What's the most important thing customers should know about IMpb?

There are three key Intelligent Mail Package® Barcode (IMpb) requirements customers must meet to ensure they receive the best experience and value when they ship packages with the Postal Service. Each package must:

- Bear a unique IMpb barcode;
- Be accompanied by a version 1.6 (or higher) electronic Shipping Services File record populated with required details about the package;
- Include the correct destination delivery address and/or 11-digit Delivery Point Validated ZIP Code for each record in the Shipping Services File

The IMpb is the critical bridge between physical packages and digital information required to enable world class service and tracking for the package products you ship with us.

What do customers need to do to use IMpb for packages?

Customers who plan to use their own software must complete the IMpb certification process. Part of the process requires signing up for a business account and Mailer Identification (MID) number via our Business Customer Gateway https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin.

What special equipment or technology is required?

Customers need to have software and printers capable of printing unique, high quality IMpb barcodes for their packages; and generating and transmitting electronic information in the Shipping Services File version 1.6 (or subsequent versions) format for each package. The Shipping Services File must also include the destination delivery address and/or 11-digit Delivery Point Validated (DPV) ZIP Code in the file for each package. The IMpb barcode uses the GS1-128 symbology. Shipping Services Files will need to be transmitted using a secure transfer protocol. Our IMpb Barcode Specifications and Implementation Guide can be found on our RIBBS website at https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmail package. Your IMpb barcode and Shipping Services File software will need to successfully complete our certification process. There are also many service providers, software vendors, PC Postage and meter vendors who offer IMpb compliant solutions. A list of these solutions can be found at https://ribbs.usps.gov/intelligentmail_package/documents/tech_guides/IMpbCertifiedSolutionsProviders.pdf.

How does IMpb help packages ship more efficiently?

The IMpb includes the routing information in the barcode which allows the Postal Service to use automated equipment to sort and track packages as they travel through our network to the post offices that will make final delivery at the respective destinations. The electronic information and intelligent barcode allows the Postal Service to project workload and resources before and during the packages' journey through our network. In addition, the address and/or 11-digit DPV ZIP Code data supports operational efficiencies by providing critical information needed to sort packages to delivery routes dynamically, leveraging technology instead of relying on complex distribution schemes memorized by employees. The data rich, digital trail created through the distribution process provides tracking visibility that improves the customer experience – customers know where their packages are and when they'll arrive – and fuels business intelligence to provide world class service and help your business grow.

What else should we know about IMpb?

The IMpb is required to access the best prices for our package products. The recent price changes in September 2014 afforded even greater discounts for Commercial Base and Commercial Plus Pricing prices for Priority Mail, with savings ranging from 9% - 59% versus retail -- depending on distance and weight. In addition, the IMpb is required for baked in insurance[1] for Priority Mail up to $50 or even $100 for some customers.

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[1] Restrictions apply: To qualify for included insurance, a shipment must meet certain requirements, such as having an applicable bar code. For details, visit https://www.usps.com/ship/priority-mail.htm. Insurance does not cover certain items. For details regarding claim exclusions, see sections:
609.4.3 (Non-payable Claims),
609 (Filing Indemnity Claims for Loss or Damage), and
503.4 (Insured Mail) of the Domestic Mail Manual at http://pe.usps.com.

New products and features rely on the IMpb and its Shipping Services File – which includes the destination address and/or 11-digit DPV ZIP Code. The IMpb is your portal to future enhancements to package products and services as well as the best prices.

When can CBP pricing be used on a meter?
A meter can be used to pay CBP pricing only on parcels that carry an IMpb barcode and meet all other IMpb requirements. Use of CBP postage is printed in conjunction with IMpb compliant shipping systems to produce an IMpb compliant label while meeting all IMpb requirements (for example PC based shipping software or an online solution such as Click-N-Ship for Business).

I want to pay Commercial Base Prices on my packages, what do I need to do to qualify for those prices?
In order to get CBP rates, Commercial packages must have an IMpb barcode, and meet all other IMpb requirements, including transmitting an electronic Shipping Services File version 1.6 or higher that includes the required address information. IMpb Certified solutions such as pbSmartPostage™ and SendSuite® take care of meeting those requirements and qualify for Commercial Base Pricing. After January 26, 2015, only packages shipped with a software generated IMpb label will get CBP pricing.

What is the retention period for USPS Tracking?
USPS Tracking retention is 120 days, reduced from 180 days.

How is the $0.20 IMpb surcharge assessed and calculated?
The $0.20 IMpb surcharge is assessed through PostalOne!

IMpb compliance metric has a threshold that requires a specified percentage of the packages to meet requirements for that metric (see chart).

For example, for address and/or 11-digit DPV ZIP Code, the threshold is 98%. As long as 98% of the packages have an address and/or

11-digit DPV ZIP Code the non-compliance fee will not be assessed for the 2% of the packages failing to meet this requirement. If more than 2% fail the address and/or 11-digit DPV ZIP Code requirement, the non-compliance fee is assessed against the number of non-compliant packages needed to reach the 98% threshold.

IMpb Compliance Thresholds	January 2015
Unique Trackable Barcode (Legacy or IMpb)	99%
Destination Delivery Address and or 11-digit DPV Zip Code in file	98%
Shipping Services File v. 1.6 or higher	97%

Do I have to pay a $0.20 IMpb non-compliance assessment fee if I use a meter to pay the retail price for a Priority Mail parcel that doesn't have an IMpb barcode or meet IMpb requirements?
The $0.20 non-compliance assessment is not applicable for metered parcels (including Priority Mail), that pay the retail price.

Do we put a Label 400 on Certified Mail and do we add $0.20 to it?
You don't need Label 400 for your Certified Mail letters, Flats, or parcels. In addition, currently the IMPB non-compliance fee is not assessed for Certified Mail unless used on Priority Mail (any shape) or First-Class Package Service parcels. Although Certified Mail is not assessed IMPB non-compliance fee, it is required to upgrade to IMpb and provide address information and or 11 Digit DPV in the Shipping Services File v1.6 or higher for each item

Is IMpb required for First-Class Mail Flats?
Customers are never to use the IMpb on FCM flats. The only authorized use is when the FCM letter or flat is mailed with Certified Mail or Registered Mail.

What happens if you are a metered customer and you do not meet IMpb requirements?
Meter customers who do not meet IMpb requirements do not qualify for Commercial Base discounts and must pay retail prices.

Meter customers must have a barcode on all parcels and on Priority Mail of any shape. An IMpb or Label 400 will meet the requirement.

If a meter customer is applying a label 400 and wants tracking, their metered strip should reflect the postage cost to ship the package plus the cost of USPS Tracking.

Is it mandatory to put an IMpb tracking label on every package?
Yes, every package must affix an IMpb tracking label.

How much is the Label 400 and how can I order them?
There is no charge for external customers for Label 400 or IMpb compliant labels for USPS Tracking our Signature Confirmation. Customer can get Label 400 from their local post offices or send a request to IMpb@usps.gov.

Where can I find more information about the IMpb?
IMpb barcode specifications are published in the Barcode, Package, Intelligent Mail (USPS2000508) document. In addition, Publication 199: Intelligent Mail Package Barcode (IMpb) Implementation Guide contains electronic manifest file specifications, service type codes, business rules, and other information needed to implement the IMpb. Both documents are posted on RIBBS and viewable at
https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=intellmail package.

Publication 205, Electronic Verification System Business (eVS) and Technical Guide, for eVS users has been updated to reflect IMpb use and is also available on RIBBS at:
http://ribbs.usps.gov/evs/documents/tech_guides/Pub205.PDF. The IMpb Final Rule Federal Register Notice is available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-20131218/pdf/2013-30023.pdf. Please send your questions to IMpb@usps.gov.