SHIPPING COST CHEAT SHEET

Dim weight: what you are really paying for

Carriers bill by box size as well as weight. In July 2026 USPS switched to the same math UPS and FedEx use, so an oversized box now costs more with all three. Here is how the bill is calculated and how much a smaller box saves.

L × W × H ÷ 139 = dim weight

Measure in inches and round each side up to the next whole inch. Round the result up to the next pound. You pay whichever is higher: the scale weight or the dim weight.

UPS AND FEDEX

Every package

Daily (account) rates use a divisor of 139. Dim weight can apply to any box, even a small one.

USPS, SINCE JULY 12, 2026

Over 1 cubic foot

Priority Mail, Priority Mail Express, Ground Advantage and Parcel Select moved from 166 to 139. It applies to boxes over 1,728 cubic inches. At or under that, you pay the scale weight.

Same 2 lb order, three box sizes

BOX (INCHES)	CUBIC INCHES	UPS / FEDEX BILLS	USPS BILLS
12 × 12 × 12	1,728	13 lb	2 lb
Cut to 12 × 12 × 7	1,008	**8 lb (5 lb less)**	2 lb
16 × 12 × 10	1,920	14 lb	14 lb
Cut to 16 × 12 × 5	960	**7 lb (7 lb less)**	**2 lb (12 lb less)**
18 × 14 × 10	2,520	19 lb	19 lb
Cut to 18 × 14 × 6	1,512	**11 lb (8 lb less)**	**2 lb (17 lb less)**

Each figure is length × width × height ÷ 139, rounded up, compared with the 2 lb scale weight. The higher number is what gets billed.

Five ways to stop paying to ship air

1. **Cut the box to the height of the order.** Taking 4 to 5 inches off the top is often the difference between a dim weight charge and the real weight.
2. **Watch the 1,728 line on USPS.** A box just over 1 cubic foot can bill at several times its real weight. A few inches shorter and it drops back to scale weight.
3. **Stock fewer box sizes.** Keep a few larger sizes and cut them down to fit, instead of shelving a box for every product combination.
4. **Use less void fill.** A box that fits the order needs less bubble wrap and paper, which saves material and packing time.
5. **Send exact dimensions with every label.** USPS now rounds each side up and is phasing in fees for missing or wrong dimensions, so measure the box you actually ship.

BoxPal Pro 2.0 scores and cuts a corrugated box down to the height you set, with a depth guide that keeps the fold line straight. Made in the USA, 90-day limited warranty.

boxpalpro.com

General guide based on carrier rules published as of November 2026. Retail rates, negotiated contracts and some services use different divisors or exemptions (USPS Flat Rate and returns are exempt). Check your carrier's current rules before relying on these numbers.