
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.

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

The choice between USPS and a private

Office Size 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

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
Identifica
tion
USPS

requires
two forms
of ID to
verify
your
identity.
The
primary
ID must
have a
photogra
ph and
your

current or physical military address ID. The (not a PO secondary box). Any ID can be acceptable a primary utility bill, IDs bank include a statement driver's t, voter license, registration state ID, on card, passport, or a

credit current
card with address,
your bring a
name. change-
Both of-
must be address
current confirmat
and valid. ion or a
If your recent bill
driver's that
license matches
does not your
have your address.

Step 4: m is
 Complete convenie
 the nt: search
 Applicatio for "PO
 n Boxes"

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 apply choose
 online or "Apply for
 in person. a PO
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Service). rural area

Step 5: might

Pay the cost

Rental \$15-\$20

Fee for six

Fees vary months,

by while a

location large box

and box in a city

size. can be

Typically, \$100 or

a small more per

box in a year.

USPS card,
 offers check, or
 rental money
 periods of order.
 3, 6, or Some
 12 offices
 months. also allow
 Payment automati
 can be c renewal
 made by using a
 credit credit
 card, card on
 debit file.

Step 6: two keys
Receive for your
Your Keys box. Test
and Start the lock
Using immediat
Your Box ely.

Once Update
payment your
is address
processe with
d, the friends,
clerk will family,
give you banks,

and any automatic subscription. Note forward that you mail to a must wait new PO for your box mail to unless be you file a forward change-d or of-redirecte address d – USPS order. does not

HOW TO GET A PO BOX FROM A

PRIVATE
PROVIDER (CMRA) g

If you services,
 want a a private
 street mailbox
 address, rental
 need to (commer
 receive cial mail
 packages receiving
 from all agency,
 carriers, CMRA)
 or want might be
 mail better.
 forwardin Compani

es like address
 The UPS (e.g., 123
 Store, Main St.,
 PostNet, Suite
 or local 500). The
 independ process is
 ent similar:

centers

offer

boxes

that look

like a

street

1. Visit
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| sizes. | applica |
| 2. Provide | tion |
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4. Pay code.
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5. Receiv boxes but
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as a real scanning
street of mail
address envelope
and s, so you
package can see
acceptance what has
ce from arrived
all without
carriers. visiting
Many the box.

COMPARISON
USPS VS. PRIVATE
MAILBOX

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

COST

- **USPS
Small
PO
Box:**
About
\$15-\$3
0 per 6
month

s 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).

(\$360–
\$720
per
year).

• **Private
Mailbox
(large
):**
\$30–\$60 per
month

Note that
USPS
boxes are
subsidized and
thus
cheaper,
but they
do not

accept g. Private
 packages boxes are
 from more
 FedEx, flexible
 UPS, or but come
 DHL at a
 unless higher
 you have premium.

a

**BENEFITS OF
 HAVING A PO BOX**

premium
 box with
 street
 addressin

Why go
 through
 the effort
 of getting

a PO box?
Here are
some
compellin
g
advantag
es:

- **Privac
y:** Your
home
addres
s stays
hidden

from
corres
ponde
nce
and
packag
es.

- **Securi
ty:**
Mail
theft is
reduce
d

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

ional address than a home address.

Travelers and RVers:

A PO box

provides a stable mailing address while you are on the move. common pitfalls when learning **how to get a PO box,** keep these tips in mind:

**TIPS FOR A
SMOOTH
EXPERIENCE**

To avoid

- **Check office hours**

**for
lobby
access**

. Some
post
offices
lock
the
lobby
after
hours.
If you
need

24/7
access,
verify
that
the
locatio
n
offers
it.

• **Bring
exact
chang
e or a**

**credit
card.**

Not all
post
offices
accept
checks
for
initial
payme
nts.

• **Rene
w**

**before
expira
tion.**

USPS
sends
a
renewa
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notice,
but if
you
miss it,
your

box
may be
reassign
ed.

Set a
calend
ar
remind
er.

• **Updat
e your
addre
ss**

**with
USPS.**

File a
perma
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change
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addres
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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**

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packag
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from
UPS/Fe
dEx
will not
be
deliver
ed to a
standa
rd PO
box.

• **Use
your
PO
box
for
subscr
iption
s like
Netflix,
Amazo
n, and
bank
statem**

ents to
avoid
missin
g
deliveri
es.

**COMMON
MISTAKES TO
AVOID**

- **Using
a PO
box
for
legal**

**docu
ments
like a
driver'
s
licens
e
addre
ss:**
Most
states
require
a

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

addresses
separate from
your
residence.

• **Forget
ting
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
ed
directl
y;
forwar
ding
from

USPS
may
not
work
for all
official
mail.

CONCLUSION

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

but handling.
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skill for choose a
anyone USPS PO
who box for
values its low
privacy, cost and
security, familiarity
and y, or a
profession private
ness in mailbox
their mail for its

street following
 address the
 and guideline
 package s above
 flexibility, —
 the selecting
 process is the right
 a few size,
 steps preparing
 away your
 from identificat
 completio ion
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ts, and Take the
understa time to
nding the evaluate
costs — your
you can specific
secure a needs,
dedicated and soon
mailing you can
address enjoy the
quickly convenie
and with nce and
minimal peace of
hassle. mind that

a PO box provides.