and
complete the fill out a PS Form
process and 1093
receive your (Application for
keys. Post Office Box

Service). cost \$15–\$20 for
Step 5: Pay the six months, while
Rental Fee a large box in a
Fees vary by city can be \$100
location and box or more per
size. Typically, a year. USPS offers
small box in a rental periods of
rural area might 3, 6, or 12

months. renewal using a
Payment can be credit card on
made by credit file.
card, debit card, Step 6: Receive
check, or money Your Keys and
order. Some Start Using Your
offices also allow Box
automatic Once payment is

processed, the friends, family,
 clerk will give banks, and any
 you two keys for subscriptions.
 your box. Test Note that you
 the lock must wait for
 immediately. your mail to be
 Update your forwarded or
 address with redirected –

PRIVATE PROVIDER (CMRA)

USPS does not automatically forward mail to a new PO box unless you file a change-of-address order.

HOW TO GET A PO BOX FROM A

If you want a street address, need to receive packages from all carriers, or want mail forwarding services, a

private mailbox PostNet, or local rental independent (commercial mail centers offer receiving boxes that look agency, CMRA) like a street might be better. address (e.g., Companies like 123 Main St., The UPS Store, Suite 500). The

process is forms of ID
similar: (same

1. Visit the
location and
inquire about
rates and
sizes.

2. Provide two

requirements
as USPS).
3. Complete their
application
form (often a
USPS Form

1583 is required, which must be notarized).

4. Pay the rental fee – usually monthly or quarterly.

5. Receive a key or access code.

Private boxes are generally more expensive than USPS boxes but offer added

convenience, of mail
such as a real envelopes, so
street address you can see
and package what has arrived
acceptance from without visiting
all carriers. Many the box.

also provide
digital scanning

**COST COMPARISON: USPS VS.
PRIVATE MAILBOX**

Understanding

the financial aspect is crucial when deciding **how to get a PO box** that fits your budget. Here is a rough comparison:

- **USPS Small PO Box:**

About \$15-\$30 per 6 months in most areas.

- **USPS Large PO Box:**

About
\$50–\$120 per
year
depending on
location.

- **Private
Mailbox
(small):**

Typically
\$10–\$25 per
month
(\$120–\$300
per year).

- **Private
Mailbox
(large):**

\$30-\$60 per month
(\$360-\$720 per year).

but they do not accept packages from FedEx, UPS, or DHL unless you have a premium box with street addressing.

Note that USPS boxes are subsidized and thus cheaper,

Private boxes are box? Here are more flexible but some compelling come at a higher advantages: premium.

BENEFITS OF HAVING A PO BOX

Why go through the effort of getting a PO

- **Privacy:** Your home address stays hidden from correspondenc

e and
packages.

- **Security:** Mail theft is reduced because the box is locked inside a post

office.

- **Consistency:** Even if you move, your PO box address remains the same unless you cancel it.

- **Small Business Professionalism:** A PO box (or private mailbox) gives a business a more

professional address than a home address.

- **Travelers and RVers:** A PO box provides a stable mailing

address while **PO box**, keep
 you are on the these tips in
 move. mind:

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH EXPERIENCE

To avoid
 common pitfalls
 when learning
how to get a

- **Check office hours for lobby access.** Some post offices

lock the lobby after hours. If you need 24/7 access, verify that the location offers it.

- **Bring exact**

change or a credit card.

Not all post offices accept checks for initial payments.

- **Renew**

before expiration.

USPS sends a renewal notice, but if you miss it, your box may be reassigned.

Set a calendar reminder.

- **Update your address with USPS.** File a permanent change-of-address online

or at the post office. Mail forwarding takes a few weeks to take effect.

- **Consider a premium PO**

box if you receive

many

packages

from different carriers.

Without it, packages from

UPS/FedEx will not be delivered to a standard PO box.

- **Use your PO box for subscription**

s like Netflix, Amazon, and bank statements to avoid missing deliveries.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- **Using a PO box for legal documents like a driver's license address:**
Most states

require a physical residential address for your license. Use the PO box as a mailing

address
separate from
your
residence.

- **Forgetting to check your box regularly:** Po

boxes can fill
up quickly,
and
overflowing
mail may be
returned to
sender after a
certain period.

- **Not notifying important senders:**

Banks and government agencies must be informed directly;

forwarding from USPS may not work for all official mail.

CONCLUSION

Knowing **how to get a PO box** is

a simple but handling.
 immensely Whether you
 useful skill for choose a USPS
 anyone who PO box for its low
 values privacy, cost and
 security, and familiarity, or a
 professionalism private mailbox
 in their mail for its street

address and — selecting the package right size, flexibility, the preparing your process is a few identification steps away from documents, and completion. By understanding following the the costs — you guidelines above can secure a

dedicated specific needs,
mailing address and soon you
quickly and with can enjoy the
minimal hassle. convenience and
Take the time to peace of mind
evaluate your that a PO box
provides.